

The Book of Acts: My Notes on Chapters 11-15

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Contents:

Introduction	Chapter 11	Chapter 12	Chapter 13	Chapter 14	Chapter 15
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Introduction

As indicated in the title, these are my notes and thoughts on my personal studies in the Book of Acts, although this would be commonly called a "commentary." I have warned Christians about the dangers of commentaries, and I would consider my notes no different; meaning that Christians ought to approach my notes with the same caution as they would approach any commentary. Knowing the great offenses against God I have committed in my life, and knowing that the salvation of my soul and the fact that I am still alive today is by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, I am unworthy of being in a position to complete such a project as this, but Christ's commandments to His born-again remnant are clear that His elect are to teach His doctrine to those who will hear.

[Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.](#)

-Matthew 28:19-20

And that He will give us the knowledge of His Word through the anointing Spirit of God:

[But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.](#)

-1 John 2:27

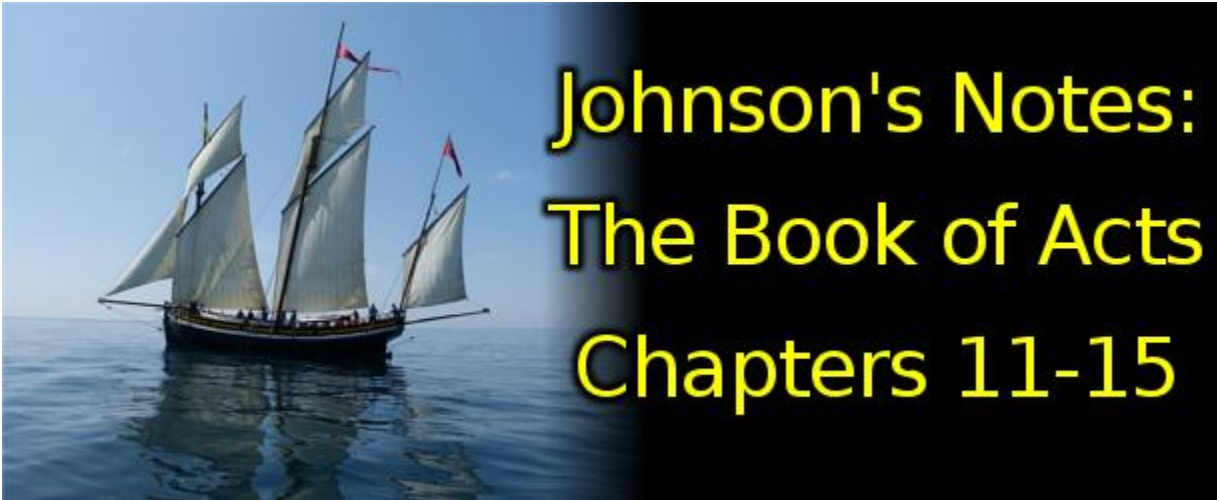
That being said, my notes are written through my analysis of the King James Bible, the preserved Word of God, and I will not be relying on worldly sources that nearly all commentators commonly use. I will not be relying on so-called "early church fathers" because most of them were pagan philosophers that helped pave the way for the corrupt Catholic Church, I will not be relying on the so-called "Septuagint" since there is no evidence it ever existed, nor will I be relying on lexicons and concordances, which (of those in common English use today) were authored by men who did not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that the Bible is mostly understandable on its own, if one has been **born again through repentance and faith**, and through **prayer** and **fasting**, has been given the gift of understanding and discernment through the Holy Spirit.

If you would like more information on these topics, I recommend the following resources here at creationliberty.com:

1. **Why I Use The King James Bible**: This will provide information about where bible versions come from, why the KJB stands far above them all, and why the KJB is not "outdated" as is often claimed by scoffers. (i.e. It's written for modern English use.)
2. **Dangers of Using Lexicons and Concordances**: This will provide information about the many problems with Greek-English lexicons, and the hidden truth about the men who authored them. (i.e. They denied Christ in their writings.)
3. **The 'Original Greek' Scam**: This will explain the dangers and huge errors of the "scholars" who try to interpret the Bible by "the original Greek."
4. **Is the Greek Septuagint Real?**: This will give more details on the non-existent evidence for the Greek Septuagint (LXX), and why the existence of such a document would defy historical and cultural reasoning.

There is only one outside source I will occasionally use to help clarify some definitions of words, and that is Noah Webster's 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language*. Although I do not hold Webster to an equivalent of God's Word, he did base his definitions primarily on the context of the King James Bible, and based on my own studies in the Word of God, I have found his definitions to be contextually accurate in most cases. The definitions of words I am using, however, are still based on the context of the Word of God alone, and if I select a definition out of Webster's Dictionary, I am analyzing the context of the verses to gain an understanding of the correct definition. (i.e. I'm double-checking Webster to the Bible in every instance I use his dictionary.)

The Book of Acts of the Apostles (or Acts for short) was written by Luke as a treatise of eye-witness testimony, and sent to a man who held a station of unknown governmental office. It documents Christ's ascension to heaven, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit to those of the faith as a sign to the Jews, the miracles performed by Christ's disciples, the suffering, persecution, and death of those who preached Christ openly, and some of the operations of the church in the early days.



— Chapter 11 —

[v1] And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

Judea was the central part of Israel surrounding Jerusalem, and there was more Gentile (i.e. heathen, pagan, idolatrous) activity on the borders of Israel; north, south, and east. There were apostles and brethren that were sharing the Gospel with the Gentiles in these areas, and they sent word to the apostles and brethren that were working to share the Gospel with the Jews in Judea.

[v2] And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

Not the circumcised Jews in general, but those who were circumcised in their Jewish heritage and were also born again in Christ, and had received the gift of the Holy Spirit alongside Peter.

[v3] Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

In the previous chapter, the Lord God had commanded Peter to go and preach unto the Gentiles. It was God's instruction that they begin preaching in Jerusalem to send this message to the Jews first, then once that had been done, they were to spread out to the Gentiles. (Rom 1:16)

[v4] But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,

rehearse (v): to narrate or recount events

expound (v): to explain, to lay open

(See 'rehearse' & 'expound', *American Dictionary of the English Language*, Noah Webster, 1828, retrieved Jan 4, 2018, [webstersdictionary1828.com])

These words sometimes have different meanings depending on the context, but in the context of this passage, this is what they mean. Peter was retelling the account of events, and also opening to them the meaning of what he saw and heard in the order which they happened.

[v5] I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

(See Acts 10:9-11)

[v6] Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

(See Acts 10:12; also read Johnson's Notes on Acts 10 for more details.)

[v7] And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

(See Acts 10:13)

[v8] But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

(See Acts 10:14)

[v9] But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

(See Acts 10:15)

[v10] And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

(See Acts 10:16)

[v11] And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.

(See Acts 10:19-21)

[v12] And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

(See Acts 10:23)

[v13] And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

(See Acts 10:3-5)

[v14] Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

(See Acts 10:6)

[v15] And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

(See Acts 10:44)

[v16] Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

(See Acts 10:47-48)

[v17] Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

Peter realized that it didn't matter what he believed, nor what he was taught to believe by those who instructed him as a boy; what mattered was the instruction of the Christian God of the Bible. When I was still trying to get started in ministry and teaching, I had a man help me, and he warned me that the greatest hindrance I would have to teaching the truth of God's Word would come from those within the church. I did not understand what he meant at the time, but years later, I understood fully what he meant. Most often, it is those within the church, who have little understanding, that seek to stop the good works you are doing, just as the circumcised men were trying to hinder Peter from doing what God had instructed, but he corrected and instructed them just as God had corrected and instructed him. (Sadly, today, most churchgoers reject that instruction and correction. [Pro 15:10](#))

[v18] When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Peter instructed them in meekness, and God gave the circumcised Christians repentance to acknowledge the truth. ([2Ti 2:25](#)) They also acknowledged that the doctrine of repentance was part of the doctrine of salvation; that the Gentiles would receive life through repentance (i.e. grief and godly sorrow of wrongdoing) and faith in the blood of Christ. They rejoiced because before Christ, one would need to join Jewish society to come to the Living God, but now His grace is going throughout the world unto all the heathen nations to those who will humble themselves to repentance and believe in the Son of God.

(Read "Is Repentance Part of Salvation?" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v19] Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

The Christians were scattered because the chief priests and elders went on the hunt for any who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, not only those who worked with Stephen to feed the widows, but any who operated in that area. So they moved to different locations and gave testimony of what they saw, but again, they only preached to the Jews because they had not heard this testimony from Peter.

[v20] And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

The Grecians in this context were those Jews who were born and/or raised in Greece.

[v21] And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

They had heard of the miracles, especially on the Day of Pentecost, and believed those who preached Christ unto them.

[v22] Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

Barnabas was from Cyprus ([Acts 4:36](#)), so it was fitting for him to go preach to the Grecians because he understood their lives and customs.

[v23] Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

He encouraged them to cling to the Word of God, as they had been humbled by His grace.

[v24] For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

Though the Bible tells us that none do good and there are none righteous ([Rom 3:10-12](#)), a good man can exist through the righteousness of God. Though the flesh dies by sin, a man can do good works by the Spirit of God working through him. ([Jms 2:18](#))

[v25] Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

Saul (Paul) was sent to Tarsus in hiding because the Grecians looked to slay him for speaking out boldly in the name of Christ. ([Acts 9:29-30](#))

[v26] And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Over the years, I've heard many people who refuse to call themselves Christians because the term "Christian" has been corrupted by so many cults; however, we need to consider that cults were around during these days as well. There were many who were corrupting the church, which is why the apostles were warning Christians about them. There will always be corruption, and Christ even told us there would be false prophets and preachers in many places ([Mat 7:15](#)), but we ought to cleave to God, as Barnabas said in verse 23.

A "Christ-ian" is someone who is "Christ-like," or someone who keeps the doctrines and commandments of Christ close to their hearts. The Lord Jesus Christ did not tell us that we would know them if they were called "Christians," but rather, He told us we would know them by their fruits ([Mat 7:20](#)), which means we would know them by the doctrine they teach and believe, their words, attitudes, and actions; just as we cannot know if a piece of fruit is good until we inspect it thoroughly. Thus, when one says they are a "Christian," but have a careless attitude towards the Word of God, and does not understand nor follow after the commandments and doctrines of Christ, then we can conclude they are liars and do not have the Spirit of God in them. ([1Jo 2:4](#))

[v27] And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

The term "prophet" in this context would mean those who received the Word directly from the Lord God to foretell future events.

[v28] And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

The word "dearth" means scarcity or lack of that which is needed, and that typically refers to a famine in Scripture. Claudius Caesar reigned from 41-54 AD, and during his reign, a massive famine swept across the land and many people died.

[v29] Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

There was not enough among the governments to feed the people, and so there would not have been a great excess in the church either, but for those Christians suffering in Judaea, supplies were sent to help provide for their needs.

[v30] Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Saul (Paul) and Barnabas delivered the supplies personally.

— Chapter 12 —

[v1] Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

This was not the same Herod that tried to kill Christ as a child, nor the Herod who beheaded John the Baptist; this was Herod Agrippa. In this context, vex means to persecute and afflict those in the church, and he did so because he hated Christ and His doctrine.

[v2] And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

James and John were Zebedee's children referred to in [Matthew 20:20](#).

[v3] And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

The majority of Jews hated Christ and His doctrine, and so they definitely hated the Christians because they preached the truth to the Jews, namely that they had crucified the Son of God, so they would obviously be pleased when any well-known figure within the church would be jailed and executed. The Scripture also makes a very important note that when Peter was taken prisoner, it was during the days of unleavened bread, which was the week following Passover, and that is key to understand the next verse.

[v4] And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

A quaternion is a group of four soldiers, so he put 16 guards in charge of keeping Peter, a harmless Christian, who did nothing more than preach Christ and heal the poor and needy. The excessive amount of soldiers was not because Peter was a threat, but because he was a prisoner of high political value, and word would have traveled of apostles just up and walking out of prisons because the Lord God freed them, so extra security measures were taken to ensure that Peter would be executed at Herod's appointed time.

The new-age bible version translators and defenders insist that "Easter" is a mistranslation in this verse, and that it should read "Passover," but they are in error. The King James Bible is the only one that has it correctly translated as "Easter." The argument they use is that the Greek word "pascha" is used, and that "pascha" means "passover," but again, the error is that the new-age "scholars" do not translate by the context.

If you go to Greece, and ask them what word they use for "passover," they'll say "pascha," but if you go Greece and ask them what word they use for "Easter," they'll also say "pascha." The word "pascha" refers to more than one celebration, but we have to go to the context of Scripture to find which one we are supposed to use, and because it was already the days of unleavened bread, which were the days following Passover ([Exd 12:15](#)), it only makes sense that Herod was waiting for the pagan festival of Ishtar (i.e. Easter) to be over before killing Peter.

(Read "Easter: Christians Celebrating Abomination" here at [creationliberty.com](#) for more details.)

[v5] Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

It was not that they did not trust in the Lord for Peter's safety, but that they deeply cared for Peter as a servant of Christ and of the church; that he had spent so much time bringing the lost to Christ, and feeding and healing the poor and sick.

[v6] And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

For these soldiers, it was their lives on the line to keep Peter in his cell, and so they dedicated themselves to keep close watch over him 24 hours a day.

[v7] And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

The term "smite" generally means to strike, and so the angel would have smacked him firmly on his side to wake him and get him up.

[v8] And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

Peter would have slept in loose clothing, and men would gird themselves by wrapping up their robes around them which would allow for more freedom when moving quickly. Men would lift up the extra cloth around their feet and tie it around their waist, forming something similar to what we know today as shorts.

[v9] And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

Peter followed the angel, but wasn't sure everything he saw was actually happening; he wondered if God was showing him another vision, since the visions God gave him were so real.

[v10] When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

It seems Peter was located in the lowest cells in the prison, but the Lord God hid him from the eyes of all the guards through multiple levels of the jail, and opened the front gate that connected to the city. After walking a block through the city, the angel left his side and he was free.

[v11] And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

Once the angel had left, he knew it was not a vision, but he really walked out of the prison. It would be shocking to anyone, as we can imagine today for a Christian to just get up and walk out of a maximum security prison without anyone noticing.

[v12] And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

These were those who prayed without ceasing for Peter's life and safety.

[v13] And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

A damsel is a young woman, and Rhoda means "rose."

[v14] And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

This was likely an emotional over-reaction, forgetting formal courtesy due to her shock because the man they prayed for stood before her.

[v15] And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

I believe we all struggle at times to believe when God answers a prayer in affirmation because we as Christians so often pray for His will to be done. His will does not always align with our own, and we do not pray for our will, but His alone. (Mat 26:39) He does sometimes give us what we ask for, and God gave them what they asked because it was in alignment with His will, but they refused to believe that Peter just walked out of a maximum security prison when he was doomed to die.

[v16] But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

Rhoda disappeared without a word, so he continued to knock, waiting for someone to at least acknowledge his presence. Astonished means they were surprised; struggling with believing what they saw.

[v17] But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

Peter referred to another James, not the son of Zebedee.

[v18] Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

Meaning that this was huge news among the soldiers, but the news probably did not go out into the public and was kept in strict confidence among the guards because such an error would be an embarrassment to Herod's governing abilities in the eyes of the people. However, one way or another, the people would find out because Herod had already gained fame for jailing Peter, and had promised to execute him.

[v19] And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode.

Death was the price a soldier would pay for letting a captive man escape, and it was a political move, since the fault of blame can be shifted from Herod onto the guards. Herod then left Judea, which would have saved him some embarrassment or obligation of explanation for Peter's unexplainable escape, and went to Caesarea, which was about 75 miles away.

[v20] And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country.

My understanding is that chamberlains had access to the King's bedchamber, which was held as a sacred place, and that the current Roman Emperor used his chamberlains as the highest ranking officers, meaning that if one made friends with the Emperor's chamberlain, it was like having a friendship with the Emperor himself. Blastus was one of the Emperor's chamberlains, and it appears that Herod was a friend to Blastus.

Herod must have had some cause for anger against Tyre and Sidon, the coastal trade cities, and he sought to go to war against them. In order to avoid this, ambassadors from both cities, who had also made friends with Blastus, came to Herod to negotiate peace between their nations, knowing that if they were all friends of Blastus, attacking one another would upset the chamberlain, and therefore, may upset the Emperor of Rome.

[v21] And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

Herod prepared an official speech for the ambassadors and the people.

[v22] And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

When Herod finished his speech, the people began to worship him as if he were a god.

[v23] And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

As a ruler over the Jews, Herod knew better than to allow the people to worship him, but he was wicked in his heart because not only did he profane the holiness of God by allowing himself to be worshipped in God's place, but that he was ready and willing to kill God's servants (like Peter and James) to appease the masses. I can only imagine the frightening horror of the scene in which the Lord God caused worms to manifest and consume Herod while he sat upon his throne of offense and in his royal garbs of vanity.

[v24] But the word of God grew and multiplied.

It did not matter how many men whipped, tortured, and executed Christians, the Word of God cannot be stopped by mankind nor devils.

[v25] And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Saul (Paul) and Barnabas finished delivering supplies for the Christians in need during the famine, and when they returned, John came with them. This John was the son of Mary, the name of the woman whose house the Christians prayed in verse 12; where Peter knocked at the gates.

— Chapter 13 —

[v1] Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

These Christians gathered together with the church in which they were first called Christians. The words "prophet" and "teacher" are separated by category in this verse, which means prophet is being used in the specific meaning of ones who would foretell future events.

[v2] As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

The Holy Ghost, who is God, called for Saul and Barnabas to be separated from the brethren so they could go out and spread the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles.

[v3] And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

This was not a laying on hands of ordainment, but a Jewish custom of wishing blessings upon a one who set out to travel. The fasting and prayer is something that is rarely done in church buildings today, and if it is claimed to be done, it is often done under false pretenses, not as the Bible instructs, but the early church did this often, not as a work of righteousness, but one of humility, taking great care for the church.

