

The Book of Acts: My Notes on Chapters 16-20

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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 always, 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

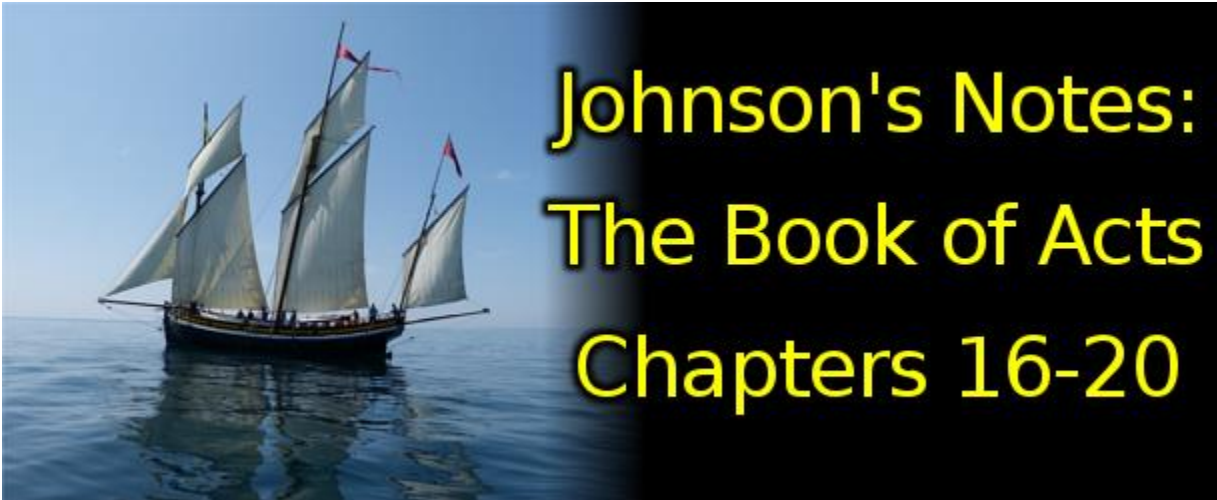
That being said, my notes are written through my analysis of the King James Bible, the preserved Word of God, and I will not be relying on worldly sources that nearly all commentators commonly use. I will not be relying on so-called "early church fathers" because most of them were pagan philosophers 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. [Does the Greek Septuagint Exist?](#): 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 16

[v1] 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:

The context is following Paul's travels to Derbe and Lystra, which were the cities of Lycaonia mentioned in [Acts 14:6](#). The mother of Timotheus (i.e. Timothy) is Eunice ([2Ti 1:5](#)), and though the Lord God commanded the Jews that they were not to marry or be married to people from pagan nations ([1Ki 11:2](#)), Eunice disobeyed and married a Greek man.

[v2] Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

This is referring to Timothy, not Timothy's father. He was of good report among the church in those two cities.

[v3] 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.

When I first read this, I found it to be rather odd because, in the previous chapter, the controversy in the church about whether or not men had to be circumcised ([Acts 15:1-2](#)) had already been settled ([Acts 15:10-12](#)), meaning that Christians do not need to observe the traditions of circumcision. However, Timothy's willingness to be circumcised, and Paul's action to do so, was not based on a religious custom, but rather, the Jews to who they were about to preach Christ's Gospel would not listen to any man teach Biblical doctrines if he was not circumcised, and so to gain the souls of some, that they might be saved, Timothy allowed himself to come under the knife.

[v4] 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.

This is referring to the previous chapter in which the elders of the church in Jerusalem, along with the apostles, had determined that there were only a few ordinances that must be kept in the New Testament, and circumcision was not among them. In particular, these were to abstain from idols, consumption of blood (likewise things strangled which retains blood), and fornication.

(Read "[Johnson's Notes on Acts 15](#)" here at [creationliberty.com](#) for more details.)

[v5] And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

In the humility of repentance ([2Co 7:10](#)) with their faith in Christ alone and His grace alone for their salvation. ([Eph 2:8-9](#))

[v6] 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,

The people of Phrygia had heard of Christ because there were locals present with the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. ([Acts 2:10](#)) Either there were none that were to receive the grace of God and the Holy Spirit in the regions north in Asia, or that the work was to be done by another; the Scriptures do not tell us why, but God did not permit them to go preach His Word there at that time.

[v7] After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

Meaning that they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of God would not allow them. It stands to reason that the Lord God did not want Paul and Silas to do the work in this area, and He left the work for another to perform because the church is established there later, which is why Peter addresses those Christians in Bithynia in [1 Peter 1:1](#).

[v8] And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

They didn't stop in Mysia, but traveled through it to get to Troas, which was in the northern region of Galatia.

[v9] 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.

Macedonia was named after Macedon/Makedon, which was a son of Zeus (Greek god of thunder) according to pagan lore.

[v10] 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.

It seems that, in Luke's writing, he switched from a third person summary to a first person testimony. He may have been quoting excerpts from Paul's writings about their travels.

[v11] Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

They would have traveled by ship to these locations on their way to their destination, since Macedonia was a Greek region.

[v12] 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.

Philippi was a Roman colony, since they feared breaking the law against Roman citizens, as we'll see later in verse 37.

[v13] 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.

The word 'wont' is not to be confused with the modern day English conjunction "won't," which is a combination of "will" and "not." The word 'wont' means "habit" or "custom," and so Paul and Silas went to a river bank that was common for people to come to and make prayers, speaking with a group of women that were there for the purpose of prayer.

[v14] 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.

Meaning that Lydia listened intently on the things Paul spoke about, since her heart was humbled by God to hear the truth. A "seller of purple" likely meant that she sold purple dyes or goods dyed in purple, which would have been a more expensive color to produce.

[v15] 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.

Lydia's repentant heart believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and so she was baptized in that river. She then humbly pleaded with the two men to be guests in her home; that she may provide some comfort to those who preached the doctrines of Christ. The word 'constrain' in this passage is not to mean that she forced them, but that she compelled and urged them strongly, having a great desire to have them stay a while longer.

[v16] 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:

A damsel is a young woman, a soothsayer is one who predicts the future, and "a spirit of divination" is a devil that is not of God, as the Lord God has clearly stated that divination is an abomination in His sight. ([Deu 18:10](#)) She helped wealthy men increase their profits, and they paid well for her services, since the devil she was possessed with was giving her special knowledge at the cost of her soul.

[v17] 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.

It should be noted here that what she spoke was the truth. It is true that Paul and Silas were servants of the Most High God, and that they were showing people the way to salvation, but she was still possessed with a devil. This association is bad, meaning that when Paul and his companions would bless and heal others in the name of Christ, this devil-possessed woman would then be prophetically associated with the miracles of God, which would only deceive other people and make her more famous.

