Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures

Using a Theme-Based Approach to Identify Literary Structures

The Book of Acts

Gary H. Everett

STUDY NOTES ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Using a Theme-based Approach to Identify Literary Structures

By Gary H. Everett

THE BOOK OF ACTS

August 2022 Edition

All Scripture quotations in English are taken from the *King James Version* (*Authorized Version*) unless otherwise noted. Some words have been emphasized by the author of this commentary using bold or italics.

All Old Testament Scripture quotations in the Hebrew text are taken from *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: with Westminster Hebrew Morphology*. Stuttgart; Glenside PA: German Bible Society; Westminster Seminary, 1996. Logos.

All New Testament Scripture quotations in the Greek text are taken from *Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition (with Morphology).* Eds. Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, M. Robinson, and Allen Wikgren. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993; 2006. Logos.

The Crucifixion image on the book cover was created by the author's daughter Victoria Everett in 2012.

© Gary H. Everett, 1981-2022

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any form without prior permission of the author.

The Three-Tiered Thematic Scheme Shaping the Book of Acts: Foundational, Structural, and Imperative

Foundational Theme – Justification through Faith in Jesus Christ

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
John 3:16

Structural Theme – The Eye-Witness Testimony of the Apostles that Jesus Christ is the Son of God

There is another that beareth witness of me;
and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.
Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.
John 5:32-33

Imperative Theme – The Office of the Apostle

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:
and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria,
and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
Acts 1:8

His Church

(1) We'll hear him say, Oh, church devine,
I am your Lord and you are mine.
Because that you have stood the test,
You are the ones that I love best.

I died for you on Calvary's tree,
That you from sin could be set free.
What greater love could one empart
To helpless souls, to broken hearts.

(2) You cost me all that Earth could give.
I died for you that you might live.
I did it all because that you believed in me
And I in you.

And now My Church you are My bride.
I'll keep you ever by My side.
From you My church I'll never stray.
I'll love you through the endless day.

(3) And so, dear Church its worth it all
To trust His Word, obey His call.
You will never regret the choice you made
For you, dear Church, the price He paid.

Thares nothing more that one could do
No greatest love for Me and you.
I'm satisfied to wait on Him
And never shall my hope grow dim.

(4) Oh blessed Church you are His choice
And you will be through endless day.
Just listen to the Spirit's voice
Oh, blessed church look up and pray.

The end

"Oh, Holy Spirit, go with this song and bless whoever sings it
as you did the one to which You first gave it.
All my love." Mother Everett.

(Flossie Powell Everett 1910-1987)

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ACTS 1
HISTORICAL SETTING 4
I. Historical Background: The Relationship of Luke and Acts 4
II. Authorship and Canonicity 6
III. Date and Place of Writing 24
IV. Recipients 33
LITERARY STYLE (GENRE) 37
I. Occasion 37
II. Genre and Characteristics of the Book 38
III. Purpose 42
THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 47
I. Thematic Scheme 47
II. Literary Structure 58
III. Outline of the Literary Structure 126
EXEGESIS AND COMMENTS 132
APPENDIX 1: THEMATIC SCHEME OF THE OLD TESTAMENT 406
APPENDIX 2: THEMATIC SCHEME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT 407
APPENDIX 3: CENTRAL IDEAS FOR SERMON PREPARATION 408
BIBLIOGRAPHY 427

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ACTS[1]

The Doctrinal Position on the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures - *Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures* supports the view of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the biblical text of the Holy Scriptures, meaning that every word originally written down by the authors in the sixty-six books of the Holy Canon were God-breathed when recorded by men, and that the Scriptures are therefore inerrant and infallible. Any view less than this contradicts the testimony of the Holy Scriptures themselves. For this reason, the Holy Scriptures contain both divine attributes and human attributes. While textual criticism engages with the variant readings of the biblical text, acknowledging its human attributes, faith in His Word acknowledges its divine attributes. These views demand the adherence of mankind to the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures above all else. The Holy Scriptures can only be properly interpreted by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, an aspect of biblical scholarship that is denied by liberal views, causing much misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the Holy Scriptures.

The Message of the Book of Acts – Based upon the view of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, each volume of *Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures* begins with introductory material that develops the central ideas of each book. These introductions present the central message in a three-tiered framework. This framework reveals the literary structure of the book.

The primary theme of the four Gospels and the book of Acts declare that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This theme lays a foundation within Luke-Acts upon which the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is built. The secondary theme of the book of Acts is the testimony of the apostles under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to take the Gospel to the nations. The secondary theme reveals through these eyewitnesses that Jesus, the Saviour of the world, must be preached to all nations. This secondary theme serves as the framework of this Gospel. Thus, the book of Acts can be outlined based upon the way the Gospel of Jesus began to be preached, first at Jerusalem, then Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. The third theme found within Luke is a supporting theme that calls us to take up our cross and follow Him, and all those who follow Him will suffer persecution as their Saviour suffered; for this is the message of the Cross, which gives muscle, or power, to the proclamation of Jesus Christ. A third theme that Luke weaves within his Gospel and the book of Acts is a responsive, or imperative theme calling its readers to follow Jesus Christ, although they will suffer persecution as their Saviour suffered on the Cross. In Luke-Acts the crucified life is seen in our obedience to Jesus' final commission to become witnesses of Him beginning where we are at unto the uttermost parts of the earth; for the plan of fulfilling this final command of Jesus Christ is laid out in Luke-Acts. This work best reflects the office and ministry of the apostle and prophet in the five-fold ministry; for this message of the Cross is what gives muscle, or power, to the proclamation of Jesus Christ. The book of Acts reveals how we serve the Lord by fulfilling the office and ministry of the apostle, which is one of the five-fold offices of the New Testament Church.

The Importance of the Message of the Book of Acts in Church History - The book of Acts is one of the most amazing records of mankind ever written. One commentator describes it as the incredible story of how God used such unlikely people to overcome such enormous obstacles using such simple means to achieve such astounding results. The impact of the early Church shook the known world of its time. J. B. Phillips says that in no comparable period of human history has "any small body of ordinary people so moved the world that

[1]The book introductions in *Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures* use a nine-level outline that follows an alphanumeric system: [omit] I. A. 1. a) (1) (a) i) α). While the first heading uses bold capital letters and no designation, the next seven levels follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*, while the ninth level incorporates the Greek alphabet. After the main heading, the other eight heading levels use bold and italicized headline style. See *The Chicago Manual of Style,* 15th edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, 1993, 2003), 275.

their enemies could say, with tears of rage in their eyes, that these men 'have turned the world upside down!'"[2]

This book serves as a master plan for any ministry to follow in achieving world evangelism. It also serves as a bridge between the testimonies of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ found in the Gospels and the ministry of the Holy Spirit of sanctification for the believer found in the Epistles. It is priceless in the fact that it is the only record that we have of the birth and beginning of the early Church in Jerusalem during its first thirty years. This record provides us the historical context in which the New Testament epistles were written.

The book of Acts also helps us to understand how the message of salvation made its transition from a Jewish culture into a universal message for all of mankind. We know from the testimony of Peter in Acts that this transition did not come easy. As a result of the Gospel being made available to all people, it provides us with the divine pattern of church order and growth and ministry that all people are to follow if we want God to work in our midst as we share the Gospel to a lost and dying world.

Why did God choose to record the missionary efforts of Paul the apostle to a greater degree than that of the other apostles of Jesus Christ, for they also went out and performed mighty signs and wonders in His name? Early church history tells us that they went to Alexandria and as far as India. Perhaps it is because Paul's life was the most faithful testimony of the grace of God and of the endurance and commitment to fulfill the Great Commission; or, perhaps because Western Civilization was built upon Christianity from the region that Paul ministered, whose faith and work laid the foundation for the Christian faith of this great civilization upon which we live today. Although the work of other apostles seems to find itself in the ancient past, Paul's efforts forever changed the face of Europe, which eventually embraced Christianity and carried the Gospel into our modern world. The development of Europe based upon Judeo-Christian beliefs became the foundation of what is called today "Western Civilization." This civilization has forever changed the face of societies around the world.

The Three-Fold Structure of the Book Introductions – In order to identify the central message of each book as a three-tiered statement, the book introductions in *Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures* address three major aspects of approaching the biblical text. These three aspects or sections are entitled (1) the Historical Setting, (2) the Literary Style (Genre), and (3) the Theological Framework.[3] These three sections of the book introductions coincide with the chronological development of historical and literary criticism.[4] More

---

[2]J. B. Phillips, *The Young Church in Action: The Acts of the Apostles Translated into Modern English* (London: Cox & Wyman Ltd., 1955), vii; cited by William MacDonald, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *Believer's Bible Commentary*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1995), 1576, Logos.

[3]Someone may associate these three categories with Hermann Gunkel's well-known three-fold approach to form criticism when categorizing the genre found within the book of Psalms: (1) "a common setting in life," (2) "thoughts and mood," (3) "literary forms." In addition, the *Word Biblical Commentary* inserts sections entitled "Form/Structure/Setting" preceding its comments. Although such similarities were not intentional, but rather coincidental, the author was aware of them and found encouragement from them when assigning the three-fold scheme of historical setting, literary style, and theological framework to his introductory material. See Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction,* trans. Thomas M. Horner, in *Biblical Series,* vol. 19, ed. John Reumann (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1967), 10; see also *Word Biblical Commentary,* eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas, Texas: Word Incorporated, 1989-2007).

[4]Historical criticism, a term often used to encompass the fields of critical studies called source, form, and redaction (composition) criticism, has been an important tool in the effort to bridge the gap between what the ancient author recorded in the biblical text and what the text means to the modern reader. Dissatisfaction with the weaknesses of existing, critical approaches for each generation of critical studies has been the driving force behind the "evolution" of modern biblical scholarship. For example, James Muilenburg's 1968 address to the Society of Biblical Literature expressed the need for a new approach to the biblical text that went "beyond form criticism" because "historical criticism had come to an impasse, chiefly because of the excesses of source analysis." He proposed a new methodology called redaction criticism. See James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 1, 18. With the recent focus upon literary criticism, Paul House says, "[L]iterary criticism arose at least in part because of impasses in older ways of explaining Scripture. Just as scholars began to look for a better way to understand the Scriptures when the various fields of historical criticism appeared to fragment the biblical text rather than reveal its

specifically, the twentieth century offered three major approaches to biblical research, generally recognized as source, form, and redaction (composition) criticism. These three approaches developed as scholars searched for better ways to understand the meaning of the biblical text and its application to the modern reader. Over the past three decades, biblical research has adopted a wide array of approaches collected under the field of study called literary criticism.[5] In the course of biblical scholarship, particularly in the writing of commentaries, book introductions have progressively become more complex through the advancement of critical studies in recent centuries. The book introductions found in *Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures* associate source criticism with the advancement of research in the book's historical setting; it associates form criticism with the advancement of research in a book's literary style; and it associates redaction (composition) criticism and literary criticism with the advancement of research in the theological framework of a book. These three aspects of introductory material serve my readers as an important foundation for understanding what the authors of the books of the Holy Scriptures were saying to their audience under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The book summaries within the third section of this introductory material include exegetical, theological, and homiletical ideas for each pericope as a guide for those who desire to preach or teach through this book. These central ideas reflect homiletical research by serving as a summary of the central ideas of the book's theological framework. This framework of a book is the key to bridging the difficult gap between exegesis and homiletics. In other words, these ideas help the student of God's Word to take that final step to not only understand what the ancient author meant to say to his original audience, but to apply the meaning of the biblical text to a modern audience. The appendices contain a collection of these exegetical, theological, and homiletical ideas to serve as an outline for those preparing sermons and lessons.

---

intended meaning, scholars today are searching for new ways to identify hermeneutical sections and their respective meanings." See Paul R. House, "The Rise and Current Status of Literary Criticism of the Old Testament," in *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism,* ed. Paul R. House, in *Sources for Biblical and Theological Study,* vol. 2 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 3, 7; Grant Osborne, "Redaction Criticism," *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation,* eds. David Alan Black and David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 199; In summarizing the historical development of critical approaches to Mark's Gospel, Bruce Bain begins by saying, "The apparent lack or sufficiency in one method seems to have given impetus for the birth of the next method." See Bruce Alan Bain, "Literary Surface Structures in Mark: Identifying Christology as the Purpose of the Gospel," PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1997 [on-line]; accessed 29 August 2013; available from http://search.proquest.com.aaron.swbts.edu/pqdthss/docview/304487757/1402E6CEA4242E4E21D/1?accountid=7073; Internet, 4.

[5]Jeffery Weima offers an excellent discussion on literary criticism. The surveys of Stanley Porter and Craig Blomberg concerning the various sub-disciplines that make up today's literary criticism expose the reason for such a variety of literary structures found in today's biblical commentaries and studies. In other words, these different approaches of literary criticism are the reason behind the variations in proposed literary structures of a book found in modern commentaries. See Jeffery A. D. Weima, "Literary Criticism," in *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues,* eds. David Alan Black and David S. Dockery (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2001), 150-151; Stanley E. Porter, "Literary Approaches to the New Testament: From Formalism to Deconstruction and Back," in *Approaches to New Testament Studies*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and David Tombs (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 77-128; and Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels,* 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 87-96.

HISTORICAL SETTING

"In-depth study of the historical setting is indispensable for sound exegesis."[6]
(William Warren)

"We dare not divorce our study from understanding the historical setting of every passage of Scripture if we are going to come to grips with the truth and message of the Bible."[7]
(J. Hampton Keathley)

Each book of the Holy Scriptures is cloaked within a unique historical setting. An examination of this setting is useful in the interpretation of the book because it provides the historical context of a passage of Scripture under examination. However, it helps when reading book introductions to understand that the discussions concerning historical setting for the books of the Bible have evolved through the centuries from simple to complex as biblical research has progressed.

Source critical studies that emerged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were concerned in its early stages with investigating the sources used by the Gospel writers because of their parallel passages. This interest spread to other relevant books of the Bible as well, such as the Pentateuch. These studies necessitated a re-evaluation of the various aspects of the historical setting of the books of the Bible. Source criticism required biblical scholarship to give greater attention to the book's title, historical background, authorship, date and place of writing, and recipients when searching for the original sources of various passages within the book. Interest in source criticism stimulated more extensive book introductions in commentaries, which became characteristic of this period of biblical research as scholars argued about various proposed views of the historical setting. Prior to this era, the book introductions to biblical commentaries were generally brief because they simply reflected the traditions handed down from the church fathers. Therefore, *source criticism* has made positive contributions to biblical scholarship despite its widespread use by liberal theologians who argued against divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Its positive effects are seen as conservative scholars are able to these various aspects of a book's historical setting to defend the integrity of the Scriptures.

This discussion supports the early Church tradition that the Luke the physician wrote Luke-Acts in Rome while Paul was in his first Roman imprisonment during the early 60's as a legal brief to defend Paul in court. As evidence to support this claim, this section on the historical setting addresses the issues of (I) Authorship and Canonicity, (II) Date and Place of Writing, and (III) Recipients.

I. Historical Background: The Relationship of Luke and Acts

Most scholars believe that the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts were originally written as a two-part work, and circulated as such along with the other three Gospels until the late first or early second century. It was perhaps at this time that Acts received its descriptive title as the "Acts of the Apostles" as distinctive from the Four Gospels. The Gospel of Luke records the events in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ while the book of Acts can be viewed the first recorded history of the early Church. While the Gospel of Luke covers a historical period of about thirty-years, from Jesus' birth (c. 4 B.C.) until His crucifixion and resurrection (c. A.D. 30), the book of Acts covers a similar amount of time, from Jesus' ascension (c. A.D. 30) until Paul's two-year Roman imprisonment (c. A.D. 64). During these thirty plus years, the early Church turned the world upside down, as the Jews of Thessalonica said in Acts 17:6, "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." The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts records the most important event in the history of mankind.

---

[6]William F. Warren, Jr., "Interpreting New Testament Narrative: The Gospels and Acts," in *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture,* second edition, eds. Bruce Corley, Steve W. Lemke, and Grant Lovejoy (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 323.

[7]J. Hampton Keathley, III, "Introduction and Historical Setting for Elijah," (Bible.org) [on-line]; accessed 23 May 2012; available from http://bible.org/seriespage/introduction-and-historical-setting-elijah; Internet.

A. Internal Evidence - Internal evidence suggests that the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts were written by a single author. This evidence is seen in their similar dedications/prefaces, in the continuity that binds their narrative stories together, in similar vocabulary and literary style, in similar themes and structure, as well as their size.

1. The Dedication/Preface - We find literary evidence of a single authorship within the dedications or prefaces to the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. Goodspeed tells us that the preface to Luke's Gospel can serve as an introduction to both volumes, with the preface to the book of Acts making a reference to the Gospel of Luke, and with both prefaces being addressed to the same Theophilus (Lk 1:3, Act 1:1).[8] In support of the common authorship of Luke-Acts as a two-book work, I. Howard Marshall says such literary divisions were common in ancient times. He cites a similar composition by Josephus, who begins his second book of an apology *Against Apion* with similar wording used by Luke, saying, "In the first volume of this work, my most esteemed Epaphroditus, I demonstrated the antiquity of our race . . . I also challenged the statements of Manetho, Chaeremon, and some others. I shall now proceed to refute the rest of the authors who have attacked us." (*Against Apion*, 2.1)[9]

These two dedications/prefaces reveal that the purpose of this two-volume work is to record the development and spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth. In addition, the preface of the later work claims common authorship to the former work, the Gospel of Luke. Both use the first person singular to introduce both books.

2. Continuity - Both books have continuity with one another. Goodspeed also explains that Jesus' closing remarks in Luke 24:44-49 tell us that there is more to this story in the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with the Gospel closes before developing this important part of the history of the early Church. When Jesus commanded His disciples to preach the Gospel to all nations beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47) and to tarry in Jerusalem unto they be endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49) He is making a clear reference to the contents of the book of Acts.[10] Since the Gospel of Luke does not reach this goal of spreading the Gospel, we must rely upon an additional volume to fulfill our Lord's commission. Thus, the book of Acts opens with the fulfillment of power coming from on high and closes with the fulfillment of the spread of the Gospel to Greco-Roman world of its day. Thus, the author clearly links these two writings in an unmistakable way.

3. Vocabulary and Literary Style - Luke and Acts are closely related in vocabulary, syntax, and style. Plummer tells us that if one compares special, peculiar, and characteristic words, phrases and constructions found in the two writings, he would see the same literary peculiarities.

The vocabulary of Luke and Acts suggests a common authorship. For example, Adolf Harnack says the temporal use of the Greek word ὡς is used forty-eight times in Luke-Acts, while not being used a single time in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.[11] He says that there are forty-nine verbs found in Luke-Acts that are not found in Matthew, Mark, and John.[12] William Hobart lists three hundred thirteen (313) Greek words in his index that are either unique to Luke-Acts or they are used in "a medical sense" unlike the other Evangelists.[13] The phrase "kingdom of God" is used frequently throughout both books. Philip Schaff tells us that there are about fifty words common to Luke-Acts that are not found anywhere

---

[8]Edgar J. Goodspeed, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1937), 181.

[9]I. Howard Marshall, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary,* in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,* vol. 5, ed. Leon Morris (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 19, Logos.

[10]Edgar J. Goodspeed, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1937), 181-182.

[11]Adolf Harnack, *Luke the Physician: Author of the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. J. R. Wilkinson, in *Crown Theological Library* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), 40.

[12]Adolf Harnack, *Luke the Physician: Author of the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. J. R. Wilkinson, in *Crown Theological Library* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908), 20.

[13]William Kirk Hobart, *The Medical Language of St. Luke* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1882), 299-305.

else in the New Testament.[14] The Greek word for "grace" (χαρις) does not occur at all in Matthew and Mark, while being used in John's Gospel four times in a single passage (1:14-17). However, it occurs eight times throughout Luke's Gospel and seventeen times in the book of Acts. It is also a word that is peculiar to the Pauline epistles, being used hundreds of times.

Luke and Acts show a similar literary style. Both books show a polished style of Greek that none of the other New Testament books equal, and they both place emphasis on individual characters in the narratives.

4. Theme and Structure – Luke-Acts share common themes as well as common structures. We are able to see similar themes and structure in respect to the author's descriptions of events and places, the arrangement of passages, and the author's points of view.

Regarding similar themes, we observe that the preaching of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in the book of Acts is based upon the events of Luke's Gospel. In addition, both books attempt to bridge the gap between Jews and Gentiles by presenting the Gospel as a message for all people. F. F. Bruce gives a number of examples of similar themes or motifs: a) universal application to all nations, b) sympathy for Jews and Gentiles, c) emphasis upon the role of women, d) similar apologetic tendencies, e) Jesus' resurrection appearances limited to Judea, f) Christ's appearance before Herod Antipas only mentioned in Luke and Acts.[15]

Regarding similar literary structures, both books are structured around localities. The Gospel of Luke begins Jesus' ministry in Galilee, then focuses on His journey to Jerusalem, discusses His ministry in this city, and reaches a climax with His death in Jerusalem and resurrection. The book of Acts begins with the Gospel being preached in Jerusalem, spreading to Judea, then Samaria and reaches a climax in Rome. In addition, both Jesus and Paul are well received by the general populace. Both are rejected by the Jewish leaders. Both are seized by an angry mob. Both undergo several trials. As Luke shows a lengthy trip of Paul to Rome, so does he write of a lengthy journey about Jesus to Jerusalem. Both faced the same fate of a trial and judgment. Finally, both books take the time to date events using historical references. His careful use of places and names reveals Luke's intent for accuracy. He intends to add credibility to his story using these details.

5. Size - The equal size of this two-volume work of Luke-Acts indicates a relationship between the two. The material contained in these volumes seems to have been divided into two equal parts, with each part fitting conveniently into the average length of an ancient papyrus roll. Daniel B. Wallace says, "Customarily, the longest usable scroll was about thirty-five feet. Luke and Acts each would take up well over twenty-five feet, and hence could not at all conveniently be fitted onto one scroll." This means that these two works would have been written upon two scrolls, since they could not have fit together on even the longest scroll of the day.[16]

B. External Evidence - Besides the internal evidence, there is unanimous agreement with the early Church fathers as to the single authorship of Luke-Acts. As a result, the internal and external evidence supporting Luke and Acts as a single work enables us to gather information about one volume and apply it to the other volume. This we will do in the introduction of these two works as we discuss authorship, date and place of writing, recipients, occasion, purpose, theme and characteristics.

II. Authorship and Canonicity

[14]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 725.

[15]F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Tyndale, 1951), 2; in Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 115.

[16]Daniel B. Wallace, *Acts: Introduction, Argument, and Outline* (Biblical Studies Foundation, Richardson, Texas, 1998) [on-line]; accessed 6 July 2010; available from; Internet, 9.

In discussing the evidence for the authorship of the books of the New Testament, one must also deal with the issue of canonicity since apostolic authority was one of the primary conditions for a book to be accepted into the biblical canon of the early church. This section evaluates three phases in the development of the canonicity of the book of Acts: apostolic authority, church orthodoxy, and catholicity. The first phase of canonization is called *apostolic authority* and is characterized by the use of the New Testament writings of the apostles by the earliest church fathers in the defense of the Christian faith (1st and 2nd centuries). The second phase of canonization is called *church orthodoxy* and is characterized by the recognition of the apostolic writings into their distinctive groups (Gospels, Pauline Epistles, Catholic Epistles), as well as their use among the churches as the rules of the Christian faith (late 2nd century through 3rd century). The third phase of canonization is characterized by the distribution and general acceptance of the books of the New Testament by the catholic church at large, seen most distinctly in the lists of canonical books made during the early church councils (4th century).

A. Apostolic Authority - Scholars generally agree that the New Testament canon went through several phrases of development in early church history prior to its solidification in the fourth century. F. B. Westcott says the earliest phase is considered the apostolic age in which "the writings of the Apostles were regarded from the first as invested with singular authority, as the true expression, if not the original source, of Christian doctrine and Christian practice." He says the "elements of the Catholic faith" were established during this period in church history.[17] At this time, the early Christian Greek apologists defended the catholic faith during the rise of the heresies of the second century using the writings that carried the weight of apostolic authority. The church established its rules of conduct upon the books that were either written by the apostles themselves, such as Matthew, John, Peter, and Paul, or directly sanctioned by them, such as Mark and Luke, the assistances of Peter and Paul respectively, as well as the epistles of James and Jude, the brothers of the Lord Jesus Christ, who were endorsed by the apostles because of their key leadership roles in the early church. Thus, apostolic authority was the primary element in selecting the canonical books of the New Testament.

Both internal and external evidence strongly support Lucan authorship. In fact, its authorship was never contested until modern times, when several radical schools of thought emerged, whose views are no longer taken seriously by evangelical Bible scholars today. The following discussion argues in support of Lucan authorship using (1) internal evidence from the book itself, (2) the writings of the early church fathers as external evidence, and (3) the confirmation of ancient manuscripts containing the book's title.

> ***1. Internal Evidence to Support Lucan Authorship -*** Although the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts do not declare their author within the text, there is overwhelming evidence that Luke, the beloved physician and companion to Paul the apostle, wrote these two books. The lack of an internal identification of author of these books does not detract from the strong evidence that supports Lucan authorship. In fact, none of the four Gospels state their authors. A further observation may be noted that some of the New Testament apocryphal gospels, which are recognized as merely imitations, frequently attribute themselves to apostolic authorship in the body of these writing. In contrast to the Gospels' lack of internal identification, such outright claims help to identify these apocryphal writings as unauthentic in origin.

[17]Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General History of the Canon of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1875), 21. The Muratorian Canon (c. A.D. 200) alludes to the criteria of apostolic authority for the New Testament writings, saying, "The *Pastor*, moreover, did Hermas write very recently in our times in the city of Rome, while his brother bishop Pius sat in the chair of the Church of Rome. And therefore it also ought to be read; but it cannot be made public in the Church to the people, nor *placed* among the prophets, as their number is complete, nor among the apostles to the end of time." (*Fragments of Caius* 3.3) (*ANF* 5); Corey Keating says, "In the first two centuries, 'apostolic authority' was the important factor in deciding to keep or reject a particular writing." See Corey Keating, "The Criteria Used for Developing the New Testament Canon in the First Four Centuries of the Christian Church," Research Paper, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2000 [on-line]; accessed 15 April 2012; available from http://www.ntgreek.org/SeminaryPapers/ChurchHistory/Criteria%20for%20Development%20of%20the%20NT%20Canon%20in%20First%20Four%20Centuries.pdf; Internet, 2.

A close examination of Luke-Acts reveals a number of clues as to their authorship. One of the first observations that we can make about the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts is that they do not have Jewish overtones like the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John. Thus, the author of Luke-Acts was not a Palestinian Jew like the other three Evangelists. From the text we can conclude that he was a second-generation Christian who had access to those who were eyewitnesses of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. The fact that the author was well educated and skilled in the Hellenistic Greek language leads us to the conclusion that he was a Greek and possible Gentile proselyte to Judaism before conversion to Christianity. Finally, the common authorship of Luke-Acts and the "we" passages in the book of Acts indicate that Luke the beloved physician was the author of these two books of the New Testament.

a) The Author Was a Second-Generation Christian - The opening dedication of the Gospel of Luke suggests that the author was a second-generation Christian, who was attempting to compile accurate testimonies of those who had been with Christ Jesus. In other words, he was not an eyewitness of the events in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ

b) The Author Had Access to Firsthand Accounts - The preface tells us that the author had access to firsthand testimonies of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. This tells us that he was in a position of influence with the early Church to gather such vital information. Such a person would have had to be a Jewish Christian or a Gentile converted to Christianity.

c) The Author Was an Educated Man - The preface of the Gospel of Luke tells us that the author had done a thorough investigation into the facts surrounding the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and had rejected many written accounts as inaccurate. The author's references to dates in history and to geography tell us that he was well-educated and well-traveled in this first century world. This leads us to conclude that the author was a man who was educated enough to do such research and to make such conclusions.

d) The Author Was Skilled in Hellenistic Greek - Because the literary quality of the Greek language in Luke's Gospel is the highest of any New Testament writing, it implies that the author was of Greek origin. This is because the Jews did not easily embrace the Greek culture. The Gospel of Luke shows two Greek styles, that of classical Greek and Greek Hebraisms. Thus, the author of Luke shows that he had an understanding of the Jewish culture as well as of the Greek culture. This implies that the author was very possibly a Greek proselyte and not a Jew.

e) The Phrase "Their Tongue" Suggests the Author was a Gentile - The author refers to the Jewish language as "their tongue," saying, "And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called *in their proper tongue*, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood." (Acts 1:19) Some scholars suggest that implies that the author was not a Jew, but such a conclusion is not justified.

f) The "We" passages in Acts Indicate Luke as the Author - One of the more obvious evidences as to the authorship of Luke-Acts can be seen in the well-known "we" passages. (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16). These verses tell us that the author actually traveled with Paul the apostle on some of his missionary journeys. In fact, three-fifths of the book of Acts is devoted to Paul's missionary journeys. The brevity of the account of the first missionary journey, along with the lack of "we" passages in this account indicates that the author did not accompany Paul on this first trip. But the lengthy details of the other missionary journeys, along with their "we" passages, indicate that the author was an eyewitness who was able to give greater detail to these events. These particular accounts with "we" passages include the second and third missionary journeys, Paul's trip to Rome and his confrontation with the Jews at Jerusalem. An author who was writing at a later date than Paul would have given a more balanced description of Paul's life, rather than the disproportionate one given in the book of Acts.

In addition, the fact that Acts mentions many of Paul's traveling companions by name eliminates them as a possible author. For example, Acts 20:4 mentions "Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus."

"Silas" is mentioned thirteen times in the book of Acts; "Mark" is mentioned four times; "Jesus," or "Justus," is mentioned one time. If we eliminate this list of travel companions, we come up with a few men who were with Paul during his imprisonment in Rome (Epaphras, Demas, Luke, and Epaphroditus). The fact that Demas later abandoned Paul disqualified him as a possible author. Thus, Luke is one of three possible authors by this process of elimination.

One "we" passage gives us a clue to the fact that the author was not a Jew. In Acts 16:16-24 the author begins the story of how Paul cast out a spirit of divination from a damsel. He writes, "as we went to prayer," and "the same followed Paul and us." Once the men of the city seized them, the author writes, "they caught Paul and Silas," and "these men, being Jews." This passage of Scripture implies that the author was not seized because he was not a Jew.[18]

Finally, three New Testament passages indicate Luke was a companion of Paul's on his missionary journeys (Col 4:14, Phile 1:24), and he was with him during his second Roman imprisonment (2 Tim 4:11). Thus, he seems to have spent more time with Paul than either Epaphras or Epaphroditus. Some scholars suggest that these last two names refer to the same individual, with one name being in its abbreviated form.

Of the three possible candidates for the authorship of Luke-Acts, internal evidence supports Luke as the most likely author.

2. Patristic Support of Lucan Authorship - During this early phase of the development of the New Testament canon, the writings of the early church fathers provide external evidence of the authorship of these books as they as defended the doctrines of the Christian faith through apostolic authority. The early church fathers were in universal agreement that Luke was the author of the Gospel of Luke as well as the book of Acts. Many of the early church fathers directly affirmed Luke's authorship and tell us that the authenticity of this Gospel was not in question. Therefore, the external evidence for Lucan authorship is very strong.

a) Marcion (d. c. A.D. 160) - The heretic named Marcion, the son of a bishop of Sinope, attempted to write a simplified version of the Gospel of Paul by accepting only ten Pauline epistles and an edited version of the Gospel of Luke (A. D. 140-160). Although his writings are lost, some of the early Church fathers, particularly Tertullian (A.D. 160-225), offer us enough evidence to partially reconstruct his theories and writings. For example, in his work *The Five Books Against Marcion,* Tertullian argues extensively against Marcion's rejection of many of the books of the New Testament. Liefeld and Pao tell us that in this condensed edition, Marcion acknowledged Luke as the author of the third Gospel.[19]

b) Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165) - *Justin Martyr* appears to have known about the four Gospels, as he frequently refers to the "memoirs of the apostles," and he tells us that they were also called "Gospels" as early as his time.

> "For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them;" (*First Apology* 66)

[18]Daniel B. Wallace, *Acts: Introduction, Argument, and Outline* (Biblical Studies Foundation, Richardson, Texas, 1998) [on-line]; accessed 6 July 2010; available from; Internet, 5.

[19]Walter L. Liefeld and David W. Pao, *Luke,* in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Revised Edition)*, vol. 10, eds. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 2007), 23-24, Logos.

> "For in the memoirs which I say were drawn up by His apostles and those who followed them, [it is recorded] that His sweat fell down like drops of blood while He was praying, and saying, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass:'" (*Dialogue of Justin* 103)

Justin Martyr also tells us that the Gospels were read during assemblies along with the Old Testament books of the prophets. This tells us that the early Church had equaled the Gospels to other divinely inspired Scriptures.

> "And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things." (*First Apology* 67)

c) Muratorian Canon (c. A.D. 200) - *The Muratorian Canon*, an ancient Latin document dated around A.D. 200, is considered the earliest attempt at listing the canonical books of the New Testament. It was discovered in the Ambrosian Library in Milan and formerly in the monastery of Bobbio. It tells us that Luke wrote his Gospel under the influence of Paul the apostle.

> "The Acts of all the apostles have been written in one book. Addressing the most excellent Theophilus, Luke includes one by one the things which were done in his own presence, as he shows plainly by omitting the passion of Peter and also Paul's departure when he was setting out from the city for Spain." (*Fragments of Caius* 3.1)

d) Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200) - *Irenaeus* tells us that Luke wrote his Gospel by relying on the testimony of Paul the apostle:

> "Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia." (*Against Heresies* 3.1.1)

Irenaeus later gives us a very lengthy defense for Luke's authorship of his Gospel and the book of Acts, stating that he was an inseparable companion of Paul:

> "But that this Luke was inseparable from Paul, and his fellow-labourer in the Gospel, he himself clearly evinces, not as a matter of boasting, but as bound to do so by the truth itself. For he says that when Barnabas, and John who was called Mark, had parted company from Paul, and sailed to Cyprus, "we came to Troas;" and when Paul had beheld in a dream a man of Macedonia, saying, "Come into Macedonia, Paul, and help us," "immediately," he says, "we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, understanding that the Lord had called us to preach the Gospel unto them. Therefore, sailing from Troas, we directed our ship's course towards Samothracia." And then he carefully indicates all the rest of their journey as far as Philippi, and how they delivered their first address: "for, sitting down," he says, "we spake unto the women who had assembled;" and certain believed, even a great many. And again does he say, "But we sailed from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came to Troas, where we abode seven days." And all the remaining [details] of his course with Paul he recounts, indicating with all diligence both places, and cities, and number of days, until they went up to Jerusalem; and what befell Paul there, how he was sent to Rome in bonds; the name of the centurion who took him in charge; and the signs of the ships, and how they made shipwreck; and the island upon which they escaped, and how they received kindness there, Paul healing the chief man of that island; and how they sailed from

> thence to Puteoli, and from that arrived at Rome; and for what period they sojourned at Rome. As Luke was present at all these occurrences, he carefully noted them down in writing, so that he cannot be convicted of falsehood or boastfulness, because all these [particulars] proved both that he was senior to all those who now teach otherwise, and that he was not ignorant of the truth. That he was not merely a follower, but also a fellow-labourer of the apostles, but especially of Paul, Paul has himself declared also in the Epistles, saying: "Demas hath forsaken me, . . . and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me." From this he shows that he was always attached to and inseparable from him. And again he says, in the Epistle to the Colossians: "Luke, the beloved physician, greets you." But surely if Luke, who always preached in company with Paul, and is called by him "the beloved," and with him performed the work of an evangelist, and was entrusted to hand down to us a Gospel, learned nothing different from him (Paul), as has been pointed out from his words, how can these men, who were never attached to Paul, boast that they have learned hidden and unspeakable mysteries?" (*Against Heresies* 3.14.1)

Irenaeus quotes from the Gospel of Luke and states Luke as its author.

> "For when He came to be baptized, He had not yet completed His thirtieth year, but was beginning to be about thirty years of age (for thus Luke, who has mentioned His years, has expressed it: 'Now Jesus was, as it were, beginning to be thirty years old,' when He came to receive baptism); and, [according to these men,] He preached only one year reckoning from His baptism." (*Against Heresies* 2.22.5)

Irenaeus quotes numerous times from the book of Acts. Here are a few examples:

> "Simon the Samaritan was that magician of whom Luke, the disciple and follower of the apostles, says, "But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who beforetime used magical arts in that city, and led astray the people of Samaria, declaring that he himself was some great one . . ." (*Against Heresies* 1.23.1) See Acts 8:9, "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:"

> "It appears probable enough that this man possesses a demon as his familiar spirit, by means of whom he seems able to prophesy . . ." (*Against Heresies* 1.13.3) See Acts 16:16, "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:"

> "Then, at last, He came on to death itself, that He might be 'the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence,' the Prince of life, existing before all, and going before all." (*Against Heresies* 2.22.4) See Acts 3:15, "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."

> "The Apostle Peter, therefore, after the resurrection of the Lord, and His assumption into the heavens, being desirous of filling up the number of the twelve apostles, and in electing into the place of Judas any substitute who should be chosen by God, thus addressed those who were present: "Men [and] brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was made guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us . . . Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and, His bishop-rick let another take." (*Against Heresies* 3.12.1) (See Acts 1:16-20)

e) The Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Luke (A.D. 160-180) - The Anti-Marcionite Prologues to the Gospels and New Testament epistles were written by the church in Rome in response to the publication of Marcion's heretical New Testament canon (c. A.D. 140). These prologues were

placed in several early Latin manuscripts and since found their way into the Vulgate. The prologue to Luke's Gospel tells us that the Luke was the writer of his Gospel:

> "Indeed Luke was an Antiochene Syrian, a doctor by profession, a disciple of the apostles: later however he followed Paul until his martyrdom, serving the Lord blamelessly. He never had a wife, he never fathered children, and died at the age of eighty-four, full of the Holy Spirit, in Boetia. Therefore --- although gospels had already been written ---- indeed by Matthew in Judaea but by Mark in Italy ---- moved by the Holy Spirit he wrote down this gospel in the parts of Achaia, signifying in the preface that the others were written before his, but also that it was of the greatest importance for him to expound with the greatest diligence the whole series of events in his narration for the Greek believers, so that they would not be led astray by the lure of Jewish fables, or, seduced by the fables of the heretics and stupid solicitations, fall away from the truth. And so at once at the start he took up the extremely necessary [story] from the birth of John, who is the beginning of the gospel, the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ, and was a companion in the perfecting of the people, likewise in the introducing of baptism and a companion in martyrdom. Of this disposition the prophet Malachi, one of the twelve, certainly makes mention. And indeed afterwards the same Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles. Later the apostle John wrote the Apocalypse on the island of Patmos, and then the Gospel in Asia."[20]

f) Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215) - *Clement of Alexandria* attributes Luke to the book of Acts in his own writings by quoting from Acts 17:22.

> "It remains that we understand, then, the Unknown, by divine grace, and by the word alone that proceeds from Him; as Luke in the Acts of the Apostles relates that Paul said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." (*The Stromata* 5.12)

g) Tertullian (A.D. 160-225) – *Tertullian* makes one of the earliest and clearest references to the authors of the four Gospels. He refers to John and Matthew as apostles and calls Luke and Mark "apostolic men" in the context of the writings of the four Gospels:

> "Of the apostles, therefore, John and Matthew first instill faith into us; whilst of apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it afterwards. These all start with the same principles of the faith, so far as relates to the one only God the Creator and His Christ, how that He was born of the Virgin, and came to fulfil the law and the prophets. Never mind if there does occur some variation in the order of their narratives, provided that there be agreement in the essential matter of the faith, in which there is disagreement with Marcion. Marcion, on the other hand, you must know, ascribes no author to his Gospel, as if it could not be allowed him to affix a title to that from which it was no crime (in his eyes) to subvert the very body." (*Against Marcion* 4.2)

Again he affirms the Gospel of Luke to be his own work:

> "The same authority of the apostolic churches will afford evidence to the other Gospels also, which we possess equally through their means, and according to their usage--I mean the Gospels of John and Matthew--whilst that which Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter's whose interpreter Mark was. For even Luke's form of the Gospel men unusually ascribe to Paul. And it may well seem that the works which disciples publish belong to their masters. Well, then, Marcion ought to be called to a strict account concerning these (other Gospels) also, for having omitted them, and insisted in preference on Luke; as if they, too, had not had free course in the

[20]*The Anti-Marcionite Prologues to the Gospels*, trans. Roger Pearse (2006) [on-line]; accessed 16 April 2010; available from http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/anti_marcionite_prologues.htm; Internet. The translation was made from the text published by Donatien De Bruyne, "Les plus anciens prologues latines des Évangiles," *Revue Bénédictine,* vol. 40 (October 1928): 193-214. See also R. G. Heard, "The Old Gospel Prologues," *Journal of Theological Studies* 6 (1955): 1-16. See also Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, c1990).

> churches, as well as Luke's Gospel, from the beginning. Nay, it is even more credible that they existed from the very beginning; for, being the work of apostles, they were prior, and coeval in origin with the churches themselves." (*Against Marcion* 4.5)

In his work *On Fasting*, *Tertullian* frequently quotes from and alludes to the book of Acts, and name Luke as the author.

> ". . . since even prayers the ninth hour generally concludes, after Peter's example, which is recorded in the Acts." (*On Fasting* 2)

> "Finally, granting that upon the centurion Cornelius, even *before baptism*, the honourable gift of the Holy Spirit, together with the gift of prophecy besides, had hastened to descend, we see that *his fasts* had been heard." (*On Fasting* 8)

> "Nay, but you would more easily find that Peter at the *sixth hour* had, for the sake of taking food, gone up first on the roof to pray; so that the sixth hour of the day may the rather be made the limit to this duty, which (in Peter's case) was apparently to finish that duty, after prayer. Further: since in the self-same commentary of Luke the *third* hour is demonstrated as an hour of prayer, about which hour it was that they who had received the initiatory gift of the Holy Spirit were held for drunkards; and the *sixth*, at which Peter went up on the roof; and the *ninth*, at which they entered the temple . . ." (*On Fasting* 10)

h) Hippolytus (A.D. 170-236) - *Hippolytus* calls Luke one of the Evangelists.

> "Mark the evangelist, bishop of Alexandria. Luke the evangelist - These two belonged to the seventy disciples who were scattered by the offence of the word which Christ spoke, 'Except a man eat my flesh, and drink my blood, he is not worthy of me.' But the one being induced to return to the Lord by Peter's instrumentality, and the other by Paul's, they were honoured to preach that Gospel on account of which they also suffered martyrdom, the one being burned, and the other being crucified on an olive tree." (*Appendix to the Works of Hippolytus 49: The Same Hippolytus on the Seventy Apostles* 14-15) (*ANF* 5)

i) Origen (A.D. 185-254) - *Origen* tells us that Luke wrote the book of Acts.

> "Judas of Galilee also, as Luke relates in the Acts of the Apostles, wished to call himself some great personage, as did Theudas before him." (*Against Celsus* 6.11)

Eusebius quotes Origen as telling us that Luke wrote the third Gospel as well as the book of Acts.

> "Among the four Gospels, which are the only indisputable ones in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition that the first was written by Matthew, who was once a publican, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, and it was prepared for the converts from Judaism, and published in the Hebrew language. The second is by Mark, who composed it according to the instructions of Peter, who in his Catholic epistle acknowledges him as a son, saying, 'The church that is at Babylon elected together with you, saluteth you, and so doth Marcus, my son.' And the third by Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, and composed for Gentile converts. Last of all that by John . . . The statement of some who have gone before us is that Clement, bishop of the Romans, wrote the epistle, and of others that Luke, the author of the Gospel and the Acts, wrote it." (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.25.4-6, 14)

j) Eusebius (A.D. 260-340) - *Eusebius* tells us Luke wrote both the Gospel bearing his name as well as the book of Acts.

> "That Paul preached to the Gentiles and laid the foundations of the churches 'from Jerusalem round about even unto Illyricum,' is evident both from his own words, and from the account

> which Luke has given in the Acts . . . But Luke, who was of Antiochian parentage and a physician by profession, and who was especially intimate with Paul and well acquainted with the rest of the apostles, has left us, in two inspired books, proofs of that spiritual healing art which he learned from them. One of these books is the Gospel, which he testifies that he wrote as those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered unto him, all of whom, as he says, he followed accurately from the first. The other book is the Acts of the Apostles which he composed not from the accounts of others, but from what he had seen himself." (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.4.1, 7)

He also tells us that when the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke were handed to John the apostle for his approval, he accepted them as authentic and truthful.

> "And when Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say that John, who had employed all his time in proclaiming the Gospel orally, finally proceeded to write for the following reason. The three Gospels already mentioned having come into the hands of all and into his own too, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness; but that there was lacking in them an account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of his ministry." (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.24.6)

k) Athanasius (A.D. 296-373) - St. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, supported Lukan authorship for the books of Luke and Acts by quoting from them while declaring "as Luke wrote". He quotes from Acts 1:1.

> "All things whatsoever our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as Luke wrote, 'both hath done and taught,' He effected after having appeared for our salvation; for He came, as John saith, 'not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.'" (*To the Bishops of Egypt* 1.1)

He also quotes from Luke 17:2.

> "And the party of Ursacius, who were at the bottom of all this, did not understand what wrath they were storing up (Rom. ii. 5) against themselves, as our Lord says by His saints, 'Woe unto them, through whom My Name is blasphemed among the Gentiles' (Is. lii. 5; Rom. ii. 24); and by His own mouth in the Gospels (Matt. xviii. 6), 'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea, than,' as Luke adds, 'that he should offend one of these little ones' (Luke xvii. 2)." (*Councils of Ariminum and Selecia* 1.2)

He also quotes from Luke 2:1.

> "And as according to the Evangelist Luke, there 'was made a decree' (Luke ii. 1) concerning the taxing, and this decree before was not, but began from those days in which it was made by its framer, they also in like manner, by writing, 'The Faith is now published,' shewed that the sentiments of their heresy are novel, and were not before." (*Councils of Ariminum and Selecia* 1.4)

He lists Luke among the four Evangelists.

> "Again it is not tedious to speak of the [books] of the New Testament. These are, the four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Afterwards, the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles (called Catholic), seven, viz. of James, one; of Peter, two; of John, three; after these, one of Jude. In addition, there are fourteen Epistles of Paul, written in this order. The first, to the Romans; then two to the Corinthians; after these, to the Galatians; next, to the Ephesians; then to the Philippians; then to the Colossians; after these, two to the Thessalonians, and that to the

> Hebrews; and again, two to Timothy; one to Titus; and lastly, that to Philemon. And besides, the Revelation of John" (*Festal Letters* 39.5)

Spence and Lang cite Pseudo-Athanasius (4^{th} -6^{th} c.) as saying that the Gospel of Luke was dictated by the apostle Paul.

> "The Gospel according to Luke was dictated by Paul the apostle, but written and put out by Luke, the blessed apostle and physician." (*Synopsis of the Sacred Scriptures*) (*PG* 28 col. 433A)[21]

l) Jerome (A.D. 342-420) - *Jerome* tells us that Luke wrote the Gospel bearing his name as well as the Acts of the Apostles as an eyewitness of the journeys of Paul. In the early parts of the book, he relied upon Paul's testimonies and the testimonies of other apostles.

> "Luke, a physician of Antioch as his writings indicate, was not unskilled in the Greek language. An adherent of the apostle Paul, and companion of all his journeying, he wrote a Gospel, concerning which the same Paul says, "We send with him a brother whose praise in the gospel is among all the churches" and to the Colossians "Luke the beloved physician salutes you," and to Timothy "Luke only is with me." He also wrote another excellent volume to which he prefixed the title Acts of the Apostles, a history which extends to the second year of Paul's sojourn at Rome, that is to the fourth year of Nero, from which we learn that the book was composed in that same city. Therefore the Acts of Paul and Thecla and all the fable about the lion baptized by him we reckon among the apocryphal writings, for how is it possible that the inseparable companion of the apostle in his other affairs, alone should have been ignorant of this thing. Moreover Tertullian who lived near those times, mentions a certain presbyter in Asia, an adherent of the apostle Paul, who was convicted by John of having been the author of the book, and who, confessing that he did this for love of Paul, resigned his office of presbyter. Some suppose that whenever Paul in his epistle says "according to my gospel" he means the book of Luke and that Luke not only was taught the gospel history by the apostle Paul who was not with the Lord in the flesh, but also by other apostles. This he too at the beginning of his work declares, saying "Even as they delivered unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word." So he wrote the gospel as he had heard it, but composed the Acts of the apostles as he himself had seen. He was buried at Constantinople to which city, in the twentieth year of Constantius, his bones together with the remains of Andrew the apostle were transferred." (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 7)

> "He (Luke) also wrote another excellent volume to which he prefixed the title Acts of the Apostles . . ." (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 9)

Jerome also affirms that Luke wrote a second volume called the Acts of the Apostles.

> "He (Luke) also wrote another excellent volume to which he prefixed the title Acts of the Apostles . . ." (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 9)

m) St. John Chrysostom (A.D. 347-407) - *John Chrysostom*, bishop of Constantinople, supports Luke as the author of his Gospel.

> "Now Luke tells us also the cause wherefore he proceeds to write: "that thou mayest hold," saith he, "the certainty of the words wherein thou hast been instructed;" that is, that being continually reminded thou mayest hold to the certainty, and abide in certainty." (*Homilies on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* 1.7)

[21]H. D. M. Spence and John Marshall Lang, *Luke,* vol. 1, in *The Pulpit Commentary*, eds. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph Exell (New York; Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1889), xviii.

n) Sophronius (A.D. 560-638) – Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, says Luke wrote his Gospel and the book of Acts.

> "Luke wrote the Gospel to which Paul himself refers when he says, And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches (II Cor. 8:18). And in his letter to the Colossians he says, Luke, the beloved physician, greets you (Col. 4:14). And to Timothy he says, Only Luke is with me (II Tim. 4:11). Luke wrote another excellent book entitled The Acts of the Apostles, a history which ends with Paul's two-year stay in Rome, that is, in the fourth year of Nero's reign. This leads us to believe that The Acts of the Apostles was written in Rome." (*The Life of the Evangelist Luke*) (*PG* 123 col. 675)[22]

o) Coptic Inscription (6th or 7th century) - Geoffrey Bingham tells us that an inscription found in a 6th or 7th century Coptic chapel on Mount Assuit in Egypt reads:

> "As for Luke the physician, he was a disciple of the apostles until he followed Paul. He lived eighty-four years. He wrote his Gospel in Achaia. Then he wrote Acts."[23]

p) Photius (A.D. c. 810-895) – Alfred Plummer cites, Photius, the patriarch of Constantinople, who says that the authorship of the book of Acts was questioned as belonging to Clement of Rome or Barnabas, but it clearly belongs to Luke:

> "Some say that the writer of the Acts was Clement of Rome, others Barnabas, and others again Luke the Evangelist; but Luke himself decides the question, for at the beginning of his preface he mentions that another treatise containing the acts of the Lord had been composed by him." (*Ad Amphilochium Quaestio* 123) (*PG* 123 col. 716A-B)[24]

3. Manuscript Evidence of the Book's Title as Support for Lucan Authorship - The earliest Greek manuscripts of the third and fourth centuries include titles for the Gospels and Acts, thus providing evidence in support of Lucan authorship. No other book of the New Testament has endured such a variety of title changes as has the book of Acts. Scholars tell us that the simple title of "Acts" is found in a number of sources, such as Aleph, Origen, Tertullian, Didymus, Hilary, Eusebius, and Epiphanius. It's most ancient title is "Acts of the Apostles," found in the Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Bezae, D, Aleph in subscription, Athanasius, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Theodoret, and Hilary (Robertson's Word Pictures). *Jerome* (A.D. 324-420) confirms this title by telling us that this book was originally called, "The Acts of the Apostles," saying, ""He (Luke) also wrote another excellent volume to which he prefixed the title Acts of the Apostles . . ." (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 9)

Jerome's statement finds support in the Anti-Marconite Prologue (A.D. 160-180), which also gives us the earliest known title to the book of Acts as "The Acts of the Apostles."

> "Indeed Luke was an Antiochene Syrian, a doctor by profession, a disciple of the apostles . . . although gospels had already been written ---- indeed by Matthew in Judaea but by Mark in Italy ---- moved by the Holy Spirit he wrote down this gospel in the parts of Achaia, signifying in the preface

---

[22]Sophronius, *The Life of the Evangelist Luke,* in *Orthodox Classics in English* (House Springs, MO: The Chrysostom Press) [on-line]. Accessed 1 December 2010. Available from http://www.chrysostompress.org/the-four-evangelists; Internet.

[23]Geoffrey C. Bingham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, in *New Creation Publications Commentary Series* (Adelaide, South Australia: New Creation Publications, Inc., 1982), 3.

[24]Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Luke,* in *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,* eds. Charles A. Briggs, Samuel R. Driver, and Alfred Plummer, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), xiv.

> that the others were written before his . . . And indeed afterwards the same Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles."[25]

The Muratorian Canon, an ancient Latin document dated around A.D. 200 calls this book "the Acts of all the Apostles," saying, ""The Acts of all the apostles have been written in one book" (*Fragments of Caius* 3.1)

Scholars says the longest ancient manuscript title is called "The Acts of the Holy Apostles," as found in Codex Alexandrinus, A2, E, G, H, A, K, and Chrysostom.

The fact that this many titles have been attributed to a single work by reputable sources is an indication that Luke never attached a title to this work, having considered it the second part of the Luke-Acts story. Since the book of Acts does not bear the author's name, its title does not serve as a witness to authorship, as does the titles of the four Gospels, which each bear the names of the authors.

John Gill tells us that the title of the book of Acts in the Syriac versions of the fourth century is, "the Book of the Acts: that is, the history of the blessed apostles, which my Lord Luke the Evangelist collected for the saints,"[26] thus, bearing witness to Lucan authorship. Its title in the Complutensian Polyglot Bible (1514) is, "The Acts of the Apostles of Saint Luke the Evangelist."[27]

George Salmon notes that if the phrase "according to" only refers to the fact that these Gospels contain the traditions that emanated from the four Evangelists, but was not written by them, then it would follow that Mark's Gospel would be entitled "according to Peter" and Luke's Gospel "according to Paul."[28] Thus, much weight can to be placed upon these most ancient titles to support authorship.

Thus, we see an unbroken tradition from the early Church fathers in support of Lucan authorship. This widespread support comes from many geographical regions of the known Christian world. The tradition until the time of the Reformation was that Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Hebrew language and someone translated it into Greek.

It is easy to see how canonicity is a testimony to Lucan when we understand that the debates of the early Church fathers to accept the general epistles of 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude was simply a debate about their authorship. Apostolic authorship meant that the works were authentic, and thus, authoritative. It was the writing's apostolic authority that granted its inclusion into the New Testament canon. Therefore, canonicity was based upon apostolic authority, and this apostolic authority was based upon the authenticity of the writing, and its authenticity was based upon the fact that it was a genuine work of one of the apostles or one who was serving directly under that apostolic authority.

B. Church Orthodoxy - The second phase in the development of the New Testament canon placed emphasis upon Church orthodoxy, or the rule of faith for the catholic Church. F. B. Westcott says, "To make use of a book as authoritative, to assume that it is apostolic, to quote it as inspired, without preface or comment, is not to hazard a new or independent opinion, but to follow an unquestioned judgment."[29] The early Church fathers cited these apostolic writings as divinely inspired by God, equal in authority to the Old Testament

---

[25]*The Anti-Marcionite Prologues to the Gospels*, trans. Roger Pearse (2006); the translation was made from the text published by Donatien De Bruyne, "Les plus anciens prologues latines des Évangiles," *Revue Bénédictine,* vol. 40 (October 1928): 193-214.

[26]John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament,* vol. 2 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: William W. Woodward, 1811), 143.

[27]The Greek title of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible of 1514 reads "Αιωράξεις τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ ἁγίου Λουκᾶς τοῦ εὐαγγελιστοῦ." See *Novum testamentum: Grece & Latine in academia complutensi nouiter impressum* (Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros and Diego López de Zúniga, 1514).

[28]George Salmon, *Matthew,* in *The Biblical Illustrator*, ed. Joseph S. Exell (New York; Chicago; Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1905), xiii-xiv.

[29]Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General History of the Canon of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan anc Co., 1875), 12.

Scriptures. They understood that these particular books embodied the doctrines that helped them express the Church's Creed, or generally accepted rule of faith. As F. B. Westcott notes, with a single voice the Church fathers of this period rose up from the western to the eastern borders of Christendom and became heralds of the same, unified Truth.[30] This phase is best represented in the writings of the early Church fathers by the collection of the apostolic writings into the distinctive groups of the Gospels, the Pauline epistles, and the Catholic epistles, and their distribution among the churches as the rules of the Christian faith (late 2nd century through 3rd century). These collected works of the apostles were cited by the Church fathers as they expounded upon the Christian faith and established Church orthodoxy. We will look at two aspects of the development of Church Orthodoxy: (1) the Patristic Support of Authenticity, Authority, and Orthodoxy and (2) Early Versions.

1. Patristic Support of Authenticity, Authority, and Orthodoxy - In addition to direct statements by the early Church fathers declaring Lucan authorship, patristic support for the authenticity of the Luke-Acts can be found in the form of direct quotes, strong allusions and weak allusions. Direct quotes are word for word citations from this book, strong allusions are apparent paraphrases, and weak allusions are words or phrases that appear to come from this book. In support of their authenticity, scholars cite references are made to Luke's Gospel and the book of Acts in the writings of some of the earliest church fathers, such as *The Epistle of Barnabas* (c. 70-130), Polycarp (c. 110-150), the Didache (c. 120-150), Irenaeus (c. 130-200), Justin Martyr (c. 100-165), Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215), Tertullian (c. 160-225), Julius Africanus (A.D. 160-240), Hippolytus (A.D. 170-236) and Origen (c. 185-254). Thus, Luke-Acts was used by the Church fathers to establish Church orthodoxy.

Here are some examples of the earliest quotes of the book of Acts:[31]

a) Clement of Rome (c. 96) - *Clement of Rome* quotes a phrase that is only found in Acts 20:35.

> "Moreover, ye were all distinguished by humility, and were in no respect puffed up with pride, but yielded obedience rather than extorted it, and were more willing to give than to receive." (*1 Clement* 2)

Note Acts 20:35.

> Acts 20:35, "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."

Whether *Clement of Rome* was quoting directly from Acts or from oral tradition, it confirms the authenticity of the narrative material contained in the book of Acts. He also makes an apparent quote from Acts 13:22.

> "But what shall we say concerning David, to whom such testimony was borne, and of whom God said, 'I have found a man after Mine own heart, David the son of Jesse; and in everlasting mercy have I anointed him?'" (*1 Clement* 18)

Note:

[30]Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General History of the Canon of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan anc Co., 1875), 331.

[31]There are many other citations available from the early Church fathers that I have not used to support the traditional views of authorship of the books of the New Testament. Two of the largest collections of these citations have been compiled by Nathaniel Lardner (1684-1768) in *The Works of Nathaniel Lardner,* 10 vols. (London: Joseph Ogle Robinson, 1829, 1838), and by Jacques Paul Migne (1800-1875) in the footnotes of *Patrologia Latina,* 221 vols. (Parisiis: Excudebat Migne, 1844-55) and *Patrologia Graecae,* 161 vols. (Parisiis: Excudebat Migne, 1857-66).

> Acts 13:22, "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."

In addition, he clearly quotes from the Sermon on the Mount out of Matthew or Luke.

> ". . . being especially mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus which He spake, teaching us meekness and long-suffering. For thus He spoke: 'Be ye merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven to you; as ye do, so shall it be done unto you; as ye judge, so shall ye be judged; as ye are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure ye mete, with the same it shall be measured to you.'" (*1 Clement* 13)

Clement of Rome also quotes from Matthew 18:6; 26:24, Mark 9:42, or Luke 17:1-2.

> "Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how He said, "Woe to that man [by whom offences come]! It were better for him that he had never been born, than that he should cast a stumbling-block before one of my elect. Yea, it were better for him that a millstone should be hung about [his neck], and he should be sunk in the depths of the sea, than that he should cast a stumbling-block before one of my little ones. Your schism has subverted [the faith of] many, has discouraged many, has given rise to doubt in many, and has caused grief to us all. And still your sedition continueth." (*1 Clement* 46)

These quotes show that *Clement of Rome* was familiarity with the New Testament writings.

b) The Epistle of Barnabas (A.D. 70-100) - *The Epistle of Barnabas* has been ascribed by *Clement of Alexandria* to the apostle Barnabas,[32] who is referred to in the book of Acts as an early co-worker on Paul's first missionary journey. However, many scholars believe that the author was a Christian of Alexandria who wrote between A.D. 70 and 100. Regardless of the author's identity of this early epistle, he alludes to Luke 4:18.

> "And again, the prophet saith, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the humble: He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to announce the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of recompense; to comfort all that mourn.'" (*The Epistle of Barnabas* 14)

Again he quotes from either Luke 6:30 or Matthew 5:42, saying, "Thou shalt not hesitate to give, nor murmur when thou givest. 'Give to every one that asketh thee,'" (*The Epistle of Barnabas* 19)

c) Ignatius (A.D. 35-107) - *Ignatius*, bishop of Antioch, quotes from Acts 10:41 and 1:11 showing his familiarity of the writings of Luke and his consideration of them as divine Scripture.

> "And on this account also did they despise death, for it were too little to say, indignities and stripes. Nor was this all; but also after He had shown Himself to them, that He had risen indeed, and not in appearance only, He both ate and drank with them during forty entire days. And thus was He, with the flesh, received up in their sight unto Him that sent Him, being with that same

[32]Clement of Alexandria was the first to ascribe this epistle to the apostle Barnabas. He writes, "Rightly, therefore, the Apostle Barnabas says, 'From the portion I have received I have done my diligence to send by little and little to you; that along with your faith you may also have perfect knowledge. Fear and patience are then helpers of your faith; and our allies are long-suffering and temperance. These, then,' he says, 'in what respects the Lord, continuing in purity, there rejoice along with them, wisdom, understanding, intelligence, knowledge.'" (*Stromata* 2.6) and, "And Barnabas the apostle having said, 'Woe to those who are wise in their own conceits, clever in their own eyes,' added, 'Let us become spiritual, a perfect temple to God; let us, as far as in us lies, practise the fear of God, and strive to keep His commands, that we may rejoice in His judgments.'" (*Stromata* 2.7)

> flesh to come again, accompanied by glory and power. For, say the [holy] oracles, 'This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen Him go unto heaven.'" (*The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyraeans* 3)

Note:

> Acts 10:41, "Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead."
>
> Acts 1:11, "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

In *The Epistle to the Magnesians*, *Ignatius* appears to take the phrase "every one shall go unto his own place" from Acts 1:25.

> "Seeing, then, all things have an end, these two things are simultaneously set before us--death and life; and every one shall go unto his own place." (*The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians* 5)

Note:

> Acts 1:25, "That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

d) The Didache (A.D. 80-100) - *The Didache*, or *The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles,* was a short early Christian manual on morals and Church practice. The Gospel of Matthew is used extensively throughout the sixteen chapters of this ancient manual, particularly from the Sermon on the Mount (See *The Lord's Teaching Through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations*) (*ANF* 7). There is a possible allusion to the book of Acts. Note the following example:

> "And concerning food, bear what thou art able; but against that which is sacrificed to idols be exceedingly on thy guard." (*The Didache* 6) See Acts 15:20, "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood."

e) Polycarp (A.D. 69-155) - The epistle of *Polycarp* contains numerous quotes and allusions from the Gospels, revealing the fact that he was acquainted with them. We also find a specific reference to the book of Acts.

> "I have greatly rejoiced with you in our Lord Jesus Christ, because ye have followed the example of true love [as displayed by God], and have accompanied, as became you, those who were bound in chains, the fitting ornaments of saints, and which are indeed the diadems of the true elect of God and our Lord; and because the strong root of your faith, spoken of in days long gone by, endureth even until now, and bringeth forth fruit to our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sins suffered even unto death, [but] 'whom God raised froth the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave.' 'In whom, though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;' into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that 'by grace ye are saved, not of works,' but by the will of God through Jesus Christ."(*The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians* 1)

In this chapter, Polycarp makes a very clear reference to Acts 2:24, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

He makes possible allusion to Acts 17:31, saying, "He comes as the Judge of the living and the dead" (*The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians* 2). He also makes a possible allusion to Acts 5:41, saying, "Let us then be imitators of His patience; and if we suffer for His name's sake, let us glorify Him." (*The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians* 8)

There is a possible allusion to Acts 21:14 when Polycarp said, "The will of the Lord be done."

> "His pursuers then, along with horsemen, and taking the youth with them, went forth at supper-time on the day of the preparation? with their usual weapons, as if going out against a robber. And being come about evening [to the place where he was], they found him lying down in the upper room of a certain little house, from which he might have escaped into another place; but he refused, saying, "The will of God be done." (*The Encyclical Epistle of the Church at Smyrna Concerning the Martyrdom of the Holy Polycarp* 7) See Acts 21:14, "And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done."

f) Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165) - *Justin Martyr*, writing in the middle of the second century, made ample use of the Gospel of Luke. Note also an allusion to Act 7:22 in the following passage.

> "These things, ye men of Greece, have been recorded in writing concerning the antiquity of Moses by those who were not of our religion; and they said that they learned all these things from the Egyptian priests, among whom Moses was not only born, but also was thought worthy of partaking of all the education of the Egyptians, on account of his being adopted by the king's daughter as her son; and for the same reason was thought worthy of great attention, as the wisest of the historians relate, who have chosen to record his life and actions, and the rank of his descent,--I speak of Philo and Josephus." (*Justin's Hortatory Address to the Greeks* 10) See Acts 7:22, "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."

g) Titian' edition of the Diatessaron (A.D. 150-160) - The Diatessaron is an edition of the four Gospels compiles as a Harmony and written as one continuous narrative. It was compiled by Titian, a pupil of Justin Martyr, about A.D. 150-60. At an early date, it began to circulate widely in the Syriac-speaking churches and became the standard text of the Gospels down to the fifth century, before it was finally replaced by four separate Gospels.

> "But their original founder, Tatian, formed a certain combination and collection of the Gospels, I know not how, to which he gave the title Diatessaron, and which is still in the hands of some." (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.29.6)

h) Shepherd of Hermas (2nd century) - There are a few probable references in the Shepherd of Hermas to the book of Acts.

> "And she answered and said to me, "Has nothing crossed your path?" I say, "I was met by a beast of such a size that it could destroy peoples, but through the power of the Lord and His great mercy I escaped from it." "Well did you escape from it," says she, "because you cast your care on God, and opened your heart to the Lord, believing that you can be saved by no other than by His great and glorious name. On this account the Lord has sent His angel, who has rule over the beasts, and whose name is Thegri, and has shut up its mouth, so that it cannot tear you." (*Visions* 4.2) See Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Note another probable reference to the book of Acts.

> "Have a care, therefore, ye who are planning such things, lest that suggestion remain in your hearts, and ye perish unto God. And ye who suffer for His name ought to glorify God, because He deemed you worthy to bear His name, that all your sins might be healed. [Therefore, rather

> deem yourselves happy], and think that ye have done a great thing, if any of you suffer on account of God." (*Similitudes* 9.28) See Acts 5:41, "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

i) Eusebius (A.D. 260-340) - *Eusebius* quotes from a late second century letter written by the church at Vienne and Lyons, in Gaul, to the brethren throughout Asia and Phrygia, which makes a reference to Acts 7:60.

> "They absolved all, but bound none. And they prayed for those who had inflicted cruelties upon them, even as Stephen, the perfect witness, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' But if he prayed for those who stoned him, how much more for the brethren!" (*Ecclesiastical History* 5.2.5) Compare Acts 7:60, "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

The Gnostic literature in the New Testament Apocrypha, written largely during the second century after Christ, and the refutations of heresies by the early Church fathers, reveal to us that the Christian Gnostic heretics largely supported the canonicity of the New Testament and their apostolic authority in an attempt to identify themselves with Christianity.[33] For example, the heretic Marcion (d.c. 160) compiled his own version of the New Testament canon, which Tertullian refutes in his work *Against Marcion*. Philip Schaff says, "The Gnostics of the second century, especially the Valentinians and Basilidians, made abundant use of the fourth Gospel, which alternately offended them by its historical realism, and attracted them by its idealism and mysticism. Heracleon, a pupil of Valentinus, wrote a commentary on it, of which Origen has preserved large extracts; Valentinus himself (according to Tertullian)[34] tried either to explain it away, or he put his own meaning into it. Basilides, who flourished about A.D. 125, quoted from the Gospel of John such passages as the 'true light, which enlighteneth every man was coming into the world' (John 1:9), and, 'my hour is not yet come.'(2:4) . . . Celsius, in his book against Christianity, written about A.D. 178, he refers to several details which are peculiar to John, as, among others, the blood which flowed from the body of Jesus at his crucifixion (John 19:34), and the fact that Christ 'after his death arose and showed the marks of his punishment, and how his hands had been pierced' (20:25, 27)."[35] Philip Schaff tells us that a disciple of Valentinus named Heracleon (A.D. 145-180), a Gnostic heretic, went so far as to write a commentary on the Gospels of Luke and John.[36] Others wrote Gnostic Gospels and Acts.

The fact that the early Church fathers quoted from the book of Acts along with other Holy Scriptures bears witness to the truth that they believed that this book was authentic.

2. Early Versions - In addition, the earliest translations of the New Testament included the four Gospels and the book of Acts; the Old Latin (2nd to 4th c), the Coptic (3rd to 4th c), the Peshitta (4th c), the Armenian (5th c), the Georgian (5th c), and the Ethiopic (6th c).[37] Luke-Acts would not have been

---

[33]Philip Schaff writes, "The Old Testament they [the Gnostics] generally rejected, either entirely, as in the case of the Marcionites and the Manichseans, or at least in great part; and in the New Testament they preferred certain books or portions, such as the Gospel of John, with its profound spiritual intuitions, and either rejected the other books, or wrested them to suit their ideas." Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), 451-452.

[34]See Tertullian's work *On the Flesh of Christ* 15.

[35]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 707.

[36]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 707; "Herecleon," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* revised, eds. F. L. Cross, and E. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 637.

[37]The Old Latin Bible manuscripts of the fifth century, Codex Bezae (Gospels, Acts, Catholic epistles), Codex Claromontanus (Pauline epistles), and Codex Floriacensis (Acts, Catholic epistles, Revelation) were used prior to Jerome's *Vulgate* (beginning A. D. 382), and these Old Latin manuscripts testify to the canonization of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament at an early date. See Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M.

translated with the other New Testament writings unless it was considered a part of the orthodox beliefs of the Church at large.

C. Catholicity - The third and final phase of New Testament canonicity placed emphasis upon the aspect of catholicity, or the general acceptance of the canonical books.[38] F. B. Westcott says, "The extent of the Canon, like the order of the Sacraments, was settled by common usage, and thus the testimony of Christians becomes the testimony of the Church."[39] This phase is best represented in the period of Church councils of the fourth century as bishops met and agreed upon a list of canonical books generally accepted by the catholic Church. However, approved canons were listed by individual Church fathers as early as the second century. These books exhibited a dynamic impact upon the individual believers through their characteristic of divine inspiration, transforming them into Christian maturity, being used frequently by the church at large. We will look at two testimonies of catholicity: (1) the Early Church Canons, and (2) Early Church Councils.

1. Early Church Canons - Every major canon of the early Church lists four Gospels as an authentic writings. Although the Muratorian Canon does not begin its damaged text until the Gospel of Luke, Matthew and Mark can be assumed to be a part of this early canon (A.D. 180) (*Fragments of Caius 3: Canon Muratorianus* 2) (*ANF* 5). *Eusebius* (A.D. 260-340) includes them in his list of "acknowledged books."[40] The four Gospels are listed in the Cheltenham List (A.D. 359).[41] *Athanasius* gives us a canonical list that includes them (c. 367).[42] *Cyril of Jerusalem* (A.D. 315-386) includes them in his list.[43] The *Apostolic Constitutions* includes all but the book of Revelation (late 4th c.).[44] Inclusion into these canons indicates that the Gospels were universally accepted by the Church at large.

2. Early Church Councils - The earliest major Church councils named the four Gospels and Acts as authentic writings; Nicea (c. 325-40), Hippo (393), Carthage (397), and Carthage (419). This would not have been done unless the Church at large believed them to be canonical.

During the fourth century, the Roman emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity and ordered Eusebius to produce fifty copies of the Scriptures.[45] The production and distribution of these Bibles, along with the Church synods that followed, served to confirm the twenty-seven books of the New Testament as canonical and authoritative. The early Church traditions of authorship and authenticity became firmly embedded within their canonicity. Therefore, citations of the New Testament Scriptures and later manuscript evidence after this period of Church history only serve to repeat traditions that had already become well-known and established among the churches of the fourth century.

We see an unbroken tradition from the early Church fathers in support of Lukan authorship. This widespread

---

Metzger, M. Robinson, and Allen Wikgren, eds, *The Greek New Testament, Third Edition* (United Bible Societies, c1966, 1968, 1975), xxxi-xxxiv.

[38]The church historian Eusebius (A.D. 260-340) notes that some of the General Epistles lacked widespread circulation among the churches, which played a role in their slower acceptance into the New Testament canon, saying, "These things are recorded in regard to James, who is said to be the author of the first of the so-called catholic epistles. But it is to be observed that it is disputed; at least, not many of the ancients have mentioned it, as is the case likewise with the epistle that bears the name of Jude, which is also one of the seven so-called catholic epistles. Nevertheless we know that these also, with the rest, have been read publicly in very many churches." (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.25)

[39]Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General History of the Canon of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1875), 12.

[40]See Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.3.1-7; 3.24-25.

[41]W. Sanday, *The Cheltenham List of the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament and the Writings of Cyprian*, in *Studia Biblica ed Ecclesiastica: Essays Chiefly in Biblical and Patristic Criticism,* vol. 3 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1891) 217-303.

[42]See Athansius, *Festal Letters* 39.5 (Easter, 367) (*NPF2* 4).

[43]See Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 4.36 (*NPF2* 7).

[44]See *The Ecclesiastical Canons of the Same Holy Apostles* 47.85 (*ANF* 7).

[45]Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament,* fourth edition (London: Macmillan and Co., 1875), 422-426.

support comes from the many geographical regions of the known Christian world in ancient times. For a modern scholar to reject Lucan authorship means that he has to reject all of the testimonies listed above. Such a person would have to lean upon speculations that have no ancient support. This is why Lucan authorship is the most widespread view today.

III. Date and Place of Writing

The date and place of writing of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts is uncertain according to many scholars. There are two major traditions proposed by the early Church. Some ancient witnesses adhere to the belief that Luke wrote his books in Rome while Paul was in his first Roman imprisonment. Other witnesses say that he wrote years later while residing in the regions of Achaea. I support the first view because it has stronger internal evidence, such as the facts that the book of Acts ends with Paul's two-year imprisonment and Luke-Acts makes no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. However, external evidence is divided and difficult to use in making a judgment. Thus, I place the writings in Rome during the early 60's.

A. Date – There is both internal and external evidence to support the view that Luke wrote his books while Paul was imprisoned in Rome. He may have relied upon previously written notes and memoranda and speeches in order to compile these books. Luke could not have written them earlier because Luke-Acts represents a continuous flow of events up until Paul's imprisonment. This view is strongly supported by the fact that Acts ends with Paul's two-year imprisonment. Therefore, a conclusion may be drawn that states it could not have been written later, since tradition tells us that Paul was released from this first imprisonment and Luke would have recorded this important event. This would give us a date of writing in the early 60's.

1. Internal Evidence - Internal evidence supports a date of writing in the early 60's.

a) Acts Ends With Paul's First Roman Imprisonment - We know that the book of Acts had to have been written after Paul's first Roman imprisonment, for this book ends with Paul's two-year imprisonment in Rome. The fact that Acts has such an abrupt ending after spending about eight chapters on this event suggests that the author recorded this event during or shortly after Paul's imprisonment. This means that Luke could not have written before the mid-60's. The fact that no mention is made of Paul's trial before Nero, his acquittal, his possible trip into Spain, his second imprisonment and ultimate martyrdom suggests that these events have not yet taken place. Luke was with Paul during his second imprisonment (2 Tim 4:11), which he did not include in his works, suggests that he had completed Luke-Acts.

b) The Status of the Jews with Rome – The book of Acts clearly shows that the Jews held a positive status with the Roman government at the time of its writing. This would not have been the case hade Luke-Acts been written after the Jew's treacherous treatment by Emperor Nero in the mid-60's and by Titus in A.D. 70 when he destroyed the city of Jerusalem. The Jewish leaders both in Jerusalem and during Paul's missionary journeys wrongly accused the Christians before the Roman rulers. If Luke wrote the book of Acts after A.D. 70, he would not have had the need to defend the Christian faith against Jewish accusations as is clearly seen in his stories. Luke bases his arguments upon the facts that the Jews were a legal religion in Rome at the time and that they had a strong voice under Roman rule.

c) Historical Accuracy of Geography and Politics – Luke's accuracy in describing the locations of cities and territories and in political events suggests that Acts was written during the period of history when Paul the apostle and the other apostles traveled throughout the Rome and Asia Minor and not at a much later date when the geography and politics were different.

Bruce Metzger notes that the author of Luke-Acts mentions thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities and nine Mediterranean islands. In addition, he alludes to ninety-five people, sixty-two of which are

mentioned in no other place in the Holy Bible. Twenty-seven of these people were civil or military leaders.[46]

No one has yet been able to prove any inaccuracies regarding people and places in Luke's writings to date. J. B. Lightfoot says that no ancient work provides as many tests of reliability as does the book of Acts.[47] This earliest of church histories makes points of contact with every part of its civilized world: with contemporary history, with politics both Jewish and Roman, and with typography whether Jewish, Roman or Greek. Luke knew when to designate a person a proconsul and when to call him a governor. He knew the classification of Roman provinces, which often changed during Rome's history. Philip Schaff and others list numerous Lucan references that have been proven reliable through the works of ancient Latin writers to recent archeological discoveries.[48] Here are some examples that support the historical reliability of Luke-Acts.

(1) The Revolt of Judas of Galilee – In Acts 5:37 Luke mentions a revolt of the Jews against the Romans under Judas of Galilee. *Eusebius* (A.D. 260-340) quotes *Josephus* in referring to this event as taking place during the time of Cyrenius, which scholars believe to be about A.D. 6. (*Antiquities* 18.1; 20.5.2, *War* 2.8.1) (*Ecclesiastical History* 1.5.2-3) According to Luke 2:1-2, Cyrenius was the governor of Syria at that time.

(2) Candace Queen of the Ethiopians – Acts 8:27 refers to a lady named Candace, who was queen of the Ethiopians. Philip Schaff says, "Strabo mentions a queen of Meroè in Ethiopia, under this name, which was probably, like Pharaoh, a dynastic title (*The Geography of Strabo* 17.1.54).[49]

(3) Agabus Prophesies of a Great Dearth – In Acts 11:28, Agabus prophesies of a great dearth throughout all the world. Claudius Caesar was Emperor of Rome A.D. 41-54. Around the fourth year of his reign, *Josephus* records such a drought taking place, which would place this event about A.D. 45 (*Antiquities* 20.2.5).

(4) King Herod Agrippa's Death - *Josephus* gives us a similar detailed account of the death of King Herod Agrippa found in Acts 12:20-23, saying that the king died after five days in bed (*Antiquities* 18.8.7).

(5) Sergius Paulus – Acts 13:7 mentions a Sergius Paulus who was a deputy of a certain country. Schaff tells us that General di Cesnola discovered a long, mutilated inscription on a pedestal of white marble, at a city in the north of the island of Cyprus called, Solvi, which, was the most important city. This inscription reads, "EPI PAULOU ANTHUPATOU," which Schaff translates, "In the proconsulship of Paulus." Many scholars believe this inscription refers to the actual (Sergius) Paulus of Acts 13:7.[50]

---

[46]Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, Content* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 171.

[47]J. B. Lightfoot says, "No ancient work affords so many tests of veracity; for no other has such numerous points of contact in all directions with contemporary history, politics, and topography, whether Jewish, Greek, or Roman." See J. B. Lightfoot, *Essays of the Work Entitled Supernatural Religion* (London: MacMillan and Co., c1889, 1893), Appendix, 19-2. See Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 732.

[48]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 732.

[49]Strabo writes, "Among these fugitives were the generals of Queen Candace, who was ruler of the Aethiopians in my time - a masculine sort of woman, and blind in one eye." See Horace L. Jones, trans., *The Geography of Strabo,* vol. 8, in *Loeb Classical Library*, eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), 139; Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, vol. 1: Apostolic Christianity A.D. 1-100* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 733.

[50]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 734.

(6) The Cities of Lystra and Derbe - As an example of reliability that supports an early date to Acts, William Ramsey believes that the geographical boundaries between Phrygian city of Iconium and the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe in Acts 14:6 was accurate at no other time except between A.D. 37-72.[51]

(7) The People of Lycaonia – In Acts 14:11 Paul and Barnabas are mistaken for Zeus and Hermes by the people of Lycaonia. Philip Schaff tells us that according to Greek myths described by Ovid in his work "Metamorphoses," the gods Jupiter and Mercury (Zeus and Hermes) had appeared to the people of Lycaonians in the likeness of men (*Metamorphoses* 8.611-678).[52] As a result, this place was visited by devout pilgrims and adorned with offerings, so that it would have been natural for these people to mistake Paul and Silas for these Greek "gods" after having seen the miracles.[53]

(8) The City of Thyatira – Acts 16:14 tells us of a woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira. Philip Schaff says, "Thyatira (now Akhissar), in the valley of Lycus in Asia Minor, and the birthplace of Lydia, was famous for its dying works, especially for purple or crimson." (see Strabo, *Geography* 13.4.14).[54] He says that an inscription found in this place verifies that a guild of purple-dealers existed. Lydia could have belonged to this same guild.[55]

(9) "The Magistrates of Philippi" – Everett Harrison tells us in Acts 16:20 that Luke uses the word "στρατηγός," which is equivalent to "praetor," to describe the rulers of the city of Philippi. However, the technical term for leaders in charge of Roman colonies was "duumviri," but inscriptions have showed that Luke's term was also commonly used.[56]

(10) "The Rules of the City" – The Greek phrase found in Acts 17:6, 8 is the single word πολιτάρχης (politarchs) in the Greek text. Schaff tells us that this title was rarely used, so some scholars may assume that Luke was wrong to refer to such an office. However, some nineteen inscriptions have now been found that make use of this title. Everett Harrison tells us that one inscription on the Vardar Gate of the city reads, "In the time of the Politarchs."[57] Philip Schaff tells us that an inscription is still legible on an archway in Thessalonica, giving the names of seven "politarchs" who governed before the visit of Paul.[58]

(11) The City of Athens - Philip Schaff notes that ancient classical writers have confirmed many of the details that Luke gives of Athens in Acts 17. The description of Athens, the Areopagus, the schools of philosophy, the idle curiosity and inquisitiveness of the Athenians (mentioned

---

[51]William M. Ramsey, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (New York: G. P Putnam's Sons, 1896), 110-111.

[52]Frank Justus Miller, trans., *Ovid: Metamorphoses with an English Translation,* vol. 1, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1951), 449-453.

[53]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 734-735.

[54]Horace Leonard Jones, trans., *The Geography of Strabo*, vol. 6, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1960), 189.

[55]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 734-735.

[56]Everett F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c1964, 1990), 243.

[57]Everett F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c1964, 1971), 243.

[58]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 735.

also by Demosthenes), the altar of an unknown God, and the quotation from Aratus, or Cleanthes in this chapter, all have support from secular, classical writers.[59]

(12) The City of Ephesus - Schaff says the archeological discoveries made by John T. Wood between 1863 and 1874 of the ancient city of Ephesus support the reliability of Luke's description in Acts 19. He writes, "The excessive worship of Diana, 'the great goddess of Artemis,' the temple-warden, the theatre (capable of holding twenty-five thousand people) often used for public assemblies, the distinct officers of the city, the Roman proconsul (ἀνθύπατος), the recorder or 'town-clerk' (γραμματεύς), and the Asiarchs (Ἀσιάρχης), or presidents of the games and the religious ceremonials, have all reappeared in ruins and on inscriptions, which may now be studied in the British Museum."[60]

(13) Paul's Voyage to Rome – Schaff says the story of Paul's voyage and shipwreck at sea while on his way to Rome in Acts 27 provides more detail about ancient navigation than any other work of Latin or Greek literature. It reveals the historical reliability of the book of Acts as well as the support that the author of Acts was an eyewitness of this event. No less than sixteen technical terms are used by Luke to describe the navigation and management of an ancient ship at sea, all of them found to be accurate. Luke is also accurate is his description of the locations of numerous islands and cities that were encountered on this voyage.[61]

(14) Paul's Term For the Leading Man on the Island of Malta – Everett Harrison tells us that Paul's use of Greek word "ὁ πρωτος" in Acts 28:7, which has an otherwise broad application, to designate the "head man" of the island was discovered to be "a technical term for the governor of the place," according to archeological discoveries of Malta inscriptions.[62]

This brings us to an event that Luke records in Acts 5:36 of one named Theudas, who led four hundred men in a revolt against Roman rule. Historians find a problem with Luke's statements in this verse when they read *Josephus*, who says that Judas's revolt took place about A.D. 6 under Cyrenius, while the insurrection of Theudas took place about A.D. 45 under Fadus, the procurator of Judea, in the reign of the emperor Claudius, (A.D. 45 or 46) (*Antiquities* 20.5.1-2). Historians are further confused when they date this speech by Gamaliel at A.D. 34 to 37. Perhaps the most common explanation given by scholars for this discrepancy is that the name Theudas was a common name and could have referred to a difference person and a different event that occurred much earlier than A.D. 45. This explanation is supported by the fact that *Josephus* described Judea as a place of much insecurity, with "ten thousand other disorders" and "full of robberies." (*Antiquities* 17.10.4; 17.10.8; 20.6.1) Unfortunately, many scholars focus on this one single suggested discrepancy surrounding the revolt of Theudas in Acts 5:36 while failing to mention the overwhelming evidence of support for the historical accuracy in the writings of Luke-Acts. In summary, the detail of places and people found in Luke-Acts as well as its historical accuracy support an early date of writing.

d) Historically Events in Acts Coincide with the Pauline Epistles – We find that the book of Acts serves as a framework by which to hang dates upon the Pauline and General epistles. There are not conflicts between the events contained within the New Testament epistles and the events found in Luke-Acts. In fact, it is possible to reconstruct the dates of many events in the book of Acts by using information found within the epistles.

---

[59]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 735-736.

[60]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 736.

[61]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 736-737.

[62]Everett F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c1964, 1971), 243.

e) No Reference to the Pauline Letters – Somewhere in the latter half of the first century Paul's thirteen epistles were collected and began to circulate among the churches. Luke makes no reference to these epistles and their significance to the early church and to the unique biographical stories of Paul found in these epistles. Luke apparently did not use these epistles as his source for Acts. This indicates that Luke wrote before these epistles gained wide circulation and importance to the early Church.

f) No Reference to the Neronian Persecutions in Rome – The Emperor Nero began persecuting the Christians of Rome in A.D. 65. This led to the deaths of Paul and Peter. Yet the tone of the book of Acts leads us to believe that that author was hopeful that the Roman system of justice would vindicate Paul and accept Christianity as a legal religion. In fact, the church in the book of Acts see no direct attack from the Roman government other than that provoked by Jews or disgruntled Roman citizens. This could hardly have been the tone after Nero's persecutions had begun.

g) No Reference to the Destruction of Jerusalem – If Luke-Acts would have been written after the terrible destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, it is almost certain that the author of history would have made some reference to this event and those events of the Roman war with the Jews (A.D. 66-70). This leads to the conclusion of a date for the early 60's.

h) No Reference to the Martyrdom of James the brother of the Lord – *Josephus* tells us that James, the brother of the Lord and bishop of the church at Jerusalem, was martyred (*Antiquities* 20.9.1). According to Hegesippus this event is believed to have taken place around A.D. 62 (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.1-20).[63] It would have been very difficult for the author of the book of Acts to omit this event had it already occurred. It is likely that this event had not occurred before Luke had compiled his material for publication.

i) No Reference to the Later Organization of the Early Church – The book of Acts makes no reference to the later development of Church polity which began to emerge late in the first century. There were numerous bishops appointed over various cities and none of these are referred to in Acts.

j) No Reference to the Gnostic Heresies of the Late First Century – While the Johannine literature written in the late first century makes clear references to the Gnostic heresies that had attacked the teachings of the Lord and His apostles, Luke makes no reference to this major issue, except by way of prophecy in Acts 20:30, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." This implies that these heresies had not yet developed.

k) The Use of Primitive Language – Guthrie tells us that terms such as "the Christ," "disciples," "the Way," and the references to the fact that Christians began to meet together on the first day of the week, all point to language used during the earliest period of the church.[64] This type of Church language would have been more developed by the later part of the first century and would have been reflected in the book of Acts had it been written in the late first century.

l) The Subject Matter Reflects a Primitive Period – The fact that the book of Acts places emphasis upon the Jewish-Gentile controversy in the spread of the Gospel indicates a pre-70's date of writing, since this issue became insignificant after the fall of Jerusalem.

2. External Evidence – Most witnesses from early Church history tells us that the four Gospels were written in the order of Matthew, Mark, Luke then John. This is the order that we find them placed in the New Testament.

---

[63]"St. James, the Lord's brother," eds. F. L. Cross, and E. A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* revised (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 722.

[64]Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grover, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 360.

a) The Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Luke (A.D. 160-180) - The Anti-Marcionite Prologue to Luke tells us that Luke wrote his Gospel after Matthew and Mark:

> "And indeed afterwards the same Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles. Therefore --- although gospels had already been written ---- indeed by Matthew in Judaea but by Mark in Italy ---- moved by the Holy Spirit he wrote down this gospel in the parts of Achaia, signifying in the preface that the others were written before his . . . And indeed afterwards the same Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles."[65]

b) Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200) - *Eusebius*, quoting Irenaeus, gives to us the order in his history in which Luke wrote his Gospel. He says that the Gospels were written in the order of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

> "Since, in the beginning of this work, we promised to give, when needful, the words of the ancient presbyters and writers of the Church, in which they have declared those traditions which came down to them concerning the canonical books, and since Irenaeus was one of them, we will now give his words and, first, what he says of the sacred Gospels: 'Matthew published his Gospel among the Hebrews in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the church in Rome. After their departure Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also transmitted to us in writing those things which Peter had preached; and Luke, the attendant of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel which Paul had declared. Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord, who also reclined on his bosom, published his Gospel, while staying at Ephesus in Asia.' He states these things in the third book of his above-mentioned work." (*Ecclesiastical History* 5.8.1-5)

c) Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215) - Later in his work, *Eusebius* tells us that Clement of Alexandria gives a slightly different order of the writing of the Gospels than that of Irenaeus. Clement gives the order as Matthew and Luke, then Mark and John.

> "Again, in the same books, Clement gives the tradition of the earliest presbyters, as to the order of the Gospels, in the following manner: The Gospels containing the genealogies, he says, were written first. The Gospel according to Mark's had this occasion. As Peter had preached the Word publicly at Rome, and declared the Gospel by the Spirit, many who were present requested that Mark, who had followed him for a long time and remembered his sayings, should write them out. And having composed the Gospel he gave it to those who had requested it. When Peter learned of this, he neither directly forbade nor encouraged it. But, last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel. This is the account of Clement." (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.5-7)

d) Origen (A.D. 185-254) - *Eusebius* then quotes Origen, who gives us the same order of the writing of the four Gospels as Irenaeus gives us. They are given by him as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

> "In his [Origen] first book on Matthew's Gospel, maintaining the Canon of the Church, he testifies that he knows only four Gospels, writing as follows: "Among the four Gospels, which are the only indisputable ones in the Church of God under heaven, I have learned by tradition that the first was written by Matthew, who was once a publican, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, and it was prepared for the converts from Judaism, and published in the Hebrew

---

[65] *The Anti-Marcionite Prologues to the Gospels*, trans. Roger Pearse (2006) [on-line]; accessed 16 April 2010; available from http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/anti_marcionite_prologues.htm; Internet. The translation was made from the text published by Donatien De Bruyne, "Les plus anciens prologues latines des Évangiles," *Revue Bénédictine,* vol. 40 (October 1928): 193-214. See also R. G. Heard, "The Old Gospel Prologues," Journal of Theological Studies n.s. 6 (1955): 1-16. See also Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, c1990).

> language. The second is by Mark, who composed it according to the instructions of Peter, who in his Catholic epistle acknowledges him as a son, saying, 'The church that is at Babylon elected together with you, saluteth you, and so doth Marcus, my son.' And the third by Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, and composed for Gentile converts. Last of all that by John." (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.25.3-6)

e) The Muratorian Canon (c. A.D. 200) - *The Muratorian Canon*, an ancient Latin document dated around A.D. 200, tells us that Luke omitted the deaths of Peter and Paul, since they occurred in his absence. This implies that Luke could have written years after their deaths.

> "The Acts of all the apostles have been written in one book. Addressing the most excellent Theophilus, Luke includes one by one the things which were done in his own presence, as he shows plainly by omitting the passion of Peter and also Paul's departure when he was setting out from the City for Spain." (*The Fragments of Caius* 3.2) (*ANF* 5)

f) Eusebius (A.D. 260-340) - *Eusebius* tells us that Luke probably wrote the book of Acts while Paul was in his second imprisonment in Rome, just before his death.

> "And Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, brought his history to a close at this point, after stating that Paul spent two whole years at Rome as a prisoner at large, and preached the word of God without restraint. Thus after he had made his defense it is said that the apostle was sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and that upon coming to the same city a second time he suffered martyrdom. In this imprisonment he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions his first defense and his impending death . . . In his second epistle to Timothy, moreover, he indicates that Luke was with him when he wrote, but at his first defense not even he. Whence it is probable that Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles at that time, continuing his history down to the period when he was with Paul." (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.22.1-2, 6)

According to *Eusebius*, Luke was with Paul during this second imprisonment. The Scriptures confirm this. Paul's second epistle to Timothy is considered his last epistle and was probably written during this second imprisonment. In it, Paul notes that Luke is with him.

> 2 Timothy 4:11, "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

Eusebius tells us that early tradition puts the order of writing as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (*Ecclesiastical History* 5.8.1-4, 6.14.6-7, 6.25.4-6). If Luke in fact wrote the book of Acts after Paul's first imprisonment of Paul, which took place around A.D. 61-63, then Matthew and Mark would have to have been written prior to this date.

g) Jerome (A.D. 342-420) - *Jerome* gives us an exact year of its writing, which was the fourth year of Nero, making it as early as A.D. 58. He gives us the place of writing as the city of Rome.

> "He also wrote another excellent volume to which he prefixed the title Acts of the Apostles, a history which extends to the second year of Paul's sojourn at Rome, that is to the fourth year of Nero, from which we learn that the book was composed in that same city." (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 7)

h) Sophronius (A.D. 560-638) – Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, follows the tradition of Jerome in placing Luke in Rome during the fourth year of Nero (A.D. 58) when writing his Gospel and Acts.

> "Luke wrote the Gospel to which Paul himself refers when he says, *And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches* (II Cor. 8:18). And in his letter to the Colossians he says, *Luke, the beloved physician, greets you* (Col. 4:14). And to

> Timothy he says, *Only Luke is with me* (II Tim. 4:11). Luke wrote another excellent book entitled *The Acts of the Apostles*, a history which ends with Paul's two-year stay in Rome, that is, in the fourth year of Nero's reign. This leads us to believe that The Acts of the Apostles was written in Rome." (*The Life of the Evangelist Luke*) (*PG* 123 col. 675)[66]

h) Eutichius (10th C. Patriarch of Alexandria) - Louis Berkhof cites Eutichius, who states that Luke wrote his Gospel in the time of Nero.[67]

i) Theophylact (11th to 12th) - Louis Berkhof quotes Theophylact (11th to 12th C. Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria), who says, "Luke wrote fifteen years after Christ's ascension."[68] (*PG* 123 col. 685C)

j) Euthymius Zigabenus (early 12th C.) - Euthymius Zigabenus writes, "And after fifteen years of the ascension of the Saviour, being instructed by Paul, he [Luke] composed the Gospel to a certain Theophilus . . ." (*Interpretation of Luke the Evangelist*) (*PG* 129 col. 857C) (author's translation).

k) St. Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1225-1274) - In the 1200's St. Thomas Aquinas, writing in his *Catena Aurea* on Matthew, quotes Remigius of Auzerre (c. A.D. 841-908) (*PL* 131 cols. 47-970), a medieval philosopher, who also wrote a commentaries on Genesis, Psalms, and Matthew.[69] In this quote, we see the thoughts of later centuries as to the dates and places of writings of the four Gospels:

> "Matthew wrote in Judaea in the time of the Emperor Caius Caligula [A.D. 37-41]; Mark in Italy, at Rome, in the time of Nero [A.D. 54-68] or Claudius [A.D. 41-54], according to Rabanus (referring to Rabanus Maurus [A.D. 776/784-856]); Luke in the parts of Achaia and Baeotia, at the request of Theophilus; John at Ephesus, in Asia Minor, under Nerva [began rule A.D. 96]."[70]

John Gill tells us that "the time of the writing of it [Luke] is not certain; some say it was written in the fifteenth year after the ascension of our Lord; others in the twenty second; and others in the twenty seventh."[71] From these witnesses, Louis Berkhof dates Luke as early as A.D. 54 and not later than A. D. 68.[72]

In these quotes, we see that many of the early Church fathers accepted the traditional order of the writing of the four Gospels as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which is the same the order found in the New Testament. With the rise of higher criticism in Europe in the 1700's, this order of writing and their respective dates began to be challenged.

My conclusion is that Luke most likely wrote Luke-Acts during Paul's first two-year Roman imprisonment (A.D. 61-63), since Acts ends with a reference to this event. The early Church fathers seem to support this view. They add that Luke wrote his Gospel after Mark, who wrote before the death of Peter (A.D. 64-65).

---

[66]Sophronius, *The Life of the Evangelist Luke,* in *Orthodox Classics in English* (House Springs, MO: The Chrysostom Press) [on-line]. Accessed 1 December 2010. Available from http://www.chrysostompress.org/the-four-evangelists; Internet.

[67]Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans-Sevensma Co., 1915), 51.

[68]Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans-Sevensma Co., 1915), 51.

[69]F. L. Cross, and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* revised (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 1173.

[70]Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected out of the Works of the Fathers,* vol. 1, part 1, second edition (Oxford: John Henry, 1864), 5.

[71]John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament,* vol. 1 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: William W. Woodward, 1811), 507.

[72]Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans-Sevensma Co., 1915), 51.

Also, Luke must have written before Nero's persecution of the Christians (A.D. 64) and before the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), since Jesus predicts this event in Luke 21:20-24. The book of Acts makes no reference to either event. If the book of Acts was prepared as a defense for Paul's trial, it would certainly have been prepared before A.D. 64, when Nero began an intensive persecution against all Christians because of the fire in Rome in that year. Luke wrote before the death of Paul (A.D. 64-65), since he ends the book with Paul in prison. Therefore, Luke most likely wrote Luke-Acts in the early 60's.

In summary, most conservative scholars will date Luke-Acts between A.D. 58 to 63, since this is supported by ancient tradition. In addition, it predates the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and it allows Acts to be written shortly after Paul's first Roman imprisonment.

B. Place of Writing - The Anti-Marcionite Prologue for Luke says Luke wrote his Gospel in the regions of Achaea.

> "Therefore --- although gospels had already been written ---- indeed by Matthew in Judaea but by Mark in Italy ---- moved by the Holy Spirit he wrote down this gospel in the parts of Achaia, signifying in the preface that the others were written before his . . ."[73]

In his preface to the commentary on Matthew, *Jerome* mentions that Luke wrote in parts of Achaia and Boeotia,[74] which contradicts his statement in *Lives of Illustrious Men* that gives the place of writing in Rome.[75] John Gill explains that the titles prefixed to the Syriac and Persic versions say that Luke wrote his Gospel in Alexandria. He says the Syriac version reads, "The Gospel of Luke, the Evangelist, which he spake and published in Greek in Alexandria the great," and the Persic version reads, "The Gospel of Luke, which he wrote in the Greek tongue in Alexandria of Egypt."[76]

As quoted above, an inscription found in a 6th or 7th century Coptic chapel on Mount Assuit in Egypt states that Luke wrote Luke and Acts while in Achaia.[77] St. Thomas Aquinas, writing in his *Catena Aurea* on Matthew, quotes Remigius of Auzerre (c. A.D. 841-908) as saying that Luke wrote his Gospel while residing in the parts of Achaia and Baeotia, at the request of Theophilus.[78]

---

[73]*The Anti-Marcionite Prologues to the Gospels*, trans. Roger Pearse (2006) [on-line]; accessed 16 April 2010; available from http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/anti_marcionite_prologues.htm; Internet. The translation was made from the text published by Donatien De Bruyne, "Les plus anciens prologues latines des Évangiles," *Revue Bénédictine,* vol. 40 (October 1928): 193-214. See also R. G. Heard, "The Old Gospel Prologues," *Journal of Theological Studies* 6 (1955): 1-16. See also Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, c1990).

[74]Jerome writes, "The third is Luke, the physician, by birth a native of Antioch, in Syria, whose praise is in the Gospel. He was himself a disciple of the Apostle Paul, and composed his book in Achaia and Boeotia. He thoroughly investigates certain particulars and, as he himself confesses in the preface, describes what he had heard rather than what he had seen." (*Preface to Matthew*) (*NPF2* 6)

[75]Jerome writes, "Luke, a physician of Antioch as his writings indicate, was not unskilled in the Greek language. An adherent of the apostle Paul, and companion of all his journeying, he wrote a Gospel, concerning which the same Paul says, "We send with him a brother whose praise in the gospel is among all the churches" and to the Colossians "Luke the beloved physician salutes you," and to Timothy "Luke only is with me." He also wrote another excellent volume to which he prefixed the title Acts of the Apostles, a history which extends to the second year of Paul's sojourn at Rome, that is to the fourth year of Nero, from which we learn that the book was composed in that same city. (*The Lives of Illustrious Men* 7)

[76]John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament,* vol. 1 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: William W. Woodward, 1811), 507.