(Read "The Biblical Understanding of Fasting" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v4] So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Seleucia was a city in Syria where they could set sail to Cyprus, Barnabas's home country. ([Acts 4:36](#))

[v5] And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

While they worked to bring the truth to the Jews, John provided their daily necessities, like housing, food, etc.

[v6] And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:

This indicates they had preached their way across the diameter of the country of Cyprus, and when they reached the end, they met a Jewish man who practiced sorcery while feigning to be a prophet of God.

[v7] Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

Barjesus aligned himself with governing authority, and when governing authority mixes with false preachers, there is always trouble. However, Paulus was a prudent man; meaning that he was cautious not to trust everything he heard, and hear the matter directly.

[v8] But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

Elymas is a Hebrew interpretation of the name "Barjesus," which would roughly mean "son of salvation." His goal was to convince the governing authorities that Saul (Paul) and Barnabas were false prophets, so that he himself would not be exposed as a fraud.

[v9] Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

There is no hiding from the Holy Ghost, who is God.

[v10] And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

Elymas's first problem is that he did not believe that these two apostles served the Living God. He thought he could deceive others in the presence of the Holy Spirit and get away with it, which makes him foolish at best, but the Holy Ghost spoke the truth of Elymas's heart; that he was an enemy of all that is righteous.

[v11] And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

The Lord God showed this wicked man great mercy because the last two people to lie in the presence of the Holy Spirit of God were killed on the spot. ([Acts 5:1-11](#)) This time frame was likely a few months, and Elymas would require others to care for him until God gave him his sight back; this would be a humbling experience, would stop his practice of sorcery, and would force Elymas to stop and think about his sin.

[v12] Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Although he may have been surprised at the miracle of blinding the sorcerer, notice that it was the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ that he was surprised with. The humility of his heart can be seen in his marveling at the doctrine, rather than the miracles.

[v13] Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

Later, in chapter 15, this event would cause Paul and Barnabas to have a heated argument, and they would end up going two separate directions. Based on later verses, it seems that John had left their company and his duties early of his own accord, without first helping them to finish their work. He may have left in fear, he may have been homesick, or he may have decided that Cyprus was as far as he needed to help them; the Scripture does not tell us the reasons, so we can only speculate.

[v14] But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

Many Jews would be gathered together in this place on this day at this time, and it was the Holy Spirit that led them to this spot, so that all would hear the Word of God.

[v15] And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

Reading from the law and prophets was a tradition done every sabbath day, and is still practiced to this day in Jewish synagogues. Exhortation would be either a word of encouragement unto faith, or a word of instruction and caution unto repentance.

[v16] Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

Paul is not saying that there were men of Israel in the congregation that did not fear God, but rather, he was addressing both Jews and Gentiles, as there were some Gentiles who feared God and gathered with the Jews to hear the Word.

[v17] The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

(See Gen 15:13)

[v18] And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

(See Exd 16:35)

[v19] And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

These were the Canannites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, and Girgashites. The Lord God did not completely wipe them out because we can see that they continued to be a nuisance to Israel, but the Lord God had destroyed so much of their civilization, they were never able to fully recover the status they once had, and their lands were divided among the tribes of Israel. (Jos 14:1-3) The word "destroy" can be used in a variety of contexts, so we have to make sure we understand what the Old Testament documented on this matter to understand what is meant by "destroy," as there are some who would claim contradiction in this passage, but they do so in their willful ignorance. (2Pe 3:5-6)

[v20] And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

These were Othniel (Jdg 1:13), Ehud (Jdg 3:15), Deborah (Jdg 4:4), Gideon (Jdg 8:28), Abimelech (Jdg 9:16), Tola (Jdg 10:1), Jair (Jdg 10:3), Jephthah (Jdg 12:7), Ibzan (Jdg 12:8), Elon (Jdg 12:11), Abdon (Jdg 12:13), Samson (Jdg 13:24), and Eli (1Sa 1).

[v21] And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

God warned the Jews that they should not desire to have a king like the Gentiles had, but rather they should live in liberty as He instructed. He warned them that the king would take everything from them, but they demanded a king nonetheless, and God gave them Saul, which was the beginning of many troubles for them. (1Sa 8)

[v22] And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

(See 1Sa 15:23, Psa 89:20)

[v23] Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

(See 2Sa 7:12)

[v24] When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

(See Mark 1:4)

[v25] And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.

(See Mark 1:7)

[v26] Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

Not just to the bloodline of Abraham, but to all those who fear God and repent, the Lord Jesus Christ has brought salvation to them all. (Heb 10:10)

[v27] For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

The Scripture has said how the Messiah would be treated, and their rejection and crucifixion of Him demonstrates the Word of God is truth.

[v28] And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

(See Mat 27:23-25)

[v29] And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

(See Mat 27:58-60)

[v30] But God raised him from the dead:

As Jesus said He would do, because He is God. ([John 2:19-21](#))

[v31] And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

(See [Mat 28:16-17](#))

[v32] And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

The promises God made to the children of Israel ([Gen 26:4](#)) were fulfilled through Christ. Jesus was born through the seed of David, and because of the shedding of His blood for the remission of sins, both Jew and Gentile can be saved.

[v33] God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

(See [Psa 2:7](#))

[v34] And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

The name "David" is sometimes used metaphorically to represent the Son of God because not only was there a connection of the bloodline, but also that the name of God's Son had not been revealed to them yet. For example, in [Jeremiah 30:9](#), it says God would raise up "David their king," but this is not referring to the person of David; rather, it is metaphorical reference to the Lamb of God, who we now know to be the name of Jesus Christ.

Many times throughout the Gospels, Christ was referred to as the "Son of David," ([Mat 12:23](#)) which means the Jews generally understood this concept. However, it was the chief priests and Pharisees, who would not believe on Christ, that questioned him being the actual David reborn, and that's why Christ rebuked them in their willful ignorance. ([Mat 22:41-46](#))

Though David saw corruption, meaning that his body decayed and rotted after his death, Christ saw no corruption, in that His body did not decay and rot.

[v35] Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

(See [Psa 16:10](#))

[v36] For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

David had broken all of the commandments of God, as Nathaniel told him in rebuke ([2Sa 12:1-7](#)), and David needed a savior just like everyone else. Thus, it was not David who was God's Holy One, but rather, it was Christ.

[v37] But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

(See [Psa 16:10](#))

[v38] Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

(See [Eph 1:7](#))

[v39] And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Even Abraham was justified by his faith, which produced his works. It is not works that save, but it is through the faith of the humbled and repentant heart that God grants His grace, and that results in the evidence of works. ([Rom 4:2-4](#))

[v40] Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;

These are the curses that came upon the children of Israel for their rejection of God's Word.

[v41] Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

This is referring to [Habakkuk 1:5](#), in which God told the Jews that He would bring to them the wonders and signs, but they would not believe them. He gave them these signs out of the wonderful kindness and charity that God brings to mankind, but He also told them that men who seek after such signs are wicked and adulterous in their hearts. ([Mat 16:4](#))

[v42] And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

Though many of the Jews did not want to believe, the Gentiles were desperately seeking this doctrine of salvation.

[v43] Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

A proselyte is one who is converted to a religious teaching, or in other words, there were Jews and Gentiles who followed them; though it does not say if they were all believers in the doctrine they taught. There may have been some who believed, and others who wanted to hear more and sought a reason to accuse them. This was not a group persuading Paul and Barnabas to continue teaching grace, but rather, Paul and Barnabas persuaded the group to continue teaching them the doctrines of the grace of God; not looking unto works for salvation.

[v44] And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

Paul and Barnabas stayed another week, teaching the new Christians, and word got out about the amazing doctrine they taught, so a larger number of people came next week to hear it.

[v45] But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

It's not that they wanted to correct error, or "protect the church," as we often hear such excuses today, but rather, they were jealous of the attention these men received from the people. These wicked men were like Diotrephes, who John wrote the church in warning, who loved "to have the preeminence among them," ([3Jo 1:9](#)) meaning they loved the honor and distinguished respect they get from having a fancy title and lofty position.

[v46] 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.

This is the same doctrine that God had instructed Peter to teach in previous chapters. Christ had taught that the kingdom of God, which is the church, shall be taken from the Jews, and given to the Gentiles who would produce fruit. ([Mat 21:43](#))

[v47] 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.

Christ had instructed them to do this before He ascended to heaven. ([Mat 29:19](#), [Mark 16:15](#), [Luke 24:47](#))

[v48] 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.

They were so happy that the Lord God's mercy stretched out to them, that they could have eternal life through Christ. It is the pridefulness of the Jews that God rejects, but He gives grace to the humbleness of the Gentiles; not to say that all Jews are prideful or all Gentiles are humble, but that God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. ([Jms 4:6](#)) The glorifying of God's Word demonstrates their belief, not to say that they believed because they were ordained (appointed to) eternal life, but the two go hand-in-hand, that justification is given to us by faith, and therefore, we are established with eternal life in Christ, which also means that those who are ordained to eternal life believe.

[v49] And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

This would be all of Cyprus and surrounding areas.

[v50] 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.

This is to be expected when we teach the truth of God's Word. Churchgoers typically have no understanding of this because they think "Christianity" is sitting in a pew for an hour once a week and having an occasional bake sale, but the fact is that those same churchgoers often react in furious anger, just as the Jews did, when the truth of the Word is actually presented to them, their pastors, and their elders. If we're not being generally rejected and persecuted, then we're teaching something wrong. (2Ti 3:12)

The "*devout and honorable women*" would have been those who were the wives of nobles and rulers, who would have been easier to bring to a discontented state than the men. (2Ti 3:5-7) They used the women to help stir up their husbands, and thereby also stirring up the people.

[v51] But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

Shaking the dust off one's feet was a Jewish tradition that represented sanctification, or in other words, they separated themselves from that location because the majority of people were rejecting the doctrine of the Christian God of the Bible. This was a commandment Christ gave to us (Mat 10:14), but sadly I've seen many Christians waste their time (Col 4:5-6) trying to debate with churchgoers who don't want to hear God's Word. (Mat 7:6)

[v52] And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

This is just as Christ taught, that we ought to rejoice when such churchgoers revile us, persecute us, and speak evil against us for the sake of Christ. (Mat 5:11-12) We need to understand that it was the synagogues, the church buildings of that day, in which the Gospel of Christ was being rejected, and that same attitude is still found in most church buildings to this day; as the Bible tells us, there is nothing new under the sun, and the things they have done of old time, are still the things they do to this day. (Ecc 1:9)

— Chapter 14 —

[v1] 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.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium, which was a city within Lycaonia, which is in the country of Turkey today, north of the Tarsus Mountains. There was trouble with the Jews in Cyprus, but it seems in other regions, being more separated from Israel, more Jews wanted to hear the truth of the Gospel of Christ fulfilling the prophecy.

I believe this is also part of the deception of the new-age "Revivalism" movement, in which they believe that large masses of people will be saved in the latter days, when the Bible teaches the opposite will happen in the latter days. (2Th 2:3) Great multitudes were saved in the early days of the church because it was new, and the people were ready for it, having knowledge of the prophets of the Old Testament, the foretelling of Christ's arrival; however, we are not living in that day, and in most instances, large groups of people will not be saved, rather, it will be individuals who have come to repentance. (Read "Revivalism: The Devil's Design" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v2] But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

This still happens to this day, even among Gentiles. When we Christians preach the truth of the Word to the church buildings (the synagogues), most of the time, they reject it, and the pastors/elders, just like the Jews in that day, cast out our names as evil and teach men to hate us. (Mat 10:22) The Bible tells us that this type of situation is standard, and that we should not marvel (i.e. be surprised) when it happens (1Jo 3:13), because they did the same thing to the Old Testament prophets who came before us. (Mat 5:12)

[v3] 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.

At this time in the infancy of the church, the Lord God allowed them to prove their doctrine through the miracles of healing and raising the dead.

[v4] But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

The source of unbelief was mostly coming from the Jews, who worked to convince the Gentiles that the apostles' doctrine and miracles were not legitimate, but despite their best effort, the Spirit of God moves upon the humble of heart. (Jms 4:6)

[v5] 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,

The same demonic spirit fell upon these wicked people as they did against Jesus Christ, looking to kill the innocent because they had no love of the truth. (2Th 2:10)

[v6] They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

Once things got too heated, and they would not hear the Word, they continued to shake the dust off their feet (i.e. sanctify themselves) and move to a new area where people would be willing to hear. Today, I've seen far too many people who waste extraordinary amounts of time with people who don't want to listen, when we should be wise and spend our time with those who want to hear.

[v7] And there they preached the gospel.

Openly, not having to fear for their lives.

[v8] And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

Impotent means weak or feeble, meaning that his feet were deformed from birth and could not walk.

[v9] The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

Only those with great faith in Christ could be healed by the apostles, which is why we only see healing for the poor and needy, and not healing for those in lofty station that puff themselves up against Christ.

[v10] Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

This isn't some parlor trick that we typically see today with so-called "faith healers," but rather, his feet were healed instantly. We also need to consider that this man had never walked in his whole life, which would mean the rest of his legs had atrophy, which is a condition in which the muscles would have to go through many months of therapy to work properly, rebuilding the muscle tissue to be strong enough to walk upright, but all these things were healed in an instant, where God not only provided the health of the flesh, but also gave him the knowledge and mental functions necessary for walking, whereas otherwise, he would normally need to spend months, if not years, learning how to walk.

[v11] 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.

Being Gentiles, they believed in the pagan gods and goddesses of the witches, and though many people think such beliefs are rarely believed today, there are a surprising number of people who are still pagans, and share pagan beliefs. Even the Catholic Church's foundation is built upon paganism, and billions believe in their lies.

(Read "Corruptions of Christianity: Catholicism" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v12] And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

Jupiter was a god held in high esteem, but they called Paul Mercury because, at that time in Roman history, the god Mercury had the same aspects as the Greek god Hermes, which was worshiped by heathen as a messenger god.

[v13] 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 was standard operating procedure for pagans, as even Marcus Aurelius himself, a former emperor of Rome, sacrificed animals at the temple of Jupiter.

(See Victor Duruy, *History of Rome and the Roman People: From Its Origin to the Establishment of the Christian Empire*, Vol. 5, Issue #1, K. Paul Trench & Company, 1885, p. 225, [Princeton University])

[v14] Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

They rent their clothes in grief and fear of the Living God, knowing their own salvation in their worthless state, as all Christians have been born again, knowing full well that we are not gods, but lowly men who need the Lamb of God's blood on our accounts. They desperately yelled out to the people to stop, fearing God's wrath on their wicked sacrifices.

It's important to notice that Paul and Barnabas did *NOT* tell the people to alter their ritual to make it more pleasing to Jesus, but rather, they told them to stop completely. Once again, this shows us that God does not accept the traditions of the pagans in any shape or form, nor did the early church teach any such tradition.

(Read "Christmas: The Rejection of Jesus," "Easter: Christians Celebrating Abomination," & "Halloween: Are Christians Lovers of Death?" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v15] 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:

We ought to worship and serve the Living God, and Him alone. (Luke 4:8) There is no reason to worship men, though many men loved to be worshipped, especially in positions of religious institutions.

(Read "Respecting Persons is Sin" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v16] Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

For about 400 years before Christ, God remained silent, sending no prophets to Israel; being longsuffering with them that they should repent. The Jews foolishly chose to believe that their wicked pagan deeds were acceptable with God because of His silence, but He warned them about their evil thoughts, that they thought the Christian God of the Bible was like unto themselves in their sin, but God would reprove them. (Psa 50:21) In addition, He suffered the wickedness of the Gentile nations as well, but as Paul explains in Romans, none of them had an excuse to not know of, and believe on, the Christian God of the Bible. (Rom 1:18-20)

[v17] 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.

It is the Lord God who provides, and they explained to the people that the miracles did not come from them, but from the Living God working through them.

[v18] And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

The phrase "scarce restrained" means Paul and Barnabas were barely able to hold the people back from offering sacrifices.

[v19] 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.

The persecution by Jews who hated Christ's doctrine continued, even from previous locations in their travels. Paul later talks somewhat about his experience, in which he was stoned to death, and the Lord God brought him back from the dead to continue the work of teaching the Gospel of Christ. (2Co 11:25, 2Co 12:1-5)

[v20] 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.

Other students of Christ stood over his dead body and mourned the loss of their brother, but while they stood around his dead body, Paul stood up and walked back into town, continuing work with Barnabas.

[v21] And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

Paul was confirmed dead, and now was alive again, so he and Barnabas went right back into the den of lions to convert all who would hear the truth, certainly to the surprise of those who confirmed his death, and exhort the brethren who lived in these cities to be faithful and trust in the Living God of their salvation.

[v22] 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 standard operating procedure American church buildings today is typically to hear a feel-good message and then go out to an all-you-can-eat buffet to fatten themselves, thinking how wonderful it is that no persecution or tribulation befalls them. However, we cannot enter the kingdom of God except through that persecution and tribulation, not that we are saved by works, but the works are the result of our faith (Jms 2:18), and if we have the faith in Christ to rightly teach His Word, we will be hated by most people. It's unavoidable, and that is what it means to bear His cross. (Mat 15:24-25)

[v23] And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Men had to be appointed over the operations of the church in the early days in order to keep everyone aligned to the same doctrine, and for overseeing the charitable works done to help the poor and needy. Those selected would have been the most humble, charitable, and active servants in the work of the ministry; unlike today in America, where churchgoers commonly respect persons, looking for college degrees or political qualifications to appoint elders.

Though fasting is not a requirement in this situation, they cared enough for the church that they fasted in prayer for them. This is rarely, if ever, done in the typical modern-day church buildings.

(Read "The Biblical Understanding of Fasting" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v24] And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

They are retracing their steps. (Acts 13:14)

[v25] And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

This was a city in Pamphylia. (Acts 13:13)

[v26] And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

They returned to Syria, where they started.

[v27] 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.

To 'rehearse' means to reenact, or in this context, to tell the tales of everything God had done during their ministry in this land. This was a powerful testimony and encouragement for the church to continue to preach the Word unto the Gentile nations.

[v28] And there they abode long time with the disciples.

They stayed as long as they could to learn as much as they could and prepare themselves for what they would need to face for sake of Christ.

— Chapter 15 —

[v1] 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.

This was a huge error, and some people to this day still teach such false doctrines, in which they claim that a man cannot have faith and be saved until he first does the works of the law; for example, many cults teach that observing the Sabbath day is still required, and that a man will go to hell when he dies if he does not observe the Sabbath every week. They lack understanding (1Co 2:14) of the doctrine of Christ that He is our Sabbath (Mat 11:28), that in the New Testament, we keep the Sabbath by keeping the commandments of Christ, and that the Sabbath itself is a prophecy that has been fulfilled in Christ. (Col 2:16-17)

(Read "Should Christians Keep the Sabbath?" here at creationliberty.com for more details; If a man wants to observe a day of the week to honor the Lord, there is no wrong in that, but when a man teaches that you *MUST* do it, then he violates Christ's doctrine.)

Another example are the churchgoers who teach that you must practice the Old Testament ordinance of tithe every week, and if you don't, you go to hell for "robbing God," which is a false teaching and practice that's only been around since turn of the 20th century. They do not understand New Testament doctrine, that tithe was used to build up a storehouse in Solomon's temple, and that income was used to support the Levites, but now there is no Levitical priesthood, the temple is the body, and the fulfillment of the law is charity, not tithe.

(Read "Is Tithe a Christian Requirement?" & "The Biblical Understanding of Charity" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

Thankfully, the Lord God put an emphasis on circumcision in Acts, otherwise, we would have a lot more cults making a bloody mess through their traditions because they do not understand the circumcision of the heart (Deu 10:16, Deu 30:6), and that circumcision of males was a mark of the seed of the Messiah through the children of Abraham. Circumcision itself was another prophecy, and it has been fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Read "The Biblical Understanding of Circumcision" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

If one were to be required to be circumcised after the instruction of Moses to be saved, there would be a couple of major problems with Scripture; the first being that it is a work that would be required to do in order to earn salvation, but as we know from other Scripture, salvation cannot be earned by works. (Eph 2:8-9) The other problem is that it would mean only men could be saved, because women were not circumcised under the law of Moses. (Gal 3:28) There are many other New Testament doctrines that are contradicted when men begin to teach such works-based doctrines, but we who are born again should put our faith in Christ, cleaning our hearts inwardly, instead of observing ordinances by which men boast to be seen amongst one another. (Jms 4:7-10)

[v2] 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.

No small dissension and disputation means that they absolutely rejected that false teaching and made sure everyone understood that it contradicted the Scripture. In short, they were firm on the matter and argued strongly against their false doctrine. However, the men from Judea would not accept Paul's and Barnabas's teaching on the matter in full, and wanted to hear what the other apostles would say about it.

[v3] 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.

Paul and Barnabas were kind to the brethren from Judea, being willing to travel for the purpose of settling the matter peacefully (Mat 5:9), and prove what was good according to God. (1Th 5:21) On their way, they took advantage of the opportunity to make sure the word was spread of what the Lord God was doing for the Gentiles.

[v4] 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.

They retold the story of their travels in chapter 14 to the elders and apostles.

[v5] 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 prided themselves in the keeping the law of God, although they didn't actually keep it as they were supposed to, as Christ pointed out that they say and do not. (Mat 23:2-3) For example, they would observe the ordinance of tithe, and pride themselves in it, but lack faith, mercy, and righteous judgment, which is the end of the law. (Mat 23:23) Though they believed on Christ, their first education was still under the ordinances of the law, and they still did not understand Christ's fulfillment of the law.

[v6] And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

This also included many of the members of the church, as indicated in verses 22 and 23. The Bible is not specific as to all who were there, but we know that Peter, James, John, Paul, and Barnabas were all present.

[v7] 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 argument continued back and forth, but it needed to be made clear to all the church, in every region, that the Gospel was to go out to the Gentiles, and that there was no prerequisite to be saved, other than repentance to God and faith in Christ.

(Read "Is Repentance Part of Salvation?" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v8] And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

Thus, the Gentiles received the anointing of the Spirit of God without any need of circumcision. The Lord God looks into the heart, sees the humility of repentance and faith, and gives the gift of His Spirit to them, without a prerequisite of ordinances.

[v9] And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Again, I would reference to the same verse I did earlier in Galatians 3:28, which states that, in the spiritual context, there is no difference between Jew versus Greek, nor high station versus low station, nor male versus female; there are certainly differences in the flesh, and commandments according to those, but in the Spirit of God, we are all one in Jesus Christ.

(Read "Respecting Persons Is Sin" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v10] 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?

The metaphorical yoke described here is one of heavy weight, which is hard to bear, unlike the light yoke of Christ. (Mat 11:30) The Jews had all been circumcised, but the majority of them crucified the Lord of Glory, and would not believe. By the works of the law is no man justified; only by faith in Christ does God justify us and imputes righteousness to us through His blood. (Rom 4:5) Thus, through false doctrine the Pharisees were looking to put a burden on the Gentiles which the Jews themselves could not handle. (Luke 11:46)

[v11] But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

As Paul writes later, Israel could not attain righteousness through the law, and they erred because they did not seek God by faith. (Rom 9:30-33) This became a stumblingblock to them, and it still is to this day, and this is another verse that confirms for us that the Jews today will NOT enter the Kingdom of God without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[v12] 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.

Paul and Barnabas once again told the story to all the church.

[v13] And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

In response to the story of God's miracles and the salvation of many Gentiles, James speaks.

[v14] Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

James is referring to Peter here, as "Simon" and "Simeon" are the same name, but spelled two different ways.

[v15] And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

James then proves this by the prophecy of the Old Testament.

[v16] 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:

The tabernacle of David fell and was raised, and Christ said this was the temple of His body, being killed by the Jews, and then He raised Himself from the dead. ([John 2:19-21](#))

[v17] 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.

The word 'residue' means "that which remains," or in other words, there are some sanctified children of God set apart from the world, and that the Gospel of Christ is to be preached to all men so that all those remaining, who are not of Christ, whether Jew or Greek, might seek God. ([2Pe 3:9](#)) This is from [Amos 9:11-12](#), in which it is specifically written that God will bring the Gospel to "*all the heathen* (i.e. Gentiles), *which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.*" This means that salvation is come unto the Gentiles, that Christ fulfilled the law of Moses, and that His doctrine would spread throughout the world.

[v18] Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

This is not from prophecy from Amos, but rather, James is speaking by inspiration of God. This was a reminder to the church that God has not missed a single detail throughout our history from the beginning of creation. ([Mat 10:29-33](#))

[v19] Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

That is, the heathen, who know little or nothing of the Old Testament rituals, should not be bothered with such details, since they have been justified freely by His grace. ([Rom 3:24](#))

[v20] But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

It was important for the Gentiles to understand that they needed to abandon the previous works of unrighteousness that involved the worship of pagan gods and goddesses and the witchcraft that results from it. However, this commandment is still ignored today because many seek to justify their wicked traditions, things like [Christmas](#), [Easter](#), and [Halloween](#), just to name a few, and sadly, many have taken the wicked symbols of idolatry and put them all over church buildings, t-shirts, and jewelry. ([Acts 17:29](#))

(Read "Christian Symbols Are Not Christian" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

Fornication, which is sexual interaction outside of marriage, is also sin still very common among the Gentiles to this day. Fornication includes sexual interaction of any kind, which includes, but is not limited to, pornography, pedophilia, sodomy (i.e. homosexuals and lesbians - [Rom 1:26-32](#)), transgenders, cross-dressers and effeminate. ([1Co 6:9-10](#))

The things strangled is connected with abstaining from blood because an animal that is strangled dies with the blood inside. Cattle should be killed by letting out their blood, which is the most merciful way to kill the beast, typically by slitting its throat. The reason for this is because the Bible says the life of the flesh is in the blood ([Lev 17:11](#)), and that we ought not to consume blood since it is through blood that atonement is made for our souls. ([Heb 9:22](#))

These primary doctrines were taught to the Gentiles, but please don't misunderstand; these are not the only commandments in the New Testament. They are the primary things new Christians should focus on after they are born again, and everything else they can learn as they go by studying the Scriptures, or in other words, a new Christian should be taught that they need to abstain from paganism/witchcraft, abstain from sexual sins, and abstain from consuming blood. In America today, many people, including many churchgoers, eat their meat rare, in which all the blood has not been cooked out of their meat, they fornicate and commit adultery like animals, and they cling to their pagan traditions, holding them in higher regard than God's Word, and thus, these basic commandments are still desperately needed. (Heb 5:12-14)

[v21] For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

The Gentiles would hear the Word of God read to them in the synagogues while sitting next to the Jews, and to show them a proper example, they should follow specific moral commandments, but they also needed to understand that, through Christ, they had been freed from certain obligations in the Old Testament law.

[v22] 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:

Paul and Barnabas were sent back with this basic instruction, but they sent a couple more Christians with them to make sure the church believed them. They should have trusted in Paul and Barnabas's instruction from the start, but forbearing their brethren (Col 3:13), they conceded to go to this meeting in Jerusalem, and since they were untrusting of Paul and Barnabas in their doctrine, the two other brethren would help insure that they were giving them the whole of the teaching, rather than just a partial explanation.

[v23] 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:

This was the instruction of the elders and apostles unto the churches, that all would know the testimony of what happened in these meetings, and what all Christians ought to be teaching.

[v24] 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:

This would verify for the church that the former Pharisees who believed on Christ were teaching in error.

[v25] It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

These words helped to reinforce the authority of Paul and Barnabas in the church, not that they had no authority, or were disrespected in any way, but that their testimony was verified by other testimonies from apostles working with the Gentiles.

[v26] Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word 'hazarded' meaning that they risked their lives for the sake of Christ, which was evidenced by the fact that Paul died from the persecution of the Jews, and was risen from the dead by God.

[v27] We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.

These would act as eye-witnesses to back up Paul and Barnabas.

[v28] For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

This list was simple and concise; easy for almost anyone to understand.

[v29] 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.

If they would keep these commandments, they would cover a multitude of sins among the church, and all other things they could learn over time.

[v30] So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

An epistle is a written document or letter, typically in formal fashion.

[v31] Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

The word consolation generally means comfort; the church rejoiced that they could stop the contention over the matter, and be reconciled together of one accord; being of one mind in Christ. (Phl 2:2)

[v32] And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

As already stated, they were backup witnesses to the teaching, and they encouraged the church.

[v33] And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

They were relieved of their duty and could return at their discretion.

[v34] Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

Silas wanted to stay a while.

[v35] Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

There was a lot of work to do in Syria to make sure that this doctrine was understood by the Gentiles, so they would not be deceived by any former Jewish teaching.

[v36] 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 cared for the condition of those who had been born again, since he was there for each of them as they traveled.

[v37] And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Barnabas agreed with the journey, but he wanted to take John, who had accompanied them to Cyprus, but left them before their work was finished.

[v38] But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

This indicates that John was not necessarily relieved of his duty to them, but returned to his family early before their journey was finished.

[v39] 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;

Paul and Barnabas fought over the matter. Paul was untrusting of one who had abandoned them during the work, wanting only someone he knew would be dedicated for such an important journey, but Barnabas wanted to show John mercy and give him another chance, just as Barnabas had stood up for Paul when Paul was first rejected from the church. Though the contention between them was heated, the Holy Spirit led them both in separate directions.

[v40] And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

Barnabas took John with him to cover the area of Cyprus, and Paul took Silas. All four were blessed with the grace of God in their travels.

[v41] And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

Paul and Silas covered Syria and other areas northward.

[CLICK HERE](#) to Continue to Chapters 16-20.