[v18] 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.

This woman followed them for days and proclaimed the truth, but she was not of Christ. This ought to be a warning to all those who study Scripture. There are many men and women who profess some truths concerning the Word of God, and may even teach some doctrines correctly, but there many of them who are not of Christ (which is evidenced by others contradictory things they say and do), and may even be possessed of devils because the good seed of the Word did not fall on good ground.

(Read "[False Converts vs Eternal Security](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v19] 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 and Silas broke no law and they did no wrong; they did good in the sight of God, but that good deed costed wicked men money, and those greedy men wanted revenge. They took Paul and Silas by force and brought them before the governing officers, which there may have been a court of justice in the marketplace, or in the district of it, for the punishment of thieves and other common criminal activity.

[v20] And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

This was a lie. They did not trouble anyone, but even if they had, it wasn't the entire city; it was just these few men, but they spoke on behalf of everyone, and without evidence. Paul healed a young woman and saved her from the devil that corrupted her, and it was the accusers' love of money ([1Ti 6:10](#)) for which Paul and Silas were being brought into question.

[v21] And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

They lied again. There was no conflict with the doctrine of Christ and Roman law; otherwise, Christ would never have allowed the giving of tribute money. ([Mat 22:17-21](#)) Notice that they did not give any specifics of what it was they were teaching that was in conflict with the law; they just vaguely accused them (which is known in Scripture as murmuring - [John 7:12-13](#)), and from my own experience, when I am accused of being a false preacher, it often comes from people who make vague accusations (i.e. murmurings) against me. Christ told us these things would happen to us when we teach the truth and do what's right. ([Mat 5:11](#))

[v22] And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

The magistrates did not tear their own clothes, as was done by those in repentance in the Old Testament, but rather, they tore the shirts off Paul and Silas so they could be whipped. This means that a sentence was passed on the two men without any evidence being presented, nor a defense heard from the accused.

[v23] And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

They were whipped across their backs, and though the number is not given here, the punishments were typically maxed out at forty depending on the crime. The order to "*keep them safely*" was not for their protection and benefit, but contextually, Paul was a man who had the power of God, and did miracles in the sight of men, so therefore, it was ordered for them to be kept under the strictest prison cells and regulations, that they would not escape.

[v24] Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

These men had not harmed a hair on anyone's head and walked peacefully, yet they were not only beaten, and without evidence of a crime, but also put into the inner most parts of the prison, which were the highest security, and even bound their feet in stocks, which would have prevented them from walking.

[v25] And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

Those of us who suffer persecution and afflictions for the sake of Christ are called blessed, and therefore, they sang praises unto God for the physical and mental anguish they suffered.

[v26] 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.

An earthquake alone would not have caused every man's bonds to be opened up and doors to be opened. It was only by the great miracle of God that these things were done, and all the prisoners would have known that this was God's response to their worship of Him.

[v27] 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.

It was likely that the prison keeper was not supposed to be sleeping on the job, and thought that, in his slumber, he let some prisoners get by him. If that was the case, then his life would have been lost anyway, since the Roman government would take his life for allowing prisoners to escape; thus, he did not draw his sword to threaten anyone, nor in self-defense, but to take his own life before having to suffer the pain and embarrassment of execution at the hands of magistrates.

[v28] But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

They yelled and commanded him to stop, reassuring him that no one had escaped. Only their bonds and doors had been opened.

[v29] Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

This man knew it was the power of the Living God who had done this, and in fear and repentance (i.e. grief and godly sorrow) of his sins, he fell on his knees at their feet. This may have been a result in that Paul and Silas had already preached the doctrines of Scripture to the prisoners and guards while staying there, so the jailor had already heard the message, and his soul was prepared to ask the following question.

[v30] And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

He now called them "Sir," treating them with respect, not as common prisoners.

[v31] And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

When a man is given a humble heart of repentance ([2Ti 2:25](#)), and the fear of God ([Jude 1:23](#)), the Lord God will give him grace ([Jms 4:6](#)), and there is no prayer of special words one must say, but rather, all a man needs to do at that point is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life. ([Rom 4:23-25](#)) Sadly, in our modern-day American leavened church buildings, a false message is preached that belief without repentance (i.e. grief and godly sorrow) will give men salvation, and many will be led through the wide gates of hell by that false message. ([Mat 7:21-23](#))

When he says "thy house," it is not that when a man is saved, his entire family is automatically saved, because grace must be given individually. There is no salvation by proxy, meaning that one cannot be saved by simply being in close relationship or physical presence with someone else who repented and believed. Rather, he is saying that the Word of God would be preached to his house, and if they come to faith in the humility of repentance, they too would share in eternal life through Christ.

[v32] And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

The jailor was born again, and brought Paul and Silas to his house so that they would hear the Word of God.

[v33] And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

It was a painful ordeal to be whipped to the point of bleeding, then have your torn clothes put back on, only to have the cloth adhere to the scabs of the wounds. There was no medical treatment for such prisoners, but the jailor cleaned them up, treated their wounds, and they in turn baptized him and all his house who received the Holy Spirit in unity.

[v34] And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

They feasted together, rejoicing in the saving blood of Christ.

[v35] And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

The captains over the guard brought the message to release Paul and Silas. It was likely that Paul and Silas returned to the prison with the jailor once it was day, so that no trouble would come down on his head for breach of his duties.

[v36] 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.

Paul and Silas were free to leave without fear of the guards.

[v37] 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.

This means that they were beaten out in the public without a cause, meaning that they were set as an example, making the public believe they were vicious criminals, without actually condemning them of crime. Under Roman law, they cannot condemn a man without evidence, and there was no evidence. Privily means "secretly," and so they were secretly releasing them so that they would not have to admit their wrong and declare Paul and Silas's innocence publicly, and thus, Paul told him that he would wait for them to come and release him personally so they would have to confess their wrongdoing.

[v38] And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

Although the Roman government may have been allowed full discretionary power (unlimited authority) against those who were not official Roman citizens, they did not have full discretionary power against legal Roman citizens because they had constitutional rights that could not be infringed. Thus, they broke the law against Roman citizens, and that had grave consequences.

[v39] And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.

Their accusers did come to retrieve them quickly, before the matter was made known to anyone else. They would not confess their error, but in continued effort to keep the matter silent and save themselves, pleaded with them to leave the city and not return.

[v40] 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.

Out of mercy, Paul and Silas complied and left the city, knowing also that such a matter would distract from their purpose of bringing the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles, so they spent a short time with their brethren outside the city before they departed.

Chapter 17

[v1] Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Thessalonica were all cities in the Macedonia region.

[v2] And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

This is what he would do just about every week in every city he traveled; he would go to the Jews as they gathered together to hear the Word on the sabbath day and reason with them about Christ's fulfillment of the prophecies in the Old Testament.

[v3] 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.

This Jesus, whose name is "salvation," is Christ, whose name is "annointed," which is the annointed Messiah who the Jews still look for to this day, not finding Him because He has already come. Paul preached this in hopes that God would give some repentance to acknowledge the truth.

[v4] 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.

Consort means "to associate," and so very few of the Jewish people believed, but many Greeks, and also the wives of those who were in chief positions heard and confessed Christ.

[v5] 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.

They grew jealous because many of the Greeks followed after the doctrine of Paul (who taught Christ), and so they sought out men who they could use to manipulate the people into doing their bidding. The men they chose to hire were lewd, in that they were given to lusts (i.e. money, women, etc), and they were "base," meaning that while everyone else was busy working, producing, buying, and selling, having a purpose in the town, these men stood around idle, doing nothing, which would make it easy to hire them with promises of coin or whores.

They searched the city for a large enough group of them, told them all what to say, and they set the city in fury by spreading rumors and starting up a mob to assault the house of one of the disciples of Christ, where Paul and Silas stayed.

[v6] 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;

They wanted to drag them out of the house to face the wrath of an angry mob deceived on the lies of the Jewish priests and elders, and when they couldn't find the two they were looking for, they dragged the rest of the Christians out in their place. The phrase "*turned the world upside down*" is used in a manner that claims their religious views have disturbed everyone in place and occupation, which is not necessarily incorrect concerning the doctrine of Christ, which is to bring lost sinners to their knees, but the context they were using this phrase was that society itself (business, government, etc) was flipped on its head because of a few Christians teaching the truth, which is a false accusation.

[v7] Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.

Again, these are more lies. The Christians never taught that Jesus overthrew Caesar, but that the governing rulers are to be respected in their office of overseeing the kingdoms of this world. ([Rom 13:1-4](#)) Of course, Christ is the ultimate ruler of this world, but He did not teach us to go to war and rebel against governments, but rather, that we should honor their governing positions, and respect those who do good in the punishment of evildoers.

[v8] And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

The people and rulers were troubled when they heard these accusations because they feared that these Christian men were starting a rebellion that would cause war with Rome. Again, there was no evidence of these things, but the mere accusation caused panic.

[v9] And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

Meaning that they proved to the magistrates by explaining their doctrine to them that the things they were accused of were lies. It may have been that some of the magistrates recognized the mob's leadership, knowing them to be untrustworthy, and sensed that some conspiracy had been plotted against them. One way or another, they were set free and no punishments were served.

[v10] And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Knowing the danger of those who sought after the life of Paul and Silas, the church helped them escape so they could continue the work of the Gospel.

[v11] 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.

noble (adj): ingenuous (generous); candid (fair, open); ready to receive the truth (See 'noble', *American Dictionary of the English Language*, Noah Webster, 1828, retrieved June 14, 2018, [webstersdictionary1828.com])

The word 'noble' can have many different meanings, but the context is describing a generous people with open ears, ready to receive the preaching of the Word of God, but they also double-checked what they heard with the Scriptures to make sure they were not being deceived on any point. This is how the church ought to operate, in that we ought to be willing to hear the truth of any preacher, but if they teach false doctrines, we ought to turn away from them.

[v12] Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

Because they were open and ready to hear the Word of God, many of them believed the truth. Don't misunderstand; it was not an open ear canal that caused them to believe, but rather, it was the humble condition of the heart which caused them to listen and understand. The "honourable women" of the Greeks were some of those who had husbands in positions of authority, who believed the Gospel of Christ, and there were more than a few Gentile men and women who were receptive to the doctrine.

[v13] 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.

Though Paul and Silas had escaped the liars and troublemakers in Thessalonica, they followed the apostles to the next city to continue harassing them. This is the definition of persecution.

[v14] And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

This indicates that Timothy continued with Paul and Silas during their travels, likely assisting them in all matters concerning food and lodging while they preached the Word of God. Paul seemed to be the main target of the pursuing Thessalonians, so they sent him onward while the other two stayed behind.

[v15] 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.

They "conducted" Paul, meaning that they led him to Athens. The people who took Paul to Athens brought back a message to Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

[v16] Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

As is common with us who are born again in Christ, once we understand the nature of idolatry, the Spirit of God stirs our spirits and makes us uncomfortable with the uncleanness and abominations against God, causing us to sanctify (separate) ourselves from the wickedness, and speak out against it. Though 21st century churchgoers typically think they are not guilty of any idolatry, they do not judge themselves with righteous judgment because much idolatry goes on in the church buildings of American society, and the churchgoers remain willingly blind to it.

(Read "[The Biblical Understanding of Idolatry](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v17] 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.

dispute (v): to contend in argument; to reason or argue in opposition; to debate
(See 'dispute', *American Dictionary of the English Language*, Noah Webster, 1828, retrieved June 14, 2018, [webstersdictionary1828.com])

The Bible tells us that we are not to have a spirit of contention in the church ([Phl 1:16](#)), but we are supposed to contend earnestly for the doctrines of Christ. ([Jude 1:3](#), [1Th 2:2](#)) Though mankind most often contends in hatred, we who are born again in Christ contend in love, caring for the lost souls of those who perish in their sins, but we do not tolerate the sin, and our spirits are vexed to the point that we must flee and/or rebuke those who will hear.

[v18] 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.

The Epicureans were men from Epicurus, who believed and taught almost exactly what is believed and taught by the religion of Evolutionism today. They believed the world was not made by any deity or design, but that a random chance impact of atoms created everything we see, which is known today as "atomic materialism."

(Read "[Evolutionism: A New-Age Religion](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

The Stoics are named after the Greek word "Stoa," which means a portico or covered porch that represents their beliefs being like a roof (or covering) over their heads. Stoicism relied heavily on the teachings of Socrates, a pagan Greek philosopher, which taught a singular god, but also a system of personal ethics that would follow a path to what they believed was true happiness.

What Paul was teaching conflicted with the philosophies of both the Epicureans and the Stoics, and so they sought to verbally attack him, calling him a "babbler," which is an insult that accuses a man of being idle/useless in his speech, irrational, and untrustworthy; in short, they were claiming his words were nonsensical, but were not giving any reasonable argument in response. They claimed he was preaching nonsense because he taught Christ and His resurrection, and like many churchgoers today, the Epicureans and Stoics would rather follow their feelings than hear the truth. ([2Ti 4:4](#))

[v19] And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

Areopagus was a street in Athens that connected directly to the temple of Mars. Those who spent a lot of time in this area were called "Areopagites," as indicated in verse 34.

[v20] For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

The word 'strange' in this context means foreign; though the Bible sometimes uses 'strange' to mean pagan, in this context, Paul was speaking to pagans, and so they meant 'strange' as "not domestic."

[v21] (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.)

Either in spare time, or living off donations, the people who spent their time where Areopagus was located would come because they wanted to discuss various religions and philosophies, which was common in Athens in that day.

[v22] 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.

Corrupt new-age versions have changed 'superstitious' to 'religious', which takes away the true meaning of this verse because pure religion is good. ([Jms 1:27](#)) It is pagan superstition that plagues the minds of men and brings them to perform odd traditions which, over time, are lost to common knowledge, and eventually they get to a point where the people doing the traditions cannot explain why they do them.

For example, modern-day wedding ceremonies are almost entirely based on pagan rituals; like the wedding rings that are used, with the ring being worn on the "ring finger" is actually based on a pagan practice of the ancient Greeks called "Palmistry," and that ring finger is part of sun worship. Throwing a bouquet of flowers, garters, throwing rice, the wedding cake, the wedding dresses—these are all based on pagan superstitions, and are not found anywhere in Scripture, but churchgoers follow them blindly, often due to pressure from family and friends (and a lot from their pastors), refusing to learn the truth and sanctify themselves.

(Read "[Marriage: What Christians Should Know](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

Paul was explaining to these pagans that they based everything they said and did on silly superstitions, rather than looking to the truth. The Lord God calls out to mankind to reason with Him about the truth of His Word ([Isa 1:18](#)), that by coming to Him in repentance (i.e. grief and godly sorrow of wrongdoing) and faith in Christ, we would gain His mercy and our sins would be washed clean. Thus, if we walk as children of light ([Eph 5:8](#)), we ought to sanctify ourselves from the superstitions of pagans. ([2Co 6:14-18](#))

[v23] 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.

There is a story that has been handed down about the "Unknown God," and although I cannot verify the reliability of this story, it makes sense to what Paul was saying here, and why he pointed out to them that this altar was made to the Christian God of the Bible. If this was a place of many religions and philosophies, someone would have told Paul this story, and that may be the reason he started off his speech by addressing this altar.

The story goes that around 600 B.C. there was a plague that spread throughout lands, and Athens being a place of heavy pagan worship, they thought they had angered one of, or some of, the various gods in one of these religions. They did everything they could to appease every god/goddess on their list, but the plague remained. One day, a man named Epimenides, who hailed from Cyprus, appeared and told them the god who was angry was a god yet unknown to them, and he believed that this god was good and would hear them if they called out to him, being merciful upon those who are ignorant of him.

Inquiring as to what they should do, Epimenides instructed them to bring some stonemasons and a flock of sheep, and that the sheep should all be healthy and of different colors—some white, some black. The sheep were not to eat anything the previous day so they would be very hungry. On the following day, the stonemasons and sheep were brought to Mars' Hill, and Epimenides instructed a man to follow every sheep, allowing the flock to graze wherever they chose.

Epimenides spoke in a loud voice: "*O thou unknown god! Behold the plague afflicting this city! And if indeed you feel compassion to forgive and help us, behold this flock of sheep! Reveal your willingness to respond, I plead, by causing any sheep that pleases you to lie down upon the grass instead of grazing. Choose white if white pleases; black if black delights. And those you choose we sacrifice to you—acknowledging our pitiful ignorance of your name!*"

Soon after releasing the sheep, some of them laid down on beds of rich grass, and did not graze, which shocked the shepherds, as it was unexpected that such hungry sheep would not eat the rich grass set in front of them. Epimenides instructed the stonemasons to mark the places where each sheep rested, separate them from the flock, build altars on those locations, and sacrifice those sheep to this unknown god. Out of fear of offending this unknown god, because they did not want to presume to know his name, or to give him a name that was not his, they engraved the inscription "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD," and by that time the next day, the plague had gone.

Athens was overjoyed, and praised the unknown god, worshipping him daily, but as is common with mankind, generations came and went, and the unknown god was forgotten. However, though the unknown god faded from their memories, the story and the altar remained until the day that the Lord God had mercy on Athens and brought Paul, His apostle, to them to reveal to them the name of this unknown god, their Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[v24] 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;

This was said to break down their superstitions, that their gods must have temples. The Lord God is a spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth ([John 4:24](#)); He has no need of such things.

[v25] Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

There is nothing made by the hands of men that represents the Godhead, as Paul will point out in verse 29.

[v26] 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;

Murder and genocide have been committed in the name of racism and pagan creeds, but God created all men of one blood; the breath of life He breathed into Adam ([Gen 2:7](#)), that we all now share being descendants of the first man. The land we are able to inhabit in this world was predestined by God down to the very last grain of sand; reminding us that God has given us liberty to make choices, but our authority limited, and bound by His will in all things.

[v27] 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:

As the Lord Jesus Christ told us that if we seek, we will find ([Mat 7:7](#)), and that He would make sure that those who He gives a heart to seek after God (since no man seeks after God of His own will - [Rom 3:11](#)), they will find Him. Because of the spiritual and eternal nature of God, He is able to be closer to us than we can be to each other.

[v28] 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.

Poets such as the Stoics, which did believe there was only one god.

[v29] 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.

It is the world that seeks after silver, gold, and other such devices of men, which please the eyes, which is not of the Father. ([1Jo 2:16](#)) The altars, statues, paintings, symbols, and any other such icon of a religious nature does not represent God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. This includes the "cross" (†) symbol, but sadly, most churchgoers choose to remain as the pagans are, ignore the Word of God, and use it as a representation of Christ. The worship of God must be done in spirit and truth ([John 4:24](#)), not by outward appearances ([John 7:24](#)), and so the symbols put on church buildings, tattoos, jewelry, etc, should not be used in the name of Christ, but churchgoers continue to do so in willful ignorance, having the same superstitious minds as the pagans.

(Read "[Christians Symbols Are Not Christians](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v30] And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Winking, which is typically the act of closing and opening the eyes, is not used here to say that God is blind to their wicked deeds, but rather, that because they had for hundreds of years turned to their pagan gods and ignored him, His blinking is a metaphorical way to explain that He is angry with their sin, as one who would see something abhorrent would close his eyes, turn his head, and open them in another direction. Because of this, God sent no prophets to them, save Paul at this time so that the Gospel of Christ would go into all the world, and that all men everywhere should come to the grief and godly sorrow of repentance ([2Co 7:9-10](#)).

[v31] 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.

That man is Christ ([1Ti 2:5](#)), who is God. ([John 10:30](#))

[v32] And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

They refused to believe that the dead could be raised, like the Epicureans, who, being atheistic, rejected miracles. It's not that it is impossible, but these men choose not to believe because they want the preaching of Paul to be vanity ([1Co 15:14](#)) so they will not have to believe because, if what Paul says is true, it makes them guilty before God ([Rom 3:19](#)), and those wicked men would rather live in their lusts of the flesh than to face the truth.

[v33] So Paul departed from among them.

Paul would have reached a point in discussion with them when he knew they would no longer listen, so he sanctified himself from them in peace, as Christ instructed His disciples. ([Mat 10:13](#)) If Paul had remained with them continually, trying to work on this one group for many years, as I have witnessed some Christians foolishly attempt, he would have wasted much of his time, and there would have been many hearers in various other locations that may not have received Christ's doctrine ([Eph 5:15-16](#)); thus, for the sake of others, we move on when someone does not want to hear. ([Acts 22:18](#))

[v34] Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Some followed after Paul to learn more, including Dionysius, which was one of the (former) followers of Areopagus.

Chapter 18

[v1] After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

Corinth was a major trade city that contained two primary harbors, which was the main trade point between Rome and Asia. This city was flush with the sins of the flesh since it was home to the Temple of Venus, which, based on historical information I've read, had at least a thousand whores on staff at all times. Paul urged the church to come to the grief and godly sorrow of repentance over their fornication and lasciviousness, and sanctify themselves from the wicked pagan sexual customs of the land. ([2Co 12:21](#))

[v2] 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.

Claudius was the fifth emperor of Rome, and he decreed that all Jews were to behave more moderately, since the Jews harshly persecuted the Christians, as we have already seen in Scripture, to the point that the plots of the Jews against the Christians was beginning to waste government time, money, and resources. Claudius sought to keep the peace, and the only way to do that was to eventually remove the Jews from Rome, that is, all those who professed the Jewish religion. (Christians were still allowed, although some were of Jewish descent, because they did not profess the religion of the Jews.)

Aquila and Priscilla, likely Roman names, are two Christians mentioned again at the end of Paul's letter to the Romans. ([Rom 16:3-4](#)) They were close friends of Paul, willingly laying down their lives for his sake.

[v3] And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

Paul was intimately familiar with tent-crafting, and because Aquila and Priscilla did the same work, it drew them together, and he stayed at their house.

[v4] And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

Which we have already learned was his habit. ([Acts 17:2](#))

[v5] And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

It was not that Paul did not testify of Jesus prior to Silas and Timothy's arrival, but that the Holy Spirit pressed upon him an urgency, to which he got right to the point instead of taking his time with them.

[v6] 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.

Most of the Jews rejected Christ yet again, and called the doctrines of Christ (and Christ Himself) of the devil (i.e. blasphemy), and so he dusted off his raiment, similar to shaking the dust off one's feet ([Mar 6:11](#)), which is a Jewish custom of sanctification, as a testimony against them. Paul was not claiming that he was clean in the sense that he was more righteous than they; although the blood of Christ does cleanse us from all unrighteousness, but rather that he was clean from the blood on their hands, having murder in their hearts. ([Isa 1:15](#)) The Spirit of God had convicted Paul that he had spent enough time with the Jews in this synagogue, and would instead go to the Gentiles in the city to preach repentance and remission of sins to them. ([Luke 24:47](#))

[v7] 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.

If Paul had returned to Aquila and Priscilla, he might have been publicly viewed as a liar, since Aquila and Priscilla had Jewish heritage. Thus, he went to stay with Justus to be among the Gentiles as he had promised. Justus's house was connected to the synagogue, being one giant structure, similar to an apartment building or strip mall.

[v8] 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.

The church was established in Corinth, and there were many in the city who believed, including a rare instance that a chief over the synagogue had converted unto Christ.

[v9] Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

Not that Paul was afraid of men, although when under threat of persecution from a mob, there is always some fear, but rather, because so many, including those in chief seats in the synagogue, believed on Christ and were baptized, tensions were rising to the point that some may have suggested that they get Paul out of the city in secret.

[v10] For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

The Lord God commanded that Paul go forward boldly because there were many in Corinth who would come to repentance and faith in Christ.

[v11] And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

It would make sense why there are two long letters to Corinth in the New Testament. Paul spent a lot of time there, and would have made many friends, who strove together with him in edifying the church.

[v12] And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

Insurrection means that the Jews bypassed standard lawful procedure, formed a mob, took Paul, and brought him to the court themselves.

[v13] Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

We have already seen many examples in the book of Acts that it is common for unbelievers to lie against those who preach the truth.

[v14] 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:

If it were a matter in which Paul had actually committed a crime against the state, then he would have sought to judge Paul according to the law, or in other words, Gallio is saying to the Jews that he would be on their side if Paul actually broke the law. Gallio spoke the truth of the matter before Paul uttered a word because he, being an experienced judge, already somewhat knew what the Jews were doing was not right.

[v15] 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.

Paul broke no civil law, nor did he teach any such thing against the law of the state; therefore, Gallio refused to take part in their religious matters.

[v16] And he drave them from the judgment seat.

Gallio kicked them out of the courtroom for wasting his time.

[v17] 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.

It was not Paul who was beaten in this instance; they apparently let him go. Rather, they took Sosthenes, one of the other chief rulers of the synagogue, and beat him instead, and this is likely because he was the one who led the mob against Paul, so when they were turned away by the government for lack of evidence, in which the judge said Paul had done no wrong, they beat Sosthenes, who had lied to them, and embarrassed them when they were found without a just cause.

Though it cannot be verified from Scripture alone, a man named Sosthenes is mentioned in [1 Corinthians 1:1](#). It is possible that, after Sosthenes had been beaten by the crowd, he was humbled to repentance, and converted to faith in Christ, to which he ended up traveling and preaching with Paul.

[v18] 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.

After 18 months in Corinth, Paul was led by God to Syria, and his close Christian friends, Aquila and Priscilla, went with him. The vow being referred to here is the Nazarite vow, in which a man (or woman) would shave his head in accordance with the 6th chapter of Numbers, and it was to be a sign of sanctification, in which there were limitations on what he could say and do at certain times until the vow was fulfilled. This would have been done in a similar fashion in which Timothy was circumcised, not to "keep the law," but rather, to win souls, that the Jews would listen to the Gospel of Christ.

[v19] And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

Ephesus was a city in Asia.

[v20] When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

The Ephesians who heard the Word (and understood it - [Mat 13:23](#)) wanted Paul to stay and teach them more, but he would not, for reasons given in the next verse.

[v21] 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.

Paul was not keeping this feast due to any tradition or obligation of the law, but it could have been to keep his vow, whatever it was that he vowed, and/or it was another opportunity to preach to the Jews that some may be converted and saved. Paul gave them a conditional promise, that he would return to visit them, but only if God allowed.

[v22] And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

Paul had gone up to Jerusalem to keep the feast, as he told the Ephesians, greeted the church there, then went to Antioch.

[v23] 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.

Paul was going back to places where he had started the church to check up on all the Christians in the locations. He would obviously be concerned for their welfare, seeing that the persecution was so heavy at this time, and that there would be a great need for encouragement, charity, and understanding of doctrine.

[v24] And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

Apollos was well-educated and wise, having good understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures.

[v25] 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.

Apollos had not yet heard the doctrine of Christ, but knew of the baptism of repentance that John had taught, and preached these things to the Jews with a passionate spirit.

[v26] 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.

Though not yet knowing the doctrines of Christ and the institution of His church, Aquila and Priscilla, who stayed behind in Ephesus after Paul had departed for Jerusalem, came to him and told him about Christ and the church.

[v27] 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:

Though he had not been ordained through the church, just like Paul, God called him from outside the church to preach the truth, and the church helped him with his needs while he taught. He became a valuable asset to the doctrines of repentance, faith, and grace in Christ.

[v28] For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

He was able to reason with the Jews in a particular way that convinced many of the truth, and although most Jews would still not be converted, the Lord God used Apollos wonderfully in that many came to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 19

[v1] 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,

Paul came back around on his tour to the various churches, and met with other Christians who believed and studied Christ's doctrine. It seems the reason for mentioning that Apollos was at Corinth was that the following disciples were in the same situation as Apollos.

[v2] 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.

Paul is not asking if they had been regenerated by the Holy Ghost, which is automatically received when one comes to the grief and godly sorrow of repentance and is born again by grace through faith, but rather, he's asking if they had been blessed with the special gifts of miracles through the Holy Ghost, which was, at that time, given by God to all those He chose. Apollos and the other disciples certainly knew of the Holy Ghost, since he was highly educated in the Old Testament Scriptures (i.e. the Old Testament prophets spoke by the Holy Ghost - [2Pe 1:20-21](#)), but they had not heard of the Day of Pentecost in which the Holy Spirit of God was poured out into the apostles of Christ.

[v3] And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

They were baptized in the spirit of Elijah ([Mat 17:11-12](#)), rather than the Holy Spirit of Christ.

[v4] 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.

Not that the baptism of repentance is wrong or outdated, which some would falsely teach, but he "verily" or "indeed" baptized with repentance, which we still do today, but we do so with Christ, and that they should believe and preach the Lord Jesus Christ, to who John had directed everyone to believe, and do things in Jesus's name, since He is the giver of all repentance unto men. ([2Ti 2:25](#)) It is not made clear if these were men who were disciples of the teaching of Apollos from another time or place, or if they had simply learned the doctrine of John from other believing Jews, but this was obviously somewhat of a problem that needed to be dealt with; namely that some had not heard of Christ's fulfillment of the prophecies John had given.

[v5] When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

They were baptized again, but this time in Christ, under the new dispensation in the Holy Spirit.

(Read "[The Biblical Understanding of Baptism](#)" here at [creationliberty.com](#) for more details.)

[v6] And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

They had not yet received the gifts of the Holy Ghost because the Lord God takes the matter very seriously, and will not give the gift of His Spirit to those who are not firmly grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, various gifts were given to them, like the ability to speak in other languages, and prophesying (in the context of foretelling future events).

(Read "[Speaking in Tongues vs Charismatic Gibberish](#)" here at [creationliberty.com](#) for more details.)

[v7] And all the men were about twelve.

The total number, including Apollos and the other disciples.

[v8] 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.

Paul continued the work in Ephesus.

[v9] 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.

The diverse, or various people, would not hear the Word, and the multitudes started to speak lies of Paul and the other disciples of Christ, Paul stopped preaching to them as Christ had instructed when they would not hear, and gathered disciples to go with him into various parts of the school of Tyrannus, which would have been a school of pagan philosophy that was either built by or named after Tyrannus, and it was likely a place similar to others Paul had visited in the past, which welcomed to hear all various religions and philosophies from pagans around the world.

[v10] 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.

Those who would travel through Ephesus would hear, and the name of Christ was spread even through those who did not believe, because they told others of what they heard, so that all of Asia knew of Christ after Paul and the rest of the church worked in this area for two years.

[v11] And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

As He had already done and continued to do.

[v12] 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.

The Lord God, in His great mercy, healed the sick by the very clothing that was on Paul's person. A handkerchief that Paul may have used to wipe the sweat from his brow would be taken by someone, brought back to a sick man, and that man was healed.

[v13] 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.

Though most people today hear the word 'exorcist' and think it is someone that casts out evil spirits, in this context, it means those who claim to cast out evil spirits, but do so under false pretenses. There are many exorcists who exist to this day who are false. ([Mat 7:21-23](#)) The exorcists in this instance are those Jews that wandered from place to place, earning a living by performing rituals for whoever would pay for them. Since it was famously known that the apostles, like Paul, were casting devils out of people and healing them in the name of Christ, the people would have been looking for anyone who could perform such miracles, and would pay them generously for their services; so to gain more money and fame, these wicked men took it upon themselves to attempt casting devils out in the name of Jesus.

[v14] And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

The sons of Sceva were the wanderers, and they joined together with one of the chief priests at Ephesus, who likely thought he could make more money and gain fame by doing these things.

[v15] And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

The devils know of Jesus ([Jms 2:19](#)), and they know of His disciples, but they don't take note of anyone who feigns to know Christ because only those who have the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in them will be feared by Satan's minions.

[v16] 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.

The devil inside the man caused him to jump at them, attacking them so viciously that he was tearing at their clothes and flesh, and they ran out of the house in fear.

[v17] 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.

The Lord Jesus Christ was glorified in this, that only those who are truly of Christ and speak in His name will be able to perform such tasks. (That is not to say that all Christians would be given this gift, and some devils only come out through prayer and fasting. - [Mark 9:29](#)) These men flaunted the name of Christ only so that they would increase their own glory and gain, but God is not mocked. ([Gal 6:7](#))

[v18] And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

They believed on Christ, confessed their sin in repentance and confessed Christ boldly, and did the works meet for repentance. ([Acts 26:20](#))

[v19] 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.

The curious arts were witchcraft, necromancy, divination, and other such occult magic and doctrines. They publicly burned 50,000 silver worth of books so that Christ would be glorified in front of all unbelievers.

[v20] So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Christ's doctrines and the faith of His disciples grew faster than any religion in the known world. This is one of the reasons Christ warned us so much about false converts in the church because when something becomes popular, people flock to it for their own personal gain, desiring wealth and fame out of the wickedness in their hearts.

(Read "[False Converts vs Eternal Security](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v21] 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.

Meaning, after the space of three months, when Paul passed through the regions where the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth were located, the Spirit of God came to Paul and gave him purpose to go to Jerusalem again, and then to Rome.

[v22] So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Timothy and Erastus were ministering (i.e. serving) Paul's needs, and so he sent them ahead into these cities to let them know he was coming, and to prepare for his travels, so all would go smoothly because he had a lot of work to do, and a limited time to do it. Paul stayed for a while longer in Asia, and would likely wait for Timothy and Erastus to return before departing.

[v23] And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

There was an uprising among the heathens in Ephesus.

[v24] For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

It logically follows that if heathen smiths are making money by producing idols and other such trinkets that related to idol worship, and the idol worship was ceasing because of the work of the Holy Spirit through the disciples of Christ, then, their customers were disappearing, which led to their total profits dropping, which would eventually leave them without a job.

[v25] Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

Demetrius called together all the other smiths who made a profit on idolatry like he did.

[v26] 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:

With every word from Paul, they lost more money ([1Ti 6:10](#)) because the people were converting away from their idols.

[v27] 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.

These men would have had no problem with the Christian doctrine if idol worship were permitted, but because we preach against all forms of idolatry, the men who profit from it take great offense.

(Read "[The Biblical Understanding of Idolatry](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v28] And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

The Diana of the Ephesians was different from other Dianas, as is customary with pagan traditions; goddesses contain many names, and the same name can apply to different gods, but the Ephesians considered their version of Diana unique among others. However, in their hearts, they cared nothing for the goddess Diana because, if they did, then they would have raised issue a long time ago concerning the doctrine of Christ, but they didn't bother to come after Paul until they started to lose profit, which means their true god is money; Diana's name is simply a cry of convenience to rally a crowd.

[v29] And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

As verse 32 will explain, the city was in confusion because they had no direction, and did not fully understand why they were gathered, but rushed together quickly because of the emotional sway of the mob. The people grabbed two Christians they happened to find along the way; likely they were out preaching the Words of Christ in this theatre area when all this started taking place.

[v30] And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

Paul wanted to go in and do what he could to convince the crowd, and also make effort to save the his two Christian brethren from suffering, but the other Christians persuaded him to remain hidden. This was a grand display of love for one another, that the Christians valued Paul, and were willing to lay down their lives for him so that he would not be harmed and the preaching of Christ could continue.

[v31] And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

Paul had friends who were chief over the theatre, and they sent word to him, pleading with him that he would not go into the theatre, else he might be killed.

[v32] Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

Because the smiths had a particular agenda, and that not everyone worshipped the same false gods, there was confusion among the mob about why they had gathered, and when they are not in one accord, the people become unsure of themselves.

[v33] And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

Alexander, a Jew who was a born again Christian, was drawn out of the crowd and put forward, likely onto a stage to be seen. He raised his hand that the people might silence themselves for a moment so he could be heard.

[v34] But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

Two hours is a long time to yell out continual praise to the goddess Diana, but in recent times, I have witnessed similar displays, where a crowd of political advocates will stand for hours screaming out the same phrases over and over, being unwilling to listen to anyone.

[v35] And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?

Who seems to be an officer in a secretary-type of position, as a scribe would have been, and he would have been commonly known to the people. The townclerk reasoned with them that all the people of the city, and surrounding countries, knew that the Ephesians generally worshipped Diana and Jupiter.

[v36] Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

Since everyone knew who the Ephesians worshipped, the townclerk explained to the crowd that it was senseless to cry out together that Diana was worshipped in this place. He requested that they see reason, and quiet themselves down.

[v37] For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

The townclerk further explained that the Christians broke no laws in their actions or doctrine, they stole no money from anyone (in fact, the opposite was true, they helped the poor and needy), and they did not call Diana the devil; they simply stated that idols were nothing and the gods were nothing; which was also technically taught by some other religious institutions in that area, like Epicureans and the Stoics aforementioned. ([Acts 17:18](#)) What the people did not understand is that the Christians were being targeted by the greed of a few merchants, and this was likely unknown to almost all who gathered in the theatre, although some wiser men may have deduced it.

[v38] Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

Enough time had passed that investigators were able to determine who provoked the mob and for what reason. In other words, he was saying if the smiths want to accuse the Christian men of doing wrong, then they should come forward and state their crimes, and let the officers of the law handle the matter.

[v39] But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

As Paul later taught, let all things be done decently and in order ([1Co 14:40](#)), meaning that they should be done peacefully and calmly, with one person speaking at a time. This would have been done in a civil court where only one person is permitted to speak at a time.

[v40] For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

The Roman government would come in to settle the matter if things got out of hand, and certain people (perhaps at random) may be rounded up and accused of crimes for disturbing the peace; meaning that they would be required to justify their concourse (i.e. their assembly and actions).

[v41] And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

They heeded his warning that the Roman soldiers may get involved if the mob continued, as mobs have a tendency to grow out of control without government intervention; therefore, they all departed, thankfully without anyone being killed.

Chapter 20

[v1] And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

The disciples who risked their lives to keep him safe; then Paul departed on his journey.

[v2] And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

Exhortation can be used in terms of encouragement or as warning and caution; both would have been given by Paul throughout the various situations and people he would have encountered in the church.

[v3] And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

Paul spent three months in Greece, preaching to the Jews as he went, and they rose up in their anger to ambush him, but before he got on the boat, the Spirit of God led him another way.

[v4] And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

Many of these men are the closest friends of Paul because they traveled and suffered with him, and that's why some of them are mentioned in letters to these Asian cities later in the New Testament. Timothy is written to in [1 Timothy 1:2](#) and [2 Timothy 1:2](#). Sopater may be the same as Sosipater in [Romans 16:21](#). Tychicus is mentioned in [Ephesians 6:21](#), [Colossians 4:7](#), and [2 Timothy 4:12](#). Erastus is mentioned in [2 Timothy 4:20](#). Though many of us read the Bible with confusion about all the names and places that are mentioned, a thorough study of the book of Acts clears up that confusion, giving us understanding that these were friends closer than brothers in the faith of Christ.

[v5] These going before tarried for us at Troas.

It seems that Luke was also there among them, since now he is writing with the use of "us" in this passage, so it was likely that he did not need to write of himself since he is the author. ([See Johnson's Notes on Acts 1:1](#)) Troas was another city in Asia Minor, aforementioned in [Acts 16:8](#).

[v6] And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

After the days of unleavened bread, which were seven days following the Passover feast ([See Johnson's Notes on Acts 12:3-4](#)), it took them five more days to get to Troas, and then they all stayed there together for a week.

[v7] And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

This was likely when they came together in the evening to eat, and they continued on throughout the night, not wanting it to end, knowing that they would have to depart the next day.

[v8] And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

It was common for them to meet in upper rooms for religious purposes. ([Acts 1:13](#))

[v9] And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

The young man was foolish to be sitting in an open window while he was so tired, but the Lord God ordained for this to happen. As he began to fall, he likely woke up suddenly and cried out, only to be silenced by hitting the ground three stories down.

[v10] And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

Certainly, many rushed to his side, but Paul reassured them that he was still alive, embraced him, and healed him.

[v11] When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

After that, Paul and the others returned upstairs, had a midnight snack, and he continued teaching until the sun came up.

[v12] And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

Meaning that they were greatly encouraged in the faith of Christ, seeing the results before their eyes in life of a healthy young man who was almost certainly dead from the fall the previous night.

[v13] And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

The phrase "to take in Paul" was meant that they would take him aboard the ship. Luke and the others prepared for Paul's arrival, but Paul decided to stay behind a while to continue conversation with the Christians, and he would arrive at Assos at a later time via land travel.

[v14] And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

They took Paul aboard the ship and continued their journey together.

[v15] And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus.

These are various islands.

[v16] For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

Paul's desire was not to keep the feast itself, because such things were fulfilled in Christ, but every year, it was a great opportunity to preach to the Jews. The reason for this is because the Passover is a feast that is founded on the prophecy of the coming Messiah, and now that Messiah has come, so the fulfillment of the Passover feast is an easy conversation transition.

(Read "[Should Christians Observe Jewish Passover?](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v17] And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

The elders are those who oversee the business of the church, as defined in verse 28.

(Read "[Is the One-Pastor Church System Biblical?](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

[v18] And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

That is, from the first day he came to Ephesus, Paul spoke and acted in a particular manner, which should have set an example for them.

[v19] Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

As should all those who have authority over the church, being humble of mind, with tears of grief and sorrow, and though tempted, they hate sin and evil ways, while being persecuted by those who will hate them for their good conversation in Christ. Temptations in this context may not always refer to temptation of sin, but a temptation unto passions, whereby our enemies would tempt us to react in an emotional outburst instead of with calm, humble, and reasonable spirit.

[v20] And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

Paul set an example for what they were to teach, and he taught this message publically, going door to door when necessary. He kept back nothing that would help them, which would be both spiritual and material.

[v21] Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Despite that there are many cults today who preach against repentance and faith, saying that repentance should not be preached to the unbelievers, Paul taught the grief and godly sorrow of repentance with faith, which is the repentance and remission of sins that Christ commanded us to teach among all nations in [Luke 24:47](#), and he did so when he went door-to-door.

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

[v22] And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

He was bound in the spirit in the sense that the Lord God had compelled Paul in his spirit to go to Jerusalem, and that he had no foreknowledge of what wicked things they may do unto him.

[v23] Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

Meaning, that as Paul traveled, the existence of the church was bearing witness to the Holy Spirit of God, and that Christ's Words were fulfilled in that persecution and tribulation, bonds and afflictions, and that they awaited him in every city in which he testified of Christ.

[v24] But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Paul was not deterred from the narrow path by chains and prison walls, nor was he swayed by threats upon his life, especially since he had already died once and been brought back to life by the Lord God. Rather, he rejoiced in the persecution, as Christ said we are blessed for it ([Mat 5:11](#)), and that our purpose here in this life is to teach His doctrines. ([Mat 28:19-20](#))

[v25] And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

Paul would not be returning to visit them; as he was persuaded that he may be going to Jerusalem to die.

[v26] Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

This may have been Paul's reference to [Ezekiel 33](#), since, being a Jew, the children of Israel were warned that they should warn the people of God's wrath to come if they are called to be watchmen, and if they did not, their blood would be required at the watchman's hand. Thus, it seems that Paul was saying that he is pure, or clean, from the blood of all men; that he had properly warned them of God's wrath, taught them the grief and sorrow of repentance, and that they should do works worthy of that repentance ([Luke 3:8](#)) by turning from sin.

[v27] For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

He taught them thoroughly all the doctrines of Christ that were given to him by the Holy Spirit.

[v28] Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

That these men should pay careful attention unto themselves, in that they should judge themselves first in righteous judgment ([John 7:24](#)), and then also to all the flock, taking great care of them, and feeding (i.e. teaching) them the truth of God's Word because Christ our Master has purchased all the church with a heavy price.

[v29] For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

There will be many who would come, not judging themselves in righteousness, but using the flock of God, deceiving them, to make merchandise of them. ([2Pe 2:3](#))

[v30] Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Out of a desire for men to respect their position, to build up in themselves prestigious titles, in which they glorify themselves in their shame ([Phl 3:18-19](#)), teaching things which they ought not for the sake of dirty money ([Tts 1:11](#)), drawing away those simple or weak in the faith after them, only to turn converts into twofold the child of hell than themselves. ([Mat 23:15](#)) They will speak things out of their own self interests that will lead hearers away from the principles of Christ.

[v31] Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Sadly, I have come under verbal attack many times for rebuking the sins and false doctrines of false preachers, which I have been told many times was "not biblical," and yet, Paul spent three years in tears of grief and sorrow ([Rom 9:2](#)), warning them of the wolves who would come to devour the sheep of Christ in the church. Sadder still is that, in my generation, this duty of the elders has been left unchecked for so long, and because of their lazy, lukewarm attitude ([Rev 3:16](#)), the flock of Christ is scattered ([Jer 23:1](#)) because there are many false converts and false preachers in many church buildings all over the world.

[v32] And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Commend is being used in the sense of entrusting; that Paul would hand over supervision to someone else, now that they have left the doctrine of the milk and entered into the meat of the Word. ([Heb 5:14](#), [Heb 6:1](#)) The Word of God can build them up if they abide in His Holy Spirit. ([1Jo 2:27](#))

[v33] I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

Paul did not seek after money or material possessions from any man. ([Mark 6:8](#))

[v34] Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

The Christians who traveled with Paul only helped him with what was necessary for living, be it clothing, food, shelter, and other travel expenses such as fees for passage on a ship.

[v35] I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Paul set an example that we were to follow, not because Paul was righteous, but that Christ in him is righteous, and that Paul lived and taught exactly as Christ has commanded us.

[v36] And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

A final prayer in humility together for the love of the brethren he would dearly miss, until the day we are all reunited in Christ's kingdom.

[v37] And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

It would indeed be a painful departure, not just in the sorrow that he might be killed, because the Living God is beyond the power of life and death, but that they would be separated from their dear friend until they had all completed their ministries.

[v38] Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

They stayed with him until his departure.

[CLICK HERE](#) to Continue to Chapters 21-25.