[77]Geoffrey C. Bingham tells us that an inscription found in a 6th or 7th century Coptic chapel on Mount Assuit in Egypt reads, "As for Luke the physician, he was a disciple of the apostles until he followed Paul. He lived eighty-four years. He wrote his Gospel in Achaia. Then he wrote Acts." See Geoffrey C. Bingham, *The Acts of the Apostles*, in *New Creation Publications Commentary Series* (Adelaide, South Australia: New Creation Publications, Inc., 1982), 3.

[78]Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected out of the Works of the Fathers,* vol. 1, part 1, second edition (Oxford: John Henry, 1864), 5.

Goodspeed defends the city of Ephesus as the place of writing on the basis that content of the book of Acts places more emphasis upon this city than any other.[79] Some modern conservative suggest that Luke wrote his Gospel while waiting with Paul on his two-year imprisonment in Caesarea and the book of Acts during Paul's two-year imprisonment in Rome. This view is strengthened by the fact that Luke was with Paul during his arrest in Jerusalem until his arrival at Rome. Thus, it has been difficult for scholars to agree upon a place of writing. I favor the place of writing of Luke-Acts in Rome in the early 60's during Paul's two-year Roman imprisonment.

IV. Recipients

Internal evidence supports the view that Luke's primary recipient was an unknown individual named Theophilus with the intent of the Church at large being secondary recipients. External evidence supports the view that Luke wrote to the Church, primarily the Gentile believers.

A. Internal Evidence - Luke opens both of his books with a dedication to an individual named "Theophilus," which means "lover of God." Some scholars suggest by its meaning that this name is intended to refer to believers and not to an individual. However, most scholars think that this was a Greek or Roman individual whom Luke esteemed, or who financed or supported the writing of Luke-Acts, or he may have been a prominent leader in the Church or a Roman leader in the region that Luke lived. One indication to his prominence is the fact that Luke addresses him as "most excellent," a word used only three other times in the New Testament to refer to Roman officials, the other uses found when Paul addresses Felix (Acts 23:26, 24:3) and Festus (Acts 26:25). Daniel Wallace says that the prologue to both the Gospel and Acts emulates so much the ancient historians' prefaces that it is quite evident that he wanted the work published.[80] Most likely, and the majority of scholars agree, Luke intended his work for a larger audience of believers even though he initially dedicated this work to an individual named Theophilus. Note the following internal evidence that supports non-Jewish recipients of the Gospel of Luke:

> ***1. Explanations of Jewish Customs and Geography -*** Luke's description of Jewish geography, laws, and customs appears to be addressed to someone who was not familiar with such details. He takes the time to explain these details in the Gospel of Luke: Luke 1:9, "*According to the custom of the priest's office*, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord." Luke 2:4, "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto *the city of David, which is called Bethlehem*; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)" Luke 2:22-24, "And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (*As it is written in the law of the Lord*, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice *according to that which is said in the law of the Lord*, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Luke 2:27, "And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, *to do for him after the custom of the law*," Luke 2:39, "And when they had performed all things *according to the law of the Lord*, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth." Luke 2:42, "And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem *after the custom of the feast*." Luke 4:31, "And came down to Capernaum, *a city of Galilee*, and taught them on the sabbath days." Luke 5:14, "And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, *according as Moses commanded*, for a testimony unto them." Luke 8:26, "And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, *which is over against Galilee*." Luke 21:37, "And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode *in the mount that is called the mount of Olives*." Luke 23:51, "(The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, *a city of the Jews*: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God." Luke 23:56, "And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day *according to the commandment*." Luke 24:13, "And, behold, two of them

[79]Edgar J. Goodspeed, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1937), 208.

[80]Daniel B. Wallace, *Luke: Introduction, Argument, and Outline* (Biblical Studies Foundation, Richardson, Texas) [on-line]; accessed 6 July 2010; available from http://bible.org/seriespage/luke-introduction-argument-and-outline; Internet, "D. Destination."

went that same day to a village called Emmaus, *which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs*." Acts 3:1, "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being the ninth hour.*"

The author also explains Jewish geography, laws, and customs in the book of Acts: Acts 5:17, "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (*which is the sect of the Sadducees*,) and were filled with indignation," Acts 5:34, "Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, *a doctor of the law*, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;" Luke's comments that Cornelius was of the Italian band suggesting that his reader(s) were Italian, or Romans, saying, "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, *a centurion of the band called the Italian band*," (Acts 10:1). Note how Luke refers to the Jews in the third person singular as being a distinct group from his Gentile readers in Acts 1:19, "And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is *called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood*."

2. Little Emphasis is Placed upon the Fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures - After Luke's first two chapters, he places very little emphasis upon the fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures, implying that a Gentile audience would not have found it of great interest since they lacked a knowledge of Jewish literature. Of the five direct references to the fulfillment of the Old Testament and three general references, only one prophetic quote is directed to the readers (3:4). All others were addressed to the Jews by the person speaking within the narrative material: *a)* To the readers in Luke 3:4, "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight"; *b)* To the Jews following Jesus in Luke 7:27, "This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee"; *c)* To Jesus' disciples in Luke 18:31, "Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished"; *d)* To the people in the Temple in Luke 20:17, "And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?"; *e)* To Peter the apostle in Luke 22:37, "For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end"; *f)* Generally to the people in the Temple in Luke 21:22, "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled"; *g)* Generally to Jesus' disciples in Luke 24:44, "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me"; *h)* Generally to Jesus' disciples in Luke 24:46, "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:"

3. Lack of Aramaic Phrases - Luke's Gospel lacks the use of Aramaic phrases, unlike the other three Gospels. This is probably due to the fact that Luke was directing his writing to a Gentile audience who would not understand Aramaic phrases.

4. Tendency to Avoid Hebraisms – On a number of occasions, Luke uses terms that are better understood by Gentile readers than by Jewish readers. On three occasion Luke uses the word αληθως for the phrase "Truly I say unto you" (9:27; 12:44; 21:3), while Matthew and Mark use only a Hebrew word that has been transliterated into a Greek word αμήν. On three occasions Luke-Acts uses the Greek word διδάσκαλος (teacher) in place of the Hebraic γραμματεύς (scribe). All other Gospels restrict themselves to the word γραμματεύς. When telling of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Matthew (21:9, 15), Mark (11:9-10) and John (12:13) all use the Hebrew phrase "hosanna" when quoting the shouts of the people. Only Luke avoids this Hebraism. Louis Berkhof believes Luke was writing to a Greek audience, if not a Roman such as Theophilus, saying that the Greek used in his Gospel is less Hebraic than in the other Evangelists.[81]

[81]Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans-Sevensma Co., 1915), 48.

5. References of Roman Exoneration and Unjust Blame from Jews - Luke's description of Jesus' trial before Pilate shows the Roman governor repeatedly trying to absolve Jesus of guilt. At Philippi, Paul and Silas were accused of "teaching customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans" (Acts 16:20-21). When they were let go, the magistrates apologized to them for beating them unlawfully (Acts 16:35-39). At Thessalonica, Paul was accused of "doing contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17:7), but was immediately set free. At Corinth, Paul was accused of "persuading men to worship God contrary to the law" (Acts 18:13). However, Gallio the proconsul was not able to determine any violation of Roman law. When the Jews accused Paul of sacrilege in Jerusalem, the governors Felix and Festus found no wrongdoing and would have let him go had he not appealed to Caesar (Acts 19-26). The author attempts to reveal that Christianity was not a threat to the Roman Empire, as the Judaizers had accused them of being. In contrast, Luke-Acts repeated shows how the Jews unjustly accused Christ Jesus and the early Church.

6. References to Salvation for the Gentiles – The Gospel of Luke makes repeated references to the fact that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for the Gentiles. See the comments below on the Secondary Theme of Luke.

7. Emphasis upon Jesus' Wisdom - Only Luke mentions Jesus in the temple as a child, probably to reveal the wisdom that He had even before becoming an adult. This would be an important characteristic to the Greek mind, which sought men who were considered wise. Paul tells us that the Greeks seek wisdom, while the Jews seek after a sign (1 Cor 1:22).

B. External Evidence - Since Luke-Acts appears to be addressed to the same person, it is logical to quote the early Church fathers regarding who what they said about Luke's intended readers for his Gospel as well as the book of Acts. External evidence supports the internal evidence regarding the identity of Luke's recipients.

1. Origen (A.D. 185-254) - *Eusebius* quotes Origen as telling us that Luke was encouraged by Paul to write his Gospel for the Gentile converts, saying, "And the third by Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, and composed for Gentile converts." (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.25.6) This statement would agree with Luke's prologue whether the word "Theophilus" was addressed to an individual or to the church community at large.

2. Gregory Naziansen (A.D. 329-389) - Gregory Naziansen, the theologian, gives us a list of the primary recipients of the four Gospels that reflects the traditions of his day, saying, "In the first place, Matthew wrote to the Hebrews of the miracles of Jesus, then Mark to Italy, Luke to those of Achaia, and John to all, a great herald who walked in heaven." (*Gregorii Nazianzeni Carmen de Libris Canonicis [15]*) (*PG* 38, col. 843-845.) (author's translation).[82] This tradition has been interpreted modern scholars to say that Matthew wrote to the Hebrews, Mark to the Romans, Luke to the Greeks and John to Christians.[83] The three Synoptic Gospels addressed the three mindsets of the civilized world of their day. Matthew, Mark and Luke lived in a world where the Jewish mind took religion to the world's most ancient past. The Roman mind was focused on dominating and subduing nations. The Greek mindset sought the highest wisdom that man could find. Matthew wrote primarily to the Hebrews to establish Jesus as their Messiah. Mark addressed his Gospel to the Romans, who would bow before the Miracle-working power of the Jesus Christ. Luke gave attention to the Greek mind, where he spoke to logic and reason to convince his readers of the wisdom of believing in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. Why would Matthew's Gospel come first? Perhaps it is placed first because to the Jews first was the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ prepared.

---

[82]Cited by Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, vol. 1: Apostolic Christianity A.D. 1-100* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 582.

[83]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, vol. 1: Apostolic Christianity A.D. 1-100* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 582.

3. St. John Chrysostom (A.D. 347-407) – *John Chrysostom*, bishop of Constantinople, appears to agree with *Eusebius* when he tells us that Luke wrote to the Christians in general, compared to Matthew's Gospel, which was written to the Hebrews.

> For this cause then Matthew, as writing to Hebrews, sought to shew nothing more, than that He was from Abraham, and David; but Luke, as discoursing to all in general, traces up the account higher, going on even to Adam. And the one begins with His generation, because nothing was so soothing to the Jew as to be told that Christ was the offspring of Abraham and David: the other doth not so, but mentions many other things, and then proceeds to the genealogy." (*Homilies on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* 1.7)

In the nineteenth century, a popular view was to apply a four-fold scheme for the recipients of the Gospels, such as D. S. Gregory, who said Matthew wrote to Jews, Mark to the Romans, Luke to the Greeks, and John to Christians.[84]

We can conclude this section of the identity of Luke's recipients by pointing to the Gentile church amidst a Greek culture of his time.

[84]D. S. Gregory, *Why Four Gospels? Or, The Gospel for All the World* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1877), 346-347.

LITERARY STYLE (GENRE)

"Perhaps the most important issue in interpretation is the issue of genre.
If we misunderstand the genre of a text, the rest of our analysis will be askew."[85]
(Thomas Schreiner)

Form critical studies followed on the heels of source criticism in the first half of the twentieth century in an effort to identify the evolution of the text from its original form as oral tradition to the stage of canonization. John Hayes and Carl Halloday describe the four primary aspects of form criticism, which are (1) the *content* "what is said," (2) the *form* "how it is said," (3) the *life setting* "in what setting or occasion it is said," and (4) the *function* "the purpose of what is said." They believe these aspects of form criticism allow the books of the Bible to be classified into their various genres as well as associate these genres with "sociological realities in the life of ancient Israel and the early church."[86] In other words, form criticism reveals biblical genres through the book's content and form; it reveals the occasion of the book through its life setting; and it reveals its purpose through its function. This section of the book introduction will address these four aspects of form critical studies in three sections in the following order:

1. Life Setting – Discussions on the occasion
2. Form and Content – Discussions on the type of genre occasioned by the author and the characteristics of the book in light of its genre
3. Function – Discussions on the purpose

These three categories follow Hermann Gunkel's well-known three-fold approach to form criticism when categorizing the genre found within the book of Psalms: (1) "a common setting in life," (2) "literary forms," and (3) "thoughts and mood."[87] In addition, the *Word Biblical Commentary* uses "Form/Structure/Setting" preceding each commentary section.[88]

I. Occasion

"Identifying the occasion and purpose for writing any document is usually important
for fully understanding the content and meaning of the message conveyed."[89]
(Thomas Lea)

Ephraem the Syrian explains that the four Evangelists did not receive a divine mandate to write their Gospels as did Moses with the Ten Commandments. Instead, he says that opportunity summoned the need for them to record the public ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.[90] However, there are a number of apparent reasons that we can find as to what occasioned the need for Luke to write Luke-Acts.

A. A Need to Give Theophilus an Account of the Christian Faith - In the 1200's, St. Thomas Aquinas, writing in his *Catena Aurea* on Matthew, quotes Remigius of Auzerre (c. A.D. 841-908), a medieval philosopher, who also wrote a commentary on Matthew. In this quote, we are told that Luke wrote his works

[85]Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, second edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, c1990, 2011), 11.

[86]John H. Hayes and Carl A. Halloday, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, revised edition (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1987), 83-84.

[87]Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction,* trans. Thomas M. Horner, in *Biblical Series,* vol. 19, ed. John Reumann (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1967), 10.

[88]*Word Biblical Commentary,* eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas, Texas: Word Incorporated, 1989-2007).

[89]Thomas D. Lea, and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, in *The New American Commentary,* vol. 34, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 41, Logos.

[90]R. P. Ioanne Baptista and Georgius Moesinger, trans., *Evangelii Concordantis Expositio facta a Sancto Ephraemo Doctore Syro* (Venetiis: Libraria PP. Mechitaristarum in Monasterio, 1876), 285-286.

in the parts of Achaia and Baeotia, at the request of Theophilus.[91] Thus, this request by Theophilus would have occasioned the writing of Luke-Acts.

B. A Need to Give an Accurate Account of the Life of Christ - We find a clear remark by *Eusebius* (A.D. 260-340) as to why Luke wrote his Gospel. We are told in this most ancient record of church history that Luke felt the need to give an accurate account of the life of Christ because other accounts were bringing into question issues concerning Christ Jesus. Luke was qualified to do this because he was acquainted with Paul and the other apostles. Note:

> "But as for Luke, in the beginning of his Gospel, he states that since many others had more rashly undertaken to compose a narrative of the events of which he had acquired perfect knowledge, he himself, feeling the necessity of freeing us from their uncertain opinions, delivered in his own Gospel an accurate account of those events in regard to which he had learned the full truth, being aided by his intimacy and his stay with Paul and by his acquaintance with the rest of the apostles. So much for our own account of these things. But in a more fitting place we shall attempt to show by quotations from the ancients, what others have said concerning them." (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.24.15-16)

C. A Need to Prepare a Defense for Paul's Roman Trial - Some modern scholars suggest that a probable occasion as to the writing of Luke was his need to prepare a written defense for Paul's Roman trial. Perhaps Theophilus was a Roman who could influence the outcome of such a trial. The impending trial of Paul would be a proper time for Luke to write to a Roman official in order to justify the Christian message as being worthy of acceptance in the Roman world. The early Church tradition that Theophilus was a Roman citizen of importance living in Italy finds some support within the text of Luke-Acts.

The descriptions of Jewish customs and geography of the land of Palestine suggest that the reader(s) was not familiar with them. In contrast, Luke's description of cities in Italy are so brief that they suggest the reader's knowledge of them (Acts 28:11-16).

Luke's comments that Cornelius was of the Italian band in Acts 10:1 suggest that this comment carried some important to the reader.

The ending of the book of Acts suggests such a trial needed a legal defense. We know that the book of Acts had to have been written after Paul's first Roman imprisonment, for this book ends with Paul's two-year imprisonment in Rome. The fact that Acts has such an abrupt ending suggests that the author recorded this event during or shortly after Paul's imprisonment. This means that Luke could not have written before the mid-60's. The fact that no mention is made of Paul's trial before Nero, his acquittal, his possible trip into Spain, his second imprisonment and ultimate martyrdom suggests that these events have not yet taken place. The fact that Luke was with Paul years later during his second imprisonment (2 Tim 4:11) suggests that Luke had completed his work because he had no need to include into the book of Acts these later events.

D. A Need to Record the Events of the Early Church – Within thirty years of the Lord's resurrection, the Gospel of Jesus Christ had spread to the ends of the known world. There certainly would have arisen a need to explain the rapid spread of the Christian faith.

II. Genre and Characteristics of the Book

Within the historical setting of the early church, the authors of the four Gospels and Acts chose to write their accounts of the Lord Jesus Christ using a literary style similar to the Greco-Roman biographies; however, they adopted a unique aspect within their ancient biographies by including kerygmatic material consisting of the teachings of Jesus Christ. Thus, the Gospels and Acts are given a distinct literary genre called a "gospel," which combines biographical narrative material and kerygmatic teachings. However, the book of Acts may be considered a historical narrative rather than a gospel in its genre. The introductory section of literary style

[91]Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected out of the Works of the Fathers,* vol. 1, part 1, second edition (Oxford: John Henry, 1864), 5.

will make a comparison of usage of the Old Testament in Acts, and the various themes emphasized in Acts, as well as a brief look at the grammar and syntax of the book of Acts.

The book of Acts has many characteristics that are unique when compared to the books of the New Testament.

A. Comparison of Usage of the Old Testament - The book of Acts contains numerous references to Old Testament prophecies that have been fulfilled. After the Gospel of Matthew, the epistles of Romans and Hebrews, and the book of Acts contain the fourth largest amount of Old Testament quotes of the New Testament books. In addition, F. F. Bruce tells us that the New Testament writers who quote from the *LXX* most often are Luke and the author of Hebrews.[92]

B. Various Motifs Emphasized in the Book of Acts – The book of Acts contains a number of motifs that reflects its themes. We find passages that emphasize the public ministry, the work of the Holy Spirit, the ministry of the New Testament church, church growth, the role of women in the ministry, apostolic sermons, the persecution of the church, and the miraculous.

1. Emphasis upon the Public Ministry of Jesus Christ – The book of Acts contains many verses that reveal the office and work of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Church age (1:1-11, 21-22, 2:22-36, 38, 3:6, 13-26, 4:2, 10-12,13,18,25-27, 30, 33, 5:30-32, 40, 42, 6:14, 7:55).

2. Emphasis upon the Work of the Holy Spirit - The Holy Spirit is referred to almost fifty times in the book of Acts, more so than in any other book in the Holy Bible. It was the Holy Spirit who enabled the apostles to fulfill their ministries in Acts as it was the Lord Jesus Christ who did the enabling in the four Gospels (1:2, 5, 8, 2:1-4, 17-18, 38, 4:8, 31, 5:3, 9, 32, 6:3, 5, 8, 10, 7:51, 55, 8:15-17, 29, 39, 9:31, 10:19-20, 38, 44-47, 11:12, 15-16, 24, 28, 13:2-4, 9, 52, 15:8, 28, 16:6-10, 19:2-6, 20:23, 28, 21:4,11).

Each person who served as a witness in the book of Acts was characterized as being full of the Holy Spirit. In the first major section (Acts 1:6-5:42), Peter and John are the primary witnesses of the Gospel. This passage notes that they testified under the anointing of the Holy Spirit (2:4, 14; 4:8; 5:3). In the second major section (Acts 6:1-12:25), Stephen, Philip, and Peter serve as the primary witnesses. Stephen (6:3, 5, 8; 7:55), Philip (6:3), Paul (9:17, 20) Peter (10:38, 44-45; 11:12, 15), and Barnabas (11:24) were all full of the Holy Spirit. In the third major section (13:1-28:31), Paul is again filled with the Holy Spirit (13:9).

Smith Wigglesworth once said that a person could not understand the New Testament epistles until he has experienced the book of Acts. He said that the Gospels bring us to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and the book of Acts brings us into the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. He says that only after we have received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit can we understand many verses in the Epistles about the Spirit-filled life. He gave 1 Corinthians 14:2 as an example of a verse that is impossible to understand unless someone has experienced praying in tongues, which says, "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."[93]

We have access to both faith and the anointing in this dispensation of the New Testament Church, but we may only have one of these two operating in our lives at any given time.[94] For example, Kenneth

[92]F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), 154.

[93]Smith Wigglesworth, *Smith Wigglesworth On Spiritual Gifts* (New Kensington, Pennsylvania: Whitaker House, c1998), 42-3.

[94]Kenneth Hagin, *Understanding the Anointing* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1983, 1994), 119-20.

Hagin talks about an anointed healer he knew who did not have the faith to receive his own healing although he had healed many men by the Holy Ghost's anointing.[95]

3. Emphasis upon the Ministry of the New Testament Church - The ministries of the New Testament church found in the book of Acts include assembling together (1:4, 6, 13-14, 2:1, 42 [fellowship], 46, 4:23-31). The believers assembled for prayer and supplication (1:12-14). The words, "pray, prayed, prayer, prayers, prayeth, and praying" occur twenty-nine times in the book of Acts as it related to communication to God (individual prayers 12 times, group prayers 17 times). References to prayer are found in Acts 1:14, 24-25, 2:42, 3:1, 4:24-31, 6:4, 6, 7:59-60. The Gospel of Luke uses the word "prayer" 28 times.

The New Testament believers assembled together to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). They assembled together for the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers (Acts 2:42). They also assembled for times of praising God (2:47; 3:9; 5:41).

The New Testament church had all things in common (2:44, 4:32). They gave collectively to meet the needs of the poor (4:37), and they ministered to the widows (6:1-2). They witnessed of Jesus Christ to others (1:8, 22, 2:14-40, 3:11-26, 4:2, 8-12, 19-20, 33, 5:20, 21, 25, 29, 6:7, 7:2-53, 8:4) and preached the Gospel to non-believers (2:14-41, 3:11-26, 4:8-12, 4:33, 5:25, 7:51, 8:5). They performed signs, wonders, and miracles of healings (2:43, 3:1-10, 5:15-16). They performed water baptism for new believers (2:41), and the laying on of hands for them to receive the Holy Spirit (6:6) and for the work of the ministry (8:17). The church judged sin among the believers (5:1-11).

4. Emphasis upon Church Growth - There are numerous references in the book of Acts to church growth. One hundred twenty (120) were saved before Pentecost (1:15). Three thousand (3000) added on the day of Pentecost (2:41). The Lord added daily such as should be saved (2:47). Five thousand (5000) were added prior to the start of persecutions in Jerusalem (4:4). Believers added more, multitudes both of men and women (5:14). The number of disciples multiplied (6:1). The number of disciples multiplied greatly, including many priests (6:7). The Church experiences persecution and scatters abroad to take the Gospel to the nations (8:4).

5. Emphasis upon the Role of Women in the Ministry - There are a number of references to women in the ministry in the book of Acts (16:31; 17:4, 17). There seemed to be more women converts than men on Paul's missionary journeys. This is also typical today as women in society generally embrace the faith quicker.

6. Emphasis upon Apostolic Sermons - Much of the content of Acts is dedicated to recording the sermons of the early apostles and evangelists. Perhaps the most common theme of all of these sermons is the message of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

a) Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost	Acts 2:14-41
b) Peter's sermon to the people in the temple	Acts 3:12-4:1
c) Peter's sermon to the Sanhedrin	Acts 4:5-23
d) Stephen's sermon to the Sanhedrin	Acts 6:8-7:60
e) Peter's sermon to Cornelius	Acts 10:34-48
f) Paul's sermon in Antioch of Pisidia	Acts 13:14-41
g) Peter and James' speeches at the Jerusalem council	Acts 15:6-21
h) Paul's sermon at Athens	Acts 17:22-34
i) Paul's sermon to the elders of the church of Ephesus	Acts 20:17-38
j) Paul's defense to the Jewish people	Acts 21:40-22:21
k) Paul's defense before Felix	Acts 24:10-21
l) Paul's defense before Agrippa	Acts 26:1-32

[95]Kenneth Hagin, *Understanding the Anointing* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1983, 1994), 132-3.

7. Emphasis upon the Persecution of the Church – The book of Acts testifies of the persecutions of the early church: threatenings and warning (4:1-21), beatings (5:17-40), the instigation of lies, the stirring up of people, and the use of false witnesses (6:9-15), death (7:54-60), and the great persecution against church in Jerusalem (8:1-3).

8. Emphasis upon the Miraculous - Louis Berkhof gives us the following list of miracles that are recorded in the book of Acts. He says, "Besides the miracles that are not described and of which there were many . . ."

a) "signs and wonders" by the apostles, 2:43; 5:12, 15, 16;
b) by Stephen, 6:8;
c) by Philip, 8:7;
d) by Paul and Barnabas, 14:3;
e) by Paul alone, 19:11,12; 28:1-9
f) the gift of tongues, 2:1-11;
g) the lame man cured, 3:1-11;
h) the shaking of the prayer hall, 4:31;
i) the death of Ananias and Sapphira, 5:1-11;
j) the apostles delivered from prison, 5:19;
k) the translation of Philip, 8:39, 40;
l) Aeneas made whole, 9:34;
m) Dorcas restored to life, 9:36-42;
n) Paul's sight restored, 9:17;
o) the deliverance of Peter from prison, 12:6-10;
p) the death of Herod, 12:20-23;
q) Elymas, the sorcerer, struck blind, 13:6-11;
r) the lame man at Lystra cured, 14:8-11;
s) the damsel at Philippi delivered ,16:16-18;
t) the jail at Philippi shaken, 16:25, 26;
u) Eutychus restored to life, 20:9-12;
v) Paul unhurt by the bite of a poisonous viper, 28:1-6;
w) the father of Publius and many others healed, 28:8, 9."[96]

C. Grammar and Syntax

1. Grammar and Syntax: Greek Language at its Best - Because the book of Acts contains less Hebraisms than the Gospel of Luke, it is considered the closest to Classical Greek of any New Testament book, perhaps with the exception of the epistle of Hebrews.

2. Grammar and Syntax: Analysis of Word Usage in Luke-Acts - Robert M. Grant gives us some insightful information as to the word usage of Luke-Acts. He says Luke's Gospel contains a total of 19,400 words while the book of Acts contains 13,380; Luke uses a total of 2,055 different Greek words while Acts uses 2,038; together, they use a total of 2,700 Greek words; Luke uses 261 words that are unique to the Gospel while Acts uses 413 unique words.[97]

3. Grammar and Syntax: Key Words – Each book of the Holy Scriptures contains key words that identify its themes. The book of Acts contains a number of key words that reflects the theme of the proclamation of the Gospel and church growth. Regarding the motif of the preaching of the Gospel, the

[96]Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans-Sevensma Co., 1915), 62.

[97]Robert M. Grant, "A Historical Introduction to the New Testament - Part Two: New Testament Literature, Chapter 10: The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts," (New York: Harper and Row, 1963) [on-line];

key words are εὐαγγελίζω (evangelize) and λόγος (word). The motif of church growth is found in key words such as αὐξάνω (grow) and πληθύνω (multiply).

Although the word εὐαγγέλιον only occurs twice in the book of Acts (15:7; 20:24), Luke uses its verb form εὐαγγελίζω fifteen times, the most frequent use of this word of any New Testament book. The second most frequent use in in the Gospel of Luke, where Luke uses it ten times. Of its fifty-four uses in the New Testament, Luke-Acts uses εὐαγγελίζω twenty-five times.

The word αὐξάνω is used three times in the verses that mark the end of a section (6:7; 12;24; 19:20). The word πληθύνω is used twelve times in the New Testament, with five of those occurrences in the book of Acts (6:1, 7; 7:17; 9:31; 12:24). The word πληθύνω is used three times in the verses that mark the end of a section (6:7; 9:31; 12:24).

III. Purpose

The purpose of the New Testament Church was to be God's instrument to reveal His plan of redemption to mankind through the promises/prophecies of the coming Messiah. In order to do this, God set the Church apart as a holy people and led them through the phases of redemption as a demonstration of His grace and love towards mankind. One phase of this plan of redemption is the believer's regeneration (justification) through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Gospels and Acts served a number of purposes for the early Church regarding the phase of the justification of the believer. They were written primarily to establish and defend the foundational doctrines of the New Testament Church; thus, there was a doctrinal and apologetic purpose. However, the authors chose to frame their work within a historical biography of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, and each Gospel writer selected historical material that emphasized his own particular didactic purpose. Finally, the Gospels and Acts served a practical and kerygmatic purpose in calling the reader to believe in Jesus Christ and to proclaim the Gospel to the nations.

A. The Doctrinal and Apologetic Purpose: To Establish and Defend the Foundational Doctrines of the New Testament Church – The primary purpose of the Gospels was to establish and defend the claim that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, which was the foundational doctrine of the New Testament Church.

The Doctrinal and Apologetic Purpose of Luke-Acts - There is evidence throughout Luke's writings of an apologetic nature, as Luke presents to Theophilus a defense for the legitimacy of the Christian faith. The timing of Luke's publication suggests that it was used in preparation for a defense at Paul's impending trial. Some scholars have suggested that the book of Acts was prepared as a legal brief in anticipation of Paul's trial before Caesar. This would mean that Luke wrote the book of Acts in order to defend Paul during his trial. Although some scholars say that the clear fact that Luke-Acts is a two-volume work negates this option, a close study of the structure of Luke-Acts does reveal an underlying theme that shows these writings as a defense for the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as well as defending the ethics of these Christians who were accused by their adversaries of committing evil atrocities. We can easily surmise that the author did not intend this dual work to be purely a historical record of the early Church, since many important events were left out. A careful study reveals that Luke placed narrative material within his work in order to achieve an intended purpose. Scholars give internal support for its apologetic nature.

1. References to Exoneration by Romans and Unjust Accusation by Jews - Luke appears to emphasize the fact that Jesus' rejection by the Jewish leaders was unwarranted as well as reveal Jesus as a man of great wisdom. Luke's description of Jesus' trial before Pilate shows the Roman governor repeatedly trying to absolve Jesus of guilt. At Philippi, Paul and Silas were accused of "teaching customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans" (Acts 16:20-21). When they were let go, the magistrates apologized to them for beating them unlawfully (Acts 16:35-39). At Thessalonica, Paul was accused of "doing contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17:7), but was immediately set free. At Corinth, Paul was accused of "persuading men to worship God contrary to the law" (Acts 18:13). But Gallio, the proconsul was not able to determine any

violation of Roman law. When Demetrius the silversmith causes a riot in Ephesus by accusing Paul wrongly, Alexander stood up and defended Paul's innocence (Acts 19:21-41). When the Jews accused Paul of sacrilege in Jerusalem, the governors Felix and Festus found no wrongdoing and would have let him go had he not appealed to Caesar (Acts 19-26).

The author attempts to reveal that Christianity was not a threat to the Roman Empire, as the Judaizers had accused them of being. It was rather, the fulfillment of the hope of all Jews, and because Judaism was legalized, Christianity should be treated by Rome as a part of this religion. Thus, Luke-Acts also has an apologetic purpose.

2. Reference in Pauline Epistle to Paul's Defense - The *Goodspeed* translation of Philippians 1:7, 17 shows that Paul appealed to Caesar in order to win a case for legalizing Christianity: Philippians 1:7, "And I have a right to feel in this way about you all, because both when I am in prison and *when I am defending and vindicating our right to preach the good news*, I have you in my heart as all sharing that privilege with me." (*Goodspeed*) Philippians 1:16, "These later do it from love for me, for they know that *God has put me where I am to defend our right to preach the good news*." (*Goodspeed*) Christianity was seen at this time as an illegal or unofficial sect of Judaism. This would support the view that Luke-Acts served in Paul's defense to get Christianity officially recognized so that the church could have rest from persecutions.

3. Luke's Preface Indicates a Petition - Daniel Wallace says the Greek word κράτιστος is used in the vocative case here. He says, "The vocative is used almost universally in the papyri only in *petitions*, as far as my own cursory research reveals (an examination of the first two volumes on the papyri in LCL). If this is the case here, then a petition is implied in Luke-Acts, even though none is stated." Wallace uses this argument to support his belief that Luke-Acts is primarily written as an apologetic work addressed primarily to a Roman official in defense of the Christian faith.[98]

4. Emphasis in Luke-Acts upon the Trials of Jesus and His Apostles - Luke 22:1-24:53 records the lengthiest account of Jesus' arrest and trials leading up to His crucifixion. The trials recorded in Luke-Acts are numerous: of Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Lk 22:66-71), before Pontus Pilate (Lk 23:1-5, 13-25), before King Herod (Lk 23:6-12), and Peter's two trials before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1-22, 5:17-42), and Stephen's unjust trial and stoning (Acts 6:8-7:60), and Peter's imprisonment by King Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1-19), and Paul's arrest in the Temple and address to the Jewish mob (Acts 21:26-22:29), his hearings before the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:10), the chief captain sending Paul to Felix the governor with a letter (Acts 23:11-35), his defense before Felix (Acts 24:1-27), his defense before Festus (Acts 25:1-12), his defense before King Herod Agrippa II (Acts 25:13-26:32), and his voyage to Rome to await his trial before Nero (Acts 27:1-28:31). There is an enormous amount of the content of Acts given to Paul's trials, both during his missionary journeys and before the Roman governors Felix and Festus. The last eight chapters focus entirely upon Paul's defense before Roman officials. All of these trials and events surrounding them serve as testimonies to prove the innocence of Jesus and His apostles.

5. Story of Shipwreck Tied to Ancient Belief of Innocence – Donald Guthrie and others note the suggestion by D. Ladouceur that it was a pagan belief in New Testament times that survival of a shipwreck proved a man's innocence. Perhaps Luke included this lengthy story as a defense for Paul's innocence.[99] This view finds support from a verse in Acts 28:4 which alludes to such a belief, saying, "And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, *No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live*."

---

[98]Daniel B. Wallace, *Acts: Introduction, Argument, and Outline* (Biblical Studies Foundation, Richardson, Texas, 1998) [on-line]; accessed 6 July 2010; available from; Internet, 11.

[99]Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grover, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 373; see D. Ladouceur, "Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a context for Acts 27-28," *HTE* 73 (1980): 435-449 and G. B. Miles and G. Tromph, "Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27-28 in the Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution and Shipwreck," *THE* 69 (1976): 259-267.

6. An Abrupt Ending - Some scholars feel that the abrupt ending to the book of Acts is an indication that the author is prompting Theophilus to do something about Paul's case, which has delayed for two years.

Luke-Acts appears to be a defense for the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as well as defending the ethics of these Christians who were accused by their adversaries of committing evil atrocities. Thus, whether Luke-Acts was directly intended to be used at one of Paul's trials or not, it certainly is structured as a defense for the Christian faith against the persecutions of the Rome government and from Judaizers. This structure is certainly a reflection of Pauline preaching of the Gospel, in that it reflects Paul's efforts to legalize the Christian faith in a Roman world.

Conclusion: The Purpose Reflects the Theme - This doctrinal and apologetic purpose of Luke-Acts reflects the foundational theme of the Gospels claiming that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

B. The Historical and Didactic Purpose: To Record the Early Church Eye-Witness Testimonies of the Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ and the Apostles that Prove He was the Son of God – *The Historical-Didactic Nature of the Gospels* - While the early Church used the Gospels to defend the testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the authors of the Gospels chose to present this testimony within a historical biography of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the writings of the four Gospels, the characteristic of selectivity is clearly seen. They all have the common thread as a biography of record of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, each Gospel arranges these events in a way that teaches us a particular lesson. For example, the Gospel of Matthew emphasizes the fact that Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures. He arranges his Gospel in a format that presents Jesus as the coming King, who delivers the laws of the kingdom of heaven to His people, how He performs the work of the kingdom, how man responds to this ministry, how to handle offences and persecution, and the departure of the King. Matthew's Gospel is packaged with the message of the coming King being woven within the major theme that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Messiah. Matthew closes his Gospel with the message of Jesus giving the commission to His disciples to teach all nations the laws of the kingdom of heaven. The Gospel of Mark also tells us of the events in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, Mark's intent is to testify that Jesus Christ was the Son of God because of His many miracles that accompanied His preaching. Mark presents his material by following the outline of Peter's proclamation of the Gospel message to Cornelius in Acts 10:34-43. His Gospel shows John the Baptist's commission and proclamation, then shows Jesus' commission and preaching ministry, first in Galilee, then the regions round about. Jesus then made His way to Judea and into Jerusalem to face the Cross. Mark closes his Gospel with a commission to the disciples to preach the Gospel with these same signs and miracles following. The Gospel of Luke serves to give testimony from men. It gives the most extensive story on the birth, life and testimony of John the Baptist. It also gives the testimonies of many others, such as Zacharias, Elisabeth, Mary, Simeon, and Anna. Thus, Luke tells us the life of our Lord Jesus Christ in a format of testimonies that were compiled by those who were eyewitnesses of our Lord and Saviour. The Gospel of John emphasizes the events in the life of Christ that confirm His deity. John weaves within his Gospel seven divine names that Jesus declares about Himself, seven miracles that show His deity, seven Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus fulfilled. John closes His Gospel with Jesus calling His disciples to follow Him. Thus, we see in the book of Acts that it is not just a chronology of the history of the early church. Rather, Luke selected particular people and events in order to reveal most accurately the situations that Christians lived in during this part of history. The book of Acts is then able to explain why the Holy Spirit was able to move so mightily in the hearts and lives of certain men. The book of Acts becomes more than a history book. It provides a moral foundation for the establishment of the doctrines of the New Testament church in the midst of persecution from all established religions. It provides a defense for the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as well as defending the ethics of these Christians who were accused by their adversaries of committing evil atrocities. Finally, an additional theme can be found woven within all four Gospels and Acts, which is the lesson that persecutions always accompany those who choose to follow Christ. Thus, we see that these five books not only give us a biography of the life of Christ and of a history of the early Church, but they each weave within their collections of events a unique theme and a lesson to be learned.

The Historical and Didactic Purpose of Luke-Acts - Luke goes to great lengths to place the origins and expansion of Christianity within a historical framework. Thus, Luke-Acts also has a historical purpose, although it is framed in a document that presents the beginnings and expansion of Christianity in order to convince the readers that the advance of the Gospel is the work of God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

This story begins in Luke's Gospel with the births of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ during the time of Herod king of Judea (Luke 1:5) and during the reign of Caesar Augustus, while Quirinius was governor of Syria (Luke 2:1-2). Luke gives much narrative material that took place in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas" (Luke 3:1-2). Jesus' death took place under the trials of Pilate and Herod Antipas (Luke 23:1-25).

The book of Acts continues telling us that the Gospel of Jesus Christ began at Jerusalem, spread throughout Judea and Samaria until it reached Rome. Walter Liefeld says that Luke dates these events "during the reign of the emperor Claudius (Acts 11:28; 18:2), when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18:12-17), when Felix and Festus ruled in Judea and Ananias was the high priest in Jerusalem (Acts 24-25), and between the times of the Jewish kings Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1-23) and Herod Agrippa II (Acts 25:13-26:32)."[100]

Conclusion: The Purpose Reflects the Theme - The historical and didactic purpose of Luke-Acts reflects the secondary theme, which is the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Although the doctrinal and apologetic purpose are primary, they are less apparent than the historical and didactic because the historical material the heavier weight of content within the Gospel.

C. The Practical and Kerygmatic Purpose: To Proclaim the Gospel to the Nations through the office of the Prophet and Apostle – The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts serve a practical purpose as the readers are called to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ as the Son of God in faith and obedience to Him. The book of Acts reveals that the early disciples of the Church "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42) Alongside this practical application, the Gospels serve a kerygmatic purpose. The book of Acts reveals that these early believers were scattered abroad beginning with the persecutions in Jerusalem and "went everywhere preaching the word." (Acts 8:1-4) In addition, the commissions of Jesus Christ at the close of each of the Gospels call believers to go forth and proclaim the Gospel to the nations. The commission in the Gospel of Luke (24:44-49) commands believers to proclaim the Gospel through testifying through the infilling of the Holy Spirit, which reflects the office of the prophet. The commission in the book of Acts (1:8) commands believers to proclaim the Gospel to the nations through the infilling of the Holy Spirit, which reflects the office of the apostle. Luke-Acts serves as a manual that empowers the Church to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Luke opens his Gospel by stating his purpose for writing this book. He said it was so that Theophilus (and the Gentile readers) "mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." (Luke refers to the same individual in Acts 1:1 in a similar way that ancient Greek historians commonly arranged such opening dedications.) He wanted this person to know with certainty and with accuracy that the stories of the Lord Jesus Christ were genuine, being confirmed by many eyewitnesses. Therefore, Luke compiles testimonies from the best sources available. Luke also made an effort to place these events around historical dates and events of contemporary people in order to give support to his own historical accuracy.

Eusebius states that Luke composed his work for a Gentile audience, saying, "And the third by Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, and composed for Gentile converts . . ." (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.25.6)

John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, tells us that Luke wrote his Gospel so the believers might be continually reminded of the certainty of the events regarding the life of Christ Jesus. He writes, "Now Luke tells us also the cause wherefore he proceeds to write: "that thou mayest hold," saith he, "the certainty of the

[100]Walter L. Liefeld and David W. Pao, *Luke,* in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Revised Edition)*, vol. 10, eds. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 2007), 678, Logos.

words wherein thou hast been instructed;" that is, that being continually reminded thou mayest hold to the certainty, and abide in certainty." (*Homilies on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* 1.7)

We can easily surmise that the author did not intend this dual work to be purely a historical record of the early Church, since many important events were left out. A careful study reveals that Luke placed narrative material within his work in order to achieve an intended purpose.

The purpose stated in the opening of the Gospel of Luke applies to the book of Acts as well. Therefore, the primary purpose of Luke-Acts is kerygmatic in that Luke's intent is to proclaim a true and accurate message of Jesus Christ and of the early Church. In order to give an accurate proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the author attempts to: *(1)* give the fullest account of the story of Jesus, starting at its beginning, (*2)* use as many eyewitness accounts as possible, (*3)* place these eyewitness accounts in an orderly manner, (*4)* place these events within the time frame of current secular events, *(5)* present his as a Gospel to the Greeks by making Jesus the Savior of the world to a sinful people, and *(6)* show that the Gospel has spread to the "ends of the earth" by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion: The Purpose Reflects the Theme - The practical and kerygmatic purpose of Luke-Acts reflects the third, imperative theme, which is a call to faith and obedience to Jesus Christ from the spirit-filled testimonies sent forth to the nations claiming that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This third purpose is clearly seen within sermons using the text of the Gospels as the preacher calls believers to apply the teachings of Jesus Christ to their daily lives.

D. Conclusion of the Three-fold Purpose of the Gospels and Acts – Having identified three purposes to the Gospels and Acts, it is logical to conclude that there are three themes embedded within these writings, with each theme supporting a particular purpose. Therefore, the three-fold thematic schemes of these books will be discussed next.

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

"Scholarly excellence requires a proper theological framework."[101]
(Andreas Kösenberger)

Redaction (composition) criticism built upon earlier forms of critical studies known as *source criticism* and *form criticism* to better understand the final composition of a book. This research asks how the literary authors edited and assembled their material into its final form. As a result, scholars began to approach the books of the Bible as independent, literary works rather than a compilation of fragmented parts gathered from various sources. A study in the evolution of the writing of commentaries reveals that extensive book outlines did not find their way into biblical commentaries until this recent era of biblical studies. Such outlines emerged during the trend of *redaction criticism*, so that by the mid-nineteenth century most commentaries offered book outlines in their introductory material. Earlier outlines existed in commentaries, but they were generally simplistic in form because scholarship lacked the necessary hermeneutical tools developed only recently in biblical scholarship.

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, biblical scholarship took a further step, using a number of approaches collectively known as *literary criticism.* This approach allowed modern critical studies and commentaries to propose greater detail in literary structures in an effort to reveal the book's theological framework. The current trend in *literary criticism* allows greater accuracy in book outlines. As a result, these outlines become valuable tools in exegesis as well as homiletics because of the recognition of a book's theological framework.

Based upon the historical setting and literary style of the book of Acts, an examination of the thematic scheme and the literary structure with its respective outline to this book of the Holy Scriptures will reveal its theological framework. This introductory section will sum up its theological framework with a set of exegetical-homiletical outlines, which are used to identify smaller units or pericopae within the book of Acts for preaching and teaching passages of Scripture while following the overriding message of the book. By following these outlines, the minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ takes his followers on a spiritual journey that brings them to the same destination that the author intended his readers to reach.

I. Thematic Scheme

". . . a statement of theme is the first step in formulating the message of the work within its historical context or in setting up guidelines within which future readings or interpretations of the work in different historical contexts may be considered legitimate."[102]
(David Clines)

"If we are to hear the words of the prophets in a way that is both faithful to their original context and of contemporary usefulness to us, we must first determine the basic theme or purpose of each prophetic book from which we wish to preach. It will also be helpful to show how the purpose of the book fits in with the overall unifying theme of the whole Old Testament and the theme or central plan of the whole Bible."[103]
(Walter Kaiser, Jr.)

Introduction - Each book of the Holy Scriptures contains a three-fold thematic scheme in order to fulfill its intended purpose, which is to transform each child of God into the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29). The primary, or foundational, theme of a book offers a central claim that undergirds everything written by the author. The secondary, or structural theme, of the book supports its primary theme by offering reasons and evidence for the central "claim" made by the author as it fully develops the first theme. Thus, the secondary

[101]Andreas J. Kösenberger, *Excellence: The Character of God and the Pursuit of Scholarly Virtue* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2011), 173.

[102]David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch, second edition* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd., 2001), 20-21.

[103]Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 102-103, Logos.

theme is more easily recognized by biblical scholars than the other two themes because they provide the literary content of the book as they navigate the reader through the arguments embedded within the biblical text, thus revealing themselves more clearly.[104] The third theme is imperative in that it calls the reader to a response based upon the central claim and supporting evidence offered by the author. Each child of God has been predestined to be conformed into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Scriptures, and they alone, have the power to accomplish this task. This is why a child of God can read the Holy Scriptures with a pure heart and experience a daily transformation taking place in his life, although he may not fully understand what is taking place in his life. In addition, the reason some children of God often do not see these biblical themes is because they have not fully yielded their lives to Jesus Christ, allowing transformation to take place by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Without a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, a child of God is not willing to allow Him to manage his life and move him down the road that God predestined as his spiritual journey. This journey requires every participant to take up his cross daily and follow Jesus, and not every believer is willing to do this. In fact, every child of God chooses how far down this road of sacrifice he is willing to go. Very few of men and women of God fulfill their divine destinies by completing this difficult journey. In summary, the first theme drives the second theme, which develops the first theme, and together they demand the third theme, which is the reader's response.

The Three-fold Thematic Scheme of the Book of Acts - There are three major themes woven throughout the framework of the book of Acts. The primary theme serves as a foundation, while the secondary theme builds it structure upon this foundation, and the third theme gives support to this entire work. These three fit together in much the same way that a house is built.

The primary theme of the four Gospels and the book of Acts declare that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This theme lays a foundation within Luke-Acts upon which the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is built. The secondary theme of the book of Acts is the testimony of the apostles under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to take the Gospel to the nations. The secondary theme reveals through these eyewitnesses that Jesus, the Saviour of the world, must be preached to all nations. This secondary theme serves as the framework of this Gospel. Thus, the book of Acts can be outlined based upon the way the Gospel of Jesus began to be preached, first at Jerusalem, then Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. The third theme found within Luke is a supporting theme that calls us to take up our cross and follow Him, and all those who follow Him will suffer persecution as their Saviour suffered; for this is the message of the Cross, which gives muscle, or power, to the proclamation of Jesus Christ. A third theme that Luke weaves within his Gospel and the book of Acts is a responsive, or imperative theme calling its readers to follow Jesus Christ, although they will suffer persecution as their Saviour suffered on the Cross. In Luke-Acts the crucified life is seen in our obedience to Jesus' final commission to become witnesses of Him beginning where we are at unto the uttermost parts of the earth; for the plan of fulfilling this final command of Jesus Christ is laid out in Luke-Acts. This work best reflects the office and ministry of the apostle and prophet in the five-fold ministry; for this message of the Cross is what gives muscle, or power, to the proclamation of Jesus Christ. The book of Acts reveals how we serve the Lord by fulfilling the office and ministry of the apostle, which is one of the five-fold offices of the New Testament Church.

These three themes fit together as the foundation, structure, and support of the book of Acts. Thus, we see the concept of how the early apostles saw themselves as building a house that is founded upon the Lord Jesus Christ, whose house are we, as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The apostles took this concept of building a house from the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt 16:18)

Note a further explanation of the three-fold structure to the book of Acts:

---

[104]For an excellent discussion on the use of claims, reasons, and evidence in literature, see Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

A. The Primary Theme of the Gospels and Acts (Foundational): The Claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God – The Gospels and Acts share the primary, Christological theme presenting the claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.[105] Each of the Gospels offers unique supporting evidence to this central claim. This Christological emphasis continues into the book of Acts, where the office and ministry of the Holy Spirit is introduced as this book makes a thematic transition from man's need for regeneration to sanctification.

1. The Primary Theme of the Holy Scriptures - The central theme of the Holy Bible is God's plan of redemption for mankind. This theme finds its central focus in the Cross, where our Lord and Saviour died to redeem mankind. The central figure of the Holy Scriptures is the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the Cross is the place where man meets God and where we die to our selfish ambitions and yield our lives to the God who created all things. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are not intended to be a complete or comprehensive record of ancient history. Rather, its intent is to provide a record of God's divine intervention in the history of mankind in order to redeem the world back to Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary. The Holy Scriptures are "Redemptive History."

Every book of the Holy Bible makes a central claim that undergirds one particular aspect of man's redemptive history. For example, the central claim of the Pentateuch is found in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD," to which all additional material is subordinate. The bulk of the material in the Old Testament is subordinate in that it serves as reasons and evidence to support this central claim. This material serves as the secondary theme, offering the literary structure of the book. In addition, the central claim calls for a response, which is stated in the following verse, "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deut 6:5) Such a response is considered the third, imperative theme that runs through every book of the Holy Scriptures. This central claim is the primary, or foundational, theme and is often obscured by the weight of evidence that is used to drive the central message, which weight of evidence makes up the secondary theme; and thus, it contains more content than the primary theme. Therefore, the secondary themes of the books of the Holy Scripture are generally more recognizable than the primary theme. Nevertheless, the central claim, or truth, must be excavated down to the foundation and made clearly visible in order to understand the central theme driving the arguments contained within the book. Only then can proper exegesis and sermon delivery be executed.

2. Why Four Gospels? - The New Testament opens with the four Gospels and the book of Acts. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the book of Acts serve primarily as testimonies, or witnesses, of the deity of Lord Jesus Christ.[106] God could have included dozens of Gospels into the Holy Bible, but He only chose four. Why is this so? One reason is that a matter, or truth, is confirmed in the mouth of two or three witnesses (2 Cor 13:1). Two or three Gospels were enough to establish the validity of Jesus' ministry. Skeptics would not believe in the Savior even if there were dozens of Gospels. In essence, there was no need for additional Gospels. The question arises as to why there are four Gospels, and not three or five records of Jesus' life and ministry. The answer can be found clearly in the witnesses that Jesus lists of Himself in John 5:1-47. In this passage of Scripture Jesus tells us there are four witnesses to His Deity beside Himself: the testimonies of the Father (5:19-30), of John the Baptist (5:31-35), of the works of Jesus (5:36-38), and of the Old Testament Scriptures (5:39-47). The structure of the Gospel of John is built around these four witnesses. The Synoptic Gospels emphasis one

[105]Scholars echo in unity the Christological theme as primary to the Gospels. For example, Robert Stein says, "Within Mark we encounter several theological emphases. Some of them are more important than others. What is clear from the beginning, however, is that the central and dominating theme of Mark is christological in nature. This is made clear from the start. Mark is about 'the gospel concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God.'" See Robert H. Stein, *Mark,* in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 21, Logos.

[106]Ernest Burton expresses a distinction between the primary and secondary themes of the Gospels, saying, "To us today the highest value of our gospels is in the testimony they bring us concerning the deeds, words, and character of our Lord Jesus. The ideas and purpose of the author, and even his personal identity, are to us matters of secondary consideration." See Ernest De Witt Burton, "The Purpose and Plan of the Gospel of Matthew," *The Biblical World* 11.1 (January 1898): 37.

of these particular witnesses: Matthew emphasizes the testimony of the Scriptures; Mark emphasizes the testimony of Jesus' works and miracles; Luke emphasizes the testimony of John the Baptist and other eye-witnesses; John emphasizes primarily the witness of the God the Father. Although each of the four Gospels emphasizes one particular witness, the testimonies of the other three witnesses are also found in each Gospel.

The four Gospels and the book of Acts reveal man's need for salvation, or the redemptive plan of regeneration, through faith in Jesus Christ, as He shed His blood on Calvary and made a way for man to be restored back into fellowship with the Heavenly Father through faith and obedience to His Word. Man's response to this claim results in his salvation, or regeneration, so that he becomes a child of God, which serves as the third, imperative, theme of the Gospels and Acts.

B. The Secondary Theme of the Book of Acts (Structural): Testimony of the Apostles under the Anointing of the Holy Spirit to Take the Gospel to the Nations – The book of Acts supports its primary theme of the deity of Jesus Christ by offering the supporting evidence of the apostles.

1. The Secondary Themes of the Holy Scriptures - The secondary themes of the books of the Holy Scriptures support the primary themes by offering reasons and evidence for the central "claim" of the book made by the author. Thus, the secondary themes are more easily recognized by biblical scholars than the other two themes because they provide the literary structure of the book as they navigate the reader through the arguments embedded within the biblical text, thus revealing themselves more clearly.

The Secondary Themes of the Pentateuch - The central claim of the Pentateuch declares that the Lord God of Israel is the true and living God, a statement found in the Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4-5, which is the foundational theme of the Old Testament. The secondary themes of the five books of the Pentateuch provide supporting evidence. In Genesis, God predestined mankind to take dominion upon the earth and He called the patriarchs and commissioned them to fulfill this task. In Exodus, God redeemed Israel and justified them as His people, and He delivered the Law to them in covenant as their foundational doctrine and teaching. In Leviticus, God provided mankind the service of the Tabernacle so maintain fellowship with man. In Numbers, God divinely provided for His people during the wilderness journey. In Deuteronomy, God made a provision for Israel to choose between the blessings and the curses. In Joshua, God brought His people into the Promised Land as their place of rest and redemption, while Judges reveals Israel's failure due to disobedience.

The Secondary Themes of the Historical Books - The historical books provide supporting evidence to the claim that YHWH is the true and living God by creating the nation of Israel and exalting it above all nations. However, the children of Israel disobeyed their God and brought divine judgment upon them. God predestined the Davidic lineage (Ruth), called David to be Israel's king and justified him before the people through divine providence (1-2 Samuel), indoctrinated Israel under the reign of Solomon's (1-2 Kings), instituted Temple service (1-2 Chronicles), restored a remnant of Israel from Captivity (Ezra-Nehemiah) and divinely watched over His people until the coming of the Messiah (Esther).

The Secondary Themes of the Hebrew Poetry - The books of Hebrew poetry provide evidence to the claim that YHWH is the true and living God by expounding upon God's provision for man to love Him with all his heart. God provided wisdom literature to offer the knowledge of God to redeem his mind (Proverbs, Job); God provided the commandments of the Law for the Jews and legal institutions for the nations to guide man to his destiny and redeem his body (Ecclesiastes, Lamentations); and God offers a personal call to mankind for fellowship and devoted service to redeem man's heart (Song of Solomon, Psalms).

The Secondary Themes of the Prophets - The books of the prophets provide supporting evidence to the claim that YHWH is the true and living God through the testimonies of the later prophets so that Israel could set her hope upon God's future redemption. Isaiah predicts Israel's redemption through the coming of the Messiah. Jeremiah predicts God the Father's time-table of seventy weeks for their redemption. Ezekiel predicts the restoration of the nation of Israel and victory over its enemies. The

twelve minor prophets offer supporting testimonies to the three major prophets. Finally, Daniel testifies of God's time frame for Israel's redemption, which Jesus called "the Times of the Gentiles."

The Secondary Themes of the Gospels and Acts - The central claim of the four Gospel writers states that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, which is the foundational theme of this division of the Holy Scriptures. In addition, each Gospel writer offers evidence as its secondary theme to support his claim. The Gospel of John offers the five-fold testimony of God the Father, John the Baptist, the miracles of Jesus, the Old Testament Scriptures, and the testimony of Jesus Christ Himself as its secondary theme. Matthew expounds upon the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures as its secondary theme; Mark expounds upon the testimony of the miracles of Jesus as its secondary theme; Luke expounds upon the testimony of John the Baptist and other eye-witnesses and well as that of the apostles in the book of Acts as its secondary theme.

The Secondary Themes of the Pauline Church Epistles - The central claim of the Pauline Church Epistles states that the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone how the power to redeem and transform man into the image of Jesus. These epistles deliver the doctrine of the Gospel to the New Testament Church. The epistle of Romans supports this claim by offering evidence of mankind's depravity and God's plan of redemption to redeem him as its secondary theme. The epistles of Ephesians and Philippians expound upon the role of God the Father in His divine foreknowledge as their secondary theme; the epistles of Colossians and Galatians expound upon the role of Jesus Christ as the head of the Church as their secondary theme; the epistles of 1, 2 Thessalonians and 1, 2 Corinthians expound upon the role of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying the believers as their secondary theme.

The Secondary Themes of the Pastoral Epistles - The central claim of the Pastoral Epistles states that God calls faithful believers into divine service in order to establish and grow the New Testament Church. The secondary themes of these epistles support their primary theme by giving instructions on the order of the Church. The epistle of 1 Timothy establishes the structure of the offices and ministries of the local church so that believers can serve the Lord within their local church with a pure heart. The epistle of 2 Timothy expounds upon this theme as Paul exhorts Timothy to develop his gifts and calling within the structure of the church. The epistle of Titus provides instructions on the importance of establishing the Church doctrines within the local church. The teaching of Church doctrines renews the mind of the believer, providing redemption for the mind. The epistle of Philemon expounds upon the theme of the love walk among fellow believers, providing redemption for men's bodies. Collectively, the secondary themes of the Pastoral Epistles provide redemption for the three-fold make-up of the believer, spirit, soul, and body.

The Secondary Themes of the General Epistles - The central claim of the General Epistles states that believers must persevere in the Christian faith in order to obtain eternal redemption. The epistles of Hebrews, James, and 1 Peter modify this theme to reflect perseverance from persecutions from without the Church. The epistle of Hebrews expounds upon the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ, which is its secondary theme. The epistle of James expounds upon a lifestyle of perseverance through the joy of the Holy Spirit, which is its secondary theme. The epistle of 1 Peter expounds upon our hope of divine election through God the Father, which is its secondary theme. The epistles of 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3, John and Jude reflect perseverance from false doctrines from within. The epistle of 2 Peter expounds upon growing in the knowledge of God's Word with a sound mind, which is its secondary theme. The epistles of 1, 2, 3 John expound upon walking in fellowship with God and one another with a pure heart, which is its secondary theme. The epistle of Jude expounds how living a godly lifestyle with our bodies, which is its secondary theme.

The Secondary Theme of the Book of Revelation - The secondary theme of the book of Revelation reveals the judgment upon the earth through the Tribulation Period and Second Coming of Jesus Christ, giving believers a vision of the hope that is laid up before them as a source of encouragement for those who persevere until the end. The primary theme of the book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ, who is coming to take His Bride the Church to Glory. The secondary theme supports this claim with the prophecies concerning the Great Tribulation Period and Second Coming.

2. The Secondary Theme of the Gospel of John - The secondary theme of the Gospel of John is the five-fold testimony that supports the primary claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,[107] which is the fundamental tenet of the Christian faith. This explains why many new believers are asked to read this Gospel early in their conversion experience. Such a declaration of Christ's deity requires evidence. When a testimony is given in a court of law, it is accompanied by all of the available evidence. This is how John the apostle presents his case of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 5:1-47, Jesus tells us there are four witnesses to confirm His Deity, which are the testimonies of the Father, of John the Baptist, of the works and miracles of Jesus, and of the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus declares Himself as a fifth witness in John 8:18.

The secondary theme of John, which provides the structure to this Gospel, is built upon this five-fold testimony. John's Gospel relies on the testimonies of these five sources in order to declare the deity of the Savior. These five witnesses of Christ's deity support the primary theme of the Gospel of John, which is the declaration that Jesus is the Son of God. This is why John ends his testimony of witnesses with the declaration, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:31). The secondary theme of John's Gospel states that all available, supporting witnesses confirm that Jesus is truly God manifested in the flesh, the Son of God. Therefore, John's Gospel is a collection of five testimonies which are used to witness to this fact. The Gospel of John opens with the testimony of the Father declaring Jesus' eternal Sonship (1:1-18). This is followed by the testimony of John the Baptist and his disciples (1:19-51), the testimony of six of His miracles, the seventh being His resurrection (2:1-11:54), the testimony of seven Old Testament passages (11:55-20:31), and the testimony of Jesus Christ Himself (21:1-23). Together these five witnesses support the claim that Jesus is the Son of God. John's Gospel also emphasizes Jesus' relationship with the Father much more than the other Gospels.

3. The Secondary Themes of the Synoptic Gospels - An examination of the secondary themes of the Synoptic Gospels find that they serve as additional witnesses to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ by emphasizing one of these five witnesses stated in John. Thus, the Gospel of John will serve as the foundational book of the Gospels, and of the entire New Testament. In fact, a person can simply believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be saved, whether or not he has a deeper and fuller revelation our Saviour and the other New Testament books. Faith in Christ Jesus as the Son of God is the foundational message of the John's Gospel, while the other Gospels support this message. The Gospel of Matthew portrays Jesus Christ as the Messiah who fulfilled the prophecies of Old Testament Scripture. Matthew testifies from the Scriptures that Jesus Christ is the King of the Jews to support His claim as the Messiah; for in this Gospel is a chronological list of Scriptures that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Matthew serves as the testimony from Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah sent to usher in the Kingdom of Heaven. The Gospel of Mark testifies of the many miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ by emphasizing the preaching of the Gospel as the way in which these miracles take place. The Gospel of Mark centers it theme on the miracles of our Lord and Savior. Thus, the witness of Jesus' works and miracles is revealed by Mark. The Gospel of Luke serves to give testimony from men who were eye-witnesses of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It gives the most extensive story on the birth, life and testimony of John the Baptist. It also gives the testimonies of many others, such as Zacharias, Elisabeth, Mary, Simeon, and Anna. Luke presents Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world that was under the authority of Roman rule, and he was writing to a Roman official who was able to exercise his authority over men. Thus, Luke was able to contrast Jesus' divine authority and power to that of the Roman rule. Jesus rightfully held the title as the Saviour of the world because of the fact that He had authority over mankind as well as the rest of God's creation. Someone who saves and delivers a person does it because he has the authority and power over that which oppresses the person. Finally, the book of Acts gives the testimonies of the Apostles and early Church. In summary, Matthew represents the testimony of the Scriptures, which sees Jesus Christ as the Messiah and coming King of the Jews. Mark

[107]The emphasis on the deity of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John is widely recognized by scholars. For example, Louis Berkhof says, "The gospel of John emphasizes more than any of the others the Divinity of Christ." See Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans-Sevensma Co., 1915), 104.

represents the works and miracles of Jesus, and sees Him as the Preacher of the Gospel with signs and wonders following. Luke represents John the Baptist and other eyewitnesses, who testify of Jesus as the Saviour of the World. It is important to note that although each of the four Gospels emphasizes one particular witness, the testimonies of the other three witnesses can be found within the framework of each Gospel, but only one has a major emphasis. Finally, the book of Acts gives us the testimony of the early disciples, which builds upon Luke's theme, as they testify of Jesus as the Saviour of the World (John 15:26-27).

In fact, every book of the Holy Bible serves as some form of a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus stated this in John 5:39, saying, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

Although each of the four Gospels emphasizes one particular witness, the testimonies of the other three witnesses are also woven within the framework of each Gospel.

4. The Secondary Theme of the Book of Acts – The secondary theme of the book of Acts supports its primary theme by giving us the testimony of the apostles under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to taking the Gospel to the nations. This secondary theme also provides the structure to Acts as the apostles take the Gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8).

The book of Acts continues Luke's theme of eyewitness testimonies as it centers on the testimonies of the apostles under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to take the Gospel to the nations. This two-fold witness is mentioned in John's Gospel when Jesus is addressing his eleven apostles at the Last Supper, saying, ""But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, *he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness*, because ye have been with me from the beginning." (Jn 15:26-27)

Therefore, the book of Acts places emphasis upon the testimonies of the early apostles. Note the many verses that refer to the testimony of the apostles (1:8; 2:40; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 8:25; 10:39; 13:31; 14:17; 15:8; 18:5; 20:24; 22:15; 23:11).

The book of Acts also shows the work of the Holy Spirit in empowering these men with a testimony. These men who bore witness with the greatest power were full of faith and the Holy Spirit. Note:

Acts 6:3 - Seven men - "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom"
Acts 6:5 - Stephen - "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost"
Acts 6:8 - Stephen - "full of faith and power"
Acts 11:24 - Barnabas - "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith"

Acts states that this Gospel must be testified to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, by witnesses that are filled with the Holy Ghost. The book of Acts opens with the disciples in the upper room being filled with the Holy Spirit and preaching the Gospel under their anointing (Acts 2:1-4). Paul will be filled with the Holy Spirit at the inception of his ministry by the laying on of hands by Ananias. As Luke accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys, he learned the power of the testimony of a man like Paul under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We see this type of preaching as the Gospel message develops when Paul speaks to the Jews in Acts 21:40-22:21 and when he speaks before King Agrippa in Acts 26:1-23. In Paul's preaching, he relies heavily upon his personal testimony and the anointing of the Holy Spirit to convince others to believe upon Jesus as the Christ. The book of Acts opens with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and ends with Paul giving witness with boldness and confidence (a manifestation of the anointing) in a Roman prison. Thus, the second part of Luke's writing is the book of Acts, which gives us eyewitness accounts, that of the early disciples coupled with the witness of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26-27). Thus, the secondary theme is the role of the anointing of the Holy Spirit in order to empower men who are chosen to take the Gospel to the world. Thus, we see Luke weave the testimony of men speaking under the power of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of prophecy woven throughout Luke-Acts.

5. Comparison of the Great Commissions of the Four Gospels - We can clearly see the themes of the four Gospels clearly emphasized in each of their Great Commissions. When Matthew's Great Commission is compared to the one in Mark, the distinction is obvious. The Great Commission ending the Gospel of Matthew serves as a final commission to the Church to build itself upon the foundational doctrines laid down in these five discourses through the teaching ministry. Mark's Gospel emphasizes the preaching of the Gospel with signs following. This supports the major themes of each Gospel. Matthew's underlying theme is to testify of Jesus through Scriptures, which lays the foundation for doctrine. Mark's theme is the testimony of Jesus through His miracles, which Gospel He delivers to His disciples. The structural theme of Luke's Gospel is the collection of verifiable eyewitness accounts as to the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. As a result, Jesus commands His disciples to be witnesses of these events by preaching the Gospel to all nations beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47), and to tarry in Jerusalem unto they be endued with power on high (Luke 24:49). Thus, he is making a clear reference to the contents of the book of Acts; and thus, he establishes its theme. The structural theme of John's Gospel is the five-fold testimony of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. John's Gospel reveals His deity with the testimony of the Father, of John the Baptist, of Jesus' miracles, by the fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures and finally in the last chapter by the testimony of Jesus Himself. This is why John's commission is simply, "Come, follow Me."

C. The Third Theme of the Book of Acts (Imperative): The Proclamation of the Cross and the Persecution of the Church (The Office of the Apostle and Prophet: Being Apostolic Witnesses of the Gospel to the Ends of the Earth) – *Introduction* - The third theme of each book of the Holy Scriptures is a call by the author for the reader to apply the central truth, or claim, laid down in the book to the Christian life. It is a call to a lifestyle of crucifying the flesh and taking up one's Cross daily to follow Jesus. Every child of God has been predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29), and every child of God faces challenges as well as failures in the pursuit of his Christian journey. For example, the imperative theme of the Old Testament is that God's children are to serve the Lord God with all of their heart, mind, and strength, and love their neighbour as themselves (Deut 6:4-5).

The child of God cannot fulfill his divine destiny of being conformed into the image of Jesus without yielding himself and following the plan of redemption that God avails to every human being. This 4-fold, redemptive path is described in Romans 8:29-20 as predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. The phase of justification can be further divided into regeneration, indoctrination, divine service, and perseverance. Although each individual will follow a unique spiritual journey in life, the path is the same in principle for every believer since it follows the same divine pattern described above. This allows us to superimpose one of three thematic schemes upon each book of the Holy Scriptures in order to vividly see its imperative theme. Every book follows a literary structure that allows either (1) the three-fold scheme of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: or (2) the scheme of spirit, soul, and body of man; or (3) the scheme of predestination, calling, justification (regeneration, indoctrination, divine service, and perseverance), and glorification in some manner.

The Third, Imperative Theme of Luke-Acts: Being Apostolic Witnesses of the Gospel to the Ends of the Earth - The third theme of Luke/Acts involves the response of the recipient to God's divine calling revealed in its primary and secondary themes. As believers we are to live a crucified life daily through obedience to the divine calling given in this book, which is to testify to all nations that Jesus is the Saviour of the world through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

This third theme that Luke weaves within his Gospel and the book of Acts is the message of persecution for all those who accepted the Gospel message. The early Church faced persecution from both the Jews and the Roman Empire.

a) Persecution by the Jews - The message that the Jews rejected Christ in contract to how many of the Gentiles embraced the message of the Gospel is woven throughout the book of Acts. The Jewish leaders of the temple in Jerusalem bought Peter and John into judgment (Acts 4:1-22). The high priest threw Peter and other apostles in prison (Acts 5:17-42). The Jews of foreign lands brought Stephen to the high

priest to be stoned (Acts 6:8-7:60). Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee, raised up a great persecution against the Church (Acts 8:1), which drove the believers into Gentile lands. Paul was challenged by the Jewish converts at the first Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29) about his Gospel to the Gentiles. Out of envy, the Jews at Antioch of Pisidia stirred up the people against Paul (Acts 13:45-52). The Jews of Thessalonica ran Paul out of town and pursued him to Berea (Acts 17:1-15). The Jews rose up against Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:12-16). The Jews participated with the Gentiles against Paul's companions in the riot at Ephesus (Acts 19:33). Paul is beaten by the Jews in Jerusalem and given an audience by the Gentile rulers (Acts 21-26). Paul met with the Jews in Rome, who rejected his words (Acts 28:17-29), and thus he preached to the Gentiles. Thus, Luke clearly shows to his readers why the Gospel of Jesus is as much a Gospel to the Gentiles as it is a Gospel to the Jews.

b) Persecution by Rome - The early Church not only suffered under the hands of the Jews, but under the Roman rulers as well. This was because the Romans did not recognize Christian as a legal religion. Unlike the Jewish religion, which the Romans allowed to exist in an effort to keep peace in their cities, the new Christian religion was perceived as a set of beliefs that conflicted with Roman rule. Luke attempts to show in his two-volume work that this persecution was unjustified and, in fact, illegal. In his Gospel, Luke emphasizes that Pilate, the Roman governor, stated three times that he found no fault in Jesus (Luke 23:4, 14, 22).

In the book of Acts, the Jews took advantage of their legal status by accusing Jesus and the early Church of breaking the Roman laws. The Gentiles at Philippi accused Paul of "teaching customs which are not lawful for Romans to receive," (Acts 16:21). Luke shows that Paul and Silas were imprisoned and beaten illegally (Acts 16:36-39). The Jews at Thessalonica accused Paul of "doing contrary to the decrees of Caesar by saying that there is another king, one Jesus," (Acts 17:7). The Jews at Corinth said that Paul "persuaded men to worship God contrary to the law," but the Roman deputy saw not fault in Paul (Acts 18:12-16). When Paul was accused of turning people from their Greek gods, the town clerk defended their innocence (Acts 19:35-41). The Jews at Jerusalem accused Paul of being one who causes seditions among the Jews throughout the world," (Acts 24:5). However, Felix, Festus, and Herod Agrippa II found no fault in him (Acts 24-26). Luke even points out that one Roman proconsul of Cyprus was converted by Paul (Acts 13:4-12). Thus, this work becomes apologetic in nature as it attempts to prove the innocence of the Christian faith.

The Filling of the Holy Spirit Empowered Jesus and Empowers Us to Testify to All Nations that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the World – The third theme of Luke/Acts supports its secondary theme by revealing the way in which to testify of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, which is through the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught and ministered the Gospel under the anointing and authority as the Saviour of the World through His office as a Prophet. Jesus' first prophetic utterances is found in Luke 4:18 when He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . ." The people recognized His prophetic ministry in Luke 4:32, "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power." Acts continues this theme by stating that this Gospel must be testified to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, by witnesses that are filled with the Holy Ghost. The third theme of the book of Acts is the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth through the testimonies of the apostles, with the Holy Spirit confirming the Gospel with miracles. A key verse in the book of Acts that reveals this theme is 1:8, where Jesus tells His disciples to spread the Gospel from Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth by the power of the Holy Spirit. Luke opens his Gospel in a similar way by stating that his Gospel was a collection of eyewitness accounts of the truth to the Gospel message of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another passage that reveals the common themes of Luke-Acts can be seen in Luke 24:45-47, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." In this passage of Scripture, we see that the theme of the Gospel of Luke is the eyewitness testimonies of our Lord's suffering and resurrection in Jerusalem, while the book of Acts is that this testimony is to be preached to all nations beginning at Jerusalem.

Because the book of Acts is not strictly a history book, Luke leaves out many events in the life of the early Church. For example, if we excluding Judas Iscariot's tragic death, Luke only records the death of one of the apostles, which was James, the brother of John. Of the other ten apostles who went out across the known world, Luke makes no mention. Luke does not tell us about the church at Jerusalem after Paul's conversion, except when Paul went to the first Jerusalem council in Acts 15. It omits Paul's journey into Arabia (Gal 1:17) and first visit to Jerusalem to see Peter and James. Nor does it does the founding of the church at Rome and Paul's additional travels, shipwrecks and perils which are referred to in the Pauline epistles (2 Cor 11:23-27).

Thus, we see in the book of Acts that it is not just a chronology of the history of the early church. Rather, Luke selected particular key individuals and events in order to reveal most accurately the situations that Christians lived in during this part of history. The book of Acts is then able to explain why the Holy Spirit was able to move so mightily in the hearts and lives of certain men. The book of Acts becomes more than a history book. It tells us primarily that the message of the Gospel was empowered by God to spread across the world. It provides a moral foundation for the establishment of the doctrines of the New Testament Church in the midst of persecution from all established religions. It provides a defense for the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as well as defending the ethics of these Christians who were accused by their adversaries of committing evil atrocities.

The book of Acts tells us that within thirty years after the death of our Saviour these twelve men, most of them unlearned, had taken the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. They had penetrated the Roman Empire and placed this message at the feet of the Emperor himself. Nothing could stop these men or their message. Their imprisonment was used by God as a way of writing the most powerful messages in the history of the world in the form of epistles. Even the deaths of these apostles were used to flame the fire and spread the message even further. Taught and empowered only by the Holy Spirit, their success testifies to the truth of the message of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, the secondary theme of the book of Acts is the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth through the testimonies of the apostles, and the third theme reveals that this took place with the Holy Spirit confirming the Gospel with miracles. Luke uses four main characters in the book of Acts to deliver this theme. They are the apostles Peter and Paul, as well as Stephen and Philip the evangelist. The activities of Peter dominate Acts 1-5. After the persecutions of Acts 6-7 and death of Stephen, Luke records the evangelistic work of Philip to the Samaritans in Acts 8. Beginning in chapter 9, Paul becomes the leading figure throughout the rest of the book of Acts.

The roles of Peter and Paul dominate the book of Acts. One obvious reason is that these two individuals were considered the two most glorious apostles of the early church, as confirmed by Irenaeus, who writes, "by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops." (*Against Heresies* 3.3.2)

Another possible reason that inspired Luke to give emphasis to these two leaders in the early church, as well as using Stephen and Philip, would be the fact that Luke's theme of how the Gospel was carried from Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria into the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8) is clearly seen in the lives of these four men. In following this theme of the fulfillment of Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8, Luke primarily used the testimonies of the two apostles that he was most closely acquainted with. Luke was a close companion of Paul the apostle. We know from the early Church fathers that Peter was also in Rome at the time of Paul's visit, suffering martyrdom with Peter. Therefore, these two great men of God impacted the life of Luke the physician more so than the events of the other apostles. The fact that the book of Acts discusses at length the lives and ministries testifies to this fact. Although there were other great men of God ministering the Gospel at this time, Luke chose to write about the two men who influenced him the most.

Peter first preached the Gospel in Jerusalem, and then took it to Judea when he was commissioned by the Holy Spirit to offer salvation to the household of Cornelius, the first Gentile. It was Stephen's death that

played a leading role in scattering the church of Jerusalem beyond its boundaries as far as Antioch. Philip played a role in taking the Gospel to Samaria. Finally, Paul was use by God to carry the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. Thus, Luke places these four men in the order that shows how the Gospel began at Jerusalem, and spread to Judea, Samaria and to Rome.

Where would Luke have received the story of Stephen's death? Most likely he received it from Paul the apostle, who witnessed this tragic event. Because Paul played a major role in the death of Stephen, he never forgot this event, which he certainly rehearsed in the ears of Luke on some of their long voyages. This would explain why Luke wrote at length about the death of Stephen in chapters 6-7.

Luke was not only touched by the events in the lives of Peter, Paul, and Stephen; but he also spent some time with Philip the evangelist, as we see in Acts 21:8-10, "And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus."

We know from this passage that Paul and Luke tarried with them many days and most likely heard Philip testify about this great evangelistic mission recorded in Acts 8. This could explain why Luke also included these events in the book of Acts, as the story fills the gap from Jerusalem, Judea, into Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. Thus Luke wrapped his theme of the commission of Jesus Christ to spread the Gospel around four key figures in the early history of the Church in the order of how the Gospel spread across the world in fulfillment of Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8.

Thus, the book of Acts is kerygmatic in its attempt to testify of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as it spread across the civilized world and reached from Jerusalem to Rome.

This pattern we seen in Acts of spreading the Gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the world was not limited to these early churches. Acts shows us the path that the Lord will lead all ministries down if they will simply follow the pattern of New Testament evangelism in the book of Acts. But, a person must first begin in the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus went to the Cross. If a minister begins by laying down his life at Calvary, he can then begin to follow the pattern of evangelism seen in the book of Acts.

The Lord has often raised up a ministry that began small by impacting its city. The Lord then opened doors for such a faithful ministers and allowed their ministry to begin touching a nation. Eventually, this ministry is promoted by the Lord until it impacts the world. Such experiences have many men and women of God seen as they have followed this same New Testament pattern of evangelizing the world after such humble beginnings.

Every child of God has been predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29). Luke/Acts emphasizes one aspect of this conformity through the crucified life of faith and obedience in Him. In Luke-Acts the crucified life is seen in our obedience to Jesus' final commission to become witnesses of Him beginning where we live unto the uttermost parts of the earth; for the plan of fulfilling this final command of Jesus Christ is laid out in Luke-Acts. I have seen this fulfillment in the life and ministry of Pastor Bob Nichols, who began as an associate pastor in a small Assembly of God church in Fort Worth, Texas in the 1950's. The Lord used this church to touch its neighbourhood. In 1964 he started a church in Fort Worth. In the 70's the Lord brought a revival to this church that touched the city. In 1974 the Lord moved him to a large church building in downtown Fort Worth. In 1993 the Lord brought a revival in this church through Evangelist Rodney Howard-Brown that touched a nation. Then, in 1997 Nichols opened a Christian television station in Uganda, East Africa. After being on the air for nine years, it has changed this nation into a Christian nation. I know, because I have managed this station for those years. But the point of this story is to show how God used one man to reach first his neighbour, then his city, his nation and finally other nations of the world. This is the evidence of a life that has followed the plan laid out in Luke-Acts for New Testament church growth. Luke/Acts best reflects the office and ministry of the prophet and apostle in the five-fold ministry of the Church. The prophetic voice gives the Church a vision and direction, while the

apostolic office leads the Church in that vision. Both of these voices work in unison in fulfilling the Great Commission. Thus, according to Luke-Acts the Kingdom of God is established upon earth through the prophetic and apostolic ministry working together to testify of the Saviour of the World through the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Comment (Prophetic Prayer in the Great Commission) - Throughout the books of Luke-Acts, the prophetic ministry launched the apostolic ministries. For example, in Luke 4:17-19 Jesus launched His public ministry with a prophet word from the Scriptures. This prophetic word from the book of Isaiah guided His entire public ministry. In Luke 28:46-49 and Acts 1:7-8 Jesus gives a prophetic utterance that will guide the early Church towards its ultimate goal of bringing the Gospel to the nations. Thus, this opening commission will drive the plot of the entire book of Acts. There will be additional prophetic utterances and visions that will steer the apostles through these early years; thus, they will play a role in developing the plot of the book of Acts. For example, the prophecy of Ananias to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:15-16) prepares Paul for his missionary journeys. Peter's vision on the house top of Simon the tanner prepares for the Gospel to spread beyond Judea (Acts 10:13-16). The prophetic utterance of the prophets in the church at Antioch send forth Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:2). The prophecy of Agabus (Acts 21:11) confirms to Paul what has already been prophetically uttered concerning his sufferings and imprisonment (Acts 20:23). The book of Acts concludes with a prophetic utterance from Paul while imprisoned in Rome as he determines that the Gospel has now been send to the nations because the Jews have widely rejected their Messiah (Acts 28:25-28).

Illustration - Dale Gentry, who has walked in the prophetic office for decades, told our church as a guest speaker in the mid-1990's of his vision in which he saw people being shot out from the city of London into the mission fields.[108] This description of someone being shot out describes how the prophetic launches the apostolic work of the New Testament church.

II. Literary Structure

"After we have stated the book's purpose [or theme], we must then mark out the major literary sections that constitute the structure of the book. Usually there are rhetorical devices that mark where a new section begins in the book. However, when such rhetorical devices are not present, one must watch for other markers. A change in subject matter, a change in pronouns, or a change in aspects of the verbal action can all be telltale signs that a new section has begun."[109]
(Walter Kaiser, Jr.)

The literary structure of the book of Acts must follow the thematic scheme of the book. It is important to note that such a breakdown of this book of the Holy Bible was not necessarily intended by the original author, but it is being used as a means of making the interpretation easier. It is hoped that this summary and outline can identify the underlying themes of the book, as well as the themes of its major divisions, sections, and subsections. Then individual verses can more easily be understood in light of the emphasis of the immediate passages in which they are found.

This section explains the rationale for the literary structure of the book of Acts by discussing three topics: (A) A Summary of the Historical Development of the Literary Structure of the Book of Acts, (B) Hermeneutical Principles for Identifying the Literary Structure of the Book of Acts, and (C) A Summary of the Book of Acts Using the Prophetic Progress of Church Growth Outline.

A. A Summary of the Historical Development of the Literary Structure of the Book of Acts – The goal of developing the literary structure of a book of the Bible is to reveal its theological framework. An evaluation of the historical development of the literary structures of the four Gospels and Acts reveals a similar

[108]Dale Gentry, sermon, *Dale Gentry Ministries*, Calvary Cathedral International, Fort Worth, Texas, mid-1990's.

[109]Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 102-103, Logos.

progressive pattern. Robert Guelich believes that the Gospel of Mark has seen a progression of three major approaches to its structure in modern times: the geographical approach, the thematic or Christological approach, and most recently the literary or rhetorical approach.[110] These three approaches appear to be determined largely by the progression of historical criticism, so that all of the Gospels have seen a similar development. For example, the geographical approach closely reflects the development of source criticism at the turn of the twentieth century. The thematic and Christological approaches reflect the development of form and redaction criticism during the mid-twentieth century. The literary, rhetorical, and chiastic approaches reflect the recent development of literary criticism. Scholars have developed each of these approaches by building upon the ideas laid down by their predecessors. The literary structure of a book must be able to reflect its three-fold thematic scheme within a theological framework.

In order to propose a summary of the book of Acts, a study must be done on the history of the development of its literary structure. The first centuries of modern scholarship following the Reformation quickly recognized the two-fold structure of Acts emphasizing the apostolic ministries of Peter and Paul. During the past century, scholars recognized that the geographical growth of the Church as defined in Acts 1:8 further shapes this two-fold emphasis. As a result, the identification of smaller literary units revealed the ministries of Peter and John, Stephen, Philip, and Paul as they took the Gospel from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome. Today's scholarship has identified additional literary elements as an aid to subdivide the book of Acts into even smaller literary units. The most popular outline of the book of Acts today highlights verses described as "progress reports," refining the literary structure of the book of Acts with great accuracy. Therefore, studies on the literary structure of the book of Acts have progressed from simple to complex because of new hermeneutical principles that allow the identification of many of this book's literary elements. This author adds an additional thematic scheme to the Progressive Report Outline of the book of Acts. This thematic scheme reveals the book's unity by offering a progressive, spiritual journey upon which the believer as well as the New Testament Church can embark in order to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

1. The Ministries of Peter and Paul Outline - Perhaps the earliest example of attempts to structure the book of Acts is the recognition of the two major characters in the book of Acts, Peter and Paul. For example, John Lightfoot (1602-75) concluded that the first twelve chapters focus upon Peter's ministry founded upon the first church in Jerusalem, and the rest of the book emphasizes Paul's missionary work having been sent out from the church in Antioch.[111] The first twelve chapters show how Peter headed the spread of the Gospel throughout Palestine. The rest of the book shows how Paul spread the Gospel to the Gentiles. Peter was commissioned in Jerusalem while Paul was sent out from Antioch. In each of these two sections of Acts, both Peter and Paul face a number of imprisonments. Supporters of this outline suggest that Paul refers to this geographical distinction between himself and Peter in Galatians 2:8, "(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)" The two-fold outline emphasizing the ministries of Peter and Paul was the predominant view until the middle of the twentieth century.[112]

---

[110]Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, in *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34A, eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1998), xxxvi, Logos.

[111]John Lightfoot writes, "Now, the method, that the evangelist prescribes unto himself, and followeth in this book, is plainly this:--from the beginning of the book to the end of the twelfth chapter, he discourseth the state of the church and gospel among the Jews: and from thenceforward, to the end of the book, he doth the like, of the same among the Gentiles: and, therefore, accordingly, although the title of the book be 'The Acts of the Apostles,' as of the apostles in general; yet doth he more singularly set himself to follow the story of the two apostles Peter and Paul: Peter's to the thirteenth chapter,--and Paul's, after; because that these two were more peculiarly the fixed ministers of the circumcision, and of the uncircumcision." See John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 8, in *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot, D.D.,* ed. John Rogers Pitman (London: J. F. Dove, 1923), 13-14.

[112]William H. Malas, Jr., "The Literary Structure of Acts: A Narratological Investigation into its Arrangement, Plot, and Primary Themes," Ph.D diss., Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 2001 [on-line]; accessed 26 June 2012; available from http://search.proquest.com.aaron.swbts.edu/pqdthss/docview/304783567/13DB037B43A625B8AE2/1?accountid=7073 ; Internet, 9.

2. The Geographical Expansion Outline – Nineteenth century scholarship recognized the clear, geographical expansion of the church recorded in the book of Acts. The church expanded from Jerusalem, to Judaea and Samaria, to Asia Minor and Macedonia, and finally to Rome, forming important narrative division within the book of Acts. Luke opens with Acts 1:8 as a key verse in his prologue to reveal the expansion of the early Church that takes place in the book of Acts. In Acts 8:1, Jesus charges His disciples to spread the Gospel from Jerusalem, to Judaea and Samaria, unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Therefore, the geographical expansion outline further develops the Peter and Paul outline in order to recognize additional literary elements within the book of Acts. Within this new literary structure, the roles of other key characters in addition come to light to Peter and Paul, such as John, Stephen, and Philip. Scholars propose a variety of subsections within the two major divisions of the book of Acts when following the geographical expansion outline (for examples of such outlines, see Alexander,[113] Gloag,[114] Zahn[115]). The following literary structures represent the most simplistic geographical expansion outline:

a) Prologue (1:1-5) - The prologue to the book of Acts serves as a brief summary of the Gospel of Luke, which is the first of the dual writings of Luke-Acts. This prologue also states the theme of these books.

b) The Witness of the Church in Jerusalem (1:6-5:42) - After a brief prologue (1:1-5) Luke begins his testimony in Jerusalem as we see the disciples ministering there in the first five chapters of Acts.

c) Key Witnesses that Began Spread of Gospel into Judea & Samaria (6:1-12:25) - Beginning in chapter six the Gospel spreads into Judea and Samaria as the result of a great persecution fueled by the zeal of Saul of Tarsus. Philip the evangelist takes the Gospel into Samaria in chapter 8, and then to the first Gentile when he converts the Ethiopian eunuch. Peter takes the Gospel to the house of Cornelius in chapter 10, emphasizing the spread of the Gospel further abroad.

d) The Witness of the Church Growth to the Ends of the Earth (13:1-28:31) - Finally, Paul takes the Gospel to the further reaches in Gentile world, whose testimony ends with him in Rome. Thus, the book of Acts follows this geographical pattern of spreading the Gospel that Jesus commanded.

3. Linguistic Parallelism and Chiasm in Luke-Acts – Robert Morgenthaler offers one of the earlier attempts to develop a literary structure for Luke and Acts beyond their obvious geographical and chronological movements.[116] He divides Luke-Acts into large blocks of scenes that alternate between Jesus and the church's ministry in Jerusalem and a travel narrative as follows:

Jerusalem scene	Luke 1:5-4:13
Travel narrative	Luke 4:14-19:44
Jerusalem scene	Luke 19:45-24:52
Jerusalem scene	Acts 1:4-7:60
Travel narrative	Acts 8:1-21:17
Jerusalem scene	Acts 21:18-26:33
Travel narrative	Acts 27:28:31

[113]Joseph Addison Alexander, *The Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner, 1858), xiv-xxiii.

[114]Paton J. Gloag, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 1 (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1870), 33.

[115]Theodor Zahn, *Die Apostelgeschicte des Lucas: Erste und Zweite Hälfte,* in *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, Band 5 (Zeipzig: A. Deichertsche, 1919, 1921), 1:9, 1:296, 2:26, 2:744.

[116]Robert Morgenthaler, *Die lukanische Geschichts-schreibungals Zeugnis: Gestalt und Gehalt der Kunst des Lukas* (Zurich: Zwingli, 1949).

In addition, Morgenthaler suggests sixteen literary elements within the Gospel that correspond in pairs. For example, Mary wraps the baby in swaddling clothes and places Him in a manger (Lk 2:7) while Joseph of Arimathea wraps Jesus in a linen cloth and places Him in a tomb (Lk 23:53).[117]

Modifications of Luke-Acts chiasm were presented by Michael Goulder in 1961, who suggested using the geographical divisions of Galilee-Samaria-Judea-Jerusalem-Resurrection-Jerusalem-Judea-Samaria-the uttermost parts of the earth to place the Resurrection as the focal point of these two volumes.[118]

Galilee
Samaria
Judea
Jerusalem
Resurrection
Resurrection
Jerusalem
Judea
Samaria
Uttermost parts of the earth

Kenneth Wolfe further modifies Goulder's analysis in order to make the Ascension of Jesus the chiastic focal point of Luke-Acts:[119]

A Galilee (Luke 4:14-9:50)
B Journey through Samaria and Judea (Luke 9:51-19:40)
C Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-24:49)
D Ascension (Luke 24:50-51)
D' Ascension (Acts 1:1-11)
C' Jerusalem (Acts 1:12-8;1a)
B' Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1b-11:18)
A' The ends of the earth (Acts 11:19-28:31)

Ethel Wallis presents another chiastic structure that places the resurrection-ascension as the focal point. She crafts her structure around three central points of the narrative material: Jesus' persecution, His Passion and Resurrection, and His commission, particularly Peter and Paul.[120] David Allen gives the following summary of her chiastic approach:

"Prologue
Stage
Inciting moment in Luke 4:28
A Rising Action (conflict) (Luke 4:28-13:35)
B Suspense (no conflict) (Luke 14:1-19:44)
C Peak (climax and resolution) (Luke 19:45-24:53)
C Peak (resolution-denouement) (Acts 1:3-6:7)
B' Denouement 1 (the church in Judea) (Acts 6:8-12:25)

[117]For a list of these corresponding literary elements, see Joseph Robert Dongell, "The Structure of Luke's Gospel" (Ph.D., Union Theological Seminary, 1991) [on-line]; accessed 15 August 2013; available from http://search.proquest.com.aaron.swbts.edu/pqdthss/docview/303964742/13FE535467A5E5F1E32/2?accountid=7073; Internet.

[118]Michael Goulder proposed his ideas of Lucan chiasm at the Second International Congress on New Testament Studies held at Christ Church, Oxford in 1961. See Michael D. Goulder, "The Chiastic Structure of the Lucan Journey," *Studia Evangelica*, vol. II, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964): 195-202.

[119]Kenneth R. Wolfe, "The Chiastic Structure of Luke-Acts and Some Implications for Worship," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 22 (1980): 60-71.

[120]Ethel E. Wallis, "The First and Second Epistles of Luke to Theophilus," *Journal for Translation and Textlinguistics* 5.3 (1992): 229.

A' Denouement 2 (the church beyond Judea) (Acts 13:1-22:22)
Inciting final moment in Acts 22:22
Finale
Epilogue"[121]

Charles H. Talbert provides literary evidence for the micro-structure of the Gospel of Luke that supports the linguistic parallelism and chiasm approach to its macro-structure.[122]

4. Stephen's Speech Outline – Some scholars suggest that Stephen's speech in Acts 7:2-53 provides the literary structure for the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. For example, Delbert Wiens proposes both parallelism and chiasm within this approach.[123] Here is a rough summary of his proposal:

Divine Visitation Abraham & Disciples	Acts 7:2-8	→	Luke 1-3, Acts 1-4
Joseph & Jesus in Confrontation	Acts 7:9-16	→	Luke 4-8, Acts 5-9
Acts & Journeys of Moses /Israel & Jesus	Acts 7:17-51	→	Luke 9-19, Acts 10-28

5. The Progress Report of Church Growth Outline – Recent scholarship seeks to identify additional literary elements in order to develop the structure of the book of Acts with greater precision. One of the most popular literary elements used today for this study are key verses that summarize the progress of church growth (2:42-47, 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:31). These verses (some scholars add additional verses) are now popularly viewed as closing passages for the major sections of the literary structure of Acts. Because these verses also reflect progressive geographical expansion of the church, recent scholarship organizes the book of Acts according to these "progress reports" of church growth. David Peterson identifies additional insight into these progress reports by describing a common narrative scheme. He says these divisions generally open with pericopae that introduce new movement for further expansion of the Gospel, reaching a climax of conflict, and closing with progress reports that show "the resolution of some conflict or cessation of opposition and persecution."[124] Here is a summary of the book of Acts that reflects this popular approach to its literary structure:

a) The Birth of the Church in Jerusalem (2:1-47) – Acts 2:1-47 begins with the disciples being filled with the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost (2:1-4). The climatic event is Peter's sermon to the multitudes who had visited Jerusalem. This section concludes with Lord adding to their numbers while they shared all things in common (2:47). Thus, the early church is born and established in Jerusalem.

> Acts 2:1-4, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
>
> Acts 2:47, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

b) The Growth of the Church in Jerusalem (3:1-6:7) – Acts 3:1-6:7 begins with Peter healing the lame man and preaching in the Temple. The plot develops with a conflict between the apostles and

[121]David L. Allen, *Lucan Authorship of Hebrews,* in *New American Commentary Studies in Bible and Theology*, vol. 8, ed. E. Ray Clendenon (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 157-158.

[122]Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: Crossroads, 1982).

[123]Delbert L. Wiens, *Stephen's Sermon and the Structure of Luke-Acts* (North Richland Hills, Texas: BIBAL Press, 1995).

[124]David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 33-34, Logos.

the Jewish Sanhedrin and the climax is reached when Peter and John are miraculously delivered from prison. This section ends with the spread of God's Word and conversion of many priests (6:7). Thus, the church in Jerusalem experiences much growth through the teaching of God's Word.

> Acts 3:1, "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour."
>
> Acts 6:7, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

c) The Spread of the Church into Judea and Samaria (6:8-9:31) – Acts 6:8-9:31 begins with the arrest, trial, and stoning of Stephen, the first martyr of the Church. The plot develops with the scattering of disciples into Palestine because of persecution as Philip the evangelist takes the Gospel into Samaria and Gaza. The climax is reached with the conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. This section ends as the first persecutions against the early church cease and the church spreads into all of Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria (9:31).

> Acts 6:8, "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people."
>
> Acts 9:31, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

d) The Spread of the Church to the Gentiles (9:32-12:24) – Acts 9:32-12:24 begins with Peter taking the Gospel to the Gentiles in Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea. The climax is reached with the death of James the apostle and miraculous deliverance of Peter from prison. This section concludes with the death of King Herod and the spread of the Gospel and church growth (12:24).

> Acts 9:32, "And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda."
>
> Acts 12:24, "But the word of God grew and multiplied."

e) The Spread of the Church into Asia Minor (12:25-16:5) – Acts 12:25-16:5 begins with the church sending Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey into Asia Minor (13:2-3). The climax is reached with the conflict that was resolved at the first church council in Jerusalem. This section concludes during Paul's second missionary journey with the establishment of the churches Paul founded during his first journey and additional church growth (16:5).

> Acts 13:2-3, "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. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."
>
> Acts 16:5, "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

f) The Spread of the Church into Macedonia and Europe (16:6-19:20) – Acts 16:6-19:20 begins with Paul being called into Macedonia. The plot develops as Paul established new churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth. The climax is reached with a riot in Ephesus. This section concludes with Paul's escape having demonstrated the power of the Gospel among the churches in Asia Minor and Macedonia (19:20).

> Acts 16:6-9, "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came

> down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."
>
> Acts 19:20, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

g) The Spread of the Church to Rome (19:21-28:31) – Acts 19:21-28:31 begins with Paul making a determined decision to preach the Gospel in Rome. The plot develops with Paul's arrest and delivery of five speeches vindicating his innocence. The climax is reached with Paul's deliverance from the storm at sea. This section concludes with Paul at rest while preaching and teaching to the believers in Rome (28:30-31).

> Acts 19:21, "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."
>
> Acts 28:30-31, "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

Summary – In summary, the *Progress Report of Church Growth Outline* best reflects the literary structure and thematic scheme of the book of Acts. In other words, this outline reveals the macro-structure of the book of Acts. Because the goal of developing the literary structure of a book is to reveal its theological framework, several additional literary devices must be identified in order to further develop its structure at the micro-level. The discussion that follows revises the *Progress Report of Church Growth Outline* using hermeneutical principles that shape it into its theological framework that I entitle the *Prophetic Progress of Church Growth Outline*.

B. Hermeneutical Principles for Identifying the Literary Structure of the Book of Acts – There are nine hermeneutical principles presented in the discussion below used to identify the theological framework of the book of Acts. They provide the key in developing a theme-based approach to the Scriptures. Three principles are general in nature for all books of the Bible, two are special to the Gospels and Acts, and five are special to the book of Acts. These nine principles are designed specifically for developing a theme-based approach to the book of Acts to help bridge the gap between exegesis and homiletics. These principles are tools used to identify thematic schemes within the book of Acts at the super, macro, and micro-levels of its literary structure.

In order to propose a summary and outline of the book of Acts that reflects its theological framework at the super, macro and micro-levels, the nine hermeneutical principles discussed below are used to reveal distinct literary devices that determine its structure. These literary devices reveal the book's structure so that each pericope can be tightly linked together within the overall theological framework of the book. These literary devices are incorporated into the *Progress Report of Church Growth Outline* in order to reflect the theological framework of the book of Acts. This theological framework is entitled the *Prophetic Progress of Church Growth Outline.*

Scholars generally recognize the geographical structure of the book of Acts, reflecting the ministries of Peter and Paul. Many support the literary devices of "progress reports" that identify the seams that make up the book's literary structure. The nine hermeneutical principles presented below incorporate these literary devices. In addition, these principles introduce additional literary devices necessary for the full development of the super, macro, and micro-structures of the book of Acts. Here are the nine hermeneutical principles discussed at length:

The Theological Framework Shaping the Major Divisions and Individual Books of the Holy Scriptures (Principles 1-3) – The major divisions of the Holy Bible are shaped by two principles entitled *The Thematic Arrangement of the Holy Scriptures* and *The Thematic Arrangement of the Major Divisions of the Holy*

Scriptures. The individual books are shaped by a third principle entitled *A Three-Tiered Theological Framework of the Individual Books of the Holy Scriptures.*

1. The Thematic Arrangement of the Holy Scriptures - The first hermeneutical principle towards developing a theme-based approach to the book of Acts is general for all of the books of the Bible. This principle proposes a thematic arrangement for Holy Scriptures using three thematic schemes: (1) the three-fold scheme of the Trinity: the Father—Jesus the Son—the Holy Spirit, (2) the three-fold scheme of the tripartite man: spirit—soul—body, and (3) the four-fold scheme of salvation (also known as the *ordo salutis*): predestination—calling—justification—glorification. These thematic schemes provide the theological framework for the major divisions of the Bible as well as the individual books of the Bible at their macro and micro-levels. (See Appendices 1 and 2)

In the Old Testament, the Pentateuch makes the primary claim that the Lord God is the true and living God and man was to love Him with all of his heart, mind, and strength, a claim found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. The historical books reflect the secondary theme of how to love the Lord God with all of one's strength; the books of poetry reflect the secondary theme of how to love the Lord God with all of one's heart; and the prophetic books reflect the secondary theme of how to love the Lord God with all of one's mind.

The Pentateuch	Central Claim (Deut 6:4-5)
Historical Books	Love God with all of one's strength
Poetic Books	Love God with all of one's heart
Prophetic Books	Love God with all of one's mind

The Thematic Arrangement of the Old Testament

In the New Testament, the Gospels and Acts reflect the theme of justification in its narrow sense of "regeneration"; the Epistles reflect the theme of justification in its broad sense described as the believer's sanctification; and the book of Revelation reflects the church's glorification. This hermeneutical principle uses the expanded form of the *ordo salutis* to identify the major theme shared by the nine church epistles as "indoctrination."

Predestination	Genesis - The Creation Story
Calling	Genesis – The Ten Genealogies
Justification	Gospels and NT epistles
Regeneration	Gospels and Acts
Indoctrination (Church Doctrine)	Nine Church Epistles
Divine Service	Pastoral Epistles-Philemon
Perseverance amidst persecutions	Hebrews-James-1Peter
Perseverance against offenses	2Peter-1-2-3John-Jude
Glorification	Revelation

The Thematic Arrangement of the New Testament

2. The Thematic Arrangement of the Major Divisions of the Holy Scriptures - The second hermeneutical principle towards developing a theme-based approach to the Scriptures is general for all books of the Bible. This principle proposes a thematic arrangement for the Gospels and Acts based upon the apostle John's five-fold thematic scheme of testimonies of God the Father, John the Baptist, the miracles of Jesus, the Holy Scriptures, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Within this arrangement, the primary theme shared by the Gospels and Acts is the claim of the deity of Jesus Christ. This claim is best reflected in His title as the Son of God.[125] In addition, each Gospel offers a distinct testimony to support the central claim of Christ's deity as its secondary theme.[126]

The Gospel of Matthew uses the testimony of Old Testament Scripture for its secondary theme as supporting evidence of deity of Jesus Christ. Matthew's Gospel declares that the Messiah as King and the Kingdom of Heaven have come in fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture.[127]

Mark's secondary theme uses the testimony of the miracles of Jesus as the Son of God.[128] Mark records these miracles in conjunction with the preaching of the Gospel as supporting evidence of Christ's deity.

---

[125]*The Deity of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew.* Regarding the Gospel of Matthew, Stanley P. Saunders says, "Matthew's claim that Jesus is the defining expression of God's presence and power among us arises both from early Christian convictions about Jesus and from the historical circumstances of the day." Saunders again says, "Matthew correlates the claim that Jesus is 'God with us' directly with the assertion that he also embodies divine power." See Stanley P. Saunders, *Preaching the Gospel of Matthew: Proclaiming God's Presence* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), xiii, xvii.

The Deity of Christ in the Gospel of Mark. In summarizing the theme of the Gospel of Mark, Howard Marshall presents this same three-tiered thematic framework, saying, "The main theme of the Gospel [of Mark] is the identity of Jesus in his relationship to the kingdom of God [primary/foundational]. Mark spells out this in two states. There is first the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God, with the evidence of the presence of the kingdom in and through the mighty works and his proclamation [secondary/structural]. Then there is the recognition that the Messiah must suffer and be raised from the dead, with the implications that this has for his followers [tertiary/imperative]." See I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 91. For example, Robert Stein says, "Within Mark we encounter several theological emphases. Some of them are more important than others. What is clear from the beginning, however, is that the central and dominating theme of Mark is christological in nature. This is made clear from the start. Mark is about 'the gospel concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God.'" See Robert H. Stein, *Mark,* in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 21, Logos.

The Deity of Christ in the Gospel of John. Regarding the Gospel of John, Louis Berkhof says, "The gospel of John emphasizes more than any of the others the Divinity of Christ." See Louis Berkhof, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans-Sevensma Co., 1915), 104.

The Deity of Christ in the Gospel of Luke. Scholars often say the major emphasis in the Gospel of Luke is Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. This title is Luke's way of expressing His divinity.

[126]Ernest Burton expresses a distinction between the primary and secondary themes of the Gospels, saying, "To us today the highest value of our gospels is in the testimony they bring us concerning the deeds, words, and character of our Lord Jesus. The ideas and purpose of the author, and even his personal identity, are to us matters of secondary consideration." See Ernest De Witt Burton, "The Purpose and Plan of the Gospel of Matthew," *BW* 11.1 (January 1898): 37.

[127]Henry M. Harman says, "The main purpose of the author [of the Gospel of Matthew] is to show that Jesus Christ is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament . . ." See Henry M. Harman, *Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures*, Library of Biblical and Theological Literature, vol. 1 (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1878), 543. Thielman says, "[Matthew] wanted to show that although the gospel did bring changes, these changes were a fulfillment of Jewish Scripture." See Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 84.

[128]The emphasis upon the works and miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Mark is widely recognized by scholars. For example, Schaff says, ". . . the second Gospel as the mighty conqueror and worker of miracles who excites our astonishment." See Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1, 582; Anthony Deane says, "Mark is more concerned to record his deeds than his words." See Anthony C. Deane, *How to Understand the Gospels,* Hodder and Stoughton's People's Library (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), 38. William Wrede says, "The evangelist [Mark] appears to have had a quite special interest in these miracles." See William Wrede, *The Origin of the New Testament,* trans. James S. Hill, Harper's Library of Living Thought (London: Harper and Brothers, 1909), 53-54. James Moffatt writes, "Mark's gospel is the story of Jesus as a supernatural figure, compelling homage from the invisible world of demons, and exercising the powders of divine forgiveness and authority on earth as Son of God and Son of man." See James Moffatt, *The Theology of the Gospels*, Studies in Theology (London: Duckworth and Co., 1912), 12. Henry Sheldon says, "The writing of the second evangelist is essentially a descriptive Gospel. Its aim is a vivid reproduction of the life of Christ, a picture of the Master in His deeds. . . . In the exercise of its pictorial art it passes rapidly from scene to scene. . . ." See Henry S. Sheldon, *New Testament Theology* (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1922), 44. Predrag Dragutinović describes two important literary elements in the Gospel of Mark. The first element is the high concentration of miracles stories, eighteen in all, plus a reference to other miracles. The second

The secondary theme of Luke supports this central claim (and primary theme of the Gospels) by collecting eye-witness testimonies of men concerning of the deity of Jesus Christ. Luke records these testimonies as prophetic oracles from men as supporting evidence.[129]

The secondary, structural theme of John offers the five-fold testimonies of the Father, of John the Baptist, of Jesus' miracles, of the Scriptures, and of Jesus Himself in revealing Jesus as the Son of God.[130] Therefore, John's Gospel is foundational to the Synoptics as it offers all five testimonies of Jesus' deity.

The secondary, structural theme of the book of Acts supports this central claim (and primary theme of the Gospels) by collecting eye-witness testimonies of the apostles concerning of the deity of Jesus Christ. Luke records these testimonies to reflect the apostolic office of the New Testament Church.

In summary, John presents the five-fold testimony of Christ's deity. Matthew develops the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures in support of Christ's deity. Mark develops the testimony of the miracles of Jesus in support of Christ's deity. Luke develops the testimony of eye-witness accounts in support of Christ's deity. The book of Acts develops the testimonies of the apostles who spread the Gospel through their public ministries in support of Christ's deity.

Gospel of John	⇨	The Five-Fold Testimony
Gospel of Matthew	⇨	The Testimony of OT Scriptures
Gospel of Mark	⇨	The Testimony of Jesus' Works
Gospel of Luke	⇨	The Testimony of John & Other Eye-Witnesses
Book of Acts	⇨	The Testimony of the Apostles

The Five-Fold Testimony Scheme for the Secondary Theme of the Four Gospels

---

element is the fact that all but three miracles are recorded during Jesus' Galilean ministry. Based upon this observation, Dragutinović concludes that "the miracles of the Son of God are at the center of narrative theology of the Gospel of Mark." Predrag Dragutinović, "The First Miracle of the Son of God in the Gospel of Mark (Mark 1,21-28). A Contribution to Mark's Christology," *SScr* 8.2 (2010): 186. Scholars frequently refer to Jesus in the Gospel of Mark as the "miracle-worker" because of the number of miracles He performs. For example, James Edwards says the four stories recorded in Mark 4:36-6:6 "all highlight Jesus as a miracle worker." James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 147, Logos.

[129]Paul Schubert describes the prophetic thread that runs through Luke-Acts as the "proof-from-prophecy scheme." See Paul Schubert, "The Final Cycle of Speeches in the Book of Acts," *JBL* 87.1 (March, 1968): 1-16; Paul Schubert, "The Structure and Significance of Luke 24," in *Neutestamentliche Studien Für Rudolf Bultmann zu seinem 70. Geburtstag am 20. August 1954,* ed. Walther Eltester, in *BZNW* 21 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1957): 165-186. Luke Johnson says, "Luke's most comprehensive way of structuring his entire two-volume work is by means of literary prophecy." See Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina, vol. 4 (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 11. Joel Green adds that the Gospel of Luke portrays Jesus in the role of a prophet, saying, "Jesus is portrayed as a prophet, but as more than a prophet; he is the long-awaited Davidic Messiah, Son of God, who fulfills in his career the destiny of a regal prophet for whom death, though necessary, is hardly the last word." See Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke,* in *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 23, Logos.

[130]George Beasley-Murray says, "According to T. W. Manson, Jesus uses πατήρ to refer to God four times in Mark, eight or nine in Q, six in Luke, twenty-three in Matthew (of which seventeen fall in the Sermon on the Mount), and 107 times in John (*On Paul and John*, 129). Of these uses, over half in the Fourth Gospel denote the relation of Jesus to the Father." See George R. Beasley-Murray, *John,* 2nd edition, in *Word Biblical Commentary,* vol. 36 (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1999), lxxxii, Logos. See also T. W. Manson, *On Paul and John: Some Selected Theological Themes,* ed. M. Black, in *Studies in Biblical Theology* 38 (London: Student Christian Movement, 1963), 129. Andreas Köstenberger says, "John's favorite expression for God in his Gospel is 'Father'." See Andreas J. Kösterberger, *John,* Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004), 28, Logos.

3. A Three-Tiered Thematic Framework Shaping the Super-Structures of the Individual Books of the Bible - The third hermeneutical principle towards developing a theme-based approach to the Scriptures is general for all books of the Bible. This principle proposes a three-tiered framework of themes that shape each individual book of the Bible. The three tiers of themes and their functions are (1) primary/foundational, (2) secondary/structural, and (3) tertiary/imperative. The primary theme functions as the foundational theme shared by all books in a major division of the Bible. The secondary theme functions as the literary structure of the book. The tertiary theme functions as the imperative theme that calls the reader to respond to the message of the book.

The book of Acts is characterized by a three-tiered framework of themes in order to deliver its theological message of the testimony of the apostles concerning Christ's deity. The primary, foundational theme that it shares with the Gospels is the claim that Jesus Christ is the Son of God resulting in man's justification (regeneration) before God, which the book of Acts reflects through the preaching of the apostles. The secondary, structural theme is the testimony of the apostles under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to take the Gospel to the nations developed using the geographical-chronological and the church growth literary structures. The third, imperative theme is expressed in Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8, to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth. This is a call to the Church to imitate the apostles in the office of the apostolic ministry. Therefore, the sections of the book of Acts at its macro-level record the testimonies of key figures in the establishment of the church, primarily Peter and Paul as well as Stephen the first martyr and Philip the evangelist.

Primary/Foundational Theme	⇨	The Deity of Christ Jesus
Secondary/Structural Theme	⇨	The Testimony of the Apostles
Third/Imperative Theme	⇨	The Commission of Acts 1:8

The Three-Tiered Framework for the Book of Acts

This theme-based approach to the books of the Bible is crafted upon this three-tiered framework that, when properly applied, offers the text-driven preacher a specific, multi-faceted, predesigned, redemptive journey upon which to take his congregation.

Literary Devices Shaping the Super-Structure of the Book of Acts: The Christological Theme (Principles 4-5) - The book of Acts contains literary devices that shape its super-structure, which reflect its Christological theme. The super-structure is shaped by the fourth and fifth hermeneutical principles entitled *The Geographical-Chronological Scheme* and *The Establishment of the Church Scheme*. The super-structure of the book of Acts consists of its introductory material recording the apostolic commission of Jesus Christ, which gives the church its duty (block 1). The book records the church's growth beginning in Jerusalem (block 2) and expanding to Judea, Samaria, and Antioch (block 3), and ultimately to Rome (block 4).

4. The Geographical-Chronological Scheme of the Gospel/Historical Narrative as a Genre in Shaping the Super-Structure of the Gospels and Acts (Reflection of the Primary Theme) – The fourth hermeneutical principle towards developing a theme-based approach to the Scriptures is special to the four Gospels and Acts. This principle proposes that these New Testament books have a geographical-chronological scheme that shapes their super-structure. The super-structure of these books reflects their primary, Christological theme. Scholars have noted for centuries that all four Gospels are placed within a geographical-chronological framework of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.[131] The narrative plot of the book of Acts is also shaped around a geographical-chronological scheme that reflects the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ from Jerusalem to Rome. The spread of the Gospel is the focus of the public ministry of apostles and the early disciples as they fulfill the divine commission of Jesus Christ in Acts 1:8. While the geographical-chronological structure of the Gospels moves the plot towards Jerusalem, the book of Acts moves the plot out away from Jerusalem towards Judea, Samaria, Antioch, Asia Minor,

[131]Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 1:58-59, Logos. Davies and Allison say, "The one incontestable fact about the structure of Matthew is this: the gospel's narrative portions follow a rough chronological sequence. . . ."

Macedonia, and finally Rome.[132] Therefore, modern scholarship generally agrees that the narrative plot of the book of Acts is built around Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This hermeneutical principle reflects the primary theme of the book of Acts by serving as a testimony of the Lordship of Jesus Christ as Head of the Church to preach the Gospel to the nations.

Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8 shapes the super-structure of the book of Acts, so that it can be divided into introductory material and three major blocks based upon its geographical description: the introductory material in which the apostles receive a divine commission from Jesus Christ (1:1-14) and the election of a replacement for Judas Iscariot (1:15-26), the establishment of the church in Jerusalem (2:1-5:42), the spread of the church in Judea/Samaria (6:1-9:31) as well as Antioch (9:32-11:26), and the spread of the church to the Gentiles (11:27-28:31). Unlike the Gospels, the book of Acts contains no formal epilogue.

Introductory Material	1:1-14, 1:15-26
The Church in Jerusalem	2:1-5:42
The Church in Judea/Samaria/Antioch	6:1-9:31, 9:32-11:26
The Church in Asia/Macedonia/Rome	11:27-28:31

The Super-Structure of the Book of Acts

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the super-structure of the book of Acts. Each block begins with the phrase Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις (1:15; 6:1; 11:27) or a variation of it (Καὶ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν) (2:1). These temporal clauses provide the geographical and chronological movement in the plot of the book of Acts.

The sections breaks within the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts frequently begin with distinctive Lucan temporal clauses in the Greek text. Luke uses the Greek word ἐγένετο (it came to pass) on one hundred seventy (170) occasions in his Gospel, far more than the other Gospels (Matthew - 13 times, Mark - 17 times, Luke 170 times, John 2 times). In addition, Luke frequently uses the preposition ἐν plus the infinitive in Luke-Acts. The use of *ἐν* with the infinitive creates a temporal clause.[133] A. T. Robertson says three-fourths of the fifty-five uses of ἐν τῷ plus the infinitive in the New Testament are found in the Gospel of Luke.[134] Luke combines ἐγένετο plus ἐν τῷ and the infinitive to create the *ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν + the infinitive* clause or an abbreviated variation of it on at least twenty-seven occasions. This clause introduces movement in the narrative plot. This lengthy clause is so rare to the rest of the New Testament writings that it is found only once outside the Gospel of Luke (Mark 4:4). Therefore, this infinitive clause structure is almost exclusively Lucan in its usage within the New Testament.

These clauses provide the literary seams within Luke-Acts, introducing movement within the narrative plot; so they serve as a key literary element to Luke's orderly accounts. Luke uses it to describe the timeframe of Jesus' public ministry and that of the apostles. Because prophecy directs the future, it has a temporal element, which Luke expresses with these temporal Greek clauses. Prophecy sets in motion

[132]Floyd V. Filson says, "It would capture the essential geographical outlook of Luke to entitle the Gospel of Luke 'From Galilee to Jerusalem,' and the Book of the Acts 'From Jerusalem to Rome.'" See Floyd V. Filson, "The Journey Motif in Luke-Acts," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel,* eds. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1970), 70.

[133]Ernest Burton says, "*Ev* governing the Infinitive with *τῷ* is most commonly temporal, but occasionally expresses other relations, such as manner, means, or content. This construction is especially frequent in Luke and Acts." See Ernest de Will Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1892), 162. Friedrich Blass says this temporal construction with the present infinitive is generally translated "while," but Luke also uses the aorist infinitive to mean "after." See Friedrich Blass, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, trans. Henry St. John Thackeray (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1905), 237.

[134]A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914), 1072.

key future events. Divine prophecy sets the course of God's plan of redemption. These Lucan temporal clauses reflect the progress of time as divine prophecies are being fulfilled. Therefore, this Lucan formula seams together the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts at its macro and micro-levels.

At the macro and micro-levels within the book of Acts, Luke often moves the narrative plot using a variety of temporal clauses without restricting himself to a specific formula. The clause καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις (and in these days) provides the section breaks for the super-structure of Acts (1:15; 6:1; 11:27). However, Luke uses at least six other temporal clauses at the book's macro and micro-levels:

ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ (and it came to pass in that day) (8:1)
ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν + the infinitive clause (and it came to pass . . .) or a variation of it (2:1; 19:1; 28:17)
μετὰ δέ τινας ἡμέρας (and after certain days) (15:36; 21:15)
ἐγένετο δὲ (and it came to pass) (4:5; 9:32, 43; 19:23; 21:1)
ὡς δὲ ἐπληρώθη ταῦτα (19:21)
ὡς δὲ ἐκρίθη τοῦ ἀποπλεῖν ἡμᾶς (27:1)

The proposed outlines of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts in *Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures* clearly reveal these literary devices. Therefore, these Lucan clauses serve as an important literary device to identify the structure of Luke-Acts just as the Matthean formula quotation derived from ἵνα πληρωθῇ helps identify its structure.

5. The Establishment of the Church Scheme Shaping the Super-Structure of the Book of Acts (Reflection of the Primary Theme) - The fifth hermeneutical principle towards developing a theme-based approach to the Scriptures is special to the book of Acts. This principle proposes that a four-fold scheme of the church's *duty, power, structure,* and *organization* shapes the superstructure of the book of Acts. The Lord spoke to me in a dream and said that the book of Acts reflects the *duty, power, structure,* and *organization* of the New Testament Church (30 July 2009). Perhaps Jesus' commission before His ascension reflects the church's *duty* to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The *power* of the Church is seen in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the miracles wrought in the Church, and as well as the room being shaken where they assembled and prayed. The *structure* of the Church is reflected in the appointment of deacons as well as the offices of the prophet and teacher. Its *organization* is reflected in Paul's missionary journeys as he founds, manages, and writes his epistles to the churches. I call this the *Establishment of the Church Scheme*. This hermeneutical principle reflects the primary theme of the book of Acts by serving as a testimony of the Lordship of Jesus Christ as Head of the Church as He establishes His Church upon the earth through His servants.

God used the apostle Peter, as recorded in the first half of the book of Acts, to establish the early Church regarding its *duty,* its *power*, and its *structure.* However, Peter was not able to take the church to its next level needed when the Church spread throughout the empire. For this task, the Lord raised up the apostle Paul, who was a man with organizational skills. Paul was highly educated; and highly educated people gain their education because of such organizational skills in their character. God used these skills in Paul to establish the early Church regarding its *order (organization and unification of all the churches in various locations).* We see these skills reflected in his first epistle to the Corinthians, ". . . And the rest will I set in order (διατάσσω) when I come," (1 Cor 11:34) and "Let all things be done decently and in order [κατὰ τάξιν]." (1 Cor 14:40) Paul praised the order in the Colossian church, saying, "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order (τάξις), and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ." (Col 2:5) Paul also told Titus to set the church in order, saying, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order (ἐπιδιορθόω) the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:" (Tit 1:5)

The *Establishment of the Church Scheme* is modelled similar to the structure of a modern corporation in western civilization. A corporation usually begins by creating a vision and mission statement that defines its original purpose and intent. Such statements are equivalent to the church's duty expressed in Jesus' divine commission in Acts 1:1-14. The company's corporate documents, its constitution and

articles of memorandum, further define its duties as a way of fulfilling its vision and mission statements. The election of a company's board of directors provides the governing body, which is equivalent to the selection of the Twelve in Acts 1:15-26 who served as the primary members of the church council in Jerusalem. The registration of a company at the state or federal government level is equivalent to the delegated power and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ given to the church in Acts 2:1-5:42. With a registration, a company is commissioned with authority to conduct its business. The company's organizational chart, presented in boxes laid out in a hierarchy of positions is equivalent to the church's structure in Acts 6:1-11:26, which consisted of the five-fold ministry and deacons. The company's policies and procedures associated with each person's job description allow it to function smoothly within departments as well as between different departments and with its outside customers and vendors. Thus, a fully organized corporate is modelled after the structure of the New Testament church. Each independent church identifying the roles of its individual members as well as its interactions with sister churches and outside relationships. Thus, modern companies have evolved an effective business structure based upon the church model presented in the book of Acts.

Introductory Material	1:1-14, 1:15-26	The Church's Duty
The Church in Jerusalem	2:1-5:42	The Church's Power
The Church in Judea/Samaria/Antioch	6:1-9:31, 9:32-11:26	The Church's Structure
The Church in Asia/Macedonia/Rome	11:27-28:31	The Church's Organization

The Establishment of the Church Scheme in the Book of Acts

Literary Devices Shaping the Macro-Structure of the Book of Acts (Principles 6-7) – In addition to the super-structure of the book of Acts, there are literary devices that shape its theological framework at the macro-level. The macro-structure of the book of Acts is shaped by the sixth and seventh hermeneutical principles entitled *The Progress of Church Growth Scheme* and *The Ordo Salutis Scheme.* The macro-structure of the book of Acts provides the supporting evidence of the deity of Christ by presenting the testimonies the apostles as they proclaim of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through the power and work of the Holy Spirit, the church grows and expands.

6. The Progress of Church Growth Scheme Shaping the Macro-Structure of the Book of Acts (Reflection of the Secondary Theme) – The sixth hermeneutical principle towards developing a theme-based approach to the Scriptures is special to the book of Acts. This principle proposes that the book of Acts can be divided into sections that reflect the progressive expansion of the early Church beginning in Jerusalem, to Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and finally to Rome. This hermeneutical principle reflects the secondary theme of the book of Acts by serving as a testimony of the progress of the apostles as they obey the divine commission of Jesus Chris to establish His Church upon the earth by taking the Gospel to all nations.

At the macro-level of the book of Acts, its sections generally begin with a pericopae that introduces new movement towards expanding the Gospel. The early plots develop as the apostles preach the Gospel to a new people group, climaxing with conflict, and concluding with a resolution as the Lord vindicates the church with the demonstration of a divine miracle or a reconciliation of doctrines. Each of these sections concludes with a summary of church growth (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:35; 19:20; 28:30-31). This structure is popularly known as the "Progress Report Outline." Luke Johnson lists a number of progress reports in Acts and he describes these passages as "summaries."[135] These summary passages serve to confirm the fulfillment of prophecy throughout Luke-Acts. There are other passages described by scholars as "progress report," but these actually serve as the greater settings and immediate settings of a particular section of the book's micro-structure (2:42-47; 4:32-35; 6:7; 16:5), or as a conclusion to sections within the book's micro-structure (19:20).

Block 1 Introduction 1:1-14

[135]Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, in *Sacra Pagina*, vol. 3, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 13.

Block 2	The Calling of Matthias	1:15-26
Block 3	The Church in Jerusalem	2:1-5:42
Block 4	The Church Spreads to Judea/Samaria	6:1-9:31
Block 5	The Church Spreads to Antioch for the Gentiles	9:32-11:26
Block 6	The Missionary Outreach to Rome	11:27-28:31
	Greater Setting: Missionary Outreach Shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch	11:27-12:23
	The Witness of Church Growth unto Asia Minor	13:1-15:35
	The Witness of Church Growth unto Macedonia	15:36-19:20
	The Witness of Church Growth unto Rome	19:21-28:29

The Progress of Church Growth Scheme of the Book of Acts

This type of six-fold outline (with variations in the location of its section breaks) has been suggested since the early 1900's among biblical scholarship. For example, in a study on the finding the dates of the events recorded within the book of Acts, C. H. Turner divides the book into six sections by incorporating the list of "progress reports." He concludes that each of these six sections represent four to six-year periods.[136] C. J. Cadoux developed Turner's outline making only minor changes.[137] James Moffatt adopted this six-fold outline, but he did not support Turner's proposed dating methods.[138] Floyd Filson adopted this six-fold division as well without its associated dates.[139]

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the macro-structure of the book of Acts following the *Progress of Church Growth Scheme*. The brevity of Blocks 1-2 allow for only a simply narrative plot. However, the sections within Blocks 3-4-5-6 have a common literary structure that shapes their narrative plots. These sections begin with introductory material that establishes the greater setting for the narrative plot (2:1-4; 6:1-7; 9:32-42; 11:27-12:25). The plots of blocks 3-4-5-6 reach a climax consisting of conflict. This conflict finds its resolution in the form of a divine miracle of deliverance or intervention, thus the Lord vindicates the church, or in the form of reconciling doctrinal differences. These blocks conclude with a description of the progress of church expansion as a result of these series of events, popularly known as "progress reports." These conclusions (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:35; 19:20; 28:30-31) reflect the progress as partial fulfillments of Jesus' apostolic commission in Acts 1:8.

7. The Ordo Salutis Scheme Shaping the Macro-Structures of the Gospels and Acts (Reflection of the Secondary Theme) – The seventh hermeneutical principle towards developing a theme-based approach to the Scriptures is special to the four Gospels and Acts. This principle proposes that the *ordo salutis* thematic scheme shapes the secondary, structural themes of each Gospel and Acts. As noted previously, the secondary theme shapes the literary structure of a book. For this reason, the literary structure of these books at their macro-levels follows the thematic scheme of the *ordo salutis*. This thematic scheme bonds the book together as an independent, literary work, a view supported by, but still being developed by new, literary criticism. This hermeneutical principle reflects the secondary theme of the book of Acts by serving as a testimony of divine intervention and establishment of the church as the apostles take the Gospel to all nations.

As is characteristic of all four Gospels, the *ordo salutis* thematic scheme (God's plan of redemption) provides the theological framework of the narrative plot of the book of Acts. This thematic scheme follows the seven-fold order of predestination, calling, justification, indoctrination, divine service,

[136]C. H. Turner, "Chronology of the New Testament," in *A Dictionary of the Bible Dealing With its Language, Literature and Contents Including the Biblical Theology,* vol. 1, ed. James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 421, 424.

[137]C. J. Cadoux, "A Tentative Synthetic Chronology of he Apostolic Age," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 56.3 (Sept. 1937): 177-191.

[138]James Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament,* in *International Theological Library,* eds. Charles A. Briggs and Stewart D. F. Salmond (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 284-285.

[139]Floyd V. Filson, *Opening the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1952), 81.

perseverance, and glorification. It is used to identify the sequence of themes framing the prologue and the apostolic ministries of the apostles of Jesus Christ at the macro-level of its literary structure. I have chosen to use this seven-fold order of God's plan of redemption superimposed *The Progress Report of Church Growth Outline* discussed above because it offers the most accurate presentation of the theological framework of the book of Acts.

Introduction (1:1- 14)	⇨	Predestination
The Calling of the Twelve (1:15-26)	⇨	Calling
Jerusalem (2:1-5:42)	⇨	Justification
Judea/Samaria/Antioch (6:1-9:31; 11:26)	⇨	Indoctrination
Asia Minor (11:27-15:35)	⇨	Divine Service
Macedonia (15:36-19:20)	⇨	Perseverance
Rome (19:21-28:31)	⇨	Perseverance/Rome

The *Ordo Salutis* of the Book of Acts

More specifically, the macro-structure of the book of Acts is:

1. Introduction (Predestination)	1:1-14
2. The Witness of the Calling of Twelve Disciples (Calling)	1:15-26
3. The Witness of Birth of the Church in Jerusalem (Justification)	2:1-5:42
4. The Witness of Church Growth in Judea/Samaria (Indoctrination)	6:1-9:31
5. The Witness of Church Growth unto Antioch (Indoctrination)	9:32-11:26
6. The Witness of Church Growth to the Gentiles	11:27-28:31
a) Greater Setting: Missionary Outreach Shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch	11:27-12:23
b) The Witness of Church Growth unto Asia Minor (Divine Service)	13:1-15:35
c) The Witness of Church Growth unto Macedonia (Perseverance)	15:36-19:20
d) The Witness of Church Growth unto Rome (Perseverance/Glorification)	19:21-28:31

The *Ordo Salutis* of the Book of Acts

Since the four Gospels are structured by the plan of redemption (predestination, calling, justification, sanctification, and glorification), it seems logical that the book of Acts should be structured around God's plan of redemption for the New Testament Church at is macro-level. I also superimpose the *Establishment of the Church Scheme* over the *Ordo Salutis Thematic Scheme*. Both of these incorporate the literary structure of the progress reports.

The Church's Duty	1:1-26
1. Introduction (Predestination)	1:1-14
2. Witness of the Calling of Twelve Disciples (Calling)	1:15-26
The Church's Power (The Miracles, Sign, and Wonders)	2:1-5:42
3. Witness of Birth of Church in Jerusalem (Justification)	
The Church's Structure (The Five-Fold Ministry and Helps)	6:1-11:26
4. Witnesses of Church Growth in Judea/Samaria (Indoctrination)	6:1-9:31
5. Witnesses of Church beyond Judea/Samaria (Indoctrination)	9:32-11:26
The Church's Organization (Establishment of Churches)	11:27-28:31
6. Missionary Outreach Shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch (Greater Setting)	11:27-12:23
7. The Witness of Church Growth in Asia Minor (Divine Service)	13:1-15:35
8. The Witness of Church Growth in Macedonia (Perseverance)	15:36-19:20
9. The Witness of Church Growth unto Rome (Perseverance/Glorification)	19:21-28:31

The *Ordo Salutis* of the Book of Acts

The concluding verses of the sections of the book of Acts at the macro-level serve as "progress reports" on the growth and expansion of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:35; 19:20; 28:30-31). These concluding "progress reports" follow the *ordo salutis* scheme.

Acts 2:1-5:42 (Justification of Jews in Jerusalem)

> Acts 5:41-42, "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Acts 6:1-9:31 (Justification of Jews in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria)

> Acts 9:31, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

Acts 9:32-11:26 (Indoctrination in all churches)

> Acts 11:25-26, "Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 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."

Acts 11:27-12:25 (Greater Setting)

> Acts 12:24-25, "But the word of God grew and multiplied. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark."

Acts 13:1-15:35 (Divine Service)

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

Acts 15:36-19:20 (Perseverance)

> Acts 19:20, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

Acts 19:21-28:31 (Glorification)

> Acts 28:30-31, "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

The *Ordo Salutis* in the Progress of Church Growth Scheme in the Book of Acts

An effort to impose similar thematic schemes upon six divisions within the book of Acts is seen in the works of David Gooding and French Arrington.[140] David Gooding describes six closing summary

[140]David Gooding, *True to the Faith: A Fresh Approach to the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990); French L. Arrington, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1988), xliv-xlv.

statements as a "formal summary" of the various aspects of the Christian faith. He proposes the following thematic scheme:

1. The Christian faith and the Deity and Messiahship of Judaism	6:7
2. The Christian faith contrasted with the Jewish Temple and its system of worship	9:31
3. The Christian faith contrasted Jewish food laws	12:24
4. The Christian faith contrasted Circumcision	16:5
5. The Christian faith contrasted with pagan worship	19:20
6. The Christian faith defended in court	28:30-3[141]

Some of Gooding's proposed themes echo the *ordo salutis* proposed above in some aspects. Thus, the proposition that the *ordo salutis* thematic scheme shapes the secondary, structural themes of the book of Acts is not a new concept to biblical scholarship.

Literary Devices Shaping the Micro-Structure of the Book of Acts (Principles 7-8) - There are literary devices within the theological framework of the book of Acts that shape its literary structure at the micro-level, so that each pericope can be connected together to reveal the author's flow of thought. The micro-structure of the book of Acts is shaped by the eighth and ninth hermeneutical principles entitled *The Speech-Testimony Scheme* and *The Prophecy-Fulfillment Scheme.* The micro-structure of the book of Acts provides the imperative themes as each passage reveals the fulfillment of Jesus' charges to His disciples to fulfill take the Gospel to the nations. The climax of the third, imperative theme of the book of Acts is reached when Paul is ministering in Rome (28:30-31).

8. The Speech-Testimony Scheme Shaping the Micro-Structure of the Book of Acts (Reflection of the Imperative Theme) - The eighth hermeneutical principle towards developing a theme-based approach to the Scriptures is special to the book of Acts. This principle proposes that Luke shapes his narrative plots around important public speeches given by the apostles. Thus, the micro-structure of the book of Acts is framed by this collection of speeches by the apostles. In the first half of the book of Acts, these speeches are followed by a collection of testimonies that record their effect in the spread of the Gospel. Thus, this speech-testimony scheme shapes the literary structure of the book of Acts at its micro-level. Some of the major blocks in Acts begin with a major speech that leads to church expansion in fulfillment of Acts 1:8, followed by a number of key events (testimonies) describing this expansion. Thus, the speech-expansion testimony framework consists of a collection of apostolic speeches and testimonies for each phase of church expansion.[142] This speech-testimony scheme is similar to the five-fold testimony scheme that shapes the micro-structures of the four Gospels. This hermeneutical principle reflects the imperative theme of the book of Acts as God calls His servants to put their faith in Christ, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Block 1: Introduction (Predestination) (1:1-14) - Because of its brevity, the introduction of Acts contains only the speech without the supporting testimonies of church expansion. For example, the book's introduction centers on the speech of Jesus (1:6-11), which reflects the theme of the predestined purpose of God's plan of redemption for His Church emphasized in this passage.

[141]David Gooding, *True to the Faith: A Fresh Approach to the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), viii, 11-15.

[142]In discussing the placement of the speeches within the book of Acts, H. N. Ridderbos says, "The first thing that may be said in this connection is that the speeches of Peter, together with similar discourses by other persons, are of special significance for the literary structure of the Book of Acts. It is clearly the purpose of the writer of the book . . . by means of these speeches to give *illustrations* of the preaching and progress of the gospel in the various historical situations which the Book of Acts describes . . . the speeches in Acts are typical, carefully selected examples or illustrations of the witness to Christ in its progress from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth." See H. N. Ridderbos, "The Speeches of Peter in the Acts of the Apostle" (paper presented at the Tyndale New Testament Lecture, Cambridge, 11 July, 1961): 5, 7.

Block 2: The Calling of the Twelve (Calling) (1:15-26) - The calling of Matthias centers around the speech of Peter on the re-electing an apostle (1:21-22), which reflects the theme of the church's divine calling emphasized in this passage.

Block 3: Church Growth in Jerusalem (Justification) (2:1-5:42) - The narrative plot of the birth and establishment of the church in Jerusalem (2:1-5:42) begins with Peter's speech on the Day of Pentecost (2:14-36), which reflects the theme of justification emphasized in this block. Although Peter later addresses the people in the Temple and the Sanhedrin in this block (3:11-26; 4:5-12: 5:27-32), these are not major speeches, but rather, events that led to the expansion of the church in Jerusalem. Literary evidence for the theme of justification is seen in the sermons recorded by Luke in 2:1-5:42, which are evangelistic in nature. After describing them as "evangelistic speeches," F. F. Bruce says, "The speeches in the first five chapters [of Acts] at least contemplate as a practical possibility the complete national repentance of Israel and national acceptance of Jesus as Messiah."[143]

Block 4 - Church Growth in Judea/Samaria (Indoctrination) (6:1-9:31) - The spread of the church into Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (6:1-9:31) begins with a lengthy speech by Stephen the martyr (7:2-53), who declares Israel's history of rejecting God. Literary evidence for the theme of indoctrination is seen in the sermon recorded by Luke in Acts 6:1-9:31, which is apologetic in nature. After describing Stephen's sermon as a "teaching," F. F. Bruce quotes Eduard Meyer to say that Stephen's sermon "marks . . . the decisive break of the new teaching with traditional Judaism."[144] Simon Kistemaker describes Stephen's teaching from a theological perspective by saying, "Stephen imparts that he is an expert theologian who is thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures."[145] This speech is followed by the testimonies of Philip the evangelist and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

Block 5 - Church Growth to Antioch (Indoctrination) (9:32-11:26) - The expansion of the church to Antioch begins with Peter's speech to the household of Cornelius (10:34-43). This speech declares God's acceptance of the Gentles into the church, officially inducting them as members. This speech reflects the theme of indoctrination emphasized in this block as it. This speech is followed by Peter's testimony before the church in Jerusalem of Gentile conversions (11:1-18) and the testimony of Barnabas as he endorses the Gentile church in Antioch.

Block 6 - Church Growth to the Gentiles (11:27-28:31) - The three sections recording Paul's missionary journeys each contain a major speech: Paul's lengthy speech in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia (13:14-41), his speech to the Athenians (17:22-32), and his farewell speech to the elders of Ephesus (20:17-38). The narrative section recording Paul's arrest and trials (19:21-28:31) is crafted around four speeches in which he defends the proclamation of the Gospel (21:15-22:29; 22:30-23: 24:1-27; 25:1-26:32). The conclusion to the book of Acts records Paul's speech to the Jews in Rome (28:17-29).

Church Growth to Asia Minor (Divine Service) (13:1-15:35) – The theme of divine service is reflected in Paul's speech in the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia.[146] Paul reminds the Jews of their heritage through the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, which promises have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He then declares himself as an ambassador of the Gospel, which has been confirmed by all those dwelling in Jerusalem. When the Jews rejected the Gospel, Paul declares his divine commission, "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the

[143]F. F. Bruce, "The Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles" (paper presented at the Tyndale New Testament Lecture, Wadham College, Oxford, 19 December, 1942), 8, 10-11.

[144]F. F. Bruce, "The Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles" (paper presented at the Tyndale New Testament Lecture, Wadham College, Oxford, 19 December, 1942), 21. See also Eduard Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums,* 3 vols. (Stuttgart; Berlin: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1921-24).

[145]Simon J. Kistemaker, "The Speeches in Acts," *Criswell Theological Review* 5.1 (1990): 34.

[146]David deSilva identifies the theme of divine service within the context of Paul's sermon in Acts 13:16-43 by saying, "The sermon in Pisidian Antioch stands at an important juncture in Acts. Paul was set apart for the work (Acts 13:2) described in verses 46-47 as proclaiming Christ, the Light of the Gentiles. That work is seen in the context of the saving acts of God, stretching from the election of the patriarchs to the very day of Paul's sermon." See David A. deSilva, "Paul's Sermon in Antioch of Pisidia," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 151 (January-March 1994): 49.

Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." (13:47) Paul most likely delivered a similar message to this throughout his first missionary journey.[147]

Church Growth to Macedonia (Perseverance amidst Rejections/Persecutions) (15:36-19:20) – The theme of perseverance amidst rejections/persecutions is reflected in the scene of Paul's speech in Athens. The apostle first declares that God as the Creator of all things has revealed Himself through general revelation to a fallen humanity. He now calls men to repentance and salvation through the Gospel prior to the judgment of the world. Luke records the rejection of his message by some Athenians who mocked him and the curiosity of others. Despite such rejection by the Athenians, Luke records the names of a few converts.[148]

The Testimony of Paul's Decision to Visit Rome (Perseverance amidst Offenses/False Doctrines) (19:21-20:38) - Literary evidence for the theme of perseverance amidst false doctrines/offenses is seen in Paul's sermon in Miletus to the elders of Ephesus recorded by Luke in Acts 20:17-38, which is hortatory in nature. In this speech, Paul directly addresses those enemies who will enter the church assembly to offence as well as speak perverse things contrary to the Gospel.

The Conclusion: Paul's Ministry in Rome (Glorification) (28:17-29) – Paul's final speech in the book of Acts is addressed to the Jews in Rome. He declares that he has been bound in chains because of the "hope of Israel," which is an eschatological statement reflecting Israel's full redemption and glorification.

Summary - In summary, the messages of these speeches follow the *ordo salutis* scheme of the book of Acts.

The Literary Structure of the Speeches in Acts - Because the speeches and testimonies in the book of Acts are placed within narrative material, they are also shaped by the characteristic literary devices of setting, plot, characters, conflict, and resolution. For example, Blocks 3-4-5 open with the greater setting (2:1-4; 6:1-7; 9:32-42; 13:1-13; 15:36-16:5; 19:21-22), followed by the immediate setting or occasion for a major speech (2:5-13; 6:8-15; 9:43-10:33; 13:14-15; 17:16-21; 19:23-16). The narrative plot then presents the speech proper (2:14-36; 7:1-53; 10:34-43; 13:16-41; 17:22-31; 20:17-35), followed by the immediate response of the hearers (2:37-41; 7:54-8:1a; 10:44-48; 13:42-43; 17:32-34; 20:36-38). Thus, these speeches are embedded within the narrative plots of the book of Acts.

In addition, the narrative plots developed within each block contain a climax and resolution involving a conflict that finds its resolution in the form of a divine miracle of deliverance, thus the Lord vindicates the church.

Block 1 - Introduction	1:1-14
Jesus' Speech to the Twelve (Predestination, 1:8)	1:7-8
Block 2 – The Calling of the Twelve	1:15-26
Peter's Speech to the Disciples (Calling, 1:21-22)	1:26-22
Block 3 - Church Growth in Jerusalem	2:1-5:42
Peter's Speech to the Jews in Jerusalem (Justification, 2:38-40)	2:5-41
Spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem	2:42-5:40
Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin	2:42-4:31
Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin	4:32-5:40

[147]Simon Kistemaker makes a similar statement, saying, "The Pisidian Antioch sermon is a type that Paul delivered throughout Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece." See Simon J. Kistemaker, "The Speeches in Acts," *Criswell Theological Review* 5.1 (1990): 37.

[148]Simon Kistemaker alludes to the theme of perseverance amidst rejection by saying, "Strictly speaking, Paul's Areopagus address in Athens is not a defense of the Christian faith. Rather, his speech is both a challenge to the pagan religion and a proclamation of the gospel." See Simon J. Kistemaker, "The Speeches in Acts," *Criswell Theological Review* 5.1 (1990): 38.

Block 4 - Church Growth in Judea/Samaria	6:1-9:31
Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin (Indoctrination, 7:51-53)	6:8-8:1a
Spread of the Gospel to Judea/Samaria	8:1b-9:30
The Testimony of Philip the Evangelist	8:5-40
The Testimony of Saul of Tarsus	9:1-30
Block 5 - Church Growth to Antioch	9:32-11:26
Peter's Speech to Cornelius (Indoctrination, 10:43)	9:43-10:48
The Testimony of Barnabas and Saul in Antioch	11:19-26
Block 6 - Church Growth to the Gentiles	11:27-28:31
Church Growth to Asia Minor	13:1-15:35
The Testimony of Paul's 1st Missionary Journey	13:1-15:35
Paul's Speech to Jews in Antioch of Pisidia (Divine Service, 13:47)	13:14-41
Church Growth to Macedonia	15:36-19:20
The Testimony of Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey	15:36-16:5
The Testimony of Paul in Macedonia	16:6-18:22
Paul's Speech to the Greeks in Athens (Perseverance, 17:32)	17:22-31
The Testimony of Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey	18:23-19:20
Church Growth to Rome	19:21-28:31
The Testimony of Paul's Decision to Visit Rome	19:21-20:38
Paul's Speech to the Elders of Ephesus (Perseverance, 20:28-30)	20:17-38
The Testimony of Paul's Arrest and Trials	21:1-26:32
Paul's Arrest and First Speech to Jewish Mob	21:15-22:29
Paul's Second Speech before the Sanhedrin	22:30-23:35
Paul's Third Speech before Felix the Governor	24:1-27
Paul's Fourth Speech before Festus and King Agrippa	25:1-26:32
The Testimony of Paul's Journey to Rome	27:1-28:31
Paul's Speech to the Jews in Rome (Glorification, 28:20)	28:17-29

The Speech-Testimony Framework of the Book of Acts

9. The Prophecy-and-Fulfillment Scheme Shaping the Micro-Structure of the Book of Acts (Reflection of the Imperative Theme) - The ninth hermeneutical principle towards developing a theme-based approach to the Scriptures is special to the book of Acts. This principle proposes that the prophetic emphasis of the Gospel of Luke carries over into the book of Acts. Luke Johnson says, "Luke's most comprehensive way of structuring his entire two-volume work is by means of literary prophecy."[149] He describes this scheme in the book of Acts as "prophecy and fulfillment" because the characters in the narrative plot deliver various prophecies. He says Jesus delivers the first prophecy in Acts 1:8, which predicts the plot of the entire book of Acts. He lists additional prophecies throughout the book of Acts as indications of the fulfillment of Acts 1:8 (3:22; 11:27; 13:46-47; 19:21; 20:25; 21:11; 23:11; 27:22; 28:28). This hermeneutical principle reflects the imperative theme of the book of Acts as those who respond to God's call take the Gospel to the ends of the earth by walking in the prophetic and apostolic offices as they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Concerning the theological purpose and "plan of God" in Luke-Acts, Johan Ferreira says, "Prophecy-and-fulfilment is the thread that binds the narrative together both theologically and narratively. Furthermore, this prophecy-fulfilment paradigm in Luke-Acts is the outworking of the divine plan"[150] Luke weaves prophetic fulfillment within the narrative plots of the book of Acts with this prophetic ministry scheme using the following structure: the setting, the prophecy or speech, the response of the people, and the fulfillment of prophecy. The *Prophecy-and-Fulfillment Scheme* is therefore embedded within the *Speech-Testimony Scheme* because the speeches that Luke records in the book of Acts have a

[149]Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, in *Sacra Pagina,* vol. 4, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 11-12.

[150]Johan Ferreira, "The Plan of God and Preaching in Acts," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 71.3 (1999): 210.

prophetic nature that fits within its narrative plot. These speeches delivered through the anointing of the Holy Spirit provide the prophetic element of Luke-Acts.

Because the office of the New Testament prophet does not present itself until Luke 11:27, the recorded speeches carry the prophetic elements in the first half of the book. Luke weaves the testimonies collected within each block together in manner that testifies of the fulfillment of the major prophecy in each block. For example, Jesus delivered His commission in 1:8 as a prophetic word concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Peter told the disciples in the upper room that the replacement of the office of Judas Iscariot was necessary in order to fulfill of biblical prophecy (1:16-22). Peter explains in his first public speech that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was a fulfillment of biblical prophecy (2:14-21). Stephen declared before the Sanhedrin that Israel's rejection of the Gospel is actually a fulfillment of biblical prophecy (7:51-53). Peter testified before the household of Cornelius that the Gentile's acceptance in the Gospel is in fulfillment of biblical prophecy (10:43). When the office of the prophet was placed within the body of Christ, Barnabas and Saul were sent forth on their first missionary journey into Asia Minor through a word of prophecy (13:1-3). Paul traveled into Macedonia based upon a prophetic vision (16:6-10). Paul made his way to Rome amidst prophecies (20:23; 21:11-12).

Literary Evidence for the Theme - Johan Ferreira says the fulfillment-of-prophecy motif in Luke-Acts is reflected "in the frequent use of the impersonal verb *dei* ('it is necessary' or 'must') in Luke-Acts. Christ must suffer (Lk. 9:22; 17:25; 21:9; 22:37; Acts 17:3), he must preach the kingdom of God (Lk. 2:49; 4:43), and the Scriptures must be fulfilled (Lk. 24:44-46; Acts 1:16). In the same way, repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all nations (Lk. 24:47)."[151] The apostles must obey God rather than man and preach the Gospel (Acts 5:29). Paul must fulfill his divine commission and take the Gospel to the nations amidst suffering (Acts 9:6, 15-16). Therefore, Paul must see Rome (Acts 19:21) and testify in Rome (Acts 23:11).[152] In each speech recorded in Acts, the context requires that the apostles must proclaim the Gospel.[153]

Block 1 - Introduction	1:1-14
Jesus' Speech to the Twelve (Apostolic-Prophetic Commission)	1:7-8
Block 2 - Calling of the Twelve	1:15-26
Peter's Speech to the Twelve	1:21-22
Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8)	
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophetic Speech in 1:21-22 in Replacement of Judas Iscariot	
Block 3 - Church Growth in Jerusalem	2:1-5:42
Peter's Speech to Jews in Jerusalem	2:5-41
Spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem	2:42-5:40
Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin	2:42-4:31
Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin	4:32-5:40
Conclusion: Church Growth in Jerusalem	5:41-42
Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8)	
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophetic Speech in 2:1-4 of Justification through the Gospel	
Block 4 - Church Growth in Judea/Samaria	6:1-9:31
Stephen's Speech to Sanhedrin	6:8-8:1a
Spread of the Gospel to Judea/Samaria	8:1b-9:30
The Testimony of Philip the Evangelist	8:5-40
The Testimony of Saul of Tarsus	9:1-30
Conclusion: Church Growth in Judea, Galilee, Samaria	9:31

[151]Johan Ferreira, "The Plan of God and Preaching in Acts," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 71.3 (1999): 211.
[152]Luke uses the Greek infinitive δεῖ more often than any other New Testament writer.
[153]Johan Ferreira, "The Plan of God and Preaching in Acts," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 71.3 (1999): 211.

Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth unto Judea/and Samaria (Acts 1:8)
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophetic Speech in 7:51-53 of Israel's Rejection of the Gospel

Block 5 - Church Growth to Antioch	9:32-11:26
Peter's Speech to Cornelius	9:43-10:48
The Testimony of Barnabas and Saul in Antioch	11:19-26

Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth unto Antioch (Acts 1:8)
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophetic Speech in 10:43 of Justification for the Gentiles

Block 6 - Church Growth to the Gentiles	11:27-28:31
Church Growth to Asia Minor	11:27-15:35
Setting: The Testimony of Peter's Deliverance from Prison	12:1-25
The Testimony of Paul's 1st Missionary Journey	13:1-14:28
The Testimony of Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey	15:36-16:4
Conclusion: Barnabas and Saul Teach at Antioch	15:33-35

Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth unto Asia Minor (Acts 1:8)
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophecy in 13:2 of Separation for Gentile Work

Church Growth to Macedonia	15:36-20:38
The Testimony of Paul in Macedonia	16:6-18:22
The Testimony of Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey	18:23-19:19
The Testimony of Paul's Decision to Visit Rome	19:21-20:38
Conclusion: Paul Exhorts the Elders at Ephesus	20:17-38

Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth unto Asia Minor/Macedonia (Acts 1:8)
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophecy in 16:6-10 concerning Paul's work in Macedonia

Church Growth to Rome	21:1-28:31
The Testimony of Paul's Arrest and Trials	21:1-28:29
Paul's Arrest and First Speech to Jewish Mob	21:15-22:29
Paul's Second Speech before the Sanhedrin	22:30-23:35
Paul's Third Speech before Felix the Governor	24:1-27
Paul's Fourth Speech before Festus and King Agrippa	25:1-26:32
The Testimony of Paul's Journey to Rome	27:1-28:16
Conclusion: Paul's Ministry in Rome	28:17-31

Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth unto Rome (Acts 1:8)
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophecy in 21:11-12 concerning Paul's arrest

The Prophetic Fulfillment Scheme in the Book of Acts

Summary – In summary, these nine hermeneutical principles use the three major thematic schemes that are inherent within the message of the Scriptures to reveal the thematic arrangement of the Scriptures. They shape the major divisions of the Bible as well as the literary structure of these books at their super, macro, and micro-levels. These principles can be grouped according to the level at which they shape the book of Acts.

The Theological Framework of the Books of the Bible

1. The Thematic Arrangement of the Holy Scriptures
2. The Thematic Arrangement of the Major Divisions of the Holy Scriptures
3. A Three-Tiered Theological Framework of the Individual Books of the Holy Scriptures

The Super-Structure of the Book of Acts

4. The Geographical-Chronological Scheme of the Gospel Narrative as a Genre in Shaping the Super-Structure of the Gospels and Acts
5. The Establishment of the Church Scheme Shaping the Super-Structure of the Book of Acts

The Macro-Structure of the Book of Acts

6. The Progress of Church Growth Scheme Shaping the Macro-Structure of the Book of Acts
7. The *Ordo Salutis* Scheme Shaping the Macro-Structures of the Gospels and Acts

The Micro-Structure of the Book of Acts

8. The Speech-Testimony Scheme Shaping the Micro-Structure of the Book of Acts
9. The Prophecy-Fulfillment Scheme Shaping the Micro-Structure of the Book of Acts

Conclusion - In conclusion, this theme-based approach simplifies the search for the central ideas of the text as well as homiletical outlines in sermon preparation by identifying the theological framework used to bridge the gap between exegesis and homiletics. The *Prophetic Progress of Church Growth Outline* best supports the literary structure and thematic scheme of the book of Acts. This literary structure is presented below.

C. A Summary of the Book of Acts Using the Prophetic Progress of Church Growth Outline – The following summary of the book of Acts revises the *Progress Report Outline* in order to reflect the prophetic elements and various literary devices described above. I have chosen to use The *Prophetic Progress of Church Growth Outline* as the best approach to the book of Acts because the literary devices discussed above clearly support this approach at both the macro and micro-levels. An examination of the following summary and outline reveals that the book of Acts has an amazingly detailed structure that only God could have orchestrated. This summary reflects the theological framework of this book.

The central claim of the Gospel of John declares that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The Synoptic Gospels support this central claim by providing supporting testimonies as their secondary themes. The book of Acts offers the testimony of the apostles using prophetic elements. The literary structure of Acts supports this claim within its theological framework through an arrangement of themes related to the fulfillment of Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8.

Here is the proposed theological framework of the Gospel of Matthew:

The Church's Duty
(The Lord's Commission)

The distinctive feature of church development in Acts 1:1-26 is an emphasis upon the Lord's commission to His disciples to take the Gospel to all the world (1:8). The words of this divine commission shape the literary structure of the book of Acts.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 1:1-26 emphasizing the duty of the church through Jesus' apostolic commission to the church and calling of the Twelve:

Exegetical Idea – Jesus Christ established the church with its duties through a divine commission and the calling of the Twelve.

Theological Idea – Because Jesus Christ established the church with its duties through a divine commission and the calling of the Twelve, God has established the church with its duties through Jesus' divine commission and the calling of the Twelve.

Homiletical Idea – Because God has established the church with its duties through Jesus' divine commission and the calling of the Twelve, every child of God has a duty in the church in God's plan of redemption as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations.

Here is a proposed outline:

1. Introduction (Predestination) (1:1-14) - The introduction to the book of Acts provides a brief summary of the Gospel of Luke, which is mentioned in its prologue as the first of the dual writings of

Luke-Acts (1:1-5). This prologue declares that Jesus Christ fulfilled His ministry and now stands as Head of the New Testament Church, empowering it with the Holy Ghost in order to fulfill its commission. After a brief prologue, Luke begins his testimony in Jerusalem where the disciples receive their divine commission in the final words Jesus delivers as a prophetic speech immediately followed by His Ascent (1:6-11). The commission recorded in this introduction serves as the secondary theme of the book of Acts, in which Jesus commissions the Church to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:1-14 establishes the *duty* of the New Testament Church predestined by God the Father. The theme of predestination undergirding Acts 1:1-14 is understood in the fact that the New Testament Church was predestined to take the Gospel to the nations of the earth.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of predestination in Acts 1:1-14 in Jesus' references to the preordained times and seasons of God the Father. Jesus speaks of the gift of the Holy Spirit promised by the Father (1:4), which would come in a few days (1:5). Jesus mentions the times and seasons that the Father has placed under His authority (1:7). Finally, the angels, who serve as God the Father's voice to man, tells the disciples that Jesus Christ will return to earth in the same manner in which He ascended (1:11).

Literary Evidence for the Structure – Three is literary evidence for the three-fold structure of Acts 1:1-14. This passage can be divided into three sub-sections based upon temporal clauses or movements in the plot, which are characteristic of narrative material. After the prologue (1:1-5), the second sub-section begins with a temporal clause using the participle οἱ συνελθόντες "when those who had gathered" (1:6) and the third sub-section with a movement of plot, "τότε" (then) (1:12). Such literary elements serve as the section breaks for the narrative material.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 1:1-14 emphasizing the predestined plan of the church through Jesus' apostolic commission to the Twelve:

> *Exegetical Idea* – Jesus Christ commissioned the apostles to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.
>
> *Theological Idea – Because Jesus Christ commissioned the apostles to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth,* God has predestined the church to be a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations.
>
> *Homiletical Idea – Because God has predestined the church to be a witness to the nations*, every child of God is predestined to serve a role in God's plan of redemption as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations.

Here is a proposed outline:

> ***a) The Setting (The Prologue): Luke's Summary of the Public Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1-5) –*** The prologue of a book establishes the setting and often gives background information to accomplish its purpose. Therefore, the prologue to the book of Acts serves as a brief summary of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this prologue, the writer makes a clear reference to the Gospel of Luke as its companion book. Luke 1:1 says that this "former account" concerned all that Jesus began to do and to teach (1:1), which reflects Luke 1-23. Acts 1:2-5 makes a clear reference to the concluding testimony of Luke's Gospel in 24:1-53after His ascension.
>
> ***b) The Speech: The Lord's Commission and His Ascent (1:6-11) –*** Acts 1:6-11 records the testimony of Lord's commission to the Twelve (1:6-8) and His ascent into Heaven (1:9-11). This passage contains an apostolic charge of the coming of the Holy Spirit and commission to spread the Gospel (1:7-8). The book of Acts records the testimonies of the apostles in which this charge is fulfilled as they preach the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. Thus, Acts 1:8 reflects the super-structure of Acts as the apostles take the Gospel to Jerusalem, to Judaea and Samaria, and finally, to Asia, Europe, and Rome. Acts 1:9-11 records ascent of the Lord into Heaven and the assurance of the angels to the disciples of His return in fulfillment of prophecy.

c) The Response: The Disciple Return to Jerusalem to Wait for the Coming of the Holy Spirit (1:12-14) – In Acts 1:12-14, the disciples return to Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy Spirit in response and obedience to the command of Jesus Christ after His resurrection (Lk 24:49, Acts 1:4-5).

2. The Witness of the Calling of the Twelve Disciples (Calling) (1:15-26) – Acts 1:15-26 records the early Church's act of choosing a replacement for Judas Iscariot, revealing how important the calling out of the Twelve were in the preparation for their predestined commission to take the Gospel to the nations. This passage has a setting, a speech, and a response to the speech. The setting is taken from 1:12-14 in which the disciples are gathered in an upper room. Peter stands up in the midst of the disciples and calls for a replacement of the office of Judas Iscariot (1:15-22). The disciples respond by selecting Matthias as the replacement (1:23-26).

Regarding the theme of "divine calling" in this passage, the apostles acknowledge their divine calling to fulfill the commission given to them by Jesus Christ, and their need to honor the number twelve as ordained by their Saviour. Before the apostle went forth to preach the Gospel, they felt compelled to reconfirm their calling by the replacement of Judas Iscariot based upon two prophecies in the book of Psalms. These prophecies confirm the divine calling of the twelve apostles as pillars of the New Testament Church. Peter's quotations of Scripture in this passage indicate that a prophetic element concerning the fulfillment of Jesus' divine commission to take the Gospel to the nations is woven throughout the book of Acts. The casting of lots was the only method of divine selection these early disciples because they had not yet been filled with the Holy Spirit nor did they know His voice. Because Jesus Christ walked in the five-fold ministry, He was qualified to appoint men for the office of the apostle. Upon His departure, the Holy Spirit was poured forth and anointed men and women for particular offices. The five-fold office emerges throughout the recorded history of the book of Acts, and was set in place as a prerequisite for the church to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. For example, the office of the evangelist took the Gospel beyond Jerusalem and Judea, and the offices of the teacher and prophet took part in appointing a new generation of apostles, sending out Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13:1-3. Paul appointed elders and eventually the pastor to oversee the churches he established so that he could journey to Rome. Thus, Acts 1:15-26 emphasizes the calling and appointment of all the offices of the church, not just the replacement of one apostle.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of divine calling in Acts 1:15-26 when the disciples prayed and asked which one the Lord had ἐκλέγομαι "called out, selected" (1:24) to replace Judas Iscariot. The disciples cast lots, which fell upon Matthias, and he was συγκαταψηφίζομαι "chosen together with" the eleven. Thus, the theme of divine calling is reflected in the selecting and choosing of a disciple to replace Judas Iscariot.

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the structure of Acts 1:15-26 as a complete unit of thought, called a pericope. This passage opens with the phrase "Καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις" (and in these days) characteristic of the movement of the plot within narrative material. The plot brings an issue to the forefront and provides a resolution in the selection of Matthias, thus a complete unit of thought. Finally, the next passage also beings with a phrase characteristic of a new movement in the plot by saying, "Καὶ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ἦσαν" (and when the day of Pentecost had come).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 1:15-26 emphasizing the divine calling of the church:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples returned to Jerusalem and selected Matthias to replace the office of Judas Iscariot in fulfillment of Scripture to establish the church so that it could go forth to fulfill its divine calling.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples returned to Jerusalem and selected Matthias to replace the office of Judas Iscariot in fulfillment of Scripture to establish the church so that it could go forth to*

fulfill its divine calling, God has called out and appointed believers to the offices of the church to establish it as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Scripture.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has called out and appointed believers to the offices of the church to establish it as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Scripture*, every child of God is called to serve a role in God's plan of redemption as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Scripture.

Here is a proposed outline:

a) The Speech: Peter's Call to Replace Judas Iscariot (1:15-22) – Acts 1:15-22 records Peter's first speech in the book in which he calls for a replacement for the office of Judas Iscariot based upon biblical prophecy. The setting for this event is supplied in the preceding passage in which the disciples are staying in an upper room in Jerusalem in obedience to Jesus' final command. In his speech, Peter cites from Psalms 69:25 and 109:8 to point out the need to fulfill these prophecies, which refer to the fall of Judas Iscariot and his replacement as one of the Twelve. Thus, the prophetic element is woven throughout the book of Acts.

b) The Response: The Choosing of Matthias in Fulfillment of Prophecy (1:23-26) – Acts 1:23-26 records the disciples' response to Peter's prophetic speech in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the appointment of Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot in the office of an apostle. These verses testify of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem. It also testifies of the fulfillment of a secondary prophecy exclusive to Acts 1:12-26 in which the early disciples elected a replacement for Judas Iscariot in fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

The Church's Power
(Preaching the Gospel with Miracles, Signs, and Wonders)

The distinctive feature of church development in Acts 2:1-5:42 is an emphasis upon the anointing of the apostles with the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel accompanied with miracles, signs, and wonders. The early church was twice filled with the Holy Spirit while assembled (2:14; 4:31). Peter heals the lame man at the Gate Beautiful (3:1-10). Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit when addressing the Sanhedrin (4:8). The apostles testified with great power (4:33) and performed many signs and wonders (5:12-16). Peter brought divine judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11). Peter is miraculously delivered from prison (5:17-20).

3. The Witness of Church Growth in Jerusalem (Justification) (2:1-5:42) – Acts 2:1-5:42 testifies of the birth and growth of the Church in Jerusalem through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, reflecting the justification for who accept the Gospel. This section of the book of Acts records the primary sermon preached by the apostle Peter that launches the preaching of the Gospel in Jerusalem, followed by the testimony of several key events that lead to the spread of the Gospel through the city. Therefore, Acts 2:1-5:42 serves as the testimony of the spread of the Gospel to Jerusalem in obedience to Jesus' commission to the church in Acts 1:8.

This narrative section opens with the setting of the Day of Pentecost (2:1-4), followed by Peter's sermon. He then heals the lame man, occasioning his sermon in the Temple. The plot develops with a conflict between the apostles and the Jewish Sanhedrin. The climax is reached when Peter and John are miraculously delivered from prison (5:12-26), evidence that God was with the early Church to vindicate them amidst persecutions and injustice. The resolution is reached as the apostles endure the warnings and beatings of the Sanhedrin with joy. This section ends with a statement that the apostles freely taught and preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem (5:41-42).

The motif of persecutions against the Church is woven throughout the book of Acts. The apostles begin to minister in power that brings many others to salvation while their faith is tested by persecutions (3:1-4:31). This passage will be followed by the testimony of church growth in Jerusalem through signs and

wonders, followed by persecutions (4:32-5:42). In the midst of signs and wonders and persecution, genuine believers stand out more distinctly among those who are false.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of justification in Acts 2:1-5:42. This passage supports the theme of the justification of the early Church as a multitude of souls in Jerusalem believed in the Gospel and continued in the teachings of the apostles. The Greek word σώζω is used four times in this section of Acts in relation to the salvation of souls (2:21, 40, 47; 4:12).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:1-5:42 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

> Exegetical Idea – The disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit and preached the Gospel with signs following as God authenticated the church to those in Jerusalem in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because the disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit and preached the Gospel with signs following as God authenticated the church to those in Jerusalem in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has authenticated the church with the baptism of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church with the baptism of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by preaching the Gospel with signs following through the baptism of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

> ***a) The Greater Setting: The Day of Pentecost (2:1-4) –*** The section on the witness of the birth of the Church in Jerusalem opens with 2:1-4, which gives the greater setting for the spread of the Gospel beginning on the Day of Pentecost.
>
> *Central Ideas* - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:1-4 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:
>
> > Exegetical Idea – The Holy Spirit was sent from Heaven to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
> >
> > Theological Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit was sent from Heaven to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His Spirit to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
> >
> > Homiletical Idea – *Because God has sent forth His Spirit to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should be authenticated through the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to testify of the Gospel in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> ***b) Peter's First Sermon on the Day of Pentecost (2:5-41) -*** Acts 2:5-41 records Peter's first sermon delivered on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem as the disciples testified of the Lord Jesus under the power of the Holy Spirit after their infilling. This event resulted in the salvation of three thousand souls, marking the birth of the New Testament Church. Therefore, the underlying theme of this narrative section is the justification of the Church through the testimony of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This narrative section begins with the gathering of Jews as a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the disciples speak in their native languages (2:5-13). This event gives Peter the

occasion to preach his first sermon on the Day of Pentecost (2:14-36), which reaches its climax when Peter calls the multitudes who had visited Jerusalem to repentance (2:37-41). Thus, the early church is born in Jerusalem.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:5-41 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Peter boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus was both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures, authenticating the church and adding three thousand souls to it as a fulfillment of the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus was both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures, authenticating the church and adding three thousand souls to it as a fulfillment of the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has authenticated the church through the preaching of Jesus as both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church through the preaching of Jesus as both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Occasion: The Gathering of the Jews (2:5-13) – Acts 2:5-13 records the occasion of Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost as the Jews gathered to witness the manifestations of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

(2) Peter's Sermon (2:14-36) – Acts 2:14-36 records Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. In this sermon, Peter delivers an apostolic charge to the people in Jerusalem by preaching Jesus (Acts 2:22-36) just as Philip preached Jesus in Acts 8:5. Peter emphasized the resurrection as proof that Jesus Christ was indeed the Jewish Messiah. This made the hearers a candidate for salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Peter takes his first text from Joel 2:28-32 and provides its interpretation in light of the work of redemption on Calvary (2:14-21). He then declares Jesus' death and resurrection (2:22-32) as a prophetic fulfillment from the book of Psalms. He also declares the ascension and exaltation of Jesus (2:33-36) as a fulfillment of Psalms. Because Peter used no hand-held bible similar to those used in the pulpit today, Peter was preaching prophetically under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Prophecy of Joel Concerning the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (2:14-21) – In Acts 2:14-21 Peter begins his sermon with a text from Joel 2:28-32 concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We must keep in mind that there were no books of the New Testament written for almost twenty years, so the early believers preached Christ Jesus from the Old Testament Scriptures. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a sign that gave Peter this opportunity to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(b) The Prophecy of David Concerning the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (2:22-32) – After quoting from Joel 2:28-32, Peter preaches Christ Jesus. He begins with a declaration of His death by the divine counsel and foreknowledge of God (2:22-23). After declaring His death, Peter preaches His Resurrection in Acts 2:24-32. In this part of the sermon, he cites Psalm 16:8-11 and interprets its prophetic fulfillment in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

(c) The Prophecy of David Concerning the Ascension and Exaltation of Jesus Christ (2:33-36) – Having preached the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, Peter declares His ascension and exaltation at the right hand of the Father. In this part of the sermon, he cites Psalm 110:1 and interprets its prophetic fulfillment in the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

(3) Conclusion: The Response of the Jews (2:37-41) – Acts 2:37-41 records the conclusion to Peter's sermon as he calls the people to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through this apostolic message, three thousand souls were added to the Church that day.

c) The Spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem (2:42-5:40) – Acts 2:42-5:40 records two key events that contributed to the spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost resulted in the conversion of three thousands souls to Christ. This number of believers in the city encouraged Peter to continue to preach the Gospel boldly despite opposition from the Sanhedrin. These Jewish leaders began to see the multitudes embrace the Gospel through its miracles, signs, and wonders. As a result, Peter is brought before the Sanhedrin on two occasions (2:42-4:31; 4:32-5:40). Peter's two encounters with the Sanhedrin establish the fact that the Jewish leaders were powerless to stop the proclamation of the Gospel. The Sanhedrin had succeeded in crucifying the Messiah by mobilizing the crowds against Him. Now the tide had turned, and the multitudes were embracing the Gospel, rendering them powerless.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:42-5:40 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Peter boldly preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter boldly preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The First Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin (2:42-4:31) – Acts 2:42-4:31 records Peter's first encounter before the Sanhedrin. Luke establishes the immediate setting to the plot as the early believers fellowshipped together as the Lord added to their numbers (2:42-47). This encounter before the Sanhedrin resulted from Peter healing the blind man at the Gate Beautiful (3:1-10), then preaching to the crowd that gathered to witness the power of the Gospel (3:11-26), at which time they arrested Peter and John (4:1-4). Peter stands before the Sanhedrin to testify of the Gospel (4:5-12). The Sanhedrin responded by warning Peter to cease from proclaiming the Gospel (4:13-22). Upon the release of apostles, the church prays for God to vindicate them from injustice, and they are again filled with the Holy Spirit as the place is shaken to testify that God had heard their prayers (4:23-31). God vindicates the Church in the book of Acts from injustice from the Sanhedrin by miraculously delivering Peter from prison (5:12-26), from the persecution of the Jews through Saul's conversion (9:1-19), and from King

Herod through Peter's deliverance from prison and the death of the king (12:1-23). God also vindicates Paul by miraculously delivering him from the storm at sea and snake bite (28:1-10).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:42-4:31 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Peter boldly declared in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord after healing the blind man, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter boldly declared in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord after healing the blind man, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders,* God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Church Growth in Jerusalem (2:42-47) – Acts 2:42-47 records the immediate setting of Peter's first appearance before the Sanhedrin by describing the response of the people in Jerusalem to Peter's sermon as they embrace the teachings of the apostles, resulting in the birth of the Church in Jerusalem.

(b) Demonstration of the Power of the Gospel (3:1-4:4) – Acts 3:1-4:4 records the testimony of Peter healing the lame man at the Gate Beautiful as a demonstration of the power of the Gospel (3:1-10). Peter then preaches a sermon in the Temple (3:11-26), after which he is arrested by the Sanhedrin (4:1-3). The healing of the lame man occasions the opportunity for preaching the Gospel in the Temple. Peter is met with opposition from the Sanhedrin as they arrest him and John (4:1-3). However, many souls are added to the church in Jerusalem as a result of Peter's boldness (4:4).

Here is a proposed outline:

i) The Healing of the Lame Man at the Gate Beautiful (The Occasion) (3:1-10) – Acts 3:1-10 records the account of Peter healing the lame man at the Gate Beautiful, which occasioned Peter's sermon in Solomon's portico. The theme of Acts 2:1-5:42 is the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. This miracle is important in that it causes the gathering of a multitude in the Temple to hear Peter's sermon. This sermon resulted in the first resistance of the early church.

ii) Peter's Sermon (The Apostolic Charge) (3:11-26) – Acts 3:11-26 records Peter's sermon in the Temple as the crowds gathered because of healing of the lame man (3:1-10). In his sermon, he claims that Israel has rejected the Messiah (3:11-16). He then provides the evidence to this claim by revealing that the Messiah's prophetic coming was fulfilled in Christ Jesus (3:17-26).

Here is a proposed outline:

a) Israel Rejected the Messiah (3:11-16) – In Acts 3:11-16, Peter presents the claim that Israel has rejected the Messiah in crucifying Jesus of Nazareth.

β) Prophecies Fulfilled in Christ Jesus (3:17-26) – In Acts 3:17-26, Peter supports the claim of Israel rejecting the Messiah by giving scriptural evidence revealed in the Old Testament prophets.

iii) The Response of the Jews (4:1-4) – Acts 4:1-4 records the reaction of the Sanhedrin to Peter's sermon as they arrest him (4:1-3). Nevertheless, five thousand souls are added to the church in Jerusalem (4:4).

(c) Peter before the Sanhedrin (4:5-22) – Acts 4:5-22 records the Peter's testimony before the Sanhedrin as they are questions concerning their faith (4:5-7). In this first incident of Peter and John standing before the Jewish leaders, they were simply given warnings (4:13-22); however, this persecution will escalate in the passages that follow.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Peter's Speech (4:5-12) – Acts 4:5-12 records the interrogation of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin as the apostles defend the Christian faith.

ii) The Response of the Sanhedrin (4:13-22) – Acts 4:13-22 record's the response of the Sanhedrin to Peter's speech. After they took counsel and gave him warnings not to preach the Gospel again (4:13-18), Peter declares his divine authority to preach the Gospel despite their threatenings (4:19-22).

(d) Conclusion: The Response of the Church to Persecutions (4:23-31) – Acts 4:23-31 records the response of the believers in Jerusalem as they pray for the same boldness demonstrated in the testimony of Peter and John.

(2) The Second Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin (4:32-5:40) – Acts 4:32-5:40 records the second testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin. Acts 4:32-35 provides the immediate setting to this narrative section by recordings testimonies of unity among believers and the power of the Holy Spirit accompanying apostolic preaching. Within this context, Peter decrees divine judgment against those who misused these privileges (5:1-11), and performs miracles resulting in Peter's second arrest (5:12-26). Peter stands before the Sanhedrin the second time, resulting with a harsher judgment of being beaten (5:27-40).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 4:32-5:40 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The Lord vindicated Peter as he preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition by judging the church and working miracles, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Lord vindicated Peter as he preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition by judging the church and working miracles, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* the Lord has provided vindication for those who preach the Gospel with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because the Lord has provided vindication for those who preach the Gospel with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to

authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Immediate Setting: The Church Holds All Things in Common (4:32-35) – Acts 4:32-35 provides the immediate setting of the narrative section in 4:32-5:41 by recording the testimony of the daily life of the early Church as they shared all things in common.

(b) Demonstration of the Power of the Gospel (Conflict as Climax of Plot) (4:36-5:26) – Acts 4:36-5:26 records testimonies of the demonstration of the power of the Gospel through divine vindication. The judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira (4:36-5:11) and the miraculous deliverance of Peter from prison (5:12-26) serve as two of the greatest examples during this period of church expansion. Because it records conflict between the early church and the Sanhedrin, Acts 4:36-5:26 serves as the climax to the narrative plot of Acts 2:1-5:42, which testifies of the birth and growth of the church in Jerusalem.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) The Witness of the Power of the Church: The Judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira (4:36-5:11) – Acts 4:36-5:11 records the account of Ananias and Sapphira lying to Peter and being judged by the apostle.

ii) The Arrest and Deliverance of the Apostles (5:12-26) – Acts 5:12-26 records the arrest and miraculous deliverance of the apostles from prison. This passage first testifies of the miracles of the early Church as the apostles perform many signs and wonders. In Acts 4:23-31 the believers had prayed for God to perform mighty signs and wonders in the midst of opposition. As they continued to preach the Word of God, the unbelievers were afraid of them because of the mighty signs and wonders that were performed by their hands (Acts 5:12-16). Note how the early Church knew their authority in Christ and were not afraid to face persecution and punishment for the sake of the Gospel.

(c) Peter before the Sanhedrin (5:27-40) – Acts 5:27-40 records Peter's second appearance before the Sanhedrin, in which he again testifies of the resurrection of Christ and His redemption for mankind (5:27-32), resulting in a harsher judgment of being beaten (5:33-40).

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Peter's Speech (5:27-32) – Acts 5:27-32 records Peter's second appearance before the Sanhedrin. They take Peter as he is teaching in the Temple, where he again testifies of the resurrection of Christ and His redemption for mankind.

ii) Response of the Sanhedrin: Beating/Warning (Resolution of Conflict) (5:33-40) – Acts 5:33-40 records the response of the Sanhedrin to Peter's speech as they beat the apostles and warn them not to preach the Gospel any more. This passage serves as the resolution to the conflict recorded in the previous passage.

d) Conclusion: Church Growth in Jerusalem (5:41-42) – Acts 5:41-42 serves as the conclusion to the third narrative block (2:1-5:42) as it records the establishment and growth of the early church in Jerusalem amidst opposition. This verse testifies of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem. It also testifies of the fulfillment of a secondary prophetic utterance exclusive to Acts 2:1-5:42 in which the early church spoke in tongues in 2:1-4. After Peter's sermon, he charged the people in 2:38 to repent and be

baptized and receive the gift of the out pouring of the Holy Spirit as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. In fulfillment of Acts 2:38, many people in Jerusalem believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 5:41-42 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples fulfilled Jesus' apostolic commission by boldly preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Jerusalem, rejoicing amidst persecutions, and authenticating the church.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples fulfilled Jesus' apostolic commission by boldly preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Jerusalem, rejoicing amidst persecutions, and authenticating the church,* God has anointed the church to fulfill Jesus' apostolic commission by bolding preaching the Gospel while rejoicing amidst persecutions.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church to fulfill Jesus' apostolic commission by bolding preaching the Gospel while rejoicing amidst persecutions*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by bolding preaching the Gospel as they rejoice amidst persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

The Church's Structure
(The Development of the Five-Fold Ministries and Office of the Deacon)

The distinctive feature of church development in Acts 6:1-11:26 is an emphasis upon the structure of the five-fold ministry and the office of the deacon. The Lord Jesus Christ appointed the first twelve apostles during His earthly ministry. The first deacons were appointed in 6:1-6. Philip the evangelist (21:8) preaches the Gospel in Samaria and Judea (8:4-40). The office of the teacher is reflected in the work of Barnabas and Saul as they taught the believers in Antioch for a year (11:25-26), although the office of the teacher is first designated in 13:1. The office of the New Testament prophet has emerged during this phase of the church's development, first revealed when Agabus the prophet travels from Jerusalem to Antioch with a prophetic word (11:27-30). The continual need for the endorsement of the church in Jerusalem (8:14; 11:11:2, 22; 15:4), where James the brother of the Lord served as the first bishop (12:17; 15:13), confirms that the office of the pastor is also established. (During their later missionary journeys, Barnabas and Saul began to appoint elders as they established churches, from which group were appointed bishops over these churches.) Thus, the five-fold ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastors, and teachers (Eph 4:11) is established in the church during the period covered by Acts 6:1-11:26.

4. The Witness of Church Growth in Judea/Samaria (Indoctrination) (6:1-9:31) – While Acts 2:1-5:42 records the birth and growth of the Church in Jerusalem for the Jews, Acts 6:1-9:31 gives the testimony of the expansion of the church into Judea and Samaria as the Lord justifies (authenticates) its role in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles through the anointing of the Holy Spirit and signs and miracles. Stephen's bold speech to the Sanhedrin and subsequent stoning gave rise to the spreading of the church into Judea and Samaria. Therefore, Acts 6:1-9:31 serves as the testimony of the spread of the Gospel into the regions of Judea and Samaria in obedience to Jesus' charge to the church in Acts 1:8.

The plot of this section begins by establishing the greater setting as the apostles commission the first deacons so they can fulfill their own public ministries (6:1-7). Thus, we observe the establishment of the

ministry of helps within the body of Christ. Acts 6:8-8:1a records the public ministry, arrest, trial, and stoning of Stephen, the first martyr of the Church as he delivers the major speech of this section. This speech occasioned the spread of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem. The plot develops with the scattering of disciples into Palestine because of persecution fueled by the zeal of Saul of Tarsus (8:1b-4) as Philip the evangelist takes the Gospel into Samaria and Gaza (8:5-40). The narrative plot reaches its climax as Saul of Tarsus is converted on his way to persecute the church in Damascus through a divine encounter (9:1-25). The resolution to this plot is reached as Saul becomes a leading witness to the Gospel (9:26-30). This section concludes as the first persecutions against the early church cease and the church spreads into all of Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria (9:31).

Literary Evidence for the Theme – This section opens and closes with references to the multiplication of the disciples. The Greek word πληθύνω (to multiply) is used five times in the book of Acts to describe this multiplication (6:1, 7; 7:17; 9:31; 12:24), with three of these uses opening and closing this section.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 6:1-9:31 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples were anointed to preach the Gospel accompanied with signs and wonders as God authenticated the church to those throughout Judea/Samaria in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples were anointed to preach the Gospel accompanied with signs and wonders as God authenticated the church to those throughout Judea/Samaria in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has authenticated the church with the anointing of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church with the anointing of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every anointed child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by preaching the Gospel with signs following through the anointing of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

a) The Greater Setting: Commission of the First Deacons (6:1-7) – Acts 6:1-7 serves as an introduction to the fourth block of the book of Acts, which records the church's spread out of Jerusalem and into Judea and Samaria. Acts 6:1-7 establishes the greater setting for the spread of the early church into Judea and Samaria by recording the testimony of the appointment of the first deacons in the early Church. This passage records the time and place and atmosphere/mood surrounding the first spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem. Thus, this setting of church growth in Jerusalem prepares the reader for the events recorded in 6:8-9:31, namely the speech of Stephen martyrdom that occasioned the dispersal of the Church beyond Jerusalem. As a result, Philip delivered the first evangelist work in Samaria and Galilee, and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus prepares the reader for the fourth block of Acts that records the spread of Christianity from Antioch of Syria to Rome. These three individuals and their testimonies occasioned the key events that led to the spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem and throughout Judea and Samaria.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – The theme of Acts 6:1-7 is the selection of the first deacons in the early church. This new order within the church freed the apostles to take the Gospel beyond Jerusalem. This passage serves to introduce Stephen, who is the main character in the passage that follows. His speech and martyrdom occasion the church's first wave of persecutions that leads to the spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem. Thus, Acts 6:1-7 provides the great setting of the third block of Acts.

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the structure of Acts 6:1-7, which serves as an introduction to the third block of the book of Acts. This passage contains an *inclusion* as a literary device to define its structure. The words πληθύνω and μαθητής are used in 6:1 and 6:7 to form this *inclusion* as both verses explicitly describe the growth of the early church in Jerusalem.

Acts 6:7 describes the growth of the Church in Jerusalem as a result of Peter's sermons and testimony before the Sanhedrin. The church took its position of unity and power as it proclaimed the Gospel with signs and wonders and the propagation of the Word of God. This verse supports the theme of the indoctrination of the early Church as the Word of God increased in Jerusalem.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 6:1-7 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

> Exegetical Idea – The Holy Spirit anointed disciples to serve the body of Christ so that the apostles could dedicate themselves to prayer and ministry of the word and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit anointed disciples to serve the body of Christ so that the apostles could dedicate themselves to prayer and ministry of the word and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* the Holy Spirit has anointed believers to serve the body of Christ so that the five-fold ministry can attend to preaching the Gospel and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit has anointed believers to serve the body of Christ so that the five-fold ministry can attend to preaching the Gospel and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, believers are to be filled with the Spirit and serve the body of Christ so that the five-fold ministry can attend to preaching the Gospel and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

b) Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin (6:8-8:1a) – Acts 6:8-8:1a records Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin. The importance of this testimony is the fact that his speech and death causes the spread of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem. This section opens with a brief description of Stephen's public ministry that occasioned his arrest (6:8-10). He delivers the longest speech recorded in the book of Acts by giving a brief history of the Lord's redemption for Israel and their continual rebellion, culminating with the crucifixion of the Messiah (6:11-7:53). The response of the Sanhedrin was to stone Stephen in the heat of their anger (7:54-8:1a).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 6:8-8:1a emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

> Exegetical Idea – Stephen boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst signs and wonders, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders who killed him.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Stephen boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst signs and wonders, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders who killed him,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in*

fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declare that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition, in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Occasion: The Anointing of Stephen's Public Ministry (6:8-10) – Acts 6:8-10 provides a brief description of Stephen's public ministry that occasioned his arrest. The Holy Spirit confirmed the Gospel through His anointing and working of miracles. Stephen's testimony confirming the resurrection of Jesus Christ created an occasion to have him arrested and illegally tried by the Sanhedrin.

(2) Stephen's Sermon (6:11-7:53) – Acts 6:11-7:53 records the testimony of Stephen's sermon before the Sanhedrin. This speech occasioned the spread of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem. In his speech, Stephen prophesies concerning Israel's rejection of the Gospel, preparing for its spread to the Gentile nations.

(3) Conclusion: The Response of the Sanhedrin: Stephen is Stoned (7:54-8:1a) – Acts 7:54-8:1a records the response of the Sanhedrin to Stephen's speech in which the Jewish leaders stone him. Thus, Stephen becomes the first martyr of the early church.

c) The Spread of the Gospel into Judea and Samaria (8:1b-9:30) – Acts 8:1b-9:30 records the spread of the Gospel into Judea and Samaria, presenting two key events that testify to this expansion of the early church. The testimony of Philip the evangelist records the spread of the Gospel into Judea and Samaria after the early church scattered from Jerusalem because of Stephen's martyrdom (81b-40). The testimony of Saul's conversion and divine commission records a key event giving the church rest while preparing the reader for Paul's upcoming missionary journeys (9:1-30).

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the structure of Acts 8:1b-9:31. The opening verses mention the great persecution that broke out against the church in Jerusalem (8:1b-4), and the closing verses describe the rest that the churches in Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed as a result of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (9:31). Thus, these opening and closing verses form an *inclusion* in that they serve to introduce and conclude the plot of Acts 8:1b-9:31. In addition, the three subsections have conclusions with similar content. The testimony of Philip in Samaria concludes with a description of Peter and John preaching the Gospel throughout Samaria (8:25). The testimony of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch concludes with a description of Philip preaching the Gospel throughout Judea (8:40). The testimony of Saul's conversion concludes with a description of Paul testifying in Jerusalem (9:29-30).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 8:1b-9:30 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The church scattered throughout Judea and Samaria after Stephen's death, bolding testifying that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions, authenticating the church and being vindicated by the Lord in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the church scattered throughout Judea and Samaria after Stephen's death, bolding testifying that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions, authenticating the church and being vindicated by the Lord,* the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they boldly testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they boldly testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs*

following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly testifying that Jesus Christ is Lord amidst opposition, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Witness of Philip the Evangelist (8:1b-40) – Acts 8:1b-40 records two testimonies of Philip the evangelist as he take the Gospel out of Jerusalem and into Samaria (8:5-25) and Judea (8:26-40). The spread of the Gospel into these regions was occasioned by the scattering of the church in Jerusalem because of Stephen's death (8:1b-4). Philip's testimony of the conversion of the Samaritans and the infilling of the Holy Spirit provides evidence of the spread of the Gospel into this region (8:5-25). Philip's testimony of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch records the preaching of the Gospel while in the southwest region of Palestine and into Galilee (8:26-40).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 8:1b-40 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Philip boldly testified in Judea/Samaria that Jesus Christ was Lord accompanied with signs and wonders, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Philip boldly testified in Judea/Samaria that Jesus Christ was Lord accompanied with signs and wonders, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ accompanied with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ accompanied with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Persecution and Scattering of the Early Church (8:1b-4) – Acts 8:1b-4 provides the immediate setting for the spread of the Gospel into Judea and Samaria. It records the testimony of how Stephen's death gave rise to the persecution of the early Church. As a result, the church scattered abroad.

(b) The Witness of Philip the Evangelist in Samaria (8:5-25) – Acts 8:5-25 records the testimony of Philip, perhaps the first evangelist, as he takes the Gospel to the region of Samaria.

(c) The Witness of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (8:26-40) – Acts 8:26-40 records the testimony of Philip as he brings the Gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch in the southwest region of Judea and into other parts of Judea.

(2) The Witness of Paul's Conversion (9:1-30) - Acts 9:1-30 records the conversion and early ministry of Paul the apostle. One important outcome of this event is that the wave of Jewish persecutions against the Church ceased (9:31).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:1-30 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The Lord vindicated the church through Paul's conversion as the disciples boldly declared that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Lord vindicated the church through Paul's conversion as the disciples boldly declared that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they declare that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they declare that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord amidst opposition, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Here is a proposed outline:

***(a)* The *Immediate Setting: Paul is Commissioned by the High Priest (9:1-2)* –** Acts 9:1-2 provides the immediate setting for Paul's trip to Damascus as he is commissioned by the high priest to persecute the Christians in that city. The irony of the plot is that the Lord Jesus Christ is about to commission him as an apostle to the Gentiles.

***(b) Saul's Trip to Damascus (Acts 22:6-16, 26:12-18) (9:3-19)* –** Acts 9:3-22 records the witness of Paul's conversion on his way to Damascus and divine commission while lodging in that city. This event serves as the climax of the plot for the witness of church growth in Judea and Samaria (6:1-9:31).

***(c) Two Testimonies concerning Saul's Conversion (9:20-30)* –** Acts 9:20-30 records two testimonies that proved Saul's conversion was genuine. The believers in Damascus and Jerusalem were afraid of him in the beginning, until Barnabas endorsed his conversion before the apostles.

Here is a proposed outline:

***i) Saul's Early Ministry in Damascus (9:20-25)* –** Acts 9:20-25 records the account of Paul's early ministry as he began to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Damascus.

***ii) Saul's Ministry in Jerusalem (9:26-30)* –** Acts 9:26-30 records the account of Saul's ministry in Jerusalem after he flees Damascus because of his testimony. This section serves as a resolution to the conflict that arose within the plot of Acts 6:1-9:31 concerning the spread of the Gospel to Judea and Samaria.

***d) Conclusion: Church Growth in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (9:31)* -** Acts 9:31 serves as the conclusion to the fourth narrative block (6:1-9:31) as it records the spread of the early church into Judea and Samaria as a result of the ministries of these early disciples. This verse serves as an appropriate conclusion to the setting of the plot in which a great persecution broke out against the church (8:1b-4). The church continued to proclaim the Gospel with signs and wonders and the propagation of the Word of God. This verse supports the theme of the justification of the Gentiles as

the Lord raised up disciples to preach the Gospel under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to those beyond Jerusalem.

This verse testifies of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel in Judea and Samaria. It also testifies of the fulfillment of a secondary prophecy in Acts 7:51-53 exclusive to this block in which Stephen declares that Israel has always rejected the prophets of God and persecuted them. Therefore, this section testifies of Israel's rejection of the apostles through their persecutions.

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:31 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples were strengthened throughout Judea/Samaria after Saul's conversion and multiplied amidst the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples were strengthened throughout Judea/Samaria after Saul's conversion and multiplied amidst the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has edified those who walk in the fear of the Lord amidst persecution through the comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has edified those who walk in the fear of the Lord amidst persecution through the comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, believers are to walk in the fear of the Lord amidst persecution so that they can be strengthened by the comfort of the Holy Spirit and authenticate the church.

5. The Witnesses of Church Growth unto Antioch (Indoctrination) (9:32-11:26) – Acts 9:32-11:26 records the establishment of the first Gentile congregation in the city of Antioch. At this time, the apostles understood the need to teach the Word of God to these new converts who were not Jews and uneducated in the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus, the theme of indoctrination is emphasized in this section.

The plot of this section begins by establishing the greater setting as Peter ministers in the cities of Lydda and Joppa (9:32-42). As Peter was ministering in Joppa (9:36-42), he receives a vision to take the Gospel into Caesarea to the house of a Gentile named Cornelius (9:43-10:48). Peter then testifies before the church in Jerusalem as they formally accept Gentiles as recipients of the Gospel (11:1-18). This section concludes with Barnabas and Saul, who establish God's Word in Antioch through the teaching ministry (11:19-26).

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of indoctrination in Acts 9:32-12:25. The church in Jerusalem included members that Luke describes as "those of the circumcision" (11:2), a distinct reference to a doctrinal position of those believers who require circumcision as a requirement for inclusion into the church. Peter's testimony of the conversion of the household of Cornelius conflicted with this doctrine, and the church embraced the Gentiles without circumcision (Acts 11:1-18). Thus, circumcision became a doctrinal dispute. Barnabas indorses the work

in Antioch, so he calls Saul and they spend an entire year teaching the believers in Antioch, a clear emphasis upon the theme of indoctrination (11:19-26).

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the unity of Acts 9:32-11:26. This section opens and closes with similar statements. In Acts 9:32, Peter travelled about Judea ministering to the Jews only. With a similar description in Acts 11:16, those believers who scattered abroad from Stephen's death settled in Phenice, Cyrus, and Antioch, speaking to the Jews only. In both cases, the Word of the Lord was preached to the Gentiles.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:32-11:26 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples boldly preached the Gospel and taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples boldly preached the Gospel and taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to indoctrinate the church by preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

a) The Greater Setting: The Witness of Peter in Lydda (9:32-42) **–**Acts 9:32-42 serves as an introduction to the fifth block of the book of Acts, which records the church's expansion as far as Antioch. This passage establishes the greater setting for the next phase of church expansion by recording the testimony of Peter's apostolic ministry throughout Judea and Samaria. In this passage, he heals man named Aeneas in the city of Lydda (9:32-35); then he raises a disciple named Dorcas to life (9:36-42). This passage records the time and place and atmosphere/mood surrounding the spread of Christianity throughout Judaea and Samaria. Thus, this setting of church growth prepares the reader for the events recorded in 9:36-12:23, namely the conversion of the household of Cornelius that allowed Barnabas to endorse the ministry to the Gentiles in Antioch.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:32-42 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Peter testified of Jesus Christ throughout Judea and Samaria with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter testified of Jesus Christ throughout Judea and Samaria with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His servants to testify of Jesus with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has sent forth His servants to testify of Jesus with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to testify of Jesus with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) Peter's Ministry in Lydda (9:32-35) – Acts 9:32-35 records Peter's public ministry in the city of Lydda as he heals a paralytic named Aeneas. This miracle resulted in many people coming to the Lord (9:35), a motif that runs throughout the book of Acts.

(2) Peter's Ministry in Joppa (9:36-42) - Acts 9:36-42 provides the immediate setting for Peter's ministry to Cornelius as he was ministering in Joppa where he raised Dorcas from the dead. This passage concludes with a statement that many believed in the Lord as a result of this miracle, a motif that runs throughout the book of Acts (9:42).

b) The Witness of Peter in Caesarea (9:43-10:48) – Acts 9:43-10:48 records the account of Peter preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the household of Cornelius. This story testifies of the early church's first efforts to evangelize a non-Jewish people. Peter's sermon is occasioned by an angelic visitation to Cornelius and Peter's accompanying vision in which the Lord tells him to eat unclean food.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:43-10:48 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Peter testified of Jesus Christ to the household of Cornelius the Gentile through a divine vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter testified of Jesus Christ to the household of Cornelius the Gentile through a divine vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God divinely sends forth His servants to testify of Jesus to all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God divinely sends forth His servants to testify of Jesus to all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to go forth divinely to testify of Jesus to all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(2) The Occasion: Angelic Visitation to Cornelius (9:43-10:33) - Acts 9:43-10:33 provides the occasion for the spread of the Gospel to the first Gentiles, namely the household of Cornelius. In this passage, God intervenes in the life of Cornelius and Peter the apostle to bring them together through divine visitations.

(3) Peter's Sermon (10:34-43) - Acts 10:34-43 records Peter's sermon before the household of Cornelius. This speech occasioned the spread of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem through Peter's testimony before the church in Jerusalem in 11:1-18.

(3) The Response of the People (10:44-48) – Acts 10:44-48 records the response of the household of Cornelius as they accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

c) The Spread of the Gospel unto Antioch (11:1-24) – Acts 11:1-24 records the spread of the Gospel unto the city of Antioch. In this section, Peter testifies to the church in Jerusalem concerning the conversion of the household of Cornelius, so that they endorse the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles (11:1-18). This endorsement allows Barnabas to be sent by them to the church in Antioch, where he then endorses this work to the Gentiles (11:19-24).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:1-24 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Peter and Barnabas confirmed that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel through the baptism of the Holy Spirit as God vindicated His church amidst persecution, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter and Barnabas confirmed that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel through the baptism of the Holy Spirit as God vindicated His church amidst persecution, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has vindicated His servants amidst persecutions as they testify that Jesus Christ is Lord of all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has vindicated His servants amidst persecutions as they testify that Jesus Christ is Lord of all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to boldly declare amidst opposition that Jesus Christ is Lord to all nations, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Testimony of Peter before the Church at Jerusalem (11:1-18) – Acts 11:1-18 records Peter's testimony before the church in Jerusalem concerning the conversion of the household of Cornelius. This event helped the early church to realize the Jesus' commission was directed to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The immediate setting for this event is the objection of Gentile converts by those believers who support the rites of circumcision (11:1-3). Peter's testimony provides evidence of God's redemptive work among the household of Cornelius by the evidence of them being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues (11:4-17). The endorsement of the church in Jerusalem paves the way for future evangelism among the Gentiles (11:18).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:1-18 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Peter confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has confirmed to His servants through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Word of God is to indoctrinate all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has confirmed to His servants through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Word of God is to indoctrinate all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a mandate to teach God's Word to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Objections to Gentile Converts (11:1-3) – Acts 11:1-3 provides the immediate setting for Peter's testimony of the conversion of the household of Cornelius as he faces the objections of those believers who support the rites of circumcision as evidence of one's true commitment to Christ Jesus.

(b) Peter's Witness of Conversion of Gentiles (11:4-17) – In Acts 11:4-17, Peter testifies of the conversion of the Gentiles, not through their willingness to become circumcised, but through their speaking in tongues as the outward evidence of them being filled with the Holy Spirit as on the day of Pentecost.

(c) The Response of the Church (11:18) – Acts 11:18 records the endorsement of the church in Jerusalem to receive Gentile converts into the church without their need of circumcision.

(2) The Testimony of Barnabas concerning the Church in Antioch (11:19-24) – Acts 11:19-24 records the testimony of the birth of the church in Antioch. Some believers who fled Jerusalem because of the persecutions surrounding the death of Stephen preached in Antioch, resulting in the conversion of Gentiles (11:19-21). When the news of the conversion the Gentiles in Antioch reached the church in Jerusalem, Barnabas was dispatched to confirm these conversions, resulting in their endorsement of this work (11:22-24).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:19-24 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the grace of God that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel and taught the Word of God in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the grace of God that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel and taught the Word of God in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has confirmed to His servants through the evidence of His grace that all nations are recipients of the Gospel in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has confirmed to His servants through the evidence of His grace that all nations are recipients of the Gospel in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a mandate to teach God's Word to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Evangelism to the Gentiles in Antioch (11:19-21) - Acts 11:19-21 provides the immediate setting for the initial work of Barnabas and Saul in Antioch. As a result of the persecutions that arose from Stephen's death, some believers took the Gospel as far as the Gentile city of Antioch, bringing many souls to the Lord.

(b) Barnabas Endorses the Work in Antioch (11:22-24) - When the news of the conversion of the Gentiles in Antioch reached the church in Jerusalem, Barnabas was dispatched to confirm these conversions, resulting in their endorsement of this work.

d) Conclusion: Barnabas and Saul Teach in Antioch (11:25-26) – Acts 11:25-26 serves as a conclusion to 9:32-12:25. As a result of this great work taking place in Antioch, Barnabas brings Saul to Antioch where they teach the word of God to these Gentile converts for an entire year.

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:25-26 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to indoctrinate the church by preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

The Church's Organization
(The Writing of the New Testament Epistles)

The distinctive feature of church development in Acts 11:27-28:31 is an emphasis upon the missionary journeys of Paul the apostle as he plants new Gentile churches and establishes their internal organization. He writes his epistles during this period of his life, which provide the doctrinal basis for the organization of these early churches. The first meeting in Jerusalem in Acts 15:1-32 between the apostles and Paul over a dispute concerning circumcision lays the foundation for the church to develop organized, doctrinal positions. This church creed is necessary for the development of church order.

At this juncture in the narrative plot of the book of Acts, Peter disappears and Paul takes center stage in fulfilling Jesus' apostolic commission in Acts 1:8. Why such a change in appointment and focus take place remains unanswered in the book of Acts. One possible reason lies in the testimony that Paul presents in his epistle to the Galatians when he confronted Peter about his wavering position among Gentile converts (Gen 2:11-14). Peter seemed to have more difficulty reaching out to Gentiles that did Paul.

As second aspect that God uses to fulfill His divine plan of redemption is the fact that Paul was viewed by the Jews as a traitor and apostate to the Jewish faith. He had been a high-ranking Pharisee, well-known among the Jews in Jerusalem. Therefore, he had a difficult time when visiting this city because of threats from those who viewed him as a traitor (Acts 9:26-31; 21:27-36). In contrast, Peter was viewed as an uneducated fisherman, of little threat to Judaism. He was able to move among the Jewish communities more easily than Paul. Thus, the Lord commissioned Paul as an apostle to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews, as stated in Galatians 2:8, "For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles."

6. The Witness of Church Growth to the Gentiles (11:27-28:31) – The previous blocks of the book of Acts have recorded the expansion of the church in Jerusalem (2:1-5:42), into Judea/Samaria (6:1-9:31), reaching unto Antioch (9:32-11:26). The sixth block (11:27-28:31) testifies of the expansion of the church to the Gentile cities and nations as far as Rome. Therefore, Acts 11:27-28:31 serves as the testimony of the spread of the Gospel "unto the uttermost parts of the earth" in obedience to Jesus' charge to the church in Acts 1:8.

The previous block (9:32-11:26) prepares the reader for this new phase of the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles by recording the establishment of the church in Antioch, in which the apostles focus upon teaching the Word of God. The church in Antioch becomes the launch pad for Paul's missionary journeys. Luke establishes the greater setting for Paul's missionary outreach by explaining how the church of Antioch took a prominent role amidst hardships and persecutions in Jerusalem. Paul's first missionary journey spreads the Gospel into Asia Minor as the apostles begin planting churches for the first time (13:1-15:35), emphasizing the theme of "divine service." Paul's second missionary journey spreads the Gospel to Macedonia, while his third journey serves to establish those churches he has planted (15:36-19:20). Amidst much hardship on these journeys, the theme of "perseverance" is emphasized in this block. The final section of Acts records the events surrounding Paul's arrest and trip

to Rome (21:1-28:31). This section emphasizes the theme of "glorification" as it concludes with Paul preaching and teaching the Gospel unhindered during his two-year Roman imprisonment.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:27-28:31 emphasizing the divine service, perseverance, and glorification of the church's commission unto Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commi*ssion*,* God has appointed the church to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

a) Greater Setting: Missionary Outreach Shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch (Divine Service) (11:27-12:25) – Acts 11:27-12:25 provides the greater setting for Paul's missionary journeys as efforts to spread the Gospel shift from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch. While the church in Antioch was being taught the Word of God, a famine brought hardship upon the believers in Judea (11:27-30). Adding persecution to famine, King Herod launches a new wave of persecutions against the church in Jerusalem by killing James the brother of John and imprisoning Peter (12:1-4). While the believers in Jerusalem continued in prayer, an angel of the Lord delivered Peter from prison (12:5-19). The Lord then smote the king so that he died (12:20-23). After Barnabas and Paul completed their ministry in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch (12:24-25). This section emphasizes the theme of divine service as Barnabas and Paul demonstrate the church's assignment to minister to the needs of the saints.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:27-12:25 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Missionary outreach shifts from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch amidst famine and persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because missionary outreach shifts from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch amidst famine and persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has watched over His church so that it is able to take the Gospel to the nations amidst hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has watched over His church so that it is able to take the Gospel to the nations amidst hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to take the Gospel to all nations amidst hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission, trusting that the Lord will watch over him.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Immediate Setting: First Famine Relief to Church in Jerusalem (11:27-30) – Acts 11:27-30 provides the immediate setting for a new wave of persecutions against the church in Jerusalem. The Lord began to raise up the office of the New Testament prophet, one of whom

was named Agabus. He accurately prophesied of a coming famine, which occasioned relief from the believers in Antioch for the churches in Judea. Keep in mind that famine was interpreted throughout the Old Testament Scriptures as divine judgment. These early believers probably understood this famine as divine judgment against Israel because of persecutions from the Jews.

(2) King Herod's Persecution of the Apostles (12:1-23) – Acts 12:1-23 records the persecution of the early Church under the reign of Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41-44). This reign of terror against the early church and divine judgment upon the king serves as an appropriate setting to Luke's new focus upon the upcoming missionary outreaches to the Gentiles. His readers would have clearly understood the underlying message that King Jesus was greater than King Herod. God is glorified through the death of James and the imprisonment of Peter when Peter is miraculously delivered (12:1-19) and King Herod is struck down by the Lord in an act that vindicates the innocence of the early church (12:20-23).

Here is a proposed outline:

> ***(a) The Death of James and the Imprisonment of Peter (12:1-19)*** - Acts 12:1-19 records the account of a new wave of persecution upon the early Church initiated by Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41-44). This conflict serves as the climax of the plot of the fifth block (9:32-12:25).
>
> ***(b) Divine Judgment upon King Herod (12:20-23)*** - Acts 12:20-23 records the account of divine judgment upon King Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41-44) because of his pride and the wicked acts that he had committed against the Church. These verses serve as an appropriate testimony of God's hand working with the church to fulfill Jesus' apostolic commission in Acts 1:8 through divine vindication. This passage serves as the resolution to the climax of the plot of the fifth block (9:32-12:25).

(3) Conclusion: The Growth of the Word of God (12:24-25) – Acts 12:24-25 records the establishment of the church in Antioch through the teaching of the Word as God prepares to use these believers to fulfill Jesus' apostolic commission in Acts 1:8. The church continued to proclaim the Gospel with signs and wonders and the propagation of the Word of God.

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 12:24-25 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Judea/Samaria:

> Exegetical Idea – The Word of God grew and multiplied in Antioch through the teaching ministries of Barnabas and Saul in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because the Word of God grew and multiplied in Antioch through the teaching ministries of Barnabas and Saul in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has established His Word upon the earth through His church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has established His Word upon the earth through His church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to established His Word upon the earth in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

b) The Witness of Church Growth unto Asia Minor (Divine Service) (13:1-15:35) (A.D. 45-47) – Acts 13:1-15:35 records the spread of the Gospel into Asia Minor through the apostolic ministries of Paul and Barnabas. This section serves as the testimony of Paul's first missionary journey. Peter, who has been the most popular apostle throughout the Gospels, and the leader of the early church in Acts 1-11, suddenly disappears from this narrative history, and Paul moves into the spotlight of Church history. This section continues the theme of divine service from the previous section (11:27-12:25) as Barnabas and Paul demonstrate how God appoints His servants to assignment and sends them forth to preach the Gospel with signs following. Thus, the first missionary journey confirms Paul's divine calling as an apostle to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:1-3 establishes the immediate setting as the Holy Spirit separates Barnabas and Saul as apostles to the Gentiles. The apostles first travel to Cyprus and two cities in Asia Minor, where Paul delivers his first major speech in 13:4-48. Despite facing opposition, they continue to boldly preach the Gospel in this region before passing back through those cities to encourage the converts who believed in order to establish churches (14:1-28). The climax of the plot is reached when a conflict arises concerning the Jewish custom of circumcision among believers. As the apostle meet in Jerusalem to address this issue, Paul and Barnabas testify of their recent work in Asia Minor. This conflict is resolved as James the bishop issues a letter requiring the Gentile believers to follow certain guidelines in order to avoid practices associated with pagan idolatry (15:1-32). This section concludes with Paul and Barnabas teaching and preaching in the church of Antioch (15:33-35).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 13:1-15:35 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

> Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions were sent forth by the Holy Spirit into divine service as far as Asia Minor to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions were sent forth by the Holy Spirit into divine service as far as Asia Minor to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has appointed the church to divine service in order to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church to divine service in order to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has a role in divine service to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

> ***(1) The Greater Setting: The Commission of Paul and Barnabas (13:1-3) –*** Acts 13:1-3 records the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas to be sent out by the church at Antioch under the instructions of the Holy Spirit. This passage serves as the greater setting for Acts 13:1-15:35 concerning Paul's missionary journeys that ultimately lead him to Rome.
>
> *Central Ideas* - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 13:1-3 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:
>
> > Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul were appointed for divine service by the Holy Spirit and the church in Antioch to take the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
> >
> > Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul were appointed for divine service by the Holy Spirit and the church in Antioch to take the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of*

Jesus' apostolic commission, God has appointed the church to various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church to various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should seek to understand his role in divine service in preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

(2) The Witness of Paul's First Missionary Journey (13:4-52) – Acts 13:4-52 records Paul's first missionary journey to the island of Cyprus and into Asia Minor. The apostles immediately face opposition as they confront a sorcerer in Cyprus (13:4-12). They move on to Antioch of Pisidia, where Paul delivers the primary speech for this block (13:13-41). While some people embrace the Gospel, other Jews rise up in opposition (13:42-52).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 13:4-48 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews and Gentiles as far as Asia Minor with signs and wonders amidst opposition from the Jews in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews and Gentiles as far as Asia Minor with signs and wonders amidst opposition from the Jews in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His servants in various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has sent forth His servants in various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has a role to support those sent forth in divine service in preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Occasion: Paul and Barnabas at Cyprus (13:4-12) - Acts 13:4-14 records Paul and Barnabas reaching their first destination at Cyprus. Although they faced opposition, the passage emphasizes the anointing of the apostles as they perform signs and wonders, resulting in the conversion of a civil leader. This passage of Scripture provides the occasion for Paul's upcoming speech by describing his first missionary journey.

(b) Paul's Speech in the Synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia (13:13-41) – Acts 13:13-41 records the ministry of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch of Pisidia. This passage contains the primary speech for this block as Paul addresses the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. After Luke provides the immediate setting (13:13-15), this speech can be divided into three sections, in which Paul (1) gives a brief outline of Israel's political history (13:16-22), (2) interprets its prophetic fulfillment in the coming of Jesus Christ the Messiah (13:23-31), and (3) presents a call to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ (13:32-41).

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the structure of Paul's speech in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. This sermon can be divided into three sections based upon Paul's three addresses to his audience (13:16, 26, 38).

Here is a proposed outline:

i) The Immediate Setting (13:13-15) - Acts 13:13-15 provides the immediate setting for Paul's speech to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia.

ii) Outline of Israel's Prophetic History (13:16-25) - In Acts 13:16-22, Paul gives a brief outline of Israel's prophetic history In this outline, Paul refers to its three periods of leadership appointed by the Lord: the time of the prophets (13:17-19), the judges (13:20), and the institution of the kingdom of Israel (13:21-22). From the Davidic lineage, Jesus Christ was born in fulfillment of prophecy and presented to Israel under the public ministry of John the Baptist (13:23-25).

iii) The Prophetic Fulfillment of Jesus Christ the Messiah (13:26-37) - In Acts 13:26-37, Paul develops his argument for the claim that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. He uses the testimonies of eye witnesses (13:26-31) and biblical prophecy written by David (13:32-37) to support his claim.

iv) The Call to Accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ (13:38-41) - In Acts 13:38-41, Paul calls the Jews and Greeks to make a decision based upon his presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(c) The Response of the People (13:42-52) – Acts 13:42-52 how some of the people accept the Gospel and churches are planted, while some of the Jews in this region reject this message and expel the apostles.

(3) The Establishment of the Gospel in Asia Minor (14:1-15:32) – Acts 14:1-15:32 records the final part of the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas as they preached the Gospel with signs and wonders in the midst of opposition (14:1-28). After completing their mission, they visited the apostles in Jerusalem in order to resolve the conflict concerning circumcision among the Gentile converts (15:1-32). The approval of the missionary work of Paul and Barnabas established the guidelines by which all missionary outreach was to be conducted.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 14:1-15:32 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul established the churches they planted in Asia Minor and confirmed God's acceptance of the Gentiles without circumcision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul established the churches they planted in Asia Minor and confirmed God's acceptance of the Gentiles without circumcision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His servants to establish churches among the nations in the liberties of the Gospel Jesus Christ in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul established the churches they planted in Asia Minor and confirmed God's acceptance of the Gentiles without circumcision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has a role to support those sent forth in divine service to establish the church among the nations in the liberties of the Gospel Jesus Christ in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) Paul and Barnabas Complete Their First Mission (14:1-28) - Acts 14:1-28 records the final part of the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas as they preach the Gospel in

Iconium and Lystra (14:1-20). After making converts and facing opposition, they returned to the cities where they had preached to strengthen these converts as they made their way back to their home church in Antioch (14:21-28).

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Paul and Barnabas at Iconium and Lystra (14:1-20) - Acts 14:1-20 records the account of Paul and Barnabas at Iconium and Lystra. The emphasis is upon the tension between the preaching of the Gospel with signs and wonders and the adversity of the Jews as they oppose the Gospel and turn the crowds against the apostles.

ii) Paul and Barnabas Strengthen the Brethren (14:21-28) - Acts 14:21-28 records the account of Paul and Barnabas returning to strengthen the disciples as they made their way back to the church at Antioch.

(b) The First Church Council in Jerusalem (15:1-32) (A.D. 50) - Acts 15:1-32 records the account of the Church at Jerusalem officially accepting the Gentile converts into full membership. This passage serves as the climax of the plot as it reaches its climax of tension in the first council at Jerusalem, which met in Jerusalem around A.D. 50.[154]

Here is a proposed outline:

i) The Immediate Setting: Dispute Concerning Circumcision (15:1-4) – Acts 15:1-4 provides the setting for the first council of the apostles in Jerusalem. A dispute arose concerning the issue of the need for circumcision among Gentile converts, a requirement strongly contested by Paul and Barnabas after seeing God's grace poured out upon those who believed on their missionary journey.

ii) Peter's Witness of Gentile Conversions (15:5-11) – Acts 15:5-11 records Peter's testimony of how God worked through him to bring salvation to the Gentiles.

iii) Paul and Barnabas Witness of Gentile Conversions (15:12) – Acts 15:21 records the testimony of Paul and Barnabas as they bear witness to God's grace being poured forth upon the Gentiles.

iv) The Judgment of James (15:13-21) – Acts 15:13-21 records the judgment of James the brother of the Lord, who served as the first bishop over the church in Jerusalem. His decision in light of the preceding testimonies was to accepting the Gentile converts into full membership. He wisely resolves the tension of this dispute by issuing a letter requiring the Gentile believers to follow certain guidelines in order to avoid practices associated with pagan idolatry

v) The Letter to the Gentiles (15:22-29) – Acts 15:22-29 records the letter written and approved by the apostles and elders and sent by the hands of those chosen to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch.

vi) The Response of the Church at Antioch (15:30-32) – Acts 15:30-32 records the response of the church at Antioch to the letter from the apostles as they gladly accepted this letter after having been told the need to be circumcised and obey the laws of Moses

[154]Darrell Bock accurately points out that this meeting was more of a consultation than a council in order to distinguish it from the formal church councils that took place in the centuries that followed. Thus, he uses the word council in Acts 15 in a "nontechnical sense." See Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 486, Logos.

by earlier disciples from Jerusalem. This passage serves as the resolution to the conflict of the plot of this passage.

(4) Conclusion: Barnabas and Saul Teach at Antioch (15:33-35) – Acts 15:33-35 serves as the conclusion of the sixth narrative block as it records the spread of the Gospel into Asia Minor (14:1-15:32). The church continued to fulfill the divine commission of Jesus Christ as they reached out to the Gentiles through divine service in the kingdom of God. These verses (15:33-35) support the theme of divine service of the early church as they describe divine service in the early Church.

These verses testify of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth. They also testify of the fulfillment of a secondary prophecy in Acts 13:2 exclusive to this block in which the Holy Spirit separated Barnabas and Paul for the work of converting the Gentiles through the same Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 15:33-35 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul served in the church in Antioch after having fulfilled their task to take the Gospel to Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul served in the church in Antioch after having fulfilled their task to take the Gospel to Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has appointed His servants to serve out of the local church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed His servants to serve out of the local church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should support the local church in divine service in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

c) The Witness of Church Growth unto Macedonia (Perseverance amidst Hardships/Persecutions) (15:36-19:20) - Acts 15:36-19:20 records the spread of the church into Macedonia as well as the establishment of the important work in Ephesus. Luke begins with the greater setting that describes how Paul and Barnabas split up prior to the second missionary journey (15:36-16:5). The plot develops as Paul responds to a divine call into Macedonia, where he establishes new churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth (16:6-18:22). After a season of rest, he embarks upon his third missionary journey back into Asia Minor to strengthen the churches (18:23-19:19). This block concludes with Luke's testimony that God's Word prevailed and spread throughout Macedonia, Asia Minor, and Greece (19:20). This section emphasizes the theme of perseverance amidst hardships/persecutions.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of perseverance amidst hardships/persecutions. This section records the greatest number of hardships and persecutions within the book of Acts. It opens with Barnabas and Saul have a serious disagreement over John Mark (15:36-41). Paul is imprisoned in Philippi (16:11-40). The Jews in Thessalonica set the city in an uproar because of Paul's public ministry, following them as far as Berea (17:1-15). Paul is cut

short on Mars Hill because of the Athenians began to mock him (17:16-34). The Jews in Corinth opposed and blasphemed Paul, dragging him before the Roman judgment seat and publicly beating one of his followers (18:1-17). Despite these hardships and persecutions, the Word of God prevailed in Asia Minor and Macedonia (18:23-19:19).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 15:36-19:20 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Macedonia in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Macedonia in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has made provision so that the church can persevere and preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has made provision so that the church can persevere and preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has divine provision so that he perseveres and preaches/teaches the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Greater Setting: Paul Begins His Second Missionary Journey (15:36-16:5) (A.D. 51-54) - Acts 15:36-16:5 records the testimony of Paul's second missionary journey as he purposes to strengthen the churches he initially planted in Asia Minor. This passage serves as the greater setting for Acts 15:36-20:38 concerning Paul's second and third missionary journeys.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 15:36-16:5 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia:

Exegetical Idea – Paul goes forth with Silas from the church in Antioch to strengthen believers in Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul goes forth with Silas from the church in Antioch to strengthen believers in Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has appointed the church leaders to strengthen and establish fellow believers in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church leaders to strengthen and establish fellow believers in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should support church leaders in strengthening fellow believers in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) Paul and Barnabas Split Up (15:36-41) - Acts 15:36-41 records the account of Paul and Barnabas splitting up over the issue of the integrity of John Mark. Paul replaces Silas as his new companion.

(b) Timothy Joins Paul and Silas (16:1-4) - Acts 16:1-4 records the account of Timothy joining Paul and Silas while they were ministering in Derbe and Lystra.

(c) Conclusion: Decrees Delivered and Churches Strong in Faith (16:5) - Acts 16:5 describes the spread of the Gospel into Asia Minor. The church continued to proclaim the Gospel with signs and wonders and the propagation of the Word of God. This verse supports the theme of the perseverance of the early Church to establish sound church doctrine.

(2) The Testimony of Paul's Ministry in Macedonia (16:6-18:22) - Acts 16:6-18:22 records Paul's work in Macedonia during His second missionary journey. This section opens with the immediate setting of Paul's Macedonian call (16:6-10). This passage provides the key prophecy that under pins this section in 15:36-20:38 as he fulfills this prophetic dream by visiting the key cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth (16:11-18:17). This section concludes with Paul returning to Antioch to conclude this second mission (18:18-22). In the passages below, Luke is careful to record both the acceptance of the Gospel by the Gentiles, as well as the unjustified opposition from Jews and civil leaders that Paul faced in each city.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of perseverance amidst persecutions in Acts 16:6-18:22 as Luke records a large number of incidences describing Paul's hardships in Macedonia. Paul and Silas were thrown into prison in Philippi (16:19-40). The Jews assaulted the Gentile converts in Thessalonica so that Paul departed to another city (17:5-9). Paul's speech on Mar's Hill in Athens was largely rejected by the Greeks (17:32-34). The Jews of Corinth rejected the Gospel (18:6). The angel of the Lord comforts Paul, encouraging him to persevere in preaching the Gospel amidst opposition with a promise of divine protection (18:9-10). Paul was brought to trial before the deputy of Achaia (18:12-17). This section records the highest concentration of stories concerning Paul's persecutions in the book of Acts.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 16:6-18:22 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia amidst persecutions from without:

Exegetical Idea – The Holy Spirit led Paul and his companions as far as Macedonia as they persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit led Paul and his companions as far as Macedonia as they persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has planted His church among the nations through His servants as they can persevere against hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has planted His church among the nations through His servants as they can persevere against hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has divine provision to persevere amidst hardships and persecutions while preaching/teaching the Gospel among the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Occasion: The Macedonian Call (16:6-10) - Acts 16:6-10 records Paul's vision of a man calling him to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the region of Macedonia, an event popularly called the "Macedonian Call." Paul's original intent on his second missionary journey was to strengthen the churches that he had planted in Asia Minor during his first missionary journey (Acts 15:36). He had no idea that God would lead him into Europe and beyond. Paul fulfills this prophetic dream in this section by visiting the key cities in Macedonia. Thus, Paul's vision serves as the occasion for his decision to travel into Macedonia.

(b) Paul at Philippi (16:11-40) - Acts 16:11-40 records the account of Paul's ministry in the city of Philippi. In this passage, Luke records two incidents to illustrate how God was confirming Paul's ministry and decision in 16:6-10 to go over into Macedonia: the story of the conversion of Lydia (16:11-15), and the casting out of a spirit of divination (16:16-18) followed by their miraculous deliverance from prison and conversion of the Philippian jailer (16:19-40). These two stories reveal how Paul's ministry touched the lives of all social levels. The jailer was perhaps of military status and a Roman citizen, while Lydia was of the working class and the Greek female slave who was delivered from a demonic spirit of divination was of the lowest class. In this passage, Luke records the unjustified beatings that Paul and Silas received from the civil leaders.

Here is a proposed outline:

> ***i) The Conversion of Lydia (16:11-15) -*** Acts 16:11-15 records the conversion of Lydia.
>
> ***ii) Paul Cast into Prison and Miraculously Delivered (16:16-40) -*** Acts 16:16-40 records Paul's arrest and imprisonment for casting out a spirit of divination. At midnight the Lord miraculously delivers Paul and Silas from prison and the jailer is converted to faith in Christ.

(c) Paul in Thessalonica (17:1-9) - Acts 17:1-9 records the account of Paul's ministry in the city of Thessalonica. In this passage, Luke records the acceptance of the Gospel by some Jews in the synagogue, and the unjustified opposition by other Jews, resulting in a riot.

(d) Paul in Berea (17:10-15) - Acts 17:10-15 records the account of Paul the apostle's ministry in the city of Berea. In this passage, Luke records the acceptance of the Gospel by the Jews in this city. However, the Jews from Thessalonica come to Berea and create a civil disturbance, resulting in Paul and Silas leaving the city.

(e) Paul in Athens (17:16-34) - Acts 17:16-34 records the account of Paul ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Athens, a passage that contains the primary speech of this section (15:36-20:38). Luke provides the immediately setting in 17:16-21 in which Paul's message opens the door for him to speak in the Areopagus. In this speech, Paul identifies with their mindset by referring to their idols, then reasons with them about the true and living God (17:22-31). Acts 17:32-34 records the response of the people as a few accepted the Gospel, while the majority rejected Paul's message.

Here is a proposed outline:

> ***i) Immediate Setting (17:16-21) –*** Acts 17:16-21 records the immediate setting for Paul's speech to the Athenians in the Areopagus. His message in the Jewish synagogues and in the marketplace opened the door for him to address the intellectuals in the city.
>
> ***ii) Paul's Speech (17:22-31) –*** Acts 17:22-31 records Paul's speech to the Athenians in the Areopagus. In this speech, Paul appeals to their sense of the natural revelation of God, as he attempts to find some common ground of faith before proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, the people began to sneer, bringing Paul's speech to a halt.
>
> ***iii) The Response of the Athenians (17:32-34) –*** Acts 17:32-34 records the response of the people as a few accepted the Gospel, while the majority rejected Paul's message. This passage lists the names of two believers, one of whom was an important civil leader.

(f) Paul in Corinth (18:1-17) - Acts 18:1-17 records Paul's ministry in the city of Corinth. Upon his arrival, he meets two Jews named Aquila and Priscilla (18:1-4). Paul faces rejection by the Jews, but acceptance by some of the Gentiles (18:5-11). Eventually, the Jews cause a civil disturbance, but are unable to prosecute Paul before the proconsul (18:12-17).

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Paul's Arrival in Corinth (18:1-4) - Acts 18:1-4 records Paul's arrival in the city of Corinth. He meets two Jews named Aquila and Priscilla, who provide him a place to stay as well as employment. Thus, he spent his weekdays working and his Sabbath days ministering in the Jewish synagogue.

ii) Paul's Ministry in Corinth (18:5-11) – In Acts 18:5-11, Luke records the ministry of Paul in the city of Corinth. He boldly preaches in the synagogue until the Jews reject his message (18:5-6). He begins meeting with the Gentiles and those Jews who believe in the house of Justus (18:7-8). Paul received a vision in the night in which the Lord encouraged him to speak boldly in the name of Jesus (18:9-11).

iii) Paul is Taken before Gallio (18:12-17) - Acts 18:12-17 records the efforts of some of the Jews to prosecute Paul, but the proconsul of Corinth take action.

(g) Conclusion: Paul Returns to Antioch (18:18-22) - Acts 18:18-22 records the account of Paul returning to the city of Antioch from his second missionary journey.

(3) The Testimony of Paul's Third Missionary Journey (18:23-19:19) (A.D. 54-58) - Acts 18:23-19:19 records the testimony of Paul's third missionary journey. Luke provides the immediate setting of Paul travelled to those churches he had planted earlier to encourage the brethren. Apollo is brought into this circle of co-workers, teaching in Ephesus as well as the churches in Macedonia (18:23-28). Paul makes his way to Ephesus, where he ministered for several years, as God worked signed and wonders by his hands (19:1-19). Luke concludes perhaps the most effective season of Paul's public ministry by describing the growth and spread of the Word of God throughout Asia (19:20).

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of perseverance amidst false doctrines in Acts 18:23-19:19 as Luke records a large number of incidences describing the teaching and defense of the Gospel. In the immediate setting (18:23-28), Paul sets forth on his third missionary journey wth the purpose of establishing the brethren in the Christian faith (18:23). Apollos contends with the Jews concerning the doctrine that Jesus Christ fulfilled the Scriptures. Paul spent two years in Ephesus establishing the Word of God. He first instructed certain disciples of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, after which he disputed in the synagogues and in the school of Tyrannus (19:1-19). This section concludes with a reflection upon the Word of God growing and prevailing in Asia Minor (19:20).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 18:23-19:19 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia amidst false doctrines from within:

Exegetical Idea – Apollos and Paul established the Word of God in Achaia and Asia Minor as they persevered amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Apollos and Paul established the Word of God in Achaia and Asia Minor as they persevered amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has established His Word in the nations through His servants as they persevere amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has established His Word in the nations through His servants as they persevere amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has divine provision to persevere while establishing God's Word in the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Apollo's Ministry in Ephesus (18:23-28) - Acts 18:23-28 records the immediate setting of Paul's third missionary journey. While Paul was visiting the churches he planted, Apollo taught in the church in Ephesus as well as Macedonia.

(b) Paul in Ephesus (19:1-19) - Acts 19:1-41 records the testimony of Paul's ministry in the city of Ephesus. Upon his arrival, he leads a number of disciples into faith in Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (19:1-7). After spending some time in the synagogue, Paul was compelled to take his followers to a peaceful venue (19:8-10). There he taught and ministered through signs and wonders for about two years (19:11-19).

Here is a proposed outline:

i) The Disciples at Ephesus Receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (19:1-7) - Acts 19:1-7 records Paul's arriving in the city of Ephesus, where he immediately leads a number of disciples into faith in Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

ii) Paul Turns to the Gentiles in Ephesus (19:8-10) - Acts 19:8-10 records Paul's early experience in the synagogue, as many Jews reject the Gospel, compelling him to relocate to a peaceful venue to disciples his followers.

iii) Paul's Miraculous Work at Ephesus (19:11-19) – Acts 19:11-19 records the effectiveness of Paul's ministry in Ephesus over a two-year period as God worked with Paul, confirming the Gospel with signs and miracles. Acts 19:11-19 gives us a brief list of some of these miracles. This was perhaps the most effective season of Paul's public ministry.

(4) Conclusion: The Mighty Growth and Prevailing of the Word of God (19:20) - Acts 19:20 serves as the conclusion of Acts 15:36-19:20 by describing the spread of the Gospel into Macedonia and Europe. The church continued to proclaim the Gospel with signs and wonders and the propagation of the Word of God. This verse supports the theme of the perseverance of the early Church to establish sound church doctrine.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:20 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission to take the Gospel to Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions completed their commissions to establish the Word of God in Asia Minor, Achaia, and Greece as they persevered amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions completed their commissions to establish the Word of God in Asia Minor, Achaia, and Greece as they persevered amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has raised up His servants to establish His Word among the nations as they persevere amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has raised up His servants to establish His Word among the nations as they persevere amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should fulfill his individual role to establish God's Word in the nations amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

d) The Witness of Church Growth unto Rome (19:21-28:29) (A.D. 58-62) - The final section of the book of Acts (19:21-28:29) serves as Luke's testimony of the prophetic fulfillment of the Gospel reaching Rome. This block reflects the themes of perseverance amidst false doctrines/offenses as well as glorification, recording the arrest and trials of Paul the apostle, his trip by sea to Rome, and his preparation for a hearing before the Roman emperor, the highest court in the Roman Empire.

The block opens with the greater setting in which Paul purposes in his spirit to visit Rome (19:21-22). He then brings about a conclusion to his work in Asia Minor and Macedonia as the occasion for his trip to Jerusalem (19:23-20:38).[155] As Paul departs from Asia Minor and makes his way to Jerusalem, Agabus delivers a prophecy to Paul concerning his impending bonds (21:1-14). Luke then records four speeches delivered by Paul in a "judicial procedure" for a Roman citizen (21:15-26:32).[156] This procedure moves from the lowest to the highest order of judgment. That is, Paul first stands before a Jewish mob and gives his defense (21:15-22:29).[157] He is then taken before the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:35), Felix the governor (24:1-27), Festus the governor and King Agrippa (25:11-26: 23), and finally he is sent to Rome where he stands trial (27:1-28:16). Luke records these speeches and trials as evidence of Paul's innocence organized in an ascending judicial order that would have been recognized and endorsed by the courts of Rome. The plot reaches its climax with the conflict that Paul faces during his shipwreck upon the island of Malta, being resolved as Paul miraculous lives after a snake bite, after which he makes his way to Rome. Luke concludes the book of Acts with Paul in Rome preaching the Gospel unhindered for two years under house arrest, serving as a final testimony of the innocence of the Christian faith (28:17-29). Many scholars suggest Luke compiles this sequence of trials in order to reveal Paul's innocence as a legal defense that could have been used during Paul's actual trial.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:21-28:29 emphasizing the glorification of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions found a place of rest in Christ amidst hardships as they preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions found a place of rest in Christ amidst hardships as they preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has provided a place of rest in Christ for those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

---

[155]Peterson says this section "records unprecedented opposition and prepares the reader for events to come in Jerusalem (21:27–40)." See David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 542, Logos.

[156]Schubert writes, "The most striking evidence is that the speeches of cycle III (chs. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27-28 22) are in the 'I' style. It is appropriate because they are given in the setting of a judicial procedure; Paul is a prisoner of the Roman authorities." See Paul Schubert, "The Final Cycle of Speeches in the Book of Acts," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87.1 (March 1968): 4.

[157]Having lived and worked in the mission fields of Africa for twenty years, I have seen the power of mob justice. Because the police and judicial systems are often corrupt, villages and communities often execute non-judicial punishments on their own. The police do not always intervene and arrest those involved in mob justice because they know the potential violence of such mobs.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a place of rest in Christ for those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God must find a place of rest in Christ in order to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Greater Setting: Paul Purposes in His Spirit to Visit Rome (19:21-22) – Acts 19:21-22 records the greater setting of Acts 19:21-20:38 as Paul purposes in his heart to close his third missionary journey by visiting Jerusalem, and then the city of Rome.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:21-22 emphasizing the glorification of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul purposed in his spirit to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul purposed in his spirit to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has provided a plan with a destiny for those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a plan with a destiny for those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should strive to fulfill his divine destiny in order to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

(2) The Occasion: Paul Concludes His Work in Macedonia and Asia Minor (Perseverance Amidst False Doctrines/Offenses) (19:23-20:38) - Acts 19:23-20:38 records the final period of Paul's third missionary journey in which he concludes his work in Macedonia and Asia Minor and prepares to return to Jerusalem, and then Rome. These events serve as the occasion for Paul's trip to Jerusalem. At this time, a riot takes place in Ephesus (19:23-41). Paul decides to leave his work in Ephesus and make a brief visit to those churches he planted in Macedonia and Greece before turning towards Jerusalem (20:1-6). Paul stops over in Troas, where he spoke to the disciples until midnight (20:7-12). From Troas, Paul makes his way to Miletus (20:13-16). At Miletus, Paul called the elders of Ephesus and gave his farewell address (20:17-38).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:23-20:38 emphasizing the perseverance amidst offenses/false doctrines of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul exhorted the church elders to watch over their churches amidst offenses and false doctrines to that he could visit Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul exhorted the church elders to watch over their churches amidst offenses and false doctrines to that he could visit Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has organized His church with divine leadership to defend it against offenses and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has organized His church with divine leadership to defend it against offenses and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should serve his church leadership to enable them to defend the church against offenses and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Riot at Ephesus (19:23-41) - Acts 19:23-41 records the riot at Ephesus in which the businessmen of Ephesus rise up in direct conflict with Paul and his coworkers. A silversmith named Demetrius incites the other businessmen of the city on the allegation that Paul was causing harm to their business of selling idols (19:23-27). This furious crowd assembled in the theatre, where they shouted and raged for about two hours (19:28-34). Eventually, the city clerk managed to calm the crowd, reason with them on a solution, then dismiss them (19:35-41).

(b) Paul's Journey to Macedonia and Greece (20:1-6) - Acts 20:1-6 records a brief account of Paul's journey into Macedonia and Greece at the end of his third missionary journey before making his way to Troas on his journey back to Jerusalem. This passage serves as the resolution to the conflict in Ephesus as Paul departs the city where he had accomplished the most effective ministry of his missionary career.

(c) Paul at Troas (20:7-12) - Acts 20:7-12 records Paul's ministry at Troas. The most significant event during this stay was the raising from the dead of a certain man named Eutychus. It is very possible that Luke mentions this individual because he played an important role in the church at a later date.

(d) Paul Journeys from Troas to Miletus (20:13-16) - Acts 20:13-16 records a brief account of Paul's journey from Troas to Miletus as he makes his way to meet the elders of Ephesus before travelling to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost.

(e) Conclusion: Paul Exhorts the Elders at Ephesus (20:17-38) - Acts 20:17-38 records Paul's brief visit to Miletus to meet the elders of the church at Ephesus. Upon arriving at Miletus, Paul calls for the elders to Ephesus (20:17). This passage records Paul's emotional speech to them as he warns them of hardships to come (20:18-35). It concludes with a very emotional departure and permanent separation between Paul and the elders of Ephesus (20:36-38).

The importance of this event lies in the fact that the church of Ephesus would become the leading church in the region. After Paul's death, John the apostle became the elder shepherd over the churches of Asia Minor and ministered out of the church in Ephesus.

These verses testify of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth. They also testify of the fulfillment of a secondary prophecy in Acts 16:6-10 exclusive to this block as Paul reflects upon his missionary outreach and the fulfillment of his calling in this speech (20:24).

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

(3) The Conflict: The Testimony of Paul's Arrest and Trials (Paul's Apostleship Predestined, Called, Justified, Glorified) (21:1-26:32) (A.D. 58) – In Acts 21:1-26:32, Luke records the accounts of Paul's arrest and trials, describing the conflict of the plot. In these trials, he delivers

four speeches in a judicial setting. While the plots of the preceding sections centered around one major speech, this final section collects four speeches together for the purpose of taking his readers into the courtrooms of Palestine to serve as witnesses to Paul's innocence and the fallacies of his accusers.

Acts 21:1-14 describes Paul's final journey back to Palestine in which he is given two prophecies concerning his arrest. When he enters the Temple, Paul is taken by a Jewish mob where he gives a defense of his innocence on the steps of a Roman military barrack in Jerusalem (21:15-22:29). The following day the Roman commander hands him over to the Sanhedrin, who attempt to condemn Paul, but find themselves in the midst of a violent dispute among themselves. The Roman commander soon orders him to be brought to Caesarea for a civil trial because of Paul's Roman citizenship (22:30-23:35). Luke records Paul's judicial hearing before Felix the governor, in which Paul was asked to give a bribe to free him from imprisonment. The governor keeps Paul in prison for two years hoping for this bribe (24:1-27). After two year, Paul is brought before the new governor named Festus (25:1-12), who turns him over to the judicial authority of King Agrippa. In this passage, the king declares Paul's innocence; then he honors Paul's appeal to the courts in Rome (25:13-26:32). Luke records these speeches and trials as evidence of Paul's innocence organized in an ascending judicial order that would have been recognized and endorsed by the courts of Rome. Thus, many scholars suggest Luke compiles this sequence of trials in order to reveal Paul's innocence as a legal defense that could have been used during Paul's actual trial in Rome.

In addition, Luke also weaves the element of the injustice of his accusers into each trial scene. For example, Luke points out in the first trial scene that the mob was falsely accusing Paul of bringing a Greek into the Temple (21:29), and the Roman commander was attempting to flog him unjustly as a Roman citizen (22:23-29). He points out in the second scene the theological discord among the Sanhedrin to the point that they were unable to find fault with Paul (23:9-10). He points out in the third scene that Felix simply wanted to extort a bribe from Paul rather than execute justice (24:26). He points out in the fourth scene that King Herod found Paul innocent of any wrong doing, but sent him to Rome simply because of Paul's appeal (26:30-32). Thus, Luke concludes each of these four scenes by pointing out the injustices of Paul's accusers.

Finally, Paul's four speeches follow the *ordo salutis* thematic scheme of predestination, calling, justification, and glorification concerning his office of an apostle to the Gentiles. In his first speech, Paul testifies of his divine vision in which the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to him and commissioned him to preach to the Gentiles (predestination). After his second speech, the Lord manifests Himself to Paul at night and reconfirms his call to testify in Rome (divine calling). In his third speech, Paul declares his faith in the God of his Jewish heritage and his innocence of any wrong doing against Judaism (justification). In his fourth speech, Paul declares his obedience to his heavenly vision in which Jesus commissioned him as an apostle to the Gentiles (glorification/fulfillment).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 21:1-26:32 emphasizing the four phases of Paul's apostleship: predestined, called, justified, glorified:

> Exegetical Idea – Paul defended his apostleship as he determined to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Paul defended his apostleship as he determined to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has empowered those who determine to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has empowered those who determine to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus'*

apostolic commission, every child of God must determine to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission trusting that God will empower him amidst trials and hardships.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Immediate Setting: Prophecies of Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem (21:1-14) (A.D. 58) - Acts 21:1-14 serves as the immediate setting for 21:1-28:29 as it describes Paul's final journey back to Palestine. The emphasis of this passage is placed upon two prophetic utterances predicting Paul's arrest and imprisonment. Certain disciples in Tyre urged Paul by the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem (21:4) and the prophet Agabus predicted Paul's arrest and imprisonment (21:11-12).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 21:1-14 emphasizing the Paul's decision to fulfill his apostleship by taking the Gospel to Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul decided to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome amidst warnings of persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul decided to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome amidst warnings of persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has His servants to make a determined decision to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has His servants to make a determined decision to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God must determine to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission trusting that God will empower him amidst trials and hardships.

(a) Paul's Arrest and First Speech to Jewish Mob (The Predestination of Paul's Apostolic Commission) (21:15-22:29) - Acts 21:15-22:29 records Paul's arrival in Jerusalem, his arrest in the Temple, and his speech before the Jewish mob on the steps of the Roman military barracks in Jerusalem. This is the first speech that Luke records of Paul's defense of the Christian faith. He will also stand before the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:35), Felix the governor (24:1-27), and Festus the governor and King Agrippa (25:11-26:32). These preliminary trials lead up to Paul's trip to Rome to appeal before Caesar (27:1-28:31).

In this section, Paul arrives in Jerusalem to meet with James and the church elders, who warn him of threats from the Jewish community because of his public ministry (21:15-26). Paul is soon seized in the Temple by a mob that turns violent, occasioning his rescue by a Roman commander (21:27-36). Paul delivers his speech to this mob on the steps of a Roman military barrack, which incites the mob to anger (21:37-22:22). In the midst of being beaten by the soldiers, Paul reveals his Roman citizenship, requiring him to be brought into a civil court (22:23-29). In this scene, Luke points out that the mob was falsely accusing Paul of bringing a Greek into the Temple (21:29), and the Roman commander was attempting to flog him unjustly as a Roman citizen (22:23-29). This speech emphasizes the predestination of Paul's apostolic commission to preach before kings and the sons of Israel. Therefore, Paul testifies of his divine vision in which the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to him and commissioned him to preach to the Gentiles.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 21:15-22:29 emphasizing the predestination of Paul's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul declared his innocence in his first trial before the Jewish mob based upon his heavenly vision and predestined divine commission in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul declared his innocence in his first trial before the Jewish mob based upon his heavenly vision and predestined divine commission in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has predestined His servants to receive their assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has predestined His servants to receive their assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is predestined to receive a divine assignment amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Paul Meets with James and the Elders at Jerusalem (21:15-26) - In Acts 21:15-26, Paul arrives in Jerusalem and meets James and the elders. At this time, the elders warn Paul of the Jew's hostility towards him because of his effective public ministry in the provinces of the Roman Empire.

ii) Paul's Arrest in the Temple (21:27-36) - Acts 21:27-36 records Paul's arrest in the Temple in Jerusalem. Luke points out the false allegation that the Jews bring against Paul of bringing a Greek into the Temple. Paul is rescued from an enraged mob by a Roman commander, who puts him in chains and brings him into a nearby military barracks.

iii) Paul's Testimony to the Mob (21:37-22:22) - Acts 21:37-22:22 records Paul's address to the mob in the Hebrew tongue. He took this opportunity on the steps of the military barracks to testify of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. I this speech, Paul reflects upon his conversion on the Damascus Road, an event mentioned three times in the book of Acts. Paul's divine calling on the Damascus Road and the visitation by Ananias (Acts 9:1-18) served as an anchor for his soul throughout his life. In fact, he seems to refer to this event when the occasion arises. It is during some of his most difficult trials that he stands upon his divine visitations to strengthen him and secure himself in his calling (Acts 22:1-21; 26:1-23).

iv) Paul and the Roman Chief Captain (22:23-29) - Acts 22:23-29 records the account of Paul defending his right to a fair trial as a Roman citizen before the Roman chief captain, who was preparing to flog him. This is the first statement that would eventually lead Paul to the high court in Rome as he appealed unto Caesar, the highest authority in the Roman judicial system. Thus, Luke concludes this scene of Paul's first trial by pointing out that the Roman commander was attempting to flog him unjustly as a Roman citizen (22:23-29).

(b) Paul's Second Speech before the Sanhedrin (The Divine Calling of Paul's Apostolic Commission) (22:30-23:35) (A.D. 58) - Acts 22:30-23:35 records Paul's second trial as he stands before the Jewish Sanhedrin. This is the second speech in Paul's legal defense of the Christian faith. Paul has spoken before the Jewish mob at the Temple (21:15-22:29); he now stands before the Sanhedrin and addressed the Jewish leaders (22:30-23:35); he will stand before Felix the governor (24:1-27); and he will stand before Festus the subsequent governor and King Agrippa (25:1-26:32). These preliminary trials lead up to Paul's appeal to Caesar.

In this scene, the Roman commander assembles the Sanhedrin. Paul's speech creates an uproar among the Sanhedrin, resulting in the dismissal of this trial (22:30-23:11). While Paul is held in the barracks, his nephew overhears the Jews plotting against his life (23:12-22). As a result, the commander organizes a detachment of soldiers to take Paul to Caesarea to be handed over to Felix the governor (23:23-35). Luke points out in the second scene the theological discord among the Sanhedrin to the point that they were unable to find fault with Paul (23:9-10). This speech emphasizes the divine calling of Paul's apostolic commission to preach before kings and the sons of Israel. Therefore, the Lord manifests Himself to Paul at night and reconfirms his call to testify in Rome.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 22:30-23:35 emphasizing the calling of Paul's commission unto Rome:

> Exegetical Idea – Jesus reaffirmed His divine calling to Paul after his second trial amidst hostilities in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Jesus reaffirmed His divine calling to Paul after his second trial amidst hostilities in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has called His servants to fulfill their assignments amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has called His servants to fulfill their assignments amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is called to fulfill their assignments amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

> ***i) Paul before the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:11) -*** Acts 22:30-23:11 records Paul's testimony before the Sanhedrin. The immediate setting for Paul's second speech is recording in 22:30 as the Roman commander assembles the Sanhedrin. Paul's speech creates an uproar among the two major sects of the Sanhedrin, resulting in the dismissal of this trial by the Roman commander (23:1-10).
>
> ***ii) The Jews Plot against Paul's Life (23:12-22) -*** Acts 23:12-22 records the Jews' plot against Paul's life, in which Paul's nephew reports this plot it to the commander.
>
> ***iii) Paul is Sent to Felix the Governor (23:23-35) -*** Acts 23:23-35 records Paul being sent to Felix the governor. In his letter to Felix, the Roman commander acknowledges that he has found Paul innocent and the Jews behaving in an uncivil manner. Thus, Luke concludes each of these four scenes by pointing out the injustices of Paul's accusers.

(c) Paul's Third Speech before Felix the Governor (The Justification of Paul's Apostolic Commission) (24:1-27) (A.D. 58-60) - Acts 24:1-27 records Paul's speech before Felix the governor as he defends himself against the charge of sedition. This is the third speech that Luke records of Paul's defense of the Christian faith. Paul has spoken before the Jewish mob at the Temple (21:15-22:29); he has been taken before the Sanhedrin and addressed the Jewish leaders (22:30-23:35); he now stands before Felix the governor (24:1-27), and he will stand before Festus the subsequent governor and King Agrippa (25:1-26:32). These preliminary trials lead up to Paul's appeal to Caesar. Many scholars suggest Luke compiles this sequence of trials in order to reveal Paul's innocence as a legal defense that could have been used during Paul's actual trial.

In this scene, the Jews employ a lawyer named Tertullus to present their accusations against Paul (24:1-9). The governor then gives Paul the opportunity to defend himself (24:10-21).

Luke points out in the third scene that Felix simply wanted to extort a bribe from Paul rather than execute justice (24:22-27). He points out in the third scene that Felix simply wanted to extort a bribe from Paul rather than execute justice (24:26). This speech emphasizes the justification of Paul's apostolic commission to preach before kings and the sons of Israel. Therefore, Paul declares his faith in the God of his Jewish heritage and his innocence of any wrong doing against Judaism.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 24:1-27 emphasizing the justification of Paul's commission unto Rome:

> Exegetical Idea – Paul declared his innocence in his third trial before Felix based upon his faith in the Jewish Scriptures and the resurrection from the dead in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Paul declared his innocence in his third trial before Felix based upon his faith in the Jewish Scriptures and the resurrection from the dead in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has justified His servants who obey Him through their faith in the resurrection of Jesus in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has justified His servants who obey Him through their faith in the resurrection of Jesus in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God should endeavor to obey Him through his faith in the resurrection of Jesus in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

> ***i) Tertullus Accuses Paul before Felix (24:1-9) –*** In Acts 24:1-9, the Jews employ a lawyer named Tertullus to present their charges against Paul before Felix the governor.
>
> ***ii) Paul's Defense before Felix (24:10-21) –*** In Acts 24:10-21, Paul defends himself before Felix the governor. In his speech, Paul reveals that his primary adversaries are certain Jews from the province of Asia.
>
> ***iii) Felix Requests a Bribe (24:22-27) –*** In Acts 24:22-27, Felix postpones his verdict in this case, hoping to delay it while he tries to extort a bribe from Paul. Thus, Luke concludes each of these four scenes by pointing out the injustices of Paul's accusers.

(d) Paul's Fourth Speech before Festus the Governor and King Herod (The Glorification/Fulfillment of Paul's Apostolic Commission) (25:1-26:32) (A.D. 60) – Acts 25:1-26:32 records the lengthy testimony of Paul standing trial before Festus the governor and King Agrippa. This is the fourth and final speech that Paul will make before his accusers before setting forth to Rome to face the highest court in the Roman Empire. Paul has spoken before the Jewish mob at the Temple (21:15-22:29); he has been taken before the Sanhedrin and addressed the Jewish leaders (22:30-23:35); and he has stood before Felix the governor (24:1-27). He now stands before Festus the subsequent governor (25:1-12), who asks King Agrippa to oversee this complex trial (25:13-26:32). These preliminary trials lead up to Paul's appeal to Caesar. Many scholars suggest Luke compiles this sequence of trials in order to reveal Paul's innocence as a legal defense that could have been used during Paul's actual trial, from the angry mob, to the Sanhedrin, to the governors, the king, and finally to Roman.

In this scene, Paul is brought before the new governor named Festus, who presses Paul into a defensive position of appealing to Caesar (25:1-12). Festus discusses this case to King Agrippa (25:13-22). He then convenes a new hearing at the request of King Agrippa, who

now oversees the trial (25:23-27). In this hearing, Luke records Paul's fourth speech in a trial setting, this last hearing before King Agrippa (Acts 26:1-29). The king's verdict is that Paul is officially innocent, but his appeal to Caesar must be honored (Acts 26:30-32). He points out in the fourth scene that King Herod found Paul innocent of any wrong doing, but sent him to Rome simply because of Paul's appeal. This speech emphasizes the glorification or fulfillment of Paul's apostolic commission to preach before kings and the sons of Israel. Therefore, Paul declares his obedience to his heavenly vision in which Jesus commissioned him as an apostle to the Gentiles.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 25:1-26:32 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of Paul's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul declared his innocence in his fourth trial before King Agrippa based upon his service to his Jewish people as well as his obedience to a heavenly vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul declared his innocence in his fourth trial before King Agrippa based upon his service to his Jewish people as well as his obedience to a heavenly vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has required His servants to fulfill their divine assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has required His servants to fulfill their divine assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God should endeavor to fulfill their divine assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Paul's Defense before Festus the Governor (25:1-12) - Acts 25:1-12 records Paul's defense before Festus the governor, resulting in his appeal to stand trial in the court of Caesar at Rome.

ii) Festus Recounts Paul's Defense to King Agrippa (25:13-22) - In Acts 25:13-22, Festus the Roman governor recounts the events of Paul's defense to King Agrippa, which results in the king's request to hear Paul's defense.

iii) The Opening Speech of Festus (25:23-27) - Acts 25:23-27 records the opening comments of Festus concerning Paul's trial, his apparent innocence, and the dilemma of preparing a letter to the courts in Rome made to King Herod and those in attendance.

iv) Paul's Speech to King Agrippa (26:1-29) - Acts 26:1-29 records Paul's speech before King Agrippa. This speech will be the third testimony of his conversion on the Damascus Road recorded in the book of Acts (see Acts 22:1-21, Acts 26:1-23). Paul's divine calling on the Damascus Road and the visitation by Ananias (Acts 9:1-18) served as an anchor for his soul throughout his life. In fact, he will often refer back to this event. It is during some of his most difficult trials that he stands upon his divine visitations to strengthen him and secure himself in his calling.

John Chrysostom notes that Paul's argument in this speech builds itself upon two testimonies: the Old Testament Scriptures testify of the hope of the resurrection of the

dead, and Paul himself encountered the resurrected Christ Jesus on the road to Damascus through a divine vision.[158]

v) The Verdict of King Agrippa (26:30-32) - Acts 26:30-32 records the final verdict of King Agrippa in which he officially declares Paul's innocence, but honors his appeal to be taken to the courts in Rome. Thus, Luke concludes each of these four scenes by pointing out the injustices of Paul's accusers.

(4) The Climax-Resolution: The Witness of Paul's Journey to Rome (Glorification) (27:1-28:16) (A.D. 60-62) - Acts 27:1-28:16 records Paul's perilous journey to Rome by sea, which many scholars estimate took place around A.D. 60. This passage provides the climax and resolution to the plot of this section. Paul is placed in a ship under the leadership of a Roman centurion named Julius (27:1-12). At this time, Paul gives a prophetic oracle of impending danger. The inevitable storm at sea does arrive, of which Luke gives great detail in 27:13-38. During this two-week period, an angel appeared to Paul and assures him that God was watching over him, from which he comforts those on board with assurance of their ultimate deliverance from the storm. The ship eventually comes aground on an island during the night (27:39-44). The climax of the plot is reached as Luke records their three-month stay on this island called Malta, in which Paul was miraculously delivered from a snake bite as well as healing the father of a leader of the island (28:1-10). As a result, Paul is given much honor by the islanders. The resolution of the climax to the plot is reached as Paul eventually arrives in Rome, where he is received by fellow believers and allowed to live under house custody (28:11-16). This passage of Scripture reflects the theme of the church's glorification/rest in that it records the church's fulfillment of Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8.

Luke organizes the narrative material of Paul's arrest, trials, and journey to Rome (Acts 21:1-28:31) as a testimony of Paul's innocence, perhaps as a legal brief to be presented at Paul's first trial in Rome. Paul has been brought to trial four times leading up to his journey by sea to Rome. Within this context, Acts 27:1-28:16 records at least three events that testify to Paul's innocence: he is visited by an angel in the midst of the storm, he is bitten by a snake and suffers no harm, and he is given liberty in Rome to minister to those who visit him.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 27:1-28:16 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul found a place of rest in Christ as God vindicated him during his voyage at sea through a miraculous deliverance in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul found a place of rest in Christ as God vindicated him during his voyage at sea through a miraculous deliverance in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants as He vindicates their injustice in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants as He vindicates their injustice in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a place of rest in Christ amidst injustice in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Here is a proposed outline:

[158]John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices, Part I Homilies XXIX-LV*, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852), 686.

(a) Paul Sails for Rome (27:1-12) - In Acts 27:1-7, Paul is placed in a ship under the leadership of a Roman centurion named Julius (27:1-12). At this time, Paul gives a prophetic oracle of impending danger.

(b) The Storm at Sea (27:13-38) - Acts 27:13-38 records the storm at sea, of which Luke gives great detail.

(c) The Shipwreck (27:39-44) - Acts 27:39-44 records the shipwreck on the island of Malta. During this two-week period, an angel appeared to Paul and assures him that God was watching over him, from which he comforts those on board with assurance of their ultimate deliverance from the storm.

(d) Paul on the Island of Malta (28:1-10) - The climax of the plot is reached as Luke records their three-month stay on this island called Malta, in which Paul was miraculously delivered from a snake bite as well as healing the father of a leader of the island (28:1-10). As a result, Paul is given much honor by the islanders.

(e) Paul Arrives in Rome (28:11-16) - The resolution of the climax to the plot is reached as Paul eventually arrives in Rome, where he is received by fellow believers and allowed to live under house custody (28:11-16).

(5) The Conclusion: Paul's Ministry in Rome (Glorification) (28:17-29) - Acts 28:17-29 records Paul's ministry in Rome while awaiting his first trial before the empire's highest court. These verses testify of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth. They also testify of the fulfillment of a secondary prophecy in Acts 21:11-12 exclusive to this block concerning Paul's arrest in Jerusalem. This passage of Scripture reflects the theme of the church's glorification/rest in that it records the church's fulfillment of Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 28:17-29 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul's mission to preach the Gospel in Rome fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of Israel's rejection of the Gospel.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul's mission to preach the Gospel in Rome fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of Israel's rejection of the Gospel,* God has watched over His Word to fulfill the prophecies of His servants concerning Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has watched over His Word to fulfill the prophecies of His servants concerning Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a role in biblical prophecy as he fulfills his divine calling.

e) The Establishment of the Gospel in Rome (28:30-31) - Acts 28:30-31 serves as a conclusion to the book of Acts, reflecting the theme of divine rest (glorification). The apostle Paul stands as the towering example of the office of the New Testament apostle in the book of Acts. He finds rest in fulfilling his destiny of taking the Gospel to Rome, which testifies of the primary divine commission of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8), and of his specific prophetic commission delivered by Ananias (Acts 9:15-16). In addition, Luke weaves within the plot of the book Paul's intent to preach in Rome (Acts 19:21; 23:11; 25:10-12; 27:24).

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish

church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 28:30-31 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul found a place of rest in Christ as he fulfilled his calling to take the Gospel to Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul found a place of rest in Christ as he fulfilled his calling to take the Gospel to Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants who fulfill their callings in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants who fulfill their callings in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a place of rest in Christ as he endeavors to fulfill his divine calling.

Summary: The Thematic Scheme of The Book of Acts – Jesus' final words to His disciples in Acts 1:8 reveal the underlying theme of the book of Acts, which is the witness of the apostles as they were empowered by the Holy Spirit to testify of Jesus Christ unto the ends of the earth. This verse reveals the structure of the book of Acts, which reads, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The book of Acts reflects the progressive spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, from Jerusalem (Acts 1:6-5:42), into Judea and Samaria (Acts 6:1-9:31), as far as Antioch (9:32-11:26), and unto the ends of the Earth (Acts 11:27-28:31). This work is accomplished as the New Testament Church embraces its duties, receives empowerment from the anointing of the Holy Spirit, sets offices in the Church, and organizes itself to spread to the nations, so that it may find its place of rest in fulfillment of its divine calling.

III. Outline of the Literary Structure

The reason for preparing an outline of the literary structure of a book is to visualize its theological framework at a glance. This brevity allows one to look at the book's framework from beginning to end in order to understand the author's purpose.

The following outline is a summary of the preceding literary structure; thus, it reflects the theological framework of the book of Acts: its purpose, its three-fold thematic scheme, and its literary structure. As a result, this outline offers sermon sections that fit together into a single message that can be used by preachers and teachers to guide a congregation or class through the book of Acts. This journey through Acts will lead believers into one aspect of conformity to the image of Christ Jesus that was intended by the Lord, which in this book of the Holy Scriptures is to prepare Christians to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth through the apostolic ministry.

Here is a proposed outline of the book of Acts that emphasizes the geographical theme of taking the Gospel from Jerusalem, to Judaea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Literary Elements of the Structure - It is important to note that each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). This structure is popularly known as the "progress report," in which scholars assign with various divisions. These sections generally follow the thematic scheme of the proclamation of the Gospel, persecution, and church growth. Each of these sections concludes with a summary of church growth (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

The Church's Duty (1:1-26)
(The Lord's Commission)

1. Introduction (Predestination) 1:1-14
a) The Setting (Prologue): Luke's Summary of Jesus' Public Ministry 1:1-5
b) The Speech: The Lord's Commission and His Ascent 1:6-11
c) The Response: The Disciples Return to Jerusalem 1:12-14
Apostolic-Prophetic Commission of Church Expansion in Acts 1:8

2. The Witness of the Calling of Twelve Disciples (Calling) 1:15-26
Καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις ἀναστὰς
a) The Speech: Peter's Call to Replace Judas Iscariot 1:15-22
b) The Response: The Choosing of Matthias in Fulfillment of Prophecy 1:23-26
Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Expansion (Acts 1:8)
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophetic Speech in 1:21-22 in Replacement of Judas Iscariot

The Church's Power (2:1-5:42)
(Preaching the Gospel with Miracles, Signs, and Wonders)

3. The Witness of Church Growth in Jerusalem (Justification) 2:1-5:42
Καὶ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν
a) The Greater Setting: The Day of Pentecost 2:1-4
b) Peter's First Sermon on Day of Pentecost (Primary Speech) 2:5-41
(2) The Occasion: The Gathering of the Jews 2:5-13
(3) Peter's Sermon 2:14-36
(a) The Prophecy of Joel 2:14-21
(b) The Prophecy of David on the Death & Resurrection of Christ 2:22-32
(c) The Prophecy of David on the Exaltation of Christ 2:33-36
(4) Conclusion: The Response of the Jews 2:37-41
c) The Spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem 2:42-5:40
(1) The First Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin 2:42-4:31
(a) The Immediate Setting: Church Growth in Jerusalem 2:42-47
(b) Demonstration of the Power of the Gospel 3:1-4:4
i) The Healing of the Lame Man 3:1-10
ii) Peter's Sermon at Solomon's Porch 3:11-26
α) Israel Rejected the Messiah 3:11-16
β) Prophecies Fulfilled in Christ Jesus 3:17-26
iii) The Response of the Jews 4:1-4
(c) Peter before the Sanhedrin 4:5-22
Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν αὔριον συναχθῆναι αὐτῶν
i) Peter's Speech 4:5-12
ii) The Response of the Sanhedrin 4:13-22
(d) Conclusion: The Response of the Church to Persecutions 4:23-31
(2) The Second Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin 4:32-5:40
(a) The Immediate Setting: The Church Holds All Things in Common 4:32-35
(b) Demonstration of the Power of the Gospel (Conflict as Climax of Plot) 4:36-5:26
i) Judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira 4:36-5:11
ii) The Arrest/Deliverance of Apostles 5:12-26
(c) Peter before the Sanhedrin (Resolution of Conflict) 5:27-40
i) Peter's Speech 5:27-32
ii) Response of the Sanhedrin: Beating/Warning 5:33-40
d) Conclusion: Church Growth in Jerusalem 5:41-42
Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8)
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophetic Speech in 2:1-4 of Justification through the Gospel

The Church's Structure (6:1-11:26)
(The Development of the Five-Fold Ministries and Office of the Deacon)

4. The Witness of Church Growth in Judea/Samaria (Indoctrination) 6:1-9:31
Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις πληθυνόντων τῶν μαθητῶν ἐγένετο
a) The Greater Setting: Commission of the First Deacons 6:1-7
b) Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin 6:8-8:1a
(1) The Occasion: The Anointing of Stephen's Public Ministry 6:8-10
(2) Stephen's Speech (Primary Speech) 6:11-7:53
(Prophecy of Israel's Rejection of the Gospel)
(3) Conclusion: The Response of the Sanhedrin: Stephen is Stoned 7:54-8:1a
c) The Spread of the Gospel into Judea/Samaria 8:1b-9:30
Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ
(1) The Witness of Philip the Evangelist 8:1b-40
(a) The Immediate Setting: Persecution and Scattering of the Church 8:1b-4
(b) The Witness of Philip the Evangelist in Samaria (8:25) 8:5-25
(c) The Witness of Philip to the Ethiopian Eunuch (8:40) 8:26-40
(2) The Witness of Paul's Conversion (9:28-30) 9:1-30
(a) The Immediate Setting: Paul is Commissioned by the High Priest 9:1-2
(b) Saul's Trip to Damascus (Conflict as Climax of Plot) 9:3-19
Prophecy of Ananias that Paul is a Chosen Vessel
(c) Two Testimonies concerning Saul's Conversion 9:20-30
i) Saul's Early Ministry in Damascus 9:20-25
ii) Saul's Early Ministry in Jerusalem (Resolution of Conflict) 9:26-30
d) Conclusion: Church Growth in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria 9:31
Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth unto Judea/and Samaria (Acts 1:8)
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophetic Speech in 7:51-53 of Israel's Rejection of the Gospel

5. The Witness of Church Growth unto Antioch (Indoctrination) 9:32-11:26
Ἐγένετο δὲ Πέτρον διερχόμενον διὰ πάντων κατελθεῖν
a) The Greater Setting: Peter's Public Ministry in Judea/Samaria 9:32-42
(1) Peter's Ministry in Lydda (9:35) 9:32-35
(2) Peter's Ministry in Joppa (9:42) 9:36-42
b) The Witness of Peter in Caesarea 9:43-10:48
Ἐγένετο δὲ ἡμέρας ἱκανὰς μεῖναι
(1) The Occasion: Angelic Visitation to Cornelius 9:43-10:33
Prophecy of Peter's Vision of Justification for the Gentiles in 10:9-16
(2) Peter's Sermon to the Household of Cornelius (Primary Speech) 10:34-42
(3) Conclusion: The Response of the People 10:44-48
c) The Spread of the Gospel unto Antioch 11:1-24
(1) The Testimony of Peter before the Church at Jerusalem 11:1-18
(a) The Immediate Setting: Objections to Gentile Converts 11:1-3
(b) Peter's Witness of Conversion of Gentiles 11:4-17
(c) Conclusion: The Response of the Church 11:18
(2) The Testimony of Barnabas concerning the Church in Antioch 11:19-24
(a) The Immediate Setting: Evangelism to the Gentiles in Antioch 11:19-21
(b) Barnabas Endorses the Work in Antioch 11:22-24
d) Conclusion: Barnabas and Saul Teach in Antioch 11:25-26
Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth unto Antioch (Acts 1:8)
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophetic Speech in 10:43 of Justification for the Gentiles

The Church's Organization (11:27-28:31)
(The Writing of New Testament Epistles to Establish Church Order)

6. The Witness of Church Growth to the Gentiles 11:27-28:31
Ἐν ταύταις δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις κατῆλθον ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων

a) Greater Setting: Missionary Outreach Shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch 11:27-12:25

(Divine Service)

(1) The Immediate Setting: First Famine Relief to Church in Jerusalem	11:27-30
(2) King Herod's Persecution of the Apostles	12:1-23
(a) The Death of James and Peter in Prison	12:1-19
(b) Divine Judgment upon King Herod	12:20-23
(3) Conclusion: The Growth of the Word of God	12:24-25
b) The Witness of Church Growth unto Asia Minor (Divine Service)	13:1-15:35
(1) The Greater Setting: The Commission of Paul and Barnabas	13:1-3
Prophecy of Separation for Gentile Work in 13:2	
(2) The Witness of Paul's First Missionary Journey	13:4-52
(a) The Occasion: Paul and Barnabas at Cyprus	13:4-12
(b) Paul's Speech in the Synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia	13:13-41
i) The Immediate Setting	13:13-15
ii) Outline of Israel's Prophetic History	13:16-25
iii) The Prophetic Fulfillment of Jesus Christ the Messiah	13:26-37
iv) The Call to Accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ	13:38-41
(c) The Response of the People	13:42-52
(3) The Establishment of the Gospel in Asia Minor	14:1-15:32
(a) Paul and Barnabas Complete Their First Mission	14:1-28
i) Paul and Barnabas at Iconium and Lystra	14:1-20
ii) Paul and Barnabas Strengthen the Brethren	14:21-28
(b) The First Church Council in Jerusalem (Conflict as Climax of Plot)	15:1-32
i) The Immediate Setting: Dispute Concerning Circumcision	15:1-4
ii) Peter's Witness of Gentile Conversions	15:5-11
iii) Paul and Barnabas Witness of Gentile Conversions	15:12
iv) The Judgment of James	15:13-21
v) The Letter to the Gentiles	15:22-29
vi) The Response of the Church at Antioch (Resolution of Conflict)	15:30-32
(4) Conclusion: Barnabas and Saul Teach at Antioch	15:33-35
Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth unto Asia Minor (Acts 1:8)	
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophecy in 13:2 of Separation for Gentile Work	
c) The Witness of Church Growth to Macedonia (Perseverance amidst Hardships)	15:36-19:20
(1) The Greater Setting: Paul Begins His Second Missionary Journey	15:36-16:5
Μετὰ δέ τινας ἡμέρας	
(a) Paul and Barnabas Split Up	15:36-41
(b) Timothy Joins Paul and Silas	16:1-4
(c) Conclusion: Decrees Delivered and Churches Strong in Faith	16:5
(2) The Testimony of Paul's Ministry in Macedonia	16:6-18:22
(a) The Occasion: The Macedonian Call	16:6-10
Prophecy by Dream of Macedonian Call (16:6-10)	
(b) Paul at Philippi	16:11-40
i) The Conversion of Lydia	16:11-15
ii) Paul Cast into Prison and Miraculously Delivered	16:16-40
(c) Paul in Thessalonica	17:1-9
(d) Paul in Berea	17:10-15
(e) Paul in Athens	17:16-34
i) Immediate Setting	17:16-21
ii) Paul's Speech	17:22-31
iii) The Response of the Athenians	17:32-34
(f) Paul in Corinth	18:1-17
i) Paul's Arrival in Corinth	18:1-4
ii) Paul's Ministry in Corinth	18:5-11
iii) Paul is Taken before Gallio	18:12-17

(g) Conclusion: Paul Returns to Antioch 18:18-22
(3) The Testimony of Paul's Third Missionary Journey 18:23-19:19
(a) The Immediate Setting: Apollo's Ministry in Ephesus 18:23-28
(b) Paul in Ephesus 19:1-19
Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ τὸν Ἀπολλῶ εἶναι
i) The Disciples at Ephesus Receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit 19:1-7
ii) Paul Turns to the Gentiles in Ephesus 19:8-10
iii) Paul's Miraculous Work at Ephesus 19:11-19
(4) Conclusion: The Mighty Growth and Prevailing of the Word of God 19:20
Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth unto Asia Minor/Macedonia (Acts 1:8)
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophecy in 16:6-10 concerning Paul's work in Macedonia

d) The Witness of Church Growth unto Rome 19:21-28:29
Ὡς δὲ ἐπληρώθη ταῦτα
(1) The Greater Setting: Paul Purposes in His Spirit to Visit Rome 19:21-22
(2) The Occasion: Paul Concludes His Work in Macedonia and Asia Minor 19:23-20:38
(Perseverance amidst Offenses/False Doctrines)
Ἐγένετο δὲ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον
(a) The Riot at Ephesus 19:23-41
(b) Paul's Journey to Macedonia and Greece 20:1-6
Μετὰ δὲ τὸ παύσασθαι τὸν θόρυβον
(c) Paul at Troas 20:7-12
(d) Paul Journeys from Troas to Miletus 20:13-16
(e) Conclusion: Paul Exhorts the Elders at Ephesus 20:17-38
(3) The Conflict: The Testimony of Paul's Arrest and Trials 21:1-26:32
(Paul's Apostleship Predestined, Called, Justified, Glorified)
Ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο ἀναχθῆναι
(a) The Immediate Setting: Prophecies of Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem 21:1-14
Prophecy of Agabus concerning Paul's arrest (21:11-12)
(b) Paul's Arrest and First Speech to Jewish Mob (Predestined) 21:15-22:29
Μετὰ δὲ τὰς ἡμέρας ταύτας ἐπισκευασάμενοι
i) Paul Meets with James and the Elders at Jerusalem 21:15-26
ii) Paul's Arrest in the Temple 21:27-36
iii) Paul's Testimony to the Mob 21:37-22:22
iv) Paul and the Roman Chief Captain 22:23-29
(c) Paul's Second Speech before the Sanhedrin (Called) 22:30-23:35
i) Paul before the Sanhedrin 22:30-23:11
ii) The Jews Plot against Paul's Life 23:12-22
iii) Paul is Sent to Felix the Governor 23:23-35
(d) Paul's Third Speech before Felix the Governor (Justified) 24:1-27
i) Tertullus Accuses Paul before Felix 24:1-9
ii) Paul's Defense before Felix 24:10-21
iii) Felix Requests a Bribe 24:22-27
(e) Paul's Fourth Speech before Festus and King Agrippa (Glorified) 25:1-26:32
i) Paul's Defense before Festus the Governor 25:1-12
ii) Festus Recounts Paul's Defense to King Agrippa 25:13-22
iii) The Opening Speech of Festus 25:23-27
iv) Paul's Speech to King Agrippa 26:1-29
v) The Verdict of King Agrippa 26:30-32
(4) The Climax-Resolution: The Witness of Paul's Journey to Rome 27:1-28:16
(Glorification)
(Conflict as Climax of Plot)
Ὡς δὲ ἐκρίθη τοῦ ἀποπλεῖν ἡμᾶς
(a) Paul Sails for Rome 27:1-12
(b) The Storm at Sea 27:13-38

(c) The Shipwreck	27:39-44
(d) Paul on the Island of Malta	28:1-10
(e) Paul Arrives in Rome (Resolution of Conflict)	28:11-16
(5) The Conclusion: Paul's Ministry in Rome	28:17-29

Ἐγένετο δὲ μετὰ ἡμέρας τρεῖς συγκαλέσασθαι
Fulfillment of Primary Prophecy of Church Growth unto Rome (Acts 1:8)
Fulfillment of Secondary Prophecy in 21:11-12 concerning Paul's arrest

e) The Establishment of the Gospel in Rome	28:30-31

EXEGESIS AND COMMENTS

The Church's Duty
(The Lord's Commission)

The distinctive feature of church development in Acts 1:1-26 is an emphasis upon the Lord's commission to His disciples to take the Gospel to all the world (1:8). The words of this divine commission shape the literary structure of the book of Acts.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 1:1-26 emphasizing the duty of the church through Jesus' apostolic commission to the church and calling of the Twelve:

Exegetical Idea – Jesus Christ established the church with its duties through a divine commission and the calling of the Twelve.

Theological Idea – Because Jesus Christ established the church with its duties through a divine commission and the calling of the Twelve, God has established the church with its duties through Jesus' divine commission and the calling of the Twelve.

Homiletical Idea – Because God has established the church with its duties through Jesus' divine commission and the calling of the Twelve, every child of God has a duty in the church in God's plan of redemption as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations.

The Church's Duty (The Lord's Commission)

1:1-14 **Introduction (Predestination) -** The introduction to the book of Acts provides a brief summary of the Gospel of Luke, which is mentioned in its prologue as the first of the dual writings of Luke-Acts (1:1-5). This prologue declares that Jesus Christ fulfilled His ministry and now stands as Head of the New Testament Church, empowering it with the Holy Ghost in order to fulfill its commission. After a brief prologue, Luke begins his testimony in Jerusalem where the disciples receive their divine commission in the final words Jesus delivers as a prophetic speech immediately followed by His Ascent (1:6-11). The commission recorded in this introduction serves as the secondary theme of the book of Acts, in which Jesus commissions the Church to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:1-14 establishes the *duty* of the New Testament Church predestined by God the Father. The theme of predestination undergirding Acts 1:1-14 is understood in the fact that the New Testament Church was predestined to take the Gospel to the nations of the earth.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of predestination in Acts 1:1-14 in Jesus' references to the preordained times and seasons of God the Father. Jesus speaks of the gift of the Holy Spirit promised by the Father (1:4), which would come in a few days (1:5). Jesus mentions the times and seasons that the Father has placed under His authority (1:7). Finally, the angels, who serve as God the Father's voice to man, tells the disciples that Jesus Christ will return to earth in the same manner in which He ascended (1:11).

Literary Evidence for the Structure – Three is literary evidence for the three-fold structure of Acts 1:1-14. This passage can be divided into three sub-sections based upon temporal clauses or movements in the plot, which are characteristic of narrative material. After the prologue (1:1-5), the second sub-section begins with a temporal clause using the participle οἱ συνελθόντες "when those who had gathered" (1:6) and the third sub-section with a

movement of plot, "τότε" (then) (1:12). Such literary elements serve as the section breaks for the narrative material.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 1:1-14 emphasizing the predestined plan of the church through Jesus' apostolic commission to the Twelve:

> *Exegetical Idea* – Jesus Christ commissioned the apostles to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.
>
> *Theological Idea – Because Jesus Christ commissioned the apostles to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth,* God has predestined the church to be a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations.
>
> *Homiletical Idea – Because God has predestined the church to be a witness to the nations*, every child of God is predestined to serve a role in God's plan of redemption as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations.

Outline – Here is a proposed outline:

a) The Setting (The Prologue) (1:1-5)
b) The Speech (1:6-9)
c) The Response (1:11-114)

1:1-5 **The Setting (The Prologue): Luke's Summary of the Public Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ –** The prologue of a book establishes the setting and often gives background information to accomplish its purpose. Therefore, the prologue to the book of Acts serves as a brief summary of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this prologue, the writer makes a clear reference to the Gospel of Luke as its companion book. Luke 1:1 says that this "former account" concerned all that Jesus began to do and to teach (1:1), which reflects Luke 1-23. Acts 1:2-5 makes a clear reference to the concluding testimony of Luke's Gospel in 24:1-53after His ascension.

The Theme of the Book of Acts Reflected in the Prologue - The theme of a book of the Holy Bible is revealed sometimes in its opening passage. The theme of the book of Acts is revealed in its prologue as Jesus commanded the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they are filled with the Holy Spirit so that they can take the Gospel to the nations (Acts 1:8). This theme is reflecting in the closing passage of the book of Acts as well when Paul told the Jews in Rome, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet," after which he quoted Isaiah 6:9-10 (Acts 28:25-27). In other words, Paul emphasizes the anointing of the Holy Spirit speaking through the prophet Isaiah. In addition, the book of Acts closes with a description of Paul "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:30-31). Thus, Paul fulfilled the commission of Jesus Christ that He spoke in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The theme of the book of Acts is reflected in John 15:26-27, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even *the Spirit of truth*, which proceedeth from the Father, *he shall testify of me*: And *ye also shall bear witness*, because ye have been with me from the beginning." In these verses, Jesus describes the testimony of the apostles through the anointing of the Holy Spirit

The Author's Rhetorical Use of Chiasm – Chiasm is a literary device used in antiquity that arranges thoughts and words into a symmetrical order. David Allen notes how Luke uses the

rhetorical device of "chiasm" in the prologue and conclusion to the book of Acts. In his prologue to Acts, we find the key words "Jesus," "teach," and "kingdom of God" mentioned in this order, while the conclusion reverses this word order as "kingdom of God," "teaching," and "Jesus." Allen says this structure served as a "linguistic signature" of Luke.[159] Ancient literature used such rhetorical devices for emphasis or for the purpose of persuading one's listeners towards a particular view.[160] In this rhetorical device, Luke is testifying to the expansion of the Kingdom of God through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the apostolic office of Paul and others.

The Author's Rhetorical Use of Alliteration – Alliteration is a rhetorical device that repeats the beginning sound of a word. Luke and the author of Hebrews employ alliteration in the prologues of their writings by using words that begin with the Greek letter "π." Within the opening sentences of Luke's prologue to his Gospel and to the book of Acts and in the epistle of Hebrews are found five words whose lexical form begins with the letter "π." David Allen cites this "signature" in Luke-Acts to argue for Lucan authorship to the epistle of Hebrews as well.[161]

1:1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

1:1 **"The former treatise" – *Comments* -** The Greek word translated into English as "treatise" in Luke 1:1 is λόγος**.** Goodspeed tells us that when the ancient Greeks would visit foreign lands, they would return and write down their memoirs as travel narratives and call them a "λόγοι," or "accounts," of their journey. Luke uses the same Greek word in the same context.[162] "The former treatise" is a reference to the Gospel of Luke.

"have I made" - ***Comments* -** Luke, the beloved physician and traveling companion of Paul the apostle is the author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. Paul mentions his name a number of times within his epistles: Colossians 4:14, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you." 2 Timothy 4:11, "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

"O Theophilus" – *Comments* - The name of Theophilus is unique to the New Testament, but it was probably a common name in this period of Greco-Roman history. For example, there was Theophilus of Antioch, the sixth bishop of Antioch in the second century;[163] there was a patriarch of Alexandria by this name;[164] and there was a bishop of Caesarea in Palestine named Theophilus.[165] Why would Luke have chosen to dedicate his writings to such a man? St. Thomas Aquinas quotes Remigius of Auzerre (c. A.D. 841-908) as saying that Luke wrote his Gospel while residing "in the parts of Achaia and Baeotia," "at the

[159]David L. Allen, "Class Lecture," Doctor of Ministry Seminar, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 25 July to 5 August 2011.

[160]Gaston Boissier, *Tacitus and Other Roman Studies,* trans. W. G. Hutchison (London: Archibald Constable and Company, Ltd., 1906), 3.

[161]David L. Allen, "Class Lecture," Doctor of Ministry Seminar, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 25 July to 5 August 2011.

[162]Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1937), 198; Wilmer Wright writes a chapter on ancient Greek "logographers." See Wilmer C. Wright, *A Short History of Greek Literature* (New York: American Book Company, 1907), 152-64.

[163]*Theophilus to Autolycus*, trans. Marcus Dods, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* vol. 2, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Buffalo, New York: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1885), 85-121.

[164]F. L. Cross, and E. A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, c1957, 1983), 1364.

[165]*Constitutions of the Holy Apostles,* 7.4.46, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* vol. 7, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Buffalo, New York: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1886), 477-8.

request of Theophilus."[166] Thus, history tells us that Theophilus played an important role in the writing of Luke's Gospel.

As to the identity of Theophilus, the *Constitutions of the Apostles,* a collection of ecclesiastical law that is believed to have been compiled during the latter half of the fourth century, states that a man named Theophilus became the third bishop of the church at Caesarea.

> "Now concerning those bishops which have been ordained in our lifetime, we let you know that they are these:--James the bishop of Jerusalem, the brother of our Lord; upon whose death the second was Simeon the son of Cleopas; after whom the third was Judas the son of James. Of Caesarea of Palestine, the first was Zacchaeus, who was once a publican; after whom was Cornelius, and the third Theophilus." (*Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, 7.4.46)[167]

This may not have been the same person recorded in the books of Luke and Acts; but when the names of Zacchaeus and Cornelius are found alongside the name of Theophilus in the same sentence, and when all three names are found to be unique to Luke's writings, one is likely to believe that it was the same Theophilus. In other words, Luke's Gospel and Acts were a compilation of testimonies of the life and works of Lord Jesus Christ and the early church, and for Luke to use the testimonies of Zacchaeus and Cornelius, the living bishops of Caesarea at the time of his writing, would have fit the way in which Luke was gathering his testimonies. Theophilus, as a local bishop of a key city in Palestine, could have easily been an influence in Luke's ministry.

However, some modern scholars suggest that a probable occasion as to the writing of Luke was his need to prepare a defense for Paul's Roman trial, and that Theophilus was a Roman citizen who could influence the outcome of such a trial. The impending trial of Paul would be a proper time for Luke to write to a Roman official in order to justify the Christian message as being worthy of acceptance in the Roman world. The early Church tradition that Theophilus was a Roman of importance living in Italy finds some support within the text of Luke-Acts.

"of all that Jesus began both to do and teach" – *Comments* - The phrase "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach" may be interpreted to mean that the Gospel of Luke has two major divisions of Jesus' earthly ministry before His Passion, which were His works and His teachings. For example, Luke 4:14-9:50 records the testimony of His Galilean Ministry in which Jesus did many wonderful miracles to reveal His divine authority as the Christ, the Son of God. These chapters of Luke emphasize the works that Jesus did under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Luke 9:51-21:38 emphasizes the teaching and training of His disciples to do the work of the Kingdom of God. Thus, the Gospel of Luke can be divided into this two-fold emphasis of Jesus' works and His teachings. However, this phrase may simply refer to a two-fold emphasis of demonstrating and teaching that is embedded throughout the Gospel of Luke.

We can see the two-fold aspect Jesus doing and teaching in the literary structure of the Gospel of Matthew as well, in which Jesus always demonstrated the work of the ministry before teaching it in the alternating narratives and discourses. For example, in Matthew 8:1-9:38, Jesus performed nine miracles before instructing His disciples and sending them out to perform miracles in Matthew 10:1-42. Then in Matthew 11:1-12:50, the Gospel records examples of how people reacted to the preaching of the Gospel before Jesus teaches on this

[166]St. Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea,* vol. 1, Matthew, pt. 1 (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1841), 5.

[167]*Constitutions of the Holy Apostles,* 7.4.46, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* vol. 7, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Buffalo, New York: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1886), 477-8.

same subject in the parables of Matthew 13:1-52. We then see examples of how Jesus handled offences in Matthew 13:53-17:27 before He teaches on this subject in Matthew 18:1-35. Jesus also prepares for His departure in Matthew 19:1-25:46 before teaching on His second coming in Matthew 24-25.

1:2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

1:2 **"Until the day in which he was taken up" - *Comments* -** Jesus' earthly ministry lasted approximately three and a half years, which time-frame is most cleared seen in the Gospel of John. There must have been a purpose in God choosing this time frame in which to preach the Kingdom of God and raise up twelve apostles to take the message of the Gospel to the world. Having worked with and listened to missionaries in Uganda who disciple young men, it has become clear that one year of discipleship is much too short of a time for a person to experience enough transformation to be sent out on his own. I believe Jesus Christ discipled the Twelve for three and a half years because this was the time it took to bring about the necessary transformation in their lives.

"after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments" – *Comments* - The book of Luke reflects Jesus Christ in His office as a prophet. Thus, Luke notes in Acts 1:2 that He spoke His divine commissions under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Such prophetic utterances are embedded in the collection of speeches in the book of Acts simply because the prophetic office undergirds of the office of the apostle. This is why Luke-Acts reflects the office of the prophet (Luke) and the office of the apostle (Acts). They work hand in hand in the structure of the New Testament Church; for the prophetic office launches the apostolic. For example, in Acts 13:1-3, Paul and Barnabas were sent forth through prophecy.

"unto the apostles whom he had chosen" - *Comments* - The mention of "the apostles whom he had chosen" clearly refers to the Twelve. Peter and John and James will play key roles in the book of Acts. In fact, of its eighty uses in the New Testament, the word ἀπόστολος is found twenty-eight times in the book of Acts. This word is used in Acts 1-16, but ceases to be used in Acts 17-28 as Paul the apostle takes the leading role in these chapters. Thus, the Twelve , mentioned in the opening prologue of Acts, play a leading role in the establishment of the early church.

1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

1:3 **'To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs" – *Comments* –** The Greek word τεκμήριον means, "that which causes something to be known in a convincing and decisive manner,' proofs" (*BDAG*). This word is used once in the New Testament. David Peterson says it means, "strict proof" or a "compelling sign" and serves as the strongest confirmation that Luke can make to verify the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.[168]

"being seen of them forty days" - *Comments* – Kevin Zadai tells the story of having a divine visit to heaven in which he asked Jesus why He was given forty extra days of ministry upon the earth. He says that Jesus responded by saying that God gave Him these

[168]David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 104, Logos.

forty extra days because of the forty days of temptation by the devil that He endured in the wilderness.[169]

"and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" - ***Comments –*** Luke opens the closes the book of Acts with a description of Jesus (1:3) and Paul (28:31) proclaiming the message concerning the kingdom of God. As Jesus is our example, the Gospel includes preaching and teaching on the principles of the kingdom of God, and not about myths and genealogies, of which Paul warns Timothy (1 Tim 1:3-6), and certainly not about church traditions.

> 1 Timothy 1:3-6, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

1:4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

1:4 **"And, being assembled together with them" - *Comments –*** The Greek word συναλίζω is used once in the New Testament (Acts 1:4). *BDAG* says this word means, either "to eat with" (*NJB, NIV*) or "to assemble" (*KJV, NASB, NEB, NKJV, TEV*). A third translation proposed my modern Englis versions is "to stay with, to lodge with" (*RSV, NRSV*).

> *1. "To Eat With" (passive voice)* – Some scholars believe the word συναλίζω literally means, "eating salt with" being derived from σύν plus ἅλας (salt). F. F. Bruce and David Peterson prefer the meaning "to eat with" based upon Luke 24:41-43, Acts 10:41, which testifies of Jesus eating with His disciples after the resurrection.[170] Howard Marshall (Henry Alford many others) prefer the translation "eating with."[171] In fact, the disciples did not "come together" (συνέρχομαι) until Acts 1:6.
>
> *2. "To Assemble" (middle voice)* – W. Robertson Nicoll believes the word συναλίζω literally means, "crowded together with" being derived from σύν plus ἁλής (close, crowded together).[172] Scholarship equally supports the translation "assembling with." (Calvin, Grotius, and others)
>
> *3. "To Stay With"* - A third translation reflects the broader context of this passage, which carries the idea of "staying with" (Howard Marshall). In other words, Jesus was lodging with His disciples when He made this statement.

In Acts 1:4, Jesus assembled with His disciples. They may have met in the same upper room where the apostles partook of the Last Supper with the Lord Jesus Christ before His Passion. The story of how they found this place is recorded in Luke 22:7-13. They happened upon it by divine providence under Jesus' instructions.

---

[169]Kevin Zadai, "The Agenda of Angels, Session 1," (The Warrior Notes TV) [online], accessed 23 May 2020; available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lS5CoeARhoU&t=2191s; Internet.

[170]F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), 58; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 106, Logos.

[171]I. Howard Marshall, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary,* in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,* vol. 5, ed. Leon Morris (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 62, Logos.

[172]W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* vol. 2 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 54.

"commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem" – *Comments* – A number of English versions shape Acts 1:4 as indirect discourse as Jesus instructs the disciples. While the Greek word ὅτι normally introduces indirect discourse (speech), there are no such markers to justify this in Acts 1:4, except the phrase "which you have heard of me." David Williams suggests the present participle "eating together" (assembling together) indicates that Jesus spoke this commandment on numerous occasions rather than on one occasion as indirect discourse.[173]

Peter, James, and John were from Galilee, and they would have felt safer in their hometown than in Jerusalem where their Saviour had just been crucified. In fact, the two angels addressed this group of men as Galileans in 1:11. Therefore, Jesus addresses this issue directly by commanding them to remain in Jerusalem. God had predestined the birth of the church in this city, namely because of its influence in the Jewish community. The Temple became the center of the proclamation of the Gospel in these early months. The book of Acts records how the apostles remained in Jerusalem even after the death of Stephen the first martyr.

"but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me" – *Comments* – Jesus spoke extensively of the coming of the Holy Spirit to His disciples in the night of His betrayal during the Last Supper (John 14:15-17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:7-10. 12-15). He made brief references to the Holy Spirit during His earthly ministry (Matt 10:20, Lk 12:12). He reminded them of this promise during the forty days following the resurrection (Lk 24:49, Acts 1:4).

Why did the disciples need to tarry or wait (καθίζω) in Jerusalem? Perhaps there are several reasons. First, the Lord honors the Jewish calendar, and He chose to send the Holy Spirit to earth to fill the New Testament believers on the Day of Pentecost. Second, this time of residing and waiting in Jerusalem helped to create anticipation and a hunger for God's arrival in the form of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit manifested Himself to the believer's in Antioch when they ministered to the Lord (Acts 13:1-3). A hunger for God by Cornelius and his family opened the doors of Heaven so that the Holy Spirit was able to rush into the room where Peter was preaching in Acts 10:44, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." These early disciples had to wait in Jerusalem so that the cares of this world would fade enough for their spiritual souls to hunger for the Lord. This corporate anointing came with a great manifestation of the Holy Spirit. However, as an individual, the apostle Paul told Timothy to stir up the gift of God within him (2 Tim 1:6). He told the Ephesians to be filled with the Spirit by "speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph 5:18-19) The apostle Jude makes a similar statement in Jude 1:20, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." Thus, we can solicit the presence of the Holy Spirit either corporately or individually.

Illustration - In 1984 on a Monday night, I had been studying my Bible until about 1:00 a.m. in the morning. I then laid down to sleep. As I tried to fall off to sleep, the presence of the Lord began to fill my room. I began to worship the Lord in song. This continued until about 5:00 a.m. in the morning. By this time, the presence of the Lord was so intense that I was laying on the floor. The Lord gave me this verse in a popular worship song. I then understood this verse like never before. In God's presence that night, I was feeling a joy that I could not explain, and it was full of worship and glory to the Father. His presence was so

[173]David J. Williams, *Acts,* in *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series,* eds. W. Ward Gasque, Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., and Robert K. Johnson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1990), 21 Logos.

intense that I asked the Holy Spirit to lift, and immediately, I felt the lifting of His Spirit, something I later regretting praying.

1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

1:5 ***Comments -*** The phrase "not many days" refers to a ten-day period if Jesus spoke these words on the day of His ascension. However, the text allows for the possibility that Jesus spoke these words at an earlier gathering during the forty-day period between His resurrection and the Day of Pentecost. Why was Jesus not specific about the date of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Perhaps Jesus was not specific because He Himself did not know the day nor the hour of this outpouring. For example, Jesus says in Acts 1:7 that the times and seasons have been placed under the authority of the Heavenly Father. Jesus taught His disciples during His public ministry that only God the Father knows the day and hour of His Second Coming, saying, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matt 24:36) Therefore, Jesus may not have known the exact time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Another possibility is that Jesus was not specific because He did not want them to know the exact day in order that they would seek the Father on a daily basis.

1:4-5 ***Comments - Luke Quotes Jesus' Command to the Apostles to Tarry in Jerusalem Immediately after His Departure –*** In Acts 1:4-5 Luke records Jesus' last command to His apostles. In these verses Jesus tells them what to do immediately after His ascension. Luke first gives us an indirect statement from Jesus by saying, " . . . (He) commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father . . ." Luke then changes to a direct quote by saying, "which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Perhaps the reason for this transition from an indirect quote to a direct one is to emphasize the most important statement that He said at this time. He must have spoken on a number of points, but Luke focuses upon those words that make up a major emphasis throughout the book of Acts; for the infilling of the Holy Spirit will be emphasized throughout the book of Acts. While the disciples received the Holy Spirit shortly after Jesus' resurrection (John 20:22-23), they were filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the rebirth of every believer is for the benefit of the child of God, to transform him from the inside. However, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is for the benefit of others as the child of God is empowered to fulfill the Great Commission. We see an emphasis placed upon the empowerment and boldness of the early Church through Luke's testimone of numerous occasions of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13; 4:31; 8:14-17; 10:44-46; 19:1-7).

1:6-11 **The Lord's Commission and His Ascent –** Acts 1:6-11 records the testimony of Lord's commission to the Twelve (1:6-8) and His ascent into Heaven (1:9-11). This passage contains an apostolic charge of the coming of the Holy Spirit and commission to spread the Gospel (1:7-8). The book of Acts records the testimonies of the apostles in which this charge is fulfilled as they preach the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. Thus, Acts 1:8 reflects the super-structure of Acts as the apostles take the Gospel to Jerusalem, to Judaea and Samaria, and finally, to Asia, Europe, and Rome. Acts 1:9-11 records ascent of the Lord into Heaven and the assurance of the angels to the disciples of His return in fulfillment of prophecy.

The Prophetic Utterances that Drive the Plot of the Book of Acts – Luke 10:2 uses the Greek word ἐκβάλλω to describe how we are to pray for the Lord of the harvest to *send forth* (ἐκβάλλω) labourers into His harvest. Throughout the books of Luke-Acts, the prophetic launched the apostolic ministries. For example, in Luke 4:17-19 Jesus launched

His public ministry with a prophet word from the Scriptures. This prophetic word from the book of Isaiah guided His entire public ministry. In Acts 1:7-8 Jesus gives a prophetic utterance that will guide the early Church towards its ultimate goal of bringing the Gospel to the nations. Thus, this opening commission will drive the plot of the entire book of Acts. There will be additional prophetic utterances and visions that will steer the apostles through these early years; thus, they will play a role in developing the plot of the book of Acts. For example, the prophecy of Ananias to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:15-16) prepares Paul for his missionary journeys. Peter's vision on the house top of Simon the tanner prepares for the Gospel to spread beyond Judea (Acts 10:13-16). The prophetic utterance of the prophets in the church at Antioch send forth Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:2). The prophecy of Agabus (Acts 21:11) confirms to Paul what has already been prophetically uttered concerning his sufferings and imprisonment (Acts 20:23). The book of Acts concludes with a prophetic utterance from Paul while imprisoned in Rome as he determines that the Gospel has now been send to the nations because the Jews have widely rejected their Messiah (Acts 28:25-28).

***The Commissions in the Book of Acts* - T**he book of Acts contains a number of divine commissions in order to release servants into the ministry field. Acts 1:6-11 serves as an introduction to the Jerusalem ministry as Jesus commissions the apostles to take the Gospel to the world. In Acts 6:1-6 the office of the deacon is commissioned by the apostles. In Acts 13:1-3 Barnabas and Saul are commissioned for their missionary journeys.

1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

1:6 ***Comments* -** The apostles knew that the Old Testament prophesied about the restoration of the nation of Israel, so they ask Jesus for clarification in Acts 1:6. They had struggled with this question recorded throughout Jesus' public ministry (Matt 20:20-21; 24:3, Lk 22:24-30).

1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

1:7 **"And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons" -** ***Comments*** **–** In Act 1:7 Jesus responds to the disciples' question about the future events of Israel's kingdom. They were asking Him about the timing of one event, the establishment of the kingdom of Israel on earth with a ruling king. He answers by mentioning the times (χρόνος) and seasons (καιρός) of God's plan of redemption for mankind as if the restoration of Israel is not a single event, but a series of events over a period of time. The disciples do not understand that Israel's full restoration will have to wait until the future Millennial Reign of Christ, when God will set up His kingdom on earth and when Jesus will rule as King of kings from the holy city Jerusalem. A number of important prophetic events must take place prior to this final event.

God's Ability to Change Times and Seasons - We often read Acts 1:7 and assume that it says the Heavenly Father has fixed and preordained times and seasons that cannot be changed. God the Father has control over the times and seasons of redemptive history; He can even change them at His will. Daniel says that God is able to change the times and seasons at His will, "And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:" (Dan 2:21)

For example, it was God's plan for the children of Israel, after having come out of bondage from Egypt, enter the land of Canaan within a year after encamping at Mount Sinai. However, God changed the time and season of this event because of Israel's rebellion at

Kadeshbarnea (Num 14:26-35) by causing them to wander in the wilderness for forty years. However, God's initial time for this nation to possess the land was upon leading Mount Sinai.

In another example, the prophet Isaiah told King Hezekiah to put his house in order because he was about to die. After the king prayed, the Lord extended the season of his life another fifteen years (Isa 38:1-8).

Also, it was God's will that the Jews receive Jesus Christ as the Messiah when John the Baptist manifested Him to all Israel and again when He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, for this was their "day" of their appointed Messiah. Thus, Jesus says, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." (Luke 19:42). This appointed day of Jesus becoming Israel's king was delayed when the Jews rejected Him by crucifying Him.

Scripture References – Peter mentions God's times (χρόνος) and seasons (καιρός) in Acts 3:19-21, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

"which the Father hath put in his own power" – ***Comments*** **–** Acts 1:7 reveals that God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son have two distinct ministries in man's redemption. The New Testament records a number of distinctions between God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son. For example, the distinction in roles between the Trinity is made clear in 1 Peter 1:2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." Through His divine foreknowledge, God the Father plans all things. Paul discusses the role of God the Father in Ephesians 1-3. Just within the book of Matthew, Jesus mentions His role on a number of occasions. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reveals that God the Father orchestrates daily blessings upon mankind in general (Matt 5:45) because He loves mankind. Jesus also revealed that God the Father determines heavenly rewards for men (Matt 6:1-18). Jesus describes the Father's daily oversight of His children in Matthew 6:19-33. Jesus mentions the Father's all-knowing power (Matt 10:29). The Father hears the cries of the upright and answers their prayers (Matt 7:11), as demonstrated throughout the Old Testament. The Father brings revelation to those who seek Him and hides it from the wicked (Matt 11:25-27; 16:17). The Father has prepared positions of leadership and enthronement beyond the office and ministry of Jesus (Matt 20:23). He has prepared judgment and eternal damnation as well (Matt 18:35). Because God the Father has planned all things, He alone knows the day and hour of the Second Coming of Jesus; for neither the angels nor Jesus Himself know the time of this event (Matt 24:36, Acts 1:7).

In Acts 1:7 Jesus tells His disciples that God the Father has not revealed the exact time of His return and the culmination of time as we know it. Even Jesus Christ does not know the times and seasons of the Heavenly Father's plan of redemption for mankind, as He says in Matthew 24:36, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Mark 13:32, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Acts 1:6-7, "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." Even the heavenly angels, who come before the throne of Almighty God and receive assignments upon earth, do not know the outcome of their ministry to mankind nor its timing. Thus, the apostles Peter, Paul, and John describe Jesus returning as "a thief in the night" in 1 Thessalonians 5:2, "For

yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." 2 Peter 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." Revelation 3:3, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Revelation 16:15, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

One reason that the timing of these events is unknown to us is that a spiritual warfare is being fought in the heavenly realm and such plans are shrouded in heavenly, military secrecy. For example, in 2 Kings 22:19 the prophet Micaiah addresses the kings of Israel and of Judah, both commanders and chiefs over an army, saying, "Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left." (1 Kings 22:19) This prophet had been given a vision of heaven, having seen the Lord God Almighty seated upon His heavenly throne surrounded by a host of military angels. God Almighty is the Commander and Chief of an innumerable army of angels and His heavenly throne is the command center of this army. The psalmist describes this heavenly army in Psalms 103:20-21, "Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure." The prophet Micaiah tells these two kings that their rule and their kingdoms rise and fall based upon this heavenly command center rather than based upon their personal skills. The commands uttered from God's throne send His army of angels into action upon earth as they carry out spiritual warfare upon earth on a daily basis. In this story in 2 Kings, a command is about to proceed from the throne of God that brings divine judgment upon the king of Israel. Although such military orders are secret, the Lord allowed the kings of Israel and Judah to see into this meeting so that they would know that the Lord God is still King over His people Israel. In a similar manner, God's plan of redemption is unfolding upon earth in a progressive manner. The orders issued from this divine command center sometimes depend upon how men respond to certain events and how faithful servants obey His charges. The angels do not know these exact plans, although they are His instruments in executing His plan.

Another reason that God does not reveal His times and seasons to us is that He wants us to be ready at all times for His Return, lest we become relaxed and focused upon earthly concerns and pleasures. For example, the writers of the New Testament have told the Church to be ready for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, we have been anticipating this important event for the past two thousand years. This has resulted in a call for each generation of Christians to prepare their lives for His Coming. We must live a holy life in preparation for this event. It has been my personal experience that when the Lord shows me future events concerning my spiritual journey, He does not reveal the timing of such events. Sometimes these events are conditional upon my faith and obedience to His Word. At other times, I am to wait patiently for such events to come to pass.

1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

1:8 **"But" -** ***Comments*** **-** Instead of "knowing" God the Father's plan of redemption, His times and seasons, as the disciples requested in 1:6, we are to understand the mind of Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who will guide us through the divine seasons of our spiritual journey in life. God the Father has a plan for each of His children, and we must pursue this plan by seeking fellowship with the Lord; otherwise, if we were given the overall plan of God's times and seasons, we would be more inclined to procrastinate in divine service. Instead, we are to join God the Father in fulfilling His divine seasons of redemption for mankind.

1:8 **"ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" -** ***Comments*** **-** The book of Acts makes continual references to those early Church leaders who spoke boldly in the name of Jesus when filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 reads, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The early church congregations were filled with the Holy Spirit as a way of equipping them to do the work of the ministry (2:4; 4:31; 10:44; 13:52; 19:6). Men such as Peter (4:8), Stephen (6:5; 7:55), Barnabas (11:24), and Paul (1:9) were all filled with the Holy Spirit and testified under the anointing. This anointing empowered the early Church to fulfill the Great Commission and take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Although every believer receives the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation, only those filled with the Holy Spirit were empowered to fulfill the divine calling of the New Testament Church.

Jesus says in Luke 24:29 and Acts 1:8 that the Spirit of God would come *upon* the disciples, rather than *in* them. The Spirit of God came to dwell within the disciples when Jesus breathed upon them in John 20:22, "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." At this time before the ascension of Jesus, these disciples were born again with the Spirit of God dwelling in them. Therefore, the Spirit of God came upon them in Luke 24:29 and Acts 1:8 as they were filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

The advancement of the Kingdom of God begins in our heart, where the Holy Spirit dwells before it can spread to another human being. In John 14:16-17 Jesus says, "for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Benny Hinn teaches on John 14:17 by saying this phrase means that the Holy Spirit is with us leading us to the Cross. He is with us to convict us of our Adamic sins so that we might come to Calvary and received salvation. When we do come to Jesus for salvation, then the Holy Spirit comes to live "in us." When the Holy Spirit comes to live in us, then He will live in us "forever," as Jesus said in John 14:17. Soon after Jesus' teachings in John 14-16, and after His resurrection, He told His disciples, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." (Acts 1:8) These disciples had walked with Jesus Christ for over three years, and so they had the Holy Spirit dwelling with them. Jesus breathed upon them in John 20:22 and they received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; for Jesus said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Now, the Holy Spirit will begin to come upon them on occasions for the work of the ministry. This is an outward manifestation of the anointing that we see operating in the Old Testament as well as in the book of Acts. Under this anointing, a man of God works miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, but we should make the distinction that the Holy Spirit comes up on us for a season and for a reason. It is not permanent like His indwelling presence in every believer. This anointing is for divine service rather than for salvation.[174]

Benny Hinn makes a distinction between the presence of God and the power of God. When a believer receives the indwelling Holy Spirit at the time of salvation, he can immediately abide in the presence of the Lord. It is this presence that keeps him from falling away into sin. As a believer pursues the presence of God, he will come to a place where he is empowered as the Spirit of God comes upon him. We refer to this empowering as the anointing of the Spirit, which manifests Himself in various ways, as in Acts 1:8. Hinn warns that a person who strays away from the presence of God in his life and falls into a sinful lifestyle may still operate under the power of God. The deception for such a person is to think that he is still in God's presence just because he experiences the power of God during divine service and ministry. A person can continue with the power of God for a time, even when he has fallen away from the presence of God. The power of God does not means that a person is yielded to God. Hinn gives the example of Moses and the children of Israel. The

[174]Benny Hinn, "Fire Conference," 5-6 June 2009, Miracle Center Cathedral, Kampala, Uganda.

fact that many of the Israelites still continued in disbelief in the midst of the power of God shows that a person can experience the power of God and still miss His presence. Although Moses walked in the power of God and performed signs and wonders, he still desired to know the presence of God. Therefore, the Lord revealed Himself to him on the Mount (Ex 33:12-34:9), so that he face shone when he came down to the children of Israel (Ex 34:28-30). Samson walked in the power of God on occasions, yet he fell into sin with Delilah for a period of time while still walking in the power (Judg 13-16).

1:8 **"ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" -** ***Comments (The Literary Structure of Acts Based upon Jesus' Commission in Acts 1:8)*** **-** In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells His disciples to take the Gospel from Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria and to the Gentiles. The book of Acts records testimonies of how the Gospel spread in Jerusalem. As the main character in this section, Peter testifies to the people of Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (2:14-36), in the Temple (3:12-26), and twice before the Sanhedrin (4:8-12, 19-20; 5:29-32). Even the Sanhedrin acknowledged this fact by saying to the apostles, "behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." (Acts 5:28) Luke uses the term "witnesses" throughout these early chapters of the book of Acts to describe the work of the apostles (1:22; 3:15; 4:31, 33; 5:20-21, 28, 42).

Luke then records events leading to the spread of the Gospel into Judea, Samaria, and as far as Antioch. Finally, Paul takes the Gospel to Asia Minor, Macedonia, and ultimately to Rome. Thus, many scholars believe the book of Acts follows this geographical pattern of spreading the Gospel that Jesus commanded. This means that Acts 1:8 serves as a key verse in the book of Acts by providing a broad outline of the contents of this book.

More specifically, Paul's ministry clearly follows this principle of church growth and expansion. Luke records Paul's testimony of specific statements declaring his efforts to take the Gospel to placed yet un-evangelized. He first placed churches in key cities in Asia Minor. Thus, Luke describes how Paul and his ministry team preached "so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 19:10)

In Romans 15:20-28, Paul describes his efforts to spread the Gospel as far as Rome. He said that he strived to preach where no other man had preached (15:20), and having no place left in Macedonia and Asia Minor (15:23-24), he looked towards Rome, and later towards Spain (15:28).

Application - The description of the Gospel expanding outward through geographical regions reflects the fact that God will divinely orchestrate similar progressive phases of outreach in our Christian service. God will first use us where we are in life, and as we demonstrate our faithfulness and obedience to Him, He will open ever increasing doors of opportunity for ministry in an effort to take our testimony to the ends of the earth. We must stay filled with the Holy Spirit in order for God to work mightily in our lives for such a ministry to expand.

Comments (The Second Coming Takes Place when the Gospel is Preached to All Nations) **–** In Acts 1:8, Jesus Christ told His disciples that they were to be witnesses of Him "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This statement must be placed within the context of this passage in which there is a question and answer regarding the times and seasons of the Father's divine plan of redemption. In Acts 1:6, the disciples have just asked Jesus Christ when the physical restoration of the nation of Israel will occur. They were speaking about an earthly kingdom. Jesus responded by telling them that the time and season of His Second Coming would be set by the Heavenly Father, and not by Him. Jesus was referring to the Second Coming that immediately follows the Tribulation. In His eschatological discourse of Matthew 24-25, Jesus explained that this

Second Coming would not take place until the Gospel had been preached to "all nations." Jesus says, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt 24:14)

We know from the book of Acts, that the Gospel was in fact preached as far as Rome, which is used figuratively to represent the phrase, "uttermost part of the earth."[175] Literally, Jesus is saying that the time of His Second Coming is determined by the Father (1:7), which will usher in the restoration of Israel (1:6), in answer to their question. This event will not take place until the Gospel has been preached to all nations, or "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (1:8).

In Acts 1:8, Jesus simply gives His disciples God's specific plan for them during the current age that they were living in. In other words, the Church age began when Jesus came to earth and would continue until the Gospel is preached unto all nations, and then shall the end come (Matt 24:14). Thus, Acts 1:8 describes the Church age.

1:8 ***Comments (The Necessity of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit for Every Believer) -*** Acts 1:8 serves as a key verse that outlines the book of Acts, showing us Jesus' plan to use the Church to take the Gospel from a city to a region unto the ends of the earth. This verse also gives us the pattern of New Testament church growth. Jesus gives to us the secret to effect Church growth in this verse by saying that believers must be endued with power before they are equipped and capable of accomplishing this mission.

Illustration **–** The baptism of the Holy Spirit is to empower the Church for the work of the ministry. The Lord dealt with me about being filled with the Holy Spirit when I began to work as a pastor. As a young pastor, the Lord spoke to me and said, "You will never walk in victory in your life until you spend two hours a day praying in tongues." When I became obedient to this Word from the Lord, my Christian walk was transformed. I experienced fewer obstacles in my daily life as I saw God's divine intervention open supernatural doors of opportunity. After many years, I was able to move into the place that God called me, which was into the mission field. Thus, we find throughout the book of Acts testimonies of churches and individual who were filled with the Holy Spirit and used by God to take this commission to the ends of the earth. The book of Acts shows to us men like Peter, Stephen, Philip, Ananias and Barnabas, filled with the Holy Spirit, taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth (4:8; 6:8; 8:5-6; 9:17; 11:24).

Application - We can apply the truths of Acts 1:8 to our individual lives and ministries. This verse tells us how to become effective witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. We learn that if we are ever going to fulfill God's purpose and plan in our individual lives, we will have to be filled with the Holy Spirit and stay filled (Eph 5:18-20). Every person's calling, every ministry on earth, must fall under this commission that Jesus gave the Church. The very purpose for our redemption and existence falls under this commission to find our place in the body of Christ and take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

[175]Clement of Rome describes Paul's public ministry as reaching "the whole world," which suggests that the ending of the book of Acts describes the fulfillment of Jesus' commission in 1:8 to take the Gospel to the "unto the uttermost part of the earth." Clement writes concerning Paul's ministry, "After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness *to the whole world*, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects." (1 Clement 5:7) In addition, the phrase "unto the end of the earth" is used in the Psalms of Solomon 8:15 to describe Pompey coming from the west [Rome] to Jerusalem (63 B.C.), saying, "He [Pompey] brought him that is from the end of the earth, that smiteth mightily; He decreed war against Jerusalem, and against her land." However, scholarship discourages a direct association between the phrase "the ends of the earth" and Rome.

Thank God, we will be empowered with the Holy Ghost to accomplish this feat (1:8). Jesus is longing for this event to take place so that He can be united with His bride. But this cannot take place until the Gospel is preached to all nations. The mandate seen in the book of Acts is for the Church to obey the command to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth. This means that the calling of every person on earth today falls under the overall divine mandate of God to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.

1:8 ***Comments (The Prophetic Ministry in the Book of Acts)*** **-** While the book of Acts places emphasis upon the apostolic ministry, Luke's Gospel emphasizes the prophetic ministry. Therefore, Jesus' final words to His disciples in Luke 24:49 reflect the infilling of the Holy Spirit by which prophecy proceeds out of man, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." All of the birth and infancy narratives of Luke reflect men and women being filled with the Holy Spirit, followed by prophetic utterances. In comparison, the book of Acts will emphasize the apostolic calling that results from prophecy by saying, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Act 1:8) Jesus' words in Acts 1:8 emphasize the spread of the Gospel to the ends of the earth, while Luke 24:29 emphasizes the need to first be filled with the Holy Spirit. If we look at the commissions of the Gospels and Acts as a single commission, we see that the Gospel of John gives a pastoral commission, Matthew gives a teaching commission, and Mark gives an evangelistic commission. This means that the great commission includes all of these commissions reflecting the five-fold ministry as listed in Ephesians 4:11. We can then conclude that the apostolic commission of Acts 1:8 cannot be fulfilled without the involvement of the other Gospel commissions. In other words, it takes the operation of the pastoral, evangelistic, teaching, prophetic/apostolic commissions to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. As a practical illustration, the church denominations that are reaching out to the nations and experiencing mass evangelism are those that have embraced the five-fold ministry. Those denominations that only embrace the pastoral, evangelistic and teaching ministries are ineffective today in reaching to the ends of the earth with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Luke weaves the prophetic element into the apostolic element throughout the book of Acts. These prophecies are delivered as divine oracles by visions (10:9-16; 16:9), by men (11:27-28; 21:10-11), and as gifts of utterance (13:1-3). Luke uses the word πληρόω in strategic places concerning Paul's ministry in the book of Acts. For example, Paul fulfilled his divine service after he and Barnabas took aid to the elders in Judea (12:25); Paul and Barnabas fulfilled their service on their first missionary journey (14:26); and Paul fulfilled his work after his third missionary journey (19:21). All of these prophecies are centered upon Jesus' apostolic commission in Acts 1:8 to take the Gospel to the nations.

1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

1:9 ***Comments*** **-** The cloud that received Jesus Christ into Heaven in Acts 1:9 was the same cloud that went before the children of Israel in the wilderness by day and shielded them from the sun (Ex 13:21), and the same cloud that came between the Israelites and Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea (Ex 14:19-20), and the same thick cloud that descended upon Mount Sinai (Ex 19:16), and the same cloud that descended upon the Tabernacle (Ex 40:34), and the same cloud that appeared above the mercy seat in the Tabernacle (Lev 16:2), and the same cloud that covered the Tabernacle when it was reared and led the children of Israel through their wilderness journeys (Num 9:15-17), and the same cloud that filled the Temple during Solomon's dedication (1 Kings 8:10-11, 2 Chron 5:13-14), and the same cloud that came like a whirlwind out of the north towards Ezekiel (Ez 1:4), and the same cloud that descended upon the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt 17:5), and the same cloud that Jesus

will ride upon at His Second Coming (Luke 21:27). Exodus 16:10 tells us that this cloud is the glory of the Lord.

1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

1:10 ***Comments*** **-** We know that the Jews believed that a matter was confirmed in the mouth of two or three witnesses. Therefore, in a court of law, at least two witnesses were needed to prove that a matter was true. This may be the reason why the Lord sent two angels in the appearance of men dressed in white apparel in order to testify of his Second Coming. This is very likely why the Lord sent two angels to the tomb to testify to the disciples of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This may help explain why Peter and John went to the tomb together to verify the resurrection (Luke 24:4). Thus, we see how Luke frequently used two individuals in his writings when testifying of a particular event.

1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

1:11 **"Ye men of Galilee" –** ***Comments*** **-** Why do the angels call this gathering "men of Galilee"? Luke tells us in this passage of Scripture that Jesus had called the apostles together and led them out to the Mount of Olives. We know from the Gospel accounts that most of these eleven apostles were Galileans. Luke then lists them by name in 1:13 of this passage.

1:11 **"shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" -** ***Comments*** **-** Jesus will return on the clouds, as the prophet Daniel said, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like *the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven*, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him." (Dan 7:13) The Day of the Lord will bring Jesus back upon the Mount of Olives, as we read in Zechariah 14:4, "And *his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives*, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

1:12-14 **The Response: The Disciple Return to Jerusalem to Wait for the Coming of the Holy Spirit –** In Acts 1:12-14 the disciples return to Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy Spirit in response and obedience to the command of Jesus Christ after His resurrection (Lk 24:49, Acts 1:4-5).

1:12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

1:12 **"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet" -** ***Comments*** **-** The mount of Olivet is mentioned as far back as King David (2 Sam. 15:30), and through the inter-biblical period (Zec 14:4). John Gill tells us that Jarchi (Rashi), a Jewish scholar, also identifies it as "the hill that is before Jerusalem" (1 Kgs 11:7).[176] This is why Mark describes the location as "over against the Temple" (Mk 13:3). It was named for the olive trees that grew on this hill.

[176]John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament,* vol. 2 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: William W. Woodward, 1817), 12; *The Complete Jewish Bible with Rashi Commentary,* ed. A. J. Rosenberg (New York: The Judaica Press Company, 1963) [on-line]; accessed 13 December 2009; available from http//www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/16445/showrashi/true; Internet, comments on 1 Kings 11:7.

1:12 **"which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey" – *Comments* -** According to Jewish tradition, a Sabbath day's journey was two thousand cubits from any city or town. One place in Scripture used to come up with this distance is Numbers 35:4-5, in which the Mosaic Law defined the boundaries of city suburbs as two thousand cubits. A cubit was considered to be a mid-sized stride.

1:13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

1:13 **"And when they were come in" – *Comments* -** That is, when they entered into Jerusalem.

"they went up into an upper room" – *Comments* – The Greek word ὑπερῷον "upper room" (*BDAG*) is used four times within the New Testament, being found only in the book of Acts (1:13; 9:37, 39; 20:8). The Gospels of Mark and Luke use the Greek word ἀνάγαιον to refer to the upper room used by Jesus and the Twelve for the Last Supper (Mk 14:15, Lk 22:12), while Matthew and John make no reference to describe this room. In contrast, Acts 1:13 uses the word ὑπερῷον to describe its upper room. The upper room mentioned in Acts 1:13 may be the same place where the disciples partook of the Last Supper with the Lord before His Passion. It also may be the room where Jesus appeared to His disciples after the Resurrection (Lk 24:33, 36, Jn 20:19, 26).

"where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James" - *Comments* – The names listed by Luke in Acts 1:13 are identical to that given in Luke 6:13-16, with the exception of some rearrangement of order and the deletion of Judas Iscariot. The four Gospels and Acts are in agreement with the names of Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Matthew (Levi), and James the son of Alphaeus. However, three of the disciples are identified by several names depending upon the preference of the Evangelist. For example, Bartholomew (Matt 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:14, Acts 1:13) is believed to be Nathanael (Jn 1:45-49; 21:2). Simon Zelotes (Lk 6:15, Acts 1:13) is believed to be Simon the Canaanite (Matt 10:4, Mk 3:18).[177] Judas the brother of James (Lk 6:16, Acts 1:13) is believed to be Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus (Matt 10:3, Mk 3:18). Judas Iscariot is not listed in Acts 1:13, preparing the reader for the next section in which the church elects Matthias as his substitute (Acts 1:15-26).

The only disciples in this list that will be mentioned again in the book of Acts are Peter, James, and John. Church history records some biographical material of the other disciples.

1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

1:14 **"with the women" – *Comments* –** Although some believe the women in Acts 1:14 named with the apostles in the upper room refer to the wives of the apostles, most scholars agree that they are the ones who followed Jesus from Galilee and ministered to Him and the disciples. These women are mentioned in Luke 8:2-3, "And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance"; Luke 23:55, "And the women also, which

[177]F. F. Bruce explains that Simon is called both "Zelotes, the Zealot" and "the Canaanite" because these two words are equivalent in Greek-Hebrew-Aramaic: "Greek ζηλωτής, Hebrew *qannā'i*, Aramaic *qan' anā'*." See F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts,* in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament,* ed. Gordon Fee (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 40, Logos.

came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid."

"and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" - *Comments* – In Acts 1:14, Luke gives an honorable recognition to Mary the mother of Jesus and His brothers out of respect. His brothers Joses, Judas, and Simon listed in Mark 6:3 must have abandoned their skepticism of Jesus after His resurrection. Acts 1:14 provides the last mention of Mary the mother of Jesus in New Testament history. However, the brothers of the Lord are mentioned throughout the New Testament (Acts 12:17; 15:13-21; 21:18, 1 Cor 9:5; 15:7, Gal 1:19; 2:9, 12, Jam 1:1, Jude 1:1).

1:15-26 **The Witness of the Calling of the Twelve Disciples (Calling) –** Acts 1:15-26 records the early Church's act of choosing a replacement for Judas Iscariot, revealing how important the calling out of the Twelve were in the preparation for their predestined commission to take the Gospel to the nations. This passage has a setting, a speech, and a response to the speech. The setting is taken from 1:12-14 in which the disciples are gathered in an upper room. Peter stands up in the midst of the disciples and calls for a replacement of the office of Judas Iscariot (1:15-22). The disciples respond by selecting Matthias as the replacement (1:23-26).

Regarding the theme of "divine calling" in this passage, the apostles acknowledge their divine calling to fulfill the commission given to them by Jesus Christ, and their need to honor the number twelve as ordained by their Saviour. Before the apostle went forth to preach the Gospel, they felt compelled to reconfirm their calling by the replacement of Judas Iscariot based upon two prophecies in the book of Psalms. These prophecies confirm the divine calling of the twelve apostles as pillars of the New Testament Church. Peter's quotations of Scripture in this passage indicate that a prophetic element concerning the fulfillment of Jesus' divine commission to take the Gospel to the nations is woven throughout the book of Acts. The casting of lots was the only method of divine selection these early disciples because they had not yet been filled with the Holy Spirit nor did they know His voice. Because Jesus Christ walked in the five-fold ministry, He was qualified to appoint men for the office of the apostle. Upon His departure, the Holy Spirit was poured forth and anointed men and women for particular offices. The five-fold office emerges throughout the recorded history of the book of Acts, and was set in place as a prerequisite for the church to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. For example, the office of the evangelist took the Gospel beyond Jerusalem and Judea, and the offices of the teacher and prophet took part in appointing a new generation of apostles, sending out Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13:1-3. Paul appointed elders and eventually the pastor to oversee the churches he established so that he could journey to Rome. Thus, Acts 1:15-26 emphasizes the calling and appointment of all the offices of the church, not just the replacement of one apostle.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of divine calling in Acts 1:15-26 when the disciples prayed and asked which one the Lord had ἐκλέγομαι "called out, selected" (1:24) to replace Judas Iscariot. The disciples cast lots, which fell upon Matthias, and he was συγκαταψηφίζομαι "chosen together with" the eleven. Thus, the theme of divine calling is reflected in the selecting and choosing of a disciple to replace Judas Iscariot.

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the structure of Acts 1:15-26 as a complete unit of thought, called a pericope. This passage opens with the phrase "Καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις" (and in these days) characteristic of the movement of the plot within narrative material. The plot brings an issue to the forefront and provides a resolution in the selection of Matthias, thus a complete unit of thought. Finally, the next passage also beings with a phrase characteristic of a new movement in the plot by saying, "Καὶ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ἦσαν" (and when the day of Pentecost had come).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 1:15-26 emphasizing the divine calling of the church:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples returned to Jerusalem and selected Matthias to replace the office of Judas Iscariot in fulfillment of Scripture to establish the church so that it could go forth to fulfill its divine calling.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples returned to Jerusalem and selected Matthias to replace the office of Judas Iscariot in fulfillment of Scripture to establish the church so that it could go forth to fulfill its divine calling,* God has called out and appointed believers to the offices of the church to establish it as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Scripture.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has called out and appointed believers to the offices of the church to establish it as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Scripture*, every child of God is called to serve a role in God's plan of redemption as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Scripture.

Here is a proposed outline:

a) The Speech: Peter's Call to Replace Judas Iscariot	1:15-22
b) The Response: The Choosing of Matthias in Fulfillment of Prophecy	1:23-26

1:15-22 **The Speech: Peter's Call to Replace Judas Iscariot –** Acts 1:15-22 records Peter's first speech in the book in which he calls for a replacement for the office of Judas Iscariot based upon biblical prophecy. The setting for this event is supplied in the preceding passage in which the disciples are staying in an upper room in Jerusalem in obedience to Jesus' final command. In his speech, Peter cites from Psalms 69:25 and 109:8 to point out the need to fulfill these prophecies, which refer to the fall of Judas Iscariot and his replacement as one of the Twelve. Thus, the prophetic element is woven throughout the book of Acts.

1:15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

1:15 **"And in those days" - *Comments* –** In Luke 1:15, Luke uses the near demonstrative pronoun οὗτος to refer to the event that immediately precedes this movement in the narrative plot. The phrase "in these days" refers to the ten days when the disciples were waiting in the upper room in strict obedience to Jesus' command. This phrase is used on three occasions in the book of Acts to mark the super-structure of the book (1:15; 6:1; 11:27).

"Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said" – *Comments* – Throughout the book of Acts, the apostles and others stood up to speak having been filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8; 7:55; 13:9; 21:11). In Acts 1:15 Peter stood up to speak; yet he was not yet filled with the Holy Spirit because He had not yet been given unto the Church.

"the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty" – *Comments* – Luke has just listed the names of the apostles, as well as recognizing those devoted women, Mary the mother of Jesus and His brothers (Acts 1:13-14). Luke now says there were many more that could be named, but he restricts his list to a few.

There were five hundred disciples who witnessed the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:6), but only one hundred and twenty of them, about one fourth of the disciples, took His commandment serious to tarry into Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high

(Luke 24:49). This ratio of response of one fourth corresponds to the Parable of the Sower, where only one fourth of the seeds bore fruit.

The numbers of disciples (Acts 1:15) and converts (Acts 2:41; 4:4) are recorded by Luke during the earliest days of the church. These numbers have value if Luke-Acts actually served as a legal brief used to defend the Christian faith in a judicial hearing. The Roman government would be very concerned about agitating a large part of their population and then trying to manage them. Luke seems intent on showing how Christianity is spread throughout the Roman Empire.

1:15 ***Comments*** **-** Jesus told the disciples in Acts 1:4 to "wait," but they were not instructed to elect another disciple. Therefore, scholars debate whether or not Peter's actions at this time were the will of God to choose a twelfth apostle, particularly since the name of Matthias never appears again in Scripture.

Peter and the disciples received the Holy Spirit in John 20:21-23. Therefore, Peter is able to receive the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and stand in their midst to speak out. Never had Peter quoted the Scriptures with the interpretation during Jesus' earthly ministry. Peter seems to be inspired by and led by the Holy Spirit at this point. In other words, Jesus delegated His divine leadership to the Holy Spirit, who would guide them after His Ascension.

Scholars often recognize the speeches in the book of Acts as its keynote feature, suggesting that Luke framed his book around these events. Therefore, if Peter is wrong in standing up and choosing a replacement disciple, then one must ask if any of the other speeches in the book of Acts are also uninspired utterances. No scholars would question the inspiration of any other speech in Acts, so it would be out of character with Luke the author to include Peter's first speech in this book if it were not inspired as well. Every speech in the book of Acts is inspired by God as men are filled with the Holy Spirit and make prophetic utterances. The act of standing up in the midst of a group and addressing them as men and brethren is typical of the opening speeches in Acts. Luke set the literary element of prophetic utterances in place in the opening chapters of the Gospel of Luke; and he is in character to continue it until the closing chapters of the book of Acts. The prophetic office undergirds the apostolic office, and the speeches in the book of Acts are prophetic, guiding the apostles to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

1:16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

1:16 **"Men and brethren" -** ***Comments*** **–** Peter opens his first speech in Acts 1:16 saying, "men and brethren." He opens his speech in Acts 2:14 by addressing those present, "the men of Judaea, and all those dwelling at Jerusalem." Peter opens his speech at Solomon's porch by saying, "men of Israel" (Acts 3:12). He addresses the Sanhedrin by saying, "rulers of the people and elders of Israel" (Acts 4:8). Stephen opens his speech in Acts 7:2 by saying, "brethren and fathers." Peter and James address the elders at the first council in Jerusalem by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 15:7, 13). Paul the apostle also begins his speeches in the same manner. He addresses the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 13:15). He spoke to the Athenians by saying, "men of Athens" (Acts 17:22). He spoke to the angry mob by saying, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." (Acts 22:1) Paul addressed the Sanhedrin by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 23:1).

"this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas" - ***Comments*** **-** In Acts 1:20 Peter quotes from Psalms 69:25 and Psalms 109:8 as a prophetic utterance by David through the anointing of

the Holy Spirit. Prior to this quote, Acts 1:16 reveals that David operated in the prophetic office, which office is the underlying theme of the Luke-Acts. Luke the author continues to refer to prophetic fulfillment throughout the book of Acts since this office will undergird the office of the New Testament apostle throughout the book of Acts. Peter's statement in Acts 1:16-20 is the first time the church interprets the Old Testament in light of the New Testament as Peter speaks under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

"which was guide to them that took Jesus" - *Comments* – Judas Iscariot led or guided the Jewish leaders to Jesus while He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.

1:17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

1:17 ***Comments* –** Judas Iscariot was "numbered" with the twelve disciples that Jesus chose to train. These Twelve are mentioned thirty-one times in the Gospels and Acts (Matt 8, Mk 10, Lk 8, Jn 4, Acts 1). The number "twelve" was significant in biblical prophecy.

1:18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

1:18 **"Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity" - *Comments* –** In Acts 1:18, Luke says Judas Iscariot purchased a piece of land with his reward month. In contrast, Matthew 27:3-7 says the priests purchased the field with the money Judas threw on the ground. Perhaps it is best to understand that the priests purchased this land "in his name" in an attempt to disassociate themselves with this money.

"and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out" - *Comments* - Acts 1:18-19 records the gruesome story of Judas Iscariot's death by falling headlong and his bowels bursting. Matthew 27:3-10 offers a parallel account of his death, which says he hanged himself. Scholars have some difficulty in reconciling these two different accounts of his death.

The traditional view attempts to combine the two stories to say that Judas Iscariot fell from the place that he hung himself. The rope may have broken, and burst open his bowels upon some rock or protruding object. This view appears to have originated in the Old Latin editions of the New Testament. For example, Bruce Metzger says Augustine's quotation of Acts 1:18 comes from an Old Latin version of North Africa. This version of Acts 1:18 mentions the hanging of Judas, saying, "*he bound himself around the neck* and, having fallen on his face, burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." (Augustine, *de Actis cum Felice Manichaeo* 1.4) (*PL*42 col. 522)[178] This version either reflects an attempt to reconcile the two accounts or its reveals the original Greek text of Acts 1:18. Friedrich Blass and Albert Clark favor this text of Augustine in their critical works on the Greek text of the book of Acts.[179] Jerome follows this reading in the Latin Vulgate as he translates the Greek phrase πρηνὴς γενόμενος "falling headlong" as "being hanged," saying, "*And he indeed hath possessed a field of the reward of iniquity, and being hanged, burst asunder in the midst: and all his bowels gushed out*." (*Douay-Rheims*) Thus, Bruce Metzger says, "The

[178]Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, second edition, a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th rev. ed.)* (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 247.

[179]Fridericus Blass, *Acta Apostolorum sive Lucae ad Theophilum Liber Alter* (Lipsiae, Aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1896), 3; Albert C. Clark, *The Acts of the Apostles, a Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes on Selected Passages* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933), 5.

Latin versions [of Acts 1:18] attempt to harmonize the account in Acts with the statement in Matthew that Judas 'went out and hanged himself' (Mt 27:5)."[180]

Metzger mentions a second ancient tradition that attempts to harmonize these two texts with a translation of "being swollen up" instead of "falling headlong." He cites the ancient the Armenian and the Old Gregorian versions as evidence of translating the Greek word πρηνής as "swollen" rather than "prone."

There are also modern views that attempt to harmonize these two texts. For example, some suggest Judas Iscariot may have died of a suffocating disease that also ruptured his body rather than being hanged. John Lightfoot stretches his imagination somewhat to say, "the devil, immediately after Judas had cast back his money into the temple, caught him up into the air, strangled him, threw him headlong, and dashed him in pieces upon the ground."[181]

Darrell Bock notes that Matthew's account attempts to describe this story within the context of the fulfillment of Zechariah 11:12-13, in which the price of this betrayal was used to purchase the potter's field. In contrast, Luke's account attempts to portray divine judgment, a motif woven throughout the book of Acts. Bock cites other passages in which a gruesome death denotes divine judgment (2 Sam 20:10, Acts 12:20-23).[182]

Matthew understood that the purchase of this field was a prophetic fulfillment in the Passion of Jesus Christ because he refers to it as a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy. Most of the phrases come from Zechariah 11:12-13, "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD." However, Jeremiah 18:1-11 carries a similar motif that Luke may have drawn from to make his statement.

1:19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

1:19 ***Comments –*** The Greek word διάλεκτος means, "a language" (*BDAG*). *Strong* says this word comes from the Greek verb (διαλέγομαι), which means, "to say thoroughly, i.e. discuss." The word διάλεκτος is used six times in the New Testament, being limited to the book of Acts. The Greek text literally reads, "in their own language," that is, "in their own native tongue."

The Greek word Ἀκελδαμάχ "Akeldama" is Aramaic for (חֲקַל דְּמָא) (field of blood).

1:18-19 ***Comments –*** Scholars generally agree that Acts 1:18-19 is a digression inserted by Luke to explain the divine judgment that fell upon Judas Iscariot. The literary evidence for this view is the fact that Luke translates the word "Aceldama" for his readers, something Peter would not have done in his speech.

---

[180]Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, second edition, a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th rev. ed.)* (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 247.

[181]John Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae: Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations Upon the Gospels, the Acts, Some Chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans and the First Epistle to the Corinthians,* vol. 4, ed. Robert Gandell (Oxford: The University Press, 1859), 18.

[182]Darrell Bock says, "Matthew sees in this a fulfillment of Zech. 11:13. . . Luke is interested in the event simply as a judgment." See Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 83-84, Logos.

The fact that the body of Judas Iscariot was not removed from the tree in which he hanged himself adds to the imagery of divine judgment in Luke's account. Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 21:22-23, "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." The fact that he hung on the tree so long may have led the Sanhedrin to consider this plot of land defined, and thus, they named it "the field of blood" as a warning to anyone who wished to acquire it. This would explain why the Jews used this plot to bury foreigners (Matt 27:7) rather than attempt to develop it for a productive purpose. They would have viewed this ground as cursed and unfit for anything productive. Such a concept was not far from the first-century Jewish mindset, for Paul quotes Deuteronomy 21:23 in his epistle to the Galatians, saying, " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" (Gal 3:13).

Scripture References - Mark's Gospel records the woe that Jesus prophesied over Judas, saying, "The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born." (Mk 14:21)

1:20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

1:20 **"For it is written in the book of Psalms" - *Comments* –** Peter cites the two Old Testament prophecies concerning Judas Iscariot, one concerning the land he acquired, and other concerning his office as an apostle.

1:20 **"Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein" - *Comments* –** The apostle Peter first quotes from Psalms 69:25, "Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents."

1:20 **"his bishoprick let another take" - *Comments* –** The apostle Peter also quotes from Psalm 109:8, "Let his days be few; and let another take his office."

The Greek word ἐπισκοπή is derived from the preposition ἐπί (upon, near) and the noun σκοπός (a watch) or the verb σκοπέω (to pay close attention to). Thus, ἐπισκοπή literally means, "to watch over carefully, to oversee." This word is used for the first time in the LXX, being found only once in secular Greek literature (TDNT). It carries the literal sense of "a visitation," and thus, "oversight" throughout the LXX. However, in two instances this word renders the meaning of the responsibilities of an office (Num 4:16, Ps 109:8) (TDNT). This word is found four times in the New Testament to describe the visitation of the Lord (Lk 19:44, 1 Pet 2:12) and the office of a ministry in church leadership (Acts 1:20, 1 Tim 3:1).

1:21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

1:22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

1:21-22 ***Comments – The Qualifications of Apostleship* -** Why would this become a qualification for apostleship? They wanted someone who had been with them from the beginning, who was an eye-witness of the accounts in which he was testifying as an apostle. Luke opened his Gospel with a statement that he had gathered eye-witness accounts of Jesus' life and ministry. Such eye-witness accounts are the most credible testimonies.

I remember the early days of moving to Texas to go to seminary. Those first few people I met held a special relationship with me throughout those seminary years. Some of us started out together, and some finished together. This builds a bond that lasts a lifetime. This seems to be a natural part of our make-up. So it was in the early ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those early disciples developed a special bond that would last a lifetime, just as is developed with schoolmates.

1:23-26 **The Response: The Choosing of Matthias in Fulfillment of Prophecy –** Acts 1:23-26 records the disciples' response to Peter's prophetic speech in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the appointment of Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot in the office of an apostle. These verses testify of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem. It also testifies of the fulfillment of a secondary prophecy exclusive to Acts 1:12-26 in which the early disciples elected a replacement for Judas Iscariot in fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

1:23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

1:24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

1:26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

1:26 **"And they gave forth their lots" - *Comments* –** The casting of lots to determine God's ways was embedded in the Mosaic Law and it was practiced by pagans (Jonah 1:7, Matt 27:35). It was practiced by Aaron as the high priest (Lev 16:8) in the form of the Urim and the Thummim, and Joshua used this method to parcel the Promised Land to the twelve tribes of Israel (Josh 18:6-10). It continued as a practice throughout Israel's history. We see the divine providence in casting lots in Proverbs 16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD." Therefore, the early apostles relied upon lots to determine God's will immediately after the ascension of Jesus Christ.

Lloyd Ogilvie notes that the disciples would have inscribed the names of these two candidates upon a stone or piece of wood, shaken them in a container, then cast them out.[183] This is the last recorded time in the Holy Scriptures when the righteous Jews, those serving the Lord, would cast lots to determine God's will. The dispensation of the Law was now ended. The disciples were about to be filled with the Holy Spirit in a few days, and would then realize that the office and ministry of the Holy Spirit was lead and guide the Church. God is often patient with our ignorance as we are learning. Had Peter and the apostles insisted on casting lots after Pentecost, the Lord would have corrected them in some way. In Acts 6:1-7 the early Church chose the first seven deacons, not by casting lots, but by looking out for men who were "of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" (Acts 6:3).

"and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles" – *Comments* - There is no record that this decision to cast lots actually benefited the church. Matthias is mentioned indirectly as a part of the Twelve in Acts 6:2, "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the

[183]Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *Acts,* in *The Preacher's Commentary,* vol. 28, ed. Lloyd J. Ogilvie (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), 50, Logos.

word of God, and serve tables." Otherwise, Matthias' name is not mentioned anymore in the Scriptures.

Many scholars believe that the book of Acts is structured so as to show that Paul the apostle was indeed the twelfth apostle. The fact that Acts opens with this story and focuses on the ministry of Paul the apostle from 13-28 implies that Luke sets a basis for why Paul was the twelfth apostle.

It is interesting to note that in the heavenly Jerusalem, there are twelve foundations, each one with the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, as we read in Revelation 21:14, "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Whose name is written as the twelfth? We may have to wait until we get to heaven to find out?

The Church's Power
(Preaching the Gospel with Miracles, Signs, and Wonders)

The distinctive feature of church development in Acts 2:1-5:42 is an emphasis upon the anointing of the apostles with the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel accompanied with miracles, signs, and wonders. The early church was twice filled with the Holy Spirit while assembled (2:14; 4:31). Peter heals the lame man at the Gate Beautiful (3:1-10). Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit when addressing the Sanhedrin (4:8). The apostles testified with great power (4:33) and performed many signs and wonders (5:12-16). Peter brought divine judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11). Peter is miraculously delivered from prison (5:17-20).

2:1-5:42 **The Witness of Church Growth in Jerusalem (Justification) –** Acts 2:1-5:42 testifies of the birth and growth of the Church in Jerusalem through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, reflecting the justification for those who accept the Gospel. This section of the book of Acts records the primary sermon preached by the apostle Peter that launches the preaching of the Gospel in Jerusalem, followed by the testimony of several key events that lead to the spread of the Gospel through the city. Therefore, Acts 2:1-5:42 serves as the testimony of the spread of the Gospel to Jerusalem in obedience to Jesus' commission to the church in Acts 1:8.

This narrative section opens with the setting of the Day of Pentecost (2:1-4), followed by Peter's sermon. He then heals the lame man, occasioning his sermon in the Temple. The plot develops with a conflict between the apostles and the Jewish Sanhedrin. The climax is reached when Peter and John are miraculously delivered from prison (5:12-26), evidence that God was with the early Church to vindicate them amidst persecutions and injustice. The resolution is reached as the apostles endure the warnings and beatings of the Sanhedrin with joy. This section ends with a statement that the apostles freely taught and preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem (5:41-42).

The motif of persecutions against the Church is woven throughout the book of Acts. The apostles begin to minister in power that brings many others to salvation while their faith is tested by persecutions (3:1-4:31). This passage will be followed by the testimony of church growth in Jerusalem through signs and wonders, followed by persecutions (4:32-5:42). In the midst of signs and wonders and persecution, genuine believers stand out more distinctly among those who are false.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of justification in Acts 2:1-5:42. This passage supports the theme of the justification of the early Church as a multitude of souls in Jerusalem believed in the Gospel and continued in the teachings of the apostles. The Greek word σῴζω is used four times in this section of Acts in relation to the salvation of souls (2:21, 40, 47; 4:12).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:1-5:42 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit and preached the Gospel with signs following as God authenticated the church to those in Jerusalem in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit and preached the Gospel with signs following as God authenticated the church to those in Jerusalem in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has authenticated the church with the baptism of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church with the baptism of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by preaching the Gospel with signs following through the baptism of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

a) The Greater Setting: The Day of Pentecost	2:1-4
b) Peter's First Sermon on Day of Pentecost	2:5-41
c) The Spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem	2:42-5:41
d) Conclusion: Church Growth in Jerusalem	5:42

2:1-4 **The Greater Setting: The Day of Pentecost –** The section on the witness of the birth of the Church in Jerusalem opens with 2:1-4, which gives the greater setting for the spread of the Gospel beginning on the Day of Pentecost.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:1-4 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The Holy Spirit was sent from Heaven to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit was sent from Heaven to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His Spirit to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has sent forth His Spirit to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should be authenticated through the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to testify of the Gospel in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

The Outpouring of the Spirit – It is important to note that the Holy Spirit filled the house before it filled the people. This first congregation of believers was gathered in an attitude of prayer and waiting upon the Lord. It was this receptive attitude that opened the windows of Heaven for the Holy Spirit to come. However, it was in the presence of the Lord, under the anointing, that people received from God. This principle still happens today and has continued over the past two thousand years of Church history. Each time God's people gather with an attitude of prayer and a receptive heart, God visits by pouring out His Spirit

and working miracles and filling them afresh with the Holy Ghost. This is what Paul was referring to when he said, "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal 3:5)

The Holy Spirit's Role in the Creation Story and in the Establishment of the New Testament Church - As the physical world was created by the hovering of the Holy Spirit over the earth, so was the spiritual church birthed out of the same Holy Spirit coming upon God's people.

The Holy Spirit Dwells within Us and He Comes upon Us - Benny Hinn refers to John 20:22 to explain that when Jesus breathed upon His disciples, they received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the same way that every new believer receives the Holy Spirit to live inside them eternally. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon them and anointed them for a season. Hinn explains that the Spirit comes upon us and anoints us for a season and for a reason in order to accomplish a special task, while the Holy Spirit also lives inside us forever; that is, He never departs. We see the Holy Spirit coming upon many people under the Old Covenant for a season to empower them for a particular task. This will continue under the New Covenant. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit did not take place under the Old Covenant; for man's sins had not been paid and man's spirit could not yet be born from above. However, under the New Covenant the Spirit lives in us and communicates with us the Father's will for our daily lives. He is in us to comfort us, guide us and intercede through us.[184]

2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2:1 **"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come" – *Comments* –** The Greek phrase "Καὶ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς" is a Lucan formula marking a major division in the super-structure of the book of Acts. The Greek word πεντηκοστή "Pentecost" means, "fiftieth" (*Strong, BDAG*), since this Jewish festival is counted fifty days from the Passover (Deut 16:1-10). This important feast was also called the Feast of Weeks, or the Feast of Firstfruits (Ex 34:22). This word is found three times in the New Testament, with Acts 2:1 containing the first usage of the term "Pentecost" in the Scriptures (Acts 2:1; 20:16, 1 Cor 16:8), and its Hebrew equivalent is not used at all in the Old Testament.

In Acts 2:1, Luke does not say, "on the day of Pentecost," but rather, "and when the day of Pentecost was fully come," in a way that reflects a prophecy leading up to this day. *BDAG* says the Greek word συμπληρόω means, "to fulfill, to approach, to come" in relation to time. This Pentecost was a day of prophetic fulfillment, as Peter declares in his sermon in Acts 2:16, "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel . . ." Luke uses the same formula in Luke 9:51, "Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήμψεως" to describe the prophetic event of Jesus' passion and resurrection. Throughout the book of Acts, the prophetic element undergirds the apostolic office.

Alfred Edersheim explains that the Jews viewed the Feast of Weeks as the celebration of the giving of the Law. They believed Moses gave the Law to Israel fifty days after the first Passover, so that this feast became "the anniversary of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai." Edersheim says while the Passover, which occurred fifty days earlier, celebrated Jewish deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the Feast of Weeks completed this period of remembrance and celebration, with the day of Pentecost serving as a conclusion to this festive time on the Jewish calendar. Thus, the phrase "and when the day of Pentecost was fully come" reflects upon the fifty days leading up to Pentecost. In a symbolic way,

[184]Benny Hinn, *This is Your Day* (Irving, Texas), on Trinity Broadcasting Network (Santa Ana, California), television program.

Edersheim suggests the sacrifice of Jesus as the Passover Lamb finds its fulfillment in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, since Pentecost was the conclusion of a lengthy festive season.[185] If we follow this analogy of Pentecost being "the anniversary of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai," then the passages in Hebrews 8:10 come to mind of the Lord saying, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." (Jer 31:33, Heb 8:10; 10:16) When the church was filled with the Holy Spirit, the laws of God were placed within each believer rather than the written Mosaic Law.

Jesus arose on the third day after Passover, and He spent forty days with His disciples after His resurrection (Acts 1:3) before His ascension. He then told His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until the day of Pentecost (Luke 24:49). Therefore, the disciples waited about one week in Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost.

The church was born on the Day of Pentecost, and it received the gift of the Holy Spirit. This event was a type of firstfruits of the heavenly things to come. Thus, the Feast of Firstfruits has a spiritual meaning as it symbolizes the firstfruits of the Kingdom of God. In fact, the gift of the Holy Spirit is called "the firstfruits of the Spirit" (Rom 8:23).

2:1 **"they were all with one accord in one place" – *Comments* -** As such gatherings after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the disciples had been visited by Him on a number of occasions. They were probably gathered in the upper room anticipating some sort of divine visitation again, while not knowing the time or place.

2:1 ***Comments* -** One might ask, "Why did the disciples have to wait ten days before receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Could not God have poured forth His Spirit on the first day of His ascension?" Someone might answer that God was waiting for the Feast Day of Pentecost. However, the answer is deeper than this. We read by Sadhu Sundar Singh that God waited so that these men's hearts would be better prepared and receptive to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

> "To pray does not imply that without prayer God would not give us anything or that He would be unaware of our needs, but it has this great advantage, that in the attitude of prayer the soul is best fitted to receive the Giver of blessing as well as those blessings He desires to bestow. Thus it was that the fullness of the Spirit was not poured out upon the Apostles on the first day, but after ten days of special preparation. If a blessing were conferred upon one without a special readiness for it, he would neither value it sufficiently nor long retain it. For instance, because Saul obtained the Holy Spirit and the kingship without seeking for them he very soon lost them both, for he had set out from home not to obtain the Holy Spirit but to look for his lost asses (1 Sam. ix.3; x.11; v.13-14; xxxi.4)."[186]

2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

2:2 **"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind" - *Comments* –** The wind is a physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Hebrew word (רוּחַ) is translated in the LXX as πνεῦμα, and means both "wind" and "spirit."

"and it filled all the house where they were sitting" - ***Comments* -** The pronoun "it" refers to the sound. That is, the sound of this "wind" from heaven filled the house.

---

[185]Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services as they were at the Time of Jesus Christ* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1908), 260-61.

[186]Sadhu Sundar Singh, *At the Master's Feet*, translated by Arthur Parker (London: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1922), 46.

2:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

2:3 ***Comments –*** A physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit appeared (ὁράω) to everyone present in the upper room. Such visions are characteristic of Luke-Acts (Lk 1:11-20, 26-38; 24:34, Acts 1:9-11; 2:2-3; 7:55-56; 9:3-8; 10:3-7, 9-16; 16:9). Luke often associates these visions with divine oracles.

The Greek word διαμερίζω means, "divided, separated" (*BDAG*). John Polhill describes this manifestation as "lapping flames that had the visible likeness of tongues." He and others suggest this vision appeared as "one great flame representing the Spirit" as it divided or separated into many smaller flames that rested upon each individual.[187] Darrell Bock describes this division in a similar statement, saying, "The distribution of these tongues among the believers is compared to a spreading fire, which divided up into bits of flame for each person."[188] John Polhill says the phrase "divided tongues as fire" means that these flames of fire "seemed to be tongues."[189] Thus, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the gift of tongues was intended for everyone there in the upper room, and it is available for every believer today. Unfortunately, many believers deny tongues as a separate experience after salvation simply because they have been taught in this manner and therefore they have never received the gift of tongues.

Scholars generally agree that the manifestation of fire in this passage represents the present of God, as does many other passages in the Scriptures. Mikeal Parsons suggests Luke's account "echoes" Old Testament theophanies. There are numerous passages in which Moses saw a flame of fire (Ex 3:2-5), where the people saw thunder and lightning (Ex 19:16) and fire (Ex 19:16; 24:17), the shaking of the earth (Judg 5:4-5) and various physical manifestations of the presence of the Lord (Ps 18:7-15; 29:3-9).[190] Thus, the fire that rested upon them may have been similar to the pillar of fire that went before the children of Israel and rested upon the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex 13:21; 40:38).

Perhaps the fire symbolizes the covenant that the Lord was making with His church. We see this fire in the covenant that the Lord cut with Abraham in Genesis 15:17, "And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." This fire from heaven is seen in the Old Testament at the Lord consumed men's sacrifices: 1 Kings 18:38, "Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." 1 Chronicles 21:26, "And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering." 2 Chronicles 7:1, "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house."

2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

---

[187]John B. Polhill, *Acts,* in *The New American Commentary,* vol. 26, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992), 98, Logos.

[188]Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 97, Logos.

[189]John B. Polhill, *Acts,* in *The New American Commentary,* vol. 26, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992), 98, Logos.

[190]Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, in *Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 37.

2:4 ***Comments –*** The prophet Isaiah predicted the New Testament event of being filled with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues when he said, "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people." (Is 28:11) In this passage (Is 28:1-13), Isaiah condemns the drunkards and promises a "crown of glory" and a "spirit of judgment" for the remnant of His people. Thus, the context of this passage supports the concept of the Day of Pentecost in which the remnant of Israel is filled with the Spirit and declaring God's Word.

The Greek word ἀποφθέγγομαι means, "to speak out, declare" (*BDAG*). Luke uses this word three times in the book of Acts (2:4, 14; 26:25), and this word is found nowhere else in the New Testament. Its first use describes the disciples as they speak in tongues when filled with the Holy Spirit (2:4). However, its other two uses describe speeches by Peter (2:14) and Paul (26:25) as they spoke revelatory messages in their own languages. The statement, "as the Spirit gave them utterance" foreshadows the "speech" motif woven throughout the book of Acts. The primary speeches recorded in this book are delivered under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In the phrase "and they began to speak with other tongues," we must note that the Holy Spirit gives us the utterance; however, as with the early disciples, we have to take the initiative and speak fourth in this new language. The phrase "other tongues" is unique to the book of Acts, being found only in 1 Corinthians 14:21 as a fulfillment of Isa 28:11-12. Luke records the occurred of tongues in the rest of his book as simply speaking "in tongues" without qualifying them as "other tongues." Perhaps Luke uses the phrase "other tongues" on this first occasion because Jews from throughout the Roman Empire were gathered in Jerusalem on this Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:6). Thus, the disciples began to speak in these "other" native tongues as a testimony of the Gospel. These other tongues of men brought the Jews together in a crowd so that the apostle Peter could preach the Gospel and launch the apostolic ministry of the New Testament Church.

2:5-41 **Peter's First Sermon on the Day of Pentecost -** Acts 2:5-41 records Peter's first sermon delivered on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem as the disciples testified of the Lord Jesus under the power of the Holy Spirit after their infilling. This event resulted in the salvation of three thousand souls, marking the birth of the New Testament Church. Therefore, the underlying theme of this narrative section is the justification of the Church through the testimony of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This narrative section begins with the gathering of Jews as a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the disciples speak in their native languages (2:5-13). This event gives Peter the occasion to preach his first sermon on the Day of Pentecost (2:14-36), which reaches its climax when Peter calls the multitudes who had visited Jerusalem to repentance (2:37-41). Thus, the early church is born in Jerusalem.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:5-41 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

> Exegetical Idea – Peter boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus was both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures, authenticating the church and adding three thousand souls to it as a fulfillment of the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Peter boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus was both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures, authenticating the church and adding three thousand souls to it as a fulfillment of the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has authenticated the church through the preaching of Jesus as both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church through the preaching of Jesus as both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Occasion: The Gathering of the Jews	2:5-13
(2) Peter's Sermon	2:14-36
(3) Conclusion: The Response of the Jews	2:37-41

A Promise, a Prayer, and the Power – In the first two chapters of the book of Acts, we see that there was a promise (1:8), followed by prayer (1:14), then the power was released (2:1-4). We must be people of prayer in order to receive God's power, even though it is promised to us.

Old Testament References Used by Peter the Apostle – In the first two chapters of the book of Acts, Peter the apostle quotes from various Old Testament passages in relation to the fulfillment of prophecy. Perhaps Jesus had taught His disciples using these same passages during His 40-day visit after the Resurrection. This would explain Peter's insight into otherwise difficult interpretations. Or, Peter was speaking by the Holy Spirit, giving him the interpretation.

The Gift of Tongues on the Day of Pentecost - Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:11-22 that the Father's divine plan in redemption is to break down the dividing walls among nations in order to build a habitation for God to dwell among His people. Thus, He is trying to bring unity back to the people on the earth. The first time God poured out His Spirit at the Tower of Babel in order to divide the peoples into seventy nations. The second time was the day of Pentecost and it was intended to bring all nations back into one group making peace.

In Genesis 11:1-9 the gift of tongues was intended to divide the people into nations. In contrast, the gift of tongues that was poured out on the day of Pentecost was intended to unite all people into one new man in Christ Jesus. This is why the Jews of the Diaspora clearly understood them speaking in their own language in order for them to hear the Gospel and become one in Christ Jesus.

2:5-13 **The Occasion: The Gathering of the Jews –** Acts 2:5-13 records the occasion of Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost as the Jews gathered to witness the manifestations of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

2:5 ***Comments -*** The devout attribute of these Jews was testified by the fact that they had traveled from afar as pilgrims to this holy convocation in Jerusalem. In God's divine providence, He chose this Day of Pentecost when Jews had gathered from many nations. The phrase "out of every nation under heaven" seems to echo Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8 for the church to become witnesses unto *the ends of the earth*.

2:6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

2:6 **"Now when this was noised abroad" -** ***Comments -*** There are two possible translations of the phrase "Now when this was noised abroad." This phrase could mean, "widely reported." This translation means that witnesses went and told the multitude about this experience, thus

drawing a crowd: "and when this sound came to their ears" (*BBE*,), "but the rumour of this having spread" (*Darby*), "now when this was noised abroad" (*KJV*), "and the rumour of this having come" (*YLT*).

An alternative meaning suggests that the crowds gathered together because they heard an unfamiliar sound: "when this sound occurred," (*NASB*), "and when this sound was heard" (*ASV, HNV*). This translation shows that many people came to find out the source of the sound because they heard a loud noise themselves. That is, no one reported the happening to them.

2:6 **"the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language" –** ***Comments*** **-** Ten days before the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost, Jesus had given the disciples His commission to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The fact that these disciples spoke in the native tongues of the people who were present served as a further testimony that God was preparing them for this great missionary task. Many of those who heard these messages in tongues in their own languages took this testimony back to their homeland and synagogues. It is possible the church in Rome was started by some of these Jews who were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

2:7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

2:7 ***Comments –*** Of the one hundred and twenty believers assembled in the upper room, probably not all were Galileans, but the majority. In fact, this group has probably been stereotyped as a movement originating out of Galilee following Jesus of Nazareth from Galilee.

2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

2:9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

2:10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

2:11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

2:8-11 ***Comments - The Jews of the Diaspora –*** In Luke 2:8-11, Luke provides a long list of nations as a reflection of the underlying theme of Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8 in that the church was to be a witness in all of these nations. This list of nations shows us that the Jews of the Diaspora were located primarily in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, being as far east as modern day Iran. We also know that there were a few Jews as far west as Rome. The "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia" are nations located east of Jerusalem. These nations were the descendants of Shem, the son of Noah. The nations of "Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia" are located towards the north and west of Palestine, and represent the descendants of Japheth. Those nations of "Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene" are located in North Africa, and represent the descendants of Ham.

Comments – The Speech of Those Filled with the Holy Spirit – When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we begin to speak God's Word. We abandon the natural course that our physical eyes see and our mind understands in this world, and our spirit begins to guide us into a different course through our tongue. We launch out onto a spiritual journey that only our spirits can perceived, a journey that coincides with God's purpose and plan of redemption for mankind. Thus, those believers in the upper room who were filled with the

Spirit of God began to speak supernaturally in the spirit realm regarding the things of God to those Jews who were visiting Jerusalem.

2:12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

2:13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

2:12-13 ***Comments -*** This event confounded the wise, as the apostle Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 1:27, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." Some with a soft heart were trying to understand the significance of this event on the Day of Pentecost. Others with a hardened heart began to scoff the present-day office and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

2:14-36 **Peter's Sermon –** Acts 2:14-36 records Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. In this sermon, Peter delivers an apostolic charge to the people in Jerusalem by preaching Jesus (Acts 2:22-36) just as Philip preached Jesus in Acts 8:5. Peter emphasized the resurrection as proof that Jesus Christ was indeed the Jewish Messiah. This made the hearers a candidate for salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Peter takes his first text from Joel 2:28-32 and provides its interpretation in light of the work of redemption on Calvary (2:14-21). He then declares Jesus' death and resurrection (2:22-32) as a prophetic fulfillment from the book of Psalms. He also declares the ascension and exaltation of Jesus (2:33-36) as a fulfillment of Psalms. Because Peter used no hand-held bible similar to those used in the pulpit today, Peter was preaching prophetically under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Prophecy of Joel Concerning the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit	2:14-21
(b) The Prophecy of David Concerning the Death/Resurrection of Jesus	2:22-32
(c) The Prophecy of David Concerning the Ascension/Exaltation of Jesus	2:33-36

Paul's Revelation of the Believer's Identify with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ - Paul the apostle received the revelation of our identity with Christ's resurrection (note Rom 6:6-12, 2 Cor 5:14-17, Gal 2:20, Col 3:3). The Lord gave Paul the work of putting the doctrines of the New Testament church into writing. Man's faith in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the milk of the Word of God; but man's faith in our identification with Christ's resurrection is the meat of God's Word.

Peter's Use of the Old Testament in the New - We ask the question of how Peter quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures so extensively during his sermon on Pentecost. He certainly had no bible as we do today. These early disciples may have obtained a copy of some Old Testament books in the form of scrolls, and read them in the upper room. Most likely, Peter was quoting these passages by memory under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

2:14-21 **The Prophecy of Joel Concerning the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit –** In Acts 2:14-21 Peter begins his sermon with a text from Joel 2:28-32 concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We must keep in mind that there were no books of the New Testament written for almost twenty years, so the early believers preached Christ Jesus from the Old Testament Scriptures. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a sign that gave Peter this opportunity to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

2:14 ***Comments – Comments –*** As he stood up on the Day of Pentecost, the tongues ceased as Peter began speak to the crowd in a common language, most likely Aramaic. Peter opens each of his speeches in the book of Acts with a common greeting. Peter opens his first speech in Acts 1:16 saying, "men and brethren." He opened his speech in Acts 2:14 by addressing those present, saying, "the men of Judaea, and all those dwelling at Jerusalem." Peter opens his speech at Solomon's porch by saying, "men of Israel" (Acts 3:12). He addresses the Sanhedrin by saying, "rulers of the people and elders of Israel" (Acts 4:8). Stephen opens his speech in Acts 7:2 by saying, "brethren and fathers." Peter and James address the elders at the first council in Jerusalem by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 15:7, 13). Paul the apostle also begins his speeches in the same manner. He addresses the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 13:15). He spoke to the Athenians by saying, "men of Athens" (Acts 17:22). He spoke to the angry mob by saying, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." (Acts 22:1) Paul addressed the Sanhedrin by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 23:1). Evidently, this was the customary way to begin a speech that Peter most likely heard in the synagogues he attended.

2:15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

2:15 ***Comments -*** The third hour of the day would be 9:00 a.m. in the morning, since the ancient Jews began their day at 6:00 a.m.[191]

2:16-21 ***Comments -*** Acts 2:16-21 is a quote from Joel 2:28-32, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."

Note the word "afterward" in Joel 2:28. What event is Joel referring to that will take place before the out of the Holy Spirit? God will pour out His Spirit after we blow the trumpet to warn God's people (Joel 2:1) and after God's people turn their hearts in repentance (Joel 2:12-13), and fast (Joel 2:15) and pray (Joel 2:17). If God's people will meet His conditions, they will receive the outpouring of His Spirit. If fact, these are the conditions that the one hundred and twenty disciples in the upper room had met in order to qualify for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

2:16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

2:17 **"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" -** ***Comments –*** The phrase "the last days" is used five times in the New Testament (Acts 2:17, 2 Tim 3:1, Heb 1:2, Jam

[191] Alfred Edersheim says, "It is noteworthy that in Genesis 1 we always read, 'And the evening and the morning were the first day,' or second, or third day, etc. Hence the Jews calculate the day from evening to evening, that is, from the first appearance of the stars in the evening to the first appearance of stars next evening, and not, as we do, from midnight to midnight." See Alfred Edersheim, *The Bible History Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, c1876-1887, 1984) 19.

5:3, 2 Pet 3:3). This period begins on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit is poured forth upon the Church. Others say the Last Days began with the First Coming of Christ, describing it as the Messianic Age confirmed by the resurrection and ascention of Christ Jesus, understood in the phrases "the time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15), "the fullness of time" (Gal 4:4), and "but was manifest in these last times" (1 Pet 1:20). This is the age of God's fulfillment of His promise of hope and eternal rest for His people. The Last Days is reflected in the phrases "these last times/this last time" (1 Tim 4:11 Pet 1:20, 1 John 2:18, Jude 1:18) and "the end(s) of the world" (1 Cor 10:11, Heb 9:26). The apostle Peter explains that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day (2 Pet 3:8). Thus, the word "days" used in this verse can refer to several thousand-year periods. Since the days of the early apostles until the Second Coming of Christ, a period of two thousand years will has elapsed.

We must ask the question of why this phrase describes the two-thousand year dispensation of the New Testament Church. Perhaps the answer is that this is the last age of man's mortality in God's plan of redemption. In other words, as the sound of the last trumpet call from Heaven, as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ descends from the clouds, and the saints of God are raptured to be with Him forever, the Church partakes of immortality. We are no longer bound by time; it no longer limits our lives. Thus, the phrase "last days" probably refers to the last dispensation in which time and mortality bind God's servants.

The fulfillment of Joel's prophecy as Peter declares in Acts 2:16-21 is demonstrated throughout the book of Acts as believers speak in tongues (2:4; 19:6), which is prophetic utterances in other languages, and as they prophesied (19:6) and as they gave prophecies to exhort one another (9:10-18; 13:2; 21:11). Thus, Joel's prophecy is not limited to those who operate in the office of a New Testament prophet, but to every believer who speaks in tongues and prophesies.

"and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" - ***Comments*** **-** God gives man direction through visions. We see believers receiving divine visions throughout the book of Acts. For example, God directed Ananias go to Paul (Acts 9:10-11). At the same time, the Lord gave Paul a vision of Ananias coming to him and praying for him to receive his sight (Acts 9:12). Through a vision, the Lord directed Cornelius to send for Simon Peter (Acts 10:3); and the Lord directed Peter to go preach to Cornelius (Acts 10:17). The Lord directed Paul to go into Macedonia (Acts 16:9). Paul received visions throughout his public ministry (2 Cor 12:1). All of these people who received divine visions were seekers of God. Therefore, God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb 11:6).

Proverbs 25:2-3 tells us that God directs nations by giving vision and direction to kings, saying, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable." Such level of revelation for nations is not made for the common man. The reason for this divine inspiration is that God has allowed the king to gain access to unreachable revelation in order to direct his kingdom alone the course of its times and seasons. For example, King Solomon had learned that his righteous decrees came by divine inspiration. We read in Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." Thus, God directs the nations of the earth by directing its leaders. One good example of this is when King Cyrus sent the Jews back to Jerusalem from their Captivity by divine inspiration (2 Chron 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-11, Is 44:28; 45:1). The natural man has no access to the divine ways of God; for they belong to those appointed by God for the purpose of guiding the destinies of a people.

However, we should ask, "What about the promise on the Day of Pentecost when the apostle Peter quotes from the prophet Joel that "your young men shall see visions, and your

old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:16-18). The answer is that every child of God in the new covenant now is able to have divine visions and dream. However, God gives these dreams and vision to His servants to understand event within their domain of influence and leadership. He does not give every believer the visions that He gives to pastors and those in the five-fold ministry. For example, if a father is the head of his family, he can ask God for guidance over domestic issues and receive divine insight and revelation. I once asked the Lord about my daughter away in college, saying, "What if she does not do what I say?" The Lord spoke to my heart and said, "Then turn her over to Me." If I had ask this question about someone else's family, the Lord would not have given me a divine word because that family is not under my dominion of divine authority. This is why God give leaders revelations and visions on a different level than He does to the average Christian.

2:17 ***Comments –*** One must ask the question of why Joel's prophecy speaks of the youthful generation having visions rather than the elders who generally hold leadership roles in society. If this prophecy was referring to the literal age of these young men and women, perhaps the answer lies in the character of the youth within a society. They have energy, ambition, and hope of a better life. They are eager to work for change for the better. Such efforts to change a society requires visions and goals in order to achieve results. It requires the wisdom of the elders as well. As a business manager, I enjoy hiring young men and women out of college because of their zeal to work and their ability to cast a vision. I am able to serve the role of applying wisdom their efforts in order to take practical steps to achieve these goals.

If Joel's prophecy is interpreted figuratively to describe a new generation of people who walk in the gifts of the Spirit, then the young men and women may be the New Testament church as the Holy Spirit is poured forth on the Day of Pentecost to empower this next generation to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations.

2:18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

2:18 ***Comments –*** New Testament prophecy is not just predicting the future; but proclaiming a "rhema" word from the Lord, a word for the occasions. Paul discusses the operation of the New Testament gift of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14:1-40, saying that anyone can prophesy. When a New Testament believer feels led by the Spirit to speak to someone concerning God's Word, he moves into a low level of prophecy. When a believe confesses a Word from the Scriptures in faith, he is prophesying.

2:19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

2:19 ***Comments –*** In Acts 2:20, Peter quotes from Joel 2:30, "And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke." Because the phrase "last days" (2:17) incorporates the First as well as Second coming of the Lord Jesus, the wonders (τέρας) in the heavens and the signs (σημεῖον) upon the earth have now begun. For example, at Jesus' crucifixion, there was darkness upon the land in the middle of the day (Matt 27:45), and an earthquake shook the land (Matt 27:51). In addition, the graves were opened and the saints resurrected to testify of the Lord Jesus (Matt 27:52-53). However, the context of this passage most clearly reflects the events surrounding the Second Coming of Christ. Jesus predicted such events in His Olivet Discourse (Matt 24-25). Jesus said that false prophets would perform signs (σημεῖον) and wonders (τέρας) (Matt 24:24). He said that there would be famines and earthquakes in various places (Matt 24:7). His reference to wars and rumors of war (Matt 24:7) and reflected in the blood, fire, and smoke characteristic of its bloodshed, burning of property, and smoke from the wake of destruction.

2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:

2:20 ***Comments –*** In Acts 2:20 Peter also quotes from Joel 2:31, "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come." Jesus also cites Joel 2:31 in Matthew 24:29, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:" These New Testament citations give credibility to the need to interpret Acts 2:19-20 as events surrounding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Comments – Genesis 1:14 gives two reasons why God created the heavenly bodies, saying, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:" The heavenly bodies are to give light upon the earth, and they are to be for signs.

Illustration - Acts 2:20 describes the sun and the moon as being signs for the coming day of the Lord. The description given here in Acts of the sun and moon being darkened can be created by a solar and lunar eclipse. When the moon passes between the sun and the earth, a full solar eclipse can be created causing the day becoming dark, because the sun is overshadowed by the moon. Thus, "the sun shall be turned into darkness." A lunar eclipse is created when the earth passes between the sun and the moon. In a normal lunar eclipse, the moon has the dark shadow of the earth passing across it, just as in a solar eclipse. On January 9, 2001, a lunar eclipse offered spectacular show, turning the moon to a blood red. This happened because a decade before in 1991, Mount Pinatubo erupted in a volcanic explosion in the Philippines. Ten years later, the debris thrown up by this volcanic eruption was still in the atmosphere. It reduced the amount of light that was being transmitted from the sun to the moon, and passing by the earth. This light diffusion caused the moon to turn an orange color as the light from the sun was bent and filtered by the earth's atmosphere. Thus, "the moon shall be turned into blood."[192]

The amount of debris in the atmosphere will determine the amount of light diffusion, thus determining the color of the moon. This will be a time on earth when earthquakes and volcanic eruptions will be frequent and enormous, as Jesus says in Matthew 24:7, "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Therefore, a darkened sun and a blood red moon are not hard to imagine under these circumstances.

Scripture References - Other Scriptures referring to this event prophesied by Joel are Matthew 24:29, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall *the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light*, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:" Luke 21:11, "And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and *fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven*." Revelation 6:12, "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; *and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood*;"

2:21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

2:21 ***Comments –*** Acts 2:21 confirms the doctrine of unlimited atonement, which means that Jesus' death was for the atonement of all of mankind. Otherwise, why does Peter say, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you." (Acts 2:38) In contrast, the doctrine of limited

[192]"Space Lunar Eclipse Offers Spectacular Show," 9 January 2001, The Associated Press and Reuters [on-line]; accessed 17 May 2009; available from http://www.cnn.com/2001/ASIANOW/east/01/10/china.space.ap/index.html; Internet.

atonement, a part of Calvinist, states that Jesus' death was strictly limited to those whom God has predestined for salvation.

Because this verse is placed within the context of the world in travail, with those events described in the Great Tribulation period, we see that men will be saved during this last event leading up to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This is confirmed by the apostle John as the elder before God's throne spoke to him about the multitudes in heaven and said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev 7:14)

2:22-32 **The Prophecy of David Concerning the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ –** After quoting from Joel 2:28-32, Peter preaches Christ Jesus. He begins with a declaration of His death by the divine counsel and foreknowledge of God (2:22-23). After declaring His death, Peter preaches His Resurrection in Acts 2:24-32. In this part of the sermon, he cites Psalm 16:8-11 and interprets its prophetic fulfillment in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

2:23 ***Comments*** **-** Acts 2:23 says that Jesus was crucified by "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." The Greek verb ὁρίζω literally means, "to mark out," and figuratively, "to appoint, decree, specify," and he says the noun "counsel" (*Strong*). The Greek word βουλή means, "volition, i.e. advice, purpose" (*Strong*). *Wuest* explains that the Greek word βουλή was used in classical Greek literature to describe "a council convened for the purpose of administering the affairs of government," and it was used of "the camp-fire council of Zenophon and his officers" when they met each night to decide a "pre-determined course of action" for the following day's march. (Xenophon, *Anabasis* books 2, 4, 5, 6, 7).[193] He then applies this picture to the Trinity as they planned a course of action to redeem mankind from his fallen condition. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit convened and took counsel together, since it takes more than one person to conspire in a legitimate council. *Wuest* says the phrase "the determinate counsel" thus means that "these deliberations were for the purpose of determining something," which was to choose the Son to be crucified beforehand as a means of redeeming mankind. *Wuest* then makes the conclusion that the phrase "the determinate counsel" stands parallel and equal in meaning to the word "foreknowledge" (πρόγνωσις) based on the Granville Sharp rule of Greek grammar.[194] He says the Greek word "foreknowledge" includes not only previous knowledge of circumstances, but within the context of Acts 2:23 it carries the idea of "foreordination," which is the way it is translated in 1 Peter 1:20, "Who verily was <u>foreordained</u> before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." *Wuest* says the word πρόγνωσις "speaks of the sovereign act of God foreordaining certain from among mankind

[193]William Barrack, *Lexicon to Xenophon's Anabasis* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1872), see βουλευω, 28; Henry G. Dakyns, trans., *Anabasis,* in *The History of Xenophon,* vols. 1-2, in *The Historians of Greece,* vols. 8-9, ed. Thomas M. Alexander (New York: The Tandy-Thomas Company, 1909), vol. 1: 195, 206, 207, 293, vol. 2: 11, 34, 39, 40, 52, 54, 75, 116, 176.

[194]Granville Sharp Rule One says, "When the copulative καί connects two nouns of the same case, [viz. nouns (either Substantive or adjective, or participles) of personal description respecting office, dignity, affinity, or connection, and attributes, properties, or qualities, good or ill,] if the article ὁ, or any of its cases, precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle: i. e. it denotes a farther description of the first-named person . . ." See Granville Sharp, *Remarks on the Use of the Definitive Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament* (London: Vernon and Hood; f. and C. Rivington; J. White and J. Hatchard; and L. Pennington, Durham, 1803), 3.

to be saved." The argument of *Wuest* fails in the fact that the Granville Sharp rule says that two Greek words in this construction are related, but it does not say that they have the same definition and meaning. For example, in the first example used by Sharp of Matthew 12:22, "the blind and dumb (man)," both attributes of blind and dumb relate to the same individual, but these two words do not have the same meaning.

James Dunn makes a similar argument using the context of Bible verses to justify a broader definition of πρόγνωσις to include pre-election. He argues that the use of προώρισεν and πρόθεσις within the immediate context of Romans 8:28-29 justifies this broader definition. He refers to two Old Testament passages that show God's foreknowledge at work in His plan of redemption for mankind: Genesis 18:19, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Hosea 13:5, "I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought." Dunn mentions another passage that shows His foreknowledge and pre-determined counsel working together to further support his claim in Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."[195] However, there are no grammatical rules that require two different Greek words used in a sentence to carry the same or a similar meaning, although they relate to the same idea.

Wuest acknowledges that many scholars believe the word πρόγνωσις simply means, "the *prescience* of God, as Vincent puts it, not the idea of pre-election."[196] I have to disagree with the conclusion of *Wuest* that "determinate counsel" and "foreknowledge" mean the very same thing. Within the context of Acts 2:23, these phrases can be complimentary, without being exactly the same in meaning. Jesus' death on Calvary was pre-determined and therefore, foreknown by God. God designed a plan of redemption for mankind through His pre-determined counsel; then He intervenes in the affairs of mankind based upon His foreknowledge of this plan. W. E. Vine contradicts *Wuest* on pre-election by saying, "God's foreknowledge involves His electing grace, but this does not preclude human will. He foreknows the exercise of faith which brings salvation."[197]

2:23 ***Comments –*** Matthew 26:3-13, Mark 14:1-9, and Luke 22:1-23 place two events together in order to contrast the roles of man and God leading up to the crucifixion of Christ Jesus. While the Jewish leaders are secretly plotting to kill Jesus, He is telling His disciples of His impending death. Both scenes work together to introduce the events of the impending Passion, reflecting the dual roles of divine providence and man's free will in God's plan of redemption. The contrast of these two events was well known to the early Church. For example, Luke records Peter's statement, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:" (Acts 2:23). The early believers later prays, saying, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." (Acts 4:27-28) Therefore, this contrast was prominent in the minds of the earlier Church.

2:24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

---

[195]James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16,* in *Word Biblical Commentary,* vol. 38B, eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1988), 482-483, Logos.

[196]Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies From the Greek New Testament for the English Reader*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), 143.

[197]W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words with their Precise Meanings for English Readers* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, c1940, 1966), "Foreknow, Foreknowledge," 119.

2:24 ***Comments –*** In Acts 2:24 Peter alludes to a number of possible Old Testament Scriptures: 2 Samuel 22:6, "The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;" Psalms 18:4, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid." Psalms 116:3, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow."

2:25-28 ***Old Testament Quotes in the New Testament –*** In Acts 2:25-28 the apostle Peter quotes from Psalm 16:8-11, "I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

2:25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

2:26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

2:27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

2:28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

2:29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

2:30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

2:30 ***Comments –*** In Acts 2:30 Peter alludes to Psalms 132:11, "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne..

2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

2:32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

2:33-36 **The Prophecy of David Concerning the Ascension and Exaltation of Jesus Christ –** Having preached the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, Peter declares His ascension and exaltation at the right hand of the Father. In this part of the sermon, he cites Psalm 110:1 and interprets its prophetic fulfillment in the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

2:33 **Comments –** The Jews in Jerusalem heard those who were filled with the Holy Spirit speaking in their native tongues. The apostle Peter tells them that they also saw something. What did they see? The Jews told one another that these men were drunk with wine because they saw them acting as if they were drunk. However, they were drunk in the Holy Ghost, something that still happens today.

2:34-35 ***Comments –*** In Act*s* 2:34-35 the apostle Peter quotes from Psalm 110:1, "A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

2:34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

2:35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

2:37-41 **Conclusion: The Response of the Jews –** Acts 2:37-41 records the conclusion to Peter's sermon as he calls the people to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through this apostolic message, three thousand souls were added to the Church that day.

2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

2:37 ***Comments*** **-** Note how Peter did not plead for a decision nor give an altar call. The anointing of the Holy Spirit prompted this response.

2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

2:38 ***Comments –*** Peter preached on the day of Pentecost. The people responded and said, "What shall we do to be saved?" Of course, Peter answered their question in all of his fullness because they not only wanted to be saved from their sins, but they wanted to be saved from an oppressive life, from a problematic life. Thus, he leads them in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Note the order of events in Peter's reply: repentance, baptism (in Jesus' name), receiving the Holy Ghost. This statement is similar to the events surrounding Jesus' water baptism in the Jordan River and receiving the Holy Ghost, as we read in Matthew 3:16, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:"

Note that the apostles repented and were baptized with John the Baptist's ministry in Acts 1:21-22, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." At Pentecost, these same disciples received the infilling of the Holy Ghost. The same order of water baptism and the infilling of the Holy Ghost is seen in Acts 19:5-6, "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

2:39 ***Comments –*** The apostles should have understood that God's message of salvation spoken by the prophet Joel was for the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Yet, these early Jewish believers struggled to accept the Gentiles into the Church without asking them to fulfill the traditional requirements given to Gentile proselytes prior to Christ's atonement. The Lord

raised up the apostle Paul to defence the salvation experience of the Gentiles without the requirement of circumcision and certain things from which to abstain.

We must realize that the promise of this prophecy of Joel was fulfilled with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit follows the preaching of the Gospel in order to fill men and women who are saved. He does not pour Himself into depraved humanity. Therefore, how eagerly He awaits the salvation of another soul so that He can fill Him and work in and through Him to bring others to Christ. We must give the Holy Spirit more opportunities to fill the hearts of mankind.

2:38-39 ***Comments – The Promise of the Father -*** The promise of the Father is the giving of His Holy Spirit to the Church. Peter was declaring that this promise was not a one-time event on the Day of Pentecots, but it was for all generations of believers who followed them. Note these insightful words from Frances J. Roberts regarding this passage of Holy Scripture:

> "For the promise of the Father is to all who believe, yea, to all who are called, even those who are afar off (Acts 2:39). And this promise is the gift of the indwelling presence of My Holy Spirit, promised to all who have been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, who have repented of their sins and received remission (Acts 2:38)."[198]

2:40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

2:37-40 ***Comments - Foundational Doctrines of Scripture -*** Acts 2:37-40 deals with the first three of the six foundational doctrines of Scripture, repentance from dead works, faith towards God, and the doctrine of baptisms (Heb 6:1-2). Acts 2:40 suggests that the other three doctrines may have been mentioned and not recorded.

2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

2:42-5:40 **The Spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem –** Acts 2:42-5:40 records two key events that contributed to the spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost resulted in the conversion of three thousands souls to Christ. This number of believers in the city encouraged Peter to continue to preach the Gospel boldly despite opposition from the Sanhedrin. These Jewish leaders began to see the multitudes embrace the Gospel through its miracles, signs, and wonders. As a result, Peter is brought before the Sanhedrin on two occasions (2:42-4:31; 4:32-5:40). Peter's two encounters with the Sanhedrin establish the fact that the Jewish leaders were powerless to stop the proclamation of the Gospel. The Sanhedrin had succeeded in crucifying the Messiah by mobilizing the crowds against Him. Now the tide had turned, and the multitudes were embracing the Gospel, rendering them powerless.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:42-5:40 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

> Exegetical Idea – Peter boldly preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Peter boldly preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic*

[198]Frances J. Roberts, *Come Away My Beloved* (Ojai, California: King's Farspan, Inc., 1973), 43.

commission, God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The First Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin	2:42-4:31
(2) The Second Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin	4:32-5:40

2:42-4:31 **The First Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin –** Acts 2:42-4:31 records Peter's first encounter before the Sanhedrin. Luke establishes the immediate setting to the plot as the early believers fellowshipped together as the Lord added to their numbers (2:42-47). This encounter before the Sanhedrin resulted from Peter healing the blind man at the Gate Beautiful (3:1-10), then preaching to the crowd that gathered to witness the power of the Gospel (3:11-26), at which time they arrested Peter and John (4:1-4). Peter stands before the Sanhedrin to testify of the Gospel (4:5-12). The Sanhedrin responded by warning Peter to cease from proclaiming the Gospel (4:13-22). Upon the release of apostles, the church prays for God to vindicate them from injustice, and they are again filled with the Holy Spirit as the place is shaken to testify that God had heard their prayers (4:23-31). God vindicates the Church in the book of Acts from injustice from the Sanhedrin by miraculously delivering Peter from prison (5:12-26), from the persecution of the Jews through Saul's conversion (9:1-19), and from King Herod through Peter's deliverance from prison and the death of the king (12:1-23). God also vindicates Paul by miraculously delivering him from the storm at sea and snake bite (28:1-10).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:42-4:31 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Peter boldly declared in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord after healing the blind man, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter boldly declared in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord after healing the blind man, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders,* God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) Immediate Setting	2:42-47
(b) Demonstration of the Power of the Gospel	3:1-4:4

(c) Peter before the Sanhedrin 4:5-22
(d) Conclusion: The Response of the Church to Persecutions 4:23-31

2:42-47 **The Immediate Setting: Church Growth in Jerusalem –** Acts 2:42-47 records the immediate setting of Peter's first appearance before the Sanhedrin by describing the response of the people in Jerusalem to Peter's sermon as they embrace the teachings of the apostles, resulting in the birth of the Church in Jerusalem.

Giving in the Early Church - The early church not only gave tithes, but shared their material substance with one another. As a missionary in Africa, I have seen some churches where the pastor rose up in great prosperity because he over spent the contributions on himself. There should be a balance to how the church contributions are spent. Acts 2:44-25 teaches that the funds should largely help those in the church who have needs.

2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

2:42 ***Comments –*** Acts 2:42 records the first assemblies of the New Testament Church, and they now had to accommodate three thousand individuals. These early believers now had a different set of doctrines than the Jews around them. Their visits to the Temple would no longer necessitate animal sacrifices or traditional, Levitical rituals. They naturally assembled with those of like-minded faith in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ the Messiah. Although they continued to go to the Temple to worship the Lord, they began to meet in smaller groups in their own houses (Acts 2:46).

The early Church addressed the needs of the entire make-up of man: mental (apostles' doctrine), social (fellowship), physical (breaking of bread), and spiritual (prayers), which are reflected in Acts 2:42. *"the apostles' doctrine"* – Apostolic authority became the primary condition for the selection of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament canon in the early centuries of the Church. The early believers did not have the books of the New Testament to read. Therefore, they relied upon the Old Testament Scriptures for several decades until the Gospels and New Testament epistles were written and dispersed. These early Jewish believers relied upon the teachings of the apostles as they interpreted the Old Testament in light of the revelation of Jesus Christ, which became a distinct doctrine unique from that taught in the local synagogues. Thus, the phrase "the apostles' doctrine" is used in Acts 2:42 to describe these early teachings. These teachings were eventually recorded and became the books of the New Testament as we know them today. *"fellowship"* - The fellowship of the early believers reflected a spiritual bond that superseded their Jewish heritage and family ties. These believers soon faced persecutions from the Jewish community because of their faith in Jesus Christ. *"breaking of bread"* - The phrase "breaking of bread" includes both communion (1 Cor 11:17-34) and love feasts (Jude 1:12) that the early Church practiced. *"prayers"* – It is possible that prayers included worship with songs and Scriptural hymns.

N. T. Wright gives a depth of meaning to the word κοινωνία by describing it as "identification," or those who have become "mutually identified."[199] In other words, Philemon sought his identification in society as a member of Paul's team. I learned to appreciate the mindset of identification when I moved from the American culture to the African mission field. While Americans treasure their personal independence from others, Africans seek to find their identity with someone or something that provides their needs. American capitalism drives a culture towards financial independence, which is reflected in a church culture of people "floating" from one church to another. Such a mindset never

[199]N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary,* in *Tyndale New Testament Commentary*, vol. 12, ed. Leon Morris (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 181, Logos.

embraces the vision of a pastor or church and works towards such goals. This is the mindset of independence. In contrast, the church people in African seek to work together and live in large family groups in the midst of poverty. Therefore, such people have a strong attachment to their family or peers, and extended family groups are normal. Some African pastors say that some church members "live" at the church, spending so much time there rather than working. Such a lifestyle reflects Acts 2:42, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." This is not so with Americans, who hardly know their neighbours and become irritable if placed in a house with a large and busy and noisy family structure. They often identify with sports teams by wearing clothing with their logos, or identification with their career or company with a vision to obtain a retirement pension, or by placing tattoos on their bodies with special meanings. In contrast, my wife from the Philippines loves to be with large groups, having grown up in a small village with many siblings, something I have never learned to appreciate. Nevertheless, I did identify with my pastor and our church, who sent me out into the mission field with a divine calling to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Africa through Christian television.

2:43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

2:43 **"And fear came upon every soul"** - ***Comments –*** The fear of God fell upon men in other places of the book of Acts: "and great fear camp on all them that heard" (Acts 5:5); "and great fear came upon all the church" (Acts 5:11); "The churches . . . walking in the fear of the Lord" (Acts 9:31); "and fear fell on them all" (Acts 19:17).

Also, the Old Testament records the fear of God fall upon people: Genesis 35:5, "And they journeyed: and *the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them*, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob." 2 Chronicles 14:14, "And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; *for the fear of the LORD came upon them*: and they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them."

Illustration - In 1990 or 1991, while taking lunch, I envisioned Jesus' feet ascending upon the Mount of Olives. Then, an awesome fear and reverence of God fell upon me. I now know how I am going to feel one day before God's throne when I giving an account of my life. All I could say during this vision was "Holy, holy is the Lord" (Isaiah 6:3), and "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). This anointing lasted a few minutes and lifted, but the effects of that experience lingered for hours.

2:44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

2:44 ***Comments –*** Bob Nichols says, "When we flow together, we go together."[200]

2:45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

2:44-45 ***Comments – All Things in Common -*** Many churches today are structured so that the church leadership keeps the donations confidential. In extreme cases, the pastor becomes wealthy by spending these donations on his personal gain. In many other cases, the funds are wasted unnecessarily. Biblically these donations are to be used to benefit the congregation. In other words, the congregation should have these donations shared in common. They should be the beneficiaries of church funds. In addition, the congregation should decide corporately on the budget, agreeing on how to portion the budget towards missions, building expenses, salaries, etc. However, such congregational agreement should be limited to those church members who are faithful in tithes and offers and serving together.

[200]Bob Nichols, "Sermon," Calvary Cathedral International, Fort Worth, Texas, 25 June 2014.

2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

2:47 **"the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"** - ***Comments*** **–** The Church began with 120 people (Acts 1:15), increased to 3000 (Acts 2:41), to 5000 (Acts 4:4), added more (Acts 5:14), multiplied (Acts 6:1), and multiplied greatly (Acts 6:7). The Lord still adds to the church daily, but the church is made up of those who acknowledge Jesus as Head and who do His word. For the Lord to add daily, we must be like the church in the book of Acts and walk in fellowship with other believers, sharing our faith with the lost.

2:46-47 ***Comments – Church Evangelism*** **–** The church in the book of Acts grew through mass evangelism as the Gospel was preached to the multitudes. However, the church also grew through one-on-one evangelism as individual believers shared their faith in Jesus with those within their sphere of influence. In doing this, the Lord became involved in our daily lives, orchestrating divine encounters and anointing those who shared their faith with others.

3:1-4:4 **Demonstration of the Power of the Gospel –** Acts 3:1-4:4 records the testimony of Peter healing the lame man at the Gate Beautiful as a demonstration of the power of the Gospel (3:1-10). Peter then preaches a sermon in the Temple (3:11-26), after which he is arrested by the Sanhedrin (4:1-3). The healing of the lame man occasions the opportunity for preaching the Gospel in the Temple. Peter is met with opposition from the Sanhedrin as they arrest him and John (4:1-3). However, many souls are added to the church in Jerusalem as a result of Peter's boldness (4:4).

Here is a proposed outline:

i) The Healing of the Lame Man at the Gate Beautiful (The Occasion)	3:1-10
ii) Peter's Sermon (The Apostolic Charge)	3:11-26
iii) The Response of the Jews	4:1-4

3:1-10 **The Healing of the Lame Man at the Gate Beautiful (The Occasion) –** Acts 3:1-10 records the account of Peter healing the lame man at the Gate Beautiful, which occasioned Peter's sermon in Solomon's portico. The theme of Acts 2:1-5:42 is the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. This miracle is important in that it causes the gathering of a multitude in the Temple to hear Peter's sermon. This sermon resulted in the first resistance of the early church.

3:1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

3:2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3:3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

3:4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

3:4 **"And Peter . . . said, Look on us" –** ***Comments*** **–** For those who have lived in poor countries with many beggars, they have observed how such beggars are too ashamed to look into the eyes of those they beg from. This may be one reason why Peter told this man at the Gate Beautiful to look at him.

3:4 **"fastening his eyes upon him with John" - *Comments* –** Anyone who has ever ministered healing to someone knows the important of having people of faith standing with you. Many of us know the difficulty of ministering healing when there is doubt and opposition in the midst. Jesus often took Peter, James and John with Him when ministering to others. He not only was teaching them, but their faith was positive and in support of Jesus' ministry. In Acts 3:4 Peter is doing the talking, but John is standing beside him in faith. Together their faith was stronger than if they were alone.

3:5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

3:5 ***Comments* –** Now this poor blind beggar did not know what was about to happen to him although his heart was open and receptive to whatever Peter had to offer. The reason the Scriptures record the man's expectation is because without it he would not have instantly obeyed and followed Peter's command to rise up and walk. Expectation is a measure of faith, however small it may be. This man received Peter's message and responded in faith. Thus, he was healed.

3:6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

3:6 ***Comments (1)* –** Many coins of the first century were made of silver and even gold. Although Peter and John did not personally possess finances, the Church had all things in common, even finances. With the wealth of faith in the early Church Peter met the man's real need through the name of Jesus. James Brooks said that in the early years of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, it could not afford to purchase several copies of some famous ancient Greek manuscripts due to lack of funds. He regretted this. He said that it was in these days that the seminary could truly say, "silver and gold have I none." Today the seminary has been blessed with millions of dollars of endowments. He added lastly, "But again, today we cannot say, 'Rise up and walk'."[201]

3:6 ***Comments (2)* –** Kenneth Hagin uses the story of the healing of the man at the Gate Beautiful (Acts 3:1-10) as an example of what Jesus Christ meant to teach us in John 14:13-14.[202] Hagin says that this passage teaches us to use the name of Jesus Christ when taking authority over the works of darkness rather than praying for Jesus Christ to do something for us. He translates this passage as "whatsoever ye shall ask [demand] in my name, that will I [Jesus] do . . ." (John 14:13)[203] For example, when Peter and John entered the Temple in Acts 3:1-10, the apostle did not pray for the lame man to be healed; rather, he demanded that the lame man stand up and walk by the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus later teaches us petition the Father for our requests in Jesus' name, saying, "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (Jn 16:23-24)

3:7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

---

[201]James A. Brooks, "Class Notes," New Testament Greek and Textual Criticism, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 21 January 1982.

[202]Kenneth Hagin, *Bible Prayer Study Course* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1991, 1999), 158-9.

[203]Kenneth Hagin, *Bible Prayer Study Course* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1991, 1999), 159-60.

3:7 ***Comments –*** Faith is acted out in Peter's life and heart as he takes the lame man's hand with confidence. Through Peter's faith, God healed with His Almighty power.

3:8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

3:9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

3:10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

3:11-26 **Peter's Sermon (The Apostolic Charge) –** Acts 3:11-26 records Peter's sermon in the Temple as the crowds gathered because of healing of the lame man (3:1-10). In his sermon, he claims that Israel has rejected the Messiah (3:11-16). He then provides the evidence to this claim by revealing that the Messiah's prophetic coming was fulfilled in Christ Jesus (3:17-26).

Here is a proposed outline:

α) Israel Rejected the Messiah	3:11-16
β) Prophecies Fulfilled in Christ Jesus	3:17-26

3:11-16 **Israel Rejected the Messiah –** In Acts 3:11-16, Peter presents the claim that Israel has rejected the Messiah in crucifying Jesus of Nazareth.

3:11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

3:12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

3:12 ***Comments -*** Peter opens his first speech in Acts 1:16 saying, "men and brethren." He opens his speech in Acts 2:14 by addressing those present, "the men of Judaea, and all those dwelling at Jerusalem." Peter opens his speech at Solomon's porch by saying, "men of Israel" (Acts 3:12). He addresses the Sanhedrin by saying, "rulers of the people and elders of Israel" (Acts 4:8). Stephen opens his speech in Acts 7:2 by saying, "brethren and fathers." Peter and James address the elders at the first council in Jerusalem by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 15:7, 13). Paul the apostle also begins his speeches in the same manner. He addresses the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 13:15). He spoke to the Athenians by saying, "men of Athens" (Acts 17:22). He spoke to the angry mob by saying, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." (Acts 22:1) Paul addressed the Sanhedrin by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 23:1).

3:13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

3:14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

3:15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

3:15 ***Comments -*** The Greek word ἀρχηγός means, "a chief leader" (*Strong*) or "a leader, ruler, prince" (*BDAG*), and it can refer to an "originator, founder, one who begins" (*BDAG*). Koester notes that ἀρχηγός is a compound word consisting of ἀρχή (first) and ἄγω (to lead),

denoting a both leader or a founder, with the translation "pioneer" reflecting both aspects of this word. Koester says the word ἀρχηγός is used in the *LXX* for those who led the children of Israel in the wilderness (Num 10:4; 13:2-3) and into battle (Judg 5:15; 9:44; 11:6, 11, 1 Chron 5:24; 8:28; 26:26, 2 Chron 23:14, Neh 2:9, Jdt 14:2).[204] This Greek word is used four times in the New Testament (Acts 3:15; 5:31, Heb 2:10; 12:2).

Luke calls Jesus Christ the "ἀρχηγός of life" (Acts 3:15), and "ἀρχηγός and Saviour" (Acts 5:31). The author of Hebrews uses the analogy of Jesus Christ and Moses, who led the children of Israel in the wilderness (Heb 3:1-6). Jesus is called the author and finisher of our faith, paving the way as the pioneer of our redemption (Heb 12:2). He became our ἀρχηγός by the Word becoming flesh (Jn 1:14) being fashioned as a man (Phil 2:8) and by His obedience unto death (Phil 2:8, Heb 5:8). Joshua the son of Nun became the captain of Israel's salvation as he led them in the conquest of the land of Canaan. In like manner, Jesus Christ has become the captain of our salvation.

3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

3:16 **"And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong"** - ***Comments* –** Just to say the name of Jesus is not all there is to this miracle. In Acts 19:13-16, Jewish vagabonds used Jesus' name and were beaten up by a demoniac. You must have also faith in His name in order to use Jesus' name; that is, you must be a born-again Christian.

3:17-26 **Prophecies Fulfilled in Christ Jesus –** In Acts 3:17-26, Peter supports the claim of Israel rejecting the Messiah by giving scriptural evidence revealed in the Old Testament prophets.

3:17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

3:18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

3:19 **"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" - *Comments* –** In Acts 3:19 Luke alludes to a book of remembrance that records the works of the wicked. The Holy Scriptures mention different types of heavenly books, giving us a glimpse into the library of Heaven itself. For example, the Book of Life is mentioned most frequently which records those names that have an eternal place in heaven. We find also the Book of the Lord which records God's divine judgment for the nations and for Israel. We find a book written specifically for the redemptive work of the Messiah. We even find books that record the deeds of the wicked and a book of remembrance of the deeds of the righteous. Finally, we find that God has a book written about the life and destiny of each of His children in this heavenly library.

The Lamb's Book of Life - We are most familiar with the Book of Life which records the names of all those who have an eternal place in heaven. This book is mentioned by Moses, by the psalmist, by the prophets Isaiah and Daniel, by Jesus Christ Himself, by the apostle Paul, but most frequently by the apostle John in the book of Revelation: Exodus 32:32-33, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Deuteronomy 9:14, "Let me alone, that I may destroy

[204]Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews,* in *The Anchor Bible*, eds. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 228.

them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they." Deuteronomy 29:20, "The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven." Psalms 69:28, "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous." Isaiah 4:3, "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." Daniel 12:1, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Luke 10:20, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Philippians 4:3, "And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life." Hebrews 12:23, "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Revelation 3:5, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Revelation 13:8, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Revelation 17:8, "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." Revelation 20:15, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 21:27, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Revelation 22:19, "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

The Book of the Lord's Divine Judgments - One heavenly book is called the Book of the Lord, in which God's redemptive plans of divine judgments for the Gentile nations are recorded, as we read in Isaiah 34:16, "Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them."

There is a heavenly book written that records the divine judgments specific to the nation of Israel, as we read in Ezekiel 2:9-3:3, "And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness."

There is a book written that records the specific events of the Great Tribulation Period, as we read in Revelation 5:1-9, "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals." In addition, there is a little book given to the apostle John which records additional judgments during the Great Tribulation Period, as we read in Revelation 10:1-11, "And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth. . . And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and

as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

The Book of the Messiah - There is a heavenly book written about the life and mission of the Messiah, which I will call the Book of the Messiah, as we read in Psalms 40:7-8, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." This book is mentioned in the New Testament in Hebrews 10:7, "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."

The Books of the Deeds of the Wicked - Not only is there a Book of Life, but there are heavenly books that record the deeds of the wicked, as we read in Revelation 20:12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Acts 3:19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

The Book of Remembrance – The books that record the deeds of the wicked suggest that there are books that record the deeds of the righteous, who must stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and give an account of their lives, as we see implied in Nehemiah 13:14, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof." The books that record the deeds of the righteous may be the same as the Book of Remembrance mentioned in Malachi 3:16, "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."

Books that Record Men's Destinies - One aspect of God's intimate knowledge of us is that fact that He has written a book about our individual lives before we were born. According to Kevin Zadai, there are individual books in heaven that record God's plan of redemption for each person's life. The angels are able to read these books and look at our individual plans in divine service. There are angels assigned to our lives to bring to pass the events written in the specific book about our lives.[205] Thus, the psalmist says, "Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." (Ps 139:16) (NIV) These books of individual lives are mentioned again in Psalm 56:8, "Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?" Perhaps these books are titled by our individual names, since each person has their own heavenly book in this royal library. In fact, this is exactly what we see taking place when Mary K. Baxter is escorted by an angel to the gates of Heaven. Her heavenly guide approached the two angels guarding these gates to discuss the guest that he was bringing from earth. She writes:

> "As I watched the angels of the Lord, I could hear some of the conversation they were having. One of them went inside the gate and returned almost immediately with a small volume. The book had a gold cover, and the printing inside was also of gold. It seemed to be a book about my life's history. My name was stamped on the cover."[206]

"when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" - ***Comments –*** Although there is only one salvation experience at which time the Holy Spirit indwells a

[205]Kevin Zadai, *The Agenda of Angels* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2019), 9, 61, 182-183, 203.

[206]Mary K. Baxter, *A Divine Revelation of Heaven* (New Kensington, Pennsylvania: Whitaker House, 1998), 18-19.

believer, there are many times of infilling. All born-again Christians have the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9, 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19), but not all have the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Before Jesus ascended into Heaven, He breathed upon the disciples and they received the Holy Spirit (Jn 20:22). These same disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4) and filled again (Acts 4:31). Paul asked the church at Ephesus if they had received the Holy Spirit after their salvation experience (Acts 19:2). After laying hands upon them to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6), Paul wrote to them, telling them to stay continually filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18). When God's Holy Spirit fills our hearts, we are strengthened, revived, and refreshed by His presence, as Isaiah prophesied, saying, "To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear." (Is 28:12)

3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

3:22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

3:23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

3:22-23 ***Comments –*** In Acts 3:22-23, Peter quotes from Deuteronomy 18:15, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;" Deuteronomy 18:18-19, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

Note that when the children of Israel asked God not to speak to them directly, the Lord harkened to their prayer givine them Moses as the spokesman for the Old Covenant. This prayer of the children of Israel is recorded in Exodus 20:18-21 and Deuteronomy 5:23-33. In comparison, God raised up Jesus as the spokesman for the New Covenant. When the priests and Levites asked John the Baptist if he were "that prophet" (Jn 1:19-21), they were referring to this prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:15-19.

3:24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

3:24 ***Comments –*** Jesus made a similar statement in John 5:39, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

3:25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

3:26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

4:1-4 **The Response of the Jews –** Acts 4:1-4 records the reaction of the Sanhedrin to Peter's sermon as they arrest him (4:1-3). Nevertheless, five thousand souls are added to the church in Jerusalem (4:4).

4:1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

4:2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

4:2 ***Comments –*** The priests came with the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, as we read in Acts 23:8, "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both." Therefore, the preaching of the resurrection of Jesus Christ would have grieved them more so than the Pharisees, who did believe in this event.

4:3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

4:4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

4:5-22 **Peter before the Sanhedrin –** Acts 4:5-22 records the Peter's testimony before the Sanhedrin as they are questions concerning their faith (4:5-7). In this first incident of Peter and John standing before the Jewish leaders, they were simply given warnings (4:13-22); however, this persecution will escalate in the passages that follow.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Peter's Speech	4:5-12
ii) The Response of the Sanhedrin	4:13-22

4:5-12 **Peter's Speech –** Acts 4:5-12 records the interrogation of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin as the apostles defend the Christian faith.

4:5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

4:6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

4:8 ***Comments –*** Peter opens his first speech in Acts 1:16 saying, "men and brethren." He opens his speech in Acts 2:14 by addressing those present, "the men of Judaea, and all those dwelling at Jerusalem." Peter opens his speech at Solomon's porch by saying, "men of Israel" (Acts 3:12). He addresses the Sanhedrin by saying, "rulers of the people and elders of Israel" (Acts 4:8). Stephen opens his speech in Acts 7:2 by saying, "brethren and fathers." Peter and James address the elders at the first council in Jerusalem by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 15:7, 13). Paul the apostle also begins his speeches in the same manner. He addresses the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 13:15). He spoke to the Athenians by saying, "men of Athens" (Acts 17:22). He spoke to the angry mob by saying, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." (Acts 22:1) Paul addressed the Sanhedrin by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 23:1).

4:9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

4:10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

4:11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

4:12 ***Comments -*** Because God has a name that is distinct from all pagan gods, there is only one way to Him, which is through faith in His holy name. While some people believe that other religions offer a way to God, their gods have different names, and thus, they do not lead men to the name of the Lord. There salvation is only found in His name, as the apostle Peter declared, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

This name has been given unto men not only for their eternal salvation, but God gave it to the Church so that believers can walk in victory and salvation in every area of their lives while on earth. We see Jesus giving the Church His holy and powerful name in the divine mandates or commissions recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:14-18.

4:13-22 **The Response of the Sanhedrin –** Acts 4:13-22 record's the response of the Sanhedrin to Peter's speech. After they took counsel and gave him warnings not to preach the Gospel again (4:13-18), Peter declares his divine authority to preach the Gospel despite their threatenings (4:19-22).

4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

4:13 **"and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled" –** ***Comments -*** Tradition suggests that these Jewish rabbis considered anyone who had not gone through their rabbinical schools to be "unlearned and ignorant" of the Scriptures. This was the reason why they marveled at the wisdom and anointing that they saw from these two apostles. However, we know that Peter and John were brilliant and literate to have accomplished what they did for Christ.

4:13 ***Comments -*** Peter and John did not have to try to convince the Sanhedrin of Jesus being in the lives of the apostles, because God's power was testimony enough. They had been in the presence of Jesus until the anointing was upon them everywhere they went.

4:14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

4:14 ***Comments –*** The Jewish leaders had nothing with which to reply, as the psalmist prophesied in Psalms 107:41-42, "Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock. The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: *and all iniquity shall stop her mouth*."

4:15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

4:16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

4:17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

4:18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

4:18 ***Comments –*** In Acts 4:18, the Sanhedrin give Peter and John a warning not to preach the Gospel again. However, then they were arrested the second time (Acts 5:17-42), they were imprisoned and then beaten. Richard Longenecker quotes Jeremias as saying the Jewish law of this day required that "a person be made aware of the consequences of his crime before being punished for it."[207] That means a legal warning was given before witnesses for the first offense before the punishment was given for the second offence.

4:19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

4:20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

4:21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

4:22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

4:23-31 **Conclusion: The Response of the Church to Persecutions –** Acts 4:23-31 records the response of the believers in Jerusalem as they pray for the same boldness demonstrated in the testimony of Peter and John.

4:23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

4:24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

4:24 **"they lifted up their voice to God with one accord" –** ***Comments –*** Romans 4:24 does not say the exact same word together. Rather, they all prayed in agreement with the moving of the Holy Spirit. Their words were in unity of the Spirit, and God heard it as one big prayer of agreement.[208]

4:25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

4:26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

4:25-26 ***Comments –*** Acts 4:25-26 is a quotation from Psalm 2:1-2 which describes man's rebellion against God as He establishes His Son upon His rightful throne ruling over mankind.

4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

---

[207]Rickard N. Longenecker, *Acts,* in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Revised Edition)*, vol. 10, eds. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 2007), 769, Logos.

[208]Kenneth Hagin, *Plans Purposes and Pursuits* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1988, 1993), 57-8.

4:27-28 ***Comments – Man Fights against God's Predestined Counsel -*** Matthew 26:3-13, Mark 14:1-9, and Luke 22:1-23 place two events together in order to contrast the roles of man and God leading up to the crucifixion of Christ Jesus. While the Jewish leaders are secretly plotting to kill Jesus, He is telling His disciples of His impending death. Both scenes work together to introduce the events of the impending Passion, reflecting the dual roles of divine providence and man's free will in God's plan of redemption. The contrast of these two events was well known to the early Church. For example, Luke records Peter's statement, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:" (Acts 2:23). The early believers later prays, saying, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." (Acts 4:27-28) Therefore, this contrast was prominent in the minds of the earlier Church.

4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

4:29 ***Comments -*** Note how the early Church knew their authority in Christ and were not afraid to face persecution and punishment for the sake of the Gospel. As they continued to preach the Word of God, the unbelievers were afraid of them because of the mighty signs and wonders that were performed by their hands (Acts 5:12-16). The Lord answered their prayers as we see in Acts 5:12, "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch." Paul offered a similar prayer in Ephesians 6:19, "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,"

4:30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

4:31 **"when they had prayed . . . they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" –** ***Comments -*** Acts 4:31 tells us that one way to stayed filled with the Holy Spirit is to stay before the Lord in prayer. These believers had been filled with the Spirit in Acts chapter 2, but they needed to stay filled.

4:31 **"the place was shaken where they were assembled together"** – ***Comments –*** In numerous places, the mountains shook at the presence of the Lord (Ex 19:18, Judg 5:5, 1 Kgs 19:11, Nah 1:5), as well as the whole earth (Heb 12:26), even the Temple of the Lord (Is 6:4).

4:31 ***Comments (1) -*** I had a dream one night in which I was told that in each of Paul's imprisonments, he received a greater anointing of the Spirit in which to walk (May 2001). This principle seems to be confirmed by the second outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the early church, which followed the first persecutions when Peter and John were arrested by the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:31).

4:31 ***Comments (2) -*** Benny Hinn teaches that there are three levels of anointing in Scripture. He says that there is the infilling of the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation; a second anointing on the day of Pentecost was to empower the Church for divine service; the third anointing in Acts 4:31 was to empower the Church to take dominion. The first anointing is for fellowship with God the Father, but the second and third anointings are to empower the Church for war, to fulfill the Great Commission.

First Anointing - Hinn refers John 14:17 to explain the first anointing, when Jesus said the Holy Spirit "dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Every believer has the Holy Spirit living inside them. An Old Testament figure of this anointing would be Moses spending forty days in the presence of God so that his face shone (Ex 34:29).

Second Anointing – The second anointing is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit, seen on the day of Pentecost. An Old Testament figure of this anointing would be Aaron being anointed to serve as the high priest (Ex 30:30).

Third Anointing – Hinn teaches that the third and most powerful anointing is seen in Acts 4:31. Perhaps the Scriptural support for this view comes from the two experiences in the book of Acts when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Church (Acts 2:1-4; 4:31). There is obviously a greater anointing upon the Church after the second outpouring than the first. After the day of Pentecost, eight thousand souls were saved, and one lame man was healed; but after the second outpouring "great power" came upon the apostles. Peter judged Ananias and Sapphira so that they died (5:1-11), many signs and wonders were performed by the hands of the apostles (5:12), and the shadow of Peter healed the sick (5:15), and multitudes were added to the Church (5:14). There was clearly a greater anointing manifesting after the second outpouring. The church was persecuted after the first and second anointings; but with the third anointing the people feared the believers.

The Three Anointings in the Life of King David - Hinn believes the story of David being anointed with the horn of oil by Samuel (1 Sam 16:13). He believes David's anointing to be king over Judah is figurative of this second level of anointing (2 Sam 2:4). He believes King David's third anointing as king over Israel is figurative of this third level of anointing (2 Sam 5:3). Hinn suggests that David was around seventeen years old at his first anointing, and according to 2 Samuel 5:4, David was twenty-three at his second anointing, and thirty at his third and final anointing. With his first anointing he defeated Goliath, anointing that lasted about six years. With his second anointing he defeated the house of Saul, an anointing that lasted seven years. With his third anointing David performed his greatest exploits, taking the city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites and defeating the Philistines, which anointing lasted the rest of his life.[209]

4:32-5:40 **The Second Testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin –** Acts 4:32-5:40 records the second testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrin. Acts 4:32-35 provides the immediate setting to this narrative section by recordings testimonies of unity among believers and the power of the Holy Spirit accompanying apostolic preaching. Within this context, Peter decrees divine judgment against those who misused these privileges (5:1-11), and performs miracles resulting in Peter's second arrest (5:12-26). Peter stands before the Sanhedrin the second time, resulting with a harsher judgment of being beaten (5:27-40).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 4:32-5:40 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

> Exegetical Idea – The Lord vindicated Peter as he preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition by judging the church and working miracles, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because the Lord vindicated Peter as he preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition by judging the church and working miracles, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus'*

[209]Benny Hinn, "Fire Conference," 5-6 June 2009, Miracle Center Cathedral, Kampala, Uganda.

apostolic commission, the Lord has provided vindication for those who preach the Gospel with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because the Lord has provided vindication for those who preach the Gospel with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) Immediate Setting: Daily Life among the Believers	4:32-35
(b) Demonstration of the Power of the Gospel (Conflict as Climax of Plot)	4:36-5:26
(c) Peter before the Sanhedrin (Resolution of Conflict)	5:27-40

4:32-35 **The Immediate Setting: Immediate Setting: The Church Holds All Things in Common –** Acts 4:32-35 provides the immediate setting of the narrative section in 4:32-5:41 by recording the testimony of the daily life of the early Church as they shared all things in common.

4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

4:34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

4:35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

4:36-5:26 **Demonstration of the Power of the Gospel (Conflict as Climax of Plot) –** Acts 4:36-5:26 records testimonies of the demonstration of the power of the Gospel through divine vindication. The judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira (4:36-5:11) and the miraculous deliverance of Peter from prison (5:12-26) serve as two of the greatest examples during this period of church expansion. Because it records conflict between the early church and the Sanhedrin, Acts 4:36-5:26 serves as the climax to the narrative plot of Acts 2:1-5:42, which testifies of the birth and growth of the church in Jerusalem.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) The Judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira	4:36-5:11
ii) The Arrest and Deliverance of the Apostles	5:12-26

4:36-5:11 **The Witness of the Power of the Church: The Judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira –** Acts 4:36-5:11 records the account of Ananias and Sapphira lying to Peter and being judged by the apostle.

The Effects of Divine Judgment in the Church - Ananias and Sapphira dared to join the early Church without an understanding of obedience to the Gospel. At their death, no other people from the general population dared to attempt to join the mighty group (5:13). It may have seemed popular to join such a congregation that could work signs and wonders (5:12),

but they realized that it came with a heavy price of obedience. Yet, having stated that many people feared to join the church, the next verse states that many people were genuine converted and joined the church (5:14). The judgment of Ananias and Sapphira had the effect of judging the church of sin.

4:36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,

4:36 **"And Joses"** - ***Comments –*** Scholars say a number of ancient manuscripts have "Joseph" in the place of "Joses." (See Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes)

4:36 "**who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas"** – ***Comments –*** *Strong* says the name "Barnabas" is derived from two Hebrew words (בַּר) (son) and (נְבִיא) (a prophet). His name means "the son of consolation, or comfort," or, in the Greek "παρακλήσεως." Evidently, Barnabas comforted others, especially with the gifts of utterance. *Jerome* (A.D. 342-420) tells us a little about this man.

> "Barnabas the Cyprian, also called Joseph the Levite, ordained apostle to the Gentiles with Paul, wrote one Epistle, valuable for the edification of the church, which is reckoned among the apocryphal writings. He afterwards separated from Paul on account of John, a disciple also called Mark, none the less exercised the work laid upon him of preaching the Gospel." (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 6)

4:37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

4:36-37 ***Comments –*** This sacrificial giving by Barnabas was recognized above many givers. His giving was such a blow to the kingdom of darkness that it stirred Satan up to corrupt the Church offerings by using Ananias and Sapphira. His gift brought Barnabas into recognition, and positioned him to become a great servant in the mission field.

5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

5:2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

5:2 ***Comments –*** Why would Ananias and Sapphira hold back part of this offering? There is a system of corruption that works in a similar way within the churches in Africa. When offerings are collected or funds received, a corrupt person will hold back a portion of this money and represent the remaining balance as the whole. In this way, a person is able to secretly look like an honest person and gain a position within the church, while becoming wealthy by embezzling funds. This person attempts to gain a position within the church so that he can embezzle more funds. The fact is that this person has a wicked heart. Evidently, Ananias and Sapphira were playing this game of corruption within the early church.

5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

5:4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5:4 ***Comments –*** We read of the punishment of the false witness in Proverbs 19:5, "A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape." (and Prov 19:9)

5:3-4 ***Comments –*** In Acts 5:3-4 the apostle Peter's words to Ananias seem to be the gift of the word of knowledge in operation because he had no natural way of knowing what Ananias

and Sapphira had done in secret. Therefore, Peter declares that Ananias has lied to the Holy Spirit rather than himself because the Holy Spirit was involved, or rather forefront, in this incident. It is important to note that Peter refers to the Holy Spirit as "God" in his statement. He is a part of the Trinity as a triune God.

5:5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

5:5 ***Comments –*** Acts 5:5 reveals that Peter neither spoke divine judgment upon Ananias neither does it say that God killed him. Although this action took place under the Old Covenant, the new covenant is one of grace coupled with chastisement for God's children. However, when Peter confronts Sapphira his wife, Peter foretells of her death as well.

5:6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

5:7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

5:8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

5:9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

5:10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

5:11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

5:12-26 **The Arrest and Deliverance of the Apostles –** Acts 5:12-26 records the arrest and miraculous deliverance of the apostles from prison. This passage first testifies of the miracles of the early Church as the apostles perform many signs and wonders. In Acts 4:23-31 the believers had prayed for God to perform mighty signs and wonders in the midst of opposition. As they continued to preach the Word of God, the unbelievers were afraid of them because of the mighty signs and wonders that were performed by their hands (Acts 5:12-16). Note how the early Church knew their authority in Christ and were not afraid to face persecution and punishment for the sake of the Gospel.

5:12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

5:13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

5:13 ***Comments –*** The early church did not have church buildings with public assemblies until after Constantine adopted Christianity in the Roman Empire in the early fourth century. Until then, believers met in homes. A stranger could not join this close-knit assembly without an obvious intent to join these early believers.

5:14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

5:15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

5:16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

5:17 ***Comments –*** The psalmist prophesied of this event, saying, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." (Ps 2:1-3)

5:18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

5:19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

5:19 ***Comments –*** The early Church experiences a number of angelic visitation. When God's children begin to follow God's plan for their lives, the Lord assigns angels to minister for them. Kevin Zadai says:

> "As a Christian begins to use his or her members, especially the tongue, he or she will find himself or herself in the perfect will of God, working with angels! This might seem difficult to believe or even too good to be true. However, this is the kind of life God created us to live. And this is the very purpose for which angels were created—to expedite God's will for every Christian, to every Christian, and within every Christian!"[210]

The first angelic visitations in the Holy Scripture are recorded in the life and ministry of Abraham. Through his obedience to the Lord, Abraham was given angels to accompany him. The Lord called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees to go to the Promised Land. Because of his act of obedience, angels accompanied Abraham throughout his lifetime. In Genesis 24:7 Abraham sends the angel of the Lord before his servant in order to divinely guide him to a wife for his son Isaac. He understood the presence of angels in his life when sending forth an angel to accompany his servant to find a wife for his son Isaac. Hebrews 1:14 speaks of angels going forth to minister unto the saints, saying, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" An angel of the Lord assigned to serve Abraham divinely guided this servant to the house of Laban. This divine principle continued into the early Church and it is for us today.

5:20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

5:20 ***Comments -*** An angel of the Lord spoke to the early apostles and said, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." (Acts 5:20) The angel of the Lord was referring to the Words of eternal life for mankind during this earthly life. The description of the Word of God as "life" refers to its eternal nature, as the apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The Word of God is described as incorruptible seed that lives and continues throughout eternity. The eternal life inherent in God's Word brings a believer into communion with God. Thus, Jesus says that His words are "spirit and life" (John 6:63).

5:21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

5:22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

[210]Kevin Zadai, *The Agenda of Angels* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2019), 16-17.

5:23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

5:24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

5:25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

5:26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

5:27-40 **Peter before the Sanhedrin (Resolution of Conflict) –** Acts 5:27-40 records Peter's second appearance before the Sanhedrin, in which he again testifies of the resurrection of Christ and His redemption for mankind (5:27-32), resulting in a harsher judgment of being beaten (5:33-41).

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Peter's Speech	5:27-32
ii) Response of the Sanhedrin: Beating/Warning (Resolution of Conflict)	5:33-40

5:27-32 **Peter's Speech –** Acts 5:27-32 records Peter's second appearance before the Sanhedrin. They take Peter as he is teaching in the Temple, where he again testifies of the resurrection of Christ and His redemption for mankind.

5:27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

5:28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

5:28 **"and intend to bring this man's blood upon us" –** ***Comments*** **-** That is, Jesus' blood. The priests were referring to Jesus' death as if His blood was not upon them, which means that they denied being responsible for His death on the Cross. In some deceitful way, they probably shifted the blame to the Roman soldiers.

5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

5:30 ***Comments*** **-** Peter makes a descriptive accusation towards the Sanhedrin, having been an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ. Since he was also an eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection, Peter is bold to declare his faith in Christ, where he once denied his association with Him the night of his Master's trial.

5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

5:31 ***Comments*** **-** The Greek word ἀρχηγός means, "a chief leader" (*Strong*) or "a leader, ruler, prince" (*BDAG*), and it can refer to an "originator, founder, one who begins" (*BDAG*). Koester notes that ἀρχηγός is a compound word consisting of ἀρχή (first) and ἄγω (to lead), denoting a both leader or a founder, with the translation "pioneer" reflecting both aspects of this word. Koester says the word ἀρχηγός is used in the *LXX* for those who led the children

of Israel in the wilderness (Num 10:4; 13:2-3) and into battle (Judg 5:15; 9:44; 11:6, 11, 1 Chron 5:24; 8:28; 26:26, 2 Chron 23:14, Neh 2:9, Jdt 14:2).[211] This Greek word is used four times in the New Testament (Acts 3:15; 5:31, Heb 2:10; 12:2).

Luke calls Jesus Christ the "ἀρχηγός of life" (Acts 3:15), and "ἀρχηγός and Saviour" (Acts 5:31). The author of Hebrews uses the analogy of Jesus Christ and Moses, who led the children of Israel in the wilderness (Heb 3:1-6). Jesus is called the author and finisher of our faith, paving the way as the pioneer of our redemption (Heb 12:2). He became our ἀρχηγός by the Word becoming flesh (Jn 1:14) being fashioned as a man (Phil 2:8) and by His obedience unto death (Phil 2:8, Heb 5:8). Joshua the son of Nun became the captain of Israel's salvation as he led them in the conquest of the land of Canaan. In like manner, Jesus Christ has become the captain of our salvation.

5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

5:32 ***Comments -*** The apostles preached and bore witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Peter says in Acts 5:32 that "the Holy Ghost" is also bearing witness, he was referring to the signs and miracles that the Holy Spirit wrought among them to confirm the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The apostles were working together with the Holy Spirit is testifying of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as we read in Mark 16:20, "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." Hebrews 2:3-4, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

5:33-40 **Response of the Sanhedrin: Beating/Warning (Resolution of Conflict) –** Acts 5:33-40 records the response of the Sanhedrin to Peter's speech as they beat the apostles and warn them not to preach the Gospel any more. This passage serves as the resolution to the conflict recorded in the previous passage.

Luke's Sources of Testimonies – Gamaliel's speech to the Sanhedrin is recorded Acts 5:33-40 took place behind closed door with only its elite members present. How Luke obtained a record of this speech is unknown. Acts 6:7 says, "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." Perhaps one of the converted priests who was in this meeting provided this testimony to Luke.

5:33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

5:33 ***Comments -*** Peter made it clear that Jesus was the only way. See Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

5:34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

5:34 ***Comments –*** The Greek word νομοδιδάσκαλος means, "an expounder of the (Jewish) law, a Rabbi" (*Strong*), "a teacher of the law" (*BDAG*). This word is used three times in the New Testament (Lk 5:17, Acts 5:34, 1 Tim 1:7). This word is equated with "scribes" (γραμματεύς) or "rabbis" (רַבִּי) (*TDNT*), as we see in Luke 5:21, "And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can

[211]Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews,* in *The Anchor Bible*, eds. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 228.

forgive sins, but God alone?" Gamaliel is described as a "doctor of the law" (Acts 5:34), and Paul describes this person as an educated class in Jewish society (1 Tim 1:7).

This word seems to be unique to the New Testament, not being found in the *LXX* or in the writings of classical Greek, Josephus, and Philo (*TDNT*). A similar construction is found in 1 Esdras 9:48 as "τὸν νόμον διδάσκειν" (νομοδιδάσκαλος), but it does not imply a Jewish title. Therefore, Paul and Luke seem to use νομοδιδάσκαλος in a descriptive manner rather than as an official title for Jewish rabbis. The *TDNT* says this word is "designed to mark off Jewish from Christian teachers" in respect to the Law.

5:35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

5:36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

5:36 **"For before these days rose up Theudas" – *Comments* -** The name "Theudas" could have been a contraction of the Greek name Theodorus, Theodosus, Theodotus, or Theodosius, as Demas is perhaps a contraction of the name Demetrius. Adam Clarke and John Gill believe this Greek name is equivalent to the Hebrew (תודה) "Thuda," or "Thoda," and it is found as "Thaddaeus" in the New Testament (Matt 10:3, Mk 3:18).[212] The suggestion by some that this name could be the Greek equivalent to several Hebrew names lacks strong evidence to support this view.[213]

5:36 ***Comments -*** *Eusebius* (A.D. 260-340), in his Church History, quotes Josephus in referring to the insurrection of Theudas. Note:

> "Luke, in the Acts, introduces Gamaliel as saying, at the consultation which was held concerning the apostles, that at the time referred to, 'rose up Theudas boasting himself to be somebody; who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered.' Let us therefore add the account of Josephus concerning this man. He records in the work mentioned just above, the following circumstances: 'While Fadus was procurator of Judea a certain impostor called Theudas persuaded a very great multitude to take their possessions and follow him to the river Jordan. For he said that he was a prophet, and that the river should be divided at his command, and afford them an easy passage. And with these words he deceived many. But Fadus did not permit them to enjoy their folly, but sent a troop of horsemen against them, who fell upon them unexpectedly and slew many of them and took many others alive, while they took Theudas himself captive, and cut off his head and carried it to Jerusalem.' Besides this he also makes mention of the famine, which took place in the reign of Claudius, in the following words." (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.11.1-3)

Josephus dates the insurrection of Theudas during the rule of Fadus as procurator of Judea (A.D. 44 or 45).

> "Now it came to pass, while Fadus was procurator of Judea, that a certain magician, whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he

[212]Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* vol. 1 (New York: G. Lane & C. B. Tippett, 1846), 720; John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament,* vol. 2 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: William W. Woodward, 1811), 194.

[213]A. C. Headlam, "Theudas," in *A Dictionary of the Bible Dealing With its Language, Literature and Contents Including the Biblical Theology,* vol. 4, ed. James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 750.

> would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it; and many were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them; who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem. This was what befell the Jews in the time of Cuspius Fadus's government." (*Antiquities* 20.1.6)

5:37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

5:37 ***Comments -*** *Eusebius* (A.D. 260-340) quotes *Josephus* in referring to this event as taking place during the time of Cyrenius, which scholars believe to be about A.D. 6. (*Ecclesiastical History* 1.5.3-6) According to Luke 2:1-2, Cyrenius was the governor of Syria at that time. *Eusebius* writes:

> "Flavius Josephus, the most celebrated of Hebrew historians, also mentions this census, which was taken during Cyrenius' term of office. In the same connection he gives an account of the uprising of the Galileans, which took place at that time, of which also Luke, among our writers, has made mention in the Acts, in the following words: 'After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away a multitude after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.' The above-mentioned author, in the eighteenth book of his Antiquities, in agreement with these words, adds the following, which we quote exactly: 'Cyrenius, a member of the senate, one who had held other offices and had passed through them all to the consulship, a man also of great dignity in other respects, came to Syria with a small retinue, being sent by C'sar to be a judge of the nation and to make an assessment of their property.' And after a little he says: 'But Judas, a Gaulonite, from a city called Gamala, taking with him Sadduchus, a Pharisee, urged the people to revolt, both of them saying that the taxation meant nothing else than downright slavery, and exhorting the nation to defend their liberty.' And in the second book of his History of the Jewish War, he writes as follows concerning the same man: 'At this time a certain Galilean, whose name was Judas, persuaded his countrymen to revolt, declaring that they were cowards if they submitted to pay tribute to the Romans, and if they endured, besides God, masters who were mortal.' These things are recorded by Josephus." (*Ecclesiastical History* 1.5.3-6, see also *Josephus*, *Antiquities* 18.1)

In this parallel passage of *Antiquities of the Jews*, *Josephus* explains that there were three major sects of the Jews, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes. A fourth group that arose for a short period of time was led by this man named Judas.

> "But of the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy, Judas the Galilean was the author. These men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty, and say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord. They also do not value dying any kinds of death, nor indeed do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man lord. And since this immovable resolution of theirs is well known to a great many, I shall speak no further about that matter; nor am I afraid that any thing I have said of them should be disbelieved, but rather fear, that what I have said is beneath the resolution they show when they undergo pain. And it was in Gessius Florus's time that the nation began to grow mad with this distemper, who was our procurator, and who occasioned the Jews to go wild with it by the abuse of his authority, and to make them revolt from the Romans. And these are the sects of Jewish philosophy." (*Antiquities* 18.1.6)

Josephus made numerous references to a man named Judas.

> There was also Judas, the son of that Ezekias who had been head of the robbers; which Ezekias was a very strong man, and had with great difficulty been caught by Herod. This Judas, having gotten together a multitude of men of a profligate character about Sepphoris in Galilee, made an assault upon the palace [there,] and seized upon all the weapons that were laid up in it, and with them armed every one of those that were with him, and carried away what money was left there; and he became terrible to all men, by tearing and rending those that came near him; and all this in order to raise himself, and out of an ambitious desire of the royal dignity; and he hoped to obtain that as the reward not of his virtuous skill in war, but of his extravagance in doing injuries. (*Antiquities* 17.10.5)
>
> "And besides this, the sons of Judas of Galilee were now slain; I mean of that Judas who caused the people to revolt, when Cyrenius came to take an account of the estates of the Jews, as we have showed in a foregoing book." (*Antiquities* 20.5.2)

As *Eusebius* says above, *Josephus* again refers to Judas in his *War of the Jews*.

> "In Sepphoris also, a city of Galilee, there was one Judas (the son of that arch-robber Hezekias, who formerly overran the country, and had been subdued by king Herod); this man got no small multitude together, and brake open the place where the royal armor was laid up, and armed those about him, and attacked those that were so earnest to gain the dominion." (*Wars* 2.4.1)
>
> "And now Archelaus's part of Judea was reduced into a province, and Coponius, one of the equestrian order among the Romans, was sent as a procurator, having the power of [life and] death put into his hands by Caesar. Under his administration it was that a certain Galilean, whose name was Judas, prevailed with his countrymen to revolt, and said they were cowards if they would endure to pay a tax to the Romans and would after God submit to mortal men as their lords. This man was a teacher of a peculiar sect of his own, and was not at all like the rest of those their leaders." (*Wars* 2.8.1)
>
> "In the mean time, one Manahem, the son of Judas, that was called the Galilean, (who was a very cunning sophister, and had formerly reproached the Jews under Cyrenius, that after God they were subject to the Romans,) took some of the men of note with him, and retired to Masada, where he broke open king Herod's armory, and gave arms not only to his own people, but to other robbers also." (*Wars* 2.17.8)
>
> "The others readily complied with their petition, sent to them Gorion, the son of Nicodemus, and Ananias, the son of Sadduk, and Judas, the son of Jonathan, that they might give them the security Of their right hands, and of their oaths; after which Metilius brought down his soldiers; which soldiers, while they were in arms, were not meddled with by any of the seditious, nor was there any appearance of treachery; but as soon as, according to the articles of capitulation, they had all laid down their shields and their swords, and were under no further suspicion of any harm, but were going away, Eleazar's men attacked them after a violent manner, and encompassed them round, and slew them, while they neither defended themselves, nor entreated for mercy, but only cried out upon the breach of their articles of capitulation and their oaths. And thus were all these men barbarously murdered, excepting Metilius; for when he entreated for mercy, and promised that he would turn Jew, and be circumcised, they saved him alive, but none else." (*Wars* 2.17.10)

5:36-37 ***Comments -*** Historians find a problem with Luke's statements in these two verses when they read *Josephus*, who says that the revolt of Judas took place under Cyrenius (about A.D. 6) (*Antiquities* 18.1.1), while the insurrection of Theudas took place under Fadus, the procurator of Judea (about A.D. 45), during the reign of the emperor Claudius, (reigned

A.D. 41-54) (*Antiquities* 20.5.1). Historians are further confused when modern scholarship dates this speech by Gamaliel at A.D. 34 to 37.

Numerous explanations have been given in an attempt to resolve this apparent discrepancy of dates. However, it is important to note that Luke, who wrote much earlier than *Josephus*, was not able to use this Jewish historian as a source, since *The Wars of the Jews* was published in A.D. 77-78 and *The Antiquities of the Jews* was published about A.D. 94. Luke's sources are not indicated in the book of Acts.[214]

Some scholars believe that either Luke or *Josephus* was mistaken in his chronology. John Gill suggests several explanations to this text. He says that verse 36 is not a quote from Gamaliel, but rather an insert from Luke, who was writing after A.D. 45. Gill suggests that the rendering "After this man rose up Judas" could read "Besides this man rose up Judas," or "Before this man rose up Judas." Gill says that some scholars even suggest that the names of Theudas and Judas should be switched in order to improve the chronology of the text by making Judas come before Theudas.[215]

Adam Clarke quotes Bishop Pearce as saying that Theudas and Judas were one and the same person. He bases this argument on the fact that Judas (not Iscariot) was also called Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus in Scripture (Matt 10:3, Jn 14:22, Mk 3:18-19).[216] This would mean that the text of Acts 5:36-37 refers to two events in the life of one individual.

Perhaps the most common explanation given by scholars for this discrepancy is that the name Theudas was a common name and could have referred to a difference person and a different event that occurred much earlier than A.D. 45. This explanation is supported by the fact that *Josephus* described Judea as a place of much insecurity, with "ten thousand other disorders" and "full of robberies."

> "Now at this time there were ten thousand other disorders in Judea, which were like tumults, because a great number put themselves into a warlike posture, either out of hopes of gain to themselves, or out of enmity to the Jews . . ." (*Antiquities* 17.10.4)
>
> "And now Judea was full of robberies . . ." (*Antiquities* 17.10.8)

This explanation is also supported by the fact that *Josephus* makes a reference to Judas the son of Hezekias (*Wars* 2.4.1) and another reference to Judas the son of Jonathan (*Wars* 2.17.10), both being robbers. Judas is also called a Galilean (*Wars* 2.17.8) as well as a Gaulonite from a city called Gamala (*Antiquities* 18.1.1). Thus, it is possible that another rebellious Theudas existed.

Horatio Hackett says, "Josephus gives an account of four men named Simon who followed each other within forty years, and of three named Judas within ten years, who were all instigators of rebellion."[217] Origen (A.D. 185-254), in his work entitled *Against Celsus*, believed that Theudas lived before the birth of Christ and that this text is perfectly accurate the way Luke records it.

---

[214]"Flavius Josephus," F. L. Cross, and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* revised (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 759.

[215]John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament,* vol. 2 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: William W. Woodward, 1811), 195.

[216]Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* vol. 1 (New York: G. Lane & C. B. Tippett, 1846), 720.

[217]Horatio B. Hackett, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* in *An American Commentary on the New Testament,* ed. Alvah Hovey (Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, c1882), 82.

> "But since it is in the spirit of truth that we examine each passage, we shall mention that there was a certain Theudas among the Jews before the birth of Christ, who gave himself out as some great one, after whose death his deluded followers were completely dispersed. And after him, in the days of the census, when Jesus appears to have been born, one Judas, a Galilean, gathered around him many of the Jewish people, saying he was a wise man, and a teacher of certain new doctrines. And when he also had paid the penalty of his rebellion, his doctrine was overturned, having taken hold of very few persons indeed, and these of the very humblest condition." (*Against Celsus* 1.57)

5:38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

5:39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

5:40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

5:41-42 **Conclusion: Church Growth in Jerusalem –** Acts 5:41-42 serves as the conclusion to the third narrative block (2:1-5:42) as it records the establishment and growth of the early church in Jerusalem. This verse testifies of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem. It also testifies of the fulfillment of a secondary prophetic utterance exclusive to Acts 2:1-5:42 in which the early church spoke in tongues in 2:1-4. After Peter's sermon, he charged the people in 2:38 to repent and be baptized and receive the gift of the out pouring of the Holy Spirit as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. In fulfillment of Acts 2:38, many people in Jerusalem believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 5:41-42 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

> Exegetical Idea – The disciples fulfilled Jesus' apostolic commission by boldly preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Jerusalem, rejoicing amidst persecutions, and authenticating the church.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because the disciples fulfilled Jesus' apostolic commission by boldly preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Jerusalem, rejoicing amidst persecutions, and authenticating the church,* God has anointed the church to fulfill Jesus' apostolic commission by bolding preaching the Gospel while rejoicing amidst persecutions.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church to fulfill Jesus' apostolic commission by bolding preaching the Gospel while rejoicing amidst persecutions*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by bolding preaching the Gospel as they rejoice amidst persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

5:42 ***Comments -*** Acts 5:42 tells us how the apostles applied the two-fold principle of teaching and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people in Jerusalem. Jesus followed this pattern of ministry wherever he went, as the Gospels reveal (Matt 9:35; 11:1, Mk 6:6).

The three key words, teaching, preaching, and healing, reveal the method that Jesus used when He began to minister to people. He first taught the people God's word, then He proclaimed how God had sent Him to establish the Kingdom of God in their lives, and thirdly, He was able to heal those who received His words.

The Church's Structure
(The Development of the Five-Fold Ministries and Office of the Deacon)

The distinctive feature of church development in Acts 6:1-11:26 is an emphasis upon the structure of the five-fold ministry and the office of the deacon. The Lord Jesus Christ appointed the first twelve apostles during His earthly ministry. The first deacons were appointed in 6:1-6. Philip the evangelist (21:8) preaches the Gospel in Samaria and Judea (8:4-40). The office of the teacher is reflected in the work of Barnabas and Saul as they taught the believers in Antioch for a year (11:25-26), although the office of the teacher is first designated in 13:1. The office of the New Testament prophet has emerged during this phase of the church's development, first revealed when Agabus the prophet travels from Jerusalem to Antioch with a prophetic word (11:27-30). The continual need for the endorsement of the church in Jerusalem (8:14; 11:11:2, 22; 15:4), where James the brother of the Lord served as the first bishop (12:17; 15:13), confirms that the office of the pastor is also established. (During their later missionary journeys, Barnabas and Saul began to appoint elders as they established churches, from which group were appointed bishops over these churches.) Thus, the five-fold ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastors, and teachers (Eph 4:11) is established in the church during the period covered by Acts 6:1-11:26.

6:1-9:31 **The Witness of Church Growth in Judea/Samaria (Indoctrination) –** While Acts 2:1-5:42 records the birth and growth of the Church in Jerusalem for the Jews, Acts 6:1-9:31 gives the testimony of the expansion of the church into Judea and Samaria as the Lord justifies (authenticates) its role in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles through the anointing of the Holy Spirit and signs and miracles. Stephen's bold speech to the Sanhedrin and subsequent stoning gave rise to the spreading of the church into Judea and Samaria. Therefore, Acts 6:1-9:31 serves as the testimony of the spread of the Gospel into the regions of Judea and Samaria in obedience to Jesus' charge to the church in Acts 1:8.

The plot of this section begins by establishing the greater setting as the apostles commission the first deacons so they can fulfill their own public ministries (6:1-7). Thus, we observe the establishment of the ministry of helps within the body of Christ. Acts 6:8-8:1a records the public ministry, arrest, trial, and stoning of Stephen, the first martyr of the Church as he delivers the major speech of this section. This speech occasioned the spread of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem. The plot develops with the scattering of disciples into Palestine because of persecution fueled by the zeal of Saul of Tarsus (8:1b-4) as Philip the evangelist takes the Gospel into Samaria and Gaza (8:5-40). The narrative plot reaches its climax as Saul of Tarsus is converted on his way to persecute the church in Damascus through a divine encounter (9:1-25). The resolution to this plot is reached as Saul becomes a leading witness to the Gospel (9:26-30). This section concludes as the first persecutions against the early church cease and the church spreads into all of Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria (9:31).

Literary Evidence for the Theme – This section opens and closes with references to the multiplication of the disciples. The Greek word πληθύνω (to multiply) is used five times in

the book of Acts to describe this multiplication (6:1, 7; 7:17; 9:31; 12:24), with three of these uses opening and closing this section.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 6:1-9:31 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

> Exegetical Idea – The disciples were anointed to preach the Gospel accompanied with signs and wonders as God authenticated the church to those throughout Judea/Samaria in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because the disciples were anointed to preach the Gospel accompanied with signs and wonders as God authenticated the church to those throughout Judea/Samaria in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has authenticated the church with the anointing of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church with the anointing of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every anointed child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by preaching the Gospel with signs following through the anointing of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

a) The Greater Setting: Commission of the First Deacons	6:1-7
b) Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin	6:8-8:1a
c) The Spread of the Gospel into Judea and Samaria	8:1b-9:30
d) Conclusion: Church Growth in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria	9:31

6:1-7 **The Greater Setting: Commission of the First Deacons –** Acts 6:1-7 serves as an introduction to the fourth block of the book of Acts, which records the church's spread out of Jerusalem and into Judea and Samaria. Acts 6:1-7 establishes the greater setting for the spread of the early church into Judea and Samaria by recording the testimony of the appointment of the first deacons in the early Church. This passage records the time and place and atmosphere/mood surrounding the first spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem. Thus, this setting of church growth in Jerusalem prepares the reader for the events recorded in 6:8-9:31, namely the speech of Stephen martyrdom that occasioned the dispersal of the Church beyond Jerusalem. As a result, Philip delivered the first evangelist work in Samaria and Galilee, and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus prepares the reader for the fourth block of Acts that records the spread of Christianity from Antioch of Syria to Rome. These three individuals and their testimonies occasioned the key events that led to the spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem and throughout Judea and Samaria.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – The theme of Acts 6:1-7 is the selection of the first deacons in the early church. This new order within the church freed the apostles to take the Gospel beyond Jerusalem. This passage serves to introduce Stephen, who is the main character in the passage that follows. His speech and martyrdom occasion the church's first wave of persecutions that leads to the spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem. Thus, Acts 6:1-7 provides the great setting of the third block of Acts.

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the structure of Acts 6:1-7, which serves as an introduction to the third block of the book of Acts. This passage contains an *inclusion* as a literary device to define its structure. The words πληθύνω and

μαθητής are used in 6:1 and 6:7 to form this *inclusion* as both verses explicitly describe the growth of the early church in Jerusalem.

Acts 6:7 describes the growth of the Church in Jerusalem as a result of Peter's sermons and testimony before the Sanhedrin. The church took its position of unity and power as it proclaimed the Gospel with signs and wonders and the propagation of the Word of God. This verse supports the theme of the indoctrination of the early Church as the Word of God increased in Jerusalem.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 6:1-7 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

> Exegetical Idea – The Holy Spirit anointed disciples to serve the body of Christ so that the apostles could dedicate themselves to prayer and ministry of the word and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit anointed disciples to serve the body of Christ so that the apostles could dedicate themselves to prayer and ministry of the word and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* the Holy Spirit has anointed believers to serve the body of Christ so that the five-fold ministry can attend to preaching the Gospel and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit has anointed believers to serve the body of Christ so that the five-fold ministry can attend to preaching the Gospel and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, believers are to be filled with the Spirit and serve the body of Christ so that the five-fold ministry can attend to preaching the Gospel and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

The Ministry of the Helps in the Old and New Testaments - The story of the first election of deacons is an example of a need arising and being met in the New Testament Church. Note how the leaders dealt with the situation by working together. Why did they decide to structure the leadership of the church with the new office of a deacon; perhaps because this was not a new concept for leadership to the people of Israel?

Note how Joshua ministered unto Moses in Exodus 24:13, "And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God." In the ministry of the Tabernacle and the Temple, the Levites were called to serve and minister to the priests. In 1 Kings 19:19-21, Elisha began to minister unto Elisha. In 2 Kings 4:8-11, we see that the Shunamite woman ministered unto Elisha, the man of God. Gehazi became the minister to Elisha. John Mark was chosen to minister unto Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:5). Paul had companions and fellow ministers who often took care of him and others. Thus, the office of a deacon was not an entirely new concept, but rather a modification of the office of an assistant to a leader or a man of God.

The selection of these deacons marks the next generation of Church leaders. Mike Murdock said that a champion is not made in the boxing ring; rather, he is simply recognized in the ring.[218] In other words, a champion is such because of the hard work and training that he has been through and not just because he fights in the ring. A mother does not become a mother because someone calls her a mother. She becomes so because she has gone through labor

[218]Mike Murdock, interviewed by Benny Hinn, *This is Your Day* (Irving, Texas), on Trinity Broadcasting Network (Santa Ana, California), television program.

and travail and the pains of childbirth. In a similar way, new levels of church leadership are not simply imparted in a day, but are born in one's life through time and diligence. The laying on of hands may impart an anointing as a seed is planted in the ground, but promotion comes through nurturing that seed. For example, Paul the apostle was recognized as an apostle to the Gentiles many years after he had laboured and toiled in the field. In Act 13, the church at Antioch laid hands upon Paul and Barnabas as an act of appointing and recognizing them as apostles. Paul had spent thirteen years previously labouring in Syria and Cilicia (Gal 1:21).

6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

6:1 **"And in those days" -** ***Comments*** **–** In Acts 6:1, Luke uses the near demonstrative pronoun οὗτος to refer to the event that immediately precedes this movement in the narrative plot. The phrase "in these days" refers to the time when the Gospel was being freely declared throughout the city of Jerusalem. In other words, the disciples in Jerusalem were freely worshipping in the Temple and gathering together in private homes and preaching the Gospel. The phrase "in those days" is used on three occasions in the book of Acts (1:15; 6:1; 11:27) for the purpose of describing the setting for the narrative material that follows. This phrase is used on three occasions in the book of Acts to mark the super-structure of the book (1:15; 6:1; 11:27).

"when the number of the disciples was multiplied" - ***Comments*** **–** Luke is careful to note the number of people converted to faith in Christ Jesus in his account of how the Gospel spread throughout Jerusalem (Acts 2:2-5:42). On the day of Pentecost, three thousand were converted through Peter's sermon (2:41). This number grew to five thousand after Peter heals the man at the Gate Beautiful and preaches in the Temple (4:4).

Luke continues to weave this motif throughout the book of Acts. In his record of the appointment of the first deacons, he notes how the number of disciples continued to multiply (6:7). As the church preached the Gospel beyond Jerusalem and into Judea, many believed as Peter performed miracles in Lydda and Joppa (9:42). Luke notes that many believed through Paul's ministry, the Bereans (17:12), the Corinthians (18:8). Luke describes that thousands of Jews that were converted during Paul's three missionary journeys (21:20). Luke sometimes describes church growth by saying the Word of God was spreading and growing throughout certain regions (6:7; 8:14; 11:1; 12:24; 13:44, 48-49; 17:11; 19:10, 20).

"there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" - ***Comments*** **–** Acts 6:1 records the first reference to non-Jews embracing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. While the apostles had not yet reached out to the Greeks and Gentiles, the early church seems to have embraced those in Jerusalem who accepted the Gospel. After all, there were Greek proselyte attending Jewish synagogues throughout the world.

6:1 ***Comments*** **-** Acts 6:1 reveals an early division in the Church at Jerusalem between the views of the Greeks and the Jews. This division is seen later in Paul's ministry to the Gentiles as he made a number of efforts to reconcile their differences in order to maintain unity within the local churches and in the overall body of Christ. Perhaps the greatest example of Paul's efforts to unite these two cultures is seen in his collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem. This topic is discussed in Acts 24:17, Romans 15:26-28, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 and 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15. Paul also states in several of his epistles that in Christ Jesus there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek (Gal 3:28, Col 3:11).

6:2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

6:2 **"Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said"** – ***Comments*** **-** Acts 6:2 is the first time that the phrase "the Twelve" is used outside of the Gospels. This phrase very likely includes the election of Mathias (Acts 1:26). We find this phrase applied only one other time when Paul will use it in his first epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15:5).

6:2 **"It is not reason that we should leave the word of God"** – ***Comments*** **-** Peter responded to the request of the Greeks in caring for their widows by first establishing the priorities of the Twelve. He explained that they could not leave off the proclamation of the Gospel as Jesus had commanded them. He has once went back to fishing after Jesus' resurrection, only to be loving redirected back into the full-time ministry on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Peter would not easily forget the lesson that Jesus taught him as He told Peter three times to feed His sheep. We read in Acts 5:42 how "daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." This verse serves to sum up the "witnessing and teaching" of the apostles, which activity has already filled the first five chapters of the book of Acts.

6:3 **"and serve tables" –** ***Comments*** **-** The phrase "serve tables" suggests that the major focus of the Church's daily ministry to the widows was in providing their daily necessities, such as food.

6:3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

6:3 "**of honest report" –** ***Comments*** **-** Sad to say, even in the early Church, honesty was not found in the heart of every believer. As the believers were to look out for seven men who were honest, this verse tells us that honesty is recognizable. You can spend time working with someone and see honesty within their character.

6:3 **"full of the Holy Ghost" –** ***Comments*** **-** The Greek text leaves out the word "Holy" and only uses "Spirit" (Ghost). However, we know from the context of this passage, especially Acts 6:5, that it is a reference to the Holy Spirit.

The attribute of being full of the Holy Ghost is recognizable in the life of the believer. Someone who is filled with the Spirit is filled with joy and has a song in their heart.[219] They are thankful at all times, as we read in Ephesians 5:18-20, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;"

6:3 ***Comments*** **-** The selection of the first seven deacons in the church at Jerusalem was based upon two fundamental outward manifestations. They were to be full of the Holy Spirit and full of wisdom. These characteristics were the outward testimony of their sincere faith and devotion to Christ. This phrase stands equivalent to that used in Acts 6:5, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and Acts 6:8, "full of faith and power," and Acts 11:24, "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."

[219]Kenneth Hagin, *Following God's Plan For Your Life* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1993, 1994), 26.

The selection of the first seven disciples is an illustration of Paul's standard of qualifications recorded in 1 Timothy 3:10, "And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless."

These apostles were very careful to choose out seven men of good report, already proven to be faithful. Romans 12:11 gives us a similar description of such virtues, saying, "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;" One who is not slothful in business is someone who has the wisdom to manage finances well, while being honest when handling money. The phrase "fervent in spirit" means "filled with the Spirit."

6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

6:4 **"and to the ministry of the word"** - ***Comments –*** The ministry of the Word includes witnessing, teaching, preaching, and healing, as Matthew testified saying, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." (Matt 4:23) We see the apostles ministering in this manner in Acts 2-5.

6:4 ***Comments –*** Acts 6:4 brings out the importance of prayer and the ministry of the Word of God in the life of those who serve Him. The duties of this world tend to choke out the Word of God and quieten the voice of the Holy Spirit in our personal lives. The apostle Peter and the other church leaders needed time with the Lord in order to hear from God and serve Him. The two-fold emphasis of prayer and ministry is seen in the Song of Solomon where God's child is exhorted to retreat to the garden of prayer and solitude, then return to the labour of the Lord's vineyard. Every believer should have a place of prayer in order to experience the Lord so that he can go forth and minister under the anointing. In Luke 10:38-42 Jesus corrects Martha on the importance of giving God's Word priority in one's life. Jesus then instructs the disciples on prayer (Lk 11:1-13). Jesus concludes His instructions on prayer by telling them to ask the Heavenly Father to give them the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Peter clearly understood the importance of prayer and the Word of God in order to stay filled with the Holy Spirit for ministry.

6:5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

6:5 ***Comments -*** F. F. Bruce says the seven deacons listed in Acts 6:5 had Greek names.[220] This implies that they were Greek converts called out to assist the Grecian widows. If not Greek by birth, they were Greek-speaking.

We can also comment on the order in which they are listed. As is typical of biblical lists of names, such as with the twelve apostles (Matt 10:1-4, Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:12-16, Acts 1:13), the more prominent names are listed first. We know that Stephen, listed first, later received importance as the first martyr of the Church (Acts 6:8-8:1a). Philip, listed second, received his prominence as the first person to hold the office of an evangelist in the Church (Acts 8:1b-40). The other five are not mentioned further in Scriptures. However, we do find the listed in the writings of the early Church fathers. Hippolytus mentions them in his writing *The Same Hippolytus on the Seventy Apostles.* He tells us that they were among the seventy disciples referred to in Luke 10:1.

"6. Stephen, the first martyr.
7. Philip, who baptized the eunuch.

[220]F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), 58.

8. Prochorus, bishop of Nicomedia, who also was the first that departed, believing together with his daughters.
9. Nicanor died when Stephen was martyred.
10. Timon, bishop of Bostra.
11. Parmenas, bishop of Soli.
12. Nicolaus, bishop of Samaria." (*Appendix to the Works of Hippolytus 49: The Same Hippolytus on the Seventy Apostles* 6-12) (*ANF* 5)

Nicolas, the proselyte of Antioch, is mentioned last, perhaps because he is identified by most of the early Church fathers as the founder of the Nicolaitans, a cult that the Lord Jesus Christ rebuked in John's epistles to the seven churches of Asia Minor (Rev 2:6, 15). This cult practiced fornication participated in pagan practices, such as eating meats offered unto idols.

The birth of the church in Antioch is mentioned in Acts 11:19-30. An early reference to Antioch in Acts 6:5 is a foreshadowing to its upcoming role in the growth of the early Church. This church also served to send out Paul and Barnabas into the mission field and as Paul's lifetime home church.

6:6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

6:6 ***Comments –*** The practice of setting apart ministers with the laying on of hands happened throughout the New Testament. For example, Paul and Barnabas were set apart by the church in Antioch for missionary work (Acts 13:1-3). Paul reminds Timothy of his ordination (1 Tim 4:14, 2 Tim 1:6). Paul gives Timothy guidelines for the laying on of hands (1 Tim 5:22). The laying on of hands is one of the six foundational doctrines of the Scriptures according to Hebrews 6:1-2.

6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

6:7 **"And the word of God increased"** - ***Comments -*** Perhaps the phrase "and the word of God spread" is more descriptive of Acts 6:7. How did it spread: though witnessing, teaching, and ministering by more and more people being converted.

6:7 ***Comments -*** When the Word increased, there was an increase in converts. When it increases in our lives, things begin to happen, because the Word cleanses us so that we are able to walk in fellowship with the Lord (Jn 15:3). The church was blessed in the ministry of Word, and it was able to increase. We are to desire the sincere milk of the Word of God in order that we may grow (1 Pet 2:2).

6:8-8:1a **Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin –** Acts 6:8-8:1a records Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin. The importance of this testimony is the fact that his speech and death causes the spread of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem. This section opens with a brief description of Stephen's public ministry that occasioned his arrest (6:8-10). He delivers the longest speech recorded in the book of Acts by giving a brief history of the Lord's redemption for Israel and their continual rebellion, culminating with the crucifixion of the Messiah (6:11-7:53). The response of the Sanhedrin was to stone Stephen in the heat of their anger (7:54-8:1a).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 6:8-8:1a emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Stephen boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst signs and wonders, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders who killed him.

Theological Idea – *Because Stephen boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst signs and wonders, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders who killed him,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declare that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition, in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Occasion: The Anointing of Stephen's Public Ministry	6:8-10
(2) Stephen's Speech (Prophecy of Israel's Rejection of the Gospel)	6:11-7:53
(3) Conclusion: The Response of the Sanhedrin: Stephen is Stoned	7:54-8:1a

6:8-10 **The Occasion: The Anointing of Stephen's Public Ministry –** Acts 6:8-10 provides a brief description of Stephen's public ministry that occasioned his arrest. The Holy Spirit confirmed the Gospel through His anointing and working of miracles. Stephen's testimony confirming the resurrection of Jesus Christ created an occasion to have him arrested and illegally tried by the Sanhedrin.

6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

6:9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

6:10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

6:11-7:53 **Stephen's Sermon –** Acts 6:11-7:53 records the testimony of Stephen's sermon before the Sanhedrin. This speech occasioned the spread of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem. In his speech, Stephen prophesies concerning Israel's rejection of the Gospel, preparing for its spread to the Gentile nations.

How Did Luke Receive the Text of Stephen's Sermon? - One must ask the question of how the content of Stephen's sermon was handed down to Luke, the author of Acts. We can be almost certain that Saul of Tarsus was present in this meeting. So, he could have been the one to give Luke the content of this sermon directly to Luke. A second possibility is that Stephen's sermon existed in some written form and that Luke used a copy while gathering testimonies of the early Church. Certainly the early Church would have been very interested in preserving the story of the first Christian martyr, and one of them could have written it down. A third possibility exists that in that the Sanhedrin could have assigned someone to write down the words of this "trial" and archived it in Jerusalem for Luke to find access to at a later time. Even today, our courts are set up to record every word spoken in them during the course of a trial. However, no physical evidence exists to suggest either one of these three possibilities are certain.

6:11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

6:12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,

6:13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

6:14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

6:11-14 ***Comments –*** In Acts 6:11-14, false witnesses accuse Stephen of blaspheming Moses, God, the Temple, and the Law, and following Jesus of Nazareth. Stephen's sermon will directly address these false allegations by discussing God, Moses, the holy Tabernacle and Temple, and the Law. Stephen first summaries God's election of Israel through the faith of Abraham and the other patriarchs (7:2-19). He describes how God raised up Moses to lead Israel out of Egyptian bondage (7:20-38), pointing out Israel's continual rebellion against their leader and failure to worship the Lord in the Tabernacle (7:39-45a) and the Temple (7:45b-50). Stephen concludes by accusing these Jewish leaders of committing the very sin of which he is accused in rejecting Jesus as the Messiah (7:51-53).

6:15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

6:15 ***Comments -*** Stephen's face shown as an angel of God because of the anointing of the presence of the Lord. We find a similar reference to the face of Moses as it shone because he had been in the presence of God on Mount Sinai in Exodus 34:29-30, "And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him."

Paul makes a reference to this event in his second epistle to the Corinthians as he compares the glory of the new covenant with the old; for there was no single event that magnified the glory of the old covenant like the time when Moses' face shown (2 Cor 3:7-8). However, every servant of Christ Jesus has received a more glorious calling than under the Old Covenant, which is clearly illustrated in the glory that shown on the face of Stephen.

7:1 Then said the high priest, Are these things so?

7:2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

7:2 ***Comments –*** Peter opens his first speech in Acts 1:16 saying, "men and brethren." He opens his speech in Acts 2:14 by addressing those present, "the men of Judaea, and all those dwelling at Jerusalem." Peter opens his speech at Solomon's porch by saying, "men of Israel" (Acts 3:12). He addresses the Sanhedrin by saying, "rulers of the people and elders of Israel" (Acts 4:8). Stephen opens his speech in Acts 7:2 by saying, "brethren and fathers." Peter and James address the elders at the first council in Jerusalem by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 15:7, 13). Paul the apostle also begins his speeches in the same manner. He addresses the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 13:15). He spoke to the Athenians by saying, "men of Athens" (Acts 17:22). He spoke to the angry mob by saying, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." (Acts 22:1) Paul addressed the Sanhedrin by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 23:1).

7:3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

7:4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

7:4 ***Comments*** **-** F. F. Bruce says it is interesting to note that the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch in Genesis 11:26-32 is in closer textual agreement to the statement of Abraham leaving Haran after his father's death in Acts 7:4 than the Masoretic or Septuagint texts. He also refers Philo the Jew as a possible reference for this statement in Stephen's speech.[221]

> "Now it is not probable that any one of those persons who are acquainted with the law are ignorant that Abraham had previously migrated from Chaldaea when he came to live in Charran. But after his father died he then departed from this land of Chaldaea, so that he has now migrated from two different places." (*On the Migration of Abraham* 32)[222]

7:5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.

7:6 **"not so much as to set his foot on" –** ***Comments*** **-** The *YLT* reads, "not even a footstep." This phrase used by Stephen reminds us of the time when God commanded Abraham to walk through the land in the length and the breadth of it. Then He promised to give it to him (Gen 13:17). Yet, in Abraham's lifetime, this promise did not take place.

7:6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.

7:6 ***Comments*** **-** The Lord spoke to Abraham in Genesis 15:13 and said that his descendants would be afflicted in a foreign land for four hundred years, a statement repeated by Stephen the martyr in Acts 7:6. However, Exodus 12:40-41 says that the days were exactly four hundred and thirty years to the very day. Paul confirms the duration of four hundred and thirty years (Gal 3:17). An apparent discrepancy is seen between these two dates. There are several possible explanations for these two different time periods. The first explanation suggests that the four-hundred-year period may be approximate, or perhaps, the extra thirty years took place as the Pharaoh over Joseph gave the Israelites thirty years of peace, followed by four hundred years of affliction by the new king. Acts 7:6 says that the new king "entreat them evil four hundred years." Perhaps Israel stayed in Egypt four hundred and thirty years, but their afflictions lasted four hundred years.

Another possible explanation for this difference focuses upon how the Jews calculated this time frame. Paul dates the time between the Lord's promise to Abraham (Gen 12:7) and the giving of the Law (Ex $20:1_f$) at four hundred and thirty years in Galatians 3:16-17, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after." Paul is probably citing Exodus 12:40, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years." The statement in Exodus 12:40 dating Israel's sojourn in Egypt as four hundred and thirty years seems to exclude Abraham and Isaac and Jacob's sojourn in Canaan.

---

[221]F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), 130.

[222]C. D. Yonge, *The Works of Philo Judaeus, Contemporary of Josephus,* vol. 2 (London: George Bell & Sons, 1894), 82.

The ancient Jews struggled to reconcile the thirty-year time difference between Genesis 15:13 and Exodus 12:40. Josephus reflects the Jewish tradition that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sojourned in Canaan for two hundred and fifteen years; and the children of Israel sojourned in Egypt for an additional two hundred fifteen years. This adds up to four hundred thirty years. He writes, "They left Egypt in the month of Xanthicus, on the fifteenth day of the lunar month; four hundred and thirty years after our forefather Abraham came into Canaan, but two hundred and fifteen years only after Jacob removed into Egypt." (*Antiquities* 2.318) In his comments, Josephus seems to be following the reading of Exodus 12:40 in the *LXX,* "ἡ δὲ κατοίκησις τῶν υἱῶν Ισραηλ, ἣν κατῴκησαν ἐν γῇ Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ἐν γῇ Χανααν, ἔτη τετρακόσια τριάκοντα." (And the sojourning of the sons of Israel, which dwelt in Egypt and in Canaan, four hundred and thirty years.)

The Samaritan Pentateuch follows the reading of the *LXX* as well, saying, "And the sojourning of the children of Israel and of their fathers [which] they walked in the land of Canaan · · · in the land of Egypt thirty years and four hundred years." (author's translation)[223] Because scholars consider the Samaritan Pentateuch and the *LXX* more ancient than the fourth century A.D. Masoretic Text, some suggest the variant reading "of their fathers" and "in the land of Canaan" is original and was omitted from the later Masoretic Text. This view supports Paul's description in Galatians 3:17 of the time-period of four hundred thirty years beginning with Genesis 12:1 and ending with the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

The Book of Jubilees is believed to be a second century B.C. Jewish writing.[224] This ancient document says Abraham moved into the land of Canaan in the fortieth jubilee (*The Book of Jubilees* 13.8) (1,954 A.M.), Jacob moved to Egypt with his clan in the forty-fifty jubilee (*The Book of Jubilees* 42.20) (2,172 A.M.), and Moses received the Law in the forty-ninth jubilee (*The Book of Jubilees* 50.4) (2,410 A.M.).[225] These dates fall approximately within the time-frame of the two hundred and fifteen year period and the four hundred and thirty year period. It is rather easy to calculate the time from Abraham's entrance into Canaan until Jacob's exodus into Egypt; Abraham entered Canaan at the age of seventy-five (Gen 12:4); Isaac was born twenty-five years later (Gen 17:1, 21; 21:5); Esau and Jacob were born sixty years later (Gen 25:26); and Jacob entered Egypt one hundred thirty-seven years later (Gen 47:9). Thus, the addition of 25 + 60 + 137 = 122 years is very close to the two-hundred-fifteen-year period proposed by Josephus.

David Rohl believes the ten generations from Joseph in Egypt to Joshua in the wilderness recorded in 1 Chronicles 7:22-27 represent approximately two hundred years when assuming a generation is about twenty years.[226] Additional verses support the view of a shorter, two hundred fifteen year period in Egypt. The Lord told Abraham that his descendants be afflicted four hundred years, but will come out of bondage in the fourth generation (Gen 15:16). Stephen the martyr was more specific by saying, "That his seed should sojourn in a strange land" (Acts 7:6). This "strange land" may have included Canaan as well as Egypt. Since Isaac, as Abraham's seed, was born within thirty years of this prophecy (Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born), this leaves four hundred years until Israel's exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. The fourth

[223]Adolf Brüll, *Das samaritanische Targum zum Pentateuch, I. Anhang: Kritishe Studen über Osforder Manuscript-Fragmente* (Frankfurt: Verland von Wilhelm Erras, 1875), 79.

[224]R. H. Charles, trans., *The Book of Jubilees,* in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English With Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books*, vol. 2, ed. R. H. Charles, 1-82 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 1.

[225]R. H. Charles, trans., *The Book of Jubilees,* in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English With Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books*, vol. 2, ed. R. H. Charles, 1-82 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 32, 73, 81.

[226]David M. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1995), 331.

generation mentioned in Genesis 15:16 is named in the Scriptures as Jacob-Levi-Kohath-Amram-Moses (Ex 6:16-19, Num 3:17-19; 26:57-59, 1 Chron 6:1-3; 23:6, 12-13). It makes more sense to fit four generations into a two hundred fifteen year period than into four hundred or four hundred and thirty year period.

7:7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

7:8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

7:8 "And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac" – ***Comments* -** Acts 7:8 tells us how God gave to Abraham the covenant of circumcision and Abraham then begat Isaac. We immediately recognize in Acts 7:8 that Isaac was born as a part of the covenant that God made with Abraham. However, the type of covenant is significant because it helped produce the promised seed, a son. It takes sons to build a nation and not daughters. Circumcision has the physical effect of increasing the changes of a son.

It is interesting to note that Abraham and Sarah did not have a son until the time of Abraham's circumcision. God called him into the land of Canaan at the age of seventy-five. At that time God promised to make him a nation that would possess this land, but it was not until Abraham was circumcised at the age of ninety-nine that his wife conceived, which was twenty-four years later. For the Scriptures tell us that shortly after his circumcision Sarah conceived. Therefore, we must ask the question, "What is the relationship between circumcision and conception?" More particular, "What is the relationship between circumcision and giving birth to a son rather than a daughter?" For we know that in order to produce a nation a man must have a son. We read later how Isaac born two sons, and how Jacob bore twelve sons.

After my wife bore us two daughters, we inquired from others about a technique that insures a son. Although there are many ideas out there, we found one that made physiological sense. We were told to come together after ovulation, and not before, after the egg had been released on the fourteenth day of the menstrual cycle. This means that we were to come together after the fourteenth day and not before this day. The reasoning is rather simple. The male sperm are said to be stronger that the female sperm and are able to swim faster towards the egg. Thus, the male sperm arrive at the egg first. However, these male sperm have a much shorter lifespan than the female sperm simply because they have used up their energy resources faster. If a couple come together before ovulation, the male sperm have usually died by the time the egg reaches the fallopian tubes and the female sperm are the ones to fertilize the egg. But when the egg is waiting in the tubes, the male sperm reach it first and a male child is conceived.

7:9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,

7:10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

7:11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.

7:12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

7:13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

7:14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

7:14 ***Comments –*** Acts 7:14 numbers seventy-five people that migrated in Egypt while Exodus 1:5 says it was seventy people, "And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already." It is interesting to note that the *LXX* as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls use the number seventy-five in their texts: "But Joseph was in Egypt. And all the souls [born] of Jacob were seventy-five." (*Brenton*) Therefore, Stephen was most likely quoting from a version other than the Masoretic text.

7:15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,

7:16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.

7:17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

7:18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

7:19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

7:20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

7:21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

7:22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

7:23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

7:24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

7:25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.

7:25 ***Comments -*** Moses must have knew that somehow God was going to deliver Israel through his hands at the age of forty years old.

7:26 And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

7:27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

7:28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?

7:29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.

7:30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

7:30 ***Comments -*** The angel was manifested to Moses as fire, as we see in Hebrews 1:7, "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, *and his ministers a flame of fire*."

7:31 When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

7:32 Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

7:33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

7:34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

7:35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

7:35 ***Comments –*** We read about this story in Exodus 2:13-14, "And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known."

Through the course of Stephen's speech, he told three Old Testament stories: Abraham leaving Teran for Canaan, Joseph being sold into Egypt, and Moses delivering the children of Israel out of Egypt. These three Old Testament patriarchs are types and figures of New Testament salvation.

The nation of Israel rejected Moses' Law after the death of Moses and Joshua, as these Jews do in Acts 7:51, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

7:36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

7:37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

7:38 **"This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers" –** ***Comments -*** The Greek word εκκλησία, translated "church" in the New Testament, is also used in the *LXX* to denote the congregation of the children of Israel. The word literally means, "an assembly, or congregation." Thus, the church that is referred to in the New Testament is but an extension of the congregation of the children of Israel, particularly those who accepted Jesus as the Messiah. The early Christian converts saw themselves as connected with the "ekklesia" of

the Old Testament.[227] This is why Paul called the New Testament Church the "Israel of God" in his epistle to the Galatians (Gal 6:16).

7:38 **"who received the lively oracles to give unto us" - *Comments* -** The classical writers reveal that the concept of sacred mysteries being utters as divine oracles was practiced in the ancient world. Regarding the use of oracles, the ancient Greeks regarded divine oracles as a form of worship until the time of the Persian war (490-479 B.C.).[228] The temple of Apollo located at Delphi was famous in the ancient world for delivering oracles to men by those in a trance, or they interpreted dreams or patterns in nature.[229] The Greek historians Herodotus (484-425 B.C.)[230] and Plutarch (A.D. 46-100)[231] mention this place of oracles in their writings. While the Romans as a nation did not regard oracles as a religious practice, this custom continued within the Empire, but not without the contempt of the Romans.[232] This practice was later outlawed under the Roman emperor Theodosius (A.D. 379-385).[233] King Saul's visit to the witch of Endor shows its popularity among ancient eastern cultures (1 Sam 28:7-25). The damsel who prophesied over Paul and Barnabas in Philippi is an example of the proliferation of divination in the New Testament times (Acts 16:16-24). *The Sibylline Oracles,*[234] a collection of Greek oracles compiled by Jews and Christians in the early centuries before and after Christ, reflect the widespread popularity that the Sibyl prophetesses held in ancient Greek and Roman history. Regarding the concept of "mysteries" (μυστήριον) revealed through oracles, Plutarch, writing about the Pythian priestesses who prophesied at Delphi, speaks of "interpreters of the sacred mysteries."[235] Thus, when Paul refers to the mysteries hidden from the ages being revealed to the Church (Rom 16:25, 1 Cor 2:7, Eph 1:9; 3;3-4, 9; 6:19, Col 1:26; 2:2; 4:3, 1 Tim 3:9), or when Luke, Paul, and Peter speak of the "oracles" (λόγιον) of God (Acts 7:38, Rom 3:2, Heb 5:12,

---

[227]F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), 84.

[228]C. H. Prichard, "Oracle," in *A Dictionary of the Bible,* vol. 3, ed. James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 629.

[229]Ronald F. Youngblood, Herbert Lockyer, Sr., F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, eds., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary,* rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), s.v. "Oracle," Logos.

[230]Herodotus writes, ". . . and he [Dorieus] asked the Spartans for a company of folks, whom he took away as colonists; he neither enquired of the oracle at Delphi in what land he should plant his settlement, nor did aught else that was customary . . ." (*Histories* 5.42) See *Herodotus III*, trans. A. D. Godley, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1938), 46-47.

[231]Plutarch tells us that the Sibylline prophetesses of Delphi used poetic verses with their prophecies, saying, ". . . for when we drew near that part of the rock which joins to the senate-house, which by common fame was the seat of the first Sibyl that came to Delphi from Helicon, where she was bred by the Muses . . . Serapio made mention of certain verses of hers, wherein she had extolled herself as one that should never cease to prophesy even after her death . . ." (*Wherefore the Pythian Priestess Now Ceases to Deliver Her Oracles in Verse* 9) He later writes, ". . . but I am constrained to claim your first promise, to tell me the reason wherefore now the Pythian prophetess no longer delivers her oracles in poetic numbers and measures . . . and also the temple of Tellus, to which the oracle appertained, and where the answers were delivered in verses and song." (*Wherefore the Pythian Priestess Now Ceases to Deliver Her Oracles in Verse* 17) See William W. Goodwin, *Plutarch's Essays and Miscellanies,* vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1911), 77, 86-87.

[232]The Roman poet Lucan (A.D. 39-65) reflects the contempt for such oracles by the Romans when he writes, "They had now come to the Temple, the only one which among the Libyan nations the uncivilized Garamantes possess. There stands Jupiter, the foreteller of destiny, as they relate; but not either brandishing the lightnings or like to ours, but Ammon with crooked horns." (*Pharsalia* 9.593-598) See H. T. Riley, *The Pharsalia of Lucan* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), 359.

[233]C. H. Prichard, "Oracle," In *A Dictionary of the Bible,* ed. James Hastings (), 629.

[234]*The Sibylline Oracles,* translated by H. C. O. Lanchester, in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English With Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books*, vol. 2, ed. R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913).

[235]Plutarch writes, "The interpreters of the sacred mysteries acted without any regard to us, who desired them to contract their relation into as few words as might be, and to pass by the most part of the inscriptions." (*Wherefore the Pythian Priestess Now Ceases to Deliver Her Oracles in Verse* 2) See William W. Goodwin, *Plutarch's Essays and Miscellanies,* vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1911), 70.

1 Pet 4:11), they are speaking in a cultural language that the Greeks and Romans understood, where pagans frequently sought oracles through divine utterance at the temples to reveal hidden mysteries for their lives.

The reference to pillars and foundations of the Church in 1 Timothy 3:15 suggests that Paul had in mind the ancient Greek and Roman temples with their practice of divination, and that he compares this pagan scene of worship to the New Testament Church and the Holy Scriptures, which serve as its pillars and foundation.

7:39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

7:39 ***Comments*** **-** The phrase "in their hearts" means that it was an act of their own will in making a decision to reject God's will and pursue their own will. The Scriptures tell us that if we sin willfully, their remains no more pardon, but certain judgment (Heb 10:26-27). This is why God's judgment upon them when they turned was to destroy them in the wilderness. For when a person clearly hears God's will and turns his heart their remains no other option but chastisement and punishment.

7:40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

7:41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

7:42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

7:43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

7:44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

7:45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

7:45 ***Comments*** **-** In the Old Testament the Hebrew name יהושע (Joshua) means "Jehovah is salvation." In the New Testament the Greek name Ιησοϋς (Jesus) means "Savior" (Matt 1:21). Therefore, the Greek word for the name "Joshua" is Jesus. The name "Jesus" in this verse is a reference to Joshua. Twice in New Testament Joshua is referred to as Jesus, both here and in Hebrews 4:8, "For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day."

7:46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

7:47 But Solomon built him an house.

7:48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

7:49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?

7:50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

7:51 ***Comments –*** In Acts 7:51, Stephen accuses the Jewish leaders of resisting the Holy Ghost. Israel had resisted the Holy Spirit in that the prophets had prophesied under the anointing of the Spirit of God. Luke makes a similar connection to Old Testament Scripture and the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:16, "which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake . . ."

7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

7:53 ***Comments -*** In Acts 7:53, Stephen tells us that Moses received the Law by the hands of angels. Adam Clarke cites the Targum's paraphrase of 1 Chronicles 29:11, which mentions such intervention of angels, saying, "Thine, O Lord, is the magnificence; for thou hast created the world by thy great power, and by thy might hast led our fathers out of Egypt, and with great signs hast caused them to pass through the Red Sea. Thou hast appeared gloriously on Mount Sinai, *with troops of angels, in giving law to thy people . . .*'"[236] We find additional support from the Targum in several passages that refer to the angels who accompanied the Lord on Mt. Sinai: Deuteronomy 33:2, "And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them." Psalms 68:17, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place."

The *LXX* uses the word "angels" in Deuteronomy 33:2, "And he said, The Lord is come from Sina, and has appeared from Seir to us, and has hasted out of the mount of Pharan, with the ten thousands of Cades; on his right hand [were] his angels with him." (*Brenton*) Paul refers to angels whom God used to speak to Moses and give him the Laws of the Old Covenant, saying, "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." (Gal 3:19) The writer of Hebrews alludes to this event in which angels spoke to Moses in the giving of the Law in Hebrews 2:2, "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;"

7:54-8:1a **Conclusion: The Response of the Sanhedrin: Stephen is Stoned –** Acts 7:54-8:1a records the response of the Sanhedrin to Stephen's speech in which the Jewish leaders stone him. Thus, Stephen becomes the first martyr of the early church.

7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

7:56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

[236]Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, vol. 2 (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1837), 633.

7:55-56 ***Comments – Stephen's Vision of Jesus -*** It is interesting to note that Stephen recognized Jesus Christ as the Son of man when He saw Him standing at the right hand of the Father. Perhaps Jesus was telling Stephen that He too had suffered in His humanity, but was now glorified by the Father, and that Stephen, too, must suffer in order to be received up into eternal glory.

7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

7:58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

7:58 ***Comments -*** In his book *The Call,* Rick Joyner is told in a vision by Paul the apostle that the memory of the light that was on Stephen's face during his stoning carried Paul through many trials. Paul felt that Stephen has somehow died for him, so that he could see the true light.[237]

7:59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

7:60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

7:60 ***Comments –*** Luke uses the respectful term "fell asleep" to describe the death of Stephen, the first martyr of the New Testament church. This term for the sleep of the saints who have died was first used by the Lord Jesus Christ to describe Lazarus asleep in the tomb (John 11:11). In fact, this term can be found in the Old Testament (2 Sam 7:12, 1 Kings 1:21, Job 14:12, Ps 13:3; 76:5; 90:5, Jer 51:57, Dan 12:2). Therefore, Jesus may have picked up this term as an Old Testament description of death. The apostles Paul and Peter use this phrase in their epistles to describe the death of the saints (Acts 7:60, 1 Cor 11:30; 15:6, 18, 51, 1 Thess 4:13, 15; 5:10, 2 Pet 3:4). I believe that Luke used this term to describe the manner in which Stephen the martyr died. He gave up the ghost and fell down dead rather than having to be crushed and killed by those who were stoning him. In other words, the Lord delivered him from the extreme pain of death by stoning, although he did endure some of their stoning, as stated in the previous verse.

8:1b-9:30 **The Spread of the Gospel into Judea and Samaria –** Acts 8:1b-9:30 records the spread of the Gospel into Judea and Samaria, presenting two key events that testify to this expansion of the early church. The testimony of Philip the evangelist records the spread of the Gospel into Judea and Samaria after the early church scattered from Jerusalem because of Stephen's martyrdom (81b-40). The testimony of Saul's conversion and divine commission records a key event giving the church rest while preparing the reader for Paul's upcoming missionary journeys (9:1-30).

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the structure of Acts 8:1b-9:31. The opening verses mention the great persecution that broke out against the church in Jerusalem (8:1b-4), and the closing verses describe the rest that the churches in Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed as a result of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (9:31). Thus, these opening and closing verses form an *inclusion* in that they serve to introduce and conclude the plot of Acts 8:1b-9:31. In addition, the three subsections have conclusions with similar content. The testimony of Philip in Samaria concludes with a description of Peter and John preaching the Gospel throughout Samaria (8:25). The testimony of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch concludes with a description of Philip preaching the Gospel throughout Judea (8:40). The testimony of Saul's conversion concludes with a description of Paul testifying in Jerusalem (9:29-30).

[237]Rick Joyner, *The Call* (Charlotte, North Carolina: Morning Star Publications, 1999), 213-4.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 8:1b-9:30 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The church scattered throughout Judea and Samaria after Stephen's death, bolding testifying that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions, authenticating the church and being vindicated by the Lord in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the church scattered throughout Judea and Samaria after Stephen's death, bolding testifying that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions, authenticating the church and being vindicated by the Lord,* the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they boldly testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they boldly testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly testifying that Jesus Christ is Lord amidst opposition, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Witness of Philip the Evangelist	8:1b-40
(2) The Witness of Paul's Conversion	9:1-30

8:1b-40 **The Witness of Philip the Evangelist –** Acts 8:1b-40 records two testimonies of Philip the evangelist as he take the Gospel out of Jerusalem and into Samaria (8:5-25) and Judea (8:26-40). The spread of the Gospel into these regions was occasioned by the scattering of the church in Jerusalem because of Stephen's death (8:1b-4). Philip's testimony of the conversion of the Samaritans and the infilling of the Holy Spirit provides evidence of the spread of the Gospel into this region (8:5-25). Philip's testimony of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch records the preaching of the Gospel while in the southwest region of Palestine and into Galilee (8:26-40).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 8:1b-40 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Philip boldly testified in Judea/Samaria that Jesus Christ was Lord accompanied with signs and wonders, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Philip boldly testified in Judea/Samaria that Jesus Christ was Lord accompanied with signs and wonders, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ accompanied with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ accompanied with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the

mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Persecution and Scattering of the Early Church	8:1b-4
(b) The Witness of Philip the Evangelist in Samaria	8:5-25
(c) The Witness of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch	8:26-40

8:1b-4 **The Immediate Setting: Persecution and Scattering of the Early Church –** Acts 8:1b-4 provides the immediate setting for the spread of the Gospel into Judea and Samaria. It records the testimony of how Stephen's death gave rise to the persecution of the early Church. As a result, the church scattered abroad.

8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

8:1 **"And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem" –** ***Comments*** **-** Luke and Paul make a number of references to Paul's past efforts to persecute the Church of God (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2; 22:19-20, 1 Cor 15:9, Gal 1:13, 1 Tim 1:12-13, Phil 3:6). Luke writes in Acts 8:3, "As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." He again writes in Acts 9:1-2, "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." He records Paul's words in Acts 22:19-20, "And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:9, "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." He says in Philippians 3:6, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:12-13, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." Paul never forgot his aggression against the church, and worked hard to serve those whom he had wronged in the past. These memories must have impacted his efforts to serve the Lord with great zeal. He writes to the Philippians, saying, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Phil 3:13). Paul had to lay aside is past atrocities and focus his mind upon his divine duties at hand.

8:1 **"and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria" –** ***Comments*** **–** Luke makes a reference to this scattering later in Acts 11:19, "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."

8:1 **"except the apostles"** - ***Comments*** **-** Why did the Twelve apostles remain in Jerusalem which the believers scattered abroad? Perhaps they were still under the impression that the Gospel was for the Jews only, and not to the Gentiles, as we see in Acts 11:19, "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." Perhaps Peter's experience of being rebuked by Paul helped change the idea that the Gospels was for the Jews only (Gal 2:11-14). However, we do know that James, the brother of the

Lord, became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. This was a very strategic location for the leaders of the church, and this is probably the reason that the apostles stayed at Jerusalem. The Twelve understood themselves to be a part of the Jewish faith with its central focus of worship in Jerusalem.

8:2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

8:3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

8:5-25 **The Witness of Philip the Evangelist in Samaria –** Acts 8:5-25 records the testimony of Philip, perhaps the first evangelist, as he takes the Gospel to the region of Samaria.

8:5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

8:5 **"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria" –** ***Comments*** **-** The Jews normally did not mix with the Samaritans, so Philip's evangelism in Samaria broke Jewish tradition, as we read in John 4:9, "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." Jesus had commanded the apostles to begin evangelizing the Jews and avoid the Samaritans (Matt 10:5). However, after Pentecost, Jesus told the disciples to preach the Gospel "in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

8:5 **"and preached Christ unto them"** - ***Comments*** **-** Keep in mind that part of the Gospel message of Christ is deliverance from sickness as well as forgiveness of sins. Therefore, we see miracles in the preaching ministry of Philip.

8:6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

8:6 ***Comments*** **-** The Greek word ὄχλος (people) refers to a multitude of people. Where did this large multitude come from? How did the people know about this meeting? One evangelist concludes that Philip most likely began preaching in a public area to a small group of people. As miracles were demonstrated through the preaching of the Gospel, word spread from house to house and the meeting grew daily until the entire city was impacted.

8:7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8:8 And there was great joy in that city.

8:8 ***Comments*** **-** This same joy that the Samaritans experienced was also felt by the eunuch when he was saved in Acts 8:39, "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

8:9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

8:10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

8:11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

8:12 **"when they believed . . . they were baptized" – *Comments* –** Jesus said, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mk 16:15-16)

8:13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

8:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

8:14 **"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God"** - ***Comments* -** The seed of the Word of God brought salvation to Samaria, as Peter writes, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet 1:23) This seed is planted in the hearts of men through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Note that the city of Samaria had received the word of God. It does not say that some individual were saved, but that the city received the Word. In our modern civilized world, people value their freedom to make independent decisions apart from their family and peers. However, in the ancient world, and in many undeveloped nations, people still make decisions largely in groups. Wives and children often follow the husband and father in his decision to embrace a religious faith, and men often follow the village elders in similar decisions. This seems to be the mindset of these Samaritan people. The Samaritans chose to receive the Gospel as a corporate decision.

8:14 **"they sent them Peter and John"** – ***Comments* -** Peter and John were pillars in the church of Jerusalem, through whom God was working mighty signs and wonders. They were sent to Samaria for a specific purpose, to pray for these new believers to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (8:15).

8:15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

8:15 ***Comments* –** Peter and John prayed not that God would *give* the Holy Ghost, for the Spirit of God already dwelt in them; rather, they prayed that the Samaritans might *receive* the Holy Ghost. God is always ready to pour out His Spirit to those who will receive Him. It is man that must prepare himself to receive Him. We are to also pray that people might receive salvation because God has already done His part at Calvary.

8:16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

8:16 ***Comments* -** The Spirit of God had already come to dwell within these new believers in Samaria. Now, Peter and John had come to lay hands upon them so that the Spirit would *come upon* them and empower them for the work of the ministry through the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

8:17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

8:17 **"Then laid they their hands on them"** – ***Comments* -** In Acts 8:17, the gift of Holy Ghost came by the laying on of hands. This is one of the six foundational doctrines of the Scriptures listed in Hebrews 6:1-2, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead

works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and *of laying on of hands*, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

8:17 **"and they received the Holy Ghost"** – ***Comments –*** Jesus said, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts 1:5,)

8:14-17 ***Comments - Peter and John Lay Hands on the Coverts of Samaria -*** The story of Peter and John coming down from Jerusalem in order to lay hands upon these new converts is important in that it shows us that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is a clear and distinct experience from salvation. Evidently Philip was anointed as an evangelist to bring people to salvation; but Peter and John were anointed to lay hands upon those who had received Christ and had been water baptized in order for them to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We see this distinct also in Acts 19:1-7 when Paul prayed for the believers at Ephesus. Paul had asked these disciples if they had "received the Holy Ghost since ye believed" since it was a separate experience.

Although someone receives Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and the Holy Spirit indwells His heart, it does not mean that this person has invited the Holy Spirit to come be with him and fill him and anoint him. The Holy Spirit is a separate person to Jesus Christ, just as Jesus Christ is distinct from God the Father. They are three but one. As Christians are to invite the Holy Spirit to become an intimate part of our lives.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit as Evidence of One's Conversion – Peter and John came to Samaria to lay hands upon these new converts from Philip's evangelist work so that they will be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues as undeniable evidence of their salvation. Throughout the book of Acts, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues provides this evidence of true conversion (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 8:14-17; 11:15-18, 23; 15:7-8; 19:1-7). This connection between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and conversion is established in Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost when he quotes the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16-21), which says, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh . . ." Later in Acts 11:15-18, Peter provides undeniable evidence of the conversion of Cornelius and his household through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. For this reason, Paul asks the question in Acts 19:2, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed," simply because he wanted evidence of the conversion of the Ephesians. Paul makes a similar association in the epistle of Galatians 3:1-5; 4:5-6 concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit as the outward evidence of one's salvation.

8:18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

8:18 ***Comments -*** What did Simon see with his physical eyes? The answer is that he saw the gift of healings in operation and heard and saw the gift of tongues. He also probably saw other visible manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For example, he heard the demonic spirits as they were being cast out. Simon even saw the "joy" being expressed in the lives of the new believers (Acts 8:8).

I have seen misguided and corrupt pastors in Africa who require their congregation to pay money for their prayers. Some offer different prices for different types of prayers.

8:19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

8:19 ***Comments –*** Simon the sorcerer was not seeking the person of the Holy Spirit, but rather, His power. This was a selfish request in that Simon wanted to benefit himself rather than yield himself to the Lord.

8:20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

8:21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

8:23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

8:24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

8:25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

8:26-40 **The Witness of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch –** Acts 8:26-40 records the testimony of Philip as he brings the Gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch in the southwest region of Judea and into other parts of Judea.

Church History Records Story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch - *Eusebius* makes a reference to this story in his Church History. He says that this Ethiopian eunuch went and proclaimed this message to his people. *Eusebius* tells us that this was the first Gentile to receive and proclaim the Gospel of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

> "But as the preaching of the Saviour's Gospel was daily advancing, a certain providence led from the land of the Ethiopians an officer of the queen of that country, for Ethiopia even to the present day is ruled, according to ancestral custom, by a woman. He, first among the Gentiles, received of the mysteries of the divine word from Philip in consequence of a revelation, and having become the first-fruits of believers throughout the world, he is said to have been the first on returning to his country to proclaim the knowledge of the God of the universe and the life-giving sojourn of our Saviour among men; so that through him in truth the prophecy obtained its fulfillment, which declares that 'Ethiopia stretcheth out her hand unto God.'" (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.1.13)

8:26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

8:26, 29 ***Comments -*** Note how clearly the Holy Spirit can speak to us, even today.

8:27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

8:27 ***Comments -*** Philip Schaff says, "Strabo mentions a queen of Meroè in Ethiopia, under this name, which name was probably, like Pharaoh, a dynastic title (*The Geography of Strabo* 17.1.54).[238]

[238]Strabo writes, "Among these fugitives were the generals of Queen Candace, who was ruler of the Aethiopians in my time - a masculine sort of woman, and blind in one eye." See Horace L. Jones, trans., *The Geography of Strabo,* vol. 8, in *Loeb Classical Library*, eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge,

8:28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

8:29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

8:29 ***Comments -*** Kenneth Hagin believes that Acts 8:29 is an example in the Scriptures where the Holy Spirit spoke with an audible voice. Hagin gives Acts 10:19 as an additional example, which says, "While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee." (Acts 10:19)[239] We can compare this experience with the one that Paul had in Acts 27:10 where he simply knew that the voyage would be harmful by the inward witness, although he did not hear the voice of the Lord. Therefore, Paul says, "I perceive."

8:30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

8:31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

8:32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

8:33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

8:33 **"and who shall declare his generation?" –** ***Comments -*** *Eusebius* (A.D. 260-340) takes the liberty to interpret the phrase "who shall declare this generation." He says that it is reveals man's weakness in his attempt to declare the majesty and glory of the eternal Son of God, a knowledge that only the Son and the Father are able to fully share together.

> "No language is sufficient to express the origin and the worth, the being and the nature of Christ. Wherefore also the divine Spirit says in the prophecies, 'Who shall declare his generation?' For none knoweth the Father except the Son, neither can any one know the Son adequately except the Father alone who hath begotten him." (*Ecclesiastical History* 1.2.2)

8:32-33 ***Comments –*** Acts 8:32-33 are a quote from Isaiah 53:7-8, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken."

8:34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

8:36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), 139; Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, vol. 1: Apostolic Christianity A.D. 1-100* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 733.

[239]Kenneth Hagin, *Following God's Plan For Your Life* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1993, 1994), 117.

8:37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

8:39 **"And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more" - *Comments* –** The Scriptures testify of a number of God's servants being translated. For example, Enoch was translated to heaven in Genesis 5:24, "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Elijah was also taken up to heaven in 2 Kings 2:1-12, and the sons of the prophets understood that "the Spirit of the Lord had taken him up" (2 Kgs 2:16). Obadiah the servant of King Ahab recognized Elijah's ability to be supernaturally translated in 1 Kings 18:12, saying, "And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth." Ezekiel was caught up by the Spirit of God on a number of occasions and saw into the spiritual realm. He says, "Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing," (Eze 3:12). He also says, "In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel," (Ezel 40:2). John the apostle was taken up by God to another place in Revelation 21:10, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." After His resurrection, Jesus moved freely in this spiritual dimension of being translated where ever He desired to go. Thus, He was able to appear to His disciples without disclosing Himself to the world. Several possible examples of being supernaturally translated can be found during Jesus' public ministry. On one occasion, the people of Nazareth attempted to throw Jesus off of a cliff, and the Scripture says, "But he passing through the midst of them went his way." (Luke 4:30) On another occasion, the disciples were in a boat during a storm without Jesus. When He came to them walking on the water and calmed the storm, they suddenly found themselves at their destination (John 6:21).

8:39 **"and he went on his way rejoicing" – *Comments* -** This same joy that the eunuch experienced also filled the city of Samaria in Acts 8:8, "And there was great joy in that city."

8:40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

9:1-30 **The Witness of Paul's Conversion -** Acts 9:1-30 records the conversion and early ministry of Paul the apostle. One important outcome of this event is that the wave of Jewish persecutions against the Church ceased (9:31).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:1-30 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

> Exegetical Idea – The Lord vindicated the church through Paul's conversion as the disciples boldly declared that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because the Lord vindicated the church through Paul's conversion as the disciples boldly declared that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions,*

authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission, the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they declare that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they declare that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord amidst opposition, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Paul is Commissioned by the High Priest	9:1-2
(b) Saul's Trip to Damascus	9:3-19
(c) Two Testimonies concerning Saul's Conversion	9:20-30

9:1-2 **The Immediate Setting: Paul is Commissioned by the High Priest –** Acts 9:1-2 provides the immediate setting for Paul's trip to Damascus as he is commissioned by the high priest to persecute the Christians in that city. The irony of the plot is that the Lord Jesus Christ is about to commission him as an apostle to the Gentiles.

9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

9:2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

9:2 ***Comments*** **-** Evidently, the Roman government allowed the Jews to exercise a limited amount of jurisdiction among themselves. The religious leaders had already put Peter, John and other apostles in prison, and brought them before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-41). They had stoned Stephen, the first Church martyr (7:54-60). Now, the Jewish leaders were exerting a wider breath of authority in Palestine, extending to Damascus, unhindered by Roman rule.

The early church adopted a title for their new sect called "the Way," a description used times in the book of Acts (9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). Grant Osborne says this term was taken from Isaiah 40:3, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."[240] The early church understood this prophecy was fulfilled in the public ministry of John the Baptist as he preached in the wilderness and present Jesus Christ to Israel. This verse maintained such a high profile in the teaching and doctrine of the early church that all four Gospels use it to introduce the public ministry of Jesus Christ (Matt 3:3, Mk 1:3, Lk 3:4, Jn 1:23).

9:3-19 **Saul's Trip to Damascus (Acts 22:6-16, 26:12-18) –** Acts 9:3-22 records the witness of Paul's conversion on his way to Damascus and divine commission while lodging in that city. This event serves as the climax of the plot for the witness of church growth in Judea and Samaria (6:1-9:31).

A Review of Divine Commissions in the Scriptures **–** The Scriptures records a number of divine commissions opening the narrative material of God' servants in the Scriptures. For

[240]Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew,* in *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 111, Logos.

example, we see in the book of Genesis that Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob each received their commissions at the beginning of their genealogies, which divide the book of Genesis into major divisions. We also see how Moses received his divine commission near the beginning of his story found within Exodus to Deuteronomy. Joshua received his commission in the first few verses of the book of Joshua. Also, we see that Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel each received a divine commission at the beginning of their ministries. The book of Ezra opens with a divine call to rebuild the Temple and the book of Nehemiah begins with a call to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, which callings Ezra and Nehemiah answered. In the New Testament, we find Paul the apostle receiving his divine commission in Acts 9:1-22 at the beginning of the lengthy section on Paul's life and ministry.

Each of these divine callings can be found within God's original commission to Adam in the story of Creation, which was to be fruitful and multiply; for these men were called to bring about the multiplication of godly seeds. The patriarchs were called to multiply and produce a nation of righteousness. Moses was called to bring Israel out of bondage, but missed his calling to bring them into the Promised Land. Joshua was called to bring them in to the land. Esther was called to preserve the seed of Israel as was Noah, while Ezra and Nehemiah were called to bring them back into the Promised Land. All of the judges, the kings and the prophets were called to call the children of Israel out of sin and bondage and into obedience and prosperity. They were all called to bring God's children out of bondage and destruction and into God's blessings and multiplication. The stories in the Old Testament show us that some of these men fulfilled their divine commission while others either fell short through disobedience or were too wicked to hear their calling from God.

One reason why these prophets received such a mighty visitation is understood in a comment by Kenneth Hagin, who said that when the Lord gives us a vision or a word for the future, it often precedes a trial, and is used to anchor our soul and take us through the trial.[241] If we look at the lives of the three Major Prophets, this is exactly what we see. These three men faced enormous trials and objections during their ministries. Their divine commissions certain were the anchor of their souls as it gave them strength and assurance that they were in God's will despite their difficulties. We see such dramatic encounters in the lives of Moses and Saul of Tarsus, as God gave them their divine commissions for a work that was difficult and even cost them their lives. Paul's divine visitation served as an anchor for his soul throughout his life. In fact, he will often refer back to this event (Acts 22:1-21, Acts 26:1-23).

Paul's Divine Encounters with the Lord Jesus Christ – The apostle Paul refers to many divine encounters with the Lord Jesus Christ after his conversion on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1-9; 22:6-10; 26:13-18). He tells us that he was caught up in the heavenly realm to receive revelations from the Lord (2 Cor 12:1-4). He tells us that he received many revelations from Jesus in 2 Corinthians 12:7, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." Some of these divine encounters are mentioned in Paul's epistles. For example, Paul received direct instructions from Jesus about the meaning and importance of the Lord's Supper, saying, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you . . ." (1 Cor 11:23) Paul received his understanding about the Rapture of the Church from Jesus, saying, "For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus." (1 Thess 4:2), and "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord . . ." (1 Thess 4:15) He told the churches of Galatia that he received his apostolic authority directly from Jesus, saying, "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.)" (Gal 1:1). Paul says that he was taught the Gospel directly from Jesus in Galatians

[241]Kenneth Hagin, *Following God's Plan For Your Life* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1993, 1994), 118.

1:11-12, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." He tells the Corinthians the same, saying, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received . . ." (1 Cor 15:3) The Lord appeared to Paul during his first visit to the city of Corinth in Acts 18:9, "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace." Jesus instructed Paul to go to Jerusalem in Galatians 2:2, "And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain." The Lord appeared to Paul during his first arrest that led to his first Roman imprisonment in Acts 23:11, "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." The Lord appeared to Paul during his second Roman imprisonment to strengthen him in 2 Timothy 4:17, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." Paul received divine visitations from the Lord Jesus Christ from the time of his conversion, throughout his public ministry, until his final imprisonment and death. Thus, Paul spoke with divine authority because of his commission and revelations that came directly from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Contrasting Paul's Two Commissions before and after Conversion – It is interesting to note how God took a man on the road to Damascus with a decree from the high priests in Jerusalem to put Christians in bondage, saved him, and sent him to Rome with a divine decree to give Christians freedom in their worship.

My Grandfather's Conversion – My mother tells me that when she was seven years old, around 1941, that her father experienced a similar event to Saul of Tarsus. My grandfather was making his way to work one morning on his bicycle towards Lynn Haven. He was on highway 390 near Mill Bayou when a bright light shown about him. Out of the light a voice told him to throw away his cigarettes. With this experience he was gloriously saved. My mother saw such a change in his life that she also gave her life to Jesus Christ at this time.

God Speaks from Heaven to Men - The voice of God the Father spoke from Heaven to mankind on a number of occasions. God spoke to King Nebuchadnezzar when he took his mind from him for a season (Dan 4:31). God spoke from Heaven at the water baptism of His Son Jesus Christ (Matt 3:17, Mk 1:11, Lk 3:22). God spoke to the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt 17:5, Mk 9:7, Lk 9:35-36, 2 Pet 1:17-18). God spoke to Jesus when He rode into Jerusalem before His Passion (Jn 12:28-29). Jesus spoke to Paul from Heaven on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-7).

9:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

9:3 ***Comments -*** My mother tells me that her father, my grandfather, was converted in a similar way. In 1943, when she was seven years old, he was riding his bicycle on Highway 390 near the Mill Bayou bridge, about one mile from our home, when a bright light appeared to him and a voice told him to throw away his cigarettes. He, too, was a man of great anger and vulgarity. He obeyed the voice of the Lord and became a Christian. Because of such a dramatic transformation in his life, my mother followed him in the faith at the tender age of seven.

9:4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

9:4 ***Comments -*** Very often in Uganda I have to repeat my name several times to strangers before it becomes clear enough for them to pronounce. Saul appears to have been physically weakened in the presence of the Lord, but conscience enough to hear and respond to the Lord.

9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

9:5 **"And he said, Who art thou, Lord" – *Comments* -** In Acts 9:5 Paul addresses Jesus as "Lord" (κύριος), which is used by the New Testament writers to refer to Jesus Christ as God, but this word can also be diminished to simply means, "master, sir." Scholars note that Paul seems to be calling him "Master" or "sir," not knowing Jesus' true identity.

9:5 **"And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" – *Comments* -** The word "Lord" (κύριος) is now used by the author to denote Jesus Christ as God, the Master of the universe.

The Almighty God, Jesus Christ the Son of God, left His post at the right hand of the Father to come to earth and talk with sinful blasphemer of the Cross. He came from beyond eternity and past the ends of the universe, through billions of galaxies, through the clouds of our world and found Saul of Tarsus on the Road to Damascus to persecute His beloved children.

9:5 **"it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" – *Comments* –** The Greek word κέντρον means, "a point, a sting, a goad" (*Strong, BDAG*).

The phrase "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" is not supported well in ancient Greek manuscripts, so that modern Greek texts and English translations usually delete this phrase (*ASV, ESV, NCV, RSV*).

***Comments (Historical Background)* –** The classical Greek and Latin writers use the phrase "it is hard to kick against the pricks" often enough to assume that it was, as Basil Gildersleeve suggests, an ancient proverb.[242] For example, the ancient Greek lyric poet Pindar (522-443 B.C.) writes, "But he, the patient and the wise. Who to the yoke his neck applies, Lifts not, like oxen prone to feel Each casual sting, his angry heel Be my complacent temper shown, Conversing with the good alone." (*The Second Pythian Ode* 2.173-175)[243] The ancient Athenian tragedian Euripides (480-406 B.C.) writes, "Better to yield him prayer and sacrifice, Than kick against the pricks, since Dionyse, Is God, and thou but mortal." (*The Bacchae* 191)[244] The ancient Roman playwright Terence (195/185-159 B.C.) writes, "Yes, yes, it is folly kicking against the pricks." (*Phormia* 1.2.27)[245]

***Comments* –** Within the context of Acts 9:5, the word "pricks" refers to the ox-goad, which was made from a long stick with some sharp object fastened on its end, being used to poke the ox and get him to move forward in his harness to pull the cart. We can imagine Paul traveling along the Damascus road in a convoy of horses, men, and wagons, with a team of oxen being prodded along the way using an ox goad. This metaphor that Jesus uses would have immediate application to what Paul was doing to the Christian in his efforts to persecute and imprison them. Heinrich Meyer paraphrases this statement in Acts 9:5 to mean, "It is for thee a difficult undertaking."[246]

---

[242]Basil L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (New York: American Book Company, 1885), 267.

[243]C. A. Wheelwright, and Thomas Bourne, trans., *Pindar and Anacreon* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1846), 106.

[244]Gilbert Murray, trans., *The Bacchae of Euripides* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, c1904, 1920), 46.

[245]John Sargeaunt, *Terance*, vol. 2, in *The Loeb Classical Library*, eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1959), 15.

[246]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 275.

Symbolically speaking, the Greek word κέντρον reflects the instrument by which man rules and managed domesticated animals. The ox goad exerted dominion over domesticated animals just as a rod symbolized a ruler's authority over man. Therefore, the goad would compare to the rod of a ruler who exercises dominion over his kingdom. Jesus Christ has become our Lord and Master as members of the kingdom of Heaven, and soon to be the Ruler of all mankind. Paul was resisting this work of redemption for mankind.

9:5 ***Comments –*** The idea in Jesus' statement that Paul was like a harnessed ox that was being prodded along the road using an ox-goad implies that God already had Paul "harnessed." That is God was divinely intervening his Paul's live prior to his conversion. If we look at his Roman citizenship and exposure to the Greco-Roman world by his birth in Tarsus, and his upbringing in Jewish law at the feet of Gamaliel, and his prominence among the Jewish leaders, we can see that God had prepared Paul prior to his conversion for his task as an apostle to the Gentiles and writing much of the New Testament. Therefore, Jesus tells Paul that it was difficult for him to kick against God's plan for his life. We find this concept in Paul's testimony to the Galatian church of being separated by God from his mother's womb when he says, "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:" (Gal 1:13-16)

In the same way, God is at work in all of our lives prior to our conversion. He has created each one of us with unique gifts and interests and sent us into this world at His time and season. If we resist His divine calling in our lives, then we, too, are "kicking against the pricks."

9:5 ***Comments –*** Paul testifies of this vision in his trial before King Agrippa II in Acts 26:14, "And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

9:6 ***Comments -*** Note how God gave Paul one simple instruction at first, and told him that he would receive further instruction when he obeyed the first. In a similar way, the Lord told Abraham to leave his country and family and into a country in which He would show him. When Abraham then came into the Promised Land and pitched camp in the plain of Moreh the Lord appeared unto Him a second time and told him that this was the land that he was to live and his descendants were to inherit.

God changed Paul's direction in life through this divine visitation. God does this again for Paul in Acts 16:9-12 when he say a man in the night telling him to come over from Asia Minor to Macedonia..

9:7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

9:8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9:8 ***Comments –*** Did the bright light of God's glory cause Saul's blindness. The Scriptures do not say, but those who have visited heaven and seen the throne of God and His glory testify to a brightness that is brighter than the sun.

9:9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

9:9 ***Comments -*** Saul fasted and prayed in response to this supernatural experience because of his devotion and discipline in the Jewish faith. This was his way of seeking the Lord.

9:10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

9:10 ***Comments –*** *"And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias"* - The Greek name Ἀνανιας is derived from the Hebrew name *ḥănanĕyāh,* "God is merciful." (*ABD*)[247] The Hebrew name Hananiah is found frequently in the Old Testament (1-2 Chron, Ezra, Neh, Jer, Dan). Hippolytus tells us this same Ananias of Acts 9:10-19 became the bishop of the church at Damascus, saying, "Ananias, who baptized Paul, and was bishop of Damascus." (*Appendix to the Works of Hippolytus 49: The Same Hippolytus on the Seventy Apostles* 5) (*ANF* 5) God most likely called Ananias to this task because of his proximity to Saul of Tarsus in the city of Damascus.
"and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord" - The fact that the Lord spoke to Ananias tells us that this disciple had learned the voice of God through a life of obedience to the Gospel message being preached by the apostles of Jesus Christ. God does not speak in this manner to carnal Christians because they would be unable to discern His voice or they would not obey Him.

9:11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

9:11 ***Comments -*** The Lord spoke to me last night in a dream that the reason Ananias was sent to Saul was because he was praying (31 December 2004). When I looked up this passage I saw where the Lord placed emphasis upon Saul's prayers. Because Saul chose to seek the Lord as a result of his vision and not reject Him, the Lord was able to work in his life by sending someone to reveal more of God's Word to him. The Lord would not have sent someone to Saul unless his heart been open to what Ananias had to say.

9:12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

9:12 ***Comments -*** It is not until a man is saved that he can see the ways of God. Saul was blind as a persecutor of the Church. But now, being made blind, he begins to see the things of God.

9:13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

9:14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

9:15 ***Comments -*** The Lord revealed to Ananias the order of Paul's ministry in Acts 9:15 when He said to him, "for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." We know from the New Testament that Paul first preached the Gospel to the Gentiles during his first three missionary journeys. He was then imprisoned in Caesarea and in Rome where he took the Gospel to kings. The book of Acts

[247]R. F. O'Toole, "Ananias," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary,* vol. 1, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 224.

closes as he delivers the Gospel to the Jews in Rome, who were "the children of Israel." In addition, towards the end of his life, tradition tells us that he wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, giving the children of Israel insight into the Gospel of Jesus Christ that is found nowhere else.

9:16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

9:16 ***Comments -*** Acts 9:16 tells us that Paul must suffer for Christ's name sake. Anything that has value to us comes at a cost. Paul's missionary life will cost him much suffering as an apostle to the Gentiles. We can read Paul's epistle of 2 Corinthians and gain a tremendous insight as to what these sufferings were and how they glorified Christ Jesus. In this epistle he explains how these suffering were for the consolation and salvation of the churches he established (2 Cor 1:6). They produced endurance for many other believers by his examples. The comfort he received from God was used to comfort others so that they would endure.

9:15-16 ***Comments – Paul's Divine Commission -*** Acts 9:15-16 reveals Paul's lifetime commission from the Lord Jesus Christ as he became an apostle to the Gentiles. Paul testified often in Jewish synagogues and in Jerusalem. He ultimately finished his course having testified to the Emperor in Rome. Paul had to fulfill this commission in order to finish his course, as he testifies in 2 Timothy 4:6-7, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:"

God gave Moses his lifetime commission at the burning bush in Exodus 3:10, "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." God gave Jeremiah his lifetime commission while he was a young man in Jeremiah 1:4-5, "Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Peter received his commission from Jesus by the Lake of Galilee in John 21:15, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs."

9:17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

9:17 **"Brother Saul"** - ***Comments -*** Saul was saved by now. So, he was a brother in the Lord. Then he received the Holy Ghost. However, this passage does not tell us that Paul began to speak with tongues as an outward manifestation of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Many years later Paul writes to the church at Corinth, saying, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." (1 Cor 14:18) Therefore, we can be almost sure that Paul began to speak with tongues when Ananias laid hands upon him.

9:18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

9:19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

9:20-30 **Two Testimonies concerning Saul's Conversion –** Acts 9:20-30 records two testimonies that proved Saul's conversion was genuine. The believers in Damascus and Jerusalem were afraid of him in the beginning, until Barnabas endorsed his conversion before the apostles.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Saul's Early Ministry in Damascus	9:20-25
ii) Saul's Ministry in Jerusalem	9:26-30

9:20-25 **Saul's Early Ministry in Damascus –** Acts 9:20-25 records the account of Paul's early ministry as he began to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Damascus.

9:20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

9:20 ***Comments* -** The message that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is the foundational message of the Christian faith. The Gospel of John builds its theme around this foundational truth.

9:21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

9:21 ***Comments* -** The Greek word πορθέω means, "pillage, make havoc of, destroy, annihilate" (*BDAG*). This word is used three times in the New Testament (Acts 9:21, Gal 1:13, 23), limited to Paul's destruction of the church. This word is used in the Old Testament Apocrypha (4 Macc 4:23; 11:4, Baruch 1:1 [Greek]) and by Josephus (*Wars* 4.405, *Antiquities* 10:135) to describe the efforts of an army to entirely annihilate a people through violent destruction. This word could be described in modern English as an act of genocide.

9:22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

9:23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

9:24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

9:25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

9:26-30 **Saul's Ministry in Jerusalem –** Acts 9:26-30 records the account of Saul's ministry in Jerusalem after he flees Damascus because of his testimony. This section serves as a resolution to the conflict that arose within the plot of Acts 6:1-9:31 concerning the spread of the Gospel to Judea and Samaria.

9:26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

9:27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

9:28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

9:29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

9:30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

9:31 **Conclusion: Church Growth in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria -** Acts 9:31 serves as the conclusion to the fourth narrative block (6:1-9:31) as it records the spread of the early church into Judea and Samaria as a result of the ministries of these early disciples. This

verse serves as an appropriate conclusion to the setting of the plot in which a great persecution broke out against the church (8:1b-4). The church continued to proclaim the Gospel with signs and wonders and the propagation of the Word of God. This verse supports the theme of the justification of the Gentiles as the Lord raised up disciples to preach the Gospel under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to those beyond Jerusalem.

This verse testifies of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel in Judea and Samaria. It also testifies of the fulfillment of a secondary prophecy in Acts 7:51-53 exclusive to this block in which Stephen declares that Israel has always rejected the prophets of God and persecuted them. Therefore, this section testifies of Israel's rejection of the apostles through their persecutions.

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:31 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples were strengthened throughout Judea/Samaria after Saul's conversion and multiplied amidst the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples were strengthened throughout Judea/Samaria after Saul's conversion and multiplied amidst the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has edified those who walk in the fear of the Lord amidst persecution through the comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has edified those who walk in the fear of the Lord amidst persecution through the comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, believers are to walk in the fear of the Lord amidst persecution so that they can be strengthened by the comfort of the Holy Spirit and authenticate the church.

9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

9:31 ***Comments –*** The Jews in this region of the world were living in fear of man, pleasing one another in Jewish fraternities and in the fear of Roman dominance. In contrast, the early Church was free of these fears. They committed themselves unto the Lord and feared Him only, entrusting their lives to Him. The Holy Spirit also encouraged them through the gifts of utterance, speaking to them in gatherings as testified in Acts 1:2; 8:29; 10:19; 11:12, 28; 13:2, 4; 15:28; 16:6-7; 20:23; 21:8, 11. In addition, the book of Acts makes numerous references to the believers being filled with the Holy Spirit.

9:32-11:26 **The Witnesses of Church Growth unto Antioch (Indoctrination) –** Acts 9:32-11:26 records the establishment of the first Gentile congregation in the city of Antioch. At this time, the apostles understood the need to teach the Word of God to these new converts who were not Jews and uneducated in the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus, the theme of indoctrination is emphasized in this section.

The plot of this section begins by establishing the greater setting as Peter ministers in the cities of Lydda and Joppa (9:32-42). As Peter was ministering in Joppa (9:36-42), he receives a vision to take the Gospel into Caesarea to the house of a Gentile named Cornelius (9:43-10:48). Peter then testifies before the church in Jerusalem as they formally accept Gentiles as recipients of the Gospel (11:1-18). This section concludes with Barnabas and Saul, who establish God's Word in Antioch through the teaching ministry (11:19-26).

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of indoctrination in Acts 9:32-12:25. The church in Jerusalem included members that Luke describes as "those of the circumcision" (11:2), a distinct reference to a doctrinal position of those believers who require circumcision as a requirement for inclusion into the church. Peter's testimony of the conversion of the household of Cornelius conflicted with this doctrine, and the church embraced the Gentiles without circumcision (Acts 11:1-18). Thus, circumcision became a doctrinal dispute. Barnabas indorses the work in Antioch, so he calls Saul and they spend an entire year teaching the believers in Antioch, a clear emphasis upon the theme of indoctrination (11:19-26).

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the unity of Acts 9:32-11:26. This section opens and closes with similar statements. In Acts 9:32, Peter travelled about Judea ministering to the Jews only. With a similar description in Acts 11:16, those believers who scattered abroad from Stephen's death settled in Phenice, Cyrus, and Antioch, speaking to the Jews only. In both cases, the Word of the Lord was preached to the Gentiles.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:32-11:26 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

> Exegetical Idea – The disciples boldly preached the Gospel and taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because the disciples boldly preached the Gospel and taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to indoctrinate the church by preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

a) The Greater Setting: Peter's Public Ministry in Judea/Samaria	9:32-42
b) The Witness of Peter in Caesarea	9:43-10:48
c) The Spread of the Church unto Antioch	11:1-24
d) Conclusion: The Growth of the Word of God	11:25-26

9:32-42 **The Greater Setting: The Witness of Peter in Lydda –** Acts 9:32-42 serves as an introduction to the fifth block of the book of Acts, which records the church's expansion as far as Antioch. This passage establishes the greater setting for the next phase of church expansion by recording the testimony of Peter's apostolic ministry throughout Judea and Samaria. In this passage, he heals man named Aeneas in the city of Lydda (9:32-35); then he raises a disciple named Dorcas to life (9:36-42). This passage records the time and place and atmosphere/mood surrounding the spread of Christianity throughout Judaea and Samaria. Thus, this setting of church growth prepares the reader for the events recorded in 9:36-12:23, namely the conversion of the household of Cornelius that allowed Barnabas to endorse the ministry to the Gentiles in Antioch.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:32-42 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Peter testified of Jesus Christ throughout Judea and Samaria with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter testified of Jesus Christ throughout Judea and Samaria with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His servants to testify of Jesus with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has sent forth His servants to testify of Jesus with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to testify of Jesus with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) Peter's Ministry in Lydda	9:32-35
(2) Peter's Ministry in Joppa	9:36-42

9:32-35 **Peter's Ministry in Lydda –** Acts 9:32-35 records Peter's public ministry in the city of Lydda as he heals a paralytic named Aeneas. This miracle resulted in many people coming to the Lord (9:35), a motif that runs throughout the book of Acts.

9:32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

9:32 ***Comments* –** David Peterson says the name "Lydda" is the Greek name of the Old Testament city called (לֹד) "Lod," mentioned four times (1 Chron 8:12, Ezra 2:33, Neh 7:37; 11:35). The Roman historian Pliny (A.D. 23-79) lists Lydda and Joppa as two of the ten ruling districts within the region of Judaea.[248] *Josephus* says the city of Joppa defines the western side of the region of Judea (*Wars* 3:51). He lists Lydda as one of the eleven presiding cities over western, coastal Judea (*Wars* 3:55). Peterson says Joppa was a town on

[248]Pliny writes, "The rest of Judaea is divided into ten Local Government Areas in the following order: the district of Jericho, which has numerous palm-groves and springs of water, and those of Emmaus, Lydda, Joppa, Accrabim, Juiria, Timnath-Serah, Beth-lebaoth, the Hills, the district that formerly contained Jerusalem, by far the most famous city of the East . . ." (*Natural History* 5.70) See H. Rackham, trans., *Pliny: Natural History*, vol. 2, in *Loeb Classical Library*, eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, L. A. Post, W. H. D. Rouse, and E. H. Warmington (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), 273-275.

the coast of Judea, while Joppa was twelve miles inland towards Jerusalem in the plains of Sharon. He says that Joppa was located about twenty-five miles west of Jerusalem.[249]

Within the context of this section of Acts, Acts 9:32 testifies of Peter travelling throughout Judaea and Galilee and Samaria (Acts 9:31) visiting the Jewish believers who has recently fled from Jerusalem because of the persecutions. He himself served as a great testimony and comfort to them, having been imprisoned and beaten by them.

9:33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

9:34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

9:35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

9:35 ***Comments –*** The town of Lydda was located in the plains of Sharon. The Hebrew name (שָׁרוֹן) "Sharon" is mentioned seven times in the Old Testament (Josh 12:18, Is 33:9; 35:2; 65:10, Songs 2:1, 1 Chron 5:16; 27:29).

9:36-42 **Peter's Ministry in Joppa -** Acts 9:36-42 provides the immediate setting for Peter's ministry to Cornelius as he was ministering in Joppa where he raised Dorcas from the dead. This passage concludes with a statement that many believed in the Lord as a result of this miracle, a motif that runs throughout the book of Acts (9:42).

9:36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

9:36 ***Comments -*** Because of the graceful character of the deer, women were sometimes named after these beautiful animals. The Aramaic name "Tabitha" and its Greek equivalent "Dorcas" mean "gazelle." The grace of the deer is referred to in the wisdom literature and the poetic books of the Old Testament (Prov 5:19, Songs 2:9; 4:5; 7:3; 8:14).

9:37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

9:38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

9:39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

9:40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

9:41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

9:42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

---

[249]David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 320, Logos.

9:43-10:48 **The Witness of Peter in Caesarea –** Acts 9:43-10:48 records the account of Peter preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the household of Cornelius. This story testifies of the early church's first efforts to evangelize a non-Jewish people. Peter's sermon is occasioned by an angelic visitation to Cornelius and Peter's accompanying vision in which the Lord tells him to eat unclean food.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:43-10:48 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

> Exegetical Idea – Peter testified of Jesus Christ to the household of Cornelius the Gentile through a divine vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Peter testified of Jesus Christ to the household of Cornelius the Gentile through a divine vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God divinely sends forth His servants to testify of Jesus to all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God divinely sends forth His servants to testify of Jesus to all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to go forth divinely to testify of Jesus to all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) Occasion: Angelic Visitation to Cornelius	9:43-10:33
(2) Peter's Sermon to the Household of Cornelius	10:34-42
(3) Conclusion: The Response of the People	10:44-48

A Reference to Cornelius by the Early Church Fathers - The story of Cornelius is unique to the New Testament. Why would Luke have chosen to tell the story of the Gentile named Cornelius? We know that Luke is giving a witness to the first Gentile convert to Christianity. But another answer may be found in the Apostolic Constitutions, a collection of ecclesiastical law that is believed to have been compiled during the latter half of the fourth century. This ancient document states that a man named Cornelius became the second bishop of the church at Caesarea. This may not have been the same person recorded in the book of Acts, but when the names of Zacchaeus and Theophilus are found alongside the name of Cornelius in the same sentence, and when all three names are found to be unique to Luke's writings, one has to believe that it was very likely the same Cornelius. In other words, Luke's Gospel and Acts were a compilation of testimonies of the life and works of Lord Jesus Christ. For Luke to use the testimony of Zacchaeus, the living bishop of Caesarea at the time of his writing, would have fit the way in which Luke was gathering his testimonies.

> "Now concerning those bishops which have been ordained in our lifetime, we let you know that they are these:--James the bishop of Jerusalem, the brother of our Lord;(5) upon whose death the second was Simeon the son of Cleopas; after whom the third was Judas the son of James. *Of Caesarea of Palestine*, the first was Zacchaeus, who was once a publican; *after whom was Cornelius*, and the third Theophilus." (*Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* 7.4.46)

Cornelius was a Giver - The story of Cornelius is the testimony of how giving is an important key to God answering our prayers. Anytime we mix giving with our prayer, God responds. 2 Corinthians 10:2 tells us that Cornelius was both a giving person as well as a man of prayer. We see these two virtues in other people in the Scriptures. For example, we see this in the story of Hannah, who made a vow to God that she would give her son into the

ministry if He would give her a man-child (1 Sam 1:11). After years of prayer, God heard her when she mixed giving with prayer.

In order to give alms unto the Lord on a regular basis, we must be able to trust Him with our finances. When we seek God, we come to know Him. We grow in our understanding of His character and faithfulness. When we know Him, we can easily trust Him with our finances by sacrificial giving.

The Household Salvation of Cornelius and His Family – The story of the household salvation of Cornelius and his family and servants is recorded in Acts 10:1-48. The New Testament writers testify of household salvation for other families as well. For example, the households of Lydia (Acts 16:15) and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:31), as well as the household of Stephanas in the church of Corinth (1 Cor 1:16), were also saved as a family.

It is difficult for us in the western culture to understand household salvation. This is because we as individuals are much less bound to our relationships as a family. But my wife's family, who are Filipinos demonstrated household salvation when her father became a Muslim for a few years. The only member of this family that did not covert was my wife, and that was because we were married. She later brought them back to Jesus Christ, but it was a family decision although the father made the decision. We see in the households of Cornelius, Lydia, the Philippian jailer and Stephanas that their households followed in the faith "from their hearts" in this collective decision to follow Christ. It means that they all gave their lives to Jesus Christ together and were genuinely saved, something that would rarely happen in the more independent Western cultures.

9:43-10:33 **The Occasion: Angelic Visitation to Cornelius -** Acts 9:43-10:33 provides the occasion for the spread of the Gospel to the first Gentiles, namely the household of Cornelius. In this passage, God intervenes in the life of Cornelius and Peter the apostle to bring them together through divine visitations.

9:43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

9:43 ***Comments –*** Acts 9:43 begins the next passage that records Peter's testimony to the household of Cornelius in Caesarea. Literary evidence to support this division is seen in the fact that this verse begins with the Lucan narrative formula derived from ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν + the infinitive clause. In addition, this narrative passage later refers to both Simon the tanner (10:6, 17) and the city of Joppa (10:23). Thus, Acts 9:43 contains introductory material to establish the occasion for the story that follows.

10:1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,

10:1 ***Comments –*** The Roman army of the first century was divided and subdivided into various units. The largest military unit was called a legion (λεγιών), made up of approximately six thousand soldiers, depending upon the need of that location within the Empire. The legion was divided into ten cohorts (σπεῖρα) or bands, consisting of a group of six hundred men. Each cohort was subdivided into tactical units called a maniple, and administrative units called a century. This century was commanded by an officer called a centurion (ἑκατοντάρχης). The centurions within a particular cohort held various ranks among themselves. They could obtain promotions up to the position of a "first centurion" who took part in the councils of war conducted by the higher ranking commanders.[250]

[250]T. R. S. Broughton, "The Roman Army," in *The Beginnings of Christianity: Part 1 The Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 5, eds. F. J. Foakes Jackson, Kirsopp Lake, and Henry J. Cadbury (London: MacMillan and Co., 1933), 427-445.

The New Testament refers to a Roman cohort on five occasions and to various centurions on twenty occasions. Jesus was handed over to a cohort of Roman soldiers prior to His crucifixion, which mocked and scourged Him (Matt 27:27, Mk 15:16) Luke refers to a cohort on three occasions (Acts 10:1; 21:31; 27:1), recognizing two of them by their prestigious titles as the Italian and Augustine cohorts.

Cornelius was one of the centurions in a prestigiously named cohort called the Italian band. History documents a cohort called the *Cohors II. Italica Civium Romanorum*. According to ancient records, this cohort was deployed in Syria before A.D. 69 and remained in this area after the Jewish war. Although there is no record of this Italian cohort being deployed in Caesarea, circumstantial evidence suggests that this cohort is the same one mentioned by Luke. Regarding the family setting in which Luke places Cornelius, he was either deployed for a long period of time in Caesarea where he brought his family or he was settled down in retirement from military service.[251]

The city of Caesarea was predominately a Gentile city, constructed by Herod the Great upon a small, ancient settlement formerly called Strato's Tower.[252] Herod built Caesarea into an administrative city for the Roman occupation of Syria and Judea. Beginning in 6 A.D., this city served as a "Roman provincial capital" where the Roman governor and other officials lived.[253] Darrell Bock says it boasted an "amphitheater, a hippodrome, and a temple dedicated to Caesar."[254] Thus, the name Caesarea was in honor of Caesar.

Such a city would have challenged Peter's perception of his call in the Gospel as he is now asked to embrace Gentiles into the community of Jewish believers, and not just any Gentiles, but the very enemies of his faith. His vision in Acts 10:9-18 is immediately followed by a visit from Cornelius' servants, taking him to the center of Roman oppression over Jerusalem and Judea. These soldiers he met as he entered the city may have participated in the Lord's crucifixion, or at least, they would have endorse it. The Twelve initially hoped that Jesus had come to deliver them from the Romans, so they asked Him, "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) Peter now finds himself inviting these very enemies of Judaism into his community of faith and fellowship.

10:2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

10:2 ***Comments -*** Why did God choose Cornelius as the first Gentile to hear the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? We find the answer in this verse when it tells us that he prayed and gave alms to the people. To whom did he give these alms, but to the Jewish people. His prayers were to bless the children of Israel. Three times in this passage we are told that Cornelius gave alms and prayed (see 10:4 and 10:31). These two principles of almsgiving and prayer were so much a part of his lifestyle that Luke defines this man's characteristics by these two virtues. God will bless those who bless the people of Israel. This was a promise that God made to Abraham when the Jewish nation was born, and it is still valid today, saying, "And

[251]T. R. S. Broughton, "The Roman Army," in *The Beginnings of Christianity: Part 1 The Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 5, eds. F. J. Foakes Jackson, Kirsopp Lake, and Henry J. Cadbury (London: MacMillan and Co., 1933), 427-445.

[252]Josephus writes, "Now, when Agrippa had reigned three years all over Judea, he came to the city Caesarea, which was formerly called Strato's Tower." (*Antiquities*, 19.8.2) See also John B. Polhill, *Acts,* in *The New American Commentary,* vol. 26, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992), 252, Logos.

[253]Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 385, Logos; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 326, Logos..

[254]Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 385, Logos.

I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen 12:3)

We see another example of this divine law of blessing in Luke 7:1-10 when Jesus heals the centurion's servant. This Gentile was blessed by God because the Jews came to Jesus and said "that he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." (Lk 7:4-5).

10:3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

10:3 ***Comments*** **-** There are many visions that occur throughout the book of Acts. Peter prophesied this in Acts 2:17-19 as "visions, dreams, prophesies, wonders, signs."

10:4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

10:4 **"Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" -** ***Comments*** **–** Cornelius' name came up before God's throne because of his prayers and alms. Prayer and almsgiving are two of the three divine virtues mentioned by Jesus Christ in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt 6:1-18). These virtues are genuine testimonies of godliness.

Paul describes the gifts from the believers in Philippi as a memorial before God, saying, "But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God." (Phil 4:18) In a similar manner, Job's name came up before the Lord because of his righteousness, "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (Job 1:8)

10:4 ***Comments*** **-** God sent the Gospel to those who sought Him. God will bring bearers of the Good News of Jesus Christ to those who seek Him. Note another example of this in Acts 16:13, "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither." The Lord send Paul through a "Macedonian call" to certain devout women in the city of Philippi

10:5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:

10:6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

10:3-6 ***Comments – The Angel Did Not Evangelize Cornelius*** **-** Why did the angel not tell Cornelius about Jesus in order to lead him and his family to salvation? Because God has ordained that men preach the Gospel, and not angels.

10:7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

10:8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

10:9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

10:10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

10:11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

10:12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

10:12 ***Comments –*** The Greek word ερπετόν means, "a creeping animal, a reptile."

Many modern English versions translate Acts 10:12 by listing only three animals rather than four as in the *KJV*. These versions follow the Greek manuscripts that omit the word for θηρίον "wild beasts" in this verse. The four-footed beasts, the reptiles, and the birds represent the three major divisions of the animal kingdom; but within the context of this passage, they symbolize all of the nations on earth as being "clean" or acceptable for salvation before God.

10:13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

10:14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

10:15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

10:15 **"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" -** ***Comments*** **-** Through the blood of Jesus Christ, God did not impute the trespasses of men unto them, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:19, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." He now looked at them as clean through their faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ.

10:16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

10:17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

10:18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

10:19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

10:19 ***Comments*** **-** Kenneth Hagin uses this verse as an example of how the audible voice of the Holy Spirit sometimes speaks to us.[255] He says that when the Lord speaks to us in such a dramatic and clear way, it usually means rough waters ahead. This was the case with Peter. For after he preached to the house of Cornelius and they were gloriously saved, he was confronted by the church in Jerusalem as to why he preached the Gospel to the Gentiles. He defends his trip to Cornelius' house by saying, "the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting" (11:12). There was no doubt in Peter's heart and mind that he had heard the voice of the Lord. This word from the Lord was what gave him the courage to defend his actions to the church in Jerusalem.

10:20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

---

[255]Kenneth Hagin, *Following God's Plan For Your Life* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1993, 1994), 117.

10:21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

10:22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

10:22 ***Comments -*** In Genesis 12:3 God said to Abraham, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." History records many accounts where God blessed those who blessed the Jews, and He cursed those who cursed the Jews. For example, God judged the Pharaoh of Egypt for persecuting the children of Israel through the Ten Plagues culminating with the death of the first born (Ex 6:1-12:51). Just as Pharaoh commanded the Jewish male children to be drown in the river, so was his entire army drowned in the Red Sea (Ex 1:22; 14:21-31). Just as the Israelite male children were killed, so was the nation of Egypt destroyed. Laban acknowledged that his blessings had come through Jacob, saying, "I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake." (Gen 30:27). God promised to reward the heathen according to what they had done to the Jews (Obad 1:15). In the New Testament, Jesus healed the Roman centurion's servant, who had blessed the Jews (Lk 7:4-5). God sent Peter to preach the Gospel to the house of Cornelius, a man that blessed the Jews (Acts 10:22). Jesus makes a similar statement in Matthew 25:40 about rewarding those who has done good to His "brethren," which certainly includes the Jews, as well as the Church, saying, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

10:23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

10:24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

10:26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

10:27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

10:28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

10:29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

10:30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

10:31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

10:31 **"and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God" -** ***Comments -*** There came a day when God remembered the gifts that Cornelius had contributed to His people. This act of remembrance reminds us of the story in the book of Esther when the king remembered the good deeds of Mordecai (Esth 6:1-11). Just as the king remembered Mordecai, so does God have His time and season of remembering us and rewarding us.

10:31 ***Comments*** **-** In Acts 10:31 the angel came to remind Cornelius that his prayer had been heard. We see a similar in story in the book of Daniel when the angel Gabriel stood before Daniel and told him that his prayers had been heard (Dan 9:20-27).

It is important to note that the angel spoke of two issues in Cornelius' life. This man was a man of prayer and a man who gave offerings. We cannot buy God's favor, but we can find His favor by the way we give offerings to Him. For example, we read how Solomon found favor with God after having offered one thousand burnt offerings unto Him. That very night, the Lord appeared to Solomon and ask him what He could give back to him in return for such an offering (1 Kgs 3:4-5). In a similar way, Cornelius found favor with God, but it was connected to his lifestyle of giving offerings unto the Lord.

10:32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

10:33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

10:34-43 **Peter's Sermon -** Acts 10:34-43 records Peter's sermon before the household of Cornelius. This speech occasioned the spread of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem through Peter's testimony before the church in Jerusalem in 11:1-18.

10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

10:35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

10:37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

10:37 ***Comments*** **-** The Synoptic Gospels tell us that when John the Baptist was imprisoned, Jesus Christ began His Galilean ministry and later moved into His Judean ministry. Acts 10:37 clearly refers to this series of events by making a summary statement about them.

10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

10:38 **"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" –** ***Comments*** **–** The fact that Jesus of Nazareth was anointed by God reveals Him ministering to humanity as the Son of Man. He was raised in the town of Nazareth from childhood and never performed a miracle prior to being anointed by the Holy Spirit as His public water baptism. Although He was the Son of God, He laid aside the priviledges of His divine nature to minister as a man, as the apostle Paul writes in Philippians 2:6-7, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Therefore, Jesus demonstrated how He wants the Church to operate on earth because we now have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the same, as Jesus says in John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

The two-fold description of Jesus being anointed with the Holy Ghost and power describes

the secret to the success of His public ministry. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and remained with Him during His earthly ministry to lead Him and strengthen Him. The word "power" refers to the signs and miracles that Jesus performed through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The word translated "power" in Acts 10:38 is the Greek word δύναμις. We find this same word used in Luke 5:17, "and *the power* of the Lord was present to heal them," which describes the manifested presence of the Holy Spirit. This Greek word is used in Mark 6:5, "And he could there do no *mighty work*," to describe the working of miracles. Thus, we could translated this phrase in Acts 10:38 to read, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and *miracle-working power*."

"who went about doing good" – *Comments* – Jesus did many good works. He said to the rebellious Jews who were about to stone Him, "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?" (John 10:32) He says that these works were "from the Father." Because He was led by the Spirit of God in all that He did, His works were motivated by pure love for God the Father and for mankind. Therefore, they were good works.

"and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" - *Comments* – Satan's control over people's lives bring oppression. Like a tyrant or dictator over a nation, Satan oppresses his subjects and exploits them. His oppression resulted in either demonic possession or physical sickness (Matt 4:23-24). When I moved to Uganda, East Africa in 1997 to serve twenty years as the station manager of a Christian television station, I met a people who had been under cruel dictatorship for twenty-five years. Many of these people still lived in fear even though they now had a great president. Satan oppresses people by causing them to walk in fear on a daily basis. Jesus stood up in the synagogue of Nazareth and declared that He had come "to preach deliverance to the captives." He set free many who were bound and oppressed by the devil during His public ministry.

Bob Larson, who has one of the most dynamic deliverance ministries today, once said that his ministry is not all about exorcism, but about healing. Delivering a person from demons is about a person's healing.[256]

10:39 ***Comments* –** Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit so that He could perform miracles. The Father who was in Jesus (John 14:10) by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit did the works and miracles through Son of God. In John 14:12 Jesus tells us that we are to do the same works that He did during His eartlhly ministry. God has planned for the Church, through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, to do these same works. Paul says, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil 2:13) We are empowered through the indwelling Holy Spirit to walk as Jesus walked. We have been called to walk in "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" in this earthly life (Eph 4:13). We have been called to follow His steps of suffering (1 Pet 2:21) while we allow God to work through us. The apostle John says, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." (1 John 2:6) This means that Jesus did all that He did as the Son of Man anointed by God, as we read in Acts 10:38, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." If Jesus did these miracles on His own as the Son of God apart from an anointing of the Holy Spirit, then He would be unfair to ask us to do the same.

10:39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

[256]Bob Larson, *Bob Larson in Action,* on Trinity Broadcasting Network (Santa Ana, California), television program.

10:40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

10:41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

10:42 ***Comments*** **-** Jesus has been appointed by God to judge both the living and the dead (Acts 10:42, 2 Tim 4:1, 1 Pet 4:5). This means that all judgment has been committed unto the Son (John 5:22, 27). No one can escape God's judgment (Rom 2:3-5, 2 Thess 1:5, 1 Tim 5:24, Heb 9:27, 1 Pet 4:17), whether it is believers at the Judgment Seat of Christ or the damned at the Great White Throne Judgment. Divine judgment is one of the foundational doctrines of the New Testament Church (Heb 6:2).

10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

10:44-48 **Conclusion: The Response of the People –** Acts 10:44-48 records the response of the household of Cornelius as they accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

10:44 ***Comments*** **–** A hunger for God by Cornelius and his family opened the doors of Heaven so that the Holy Spirit was able to rush into the room where Peter was preaching. The Holy Spirit manifests Himself to those who seek Him. For example, Jesus commanded His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them. This time of residing and waiting in Jerusalem helped to create anticipation and a hunger for God's arrival in the form of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit manifested Himself to the believer's in Antioch when they ministered to the Lord (Acts 13:1-3). In acts 10:44 the Holy Spirit fell upon all who "heard the Word." Jesus said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matt 11:15) This means that there may have been some people present that did not receive and hear Peter's words; and these would not have been filled with the Holy Spirit.

10:45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

10:45 ***Comments*** **–** Luke refers to "those of the circumcision" (οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς) two times in the book of Acts (Acts 10:45; 11:2). Paul refers to this group four times in his epistles (Rom 4:12, Gal 2:12, Col 4:11, Tit 1:10). Sometimes this phrase refers to the Jews only (Rom 4:12, Tit 1:10), and at other times it refers to Jewish believers (Acts 10:45; 11:2, Gal 2:12, Col 4:11).

The act of circumcision was an outward sign of one's commitment to the Jewish faith, whether for those born Jews or proselytes. Within the context of this passage in Acts concerning the salvation of the household of Cornelius, Luke seems to use the phrase "those of the circumcision" to emphasize the fact that the early believers still practiced circumcision as a necessity for those who accept the Gospel. The church had not yet been confronted with Gentile salvation apart from circumcision. Now, this tradition must be confronted and recognized as an unimportant part of a person's conversion, whether Jew or Gentile.

Those of the circumcision were astonished because they witnesses how a person's salvation was limited to faith in Jesus Christ alone apart from any works of man to please God.

10:46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

10:46 ***Comments –*** Throughout the book of Acts, the gift of speaking in tongues was the outward sign of an inward experience of being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. The gift of tongues was an unquestionable testimony of one's salvation experience.

10:47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

10:47 ***Comments –*** The evidence that the household of Cornelius had received the Gospel was the gift of tongues. This was the first time that Jewish believers had witnessed the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of Gentiles; so they described this event as being similar to that on the day of Pentecost. Its similarity in manifestation was undeniable evidence that God was accepting the faith of Gentiles.

10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

10:48 ***Comments –*** The act of water baptism, which began during the public ministry of John the Baptist and was adopted by Jesus and His follower, was adopted by the early church. While the Jews required the act of circumcision for Gentiles as proselytes who converted to their faith, the early church substituted the act of water baptism for themselves as well as those Gentile converts. The preceding verses reveal the struggle for these early believers to abandon circumcision as a centuries-old practice as they witnessed God's grace pour forth upon uncircumcised Gentiles.

11:1-24 **The Spread of the Gospel unto Antioch –** Acts 11:1-24 records the spread of the Gospel unto the city of Antioch. In this section, Peter testifies to the church in Jerusalem concerning the conversion of the household of Cornelius, so that they endorse the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles (11:1-18). This endorsement allows Barnabas to be sent by them to the church in Antioch, where he then endorses this work to the Gentiles (11:19-24).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:1-24 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

> Exegetical Idea – Peter and Barnabas confirmed that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel through the baptism of the Holy Spirit as God vindicated His church amidst persecution, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Peter and Barnabas confirmed that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel through the baptism of the Holy Spirit as God vindicated His church amidst persecution, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has vindicated His servants amidst persecutions as they testify that Jesus Christ is Lord of all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has vindicated His servants amidst persecutions as they testify that Jesus Christ is Lord of all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to boldly declare amidst opposition that Jesus Christ is Lord to all nations, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Testimony of Peter before the Church at Jerusalem	11:1-18
(2) The Testimony of Barnabas concerning the Church in Antioch	11:19-24

(3) God Vindicates the Church amidst Famine and Persecution 11:27-12:23

11:1-18 **The Testimony of Peter before the Church at Jerusalem –** Acts 11:1-18 records Peter's testimony before the church in Jerusalem concerning the conversion of the household of Cornelius. This event helped the early church to realize the Jesus' commission was directed to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The immediate setting for this event is the objection of Gentile converts by those believers who support the rites of circumcision (11:1-3). Peter's testimony provides evidence of God's redemptive work among the household of Cornelius by the evidence of them being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues (11:4-17). The endorsement of the church in Jerusalem paves the way for future evangelism among the Gentiles (11:18).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:1-18 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Peter confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has confirmed to His servants through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Word of God is to indoctrinate all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has confirmed to His servants through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Word of God is to indoctrinate all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a mandate to teach God's Word to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Objections to Gentile Converts 11:1-3
(b) Peter's Witness of Conversion of Gentiles 11:4-17
(c) Conclusion: The Response of the Church 11:18

11:1-3 **The Immediate Setting: Objections to Gentile Converts –** Acts 11:1-3 provides the immediate setting for Peter's testimony of the conversion of the household of Cornelius as he faces the objections of those believers who support the rites of circumcision as evidence of one's true commitment to Christ Jesus.

Peter's Efforts to Evangelize the Gentiles is Met Initially with Opposition from the Early Jewish Believers - Peter's visit with the Gentiles may be compared today like going to speak to the mafia or working with drug addicts and prostitutes. Religious people would disagree with those types of involvements with sinners. In fact, Acts 11:1-18 records how the Church spoke against this act and Peter had to explain how he was led to this Gentile by a divine vision in order to defend his actions. Thus, Luke attaches the account of Peter's vision to the story of his evangelistic work with Gentiles.

11:1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

11:2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

11:3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

11:4-17 **Peter's Witness of Conversion of Gentiles –** In Acts 11:4-17, Peter testifies of the conversion of the Gentiles, not through their willingness to become circumcised, but through their speaking in tongues as the outward evidence of them being filled with the Holy Spirit as on the day of Pentecost.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit as Evidence of One's Conversion – In Acts 11:14-17, Peter provides undeniable evidence of the conversion of Cornelius and his household through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Throughout the book of Acts, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues provides this evidence of true conversion (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 8:14-17; 11:15-18, 23; 15:7-8; 19:1-7). This connection between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and conversion is established in Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost when he quotes the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16-21), which says, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh . . ." For this reason, Paul asks the question in Acts 19:2 concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit simply because he wanted evidence of the conversion of the Ephesians.

Although the connection is not made in a number of narrative stories, it has become part of the context of conversion because of the numerous testimonies of this important connection. However, it must be stated that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not necessary for conversion; rather, it serves as undeniable evidence of one's genuine conversion.

11:4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,

11:5 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:

11:6 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.

11:7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

11:8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

11:9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

11:10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11:10 ***Comments –*** Jesus spoke to Peter three times in John 21:15-21 to feed His sheep. Here in Acts 11:10, Peter is again addressed three time with the same charge to accept the Gentiles into the church.

11:11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.

11:12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

11:13 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;

11:14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

11:14 ***Comments -*** Men are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. They must hear the words of the Gospel in order to become saved as Paul writes in Romans 10:14, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Paul then says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom 10:17)

11:15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

11:15 ***Comments –*** Luke tells us in the previous narrative section that Cornelius and his family began to speak in tongues and praise God (Acts 10:46). The evidence in the book of Acts of a genuine conversion was being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.

11:16 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.

11:16 **"Then remembered I the word of the Lord"** - ***Comments -*** The Holy Spirit quickened a past event to the apostle Peter. The Holy Spirit has often done this for me, just as Jesus promised, saying, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (Jn 14:26)

11:17 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?

11:17 ***Comments –*** Within the context of this passage, the gift of the Holy Spirit is the baptism of the Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. This gift is for all who believe in Jesus.

11:18 **The Response of the Church –** Acts 11:18 records the endorsement of the church in Jerusalem to receive Gentile converts into the church without their need of circumcision.

11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

11:18 ***Comments -*** Throughout the book of Acts, the gift of tongues is the proof that an individual is genuinely saved.

11:19-24 **The Testimony of Barnabas concerning the Church in Antioch –** Acts 11:19-24 records the testimony of the birth of the church in Antioch. Some believers who fled Jerusalem because of the persecutions surrounding the death of Stephen preached in Antioch, resulting in the conversion of Gentiles (11:19-21). When the news of the conversion the Gentiles in Antioch reached the church in Jerusalem, Barnabas was dispatched to confirm these conversions, resulting in their endorsement of this work (11:22-24).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:19-24 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the grace of God that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel and taught the Word of God in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the grace of God that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel and taught*

the Word of God in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission, God has confirmed to His servants through the evidence of His grace that all nations are recipients of the Gospel in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has confirmed to His servants through the evidence of His grace that all nations are recipients of the Gospel in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a mandate to teach God's Word to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Evangelism to the Gentiles in Antioch	11:19-21
(b) Barnabas Endorses the Work in Antioch	11:22-24
(c) Conclusion: Barnabas and Saul Teach in Antioch	11:25-26

11:19-21 **The Immediate Setting: Evangelism to the Gentiles in Antioch -** Acts 11:19-21 provides the immediate setting for the initial work of Barnabas and Saul in Antioch. As a result of the persecutions that arose from Stephen's death, some believers took the Gospel as far as the Gentile city of Antioch, bringing many souls to the Lord.

11:19 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.

11:19 ***Comments –*** Acts 8:1 makes an earlier reference to this dispersion of the church because of Stephen's death, saying, "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles." Thus, as F. F. Bruce notes, Acts 11:19 picks up from Acts 8:4 with the same phrase, "Οἱ μὲν οὖν διασπαρέντες" (Now they which were scattered).[257]

In Acts 11:19, Luke mentions three locations where believers scattered after the death of Stephen in Jerusalem. Phonecia refers to a region along the Mediterranean coast with Tyre and Sidon as its chief cities. It was about one hundred miles long and averaged fifteen miles across.[258] The large island of Cyprus is located off the cost of Phonecia and south of Asia Minor. Ancient historians confirm a large community of Jews lived in Cyprus. Luke mentions how Barnabas and Saul visited a Jewish synagogue in Cyprus on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:4-5). The city of Antioch on the Orontes River bordered Syria and Asia Minor. It was the third largest city in the Roman Empire.[259]

Darrell Bock says these three locations have important Jewish settlements.[260] Thus, the believers scattering north from Jerusalem would have found refuge and opportunities for work in these Jewish communities which were the major cities located north of the land of Palestine, beyond the reach and control of Herod Agrippa I (reigned A.D. 41-44).

Illustration – During the dictatorship of Ida Amin in Uganda, East Africa (1971-79), the government drove out most of the Indian business community. These Indians fled to three

[257]F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts,* in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament,* ed. Gordon Fee (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 224, Logos.

[258]Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 412, Logos.

[259]David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 350, Logos.

[260]Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 412, Logos.

primary locations: Nairobi, Kenya and London and Toronto, Canada. The chose to move to these three cities because of the large Indian communities already thriving in these foreign cities. In this way, these Indians would have the best chance of getting resettled with housing and jobs to sustain them. This is probably what happened with the Jewish Christians fled Jerusalem at the death of Stephen and settled in Phonecia, Cyprus, and Antioch.

11:20 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.

11:21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

11:22-24 **Barnabas Endorses the Work in Antioch -** When the news of the conversion of the Gentiles in Antioch reached the church in Jerusalem, Barnabas was dispatched to confirm these conversions, resulting in their endorsement of this work.

11:22 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.

11:22 ***Comments*** **–** The apostles and elders in the church in Jerusalem remained the central leadership of those believers who scattered abroad. However, as Paul plants churches in Asia Minor and Macedonia, he strongly defends his apostolic authority over them in his epistles. This is particularly obvious in his epistle to the Galatians, where the issue of circumcision caused doctrinal error.

11:23 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.

11:23 ***Comments*** **–** Acts 11:23 provokes the question of how Barnabas "saw" the grace of God among the new converts in Antioch. Had this verse said that Barnabas "heard" about the grace of God from these believers, then we can assume that he heard personal testimonies of the conversion of the Greeks. However, Barnabas saw things that proved that the Greeks had received the Holy Spirit in the same way that the Jews received in Jerusalem. Barnabas must have seen the demonstration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit operating among these believers, such as the gifts of utterance and various healings and deliverances. In a similar manner, Peter, referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit of the household of Cornelius, has just said, "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?" (Acts 11:17) Thus, we can assume with confidence that Barnabas was seeing new converts filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. This was the hallmark of a genuine conversion experience throughout the book of Acts; for Paul the apostle looks for this certainty of conversion among the Ephesians when he asks, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:2)

11:24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

11:25-26 **Conclusion: Barnabas and Saul Teach in Antioch –** Acts 11:25-26 serves as a conclusion to 9:32-12:25. As a result of this great work taking place in Antioch, Barnabas brings Saul to Antioch where they teach the word of God to these Gentile converts for an entire year.

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the

proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:25-26 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to indoctrinate the church by preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

11:25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

11:26 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.

11:26 **"And when he had found him, he brought him unto" - *Comments* –** We have no idea of how Paul came to his decision to leave his hometown of Tarsus and move to a foreign city. This decision was perhaps the most important one in his life. He chose to go where the Spirit of God was moving. Through this decision, he placed himself in a position to move into the office of an apostle.

"And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people" - *Comments* – Paul and Barnabas spent an entire year teaching these Gentiles the Word of God. Unlike the church in Jerusalem, these Gentile converts probably had little education in the Old Testament Scriptures. Much if not all of its message would have been foreign to them. Therefore, Paul and Barnabas felt compelled to start with the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith. Therefore, the earliest witness of the office of the New Testament teacher is found in the church of Antioch (Acts 11:26; 13:1).

Those who submitted to these teachings were called "Christians." Within this context of the first record of a New Testament teaching ministry, a Christian was defined as a believer who submitted himself to learn and obey God's Word. He was one who followed Christ's teachings as a lifestyle, as did the disciples who forsook all and followed Jesus during His public ministry.

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." – *Comments* - The Greek word Χριστιανός (Christian) is derived from the Messianic title Χριστός (Christ), a title given to Jesus Christ by the early Church after His resurrection. This word is used three times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16). The Greek word Χριστός comes from the Hebrew word (מָשִׁיחַ), which mean "anointed." We get the English word

"Messiah" from an English transliteration of this Hebrew word. Jesus Christ was the Anointed One (Acts 4:27; 10:38), and His followers, whose preaching was accompanied with signs and wonders, were "anointed ones." Therefore, the early Christians were literally called, "the little anointed ones" in Antioch. We can see the translation of Messiah as the Anointed One in Acts 4:27, "For of a truth against thy holy child *Jesus, whom thou hast anointed*, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,"

Comments – Christianity is first recognized as a distinct religion in Antioch. While the Greeks are called Christians in the city of Antioch, there had been no such effort to address the early Jewish converts with such a title, as the earlier chapters of the book of Acts testify. The Jewish converts were not embracing a new faith or religion; there was no major change of religious beliefs as with the Greeks in Antioch. The Jews were simply accepting or rejecting their Messiah, promised in their Scriptures. However, the Greeks who embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ were inducted to an entirely new set of beliefs, or doctrines. They had need of teaching and discipleship in the Scriptures because they were much less familiar with its content. Their faith also required a radical change in lifestyle, thus, a new "religious belief." Such a radical change warranted the title 'Christian' in order to distinguish them from their pagan neighbours.

The Church's Organization
(The Writing of the New Testament Epistles to Establish Church Order)

The distinctive feature of church development in Acts 11:27-28:31 is an emphasis upon the missionary journeys of Paul the apostle as he plants new Gentile churches and establishes their internal organization. He writes his epistles during this period of his life, which provide the doctrinal basis for the organization of these early churches. The first meeting in Jerusalem in Acts 15:1-32 between the apostles and Paul over a dispute concerning circumcision lays the foundation for the church to develop organized, doctrinal positions. This church creed is necessary for the development of church order.

At this juncture in the narrative plot of the book of Acts, Peter disappears and Paul takes center stage in fulfilling Jesus' apostolic commission in Acts 1:8. Why such a change in appointment and focus take place remains unanswered in the book of Acts. One possible reason lies in the testimony that Paul presents in his epistle to the Galatians when he confronted Peter about his wavering position among Gentile converts (Gen 2:11-14). Peter seemed to have more difficulty reaching out to Gentiles that did Paul.

As second aspect that God uses to fulfill His divine plan of redemption is the fact that Paul was viewed by the Jews as a traitor and apostate to the Jewish faith. He had been a high-ranking Pharisee, well-known among the Jews in Jerusalem. Therefore, he had a difficult time when visiting this city because of threats from those who viewed him as a traitor (Acts 9:26-31; 21:27-36). In contrast, Peter was viewed as an uneducated fisherman, of little threat to Judaism. He was able to move among the Jewish communities more easily than Paul. Thus, the Lord commissioned Paul as an apostle to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews, as stated in Galatians 2:8, "For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles."

11:27-28:31 **The Witness of Church Growth to the Gentiles –** The previous blocks of the book of Acts have recorded the expansion of the church in Jerusalem (2:1-5:42), into Judea/Samaria (6:1-9:31), reaching unto Antioch (9:32-11:26). The sixth block (11:27-28:31) testifies of the expansion of the church to the Gentile cities and nations as far as Rome. Therefore, Acts 11:27-28:31 serves as the testimony of the spread of the Gospel "unto the uttermost parts of the earth" in obedience to Jesus' charge to the church in Acts 1:8.

The previous block (9:32-11:26) prepares the reader for this new phase of the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles by recording the establishment of the church in Antioch, in which the apostles focus upon teaching the Word of God. The church in Antioch becomes the launch

pad for Paul's missionary journeys. Luke establishes the greater setting for Paul's missionary outreach by explaining how the church of Antioch took a prominent role amidst hardships and persecutions in Jerusalem. Paul's first missionary journey spreads the Gospel into Asia Minor as the apostles begin planting churches for the first time (13:1-15:35), emphasizing the theme of "divine service." Paul's second missionary journey spreads the Gospel to Macedonia, while his third journey serves to establish those churches he has planted (15:36-19:20). Amidst much hardship on these journeys, the theme of "perseverance" is emphasized in this block. The final section of Acts records the events surrounding Paul's arrest and trip to Rome (21:1-28:31). This section emphasizes the theme of "glorification" as it concludes with Paul preaching and teaching the Gospel unhindered during his two-year Roman imprisonment.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:27-28:31 emphasizing the divine service, perseverance, and glorification of the church's commission unto Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome:

> Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commi*ssion*,* God has appointed the church to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

a) Greater Setting: Missionary Outreach Shifts - Jerusalem to Antioch	11:27-12:23
b) The Witness of Church Growth unto Asia Minor (Divine Service)	13:1-15:35
c) The Witness of Church Growth unto Macedonia (Perseverance)	15:36-19:20
d) The Witness of Church Growth unto Rome (Perseverance/Glorification)	19:21-28:29
e) The Establishment of the Gospel in Rome	28:30-31

A Description of Paul's Ministry - Paul's missionary journeys recorded Acts 13:1-28:31 can be characterized in two verses from 2 Timothy 2:8-92, "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound." In these verses, Paul describes his ministry to the Gentiles as having suffered as an evil doer, but He glorys in the fact that the Word of God is not bound.

Paul followed the same principle of church growth mentioned in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." He first placed churches in key cities in Asia Minor. We later read in Acts 19:10 where he and his ministry team preached "so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." In Romans 15:20-28, Paul said that he strived to preach where no other man had preached, and having no place left in Macedonia and Asia Minor, he looked towards Rome, and later towards Spain.

11:27-12:25 **Greater Setting: Missionary Outreach Shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch (Divine Service) –** Acts 11:27-12:25 provides the greater setting for Paul's missionary journeys as efforts to spread the Gospel shift from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch. While the church in Antioch was being taught the Word of God, a famine brought hardship upon the believers in Judea (11:27-30). Adding persecution to famine, King Herod launches a new wave of persecutions against the church in Jerusalem by killing James the brother of John and imprisoning Peter (12:1-4). While the believers in Jerusalem continued in prayer, an angel of the Lord delivered Peter from prison (12:5-19). The Lord then smote the king so that he died (12:20-23). After Barnabas and Paul completed their ministry in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch (12:24-25). This section emphasizes the theme of divine service as Barnabas and Paul demonstrate the church's assignment to minister to the needs of the saints.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:27-12:25 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Missionary outreach shifts from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch amidst famine and persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because missionary outreach shifts from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch amidst famine and persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has watched over His church so that it is able to take the Gospel to the nations amidst hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has watched over His church so that it is able to take the Gospel to the nations amidst hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to take the Gospel to all nations amidst hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission, trusting that the Lord will watch over him.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) Immediate Setting: First Famine Relief to Church in Jerusalem	11:27-30
(2) King Herod's Persecution of the Apostles	12:1-23
(3) Conclusion: The Growth of the Word of God	12:24-25

11:27-30 **Immediate Setting: First Famine Relief to Church in Jerusalem -** Acts 11:27-30 provides the immediate setting for a new wave of persecutions against the church in Jerusalem. The Lord began to raise up the office of the New Testament prophet, one of whom was named Agabus. He accurately prophesied of a coming famine, which occasioned relief from the believers in Antioch for the churches in Judea. Keep in mind that famine was interpreted throughout the Old Testament Scriptures as divine judgment. These early believers probably understood this famine as divine judgment against Israel because of persecutions from the Jews.

11:27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

11:27 **"And in these days" - *Comments* –** In Acts 11:27, Luke uses the near demonstrative pronoun οὗτος to refer to the event that immediately precedes this movement in the narrative plot. The phrase "in these days" refers to the time when the church was being established in Antioch as Barnabas and Saul ministered the Word of God for an entire year prior to being sent out to gather offerings for the believers throughout Judea. This phrase is used on three occasions in the book of Acts to mark the super-structure of the book (1:15; 6:1; 11:27).

"came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch" - *Comments* – Acts 11:27 provides the earliest reference to the office of the New Testament prophet. A group of prophets seem to have emerged from the church in Jerusalem, and made their way to other congregations as the Spirit of God led them about their public ministry.

11:28 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.

11:28 **"And there stood up one of them named Agabus" – *Comments* –** The prophet Agabus, one of the earliest prophets of the early Church, is mentioned in Acts 11:27-30; 21:10-14. He spent time in Antioch, but seems to have dwelt in Judea. We are told by *Hippolytus* that Agabus was one of the seventy disciples mentioned in Luke 10:1, "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come."[261]

The description of Agabus "standing up" suggests that he stood forth during a church gathering to prophecy. David Peterson notes that this phrase "standing up" is also used concerning the protocol of those who address the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:17, 34).[262]

11:28 **"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"** – ***Comments* -** Claudius Caesar was Emperor of Rome from A.D. 41 to 54. *Josephus* refers to a famine in Palestine during the procuratorship of Tiberius Alexander (A.D. 46-48.), which falls within the time of Claudius (*Antiquities* 3.320; 20:51-53; 20:101). There were other references to famines by Roman historians (Tacitus, *Annals* 12.43; Seutonius, *Claudius* 18.2; Dio Cassius 60.11).[263]

> "Nay, further, a little before the beginning of this war, when Claudius was emperor of the Romans, and Ismael was our high priest, and when so great a famine was come upon us, that one-tenth deal [of wheat] was sold for four drachmae." (*Antiquities* 3.320)

> "Then came Tiberius Alexander as successor to Fadus; he was the son of Alexander the alabarch of Alexandria, which Alexander was a principal person among all his contemporaries, both for his family and wealth: he was also more eminent for his piety than this his son Alexander, for he did not continue in the religion of his country. Under these procurators that great famine happened in Judea, in which queen Helena bought corn in Egypt at a great expense, and distributed it to those that were in want, as I have related already. And besides this, the sons of Judas of Galilee were now slain; I mean of that Judas who caused the people to revolt, when Cyrenius came to take an account of the estates of the Jews, as we have showed in a foregoing book. The names of those sons were James and Simon, whom Alexander commanded to be crucified. But now Herod, king of Chalcis, removed Joseph, the son of Camydus, from the high priesthood, and made Ananias, the son of Nebedeu, his successor. And now it was that Cumanus came as successor to Tiberius Alexander; as also that Herod, brother of Agrippa the great king, departed this life, in the eighth year of the reign of Claudius Caesar. He left behind him three sons; Aristobulus, whom he had by his first wife, with Bernicianus, and Hyrcanus, both whom he had by Bernice his brother's daughter. But Claudius Caesar bestowed his dominions on Agrippa, junior." (*Antiquities* 20.51-53)

---

[261]Hippolytus, *On the Twelve Apostles: Where Each of Them Preached and Where He Met His End, On the Seventy Apostles,* trans. S. D. F. Salmond, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* vol. 5, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Buffalo, New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1886), 254-256.

[262]David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 357, Logos.

[263]JoAnn Ford Watson, "Agabus (Person)," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 88.

> "Under these procurators that great famine happened in Judea, in which queen Helena bought corn in Egypt at a great expense, and distributed it to those that were in want, as I have related already:" (*Antiquities* 20.101)

11:29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

11:29 ***Comments –*** Years later during Paul's third missionary journey, he will take up another offering for the saints in Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-3, 2 Cor 8:16-9:5).

11:30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

11:30 ***Comments -*** According to Frank Goodwin and other scholars, Saul was converted around A.D. 36 and spent his first three years as a Christian in Damascus and Arabia. His first visit to Jerusalem took place in A.D. 39, three years after his conversion (Acts 9:26-29; 22:15-21, Gal 1:17-20). After leaving Jerusalem he moved to Tarsus, and evangelized the regions of Syria and Cilicia for four or five years (Acts 9:29-30, Gal 1:21-24). About A.D. 43-44 Barnabas went to Tarsus seeking Paul (Acts 11:19-25), found him and brought him back to the church in Antioch, where they ministers together for the next year (Acts 11:26). Acts 11:30 records Saul's second visit to Jerusalem, which takes place in A.D. 44 during the Passover festival.[264] Barnabas and Saul will return to Antioch after this festival, taking with them John Mark (Acts 12:25).

12:1-23 **King Herod's Persecution of the Apostles –** Acts 12:1-23 records the persecution of the early Church under the reign of Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41-44). This reign of terror against the early church and divine judgment upon the king serves as an appropriate setting to Luke's new focus upon the upcoming missionary outreaches to the Gentiles. His readers would have clearly understood the underlying message that King Jesus was greater than King Herod. God is glorified through the death of James and the imprisonment of Peter when Peter is miraculously delivered (12:1-19) and King Herod is struck down by the Lord in an act that vindicates the innocence of the early church (12:20-23).

Here is a proposed outline:

1. The Death of James and the Imprisonment of Peter	12:1-19
2. Divine Judgment upon King Herod	12:20-23

12:1-19 **The Death of James and the Imprisonment of Peter** - Acts 12:1-19 records the account of a new wave of persecution upon the early Church initiated by Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41-44). This conflict serves as the climax of the plot of the fifth block (9:32-12:25).

Satan Attacked Church Leaders - Peter and John have been thrown in jail on two previous occasions, and Stephen had been stoned. It is interesting to note how Satan attacked the three leading apostles, those who were the closest to Jesus during His earthly ministry. Satan often attacks the heads of the churches in order to make the sheep scatter. In the order of events, James, the brother of John is killed; then, Peter is imprisoned and threatened with death, who, with John, was earlier imprisoned by the Jewish Sanhedrin.

[264]Frank J. Goodwin, *A Harmony and Commentary on the Life of St. Paul according to the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1951), 27.

The Silence of the Sanhedrin - John Chrysostom and Matthew Henry note that since Saul's conversion, the Jewish Sanhedrin has stood silent in the Scriptures.[265] Perhaps after this embarrassing turn of events against them, the Sanhedrin took Gamaliel's advice more serious (Acts 5:33-42), seeing that they were losing their battle by fighting in their own strength. Now a greater and mightier force than the Sanhedrin assaults the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the religious powers give way to civil powers. King Herod, who stands not just as a king over the Jews, but as Rome's representative to bring order and judgment to his region of dominion, now attempts to destroy the Church by attacking its leadership.

As we read Acts 12:5 where the church began earnest prayer for Peter's deliverance, there is deposited in our hearts a sense of expectation for divine intervention. Having read the Scriptures from Genesis to the Gospel of John, we have come to know God as a Deliverer of His people. As we read the preceding eleven chapters of the book of Acts, we see God beginning to move mightily within the church with signs and wonders. Thus, this passage of Scriptures places emphasis upon the power of the early Church, which covers fourteen verses, rather than the death of James the apostle, which is mentioned in a single verse.

Peter's Miraculous Deliverance from Prison – The story of Peter's miraculous deliverance from prison in Acts 12:1-19 reflects the message of Psalm 2:1-5, where the heathen rage against the Lord's anointed. In Acts 12:1-4 the heathen were raging against the Church by putting Peter in prison, as described in Psalms 2:1-3, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." In Acts 12:18 Peter's miraculous escape from prison put the city in derision and stirred it up, as described in Psalms 2:4, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." In Acts 12:20-23 God vexes the heathen by killing King Herod, as described in Psalms 2:5, "Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."

12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

12:1 **"Now about that time" – *Comments* -** Views differ as to what event is meant by the phrase "about this time." *Eusebius* believes it refers to the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius.[266] Heinrich Meyer translates the phrase "but at that juncture," saying it refers to the events mentioned in the passage immediately preceding the phrase, which was the visit of Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem to deliver an offering for the saints. Meyer supports this view by saying this same Greek phrase is used in Acts 19:23 in this way. He believes the events of Acts 12:1-24 coincide with Barnabas and Saul's visit to Jerusalem.[267] This view is strongly supported by the closing verse in this passage of Scripture, which says, "And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark." (Acts 12:25) Thus, the story in Acts 12:1-25 opens with a famine upon the land, which affected the saints of Jerusalem so that Barnabas and Saul brought relief from the church in Antioch during the time of the Passover festival. If this trial of famine was not enough for the early Church, Herod was now raising his hands to persecute these saints in Jerusalem.

---

[265]John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices, Part I Homilies I-XXVIII*, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1851), 373; Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2114, Logos.

[266]Eusebius writes, "'Now about that time' (it is clear that he means the time of Claudius) . . ." (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.9.1-4).

[267]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 228.

"Herod the king" - *Comments* - Scholars tell us that Herod the king in Acts 12:1 was Herod Agrippa I (reigned A.D. 41-44), the nephew of Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist (Mk 6:14-29), and grandson of Herod the Great, who massacred the children of Bethlehem (Matt 2:16-18). Herod the Great also killed his son Aristobulus, who was the father of this Herod (see the family lineage described by Josephus in *Antiquities* 18.5.4). Josephus calls this Herod by the surname Agrippa, which surname John Gill says has been added to the Syriac text.[268] Because of Herod Agrippa's loyalty to Rome, his kingdom was extended to nearly the former size once held by his grandfather Herod the Great during the time of Jesus' birth (*Antiquities* 18.6.10; 18.7.2; 19.5.1; 19.6.1). Thus, he ruled over all of Palestine.[269] Although some scholars say Herod Agrippa I was not a Jew, being born from an Edomite family,[270] Josephus says, "he was by nation a Jew." (*Antiquities* 18.6.7). Thus, scholars like Meyer believe he was of Jewish birth.[271]

"stretched forth his hands" - *Comments* - The phrase "stretched forth his hands" is used frequently throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, so it can be considered a Hebrew idiom. This phrase is used figuratively to express the fact that Herod was exercising his powers as king over the Jews. Meyer says it is a Hebrew idiom, and translates this phrase, "laid hands on, he caught at, i.e. he caused to be forcibly seized . . ."[272]

"to vex certain of the church" – *Comments* - Herod targets the leaders of the church. In the verses that follow, he kills the apostle James (12:2) and imprisons Peter (12:3-19). This will be his last acts as a king over the Jews, for God will judge him and kill him soon afterwards (Acts 12:20-24).

12:1 ***Comments* –** The Gospel has been preached throughout Jerusalem and Judea, with thousands of converts coming to Christ. The numbers of believers had grown into the thousands. The Sanhedrin was the only group that had persecuted the Church at this time. However, they had become powerless to stop this threatening movement, which was outside the scope of Roman rebellion. Peter's miraculous escape from prison (Acts 5:17-20) only energized this movement of Christians because the miracle was viewed as a divine act of God favoring the church. Now, King Herod, who represented both the Jews and the Roman government in this region, stepped in and continued this persecution.

Perhaps the Sanhedrin had solicited the king's help in his matter, coming up with a plan to target the leaders of the church, assuming the people were following a person. The king felt he could harm (κακόω) the church by systematically removing their leaders; but they failed to comprehend the magnitude of the conversion experience in the lives of each believer.

12:2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

12:2 **"And he killed James" – *Comments* -** As early as John Chrysostom, scholars have commented on the story of Jesus telling James and John that they would suffer with His

[268]John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament,* vol. 2 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: William W. Woodward, 1811), 261.

[269]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 228.

[270]Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2114, Logos.

[271]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 230.

[272]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 229.

"cup" and with His "baptism" (Matt 20:20-23).[273] The mother of James and John once came to Jesus and asked if Jesus would set them at his side on the throne of Israel. When Jesus asked them if they were willing to drink His cup and share in His baptism, they heartily accepted. Jesus thus predicted their sufferings and death. James was the first of the apostle to die, and John would be the last.

"the brother of John" – *Comments* - John Chrysostom notes that the phrase "the brother of the John" was intended on distinguishing James the apostle from James the brother of the Lord, who was the first bishop of Jerusalem (Acts 15:13).[274] However, John Calvin believes this distinction was made for James the son of Alphaeus, another one of the twelve apostles (Acts 1:13).[275]

"with the sword" - *Comments* - Adam Clarke says that the Jews had four types of punishment by death: stoning, burning, killing with the sword (beheading), and strangling. He says the Talmud required those who drew Jews away from their faith to be killed by the sword.[276] *Eusebius* quotes Clement of Alexandria, who tells us of the ancient tradition that James was beheaded.[277] Most likely, Herod used the Roman sword to kill James because he used Roman soldiers to imprison Peter in this same passage.

It is very possible that if the Church had prayed for James, the brother of John, the way they prayed for Peter, he would not have been killed, but these disciples were still learning the power of prayer.

12:2 ***Comments* -** Scholars propose the date of A.D. 44 when Herod Agrippa I killed James the apostle. This date is taken from Josephus, who says there was a drought in the eighth year of Claudius Caesar, which was approximately A.D. 44 (*Antiquities* 20.5.2). The drought mentioned in Acts 11:27-30, which provides the context for the time of Herod Agrippa's persecutions, is generally believed to be this same drought mentioned by Josephus.

Eusebius mentions Luke's account of the death of James as recorded by Clement of Alexandria. Early Church tradition adds to this narrative material of Luke by saying that the one who led James to his judgment was so moved by the apostle's testimony that he offered himself to be beheaded alongside him (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.9.1-4).

---

[273]John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices,* Part I Homilies I-XXVIII, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1851), 372.

[274]John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices,* Part I Homilies I-XXVIII, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1851), 372.

[275]John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. first (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 479.

[276]Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* vol. 1 (New York: G. Lane & C. B. Tippett, 1846), 774.

[277]Eusebius writes, "'Now about that time' (it is clear that he means the time of Claudius) 'Herod the King stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.' And concerning this James, Clement, in the seventh book of his Hypotyposes, relates a story which is worthy of mention; telling it as he received it from those who had lived before him. He says that the one who led James to the judgment-seat, when he saw him bearing his testimony, was moved, and confessed that he was himself also a Christian. They were both therefore, he says, led away together; and on the way he begged James to forgive him. And he, after considering a little, said, 'Peace be with thee,' and kissed him. And thus they were both beheaded at the same time. And then, as the divine Scripture says, Herod, upon the death of James, seeing that the deed pleased the Jews, attacked Peter also and committed him to prison, and would have slain him if he had not, by the divine appearance of an angel who came to him by night, been wonderfully released from his bonds, and thus liberated for the service of the Gospel. Such was the providence of God in respect to Peter." (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.9.1-4)

Perhaps the reason Luke did not spend any more time discussing the tragic death of James, one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, is because the emphasis of the book of Acts is on the expansion of the Church through miracles and demonstrations of the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter's imprisonment and miraculous deliverance that follows consists of fourteen verses, compared to one sentence about James' death. This is because Peter's deliverance reveals the power of the Holy Spirit at work in the early Church, rather than the death of James. The story of the death of James will be mentioned in early Church history (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.9.1-4), and in books like John Fox's *Book of Martyrs,*[278] where it is properly placed.

Imagine the shock that these early disciples experiences when James the apostle was killed. Jesus had commissioned them to take the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the world. James was never de-commissioned from this task. His death must have made these disciples doubt God's ability to fulfill the Great Commission. For this reason, I do not believe it was God's perfect will for James to die. In the following verses, an angel will miraculously deliver Peter from prison and certain death. Peter, realizing this miracle, decides to hide himself for the first time, realizing that God was not willing that he die, as James had died.

12:3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

12:3 **"And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also" -** ***Comments*** **-** Calvin notes that Herod was not attacking the church because of his zeal for the Mosaic Law, neither for his disdain for the Church; rather he sought to serve his own political ambitions by doing something the Jews perceived was for their benefit.[279] Political leaders can be men-pleasers. Thus, Herod Agrippa I sought an opportunity to find favor with the Jews by arresting Peter during a time when the Jewish leaders had gathered in Jerusalem, an ideal time when they could easily take note of Herod's deed. In postponing Peter's execution, Herod appeared before these leaders to honor the Jewish Passover, and to avoid causing any disturbance during this most holy week.

Herod was obviously trying to keep the Jews appeased because they had a history of being rebellious and difficult for Rome to manage. Had the execution of the apostle James stirred up riots and unrest, the king would have stopped these targeted executions and appeased the people. Instead, he scored public favour, the strongest weapon of a political leader. . In other words, he was trying to improve his "approval ratings at the polls."[280]

Josephus gives us a description of Herod Agrippa's personality as being benevolent towards the Jews (*Antiquities* 19.7.3). His efforts to please the Jews by persecuting the church would have been typical of this king.

> "Now, this king was by nature very beneficent, and liberal in his gifts, and very ambitious to oblige people with such large donations; and he made himself very illustrious by the many chargeable presents he made them. He took delight in giving, and rejoiced in living with good reputation." (*Antiquities* 19.7.3)

[278]William B. Forbush, ed., *Fox's Book of Martyrs* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston: c1926, 1965), 2-3.

[279]John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. first (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 479.

[280]Robert Higgins, *Untapped Power* [on-line]; accessed 16 July 2009; available at http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=132931&Page=2; Internet.

12:3 **"Then were the days of unleavened bread" – *Comments* -** The Mosaic Law designated the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or the Passover, from the fourteenth to the twenty-first of the month Nisan (Ex 12:15-18, Lev 23:5-6, Deut 16:1-4).

12:4 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.

12:4 **"And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison" - *Comments* -** Herod did not kill Peter immediately because he did not want to cause a disturbance during the Passover festival.

12:4 **"and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him" – *Comments* –** The Greek word τετράδιον means a squad of four Roman soldiers (*BDAG*). John Calvin notes that these four bands consisting of four soldiers in each band would have shared the four night watches of three hours each.[281] Thus, we read in Acts 12:6 that Peter slept between two soldiers, while several stood at the prison door. Perhaps King Herod has been told of Peter's miraculous escape from the public (δημόσιος) prison used by the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:17-20). He was determined to secure Peter in a manner that made escape impossible.

12:4 **"intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people" – *Comments* -** The Greek word πάσχα means, "the Passover." This word is translated twenty-eight times in the New Testament as "passover" and once as "Easter."

Perhaps Herod did not want to defile the festive occasion with blood, so he waited for this seven-day event to transpire before bringing Peter forth for judgment. Meyer suggests that Herod would have brought Peter forth and stood him in the same place of judgment where Pilate judged the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn 19:13).[282] Standing before the Jewish leaders, Herod intended to pronounce the death sentence upon the apostle Peter in an effort to please the Jews.

12:5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

12:5 ***Comments* -** Herod's calculated plan failed to account for one fact, the prayers of the saints. The reference to the corporate prayers of the church is clearly intended to let the reader know that a miracle was about to take place again. This king had earthly powers to wield the sword and take man's life, but he lacked the power of divine judgment. Had Herod reflected back upon God's mighty acts in the Church, he would have considered the possibility of what the Lord was about to do in delivering Peter, but pride blinds the heart and mind.

This season of prayer was not the church's normal prayer session. Rather, the Scriptures describe it as prayer made "without ceasing." Such a crisis as they were now facing, moved them beyond their typical response to persecution of quietness and scatting to nearby cities. It moved them into the position of offense, so that they stood as a roaring lion, an overcoming Church, called to take dominion upon earth and break the powers of darkness. Until now, we have no record in the Scriptures of such earnest prayer by the saints. They had spent ten days in the upper room in prayer and supplication (Acts 1:13-14); after the day of Pentecost they had "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," (Acts 2:41); they had enjoyed access into the Temple for prayers (Acts 3:1); the place where they prayed was shaken in the assembly following Peter

[281]John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. first (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 480.

[282]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 230.

and John's first release from the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:23-31); the early apostles were men of prayer; (Acts 10:9) but never had the Church prayed with such intensity. The Church was about to experience a new level of power, not one displayed through the gifts of the Spirit under the anointing of the apostles, but of a display from Heaven as God moves mightily in response to the prayers of the saints.

God is not a respecter of persons. I believe He would have delivered James the apostle from death had the church earnestly prayed for him. God responds to our faith, rather than predestine some of the saints for death and some for a fruitful ministry. Although uses tragedies and makes something good come from it, such martyrdoms is not in God's divine plan for the believer, who is destined for a victorious life. This is the message proclaimed in Acts 12:1-19, which focuses most of its attention upon Peter's miraculous deliverance rather than on the martyrdom of James the apostle.

12:6 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.

12:6 **"And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping" –** ***Comments*** **-** John Calvin notes that Peter was "within one night of death."[283] God sometimes waits until the last minute before bringing us deliverance. Peter was delivered just before his execution was scheduled. Peter had placed himself into God's hands. John Trapp notes that David also slept while God delivered him from his adversaries, as we read in Psalms 3:5, "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me."[284]

12:6 **"between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison" -** ***Comments*** **-** It appears that these four bands of soldiers were divided so that two kept the doors and two slept with Peter in chains during each of the four night watches. The two guards at the door of the prison distanced themselves apart and to form the first and second guards through which the angel led Peter (Acts 12:10).

Heinrich Meyer notes that practice of chaining prisoners to a soldier was a Roman custom, and he gives several references.[285] Josephus tells us about Herod Agrippa I being chained to a soldier while in bonds (*Antiquities* 18.6.7). Pliny the Younger refers to sending a prisoner in chains (*Letters* 10.65).[286] Lucius Seneca writes, ". . . the same chain fastens the prisoner and the soldier who guards him . . ." (*Epistles on Morals* 5)[287]

12:7 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.

12:7 ***Comments*** **-** John Calvin notes the power of God's command to cause chains to fall from their victims.[288]

---

[283]John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. first (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 482.

[284]John Trapp, *A Commentary or Exposition Upon All the Books of the New Testament* (London: R. W., 1656), 559.

[285]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 230.

[286]William Melmoth, trans., *The Letters of Pliny the Consul* (Boston, Mass: R. Larkin, 1809), 231.

[287]Richard M. Gummere, trans., *Seneca Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales,* vol. 1, in *The Loeb Classical Library*, eds. E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1935), 23.

[288]John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. first (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 483-484.

12:8 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.

12:8 ***Comments -*** *Smith* says that men in the ancient orient wore traditional garments that were common among these cultures. Their clothing consisted on an inner garment (χιτών), or under garment, which looked like a long shirt, normally being sleeveless that reached down to the knees. This tunic was held tightly to the waist using a girdle, a type of belt. A second, outer tunic was similar, but longer in length, and worn over the first. The third, outer garment (ιμάτιον) was worn on top and seen in public. Peter girded himself by wrapping his inner garment with his belt. He then put on his outer garment and followed the angel.

12:9 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.

12:9 ***Comments -*** Peter had seen a vision before (Acts 10:9-19), and understood how real they seemed to be. He initially thought this was another vision.

12:10 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.

12:10 **"When they were past the first and the second ward" –** ***Comments -*** The English word "ward" to mean, "the act of guarding; watch; guard; guardianship; specifically, a guarding during the day" (*Webster*). The phrase "first and second ward" can refer either to the guard post, or to the guards themselves.[289] This phrase tells us that two of the four guards that make up the four Roman quaternions of soldiers mentioned in 12:4 were guarding the doors of the prison, while two guards from one of the quaternions were sleeping in chains with Peter, their prisoner.

12:11 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.

12:12 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.

12:12 **"And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark" -** ***Comments -*** This Mary was not the mother of James the apostle, who had just been slain by Herod Agrippa I; rather, this was the mother of John Mark, who was the author of the Gospel of Mark. According to *Eusebius*, Papias (A.D. c. 60-130), bishop of Hierapolis, said that John Mark was a follower of Peter, and wrote his Gospel based upon the memoirs of Peter. He says that those who followed Peter's teachings were so overwhelmed at the apostle's death in Rome that they asked John Mark, who was also a close follower of Peter, to record the Gospel that Peter had taught them. They so prevailed upon John Mark that he consented and wrote his Gospel.[290] Jerome calls John

[289]A. C. Hervey, *Acts,* in *The Pulpit Commentary*, eds. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph Exell (New York; Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company, n.d.), 379.

[290]Eusebius writes, "And thus when the divine word had made its home among them, the power of Simon was quenched and immediately destroyed, together with the man himself. And so greatly did the splendor of piety illumine the minds of Peter's hearers that they were not satisfied with hearing once only, and were not content with the unwritten teaching of the divine Gospel, but with all sorts of entreaties they besought Mark, a follower of Peter, and the one whose Gospel is extant, that he would leave them a written monument of the doctrine which had been orally communicated to them. Nor did they cease until they had prevailed with the man, and had thus become the occasion of the written Gospel which bears the name of Mark." (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.15.1) and "'This also the presbyter said:

Mark "the disciple and interpreter of Peter" (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 8).[291] John Mark was the nephew to Barnabas (Col 4:10); and there is Scriptural evidence that Peter may have been paternally related to John Mark as well when he writes, "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son." (1 Pet 5:13). However, it is generally agreed that John Mark's relationship to Peter was a close spiritual bond, so that the use of the phrase "Marcus my son" meant that John Mark was a convert or disciple or assistant to Peter. Paul calls Timothy and Titus his sons in a spiritual sense (1 Tim 1:2, 18, 2 Tim 1:2; 2:1, Tit 1:4).

John Mark is most likely mentioned in Acts 12:12 because he is about to accompany Barnabas and Paul back to Antioch (Acts 12:25), and then join them on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:5).

12:13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

12:13 ***Comments -*** The damsel Rhoda appears only once in the New Testament (Acts 12:13).

12:14 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.

12:15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

12:16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

12:16 ***Comments -*** The early disciples were understandably astonished because their prayers had never been seen so effective. They had been praying in the Temple and in the upper room. They had prayed after Peter and John's first imprisonment, and felt the place shaken. Yet, they had never seen such an immediate and miraculous answer to fervent prayer.

12:17 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.

12:17 **"And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren" –** ***Comments –*** Heinrich Meyer and others believe that the James that Peter mentions in Acts 12:17 is the Lord's brother, who becomes bishop of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13; 21:18, 1 Cor

---

Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterward, as I said, he followed Peter, who adapted his teaching to the needs of his hearers, but with no intention of giving a connected account of the Lord's discourses, so that Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them. For he was careful of one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them falsely.' These things are related by Papias concerning Mark." (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.15) See Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History,* trans. Arthur C. McGiffert under the title *The Church History of Eusebius,* in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church,* A New Series, vol. 1, eds. Henry Wace and Philip Schaff (Oxford: Parker and Company, c1890, 1905), 115-116, 172-173.

[291]Jerome writes, "Mark the disciple and interpreter of Peter wrote a short gospel at the request of the brethren at Rome embodying what he had heard Peter tell. When Peter had heard this, he approved it and published it to the churches to be read by his authority as Clemens in the sixth book of his Hypotyposes and Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, record. Peter also mentions this Mark in his first epistle, figuratively indicating Rome under the name of Babylon 'She who is in Babylon elect together with you saluteth you and so doth Mark my son."' See Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men,* trans. Ernest C. Richardson, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church,* Second Series, vol. 3, eds. Henry Wace and Philip Schaff (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1906), 364.

15:7, Gal 1:19; 2:12, Jam 1:1).[292] However, John Calvin believes this verse refers to James the son of Alphaeus, one of the twelve (Matt 10:3, Mk 2:14; 3:18, Lk 6:15, Acts 1:13).[293] Although there were two men of the Twelve named James, and one of them was martyred in Acts 12:2, the context of the book of Acts supports the view that this is a reference to James the brother of the Lord.

12:17 **"And he departed, and went into another place" – *Comments* -** The Scriptures do not tell us where Peter departed after his miraculous deliverance from prison. After speaking to the saints, he probably hid himself for a time, knowing that Herod would seek him and imprison him again. The book of Acts will refer to Peter only one more time, during the first Jerusalem council (Acts 15:7), while Paul the apostle will move to the center stage for the rest of Luke's account of early church history. There was a time when Jesus withdrew Himself from threats of death by the Jewish leaders, as we read in Matthew 12:14-15, "Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;" Thus, Peter was emulating his Master by going to another location in Acts 12:17.

Peter now fades out of the history of early Church, appearing only in the first Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:7). If Jesus was crucified and resurrected around A.D. 30, and Peter's deliverance from prison took place around A.D. 44, then Peter had held the position as leader of this early Church for about fourteen years. We read in Acts 15:1-35 that James, the brother of the Lord, emerges as the first bishop of the Church of Jerusalem. This means that the focus shifts off of Peter and on to James and Paul the apostle. Perhaps the reason for this is the fact that people sometimes get their eyes upon man and off of the Lord, who is the one working miracles through a man. Peter was walking in an anointing so strong that he shadow healed the sick (Acts 5:15), something that did not happen in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. It would have been easy for believers to begin to over praise him, therefore, the need would have arisen to shift the focus upon other leaders.

It is interesting to note that when Peter becomes quiet in Jerusalem after his imprisonment and miraculous deliverance, the church in Jerusalem becomes quiet as well. The rest of the book of Acts will focus upon Paul the apostle's ministry, which takes place out of the church in Antioch.

12:18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

12:18 ***Comments* -** God had these people in derision, as the psalmist describes in Psalms 2:4, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."

12:19 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.

12:19 **"and commanded that they should be put to death" - *Comments* -** Note that these sentries were put to death because of Peter's escape, as was the custom of the Romans. John Chrysostom notes that the act of putting them to death testified to Herod Agrippa's

[292]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 234.

[293]John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. first (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 488.

wickedness, and to God's marvelous miracle of delivering Peter.[294] The only way to stop corruption and bribery in a corrupt society was the penalty of death. Therefore, the guards were threatened with the sentence of death with the escape of prisoners.

12:19 **"And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode" – *Comments* -** Meyer notes that Herod Agrippa I normally lived in Jerusalem (see Josephus, *Antiquities* 19.7.3).[295] Perhaps Herod's departure from Judaea to Caesarea was the result of his embarrassment because of the miraculous deliverance of Peter, which shamed this king. The Roman governors over Judea were seated in Caesarea on the coast, which hosted Rome's administrative government in Judea (This was not Caesarea Philippi).

12:20-23 **Divine Judgment upon King Herod -** Acts 12:20-23 records the account of divine judgment upon King Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41-44) because of his pride and the wicked acts that he had committed against the Church. These verses serve as an appropriate testimony of God's hand working with the church to fulfill Jesus' apostolic commission in Acts 1:8 through divine vindication. This passage serves as the resolution to the climax of the plot of the fifth block (9:32-12:25).

Extra-biblical Sources of Herod's Death – The death of Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41-44) was such an extraordinary event, it was recorded in secular history as well as Church history. *Josephus* gives us a lengthy account of this event, and adds that the king died after five days in bed (*Antiquities* 19.8.2).[296]

---

[294]John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices,* Part I Homilies I-XXVIII, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1851), 382

[295]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 229.

[296]Josephus writes, "Now when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Cesarea, which was formerly called Strato's Tower; and there he exhibited shows in honor of Caesar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons, and such as were of dignity through his province. On the second day of which shows he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theater early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another, (though not for his good,) that he was a god; and they added, "Be thou merciful to us; for although we have hitherto reverenced thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature." Upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. But as he presently afterward looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him; and fell into the deepest sorrow. A severe pain also arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. He therefore looked upon his friends, and said, "I, whom you call a god, am commanded presently to depart this life; while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away by death. But I am bound to accept of what Providence allots, as it pleases God; for we have by no means lived ill, but in a splendid and happy manner." When he said this, his pain was become violent. Accordingly he was carried into the palace, and the rumor went abroad every where, that he would certainly die in a little time. But the multitude presently sat in sackcloth, with their wives and children, after the law of their country, and besought God for the king's recovery. All places were also full of mourning and lamentation. Now the king rested in a high chamber, and as he saw them below lying prostrate on the ground, he could not himself forbear weeping. And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and in the seventh year of his reign; for he reigned four years under Caius Caesar, three of them were over Philip's tetrarchy only, and on the fourth he had that of Herod added to it; and he reigned, besides those, three years under the reign of Claudius Caesar; in which time he reigned over the forementioned countries, and also had Judea added to them, as well as Samaria and Cesarea. The revenues that he received out of them were very great, no less than twelve millions of drachme. Yet did he borrow great sums from others; for he was so very liberal that his expenses exceeded his incomes, and his generosity was boundless." (*Antiquities* 19.8.2)

Divine Judgment – Because of Herod Agrippa's loyalty to Rome, his kingdom was extended to nearly the former size once held by his grandfather Herod the Great during the time of the early Church (*Antiquities* 18.6.10; 18.7.2; 19.5.1; 19.6.1). Thus, he ruled over all of Palestine.[297] This sense of great power would have caused him to have the great pride recorded in Acts 12:1-23. This story of God's fury is an illustration of Psalms 2:5, "Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." The judgment upon Herod Agrippa is similar to God's judgment upon King Nebuchadnezzar, when God turned his mind that that of a beast for seven years until he acknowledges the God of Heaven (Dan 4:1-37).

Muammar Gaddafi was the Muslim dictator of Libya from 1969 to 2011. In 2007, he dedicated a mosque in Kampala. During his speech, he publically denounced the Scriptures and the Christian faith. On 20 October 2011, Omar Gaddafi was captured and publically executed after having been forced from power two months earlier. This event was recorded and displayed in the media for the world to see. Gaddafi publically humiliated the Church in Uganda, and God publically humiliated this dictator in his death.

While meditating upon Acts 12:20-23 regarding Herod's death, the Lord quickened to me Hebrews 10:26-27, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Herod Agrippa was a Jew and knew about the God of Israel, whether he served him or not. For Herod to take praise from men who called him "God" was without excuse, and punishment was certain.

12:20 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.

12:20 ***Comments –*** Tyre and Sidon were coastal cities. Herod was in control of the economy of Tyre and Sidon because they depended upon his support (τρέφω), perhaps a reference to food supply, such as grain or other food commodities. In addition, Herod could wield the Roman sword and judge these people if he determined the need.

This timing of Herod's visit to these cities may have occurred during or shortly after the famine of 12:11:27-30, which would have confirmed to these towns their need to remain in favor with the king. Therefore, they tried to please him and wisely became a friend of Blastus, one of his assistances.

12:21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

12:21 ***Comments –*** In Acts 12:21, Luke subtly portrays the arrogance of the king in contrast to the humility of the church.

12:22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

12:22 ***Comments –*** The towns people made every attempt to please King Herod, even to the point of declaring him deity, a title reserved for the Roman emperor. Perhaps it was their way of wishing him to be the emperor someday. Some of the Roman emperors were given a status of deity by the people, with such emperor worship providing a common bond in the midst of

[297]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 228.

a diverse culture of pagan religions.[298] In giving this same statue to Herod Agrippa I, the people of Tyre and Sidon, knowing his rise to fame and power, were offering him their highest praise. They were equating him with Caesar in an effort to gain his favor. However, Herod was a Jew, of the nation of Israel, a chosen people who knew the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Herod was not ignorant concerning his Jewish faith in YHWH, compared to Caesar, who was a Gentile that was ignorant of God, as were the Athenians who worshipped the "Unknown God" (Acts 17:22-23). Therefore, God held Herod accountable, and judged him for accepting such praise.

12:23 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.

12:23 ***Comments –*** King Herod was an ungodly leader; but His act of persecuting the church put believers on their knees in prayer (Acts 12:5). Luke's reader would naturally connect this king's death by divine judgment with the church's prayers.

12:24-25 **Conclusion: The Growth of the Word of God –** Acts 12:24-25 records the establishment of the church in Antioch through the teaching of the Word as God prepares to use these believers to fulfill Jesus' apostolic commission in Acts 1:8. The church continued to proclaim the Gospel with signs and wonders and the propagation of the Word of God. These verses support the theme of the indoctrination of the early Church as it describes spread of the Word of God as it is taught to this Gentile church.

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 12:24-25 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Judea/Samaria:

Exegetical Idea – The Word of God grew and multiplied through the teaching ministries of Barnabas and Saul in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Word of God grew and multiplied through the teaching ministries of Barnabas and Saul in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has established His Word upon the earth through His church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has established His Word upon the earth through His church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to established His Word upon the earth in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

12:24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

12:24 ***Comments –*** The Greek word αὐξάνω (grow, increase) and πληθύνω (multiply) may simply be used as synonyms. However, the growth of God's Word may reflect discipleship as

[298]Erich S. Gruen, "Rome: Ancient Rome," in *The World Book Encyclopedia,* vol. 16 (Chicago: World Book, Inc., 1994), 447.

believers grow in their understanding of the Scriptures; and multiplication may reflect evangelism as more and more believers are added to the church.

Acts 12:24 serves as an appropriate conclusion to the third wave of persecutions against the early Church in Palestine. Luke's claim in Acts 12:24 that the word of God grew and multiplied follows a victorious conclusion to the third wave of persecutions under Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41-44), whose death was a clear act of divine judgment. Luke has offered strong testimony that Jesus of Nazareth is greater than King Herod. The weight of testimony presented in the book of Acts continues to favor the justification of Jesus of Nazareth and His followers and condemn the wicked leadership that brought persecution against this group.

The general statement in Acts 12:24 describing the expansion of the early Church expresses the theme of the book of Acts, which is stated in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Similar statements are woven within the narratives of the book of Acts: Acts 6:7, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." Acts 11:21, "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." Acts 19:20, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

12:25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

12:25 **"And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem" -** ***Comments*** **-** Acts 12:25 is tied to Acts 11:30, "Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." The setting for Acts 12:1-24 is the visit of Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem during the Passover festival for the purpose of giving a love offering to the saints because of the famine. Barnabas and Saul then depart Jerusalem, having either witnessed Peter's miraculous deliverance from prison. They may have been praying with the saints in the very house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, when Peter knocked on their door.

"when they had fulfilled their ministry" – ***Comments*** **-** The faithfulness of Barnabas and Saul to fulfill their ministry becomes a prerequisite for what is about to take place in Acts 13:1-3, when God will send them forth as apostles to the Gentiles. Their faithfulness positions them for their divine calling as apostles.

13:1-15:35 **The Witness of Church Growth unto Asia Minor (Divine Service) (A.D. 45-47) –** Acts 13:1-15:35 records the spread of the Gospel into Asia Minor through the apostolic ministries of Paul and Barnabas. This section serves as the testimony of Paul's first missionary journey. Peter, who has been the most popular apostle throughout the Gospels, and the leader of the early church in Acts 1-11, suddenly disappears from this narrative history, and Paul moves into the spotlight of Church history. This section continues the theme of divine service from the previous section (11:27-12:25) as Barnabas and Paul demonstrate how God appoints His servants to assignment and sends them forth to preach the Gospel with signs following. Thus, the first missionary journey confirms Paul's divine calling as an apostle to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:1-3 establishes the immediate setting as the Holy Spirit separates Barnabas and Saul as apostles to the Gentiles. The apostles first travel to Cyprus and two cities in Asia Minor, where Paul delivers his first major speech in 13:4-48. Despite facing opposition, they continue to boldly preach the Gospel in this region before passing back through those cities to encourage the converts who believed in order to establish churches (14:1-28). The climax of the plot is reached when a conflict arises concerning the Jewish custom of circumcision

among believers. As the apostle meet in Jerusalem to address this issue, Paul and Barnabas testify of their recent work in Asia Minor. This conflict is resolved as James the bishop issues a letter requiring the Gentile believers to follow certain guidelines in order to avoid practices associated with pagan idolatry (15:1-32). This section concludes with Paul and Barnabas teaching and preaching in the church of Antioch (15:33-35).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 13:1-15:35 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions were sent forth by the Holy Spirit into divine service as far as Asia Minor to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions were sent forth by the Holy Spirit into divine service as far as Asia Minor to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has appointed the church to divine service in order to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church to divine service in order to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has a role in divine service to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Greater Setting: The Commission of Paul and Barnabas	13:1-3
(1) The Witness of Paul's First Missionary Journey	13:4-48
(2) The Establishment of the Gospel in Asia Minor	14:1-15:32
(3) Conclusion: Barnabas and Saul Teach at Antioch	15:33-35

13:1-3 **The Greater Setting: The Commission of Paul and Barnabas –** Acts 13:1-3 records the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas to be sent out by the church at Antioch under the instructions of the Holy Spirit. This passage serves as the greater setting for Acts 13:1-15:35 concerning Paul's missionary journeys that ultimately lead him to Rome.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 13:1-3 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul were appointed for divine service by the Holy Spirit and the church in Antioch to take the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul were appointed for divine service by the Holy Spirit and the church in Antioch to take the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has appointed the church to various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church to various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should seek to understand his role in divine service in preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Prophets and Teachers in the Early Church - It is important to note that the five prophets and teachers in these verses were all in agreement as to the will of God. When a minister takes a major decision in his life, it is important that his mentors or fellow ministers sense the same leading and send him out with their prayers and blessings.

Comparison of Calling of Kenneth Hagin – Paul the apostle had spent over a decade preaching the Gospel wherever there was an open door. For example, he spent years in the regions of Syria and Cilicia preaching the Gospel (Gal 1:21). At an appointed time, the Lord separated Paul and Barnabas and anointed them in the office of an apostle. In a similar manner, Kenneth Hagin pastored for the first twelve years of his ministry. The Lord then anointed him in the office of a teacher and sent him into the field ministry.[299] These men had been faithful in serving the Lord with their level of anointing, and the Lord appointed a time to move them into a greater anointing.

Comparison of My Calling with Acts 13:1-3 - It is amazing to compare this event recorded in Acts 13:1-3 to the time my wife and I were sent into the mission field. For example, I had been serving in my local church for about fourteen years just as Paul had been doing (Gal 2:1) before being sent out. Also, Dale Gentry, a minister in the office of the prophet, received a dream of me being the one to send out when my pastor asked his counsel of whom to send. Thus, I was chosen by the operation of the gifts of the Spirit in a similar way that Paul and Barnabas were chosen by the gift of utterance from the Holy Spirit. Finally, our pastor laid hands upon my wife and I and sent us away, just as was done in Act 13:1-3.

13:1 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.

13:1 **"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers" –** ***Comments -*** The first office of the New Testament Church was that of the apostle. Jesus Christ ordained twelve men in this ministry office prior to His ascension into Heaven. In Acts 11:27 we read about the office of the prophet in the church in Jerusalem, of which Agabus was the most prominent (Acts 11:28; 21:10). We see in Acts 13:1 the office of the teacher being recognized in the church of Antioch. Thus, we have an order in which these first three offices of the five-fold ministry were placed into the New Testament Church. Paul lists this same order of offices in 1 Corinthians 12:28, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." The office of the evangelist is recognized later in the public ministries of Philip (Acts 21:8) and Timothy (2 Tim 4:5). Paul begins to ordain elders and pastors to oversee his churches later in the book of Acts, which is the final office that the New Testament church will recognize.

It is important to note that Luke says the prophets and teachers were *in the church* of Antioch. In other words, they were not *outside* the fellowship of this local congregation. The offices of the five-fold ministry should not operate independent and apart from the local church assemblies. Every minister of the Gospel should fall under the leadership of a local congregation, namely the pastor. This becomes evidence in Acts 15:1-35 as the Twelve apostles submitted themselves to the ruling of James the brother of the Lord and the first bishop of the church of Jerusalem.

13:1 **"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" –** ***Comments –*** Of the five individuals listed in Luke 13:1, only Saul and Barnabas are familiar to the readers.

[299]Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Gifts and Calling of God* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, c1986, 1992), 17, 30.

Therefore, Luke inserts a brief description of the other three men, who are not elsewhere mentioned in the book of Acts.

An English translation of Acts 13:1 makes no distinction between the offices of those five individuals named, that is, those who were prophets and those who were teachers. However, Heinrich Meyer believes the Greek text does imply a distinction with the arrangement of the Greek particles τέ and κάι, saying, "This division is indicated by the position of the particles: (1) τέ . . . κάι . . . κάι; (2) τέ . . . κάι." In other words, the first use of τέ introduces three prophets and its second use introduces two teachers following the order of these two offices in the preceding phrase. Meyer also mentions the possibility that some of these prophets are implied in Acts 11:27, "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch"; but he believes these prophets most likely returned to Jerusalem after visiting Antioch, so they were not on this list. He also suggests that the list of name in Acts 13:1 was based upon "seniority" within the church in Jerusalem.[300]

"and Lucius of Cyrene" – Lucius of Cyrene may have been a part of the disciples that were scattered abroad, who preached the Gospel to the Greeks in Antioch, as mentioned in Acts 11:20, "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." Lucius of Cyrene may be mentioned again in Romans 16:21, "Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you." However, it is impossible to be certain that this is the same individual.

"and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch" – Manaen, which Greek is equivalent to (מְנַחֵם), is mentioned only once in the New Testament (Acts 13:2).[301] Scholars believe Herod the tetrarch is the Herod Antipas mentioned in Luke 3:1, "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene," This is the Herod that beheaded John the Baptist. G. V. Lechler bases his conclusion of Herod's identify upon *Josephus*, who says that Herod Agrippa II was only seventeen years old when his father Herod Agrippa I died (*Antiquities* 19.9.1); so the Herod mentioned in Acts 13:1 must refer to an earlier king serving during the public ministry of John the Baptist, which would be Herod Antipas, the youngest son of King Herod the Great and tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea (4 B.C. to A.D. 39).[302]

BDAG says the Greek word σύντροφος means either "nourished, brought up together," or "familiar, on friendly terms." Thus, Manaen could have been Herod's foster brother, and raised from a child in the royal court, or he could have simply been an intimate friend later in life, a companion to this king. However, F. F. Bruce believers the term "foster-brother" is appropriate for this context. [303] This Greek word is used only once in the New Testament (Acts 13:1).

---

[300]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 244.

[301]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 244.

[302]G. V. Lechler and K. Gerok, *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 2, trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. John P. Lange, in *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, third series, vol. 25 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1864), 11; see F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts,* in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament,* ed. Gordon Fee (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 245, Logos.

[303]F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts,* in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament,* ed. Gordon Fee (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 245, Logos.

13:2 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.

13:2 **"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said"** – ***Comments –*** The church in Antioch began to minister to the Lord through praise and worship. We see this ministry taking place after the Last Supper in which Jesus and the disciples sung a hymn unto the Lord before departing for the Mount of Olives (Matt 26:30, Mark 14:26). As this early congregation ministering to the Lord, our God responded by ministering to them the through the presence of the Holy Spirit. These believers did not have the Temple in Jerusalem in which to assemble and follow traditional worship ceremonies. So, they sought a non-traditional way in which to conduct themselves during their assemblies. They did not fear the Jewish leaders' threats, as did the believers in Judea, so they had the freedom to openly worship the Lord. Therefore, they had the freedom to spend lengthy time in ministering to the Lord. Unfortunately, through the centuries few congregations allow the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in their midst. They do not accept the gifts of the Spirit, being slain in the Spirit, weeping and laughter, etc. This freedom has been lost because man has created traditional forms of ceremonies for each denomination of churches. Once I became a member of a Charismatic church, I saw the moving of the Holy Spirit for the first time. For example, having been raised in a Southern Baptist church, the pastors gave emphasis upon the office and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, they rejected the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit because they did not understand them. I heard my first prophetic word as a young seminary student. While attending an all-night prayer service at a Southern Baptist church one Friday night, another fellow student walked down to the front of the church and gave a prophecy. We had been praying for peace upon the earth. He spoke as a prophetic voice and told us that there would be not peace upon earth until Jesus Christ returns. I asked the Lord to give me an opportunity to talk to this student. On Monday afternoon, while waiting for class, he came and sat down beside me outside. I had an opportunity to ask him how this gift of the Spirit operates through prophecy. Thus, the Lord wanted me to understand the operations of the Spirit because my pastor was unable to teach the congregation about this subject.

These early believers fasted as a way of separating themselves for a season of dedication to the Lord. Jesus endorsed fasting as a New Testament practice in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 6:16-18). The first recorded practice of fasting in the New Testament Church is recorded in Acts 13:2.

The Holy Ghost probably spoke through one of the gifts of utterance in this instance in Acts 13:2, since there were prophets in this meeting. In contrast, the setting apart or ordination service of the first deacons in Acts 6:1-5 did not seem to be through prophecy or another gift of utterance, but by an apparent need in a particular area. We see the gift of prophecy (1 Tim 4:14) and the laying on of hands (1 Tim 5:22, 2 Tim 1:6) associated with ordinations services in the New Testament.

The New Testament church polity or government was a theocracy, not a democracy or other kind of government. God is the one who directs its affairs through the work of the Holy Spirit. This structure can be understood by looking back at the time of the judges before Saul became king over Israel, when YHWH was Lord over the nation, and not a man. During thie early period of Israel's history, the Lord gave His people directions through the office of the priests as the Lord directed him. Under the new covenant, guidance is given through the gifts of the Holy Spirit working through His servants, or directly to individuals through dreams and visions and words from the Lord.

"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" - ***Comments –*** When God gives His servants a prophetic word concerning His work, then He also has a plan and a destiny for this work. God's plan for Paul and Barnabas was to take the

Gospel to the Gentiles. In Acts 13:2, the verb "I have called" is in the perfect tense. This means that an action took place in the past that continues into the present. This means that God's plan for Paul had already been established. He called Paul to this task in eternity past. The phrase "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" can also mean that the Lord had already begun to reveal this calling to Paul and Barnabas earlier. God had already called Paul and Barnabas beforehand by His divine will and foreknowledge before this event in Acts 13:2. For example, at Paul's conversion the Lord said to Ananias that Paul was "a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:" (Acts 9:15) Thus, Paul had this prophetic word planted within his spirit as a new believer. The Lord spoke to Paul again during his first visit to Jerusalem and said, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." (Acts 22:21) Thus, the prophetic utterance in Act 13:2 served as confirmation of previous utterances on at least two earlier occasions.

Before they were set apart in Antioch as apostles to the Gentiles (Acts 13:2), Barnabas had been moving about preaching the Gospel in the regions of Syria (Acts 11:19-24), with Paul also ministering in Syria and Cilicia for several years (Gal 1:21). Sometime around A.D. 43, Barnabas journeyed to Tarsus, found Paul, and brought him to Antioch of Syria, where they ministered together about a year (Acts 11:25-26). Around A.D. 44, fourteen years from the time of his conversion, having moved about in the regions of Syria and Cilicia preaching the Gospel (Gal 1:21), they returned Jerusalem and declared to the apostles that work that they had been doing among the Gentiles (Acts 11:30, Gal 2:1-10). While in Jerusalem, the church acknowledged that these two men had a divine calling as an apostle to the Gentiles, so they gave them their blessings to go unto the Gentiles (Gal 2:9). Therefore, both churches in Jerusalem and Antioch recognized the calling on these men. Their sending out did not come without them having been prepared for such a task. It was evident before they were sent out that they had an anointing to minister to the Gentiles. This is the way the Lord works in our lives as well. He will prepare us and confirm to us our calling before He opens the door to send us out. So, while we wait for such an opportunity, we must be faithful. Thus, the Greek text reads in the perfect tense, "I have called them." This tense means that the action happened in the past and continues into the present. Thus, the calling of Barnabas and Paul took place in the past, but was confirmed during this time of prayer and worship in the church at Antioch.

13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

13:3 ***Comments –*** It is important to note that God moved upon this congregation to send out two servants into public ministry. Because Jesus delegated divine authority to the Church to conduct the business of establishing the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth (Matt 28:18-20), it was the role of the Church to send forth ministers of the Gospel. The divine authority of the New Testament Church is seen in a number of statements made by the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, in Matthew 18:15-20 Jesus describes the authority of the New Testament believers to bind and loose upon earth as well as heaven, saying, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt 18:18-20) Jesus makes a similar statement after His resurrection, saying, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John 20:23) Thus, the church in Antioch was the instrument that God used to divine appoint Paul and Barnabas into the office of New Testament apostles and to send them forth with a divine unction.

13:4-48 **The Witness of Paul's First Missionary Journey –** Acts 13:4-52 records Paul's first missionary journey to the island of Cyprus and into Asia Minor. The apostles immediately

face opposition as they confront a sorcerer in Cyprus (13:4-12). They move on to Antioch of Pisidia, where Paul delivers the primary speech for this block (13:13-41). While some people embrace the Gospel, other Jews rise up in opposition (13:42-52).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 13:4-48 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews and Gentiles as far as Asia Minor with signs and wonders amidst opposition from the Jews in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews and Gentiles as far as Asia Minor with signs and wonders amidst opposition from the Jews in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His servants in various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has sent forth His servants in various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has a role to support those sent forth in divine service in preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Occasion: Paul and Barnabas at Cyprus	13:4-12
(b) Paul's Speech in the Synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia	13:13-41
(c) The Response of the People	13:42-52

13:4-12 **The Occasion: Paul and Barnabas at Cyprus -** Acts 13:4-14 records Paul and Barnabas reaching their first destination at Cyprus. Although they faced opposition, the passage emphasizes the anointing of the apostles as they perform signs and wonders, resulting in the conversion of a civil leader. This passage of Scripture provides the occasion for Paul's upcoming speech by describing his first missionary journey.

13:4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

13:4 ***Comments –*** Barnabas was "a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus" (Acts 4:36). He would have considered his own country a familiar place to begin missionary outreach before travelling to unfamiliar regions and towns. In a similar way, Paul has spent many years ministering in his native home of Tarsus. We know this because Barnabas went to look for Paul in the city of Tarsus and brought him to Antioch (Acts 11:25). Thus, Paul would have naturally consented to the desire of Barnabas to travel to his native land of Cyprus on their first missionary journey.

13:5 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.

13:5 ***Comments –*** The apostle Paul began his public ministry by preaching the Gospel in the synagogues of the Jews. He continued this approach throughout his ministry (Acts 13:5, 14-15, 42; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 8, 19, 26; 19:8). His credentials as a zealous Jew and a Pharisee would have open the door for Paul to speak in the synagogues throughout the Roman Empire.

Acts 13:5 tells us that Paul and Barnabas took John Mark with them on their first missionary journey. This may be because they had taken with him on previous trips, as we see in Acts 12:25, "And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark."

13:6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:

13:7 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.

13:7 **"Which was the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus" – *Comments* –** Philip Schaff tells us that General di Cesnola discovered a long, mutilated inscription on a pedestal of white marble at an inportant northern city of Cyprus called Solvi. This inscription reads, "EPI PAULOU ANTHUPATOU," which Schaff translates, "In the proconsulship of Paulus." Many scholars believe this inscription refers to the Sergius Paulus mentioned in Acts 13:7.[304]

13:6-7 ***Comments – Satan's Efforts to Control Leadership* -** Note how Satan is trying to control the leadership of Cyprus in order to corrupt the entire nation.

13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

13:8 **"seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith" - *Comments* -** It is interesting to note how the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is described with the phrase "the faith." This phrase emphasizes the response of the hearers. While world religions require an initial commitment to a set of doctrines and lifestyle, Christianity simply requires faith, which proceeds from the heart.

13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

13:9 **"Then Saul, (who also is called Paul)" - *Comments* -** It was not uncommon for a person to take upon himself a new name when moving into a new culture. Saul was a Jewish name and Paul became his Roman name. Paul took his surname most likely at this time, on his first missionary journey. *Jerome* (A.D. 342-420) tells us that Saul changed his name to Paul because this was the name of his first convert (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 5).[305] We find the story of the conversion of Sergius Paulus in Acts 13:4-12, where we also find Paul being called by his new name for the first time (Acts 13:9).

13:9 **"filled with the Holy Ghost" – *Comments* -** The book of Acts makes continual references to those early Church leaders who spoke boldly in the name of Jesus when filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 reads, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The early church was filled continually with the Holy Spirit (2:4; 4:31; 10:44; 13:52; 19:6). Men such as Peter (4:8), Stephen (6:5; 7:55), Barnabas (11:24), and Paul (1:9) were all filled with the Holy Spirit and testified

[304]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 734.

[305]Jerome writes, "As Sergius Paulus Proconsul of Cyprus was the first to believe on his preaching, he took his name from him because he had subdued him to faith in Christ." Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men,* trans. Ernest C. Richardson, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church,* Second Series, vol. 3, eds. Henry Wace and Philip Schaff (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1906), 362.

under the anointing. This anointing empowered the early church to fulfill the Great Commission by taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Although every believer receives the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation, only those filled with the Holy Spirit were empowered to fulfill the divine calling of the New Testament Church.

13:9 **"set his eyes on him" – *Comments* -** This boldness of Paul to set his eyes upon this sorcerer feared by the people is a manifestation of our behaviour when under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This same boldness is seen in the courage of great men in the Old Testament when empowered by the Holy Ghost, such as David and his men during battle. This boldness to proclaim the Gospel in the midst of adversity is why the book of Acts focuses upon those men, such as Peter (4:8), Stephen (6:5; 7:55), Barnabas (11:24), and Paul (1:9), who were filled with the anointing during their proclamation of the Gospel, because these men took the Gospel to the nations.

13:10 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?

13:11 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.

13:12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

13:13-41 **Paul's Speech in the Synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia –** Acts 13:13-41 records the ministry of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch of Pisidia. This passage contains the primary speech for this block as Paul addresses the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. After Luke provides the immediate setting (13:13-15), this speech can be divided into three sections, in which Paul (1) gives a brief outline of Israel's political history (13:16-22), (2) interprets its prophetic fulfillment in the coming of Jesus Christ the Messiah (13:23-31), and (3) presents a call to accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ (13:32-41).

Literary Evidence for the Structure – There is literary evidence for the structure of Paul's speech in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. This sermon can be divided into three sections based upon Paul's three addresses to his audience (13:16, 26, 38).

Here is a proposed outline:

i) The Immediate Setting	13:13-15
ii) Outline of Israel's Prophetic History	13:16-25
iii) The Prophetic Fulfillment of Jesus Christ the Messiah	13:26-37
iv) The Call to Accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ	13:38-41

13:13-15 **The Immediate Setting –** Acts 13:13-15 provides the immediate setting for Paul's speech to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia.

13:13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

13:13 ***Comments* -** Perhaps John (Mark) returned because the Holy Ghost only sent Saul and Barnabas (13:2); that is, John may have not felt called on this particular journey.

13:14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

13:14 ***Comments –*** David deSilva notes that Paul's custom is to visit the Jewish synagogues first during his missionary journeys: (Damascus, 9:20; Salamis, 13:5; Antioch of Pisidia, 13:14; Iconium, 14:1; Thessalonica, 17:1-3 Berea, 17:10-12; Athens, 17:17; Corinth, 18:4; Ephesus, 18:19 and 19:8).[306]

13:15 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.

13:15 ***Comments –*** John Polhill notes that these Jewish synagogues typically had a single ruler, perhaps an elder, Luke's description of a number of rulers suggests that the predecessors kept their titles. He also suggests that the rulers of the synagogue probably met Barnabas and Paul prior to this gathering and arranged for them to speak.[307]

13:16-25 **Outline of Israel's Prophetic History –** In Acts 13:16-22, Paul gives a brief outline of Israel's prophetic history In this outline, Paul refers to its three periods of leadership appointed by the Lord: the time of the prophets (13:17-19), the judges (13:20), and the institution of the kingdom of Israel (13:21-22). From the Davidic lineage, Jesus Christ was born in fulfillment of prophecy and presented to Israel under the public ministry of John the Baptist (13:23-25).

13:16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

13:16 ***Comments –*** Paul waved (κατασείω) his hands as a customary gesture to open his speech. Because of a mixed congregation, Paul's opening words in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia is "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God," a phrase that addresses both Jews and proselytes as confirmed in Acts 13:26, "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God," and in Acts 13:42-43, "And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. 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."

Peter opens his first speech in Acts 1:16 saying, "men and brethren." He opens his speech in Acts 2:14 by addressing those present, "the men of Judaea, and all those dwelling at Jerusalem." Peter opens his speech at Solomon's porch by saying, "men of Israel" (Acts 3:12). He addresses the Sanhedrin by saying, "rulers of the people and elders of Israel" (Acts 4:8). Stephen opens his speech in Acts 7:2 by saying, "brethren and fathers." Peter and James address the elders at the first council in Jerusalem by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 15:7, 13). Paul the apostle also begins his speeches in the same manner. He addresses the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch by saying, "men of Israel, and ye that fear God" (Acts 13:15). He spoke to the Athenians by saying, "men of Athens" (Acts 17:22). He spoke to the angry mob by saying, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." (Acts 22:1) Paul addressed the Sanhedrin by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 23:1).

13:17 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.

13:17 ***Comments –*** Acts 13:17 sums up Israel's deliverance from the land of Egypt. God chose (ἐκλέγομαι) Abraham and his children out of all the peoples of the earth. Paul proceeds to

[306]David A. deSilva, "Paul's Sermon in Antioch of Pisidia," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 151 (January-March 1994): 33.

[307]John B. Polhill, *Acts,* in *The New American Commentary,* vol. 26, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992), 297, Logos.

describe God's blessing upon the children of Israel as He exalts them in Egypt, delivers them from bondage, patiently endures their behavior in the wilderness, gave them the land Promised Land after drive out seven nations, raised up judges to deliver His people, and gave them a king according to their desire. This list of events reflects God's grace upon His people amidst a covenant of the Law in which they deserved destruction. God raised up David as king, through whom was born the Messiah, perhaps His greatest act of grace under His divine election.

"and exalted the people" - One way that God began to "exalted" the children of Israel in the land of Egypt was by giving them supernatural population growth. Their great numbers brought fear into the heart of the Egyptian leaders. However, God specifically exalted them in the eyes of the Egyptians through the ten plagues and the miraculous exodus through the Red Sea, as Luke then says, "and with an high arm brought he them out of it."

"when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt" - Paul uses the Greek word παροικία (sojourn) to describe their time in Egypt, which is translated "dwelt as strangers" in the *KJV*. This Greek word is used only twice in the New Testament (Acts 13:17, 1 Pet 1:17). Peter describes the Christian life upon earth as a time of "sojourning." In other words, this world is not our true home, for we look for a heavenly home prepared for us by God.

13:18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

13:18 ***Comments –*** Acts 13:18 sums up the forty-year wilderness journey of the children of Israel under the leadership of Moses as recorded in the books of Numbers to Deuteronomy. They did spend one year at the foot of Mount Sinai before setting forth through the wilderness (Num 10:11).

13:19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

13:19 ***Comments –*** Acts 13:19 sums up the five-year period of Israel's conquest of the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. The book of Joshua records Israel's preparation for the conquest (1:10-5:15), the battles that took place during the conquest (6:1-12:24), and the division of lands to the twelve tribes of Israel (13:1-21:45).

The Old Testament Scriptures make several references to this list of "seven nations" defeated during Joshua's conquest of the Promised Land. Moses lists these nations as the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, describing them as "seven nations greater and mightier than thou" (in Deut 7:1). Joshua again lists them (Josh 3:10; 12:8; 24:11). An incomplete list is recorded in Judges 3:5. The author of the book of Kings provides an incomplete list of these nations (1 Kgs 9:20). Thus, this list of seven nations was well defined in Paul's study of Jewish history.

The number "seven" generally echoes divine intervention in God's acts of redemption for Israel and the New Testament church. We see this concept reflected in Joshua's exhortation to the children of Israel as he prepares them for the conquest, saying, "Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites." (Josh 3:10) The children of Israel knew that the Lord was with them because He miraculously orchestrated victory over these seven nations during the Conquest.

The books of Judges and Samuel reveal that these nations were not entirely destroyed during the Conquest. The Israelites dwelt among the remnant of these nations during the time of the Judges (Judg 3:5). David had to dislodge the remaining Jebusites from the city of Jerusalem

(1 Chron 11:4-6). Solomon accommodated the remnant of these nations during his reign, but put them under tribute (1 Kgs 9:20-21).

13:20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

13:20 ***Comments –*** Some English translations can be a bit misleading regarding Acts 13:20, such as *God's Word, ISV, KJV,* and *NKJV*. In the Greek text, the phase "about the space of four hundred and fifty years" precedes the rest of Acts 13:20, "and after these things, he gave (them) judges until Samuel the prophet." Therefore, scholars correctly understand the four hundred fifty year period to serve as a summary of Acts 13:17-19, from the time of Israel's sojourn in the land of Egypt to the death of Joshua, rather than the period of the judges. For example, the *ESV* reflects the most popular translation, reading, "All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet."

According to Jewish history, the children of Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt four hundred years (Acts 7:6). They spent one year at Mount Sinai, forty years in the wilderness, about five years in the conquest of the Promised Land, plus the time for the division of land to the twelve tribes. Thus, Paul describes this time period of Israel's history as four hundred and fifty years.

In contrast, the period of the judges lasted about three hundred to three hundred and fifty years. The book of Judges provides an account of Israel's history during the time when the judges ruled Israel, a distinct period of time mentioned in several passages of Scripture. For example, Ruth 1:1 says, "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled." Citing 2 Kings 23:22, "Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah." Paul the apostle defines the time frame of this period by saying, "And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." (Acts 13:20) Therefore, Daniel Block notes that this era "was well defined in Israelite historical thought."[308]

The period of the judges in Jewish history extended from the death of Joshua (Jug 1:1; 2:6-10) to the beginning of public ministry of Samuel the prophet (Acts 13:20); and some scholars extend this period to the anointing of King Saul. Several verses provide a time frame for this era of Israelite history. King Solomon's fourth year of reign, commonly dated at 966 B.C., was four hundred eighty years after the Exodus (1 Kgs 6:1), placing the date of Israel's deliverance from Egypt at 1446 B.C.[309] The children of Israel spent one year encamped before Mount Sinai (Num 9:1; 10:11) and forty years marching in the wilderness (Num 32:13, Deut 29:5). The conquest of the Promised Land lasted five years (Josh 14:10). Assuming King Solomon's fourth year of reign is dated at 966 B.C., this dates Joshua's closing speeches around 1400 B.C. (Josh 23-24). The period of the judges began shortly thereafter.

Working backwards to assign a date for the end of the period of the judges, we must begin with the kings of Israel. David's reign is clearly described as forty years (1 Kgs 2:11), suggesting a date of 1010-970 B.C. The reign of Saul is estimated to be between twenty-

[308]Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth,* in *New American Commentary,* vol. 6, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 25, Logos.

[309]Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges,* in *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament,* eds. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 11.

five[310] to forty years (Acts 13:21),[311] suggesting a date of 1050-1010 B.C. The period of Samuel's public ministry is not stated, but estimated at forty years. Eli's public ministry lasted forty years (1 Sam 4:18). This approximates the end of the period of the judges at 1130-1100 B.C. This gives us an estimate for the period of the judges at 1400-1100 B.C.[312]

However, scholars notice a discrepancy in this period of time because the consecutive dates listed in the book of Judges add up to four hundred and two years: Othniel (40), King Eglon (18), Ehud (80), Jabin (20), Barak (40), Midianites (7), Gideon (40), Abimelech (3), Tola (23), Jair (22), Philistines/Amonites (18), Jephthah (6), Ibzan (7), Elon (10), Abdon (8), Philistines (40), Samson (20). Scholars reconcile this discrepancy by suggesting that the period of some of the twelve judges must have overlapped. Allowing for miscalculations, we can estimate the period of the judges to be three hundred to three hundred fifty years (1420-1070 B.C.).[313]

13:21 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.

13:22 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.

13:22 **"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart" – *Comments* -** After the Lord took the kingdom from Saul, He looked for a man after His own heart, as we read in 1 Samuel 13:14, "But now thy kingdom shall not continue: *the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart*, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee." So, we must ask how David was a man after God's own heart.

Throughout the history of the nation of Israel, God progressively revealed His many divine names to certain individuals. Each name revealed a new aspect of His holy, divine character. Each time He revealed His name, it was done so to meet a need in someone's life, and to encourage someone to look to Him as the Lord over every situation and over all the enemies. King David knew the character of God more intimately than any man before him. For example, David addresses Him as "Father" for the first time in the Scriptures: Psalms 68:5, "*A father of the fatherless*, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation." Psalms 103:13, "*Like as a father* pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him." Later, Ethan the Ezrahite (1 Kings 4:31) also addressed God as "Father" in Psalms 89:26, "He shall cry unto me, *Thou art my father*, my God, and the rock of my salvation." David knew to fear God as the children of Israel has been taught in the Law, but he tasted of God's goodness as the Lord intervened in his life. His lifestyle of praising and worshiping the Lord opened the door to this level of intimacy that no man on earth had experienced before. The Gospels testify of how Jesus Christ revealed God to us as our Heavenly Father in order to show us His tender love for His children. Few individuals in history before Jesus

[310]Diana Edelman says, "In light of Saul's deduced age at death, a reign lasting upwards of 25 years seems indicated." See Diana V. Edelman, "Saul: Person," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary,* vol. 5, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 993.

[311]The *NIV* reads, "Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years." (1 Sam 13:1) Acts 13:21 reads, "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." (*KJV*)

[312]In addition, we are also told that from the time Israel defeated Sihon king of the Amorites (Num 21:21-25) to the time of Jephthah the judge was three hundred years (Judg 11:26). However, this gives us very little assistance in these calculations.

[313]David Washburn echoes the consent of biblical scholarship by pointing out the difficulties of precise dates for the period of the judges. See David L. Washburn, "The Chronology of Judges: Another Look," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147 (Oct-Dec 1990): 414-25.

came to earth knew God as intimately as did King David; for David was a true worshipper of God, and this worship ushered him into the presence of God, where God revealed Himself to David as a Father.

13:23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

13:24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

13:25 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.

13:26-37 **The Prophetic Fulfillment of Jesus Christ the Messiah –** In Acts 13:26-37, Paul develops his argument for the claim that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. He uses the testimonies of eye witnesses (13:26-31) and biblical prophecy written by David (13:32-37) to support his claim.

13:26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

13:26 ***Comments –*** Acts 13:26 begins the second portion of Paul's sermon in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia as Paul takes a moment to again address his audience of both Jews and Gentile proselytes.

13:27 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.

13:28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

13:29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

13:30 But God raised him from the dead:

13:31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

13:32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

13:32 ***Comments –*** In Acts 13:32, Paul refers to the patriarchs of Israel, which he mentions in his opening statements in 13:17, saying, "The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers."

13:33 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.

13:34 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.

13:34 ***Comments –*** The phrase "the sure mercies of David" is taken from Isaiah 55:3, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even the sure mercies of David*."

13:35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

13:36 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:

13:37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

13:40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;

13:41 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.

13:41 ***Comments* –** In Acts 13:41, Paul quotes from Habakkuk 1:5, "Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you." This passage refers to the wonderful works that the Lord would perform during the coming of the Messiah and the miracles that would accompany the preaching of the Gospel. Although Paul "declared it unto them," many of the Jews refused to believe the Gospel.

13:42-52 **The Response of the People –** Acts 13:42-52 how some of the people accept the Gospel and churches are planted, while some of the Jews in this region reject this message and expel the apostles.

13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

13:43 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.

13:43 ***Comments* –** What began as "Barnabas and Saul" in Acts 13:2, 7 developed into "Paul and Barnabas" (Acts 13:43, 46, 50; 14:1, 23; 15:2, 12, 22, 35, 36) Barnabas had mentored Paul for many years, standing beside him as he grew from a new believer to a man called by God. Now, God was using Paul in a mighty way that placed him in the foreground of their relationship and Barnabas in the background. However, Barnabas is mentioned on several occasions (Acts 14:12, 14; 15:25).

13:44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

13:45 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.

13:45 **"when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy"** – ***Comments* –** Paul intended to provoke the Jews to jealously through the preaching of the Gospel, as he says in Romans 11:14, "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them."

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

13:47 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.

13:48 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.

13:49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

13:50 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.

13:51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

13:51-52 ***Comments –*** In Acts 13:51-52, the disciples did as Jesus commanded them in Luke 9:5, "And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them." Joy comes by doing God's Word.

14:1-15:32 **The Establishment of the Gospel in Asia Minor –** Acts 14:1-15:32 records the final part of the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas as they preached the Gospel with signs and wonders in the midst of opposition (14:1-28). After completing their mission, they visited the apostles in Jerusalem in order to resolve the conflict concerning circumcision among the Gentile converts (15:1-32). The approval of the missionary work of Paul and Barnabas established the guidelines by which all missionary outreach was to be conducted.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 14:1-15:32 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

> Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul established the churches they planted in Asia Minor and confirmed God's acceptance of the Gentiles without circumcision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul established the churches they planted in Asia Minor and confirmed God's acceptance of the Gentiles without circumcision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His servants to establish churches among the nations in the liberties of the Gospel Jesus Christ in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul established the churches they planted in Asia Minor and confirmed God's acceptance of the Gentiles without circumcision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has a role to support those sent forth in divine service to establish the church among the nations in the liberties of the Gospel Jesus Christ in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) Paul and Barnabas Complete Their First Mission	14:1-28
(b) The First Church Council in Jerusalem	15:1-32

14:1-28 **Paul and Barnabas Complete Their First Mission -** Acts 14:1-28 records the final part of the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas as they preach the Gospel in Iconium and Lystra (14:1-20). After making converts and facing opposition, they returned to the cities where they had preached to strengthen these converts as they made their way back to their home church in Antioch (14:21-28).

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Paul and Barnabas at Iconium and Lystra	14:1-20
ii) Paul and Barnabas Strengthen the Brethren	14:21-28

14:1-20 **Paul and Barnabas at Iconium and Lystra -** Acts 14:1-20 records the account of Paul and Barnabas at Iconium and Lystra. The emphasis is upon the tension between the preaching of the Gospel with signs and wonders and the adversity of the Jews as they oppose the Gospel and turn the crowds against the apostles.

14:1 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.

14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

14:2 ***Comments*** **-** Man's tongue is a powerful weapon for good or evil. The tongue can bring salvation to a soul and usher him into heaven, or it can corrupt an innocent mind against the truth and send him to hell. Solomon writes, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." (Prov 18:21)

14:3 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.

14:3 **"which gave testimony unto the word of His grace"** - ***Comments*** **-** They spoke the word of God's saving grace through Jesus Christ, our blessed Redeemer.

14:3 **"and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands"** - ***Comments*** **-** It is God who gives the grace for these signs and wonders to be done in people's lives.

14:3 ***Comments*** **-** These signs and wonders were confirmation of the apostolic calling of Paul, as he reveals in 2 Corinthians 12:12, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

14:4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

14:4 **"But the multitude of the city was divided" -** ***Comments*** **-** Jesus said that He came to bring division in Luke 12:51-52, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three."

14:5 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,

14:6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

14:7 And there they preached the gospel.

14:8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

14:9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

14:9 ***Comments –*** The impotent man hear Paul preach the Gospel and received faith for his own healing. This means that Paul preached that divine healing was a part of the atonement of Jesus Christ when he preached the Gospel. The impotent man's faith healed him, not Paul's faith. We see another example of a person's faith rising up to receive healing in Mark 5:34, "And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. This lady had heard the preaching of the Gospel second hand, but it was enough to stir up her faith to receive healing. Paul said, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom 10:17) We must include divine healing in the atonement of Jesus Christ as a part of our proclamation of the Gospel.

14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

14:7-10 ***Comments - The Healing of the Lame Man at Lystra -*** The preaching of the Gospel should always involve healing. The Gospel is a message of the healing of the total man, which consists of spirit, soul, and body. Kenneth Hagin says that Paul did three things: he preached the Gospel to the man (14: 7); he perceived that the man had faith to be healed (14: 9); and he told the man to rise up and walk (14:10). The man also did three things (in order to receive his healing): he heard Paul preach the Gospel (14 9); he had faith to be healed (14:9); he leaped up and walked (14:10).[314]

14:11 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.

14:12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

14:13 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.

14:11-13 ***Comments - Paul and Barnabas Mistaken for Mythological Gods -*** Philip Schaff tells us that according to Greek myths described by Ovid in his work *Metamorphoses*, the gods Jupiter and Mercury (Zeus and Hermes) had appeared to the people of Lycaonians in the likeness of men.[315] This place was visited by devout pilgrims and adorned with offerings.[316] Therefore, it would have been natural for these people to mistake Paul and Silas for these Greek "gods" after having seen the miracles.

14:14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

14:15 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:

---

[314]Kenneth Hagin, *Bible Faith Study Course* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1991, 1999), 1-2.

[315]Ovid writes, ""I have myself seen the spot; for Pittheus sent me to Phrygia, where his father once ruled. Not far from the place I speak of is a marsh, once a habitable land, but now water, the haunt of divers and coots. Hither came Jupiter in the guise of a mortal, and with his father came Atlas' grandson, he that bears the caduseus, his wings laid aside." (*Metamorphoses* 8.622-627) See Frank J. Miller, trans., *Ovid: Metamorphoses with an English Translation,* vol. 1in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1951), 449.

[316]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, vol. 1: Apostolic Christianity A.D. 1-100* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 734-735.

14:15 **"We also are men of like passions with you"** – ***Comments –*** James makes a similar statement, saying, "*Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are*, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." (Jam 5:17)

14:16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

14:17 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.

14:17 ***Comments -*** What ways did He give mankind a witness of Himself and His divine nature? Acts 14:17 implies that He testified through His creation (Rom 1:20). Every generation of mankind has received general revelation of God's testimony about Himself from creation. In addition, every generation has been given the testimony of the Holy Scriptures. From the promise of the Messiah to Adam and Eve, and the recordings of ancient history in the Jewish writings and Holy Scriptures, God has revealed specific to mankind. A third testimony that God has given to mankind is in the form of miracles. God has allowed each generation of mankind to see some type of miracle that testifies of Him. Fourth, God has revealed Himself to particular individuals so that each generation of mankind has eye witnesses of Him. People have seen angels, and have been taken to Heaven and Hell to be witnesses to their generation. God has been careful to provide each generation of mankind with unarguable testimonies of Himself.

14:18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

14:19 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.

14:20 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.

14:19-20 ***Comments –*** The Jews attempted to stone Paul because he was the chief spokesman. Barnabas was not such a target. During this event, Paul must have remembered how he organized Stephen's stoning and how marvelous was the grace of God that allowed Paul to live. Hence, could Paul say: 1 Corinthians 15:9, "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." Ephesians 3:8, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;" 1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

14:21-28 **Paul and Barnabas Strengthen the Brethren -** Acts 14:21-28 records the account of Paul and Barnabas returning to strengthen the disciples as they made their way back to the church at Antioch.

14:21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

14:21 ***Comments –*** Paul's efforts to teach was a profitable work of God.

14:22 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.

14:23 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.

14:23 **"And when they had ordained them elders in every church" - *Comments* –** Note how Paul took the first step in setting up order in the church. He ordained elders before he ordained a pastor. This was perhaps because a group of elderly people would tend to make wiser decisions that one lone pastor, who might easily get puffed up with his position. But how could Paul ordain elders so quickly after their conversion? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that many of Paul's early converts were Jews, who knew the Scriptures well from a child. One example of this would be Apollos, who was an Alexandrian Jew, and mighty in the Scriptures before his conversion (Acts 18:24-25).

"and had prayed with fasting" - *Comments* – Jesus taught on prayer and fasting in Matthew 6:5-18. Praying and fasting is one duty of the Christian life that demonstrates a believer's devotion to the Lord. The church in Antioch prayed and fasted, as we see in Acts 13:2, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted."

"they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed" - *Comments* – I have spent time commending myself and family to the Lord each day. With this practice, I see more of God's hand at work in my daily affairs. The Lord must give us a greater focus when we are summited to Him each day, entrusting ourselves to Him with the affairs of life.

14:24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

14:25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

14:26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

14:26 **"And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God" - *Comments* –** In Acts 14:26, Luke describes the events of Acts 13:3 as Barnabas and Paul being "handed over" (παραδίδωμι) to "the χάρις (grace) of the Lord." This same phrase is used in Acts to describe how Saul and Silas were sent out on their second missionary journey. Luke writes, "And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God." (Acts 15:40)

"for the work which they fulfilled"- *Comments* – The Greek word πληρόω is used sixteen times in the book of Acts. Five of these uses mean, "to make full" (*BDAG*), and the other eleven occasions describe a "complete period of time" (*BDAG*). Of the eleven temporal uses, three of them refer specifically to the fulfillment of Scripture (1:16; 3:18; 13:27), while four refer to the completion of divine service (12:25; 13:25; 14:26; 19:21). In addition, Luke uses the construction ὡς δὲ + πληρόω on four occasions to refer to the completion of time (7:23; 9:23) or the completion of divine service (13:25; 19:21).

Luke uses the word πληρόω in strategic places concerning Paul's ministry in the book of Acts. For example, Paul fulfilled his divine service after he and Barnabas took aid to the elders in Judea (12:25); Paul and Barnabas fulfilled their service on their first missionary journey (14:26); and Paul fulfilled his work after his third missionary journey (19:21). All of these prophecies are centered upon Jesus' apostolic commission in Acts 1:8. Thus, Luke weaves the prophetic element into the apostolic element throughout the book of Acts. These prophecies are delivered as divine oracles by visions (10:9-16; 16:9), by men (11:27-28; 21:10-11), and as gifts of utterance (13:1-3).

Paul and Barnabas had fulfilled God's purpose during their first missionary journey. This translation means that Luke is possibly reflecting back on the fulfillment of the prophecies

given to Paul by Ananias concerning his divine calling as an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15-16), and by the church of Antioch to go forth on missionary journeys (Acts 13:1-3).

14:27 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.

14:28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

14:28 ***Comments –*** Many scholars will place the dates of Paul's first missionary journey at A.D. 45-47 and the first Jerusalem Council at A.D. 50. Thus, Paul and Barnabas would have spent about two years in their home church of Antioch (A.D. 48-49)

15:1-32 **The First Church Council in Jerusalem (A.D. 50) -** Acts 15:1-32 records the account of the Church at Jerusalem officially accepting the Gentile converts into full membership. This passage serves as the climax of the plot as it reaches its climax of tension in the first council at Jerusalem, which met in Jerusalem around A.D. 50.[317]

Here is a proposed outline:

i) The Immediate Setting: Dispute Concerning Circumcision	15:1-4
ii) Peter's Witness of Gentile Conversions	15:5-11
iii) Paul and Barnabas Witness of Gentile Conversions	15:12
iv) The Judgment of James	15:13-21
v) The Letter to the Gentiles	15:22-29
vi) The Response of the Church at Antioch	15:30-32

James the Pastor – It is important to note that the twelve apostles of the Lamb were members of the church at Jerusalem in which tradition tells us that James the brother of the Lord was the pastor. As members of this church, these apostles of the Lamb were subject to their pastor. For in this chapter, it is James who decrees the final verdict of this council by which the apostles and prophets of this church willingly submitted.

First New Testament Epistle – In this chapter of Acts, we find the first epistle that was written to the New Testament Church by the hands of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ at the first church council. What caused the need for this first epistle to be written? The occasion was the need to interpret the teachings of the Old Testament and of the Lord Jesus Christ in the light of the foreign cultures outside the nation of Israel.

For example, as an African missionary, I talk with American and Canadian pastors who are shepherding African congregations or Bible schools. In this "foreign" culture, so distant from Western civilization, these pastors have difficulty distinguishing between genuine marriages, common-law-marriages and those who are just living together in fornication. This is because the customs of marriage are so foreign.

When these African men are chosen to be church leaders and pastors, they have to meet the qualifications of being the husband of one wife. But if they had children from several relationships, how does one determine if these were marriages of acts of fornication. One pastor told me that he learned to use the custom of a bride price as evidence of a legal marriage. Otherwise, the need for a marriage ceremony was required for members of his church.

[317]Darrell Bock accurately points out that this meeting was more of a consultation than a council in order to distinguish it from the formal church councils that took place in the centuries that followed. Thus, he uses the word council in Acts 15 in a "nontechnical sense." See Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 486, Logos.

The early Church accepted only the epistles of the New Testament apostles as having the divine authority to establish these new guidelines of conduct for churches everywhere. Each New Testament epistle that was written to the Church by these apostles was occasioned by the need to interpret the teachings of the New Covenant into an unfamiliar culture of people who were being evangelized. Thus, each Pauline epistle, although it may be occasioned by a particular need and have a particular theme, is based upon the underlying theme of laying the foundation, or guidelines, of Christian conduct for the early Church.

The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament - The New Testament church, because of its Jewish heritage, immediately incorporated the Old Testament Scriptures into its daily worship. These new believers quickly realized that some of the Old Testament teachings, such as the Law of Moses, must now be interpreted in light of the New Covenant. We see this struggle of interpreting the Old Testament taking place at this first council of Jerusalem.

Illustration - Those like Paul and Barnabas who had been in the field ministry winning souls to Christ, understood the power of the Gospel towards those who simply believe. However, the Jewish converts who had isolated themselves in Jerusalem wanted to be rigid regarding their Old Testament faith. We can compare this story to similar issues that the Vatican faces in modern times. Those priests who live and work with their parishioners tend to be more compromising on ethical issues, while the bishops at the Vatican tend to be uncompromising on issues and follow their traditions. The church at Jerusalem had to deal with a similar situation.

15:1-4 **The Immediate Setting: Dispute Concerning Circumcision –** Acts 15:1-4 provides the setting for the first council of the apostles in Jerusalem. A dispute arose concerning the issue of the need for circumcision among Gentile converts, a requirement strongly contested by Paul and Barnabas after seeing God's grace poured out upon those who believed on their missionary journey.

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

15:1 ***Comments –*** The act of circumcision was one of the key distinctions between a Jew and a Gentile. The Roman historian Tacitus mentions the high value the Jews placed on circumcision:

> "The Jews are extremely loyal toward one another, and always ready to show compassion, but toward every other people they feel only hate and enmity. They sit apart at meals, and they sleep apart, and although as a race, they are prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; yet among themselves nothing it unlawful. They adopted circumcision to distinguish themselves from other peoples by this difference." (*Histories* 5.5)[318]

These early Jewish converts to Christianity had difficulty distinguishing between God's saving grace and the rite of circumcision. They were zealous for their beliefs, but they were in error concerning the need for circumcision.

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

[318]Clifford H. Moore, and John Jackson, trans., *Tacitus: The Histories* and *The Annals,* vol. 2, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1925), 181-183.

15:3 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.

15:4 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.

15:5-11 **Peter's Witness of Gentile Conversions –** Acts 15:5-11 records Peter's testimony of how God worked through him to bring salvation to the Gentiles.

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

15:6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

15:7 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.

15:7 ***Comments –*** Peter opens his first speech in Acts 1:16 saying, "men and brethren." He opens his speech in Acts 2:14 by addressing those present, "the men of Judaea, and all those dwelling at Jerusalem." Peter opens his speech at Solomon's porch by saying, "men of Israel" (Acts 3:12). He addresses the Sanhedrin by saying, "rulers of the people and elders of Israel" (Acts 4:8). Stephen opens his speech in Acts 7:2 by saying, "brethren and fathers." Peter and James address the elders at the first council in Jerusalem by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 15:7, 13). Paul the apostle also begins his speeches in the same manner. He addresses the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 13:15). He spoke to the Athenians by saying, "men of Athens" (Acts 17:22). He spoke to the angry mob by saying, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." (Acts 22:1) Paul addressed the Sanhedrin by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 23:1).

15:8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

15:9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

15:10 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?

15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

15:12 **Paul and Barnabas Witness of Gentile Conversions –** Acts 15:21 records the testimony of Paul and Barnabas as they bear witness to God's grace being poured forth upon the Gentiles.

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

15:13-21 **The Judgment of James –** Acts 15:13-21 records the judgment of James the brother of the Lord, who served as the first bishop over the church in Jerusalem. His decision in light of the preceding testimonies was to accepting the Gentile converts into full membership. He wisely resolves the tension of this dispute by issuing a letter requiring the Gentile believers to follow certain guidelines in order to avoid practices associated with pagan idolatry

15:13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

15:14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15:15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

15:16 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:

15:17 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.

15:16-17 ***Comments –*** The prophet Amos tells us that the Lord will rebuild the tent or tabernacle (σκηνή) of David so that both Jews and Gentiles would be able to seek the Lord. This Old Testament prophet did not not say that the Lord would rebuild the Tabernacle of Moses, because this would put the Jews and Gentiles back under the Law with all of its required animal sacrifices and laws and ordinances. Neither did the prophet say that the Lord would rebuild the Temple of Solomon. Although King Solomon built a magnificent building for the Lord, its worship required animal sacrifice and it excluded access by the Gentiles. This exclusion is evident in the building of Herod's temple when the Jews created the outermost court for the Gentiles (Josephus, *The Jewish Wars* 5.5.3; 6.2.4, *Antiquities* 17.11.5) The apostle Paul was arrested for allegations of bringing a Gentile convert into the inner court of the Jews (Acts 21:28-29). Herod's temple was defiled with money changes and those selling sacrificial animals (Matt 21:12, Mark 11:14, Luke 19:45, John 2:15). Instead, David's tent was reduced simply to a place where man was able to commune with God. We read in 1 Chronicles 15:1, "And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent." This simple tent that David pitched had one purpose, which was to house the ark of the covenant so that the Lord could dwell among men. It was a place that allowed David to put on a linen ephod and enter into the presence of the Lord (1 Chron 15:27). It was a place without walls. It was a place that welcomed all Israelites and those non-Jews dwelling in Israel. It was a place that allowed all of David's fighting men to worship, which consisted of mixed peoples when he said, "Let us bring the ark of our God back to us." (1 Chron 13:1-2) It was the place where a people first learned to sing and worship the Lord from a heart of thanksgiving (1 Chron 16:1-36). This most closely describes God's purpose for Israel building a temple on earth. This was the tabernacle of David.

15:18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

15:15-18 ***Comments –*** In Acts 15:15-18 the author Luke is quoting from Amos 8:10-11 (*LXX*) or Amos 9:11-12 (*MT*):

> Amos 8:10-11, "In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and will rebuild the ruins of it, and will set up the parts thereof that have been broken down, and will build it up as in the ancient days: that the remnant of men, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, may earnestly seek [me], saith the Lord who does all these things." (*LXX*)
>
> Amos 9:11-12, "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this." (*MT*)

F. F. Bruce tells us that the *LXX* substitutes the Masoretic "yireshu" (will possess) for "yidreshu" (will seek) and the Masoretic "adam" (man) for "Edom." In addition, the *LXX*

neglects the particle "'eth," which marks the accusative case preceding "she'erith" (remnant).[319]

15:16-18 ***Comments – The Harvest -*** The passage in Amos 9:11-15 is about the great harvest of souls in the last days. The house of David is symbolic of prayer where churches intercede to God for the harvest of souls. The harvest of souls is directly linked to the prayer efforts of the Church. Todd Bentley speaks regarding this two-fold process in the context of the great harvest that will precede the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

> "While traveling to an evening crusade I was caught up in an interactive vision. I saw the great harvest field already white. The angels were working in this field. Then Jesus came to me. I knew in my spirit He was the Lord of the Harvest, but He came to me dressed as the Good Shepherd (John 10) and holding a staff. I wondered why the Lord of Psalm 23 was the Lord of the Harvest. Then I understood – this is not just about winning souls, but also about discipling these same souls. Jesus doesn't want to just be savior, but He also wants to be the great overseer of their souls and He wants to lead them into the depth of Psalm 23. He desires to restore their souls and to lead them beside the still waters. Immediately, these Scriptures came to my mind: Psalms 24:1, Revelation 11:15, Isaiah 40:15, Psalm 2:8.
>
> "This was a faith level where whole cities and nations can be saved in a day. The Lord said to me, 'Todd, enter into My harvest power! It's the Harvest of Amos 9:13, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt."'
>
> "There is coming an acceleration of the laws of sowing and reaping. The seed will be planted and as soon as the seed is sown, it will be reaped. There will be harvest until the days of sowing and sowing until the days of harvest – a holy overlapping of continual sowing and reaping. When this acceleration happens, men and women will cry out, 'What must I do to be saved?'
>
> "As I continued to walk in the harvest I noticed a tent in the field and asked, 'Lord, what is that tent doing in the harvest and why does it look so old and ragged? It's not as glorious and golden as these fields.' The Lord responded, 'Todd, this is the tabernacle of David and it looks that way because, for many, prayer is so inviting. It is a matter of perspective and priority. To many, prayer is tedious work, but to others it is the glory. Most importantly, the tabernacle releases the Amos 9:13 harvest.'
>
> "In the book of Acts, Paul, Barnabas, Peter and their ministry teams are seeing tremendous harvest in cities. Churches are being planted and the Holy Ghost is falling on the Gentile believers as well as the Jews. In Acts 15 they meet for the Jerusalem council and give reports of the harvest and discuss whether Gentile believers need to be circumcised. In the midst of this James quotes Amos 9:11-12, 'In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.'
>
> I said, 'God there it is again – the great harvest and the house of David.' Night and day prayer, 24 hours a day, seven days a week is already taking place in the Church. These houses of prayer are essential to the releasing of an end-time signs and wonders

[319]F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), 151.

movement, healing revival and the geographic healing centers."[320]

15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

15:20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

15:20 ***Comments -*** Note that in the book of 1 Corinthians, two of the major topics that Paul dealt with were idolatry and fornication. We learn from the ancient Greek pagan forms of temple worship that these temples kept slaves as temple prostitutes, thus mixing idolatry with fornication. Therefore, the practice of feasting as a part of idolatry and fornication appears to have been a common practice in Asia Minor among the temple worship of the Greeks. As a result of this pagan activity, James, the first bishop of the church in Jerusalem, focused the first written church decree upon the need to avoid pagan forms of worship for the Gentile converts by listing four things that were practiced during these pagan rituals. They were to avoid idolatry, fornication, and the meats associated with these pagan feasts. Paul the apostle will elaborate upon these topics in 1 Corinthians 5-10.

We also see in Romans 1:18-32 how idolatry was followed by fornication as God turned mankind over to a reprobate mind. Thus, these two sins are associated with one another throughout the Scriptures.

15:21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

15:22-29 **The Letter to the Gentiles –** Acts 15:22-29 records the letter written and approved by the apostles and elders and sent by the hands of those chosen to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch.

15:22 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:

15:22 ***Comments –*** Judas is not mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures, so nothing more is known about him. However, Silas (Σίλας) was of one of Paul's close traveling companions during his second missionary journey, basically taking the place of Barnabas. Although Paul and Peter use his Roman name Silvanus when referring to him in their epistles, we know him in the book of Acts by his Jewish name Silas. His first appearance in Scriptures takes place in Acts 15 during the Jerusalem council where he is identified as a leader (Acts 15:22) in the Jerusalem church, and a prophet (Acts 15:32). He was chosen along with Judas Barsabas to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to the church in Antioch in order to place into effect some guidelines for Gentile Christians. He moved about with Paul during his second missionary journey and is last identified with Paul in Acts 18:5 where he and Timothy meet Paul in Corinth. Paul will refer to him in his two epistles to the church at Thessalonica (1 Thess 1:1, 2 Thess 1:1) and in his second epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor 1:19). We also find his name mentioned as "faithful brother" and bearer of Peter's first epistle (1 Pet 5:12).

As mentioned in the letter that follows, Judas and Silas were sent with Barnabas and Saul to give credibility to this letter as authentic. In societies where corruption is systemic or common, people need evidence that someone is authentic.

[320]Todd Bentley, *Journey Into the Miraculous* (Victoria, BC, Canada: Hemlock Printers, Ltd., 2003), 327-9.

15:23 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:

15:24 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:

15:25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

15:26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15:27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.

15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

15:25-28 ***Comments*** **-** The early Church leaders make the decision concerning circumcision at the first council of Jerusalem by two witnesses. They received a divine word from God through the one of the gifts of utterance, combined with the Spirit of God bearing witness to their hearts. They made their decision because they felt in their hearts confirmed that it was the right thing to do, as is indicated in the phrase "it seemed good." Thus, they were being led by the Spirit at this time. Luke writes, "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us". Luke makes a similar statement in the opening passage of His Gospel by saying, "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus," (Luke 1:3). Luke was simply saying that he felt led by the Holy Spirit to write his Gospel.

15:29 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.

15:29 ***Comments*** **–** Abstinence from meats offered unto idols was important in that it helped a weaker brother not to stumble (1 Cor 8:1-13). Apparently, the practice of feasting at idolatrous temples in those days involved rituals that used the blood of animals after strangling them, feasting on their meat, as well as men laying with temple prostitutes. Therefore, the prohibition against fornication is listed with these other practices that were common in idolatrous worship.

15:30-32 **The Response of the Church at Antioch –** Acts 15:30-32 records the response of the church at Antioch to the letter from the apostles as they gladly accepted this letter after having been told the need to be circumcised and obey the laws of Moses by earlier disciples from Jerusalem. This passage serves as the resolution to the conflict of the plot of this passage.

15:30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

15:31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

15:32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

15:33-35 **Conclusion: Barnabas and Saul Teach at Antioch –** Acts 15:33-35 serves as the conclusion of the sixth narrative block as it records the spread of the Gospel into Asia Minor (14:1-15:32). The church continued to fulfill the divine commission of Jesus Christ as they

reached out to the Gentiles through divine service in the kingdom of God. These verses (15:33-35) support the theme of divine service of the early church as they describe divine service in the early Church.

These verses testify of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth. They also testify of the fulfillment of a secondary prophecy in Acts 13:2 exclusive to this block in which the Holy Spirit separated Barnabas and Paul for the work of converting the Gentiles through the same Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 15:33-35 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul served in the church in Antioch after having fulfilled their task to take the Gospel to Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul served in the church in Antioch after having fulfilled their task to take the Gospel to Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has appointed His servants to serve out of the local church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed His servants to serve out of the local church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should support the local church in divine service in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

15:33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

15:34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

15:35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

15:36-19:20 **The Witness of Church Growth unto Macedonia (Perseverance amidst Hardships/Persecutions) -** Acts 15:36-19:20 records the spread of the church into Macedonia as well as the establishment of the important work in Ephesus. Luke begins with the greater setting that describes how Paul and Barnabas split up prior to the second missionary journey (15:36-16:5). The plot develops as Paul responds to a divine call into Macedonia, where he establishes new churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Corinth (16:6-18:22). After a season of rest, he embarks upon his third missionary journey back into Asia Minor to strengthen the churches (18:23-19:19). This block concludes with Luke's testimony that God's Word prevailed and spread throughout Macedonia, Asia Minor, and Greece (19:20). This section emphasizes the theme of perseverance amidst hardships/persecutions.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of perseverance amidst hardships/persecutions. This section records the greatest number of hardships and persecutions within the book of Acts. It opens with Barnabas and Saul have a serious disagreement over John Mark (15:36-41). Paul is imprisoned in Philippi (16:11-40). The Jews in Thessalonica set the city in an uproar because of Paul's public ministry, following them as far as Berea (17:1-15). Paul is cut short on Mars Hill because of the Athenians began to mock him (17:16-34). The Jews in Corinth opposed and blasphemed Paul, dragging him before the Roman judgment seat and publicly beating one of his followers (18:1-17). Despite these hardships and persecutions, the Word of God prevailed in Asia Minor and Macedonia (18:23-19:19).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 15:36-19:20 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Macedonia in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Macedonia in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has made provision so that the church can persevere and preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has made provision so that the church can persevere and preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has divine provision so that he perseveres and preaches/teaches the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) Immediate Setting: Paul Begins His Second Missionary Journey	15:36-16:5
(2) The Testimony of Paul's Ministry in Macedonia	16:6-18:22
(3) The Testimony of Paul's Third Missionary Journey	18:23-19:19
(4) Conclusion: The Mighty Growth and Prevailing of the Word of God	19:20

15:36-16:5 **Immediate Setting: Paul Begins His Second Missionary Journey (A.D. 51-54) -** Acts 15:36-16:5 records the testimony of Paul's second missionary journey as he purposes to strengthen the churches he initially planted in Asia Minor. This passage serves as the greater setting for Acts 15:36-20:38 concerning Paul's second and third missionary journeys.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 15:36-16:5 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia:

Exegetical Idea – Paul goes forth with Silas from the church in Antioch to strengthen believers in Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul goes forth with Silas from the church in Antioch to strengthen believers in Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has appointed the church leaders to strengthen and establish fellow believers in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church leaders to strengthen and establish fellow believers in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of

God should support church leaders in strengthening fellow believers in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) Paul and Barnabas Split Up	15:36-41
(b) Timothy Joins Paul and Silas	16:1-4
(c) Conclusion: Decrees Delivered and Churches Strong in Faith	16:5

15:36-41 **Paul and Barnabas Split Up -** Acts 15:36-41 records the account of Paul and Barnabas splitting up over the issue of the integrity of John Mark. Paul replaces Silas as his new companion.

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

15:37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

15:38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

15:38 ***Comments –*** Acts 15:38 says that Paul made his evaluation not to take Mark along with them again because he left them on the first mission. There appears to be a sense of Paul feeling in his spirit that Barnabas was not making the right decision.

15:39 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;

15:39 ***Comments -*** Barnabas was the uncle of John Mark (Col 4:10). We can assume that Barnabas and John Mark visited the towns that were a part of the first missionary journey since Paul and Silas take a different route. Paul apparently avoids the cities on his first missionary journey so that he does not encroach into the ministry of Barnabas.

15:40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

15:40 ***Comments –*** In Acts 15:40, Paul and Silas were sent out by the Church. They were "handed over" (παραδίδωμι) to "the χάρις (grace) of the Lord." This same phrase is used in Acts to describe how Barnabas and Saul were sent out on their first missionary journey. As they completed their first journey and returned to the church in Antioch, Luke writes, "And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled." (Act 14:26)

The phrase "grace of the Lord" or "grace of God" is used in various forms throughout the New Testament, primarily in the writings of Paul and Luke. Sometimes the phrase clearly refers to God's grace necessary for the salvation of men, sometimes it describes God's favor, and sometimes it refers to the manifestations and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

For example, Luke uses this phrase to clear refer to the act of salvation. He says, "But we believe that through *the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ* we shall be saved, even as they." He says, "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*." (Acts 20:24) Paul writes, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not *the grace of God* in vain." (2 Cor 6:1)

Sometimes, this phrase refers to events that demonstrate God's favor upon man. For example, Luke records how Jesus as a child "grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and *the grace of God* was upon him." (Lk 2:40) He again says, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and *in favour with God and man*." (Lk 2:52) Paul writes, "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by *the grace of God*, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." (2 Cor 1:12)

However, Luke uses this phrase in the book of Acts to refer to various manifestations of the Holy Spirit. For example, he says, "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and *great grace was upon them all*." (Acts 4:33) He again says, "And Stephen, *full of faith* (χάρις) and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." (Acts 6:8) Luke again says, "Who, when he came, and had seen *the grace of God*," (Acts 11:23)

Acts 15:40 describes Paul and Silas being "handed over to the grace of God," which seems to describe a congregational prayer in which the church in Antioch laid hands upon the disciples and prayed for the Lord to watch over them in His divine care. It is very possible that this event included a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, such as the gifts of utterance as in Acts 13:1-3; but such an utterance is not recorded in Acts 15:40.

In contrast Barnabas and Mark went without being sent through the confirmation of God. Over time, the work of Barnabas and Mark appears not to be as effective as that of Paul and Silas. While Paul continues to return to the church in Antioch after each missionary journey, there is no record that Barnabas returned and received the blessings and endorsement of this church.

Illustration – There are many Christians that go forth to do good works for the Lord of their own initiative, without the blessings of the local church. One reason is that they do not want to be subject to the God-appointed leadership of a local church. Such efforts appear worthy, but they lack the blessings of God as well as the anointing of the Holy Spirit accompanying them. The typical clue that a person is a "lone ranger" is the fact that he does not acknowledge a local church, working independently of others.

15:41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

5:41 ***Comments –*** According to Paul's testimony in Galatian 1:21, he had spent time in the regions of Syria and Cilicia during his early years of ministry, prior to being sent out by the church in Antioch in Acts 13:1-3. In addition, Barnabas found Paul in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, and brought him to Antioch to work with him (Acts 11:25-26). The evidence that Paul had established a work in these two regions is seen by the fact that James the bishop in Jerusalem addressed his letter to the believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia (Acts 15:23). Therefore, Paul is intentionally avoiding the cities that he and Barnabas visited on their first missionary journey. Instead, he is going to cities where he had already planted the seed of the Gospel in order to avoid a conflict with Barnabas.

16:1-4 **Timothy Joins Paul and Silas -** Acts 16:1-4 records the account of Timothy joining Paul and Silas while they were ministering in Derbe and Lystra.

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

16:1 ***Comments*** **-** Timothy's mother was a Christian. The Greek reads, "a Jewish woman of faith."

16:2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

16:3 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.

16:3 ***Comments -*** Timothy had to forsake family and friends in order to follow Jesus. He was circumcised so that he would be more readily accepted by the Jews.

16:4 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.

16:5 **Conclusion: Decrees Delivered and Churches Strong in Faith -** Acts 16:5 describes the spread of the Gospel into Asia Minor. The church continued to proclaim the Gospel with signs and wonders and the propagation of the Word of God. This verse supports the theme of the perseverance of the early Church to establish sound church doctrine.

16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

16:5 ***Comments –*** Paul begins his second missionary journey by establishing the churches he planted earlier through the teaching of God's Word.

What made the church become established in the faith and grow in number? Acts 16:4 says that they received the Word of God and kept the word, "they delivered them the decrees for to keep."

16:6-18:22 **The Testimony of Paul's Ministry in Macedonia -** Acts 16:6-18:22 records Paul's work in Macedonia during His second missionary journey. This section opens with the immediate setting of Paul's Macedonian call (16:6-10). This passage provides the key prophecy that under pins this section in 15:36-20:38 as he fulfills this prophetic dream by visiting the key cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth (16:11-18:17). This section concludes with Paul returning to Antioch to conclude this second mission (18:18-22). In the passages below, Luke is careful to record both the acceptance of the Gospel by the Gentiles, as well as the unjustified opposition from Jews and civil leaders that Paul faced in each city.

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of perseverance amidst persecutions in Acts 16:6-18:22 as Luke records a large number of incidences describing Paul's hardships in Macedonia. Paul and Silas were thrown into prison in Philippi (16:19-40). The Jews assaulted the Gentile converts in Thessalonica so that Paul departed to another city (17:5-9). Paul's speech on Mar's Hill in Athens was largely rejected by the Greeks (17:32-34). The Jews of Corinth rejected the Gospel (18:6). The angel of the Lord comforts Paul, encouraging him to persevere in preaching the Gospel amidst opposition with a promise of divine protection (18:9-10). Paul was brought to trial before the deputy of Achaia (18:12-17). This section records the highest concentration of stories concerning Paul's persecutions in the book of Acts.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 16:6-18:22 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia amidst persecutions from without:

> Exegetical Idea – The Holy Spirit led Paul and his companions as far as Macedonia as they persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit led Paul and his companions as far as Macedonia as they persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has planted His church among the nations through His servants as they can persevere against hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has planted His church among the nations through His servants as they can persevere against hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has divine provision to persevere amidst hardships and persecutions while preaching/teaching the Gospel among the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Occasion: The Macedonian Call	16:6-10
(b) Paul at Philippi	16:11-40
(c) Paul in Thessalonica	17:1-9
(d) Paul in Berea	17:10-15
(e) Paul in Athens	17:16-34
(f) Paul in Corinth	18:1-17
(g) Conclusion: Paul Returns to Antioch	18:18-22

16:6-10 **The Occasion: The Macedonian Call -** Acts 16:6-10 records Paul's vision of a man calling him to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the region of Macedonia, an event popularly called the "Macedonian Call." Paul's original intent on his second missionary journey was to strengthen the churches that he had planted in Asia Minor during his first missionary journey (Acts 15:36). He had no idea that God would lead him into Europe and beyond. Paul fulfills this prophetic dream in this section by visiting the key cities in Macedonia. Thus, Paul's vision serves as the occasion for his decision to travel into Macedonia.

The Purpose of Divine Visions and Words from the Lord - Kenneth Hagin teaches how God will often give His children a divine encounter in order to strengthen them for the journey that lies ahead.[321] This encounter becomes a source of strength that we can lean upon during difficult day ahead. The vision recorded in Acts 16:6-10 gave Paul direction and assurance (16:10 "assuredly") that he was in God's will despite the hardships that lay ahead. Paul and his companions certainly faced persecutions when founding his first churches in Macedonia. He stood strong knowing that God had supernaturally spoken to him to go into Macedonia. Paul could lean upon this vision for strength in the days and months ahead assured that he was in the will of God despite the persecutions.

We must note that the apostle Paul received a divine vision or call to go forth in a particular direction on very few occasions during his public ministry. He did receive a prophetic word from a disciple named Ananias concerning his divine commission to take the Gospel to the Gentiles when he was first saved, and he and Barnabas received their divine commissions to go forth as apostles to the Gentiles in Acts 13:1-3. However, Acts 16:6-9 records the only occasion in which the Holy Spirit guided Paul and his team to a specific location in which to travel and minister. On all other occasions, Paul and his team chose where to go as long as they felt a peace about where to go. We see this happening when made plans to travel to Phrygia and the region of Galatia and Asia. We do not know if the Spirit forbad them to travel to these regions through the gifts of utterance or through the inner witness of the Spirit of God. Nevertheless, Paul chose to travel to many cities with the assurance of this divine commission as an apostle to the Gentiles.

[321]Kenneth Hagin, *Following God's Plan For Your Life* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1993, 1994), 118.

The Importance of Evangelism in Europe - Paul's call to Macedonia was the open door that brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ into Europe. Although the church at Rome has been established earlier, Paul's journey into Macedonia was the first effort to evangelize Europe and lay a foundation for these early churches to become established, and later spread across Europe. Of all the major places on earth where Christianity spread during the early centuries, the people of Europe embraced the Gospel most readily. The Middle East was soon overran by Islam and forced into human traditions and bondages, keeping their societies in a primitive state of social development until modern times. Neither did the African and Asian continents embrace Christianity on a large enough scale to transform their societies. Only in Europe did Christianity become rooted in their society so as to transform the people's moral fiber, leading the way to modern civilization as we know it today. Although the European governments and churches leaders would corrupt the teachings of the Gospel through Roman Catholicism and other Orthodox sects, the light of the Gospel would shine through the Dark Ages and explode into the hearts of men during the Reformation. This explosion of Christianity led men into the period called the Renaissance, where men were free to expand their knowledge through inventions and modern sciences. This explosion of knowledge led to a modern civilization that practiced the Christian faith in nations like Germany, Britain and the United States. This environment of human development combined with Christian values allowed Europe to become the major portal, or gateway, of human achievement in many aspects of life, while much of the world lay bound in primitive superstitions and witchcraft. Paul's Macedonian call was the doorway to transforming Europe and the world with Christianity.

Many parts of the world are saying, "Come." We need a vision in order to go.

16:6 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,

16:6 **"Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia" –** ***Comments*** **-** What did the districts of Phrygia and Galatia have in common? Ancient Roman history tells us that groups of the Gauls from France made their way eastward conquering marauding through the land. A large group of them eventually settled in the north central region of Asia Minor after having disposed the Phrygians, who were the ancient inhabitants of this land. Although overcome by the Gauls, who later became known as "Gallo-Graecians," or Galatians, these Phrygians still inhabited portions of their ancestral land and had learned to co-exist with their ancient conquerors.

16:6 **"and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia" -** ***Comments*** **-** Paul wrote to Timothy at the end of his life, saying, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." (2 Tim 1:15) Thus, the Asians turned away from Paul, while the Macedonian churches remained faithful to the Gospel.

16:6 ***Comments*** **-** Paul was close to Asia. Man's reason would lead them this way, but God had different plan.

16:7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

16:7 ***Comments*** **-** Again, the Holy Spirit says, "No." The Holy Spirit must lead us in the work of the ministry.

16:8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

16:9 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.

16:9 ***Comments -*** The Scriptures tell us that the Lord has a voice that we can hear, as He tells us in John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:" Time and again in the Scriptures, the Lord spoke to His servants, to Abraham (Gen 22:9), to Ananias (Acts 9:11), and to Paul (Acts 22:10), just to name a few people. The Lord still speaks to us today if we will follow Him.

16:10 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.

16:10 ***Comments -*** Acts 16:10 begins the first of several "we" passages in which we know the writer of the book of Acts was with Paul on the journey. We know that Silas had begun the journey with Paul (Acts 15:40) and that Timothy had joined them at Derbe and Lystra (Acts 16:1-3). From this verse in Acts 16:10 we can conclude that Luke joined this team as they crossed the Aegean Sea into Macedonia.

It is important to note that after Paul had seen the vision, those who were under his leadership became a part of his calling, for they said, "assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach . . ." They identified their calling by following their leader's calling. A leader's vision should define the calling of those who are set under him.

16:11-40 **Paul at Philippi -** Acts 16:11-40 records the account of Paul's ministry in the city of Philippi. In this passage, Luke records two incidents to illustrate how God was confirming Paul's ministry and decision in 16:6-10 to go over into Macedonia: the story of the conversion of Lydia (16:11-15), and the casting out of a spirit of divination (16:16-18) followed by their miraculous deliverance from prison and conversion of the Philippian jailer (16:19-40). These two stories reveal how Paul's ministry touched the lives of all social levels. The jailer was perhaps of military status and a Roman citizen, while Lydia was of the working class and the Greek female slave who was delivered from a demonic spirit of divination was of the lowest class. In this passage, Luke records the unjustified beatings that Paul and Silas received from the civil leaders.

Here is a proposed outline:

1. The Conversion of Lydia	16:11-15
2. Paul Cast into Prison and Miraculously Delivered	16:16-40

Paul's Affection Towards the Philippians - Paul wrote his most affectionate letter to the church at Philippi and they became his most avid supporter, especially through their sacrificial financial contributions. Everywhere Paul went, he commended the Philippian church for their labor of love, as he says in 2 Corinthians 8:1, "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;"

16:11-15 **The Conversion of Lydia –** Acts 16:11-15 records the conversion of Lydia.

16:11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

16:11 ***Comments -*** This is the first time that the first person plural verb is used in the book of Acts. So Luke is with them now on the missionary journey.

16:12 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.

16:12 **"And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony" - *Comments* -** The city of Philippi was named after Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, because he re-founded this ancient city.[322] Paul first visited Philippi during his second missionary journey about A.D. 50 after receiving in a vision what we have labeled as the "Macedonian Call." Paul immediately left Asia and sailed from Troas to Europe. He and his companions landed at Neapolis and embarked upon the famous Egnatian Way that connected the western Empire to the East. From Neapolis they headed ten miles inland over the coastal range to the city of Philippi.

As a colony, Philippi held a political advantage to its neighboring cities. A Roman colony was simply a military outpost used to protect the Empire as well as "Romanize" the region in which it was located. It was the only Roman colony in the province of Macedonia, so it held the position as the chief city. In return for this service from the citizens of a colony, its inhabitants held special privileges, such as immunity from taxes, an autonomous government and Roman citizenship. *JFB* says, "A colony was in fact a portion of Rome itself transplanted to the provinces . . . a portrait of the mother city."[323] As a chief city, the citizens of Philippi were not subject to the authorities of this province, but rather, they were accountable only to Rome.

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

16:13 ***Comments* -** Paul and his travelling companions went where the Holy Spirit led them. This Sabbath must have been a true confirmation of God's leadership, being many miles from home. I believe the riverside was chosen because of its quiet and tranquil beauty, thus being a place of meditation.

Paul established his churches under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, as the psalmist prophesied, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (Ps 127:1)

16:14 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.

16:14 ***Comments* -** Philip Schaff says, "Thyatira (now Akhissar), in the valley of Lycus in Asia Minor, was famous for its dying works, especially for purple or crimson." (see Strabo,

[322]Diodorus of Sicily writes, "Thence he [Philip II] marched to Cremides, which he enlarged, and made more populous, and called it after his own name, Philippi." (*Bibliotheca Historica* 16.2) See G. Booth, trans., *The Historical Library of Diodorus the Sicilian in Fifteen Books,* vol. 2 (London: J. Davis, 1814), 85; Appian writes, "Philippi is a city that was formerly called Datus, and before that Crenides, because there are many springs bubbling around a hill there. Philip fortified it because he considered it an excellent stronghold against the Thracians, and named it from himself, Philippi." (*Civil Wars* 4.105) See Horace White, trans., *Appian's Roman History,* in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1961), 315.

[323]Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *The Portable Commentary: A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments,* vol. 2 (Glasgow: William Collins, 1863), 380; *JFB* cites Aulus Gellius, who writes, "But colonies stand in another relationship: they have no footing in the state from any extrinsic right, nor do they claim it by their origin, but they are as it were offsprings of the state, and are of necessity subject to the laws and institutes of the Romans; which condition, though it be more exposed and less free, is yet deemed more desirable and respectable, on account of the amplitude and majesty of the Roman people, of which these colonies seem to be little copies and resemblances, and because the privileges of municipalities become obscure and obliterated from their ignorance of their proper claims." (*The Attic Nights* 16.13) See W. Beloe, trans., *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius,* vol. 3 (London: J. Johnson, 1795), 241.

Geography 13.4.14).[324] Schaff says that an inscription found in this place verifies that a guild of purple-dealers existed. Lydia could have belonged to this same guild.[325]

We need to pray that God would open our hearts to His Word as He did those early believers in Philippi.

16:15 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.

16:15 ***Comments –*** The earliest churches were house churches in the New Testament. The common meeting places were in the homes of those members who were wealthy or able to accommodate them. Thus, at Colossi the congregation met in the house of Philemon (Phile 1:2). At Ephesus the congregation initially met in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9) before later meeting in the house of Aquila and Prisca (1 Cor 16:19, Rom 16:5). At Corinth the church met initially in the house of Justus (Acts 18:7), and later in the house of Gaius, as the congregation grew in number (Rom 16:23). At Laodicea one congregation met in the house of Nympha (Col 4:15). In Philippi the early believers probably met in the house of Lydia (Acts 16:15). In Thessalonica the first converts probably met in the house of Jason (Acts 17:5). Jesus Christ commanded His disciples in Matthew 10:11-13 to find a place of rest during their travels, by staying in the homes of those who received their message.

After someone is born-again, a desire for fellowship with other believers is one fruit of salvation.

16:16-40 **Paul Cast into Prison and Miraculously Delivered -** Acts 16:16-40 records Paul's arrest and imprisonment for casting out a spirit of divination. At midnight the Lord miraculously delivers Paul and Silas from prison and the jailer is converted to faith in Christ.

16:16 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:

16:17 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.

16:16-17 ***Comments –*** The devil comes to battle against the work of God.

16:18 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.

16:18 ***Comments -*** In one of the major visions that Kenneth Hagin experienced in his life, the Lord Jesus used the story of the girl possessed with a spirit of divination to teach him the important of casting out demons by the Spirit of God.[326] This story is told within the context of a chapter in his book *The Authority of the Believer* in which Hagin explains that a believer has authority over Satan any time, but he does not have authority over the will of other people. Each person must choose to be set free from the powers of darkness. Jesus explained that this girl followed Paul and Silas around Philippi for "many days" crying, "These men are the servants of the most high God." Jesus Christ asked Hagin, "Do you

[324]Strabo says, "The water at Hierapolis is remarkably adapted also to the dyeing of wool, so that wool dyed with the roots rivals that dyed with the coccus or with the marine purple." See Horace Leonard Jones, trans., *The Geography of Strabo*, vol. 6, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1928), 189.

[325]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, vol. 1: Apostolic Christianity A.D. 1-100* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 735.

[326]Kenneth Hagin, *The Believer's Authority* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1984, 1992), 58.

know why Paul did not deal with that spirit the first day?" Hagin replied, "No, I really don't. I've wondered about it. Why didn't Paul, an apostle, a man of God, a man of authority, just take authority over that evil spirit the first day?" Jesus said, "He had to wait for the manifestation of the Spirit; he had to wait until the Spirit of God gave him discerning of spirits."

We can cast Satan out of our lives and out of our home anytime we choose because we have authority over him 24-hours a day. But we must be led by the Spirit when casting demons out of others. We must operate with a word of knowledge or discerning of spirits like Paul, or this person must be willing to be delivered.

16:19 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,

16:20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

16:21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

16:19-21 ***Comments -*** Notice that these magistrates said that they were "Romans" and not Greeks. The city of Philippi held a unique position in the Roman Empire as a Roman colony, thus holding a political advantage over its neighboring cities. A Roman colony was simply a military outpost used to protect the Empire as well as "Romanize" the region in which it was located. It was the only Roman colony in the province of Macedonia. In return for this service from the citizens of a colony, its inhabitants held special privileges, such as immunity from taxes, an autonomous government and Roman citizenship. When Paul visited this city, he found the majority of inhabitants being Greek, with a large group of Roman colonists and magistrates who dominated the city and a much smaller group of Jews who apparently gained little voice in this community. The Romans worshipped the Emperor, believing him to be a god. The Gospel goes against the worship of Caesar and therefore causes strife in the city, as we read in Acts 17:7, "Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus."

16:22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

16:22 ***Comments -*** Acts 16:22 is a fulfillment of Psalm 2:1-12 as the heathen raged against the Lord.

Paul delayed his confession of Roman citizenship until Acts 16:37.

16:23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

16:23 ***Comments –*** Paul and Silas took a severe beating. The Lord had warned Paul of such persecutions through Ananias in Acts 9:16, "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Paul refers to this event in Philippians 1:30, "Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me"; 1 Thessalonians 2:2, "But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention."

16:24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

16:24 ***Comments –*** The jailor took this charge serious because it could have cost him his life to let them escape, as we read about the apostle Peter and John escaping prison in Acts 12:18-19, "Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death."

16:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

16:25 ***Comments –*** The church needs to be praying at all times. James writes, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." (Jam 5:13) We are not to be overcome by circumstances, but we are to soar like eagles as the psalmist says in Psalms 8:2, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." God's demonstration of power is revealed by sending the earthquake and setting Paul and Silas free.

16:26 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.

16:26 ***Comments -*** The story of Paul's deliverance from prison in this chapter demonstrates the power of prayer and praise. The Lord sent a great earthquake, not a minor one. Even the prisoners were set free.

The early believers were a people of prayer (Acts 16:13). The apostle Peter was delivered from prision in a similar way, as we see in Acts 5:19, "But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said." When Peter was miraculously delivered from prison in Acts 12:7, the church was praying for him (Acts 12:5). God still gives visions, casts our demons, sends earthquakes and saves households. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. Paul writes in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

16:25-26 ***Comments – Praise Sets the Captive Free -*** The story the deliverance of Paul and Silas illustrates God's way of deliverance. When we praise God, He sets the captives free. Note that Paul and Silas were led of the Spirit to go to Philippi. As leaders, they received the greater persecution instead of Lydia and her friends.

16:27 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.

16:27 ***Comments -*** Why would the jailer want to kill himself? He was facing a death sentence for letting the prisoners escape. When Peter escapes in Acts 12:18-19, the guards are put to death. The only way to stop corruption and bribery in a corrupt society was the penalty of death. Therefore, the guards were threatened with the sentence of death with the escape of prisoners.

16:28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

16:29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

16:29 ***Comments -*** The jailer now fears God.

16:30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

16:30 ***Comments -*** The jailer now has a new attitude, and sees himself as a sinner. The Jews asked a similar question after Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

16:31 ***Comments –*** Notice that Paul did not tell the keeper of the prison to confess his sins and to ask Jesus to come into his heart in order to be saved. A sinner cannot remember all of his sins in such a confession. Instead, the confession is to declare one's faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ, to acknowledge His lordship over one's life. This yielding to God in acknowledgement of His Word and work in redemption is man's role in salvation. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, saying, "For by grace are ye saved through faith." (Eph 2:8) God made His grace available to mankind through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Man's role is to place his faith and trust in this work of atonement, and to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, as God manifested in the flesh, our Savior. Thus, a person may believe that Jesus Christ was born and lived in history, as to other religions; but this will not save him. He must entrust himself to God based upon the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

Household Salvation - God can save entire households. This is illustrated in the stories of Noah's deliverance from the Flood, in Lot's deliverance from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the deliverance of Joseph's family from the seven-year famine, and in the deliverance of Rahab's family from the destruction of Jericho. It is seen in the first Passover, when the angel Passover every home where the blood was applied, saving all members of that household from judgment (Ex 12:22-23). We read in the book of Acts how the households of Lydia (Acts 16:15) and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:31), as well as the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48) were also saved.

It is difficult for us in the western culture to understand household salvation. This is because we as individuals are much less bound to our relationships as a family. But my wife's family, who are Filipinos demonstrated household salvation when her father became a Muslim for a few years. The only member of this family that did not covert was my wife, and that was because we were married. She later brought them back to Jesus Christ, but it was a family decision although the father made the decision. We see in the households of Cornelius, Lydia, the Philippian jailer and Stephanas that their households followed in the faith "from their hearts" in this collective decision to follow Christ. It means that they all gave their lives to Jesus Christ together and were genuinely saved, something that would rarely happen in the more independent Western cultures.

16:32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

16:33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

16:33 ***Comments -*** Baptism comes immediately after salvation in the book of Acts. Salvation brings a change, as we see the Lord opening the heart of Lydia (Acts 16:14-15). This change is demonstrated by water baptism.

16:34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

16:34 ***Comments -*** The entire family is filled with joy.

16:35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

16:36 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.

16:37 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.

16:37 ***Comments -*** God promises His children that He will give us the words to speak when they are delivered over to governors and kings (Matt 10:18-19). Paul and Silas did not seem to have much of an opportunity to speak in Acts 16:22 when they were first beaten and taken to prison taken. At his release, Paul is given the opportunity to speak. Perhaps Paul did not tell the city leaders that he was a Roman before his arrest because God knew the jailer would be saved. Perhaps God hid this wisdom from Paul and gave it to him at his release.

Paul could have confessed his Roman citizenship when he was first taken and beaten in Acts 16: 22, but he did not do it. Why? Because God's name would not have been glorified until after the miraculous deliverance. Paul's suffering was for God's namesake, as we read in Acts 9:16, "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." God received the glory and honor in this event. As the persecution increased, God's power was demonstrated and exploded suddenly. Paul and Silas, entered into the manifestation of God's mighty power by much trial and tribulation and suffering.

Paul did acknowledge his citizenship when he was taken prisoner in Acts 22:25. This acknowledgement would bring him before Caesar.

16:38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

16:38 ***Comments -*** The city now falls into the fear of God and his people, Paul and Silas. God was at work in the city.

16:39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.

16:40 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.

16:40 **"And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia"** - ***Comments -*** Why did the Paul and Silas return to Lydia's house? Perhaps this home was where they received hospitality when first coming to the city of Philippi. They remained there according to Jesus' commandment in Matthew 10:11, "And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence."

16:40 **"and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them" -** ***Comments –*** Paul and Silas comforted the believers concerning their recent persecutions. Paul reflects upon such events in 2 Corinthians 1:4-6, "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation."

16:40 **"and departed"** - ***Comments -*** Jesus sent an example of departing hostility in Matthew 8:34, "And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts." Jesus tells his disciples to do the

same in Matthew 10:14, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet."

17:1-9 **Paul in Thessalonica –** Acts 17:1-9 records the account of Paul's ministry in the city of Thessalonica. In this passage, Luke records the acceptance of the Gospel by some Jews in the synagogue, and the unjustified opposition by other Jews, resulting in a riot.

Thessalonica was a Free City in the Roman Empire - We must understand that Thessalonica was a free city in the Roman Empire, which meant that it was a city without the deployment of Roman soldiers. Therefore, it was autonomous in all of its internal affairs. So, when we read about the trouble that Paul encountered in this city, we must understand that there was no official tribunal that he was taken before, as was done when he appeared before Gallio, the Roman deputy of Achaia who was seated in Corinth, or when he appeared before Felix and Festus, the Roman governors over Judea who were seated in Caesarea Philippi. This trouble in Thessalonica was rather disorganized and haphazard. Nevertheless, Paul was advised to leave the city in order to promote peace.

The "We" Passages in Acts - At this point in Acts 17:1 the "we" sections discontinue. We do not find them again until Paul returns to the city of Philippi in Acts 20:5-6. For this reason scholars suggest that Paul left Luke behind in Philippi to tend this young flock in his absence. Luke the Gentile would have been the perfect candidate out of the three, with Silas being a Jew by birth and Timothy being half Jew. This is because the city of Philippi was a Roman colony and a military outpost with little tolerance for ethnic groups. This is why it did not have an established synagogue in the city.

17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

17:1 ***Comments -*** Paul's decision to pass by the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia could have been occasioned by a number of reasons. He could have been following the leadership of the Holy Spirit by visions or divine gifts of utterance. Or, he may have had predetermined requirements of the cities that he settled in to minister, such as a Jewish synagogue, or an economy strong enough to support his trade as a tent maker.

Marcus Tod says Paul was traveling along the Via Egnatia, the great Roman road leading from the coast of the Adriatic to the river Hebrus (Maritza), one of the main military and commercial highways of the empire.[327] After passing through Amphipolis, one had to travel thirty Roman miles to reach Apollonia and an additional thirty-eight Roman miles to reach Thessalonica. Thus, Paul and his companions travelled several days to reach each city.

17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

17:2 ***Comments -*** Why did Paul always start his ministry in a new city by going to the synagogue? The Gospel was to be preached first to the Jews as we read in Acts 13:46, "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Paul alludes to this in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." The following verses in the book of Acts illustrate how often Paul followed this pattern of evangelism in preaching to the Jews first:

[327]Marcus N. Tod, "Amphipolis," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* ed. James Orr (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 125.

Acts 13:14 - On first journey, Paul went to Synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia.
Acts 14:1 - On first journey, Paul went to synagogue in Iconium.
Acts 16:12,13 - In Philippi, a Roman Colony, no synagogue is mentioned.
Acts 18:4 - Paul in Corinth in a synagogue.
Acts 19:8 - Paul in Ephesus in a synagogue.
Acts 13:5 - Paul in a synagogue in Salamis (first journey).
Acts 9:20 - Paul at conversion in a synagogue in Damascus.
Acts 17:10 - Paul and Silas at a synagogue in Berea.
Acts 17:17 - Paul at a synagogue in Athens.

17:3 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.

17:3 ***Comments -*** When Paul told the Jews in Thessalonica in Acts 17:3 that Jesus is "Christ," he was referring to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, whom the Jews are expectantly awaiting. Paul used the Old Testament Scriptures to prove that Jesus the Messianic passages.

17:4 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.

17:5 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.

17:5 ***Comments -*** The Gospel brings division between those who seek God and those who reject God (Matt 10:34, Lk 12:51). Our Gospel preaching will bring division also.

Jason took Paul and Silas into his home just as Jesus taught the disciples to receive this hospitality in Matthew 10:11, "And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence."

17:6 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;

17:6 ***Comments -*** The Greek word for "rulers of the city" is πολιτάρχης (politarchs). Since the term is not found in Greek classical literature, some people may assume that Luke was wrong to refer to such an office. However, some nineteen inscriptions have now been found that make use of this title. Philip Schaff tells us that an inscription is still legible on an archway in Thessalonica, giving the names of seven "politarchs" who governed before the visit of Paul.[328]

17:7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.

17:8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

17:9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

17:9 ***Comments -*** These "politarchs," as Luke titles them, reasoned that the best remedy for this unstable situation was to take a security bond from Jason, although they probably cared little about such religious bickering. Their goal was to keep peace in the city. This bond may have

[328]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, vol. 1: Apostolic Christianity A.D. 1-100* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 735.

been issues under the conditions that Jason guarantee the departure of Paul, or perhaps a more simple guarantee that there would be no more trouble from them. However, once the rulers of the city stood against Paul and his companions, it was time to leave. Paul respected this order of authority by leaving.

17:10-15 **Paul in Berea –** Acts 17:10-15 records the account of Paul the apostle's ministry in the city of Berea. In this passage, Luke records the acceptance of the Gospel by the Jews in this city. However, the Jews from Thessalonica come to Berea and create a civil disturbance, resulting in Paul and Silas leaving the city.

17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

17:11 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.

17:12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

17:13 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.

17:13 ***Comments -*** Note that the Jews were the ones causing the trouble, not the Romans.

17:14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

17:14 ***Comments -*** Paul was the one in most danger, so he was sent away. Leaders seem to suffer the most during times of persecution, since they are usually the targets.

17:15 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.

17:16-34 **Paul in Athens –** Acts 17:16-34 records the account of Paul ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Athens, a passage that contains the primary speech of this section (15:36-20:38). Luke provides the immediately setting in 17:16-21 in which Paul's message opens the door for him to speak in the Areopagus. In this speech, Paul identifies with their mindset by referring to their idols, then reasons with them about the true and living God (17:22-31). Acts 17:32-34 records the response of the people as a few accepted the Gospel, while the majority rejected Paul's message.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Immediate Setting	17:16-21
ii) Paul's Speech	17:22-31
iii) The Response of the Athenians	17:32-34

Secular Support for Luke's Description of Athens - Philip Schaff notes that ancient classical writers have confirmed many of the details that Luke gives of Athens: "the descriptions of Athens, the Areopagus, the schools of philosophy, the idle curiosity and inquisitiveness of the Athenians (mentioned also by Demosthenes), the altar of an unknown

God, and the quotation from Aratus, or Cleanthes" in this chapter, all have support from secular writers.[329]

Paul's Method of Evangelism in Athens – We have no record of Paul working miracles in the city of Athens; for he will later explain to the Corinthians that, "the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom." (1 Cor 1:22) Thus, Paul met the Athenians at their point of faith and reasoned with them by referring to some common points between their philosophy and the Gospel. He referred to their altar inscriptions to unknown gods; thus, identifying with the fact that they believed in a god or some type of supernatural. His message progressed from the fact that God existed into the revelation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is an effective method of witnessing. Despite Paul's inspiration and skill, most of the Athenians rejected his message. Paul wrought no miracles among these heathen Athenians because they sought the truth from human reason, rather than displays of power, as the Jews sought.

The examples of Acts 17:1-9 in which Paul evangelized the Jews of Thessalonians and Acts 17:16-34 in which he spoke to the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill provide an excellent example of how to speak to different people groups. When speaking to the Jews, he testified from their Scriptures, that is, the Old Testament, in order to lead them to Christ (Acts 17:2). However, when speaking on Mars Hill Paul began by acknowledging their religious inclinations by referring to their altars dedicated to the unknown god; so in this statement he found a point of agreement with his hearers (17:23). He then appeals to general revelation of God as testified in creation (17:24), and explained the divine nature of God from this testimony of creation (17:24-28). He then quotes one of their Greek poets who also testified of God (17:28). Finally, Paul appeals to man's sense of sin-conscience by mentioning divine judgment and the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (17:29-31). However, on this issue of sin and the resurrection many of these Athenians stumbled (17:32). At no time did Paul quote the Jewish Scriptures to the Greeks, who would have rejected it as a valid testimony. So, Paul finished his speech on the hill and met with those few who did embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ (17:33-34).

17:16-21 **Immediate Setting –** Acts 17:16-21 records the immediate setting for Paul's speech to the Athenians in the Areopagus. His message in the Jewish synagogues and in the marketplace opened the door for him to address the intellectuals in the city.

17:16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17:16 ***Comments –*** *"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens"* - Paul has most likely heard about the city of Athens so that his visit was not entirely new to him. He was familiar with their culture because he quotes one of their poets in 17:28. However, the impact of seeing how deep into idolatry this city had fallen was distressing to Paul.

Paul records his experience of being left in Athens alone in 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2. Upon arriving in Athens, Paul immediately sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to establish the new congregation in that city because of his concern for the well-being of this new congregation of believers amidst persecutions. After departing from Athens, Paul makes his way to Corinth and wait for Timothy. It is this report from Timothy that occasions Paul to sit down and write the epistle of 1 Thessalonians.

"his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry" – On other occasions in the book of Acts, the apostles and disciples were filled with the Spirit in

[329]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, vol. 1: Apostolic Christianity A.D. 1-100* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 735-736.

conjunction with the delivery of a speech in accordance to Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Peter on the Day of Pentecost, 2:1-4; Peter before the Sanhedrin, 4:8, the believers, 4:31; Stephen before the Sanhedrin, 6:10; 7:55; Paul to Elymas the sorcerer, 13:9, Paul in Corinth, 18:5). In Acts 17:16, Paul was stirred up or aroused (παροξύνω) when he saw the depth of human ignorance and depravity among the Athenians. With this inner turmoil, the Holy Spirit gives Paul the words to speak both in the synagogue and on Mar's Hill.

17:17 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.

17:18 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.

17:18 ***Comments –*** *"Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him"* - The Epicurean philosophers adhered to the ideals of their founder Epicurus (341-270 B.C.), a Greek who settled in Athens in 307-306 B.C. and founded a school of philosophy called "the Garden." This philosophy remained popular for about three centuries, being embraced by Romans as well as Greeks. Epicurus proposed that the laws of physics around us were determined by small, invisible particles called atoms. The earth is formed by these atoms coming together. He viewed the mythological gods as nothing more than a collection of complex atoms that were unable to engage with mankind. Based upon this reality, mankind was free from divine judgement of these gods and from death. Therefore, man was free to pursue a life of obtaining pleasure, with happiness being his ultimate goal.[330]

The Stoic philosophers were followers of the teachings of Zeno (340-265 B.C.), who lectured from a colonnade in Athens around 301/300 B.C. Therefore, the name "Stoic" is derived from the Greek word *stoa* (colonnade). This school of philosophy continued into the latter half of the third century A.D. Stoicism can be divided into three categories: logic, physics, and ethics. Man's perceptions of his existence must be guided by logic (*logos*). Physics attempts to understand the material world around us, which is divided into four elements: fire, air, water, earth. This philosophy views God as nothing more than the forces of nature that bring these substances into their visible form. They interpreted their mythological gods allegorically as various forms of this creative force. In the area of ethics, Stoicism taught that man's ultimate goal was to live in harmony with the world around him by walking in the virtues of insight prudence courage, and justice.[331]

"And some said, What will this babbler say?" - These Athenian philosophers looked down upon Paul because of his style of ministry. They observed him wandering around the market place looking for an opportunity to teach his philosophy. They mockingly call him a "σπερμολόγος" (literally, picking up seeds) as they compare him to the scavenger birds or the poor who hang around the market to pick up scraps of food (*BDAG*). The word "babbler" does not justly express the "imagery" behind this word, which actually describes a person who picks up bits and pieces of information from others and attempts to create a doctrine characterized by unsophisticated "babbling" (*BDAG*).

17:19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

---

[330]Thomas Schmeller, "Stoics, Stoicism," in *The Anchor Bible Commentary* vol. 6, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 210-214.

[331]Thomas Schmeller, "Stoics, Stoicism," in *The Anchor Bible Commentary* vol. 6, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 210-214.

17:19 ***Comments –*** Perhaps Paul's continued presence eventually compelled these curious philosophers to find out the doctrine behind his determination to preach to strangers. They took him to Ἄρειος πάγος (literally, Hill of Ares). This hill was named after the Greek god Ares, the god of war, also called by the name Mars in Roman mythology. Scholars debate as to whether Luke is referring to a geographical place or the name of the city's council "the Areopagus." Its members were called Areopagites, a title Luke uses for one of Paul's converts named Dionysius (Acts 17:34).

17:20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

17:21 (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.)

17:21 ***Comments –*** We can imagine the Greek philosophers who strove to find the truth about life. They would have mixed superstitions of Greek and Roman mythology along with their knowledge of nature and science to reach conclusions about the meaning of life. The apostle Paul stood on Mars Hill and delivered the Gospel of Jesus Christ to such learned men, only to be rejected by them (Acts 17:22-34). Paul was very familiar with such characteristics of educated men.

Paul was able to talk with them during the day time because they were philosophers by trade rather than labourers who worked by day. While the working class was busy about daily duties, these Athenian philosophers may have made their living by peddling their ideas.

Scholars list a number of ancient authors who describe the curious behavior of the Athenians (Demosthenes, *Philippic* 1.10, Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 3.38.5).[332]

17:22-31 **Paul's Speech –** Acts 17:22-31 records Paul's speech to the Athenians in the Areopagus. In this speech, Paul appeals to their sense of the natural revelation of God, as he attempts to find some common ground of faith before proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, the people began to sneer, bringing Paul's speech to a halt.

17:22 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.

17:22 ***Comments –*** *"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill"* – Luke uses the name Ἄρειος πάγος (literally, Hill of Ares) a second time in this passage (see 1:19). This hill was named after the Greek god Ares, the god of war, also called by the name Mars in Roman mythology.

"and said, Ye men of Athens" – Luke records a number of important speeches in the book of Acts. Each speech opens with the traditional acknowledgment of the hearers. For example, Peter opens his first speech in Acts 1:16 saying, "men and brethren." He opens his speech in Acts 2:14 by addressing those present, "the men of Judaea, and all those dwelling at Jerusalem." Peter opens his speech at Solomon's porch by saying, "men of Israel" (Acts 3:12). He addresses the Sanhedrin by saying, "rulers of the people and elders of Israel" (Acts 4:8). Stephen opens his speech in Acts 7:2 by saying, "brethren and fathers." Peter and James address the elders at the first council in Jerusalem by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 15:7, 13). Paul the apostle also begins his speeches in the same manner. He addresses the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 13:15). He spoke

[332]David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 492-493, Logos.

to the Athenians by saying, "men of Athens" (Acts 17:22). He spoke to the angry mob by saying, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." (Acts 22:1) Paul addressed the Sanhedrin by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 23:1).

"I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious" - The Greek word δεισιδαιμονέστερος "religious, superstitious" (*BDAG*) is probably a compound word derived from δειλός "timid, faithless" and δαίμων "a demon, or supernatural spirit" (*Strong*). Paul used this word to clearly reflect the mindset of the Greeks, as they held on to the superstitions of their ancestors about visitations and divine interventions from their many gods. The Greeks believed in their mythologies, as far-fetched at these stories might seem to us today. We see such superstitious beliefs when Paul visited Lystra. After Paul healed a man, the people thought that the gods had come down to visit them, calling Barnabas by the name of their god Jupiter and Paul by the name of the god Mercury (Acts 14:11-12).

17:23 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.

17:23 ***Comments -*** Scholars cite several ancient Greek writers who mention unknown gods. The Greek geographer Pausanias (2nd c. A.D.) mentions "and altars of the gods named Unknown" which were set up in the harbor and streets of Athens;[333] the third century A.D. Greek biographer Diogenes Laërtius speaks of "altars without name" scattered throughout Athens;[334] in *The Dialogue of Philopatris,* a Greek dialogue formerly credited to Lucian of Samosata, but now assigned to the tenth century,[335] a person kneels down and worships "the unknown god in Athens."[336] Paul was most likely referring to such an altar in Acts 17:23, of which there seems to be numerous ones in Athens, since he uses the same Greek word ἄγνωστος (unknown) that is used in this third cited Classical text.

17:24 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;

17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

---

[333]Pausanias writes, "The Athenians have also another harbour, at Munyehia, with a temple of Artemis of Munychia, and yet another at Phalerum, as I have already stated, and near it is a sanctuary of Demeter. Here there is also a temple of Athens Sciras, and one of Zeus some distance away, and altars of the gods named Unknown, and of heros, and of the children of Theseus and Phalerus." (*Description of Greece* 1.4) See W. H. S. Jones, and H. A. Ormerod, trans., *Pausanias Description of Greece,* in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1918), 7.

[334]Diogenes Laërtius writes, "And when he [Epimenides] was considered by the Greeks as a person especially beloved by the Gods, on which account when the Athenians were afflicted by a plague, and the priestess at Delphi enjoined them to purify their city, they sent a ship and Nicias the son of Niceratus to Crete, to invite Epimenides to Athens; and he, coming there in the forty-sixth Olympaid, purified the city and eradicated the plague for that time; he took some black sheep and some white ones and led them up to the Areopagus, and from thence he let them go wherever they chose, having ordered the attendants to follow them, and wherever any one of them lay down they were to sacrifice him to the God who was the patron of the spot, and so the evil was stayed; and owing to this one may even now find in the different boroughs of the Athenians altars without names, which are a sort of memorial of the propitiation of the Gods that then took place." (*The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers,* Epimendes 3) See C. D. Yonge, trans., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers by Diogenes Laërtius*, in *Bohn's Classical Library,* ed. Henry Bohn (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), 51.

[335]"Philopatris," in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* revised, eds. F. L. Cross, and E. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 1085.

[336]The author writes, ". . . and we, discovering the unknown [god] in Athens, and worshipping, hands outstretched unto heaven to this one we give thanks, as considering [it] worthy to be obedient to such one of might." (author's translation) (*The Dialogue of Philopatris,* lines 617-620) See B. G. Niebuhrii, ed., *The Dialogue of Philopatris* (324-342), in *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Pars XI: Leo Diaconus* (Bonnae: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1828), 342.

17:25 ***Comments* –** Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (Jn 4:24)

17:26 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;

17:26 **"and the bounds of their habitation" –** ***Comments* -** Some scholars find within Acts 17:26 a reference to a time when God had men divide the earth by lots among the sons of Noah. We can find a reference to this allotment in Genesis 10:25, which tells us that the earth was divided during the days of Peleg. We find an additional reference to this event in Deuteronomy 32:8, "When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel."

We can find a lengthy account of this story in extra-biblical Jewish literature. In *The Book of Jubilees*, it says that in the days of Peleg, the nations were dividing themselves upon the earth. The divided the earth into three lots according to the inheritance of the three sons of Noah. Since this document dates a few centuries before the time of Christ, it shows to us how the Jews may have interpreted this passage in Genesis.

> "And in the sixth year [1567 A.M.] thereof, she bare him son, and he called his name Peleg; for in the days when he was born the children of Noah began to divide the earth amongst themselves: for this reason he called his name Peleg. And they divided (it) secretly amongst themselves, and told it to Noah. And it came to pass in the beginning of the thirty-third jubilee [1569 A.M.] that they divided the earth into three parts, for Shem and Ham and Japheth, according to the inheritance of each, in the first year in the first week, when one of us who had been sent, was with them." (*The Book of Jubilees* 8.8-11)[337]

17:27 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:

17:28 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.

17:28 **" For in him we live, and move, and have our being" -** ***Comments* –** The Greek word translated "have our being" (*KJV*) is εσμέν, which literally means, "we are." This same Greek verb is used in Hebrews 11:6, "for he that cometh to God must believe that *He is*."

Paul's statement, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being," is believed by some to come from the ancient Greek poet Epimenides (6th c. B.C.) in his poem *Cretica*. F. F. Bruce provides the following translation from the Syriac of Isho'dad, Bishop of Hadatha:

> "They fashioned a tomb for thee, O holy and high one—
> The Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies!
> But thou art not dead: thou livest and abidest forever,
> For in thee we live and move and have our being."[338]

---

[337] *The Book of Jubilees,* translated by R. H. Charles, in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English With Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books*, vol 2, ed. R. H. Charles, 1-82 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 25-6.

[338] F. F. Bruce provides this quote, which he says comes from the Syriac version of the ninth century commenties of Isho'dad, Bishop of Hadatha. See F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts,* in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament,* ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 339, Logos.

17:28 **"as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" – *Comments* -** We find the phrase "For we are his offspring" in a poem entitled *Diosemeia* (the Divine Signs), written by the ancient Greek poet Aratus (c 315-240 B.C.), a native of either Tarsus or Soli, who based his poem on the work of the ancient Greek astronomer Eudoxus of Cnidus (c. 390-337 B.C.) called *Phainomena.* E. W. Bullinger says, "Antigonus Gonatas, King of Macedonia (273-239 BC), requested the Poet Aratus to put the work of Eudoxus into the form of a poem, which he did about the year 270 BC."[339] Paul was obviously familiar with this ancient poem, for he quotes in his address to the Athenians on Mars Hill. The poem reads:

> "From Zeus we lead the strain; he whom mankind
> Ne'er leave unhymned: of Zeus all public ways,
> All haunts of men, are full; and full the sea,
> And harbours; and of Zeus all stand in need.
> We are his offspring: and he, ever good and mild to man,
> Gives favouring signs, and rouses us to toil.
> Calling to mind life's wants: when clods are best
> For plough and mattock: when the time is ripe
> For planting vines and sowing seeds, he tells,
> Since he himself hath fixed in heaven these signs,
> The stars dividing: and throughout the year
> Stars he provides to indicate to man
> The seasons' course, that all things duly grow . . ." (*Diosemeia,* lines 1-13)[340]

G. R. Mair gives us an alternate translation:

> "From Zeus let us begin; him do we mortals never leave unnamed; full of Zeus are all the streets and all the market-places of men; full is the sea and the havens thereof; always we all have need of Zeus. For we are also his offspring; and he in his kindness unto men giveth favourable signs and wakeneth the people to work, reminding them of livelihood."[341]

However, John Chrysostom credits this statement to the ancient Greek poet Epimenides (6th c. B.C.).[342] It makes better sense that Paul was quoting only one Greek author in Acts 17:28, rather than two different authors.

17:28 ***Comments* –** Severus, bishop of Al-Ushmunain (fl. ca. AD 955-987), tells us that the teachings of Greek philosophy were wide spread in the Roman Empire during New

---

This quote can be found in the Syriac in *The Commentaries of Isho'dad of Merv Bishop of Hadatha (c. 850 A.D.) in Syriac and English,* vol. 5, ed. and trans. Margaret Dunlop Gibson, in *Horae Semiticas no XI* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1916), 40.

[339]E. W. Bullinger, *The Witness of the Stars* (London: E. W. Bullinger, c1893), 13-4.

[340]Robert Brown, *The Phainomena, or 'Heavenly Displays' of Aratos* (London: Longman and Co., 1885), 13.

[341]A. W. Mair, and G. R. Mair, trans. *Callimachus and Lycophron* and *Aratus*, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heineman, 1921), 369, 381.

[342]John Chrysostom writes, "For when Paul was discoursing to the Athenians, in the course of his harangue he quoted these words, *To the Unknown God;* and again, *For we also are His offspring, as certain also of your own poets have said.* It was Epimenides who said this, himself a Cretan, and whence he was moved to say it is necessary to mention. It is this. The Cretans have a tomb of Jupiter, with this inscription. 'Here lieth Zan, whom they call Jove.' On account of this inscription, then, the poet ridiculing the Cretans as liars, as he proceeds, introduces, to increase the ridicule, this passage. 'For even a tomb, O King, of thee They made, who never diedst but aye shalt be.'" (*Epistle of St. Paul to Titus: Homily III*) See John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, