

DEVOTION GUIDE 2020

- **OCTOBER**
- **NOVEMBER**
- **DECEMBER**



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***Welcome to the Church
Where the SHOUT
Has Not Gone OUT!***



October 1, 2020

(Acts 16:20-22) *"And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them."*

These magistrates were not Jewish, because the people who brought Paul and Silas accused them of being Jews. The ones they were troubling was them, keeping them from making an easy living from this poor girl. Rome ruled here in Philippi at this time and everything was based on the Roman law, not on a moral code of Christianity or Judaism. The Romans, at this time, were not Christian or Jews, but heathen. They incited a mob against Paul and Silas that was actually without cause. Paul and Silas had not attacked Rome but the magistrates forcibly tore off Paul and Silas' clothes and commanded them to be beaten. Standing up for right is not easy at times!



October 2, 2020

(READ ACTS 16:23-24) *"And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."*

Their punishment was a public beating and then they were thrown into jail. Along with the pain inflicted, the public beating was always used to embarrass the one receiving the whipping. They instructed the jailer specifically to keep them from escaping. It was not enough to have them in the inner prison... the jailer put them in stocks, as well. There should be no possible way for them to get out...yet they had not taken into account the God of Paul and Silas!

When we face battles in our life...we, too, must remember and take into account our GOD...He is on the throne and has all things under HIS CONTROL!



October 3, 2020

(READ ACTS 16:25-26) *"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." And I Thess. 5:18, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*

Any time is always the correct time to praise God! The other prisoners could hear their prayers and praise—they were right there with them. We know that everyone who lives Godly lives will suffer persecution...tribulation comes to everyone. Our attitude about the problem is what can free us from bonds. We must know that victory is only in Jesus Christ. We see the divine power of God in action here. Sometimes, God uses earthquakes & other means to deal with man. In this case, all the doors flew open and their bands came off!



October 4, 2020

(Acts 16:27-30) *"And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*

This keeper of the prison was going to kill himself to keep from being tortured for letting the prisoners go. He couldn't believe they were all still here...they could have gotten away so easily! Before, he was afraid of the ruler from Rome, and now he is afraid of God! He was aware that Paul and Silas had prayed and praised God and had caused this to happen. He ran to them and fell down before them for help. This miracle of the earthquake and the bands falling off has convinced this jailer that Paul and Silas have the truth and their God is REAL!



October 5, 2020

(Acts 16:31-34) *"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."*

Paul and Silas told the jailer about the plan of salvation, which is a wonderful promise that all believers can stand on! Not only will we be saved, but our family as well...what a glorious promise and assurance! It appears that Paul and Silas went to the jailer's home and preached to him and his family. The jailer was truly excited and happy over his salvation and the salvation of his family. In return, they treated the wounds of Paul and Silas, and Paul and Silas baptized him and his family.

What a glorious picture...Paul and Silas shared the Word of God with them and God did the rest!



October 6, 2020

(Acts 16:35-37) *"And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go. And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out."*

The jailer's superiors had sent word to tell Paul and Silas they could go. Evidently, the magistrate didn't know about the earthquake because he made no reference as to any escape. Paul was not about to let them usher them out quietly after all the humiliation and suffering they had been through! He reminded them that he is a Roman citizen, and it was illegal to punish a citizen of Rome without a free trial. Paul lets them know they'll have to find an acceptable way of an apology before they will leave. Paul was bold about his faith--ARE WE?



October 7, 2020

(Acts 16:38-40) *"And the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans." And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."*

The magistrates could have gotten into a whole lot of trouble. Romans were not to be punished or imprisoned without a trial. If their mistake was known in Rome, they might lose their positions. They wanted Paul and Silas to quietly leave town before word got back of what they had done. The other believers had gathered at Lydia's house. Paul and Silas went by to report what had happened. This was something equivalent to a home church. Paul comforted and encouraged the believers, and then they left to witness. Shine YOUR Light!



October 8, 2020

(Acts 17:1-3) *"Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."*

Thessalonica was part of Macedonia. It is not a completely pagan area, because we are told that a synagogue or place of worship was there. Paul preached three different Sabbaths here. Being a Pharisee, Paul would have access to the synagogue. He tried to reason with them that Christ and Messiah are the same. The Jews had been looking for generations for Messiah. Paul was not accusing them, but explaining to them, of Jesus' death and entombment. He explained that Jesus had to die, so that He could be resurrected. It was prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Jesus. What a SAVIOR!



October 9, 2020

(Acts 17:4-5) *“And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.”*

The Greeks were in synagogue and were interested in the one true God. Thessalonica was a city actually that had many synagogues. In Luke's writings, he gives credit to the women that received Christ as Savior. As for Jason, some believe he was a relative of Paul. The name Jason is a Romanized form of the name Jesus or Joshua. The “*lewd fellows of the baser sort*” would be called thugs or criminals in our society. Notice, why these Jews came against them, it was because of envy or jealousy. These Jews had gathered a mob to get rid of Paul and Silas because they were envious. Don't let envy control you!



October 10, 2020

(Acts 17:6-10) *“And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go. And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.”*

They didn't really have any legitimate grievance against Paul and Silas or Jason—who would stand up before the court, so they were accusing them of trying to take Caesar's throne. Jason put up bond for himself and the others so they would let them go. Paul and Silas left in darkness to keep them from imprisoning them. They could find safe haven in Berea. We can find a safe haven in the presence of Jesus anytime!



October 11, 2020

(Acts 17:11-12) *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.”*

If you truly study the Scriptures with an open mind and heart to receive the Truth, God will peel back the pages of understanding and reveal that Truth to you. The Old Testament Scriptures point to Jesus. If these people truly understood the Old Testament, they would readily accept Jesus as their Messiah. Their attitude was better (*they were not envious*) but eager to know the Truth. Jesus is the Truth. These Greek women were attending the synagogue. They were all worshippers of God the Father already. Now they receive Jesus as Savior and Lord, their Messiah. Is He YOUR Lord & Messiah?



October 12, 2020

(Acts 17:13-14) *“But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.”*

These Jews from Thessalonica aren't satisfied to run them out of their town, they cause trouble here in Berea, as well. Probably those that were stirred up were those who rejected Paul's message. The beginning of the Christian movement and the founding of their Churches were under much opposition. Even today, churches face opposition. Paul was rushed out of town by night to keep him from being jailed. Why Silas and Timothy stayed behind is not given. Perhaps, they were not at the house when Paul was carried away. The authorities were really after Paul who was the chief preacher, so the others were not in as much danger. Regardless, stand up no matter what!



October 13, 2020

(Acts 17:15-16) *“And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed. Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.”*

It appears that Paul was whisked away so quickly, that he did not have time to wait for Timothy and Silas. Paul sends word to Timothy and Silas to come immediately and join him. He may have feared for their lives, if they stayed there in Berea. Those who brought Paul safely to Athens were to take instructions back to Timothy and Silas. Paul, later on sends Timothy back to Thessalonica and Silas to Berea, because he cannot go back there himself. Athens truly was a city of idols. This was not a godly city by any stretch of the imagination. He must have felt out of place—do YOU feel out of place in this world?



October 14, 2020

(Acts 17:17-18) *“Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.”*

“Dispute” means Paul argued with them. “Devout” means religious. The synagogue was Jewish and these people Paul was disputing were the leaders of the Jews. They were students of the Old Testament, but didn’t believe Jesus was the promised Messiah. These philosophers of the Epicureans taught that through philosophy a person could find happiness. True pleasure, and not absolute truth, is what they taught. In Athens, this philosophy of materialism was strongly supported at this time. The Stoicks taught pride, independence, and believed in fate, not faith. Sounds like secular humanism—centered on SELF!



October 15, 2020

(Acts 17:19-21) *“And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)”*

This Areopagus seems to be a court named after their false god of war. These people, who were so possessed with having every bit of knowledge they could get, would be wanting this new knowledge, as well. They were fascinated with the mind, not the spirit. These people analyzed everything they heard. They checked out all new things, just as people today are always looking for something new. You can't analyze God! He must be accepted on faith, not fact. These people worshipped their own mind. If they could not prove it, they did not believe it. They had faith in no one and nothing. What a pity!



October 16, 2020

(Acts 17:22-23) *“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.”*

Mars' hill and Areopagus is the same place. Superstitious, here, means more religious than others. He does not say they are involved with God, just that they are religious. A person can be religious about any thing. You see, these intelligent people knew that there had to be something, or someone, who started all of this. In science you can go so far back, but science does not really know where it all began. Paul says here, you really are worshipping God, but you are ignorantly worshipping you know not what. For them to be told they are ignorantly doing anything, is quite a shock to them. They think themselves to be very intelligent. Paul wanted to tell them who this God is!



October 17, 2020

(Acts 17:24-25) *“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;”*

Paul is starting out with very fundamental teaching. He touches first on something that they will agree with. They know that they have no idea who made heaven or earth, so they will go along with this much of Paul's message. They know that they have never seen Him, so they would also believe that He did not dwell in temples. We see that boldness of Paul because on this very Mars' hill they have temples to false gods. The Parthenon is one of the well known temples here. Since God made the world, and everything, and everyone in it, He really doesn't need us, or the things we might do for Him. We need Him. In Him we live and breathe, and have our being. Thank God now!



October 18, 2020

(Acts 17:26-27) *“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:”*

These proud people don't want to hear that all these people of the world that they look down on, were made from the same blood line as they were. Paul is showing that all people everywhere are sisters and brothers, and that we should all worship the one true God who gave us all life. God is with us all the time. He never moves away from us. We sometimes wander away from Him. If we seek Him, we will find Him. The heathens are stumbling through life looking for something (*they know not what*). They are really looking for God and do not realize it. Paul is saying to these people, reach out, He is right here with you. There is no better peace than to have this assurance!



October 19, 2020

(Acts 17:28-29) *“For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.”*

Paul is saying that God causes us to live. Christians know that the very breath of life breathed into us at creation is our life .. He (God) put it within us. These words Paul quoted had been written by one of their own Greek poets. Paul is explaining here to them why it is wrong to worship a statue of gold, or silver, or any other engraved thing. These are creations of man. We must only worship our Creator—God. Paul was telling them that if you are truly God's offspring, then you will know these images are not God. What do you place between yourself and the worship of God? Is it a person, hobby or even entertainment? Worship God above all things or people!



October 20, 2020

(Acts 17:30) *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:”*

Paul says that God overlooked their sin in the past, because it was done in ignorance. God now has revealed Himself to mankind, and man must repent of all those sins he has committed and come to the one true God.

People (even Christians) live today like they will never be judged or punished for their sins. We will all give an account of our life to a holy and righteous God.

Since the knowledge of God has come, God will not look the other way any longer at sin. We must repent by turning from our evil ways and worship God with a cleansed heart. God is not “winking” anymore...Repent and Turn from all sin!



October 21, 2020

(Acts 17:31) *“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”*

Paul is now giving the conclusion to his sermon. He has led them to the place and time of decision. It's altar call time! The needed to search their heart and decide. Do they go on worshipping their idols, or do they repent and start life anew with this God that Paul is telling them of? Paul tells of a day of judgment, when even these people of Athens will stand before this Judge of all the world. Paul tells them that the One who will judge the world is the very same Jesus that rose from the grave. His rising from the grave is evidence of Who He is. His judgment will be righteous. These people were self-righteous and it would be hard for them to accept this message.



October 22, 2020

(Acts 17:32-34) *“And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.”*

Poor Paul had turned some of them completely off when he mentioned the resurrection, because they did not believe in life after death. Yet, there were some who were interested and were eager to hear more about this life after death. Everyone fears death until they have the blessed hope of the resurrection. According to some history books, a Dionysius was the pastor of a diocese in Corinth and this one here was supposedly named for him. This woman Damaris was not a relative of his. It sounds like only a few received the gospel message into their hearts. We rejoice over any soul that comes to Jesus Christ, and we don't give up—we keep praying and telling!



October 23, 2020

(Acts 18:1-3) *“After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.”*

This Claudius is Caesar. When he ordered the Jews to leave Rome, it appears Aquila and Priscilla came to Corinth. We don't know how long Paul waited in Athens for Timothy and Silas. We do know it would have taken about a month for the servant to take back the news that Paul wanted them to come, and then for them to make the trip, because it was a long way. Corinth was about 40 miles from Athens, so it would have taken 2 or 3 days to get there. Paul was going to work some as a tentmaker and he stayed with these tentmakers in Corinth. He understood Jewish customs & would fit in well with them.



October 24, 2020

(Acts 18:4-5) *“And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.”*

Notice the different wording here. He “reasoned.” In the other places he “disputed.” We also read that he “persuaded” them, the Greeks and Jews. “Pressed in the spirit” here means compelled of the Spirit. Paul had been working part time as a tentmaker, now the Holy Spirit has set him on fire to preach the gospel message! Whether Silas and Timothy being there had strengthened him, we don't know for sure...but it had to encourage his heart to have others in the faith to be there to back him up. He boldly proclaims Jesus as the Christ the Messiah. Our Christian friends, too, are an encouragement to us...They pray for us and lift us up before the Father! AMEN!



October 25, 2020

(Acts 18:6) *“And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.”*

Paul could take no more opposition to the name of Jesus Christ. His people, the Jews, had rejected Jesus. The shaking of his garments was an act of saying, *“I am through trying to convince you.”* He was obligated to try to tell them, but they didn't listen. His obligation now is over.

He was called to the Gentiles, as well as the Jews. In Acts 9:15, God tells Ananias of this call... *“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”*

We, too, are obligated to tell others about Jesus, the Savior!



October 26, 2020

(Acts 18:7-8) *“And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”*

Justus lived just next door to the synagogue. It appears that Paul preached at Justus' house, who was a believer. The voice of Paul probably would have carried, so that those attending synagogue would have heard the message, also. Crispus was one of the few people that Paul himself baptized. He was chief ruler of the synagogue, and it would have been proper for Paul to baptize him. In I Corinthians 1:14 we read, *“I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius.”* Many of these Corinthians were probably Jews, because this house where Paul preached was next to their synagogue. We should not be ashamed to proclaim the message of God anywhere!



October 27, 2020

(Acts 18:9-11) *“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”*

Paul has run into trouble nearly everywhere he has ministered. In every instance, he had not been able to settle down and really preach for any length of time, because the Jews would come in and force him to leave. We see here that God is telling Paul to settle down and preach boldly, that God Himself will protect him from any harm. What a promise! The Lord tells Paul that there are many people here who will receive Jesus into their hearts. This is a time of peaceful ministry for Paul. This 18 months was time to form a sound base for forming the Corinthian church. Paul will later write I and II Corinthians to this very church he started here. Let God use you, too!



October 28, 2020

(Acts 18:12-14) *“And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:”*

After 18 months of peace for Paul, suddenly the Jews came against him and brought him before the judgment seat. Notice, they are not accusing Paul of worshipping a false god. They say he persuades men to worship God. They are complaining about the way he worships, not *who* he worships. Paul does not have to defend himself—Gallio does it for him. He seems a little annoyed that they would bring any accusation against Paul. He says, in a sense, he has done no wrong, so why do you accuse him? He also says he would listen to their grievance, but they really don't have one. Paul stayed true to his calling!



October 29, 2020

(Acts 18:15-17) *“But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drave them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.”*

Gallio says again here, “this is not for a court to judge.” It would be like asking a court today to decide between two denominations of churches. This is not a civil matter. They had wasted his time, and he was very annoyed with them. These people who caught the ruler of the synagogue up and beat him, must have been sympathetic to Paul. Gallio would not stop them, because this, too, was a matter of church concern, and not a civil matter. These Greeks were probably a mixture of people who disliked the Jews. It was the wrong place and the wrong time! God had a job for Paul to do and for us, too!



October 30, 2020

(Acts 18:18) *“And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.”*

In the last lesson, we learned that Paul stayed in Corinth for 1 1/2 years and started the church there. The Jews finally came against him and tried to cause him trouble, but Gallio would not do their dirty work for them. Now we read that Paul stayed there for a while after this incident, then he leaves and goes to Syria. Priscilla and Aquila had become very close to Paul. He had lived with them while he was in Corinth. Paul shaved his head for a vow. It seems this shaving his hair off was so that he could take it to the temple when he goes to sacrifice. Paul is still fulfilling some of the Jewish customs, even though he is a converted Christian. We cannot be sure why he is doing this, but we can be sure he is doing what he feels is best at the time.



October 31, 2020

(Acts 18:19-20) *“And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;”*

He left Aquila and Priscilla here at Ephesus, and Paul continues on after stopping and preaching at the synagogue.

It appears that Paul has not completely given up on winning the Jews to Jesus, because here he is, again, in their synagogue trying to make them understand. Two years before this, Paul had been forbidden to go to Asia, but now it seems that it is pleasing to God for Paul to go there. Paul was set for Jerusalem. He just stopped momentarily here...they could not persuade him to stay longer (or tarry), because he had something he wanted to do in Jerusalem. Paul was on a mission from God. Are you open to do the will of God in your life... no matter the consequences or how hard the job will be? Pray!



November 1, 2020

(Acts 18:21-22) *“But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.”*

We see that Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem. Maybe he was going to carry his hair he had cut off there. The feast he thought it was so important to get to, had to be one of the three important feasts: the Passover, Pentecost or Harvest. *“I must by all means”* indicates that even if the weather is bad, he will go anyhow. It mentions that He went to Caesarea, which is not far from Jerusalem. It says *“and gone up.”* Jerusalem is up from Caesarea. It also says and *“saluted the church,”* I believe that is speaking of the church at Jerusalem. Antioch would be down from Jerusalem. He then leaves Jerusalem and goes to Antioch. Paul's determination is to be admired. How determined are we?



November 2, 2020

(Acts 18:23-24) *“And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples. And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.”*

Paul was going back and checking on the churches, after he had spent a few months here. He had a great deal to do with the formation of these churches. He was going back to make sure that they were still worshipping in the way he established them. We see, here, a man called Apollos, who is highly educated, particularly in the Scriptures. We know that he is a Jew by birth, but a Christian by choice. He has not received the fullness of the Holy Ghost, since he has been baptized in the baptism of repentance only (John's baptism). Ephesus was one of the cities on Paul's second journey where he stayed and preached for a short time. We are also Christians by choice!



November 3, 2020

(Acts 18:25-26) *“This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”*

Apollos was from Alexandria, as we read several other times other than in Acts. Paul speaks very highly of Apollos. Read I Corinthians 3:4-7, and I Corinthians 16:12, and Titus 3:13. Some expositors believe that he became one of the early bishops. We know that he knew the Scriptures well, and that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah. He not only knew that Jesus was the Christ the very Son of God who came to be Savior of the world, but he proclaimed that good news to every one he saw. He knew the Scriptures so well, that he immediately related what they told him about Jesus and he knew He was the Messiah. Aquila and Priscilla proceeded to tell him more fully about the gospel message that he was so eager to embrace.



November 4, 2020

(Acts 18:27-28) *“And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.”*

Apparently, these believers in Achaia knew very little of the Scriptures. They had received the grace of God, but had not yet been taught in the Bible. The brothers of Ephesus knew what a great Bible scholar he was and wrote a letter recommending him as a speaker at Achaia. He appears to be a teacher of the Word. There are thirty-eight or more specific Old Testament Scriptures which prophecy the coming Messiah. When you join these prophecies with the circumstances of Jesus' birth, life, crucifixion, entombment and resurrection, there is no doubt left who He is! Don't doubt—just believe!



November 5, 2020

(Acts 19:1-2) *“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.”*

We know that we studied in our devotions that Apollos taught the Scriptures. He was not acquainted with the baptism of the Holy Ghost himself, so he did not bring any teaching of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He was a teacher of the Word of God, not the Spirit of God. These people were strong believers in Jesus Christ, but they had not been taught about the power of the Holy Ghost. When Paul asks them if they had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, they were confused, because they did not know about it. The only answer they could give was that they did not even know if there was a Holy Ghost. So many people today do not understand this power!



November 6, 2020

(Acts 19:3-5) *“And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”*

These people in all sincerity had been baptized in John's baptism. They did all they knew to do. John the Baptist had gone through the land preaching “Repent and be baptized... The Lord Messiah is coming!” These people here at Ephesus had done all of this in obedience to Apollos' teaching. They had just stopped short of being baptized in the Holy Spirit because they knew nothing about it. Paul was there to clear things up and present water baptism and show them to rise to new life in Jesus Christ. While baptism does not save you, it shows obedience.



November 7, 2020

(Acts 19:6-8) *“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve. And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.”*

It appears from verse 7, there were twelve men who received this baptism of the Holy Ghost here at Ephesus. The fire of the Holy Ghost (or the baptism of the Holy Ghost) came upon them as Paul touched them. After this, Paul went to the synagogue for about three months and evidently, there were some things that were not pleasing to him in this church, because we see that he was “disputing and persuading.” Paul found it necessary to spend extra time teaching doctrine here. Remember, this was in the early days when they were just establishing the church. So many people today still are not acquainted with the Bible doctrines. Study & show yourself approved!



November 8, 2020

(Acts 19:9-10) *“But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.”*

Many people did not accept this message of Paul. They were already settled in the way they believed, and they were not anxious to change. It seems Tyrannus had a school here and Paul lectured at the school. When Paul could not get the other disciples into unity, he left this area. It was not uncommon for the rulers of the Jews to get together and debate a Scripture that was giving them problems. Paul talked to both Jew and Greek alike and it does say “all who dwelt in Asia.” That would make you believe he ventured out to other unnamed cities, but made his headquarters here in Ephesus. Tell everyone about Jesus!



November 9, 2020

(Acts 19:11-12) *“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.”*

Paul prayed over these items of clothing, and God healed and delivered the people these articles were sent. God is not limited. This is just a show of God's power, just as Jesus spoke the word and healed the demoniac girl at home when her mother came to Jesus for help in Matthew 15:21-28. God's power is not limited to a certain location or time. This power of God in Paul was very great, and Paul was not afraid to use it. Today, there are many false preachers and people who are making money by promising great miracles and healing. Remember that God performs miracles and healings without exchanging money! If it's God's will that you're healed or granted a miracle, He will perform it without monetary cost.



November 10, 2020

(Acts 19:13-14) *“Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.”*

These vagabond Jews were similar to Gypsies with no certain dwelling place. They cast spells and supposedly delivered people from evil spirits. They did not know Jesus, or believe in Him. They had heard that Paul preached of Jesus, but they really did not know any details about this either. They knew that Paul used Jesus' name to heal and deliver people, but they had no idea where the power came from. They were practicing magic. These were not even devout Jews, much less believers in Christ. They had a chief priest, because they were of Jewish birth, for no other reason. They were not even living for either Judaism or Christianity. They were only trying to make money.



November 11, 2020

(Acts 19:15-16) *“And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”*

These demons knew Jesus in heaven before they became demons, while they were angels. They knew Paul because he delivered demons from many people. They actually were afraid of Jesus' name and of Paul, because of the power of Jesus in him. They didn't know, and certainly were not afraid of, this priest of Sceva or his seven sons. Many times the demons called out Jesus' name when they came in contact with Jesus, such as in Mark chapter 5, verse 7. Remember, this is one man against seven men. The problem is that this one man with the demons has super-natural strength. He could have several thousand demon spirits inside him, as the insane man did that Jesus cast 2,000 demons out of! They are no match for JESUS!



November 12, 2020

(Acts 19:17-19) *“And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.”*

You can easily see how this would cause a great move of the church. It leaves absolutely no doubt who has the power. You see the only name that can cause deliverance and healing is the name of Jesus Christ. You can see why everyone magnified His name. These who heard believed and they repented of their sins. These people are willing to give up all of their witchcraft books to be burned. They are serious about believing in Jesus Christ. We could take a lesson from them. They didn't worry about the cost, they just didn't want to have anything displeasing to God in their home or possession.



November 13, 2020

(Acts 19:20-21) *“So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.”*

Back to verse 19: so many people who claim to be Christians today are reading their horoscope, have Ouija boards, Buddha's and all other sorts of things that God is not honored by. If we are Christian, we ought to have a good old-fashioned spiritual house cleaning! Verse 20...The Word grew, because it was the Truth. We see that Paul's journey, checking on all of the churches he had started, was quickly done. He purposed to go to Jerusalem, and then mentions that he must go to Rome. Paul, among other things, was a Roman citizen. He was concerned and had a passion for the Romans. You remember God had sent him to the Gentiles. Do we have a compassion for others to know the Christ we know? We must share Christ!



November 14, 2020

(Acts 19:22-23) *“So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season. And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.”*

Timothy had been an understudy of Paul's, and anything Timothy might say would be as if Paul himself were speaking. This is the first mention of Erastus. Erastus seems to have been a Corinthian. This may be found in Romans 16:23. He was a city treasurer or steward. At any rate, he was a chamberlain of the city. He was probably at Ephesus with Paul and Timothy. In II Timothy 4:20, Erastus was at Corinth which indicates, again, that was his regular home. Paul sent them to Macedonia to check on the churches for him. This is undoubtedly speaking of here at Ephesus where Paul stayed. This stir is over the false goddess Diana. People do not take kindly when you point out



November 15, 2020

(Acts 19:24-25) *“For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.”*

Do you remember when some people carried around their lucky rabbit's foot? It wasn't too lucky for the rabbit, but some really believed it would help them. These people carried small silver images of Diana that they thought would bring them good luck. They were probably like charms on a charm bracelet or necklace. Demetrius had made images to set around in their houses, as well. He was making a lot of money from them. The great concern these craftsmen had is that there will no longer be a market for their images. If all the people became Christians, they would be out of business. They have called an emergency meeting to try to stop Paul and this Christianity he preaches. We will always face opposition—keep on trying!



November 16, 2020

(Acts 19:26-28) *"Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians."*

Paul had brought a direct attack upon the false images that they worshipped as gods. These men were really not concerned with this false goddess. They were afraid they would not have any way of making a living. The false goddess Diana had supposedly fallen from heaven and there was widespread worship of her. It was bold of Paul to go straight to people worshipping this false goddess, and try to set them on the path to true righteousness in Jesus Christ. How determined are we to tell others?



November 17, 2020

(Acts 13:46) *"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."*

Every person on earth is a free agent. We either choose the Lord Jesus Christ and everlasting life, or we refuse the Lord and death reigns. We judge ourselves, as the Scripture above says. There really is no need to waste God's time on those who will not listen and accept the good news of the gospel. Paul has done the only thing he could do, and that is to turn to someone who is interested in receiving eternal life.

The Gentiles are not only wanting Jesus as Savior, but they are eager to receive life in Him. It is a great blessing when you find a person who is open to receive the truth. And it is a shame and reproach to find those that try to undermine the work GOD has performed in that person's life. Pray for them both!



November 18, 2020

(Acts 13:47-48) *“For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”*

Paul is now no longer limited to carry the message to just the few Jewish villages, but is told of the Lord to spread it everywhere to whosoever will. Paul and Barnabas will be set free to minister wherever they go, regardless of the nationality of the people. Paul's missionary endeavors are to the Gentile nations everywhere. Paul was a Pharisee and this was hard for him, but he will do what God sends him to do. God had foreknowledge of all who would believe. The Gentiles received Jesus as Savior gladly. They had been thought of as heathen before, not even being offered the God of the universe...but GOD included us!



November 19, 2020

(Acts 13:49-51) *“And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.”*

It is so great to hear a new Christian talking about their Lord! There's no way you can stop them talking about it. Paul & Barnabas' message spread like wildfire and soon everyone knew of Jesus. The jealousy of this great move of God has caused a stir among the religious people of the day. These Jews wanted to be rid of Paul and Barnabas and ran them out of town. To “shake the dust of the feet off” is like speaking a terrible punishment on them from God. In other words, Paul and Barnabas are saying they won't have any more to do with these Jewish people here, they are evil, let God take care of them. FYI: Iconium was Asia. Keep giving out the message and LET GOD TAKE CARE OF THE RESPONSE!



November 20, 2020

(Acts 13:52; 14:1) *"And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost. And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed."*

It seems whenever the disciples had a bad time somewhere, God poured out the Holy Ghost on them all over again and they were filled with joy! The synagogue was opened to the Greeks, as well as the Jews. It seemed that Paul was under great anointing of God at this time and many were brought into the numbers of the Christians. Paul is preaching the Word and many who are receiving this Word are saved. Remember, these disciples had been filled again with the Spirit and with joy about the time they came to Iconium. In Romans 10:14, we find it is necessary to have a preacher because by the foolishness of preaching, people are won to God. Amen?



November 21, 2020

(Acts 14:2-3) *"But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands."*

These Jews were jealous, because the body of believers in Christ was growing far more rapidly than the people in the synagogue. These Jews put a question into the minds of the Gentiles who were not familiar with the Scriptures. Satan never changes. This is still going on today. He planted a question in Eve's mind, and that has been his plan from the beginning. Faith and doubt are opposites. If you have doubt, you do not have faith. It is easy to sway the thinking of a new convert. Paul kept proclaiming the pure word of God and He allowed them to do wonderful signs and wonders which should have convinced the people who was right. Many times people are blinded so much by unbelief that they ignore the miracles.



November 22, 2020

(Acts 14:4-6) *"But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them, They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:"*

Not everyone will receive the Truth of God, and Iconium is no different. Some believed, and some didn't. It seemed that those who did not believe used every means available to them to try to keep the others from believing. At times even homes are divided into battlegrounds because some of the family believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and some do not. This is what happened. Their differences in belief caused division among the people. It appears here that Paul and the other disciples had to run for their lives to keep from being killed. THERE'S A TIME TO STAND and a time to USE GOOD JUDGMENT!



November 23, 2020

(Acts 14:7-8) *"And there they preached the gospel. And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:"*

The whole reason they are making this trip is to preach the gospel unto all the world. Matthew 28:19 gives Jesus' great commission to all who would be His ministers, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."* Paul, Barnabas, and the other disciples were carrying out this great commission. It is not our job to win them to Christ—we preach the Word and God will give the increase. All the glory should go to GOD. The man sitting in Lystra was in a very poor and destitute condition—just like us before we asked Christ to be our Savior. This man came into the world a cripple and had been one ever since. Situations like this are great examples of how God can reveal His power and greatness! His saving power is a miracle, too!



November 24, 2020

(Acts 14:9-11) *"The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men."*

In Romans 10:17, *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* This man heard Paul preach and that preaching built up his faith enough that he might receive his healing. This man's faith paid off! He leaped and walked. Over and over, Jesus said to those He was healing, *"your faith has made you whole."* The Lycaonians worshipped false gods, and they associated these miracles as being done by these false gods. They knew the miracle was real and they knew that a miracle such as this was beyond what a natural man could do. They assumed that this miracle originated with Paul—but GOD was at work!



November 25, 2020

(Acts 14:12-13) *"And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people."*

This false god Mercurius had to do with eloquent speaking. This is why they assumed Paul was Mercurius. Jupiter and Mercury in Greek is the same as Zeus and Hermes. This priest was bringing these sacrifices to them because they believed that they were these false gods they worshipped, and they always sacrificed to these false gods, so they wanted to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas.

Preachers and servants of God do not need to obtain the praise of people... they need to point them to Jesus Christ and let them know that He alone should get all glory and praise. While we should honor and respect the man of God, we are not to worship them. GOD IS ABOVE ALL!



November 26, 2020

(Acts 14:14-16) *"Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways."*

The reaction of the priest frightened Paul and Barnabas, who knew the dangers of allowing anyone to deify them. God alone is to be worshipped. This is a lesson many today need to look at carefully. Men and women of God are not to be thought of too highly (exalted and lifted up). The power is God's. We are just His messengers. The created should never be worshipped, we should worship only the Creator. God has made mankind a free-will agent. We can choose who to worship...but if it's not GOD—we will suffer great loss. PLACE GOD ABOVE ALL!



November 27, 2020

(Acts 14:17-18) *"Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them."*

Paul and Barnabas tell these people about the only true God... The Creator of the world. Paul tells them that even nature itself testifies of this one true God. This description here and in the previous lesson is explaining to them the magnitude of the true God. Paul explains how foolish it is to worship Mercury and Jupiter, that the One to worship is the Creator of all things. This God that Paul is telling them about is concerned about His creation and provides for their needs. He explains the true God through nature. They were able to stop the people from sacrificing to them, but it was not easy. These people were not easily convinced of this God they had never heard of before. Witnessing and preaching is hard but necessary! Witness today!



November 28, 2020

(Acts 14:19-20) *"And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe."*

Again, this is not the same Antioch where the believers were first called Christians. This is the same group who gave Paul trouble at Iconium. It appears here that they stoned Paul so badly, that they took him for dead and dragged him out of the city. It's almost unbelievable, that just a few hours earlier they had thought him to be a god. This shows how quickly people forget the miracles. We see the loyalty of the disciples even in the face of death. Even though Paul has been left for dead, they gather around him. The strength of many believers has to be what caused him to rise up! LOYALTY is a GREAT thing!



November 29, 2020

(Acts 14:21-22) *"And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."*

The preaching of the gospel in Derbe brought them renewed courage, and Paul and Barnabas went right back to where they had all the trouble. They were determined to bring the good news of the gospel to this entire area, even if it meant their lives. They wanted to check on those new converts and let them know they may be persecuted and the way won't be easy. Even though the tribulation is great (like Paul's stoning), they must stand firm in the Lord to inherit the kingdom of God. This message is not only for them but for us as well. We can't give in to the enemy when trials come. In this life we will have tribulation but be of good cheer, Jesus has overcome the world and we can, too, through Him. STAND FIRM & keep going!



The first trip Paul had made into this area, he was like an evangelist. He preached and many were saved, but on this trip he is back to establish a church for them. This body of believers would have to stick together to be able to survive. One reason a church was needed is that the members can draw strength from each other. This ordaining of elders was so the local church could function with a leader. The prayer and fasting was so God could choose, through them, the right leader. Pisidia was a mountainous district in Asia Minor, north of Pamphylia and was a really rough area filled with robbers. They were at odds with Rome. Pamphylia means of every race. The church was important then to GOD and it still is! Be faithful!

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NOTES:

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December 1, 2020

(Acts 14:27-28) *"And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples."*

They were all excited telling all of their Jewish helpers how God was the God of the Gentiles, as well as the Jews. God had opened the door to His church to all people. God, the Holy Spirit, had gone on ahead of Paul and Barnabas and prepared the hearts of those who were to believe and receive the Lord as Savior. God had shown this Pharisee (Paul) that Christianity was for the Gentile, as well as the Jew. They deserved a time of rest in verse 28. They were with the disciples who believed as they did. Here, there were no unbelieving Jews to harass them. This was a much needed time of rest and a time of sharing their trials and triumphs. It was testimony & fellowship time!



December 2, 2020

(Acts 15:1) *"And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."*

Here we go... dissension in the church. You remember that the apostles and most of the disciples at the beginning were of the physical house of Abraham, and had practiced circumcision of all males at eight days old. These teachers had themselves been involved with the Old Testament teaching of Moses' law. They did not understand grace. They were trying to put all the new Gentile converts under the Mosaic law. Nowhere in Jesus' teaching while He was on the earth, did He teach circumcision of the flesh. Jesus taught circumcision of the heart. The people in verse 1 are like many of the people of our day, who try to add stipulations to be done in order to be saved. Salvation is so simple. Romans 10:9-10 explains it perfectly and St. John 3:15-17 tells it so well in Jesus' own words. NOTHING added!



December 3, 2020

(Acts 15:2) *"When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question."*

The word of Paul and Barnabas and the other ministers here was not acceptable to the men from Judaea. Peter and James, the half brother of Jesus, were the leaders of the church. Don't confuse this James with James the brother of John who had already been martyred. The church was in the early stages here, and all of the doctrines had not been settled to everyone's knowledge. Many of the Christian converts had come from Judaism and they tried to bring their old practices and traditions with them. They were caught up in the law and did not understand grace, so it was smart of Paul and Barnabas to call in someone not directly involved to straighten this out.



December 4, 2020

(Acts 15:3-4) *"And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them."*

During their travels, they went back by all the churches that had been established on their way through Phoenicia and Samaria. The good news was, that God had offered salvation to the Gentiles, as well. When anyone is added to the Kingdom of God, we should feel great joy... no matter where they came from. "Brethren" here means all who are of like persuasion. The church at Jerusalem seemed to be like the main church that other churches were branches of. This really was a natural setting for the church to be, since Jerusalem was where the temple of the Jews was. I am so glad the Gentiles were given to opportunity to get saved—Praise God, He included us, too!



December 5, 2020

(Acts 15:5) *"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."*

The Pharisees had been caught up in the law from the very beginning. Now they are trying to combine the law and grace, which won't work. Even today, there are groups who claim to be following Christ yet they burden people with the law. If the law had been sufficient, there wouldn't have been any need for Jesus or the gift of grace. Moses' law was for a specific time for specific people, but it was obvious no one could live up to this law, so God sent us a Savior. In Galatians 3:24-26, we read about the law and grace. *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."* Jesus did not do away with the law, but He fulfilled the law for us.



December 6, 2020

(Acts 15:6-7) *"And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."*

The apostles and elders in this area came together to have a meeting to determine what the doctrine of the followers of Christ should be. Peter listened to the discussion by both sides. In fact, it appears that he allowed it to go on for a good while, until every one had stated their case. Then Peter takes charge. He arises and gives them the final word on the matter... not boastfully, but with authority. He reminds them that God chose him to minister to the Gentiles so that they, too, could have the opportunity to hear the Word of God and believe. It is not up to us to decide the ways and plans of GOD.



December 7, 2020

(Acts 15:8-9) *"And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."*

Peter reminds them that God approved the Gentiles because of the condition of their hearts, and not because they had been circumcised. He poured out the Holy Ghost on these Gentiles before they had participated in water baptism, let alone been circumcised. If God puts His seal of approval on them, who is anyone to object? The heart is really what determines whether we are saved or not. God, who looks on the heart sees either a heart desperately wicked or a heart stayed upon God. Romans 2:29 says, *"But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."* The purifying of the heart is the washing of the heart with the shed blood of Jesus.



December 8, 2020

(Acts 15:10-11) *"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."*

Peter is saying that if God accepted them the way they were, why couldn't they? He reminds them that the keeping of every letter of the law, including circumcision, was too hard for even the Jews to do; and now they were trying to burden down the people that God had already accepted with these unattainable rules. Peter reminds them that Salvation is the same for Jew and Gentile. Thank GOD for the grace of our Lord Jesus!

Ephesians 2:8 *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"*

Ephesians 2:9 *"Not of works, lest any man should boast."*



December 9, 2020

(Acts 15:12) *"Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them."*

Peter, the voice of authority, has spoken and suddenly all of the arguing stopped. This opened the way for Paul and Barnabas to testify of their missionary journeys to Pamphyla, Derbe, and other places, and how those who had never before heard the gospel message received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The most exciting part was that the Gentiles, who had been worshipping the false goddess Dianna, had believed Paul and Barnabas' testimony of Jesus and had come to the One true God. Paul probably told of the miracle of healing the lame man, but also told of the persecution they had endured by the grace of God, as well. When you are truly saved, you will want to testify of the goodness and grace of God to everyone!



December 10, 2020

(Acts 15:13-14) *"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."*

This James is not John the apostle's brother. He had already been killed for the gospel. This is the half brother of Jesus by Mary. James seemed to be highly thought of in the church, even though he didn't accept Jesus as his Savior and Lord until after Jesus had risen from the grave. James demanded their attention in the above verse.

James called Peter by the name "Simeon." In Scripture after Scripture, we are told that things are established or verified by two witnesses: and here is your second witness regarding the hot topic of salvation for the Gentiles. James knew what God had commanded concerning the open door of salvation.



December 11, 2020

(Acts 15:15-17) *"And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."*

James reminds them that this was even prophesied by the Old Testament prophets. He tells them of the promise the Lord had made... *"This I will return,"* is speaking of Jesus' return. The word, "residue" means those remaining. In this instance here it is speaking of the non-Jew. The salvation of Jesus Christ is offered to whosoever will. Not to just a chosen few, but to all. The statement *"...upon whom my name is called..."* means the Christians or followers of Christ who have taken on His name and have accepted Him as their Lord and Savior.



December 12, 2020

(Acts 15:18-20) *"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood."*

God's foreknowledge of everything from the beginning of the world unto the end of the world is spoken of here. James is saying my decision is that we not trouble these Gentiles who have come to God. God foretold it, they received the Holy Ghost just as we did, now let's not alter God's decision. James also gives some instructions for church membership behavior. Don't have any idols of any kind; and fornication is sin. This special warning against all body sin should be heeded by all Christians. We should be conscious at all times and open to the Spirit of God to lead us...HE WILL NEVER LEAD US into anything that defiles our body or damages our testimony!



December 13, 2020

(Acts 15:21-22) *"For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:"*

James is saying that if they want to become a Jew and live by Moses' law, they can find that in the synagogue. There is a separation of Moses' law and God's grace—you can't have both. The apostles and elders decided to accept Peter and James' decision on the matter of the Gentiles. A committee is chosen of the elect men in the group to go and carry this good news of the church's decision to the church at Antioch. Perhaps, Judas surnamed Barsabas and Silas went to assure the people of Antioch that this was not just Paul and Barnabas' decision, but was also Peter and James' decision, as well.



December 14, 2020

(Acts 15:23-24) *"And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:*

These letters were written to the churches as a sort of doctrine of the church. They were also written to the churches to settle the question of keeping the law of Moses and of circumcision. They were addressed to the Gentile believers and said that whoever had required them to do these things was not speaking for the apostles and church leaders & to not be troubled by this, because it is not the Christian's doctrine. These representatives of the main body support the fact that keeping the Mosaic law and circumcising the men is not the doctrine of Christianity. The early church is still being formed here.



December 15, 2020

(Acts 15:25-27) *"It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth."*

"Men that have hazarded their lives..." this is speaking of men like Paul who have gone and preached the gospel, even in the face of death. Paul had been stoned and left for dead, and then went right back to the same area to preach again. These men felt it an honor to suffer for Jesus. We see from this that the message Peter and James had sent in a letter to these churches about the requirements for the Gentiles was not all they had done. They had also sent Judas and Silas to verify & witness to the people of their experiences. Are you willing to suffer for the cause of Christ? How much do you REALLY love Him?



December 16, 2020

(Acts 15:28-29) *"For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."*

The apostles were guided in their setting of doctrine by the Holy Ghost. These rules of doctrine are really a furtherance of what Jesus said when He was asked what commandments were important: Matt. 22:37-40, "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." If we love God with all our heart, we will not have idols. If we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will not commit sin. The doctrine of Jesus Christ and the doctrine the Holy Ghost gave the leaders is the same.



December 17, 2020

(Acts 15:30-32) *"So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them."*

An epistle is a written letter or message. This message was given to the entire church (*followers of Jesus*) so that there would be no question about the doctrine of the church. The word, "consolation" means comfort. They were all very pleased and comforted to have this settled so that they would no longer be questioning whether they were doing the right thing or not. Judas and Silas are identified as "being prophets," which shows by what authority they were able to preach the Word of God to the people. The statement about the "*many words*" probably means that they preached more than this one time.



December 18, 2020

(Acts 15:33-35) *"And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still. Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also."*

This sounds like a Holy Ghost revival of the believers! It went on and on because they were all being refreshed in the Lord. They finally let them go back to their evangelistic work. The other church leaders went back to Jerusalem or to their mission fields, but Silas decided to stay here and minister in Antioch. It seemed like Antioch was a place for the apostles and believers to go preach and also get built up before going out in the field. There is strength in groups of believers. One of the problems with pastors is that they are constantly giving out to others, and never going back and getting refreshed themselves. This meeting at Antioch at this time, seemed to be for the building up of the apostles (*ministers*). We all need to be refreshed in the Lord!



December 19, 2020

(Acts 15:36) *"And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do."*

Paul and Barnabas had started churches all over Asia Minor. Sometimes, they found themselves in the middle of all kinds of false religions. Paul wanted to go back to each one of them individually to make sure that they were still worshipping the way he and Barnabas had started them out. He not only wanted to check up on them, but to encourage them in the Lord, as well. They were probably under heavy persecution from the idolatrous people around them and from the strict Jewish people, as well. So, it was time for a checkup. Sometimes, we need to perform a checkup of our own life. Do we still have that "new Christian" attitude? Do we hunger to learn more about the Bible and about our Savior? If not—why not?



December 20, 2020

(Acts 15:37-39) *"And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;"*

The "John" this verse is speaking of is not John who wrote the Book of John and was James' brother, but was Mark the writer of the Gospel of Mark. Mark and Barnabas were related thru Mark's mother—Colossians 4:10. Blood is a little stronger than friendship in this case. Their argument seemed to be over Mark. Cyprus was the home of Barnabas and was also the place Barnabas & Paul had started an early church. Maybe Barnabas took Mark and went home. There is no evidence of why they split up, but it looks like two great friends were separated over a third party. Try to solve out any differences!



December 21, 2020

(Acts 15:40-41) *"And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches."*

It appears that Silas had been a successful disciple himself, and the leaders of their group recommended Silas to Paul as someone who would do a good job as helper to Paul. So he took Silas as his new partner. It is interesting that they went out two at a time, as the Lord had sent them when He was on earth. Maybe it has to do with the Scripture, *"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven,"* Matthew 18:19. Paul went back to the same churches he and Barnabas had started and checked on how they were doing. He may have preached and taught that they were not under the Mosaic law, but under the grace of Jesus Christ. Thank GOD, we are UNDER GRACE!



December 22, 2020

(Acts 16:1) *"Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:"*

It appears that Timothy and his mother, Eunice, had been early converts of Paul. Eunice was a Jewess, but she had received Christ. 2 Timothy 1:5 tells us that Timothy's mother and grandmother were believers in Christ, even before Timothy was: *"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."* Paul was acquainted with all three, Lois, Eunice and Timothy. He even calls Timothy his son. Timothy was not his physical son, but his son in that Paul had led him to Christ, 2 Timothy 1:2 *"To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."* We also see an interfaith marriage between Timothy's mother and father because she was a Jew and he was a Greek.



December 23, 2020

(Acts 16:2-3) *"Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek."*

The name, "Timothy" means "venerating" God or respecting God. It seems that since Paul's last visit, Timothy had been ministering and visiting other churches than his home churches because he was highly spoken of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. He had been taught the Jewish law by his mother and had been told of the Messiah as well. Paul does this circumcision of Timothy because Timothy's father was a Greek, and the Jews will not accept him unless he has been circumcised. This seems to be a terrible contradiction to Paul's fight against the Gentiles being circumcised. Paul had said he must be all things to all people, that by all means he might save some. (1 Corinthians 9:11) Win the lost at any cost!



December 24, 2020

(Acts 16:4-5) *"And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."*

Paul and Timothy are teaching the doctrine of Christians, which in a capsule is this... "Love God and worship Him alone and love your neighbor as yourself." The faith they were established in was faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and faith that Jesus Christ rose from the grave. Romans 10:9-10 explains perfectly about this faith that we must have. Notice how the churches were established (in faith). They must have had daily preaching, because people were saved every day. The Bible says by the foolishness of preaching men believe and are saved, I Cor.1:21 *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."* PREACHING IS NECESSARY!"



December 25, 2020

(Acts 16:6-9) *"Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."*

The Holy Ghost was leading Paul and telling him where to go and where not to go. We see here the Holy Spirit of God checking them from going into Bithynia. So many times we run ahead of God and go places God would not have us go. We should be like Paul and let the Holy Spirit lead us to a fertile place to minister. Troas is in Asia, and Paul had his vision here. Macedonia is a country lying north of Greece. It seems that Paul heeds this vision and goes to Macedonia. Listen to God!



December 26, 2020

(Acts 16:10-12) *"And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days."*

One really admirable trait that Paul had was that when God called him to do something, he did not hesitate but immediately answered the call. Paul immediately goes to Macedonia and begins to preach the good news of the Gospel to them. Paul went to the main city of Macedonia. We were not told any of the details of the vision he had in Troas, but we can assume the Holy Spirit told him to come to Philippi. He passed other cities and made it to Philippi, so it appears that it was this specific city he was told to come to. Do what GOD wants!



December 27, 2020

(Acts 16:13) *"And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither."*

There are several things we must pay attention to in this short verse. These people were Jewish, because they observed sabbath. We know that Luke was with Paul here because he says "we", and Luke is the penman. It is rather interesting that Paul is not speaking in the synagogue but on a river bank. It is also interesting that his first ministry here in Philippi is to the women. This has to be the working of the Holy Spirit. We will find later in Philippians 4:3 that the church in Philippi has two women ministering in the church and Paul tells the church to be supportive of them. Philippians 4:3 *"And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life."* WE MUST WORK TOGETHER!



December 28, 2020

(Acts 16:14-15) *"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."*

It appears that the Holy Spirit sent Paul and the others to minister to Lydia and to start a church here in her home. Lydia worshipped God before Paul came, but after hearing the gospel message, received it with gladness in her heart. We are not told who Lydia's household was. She may have been a widow. We are told she was a seller of purple for a living. She did as Paul had preached, and was baptized and her household was baptized, also. She insisted on Paul and his helpers coming and staying in her house, if they deemed her worthy. Like Lydia, we should contend each day to be more faithful!



December 29, 2020

(Acts 16:16-17) *"And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation."*

Soothsayers or fortunetellers pretend to be able to tell the future. The so-called power that they do have comes from Satan and not God. This girl could be compared to modern day palm readers. They make a living doing this by preying on people who are not certain about their lives and do not have a relationship with God. The whole thing is demonic. Paul does not need a demon-possessed woman following around after him proclaiming to know the way to salvation. Her message is true, but it's coming from an unclean vessel. He does not want people to think she is with him. He guarded his testimony!



December 30, 2020

(Acts 16:18-19) *"And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,"*

Paul took all he could take! Her continuous crying out finally began to disturb Paul, and he commanded the evil spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus Christ, and it did. Those who took Paul and Silas to be tried were the men making a living from this girl. Paul had stripped them of their future profits and they could no longer exploit her. 2 Corinthians 6:14b-16a *"...for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God..."* *"...Touch not the unclean thing!"*
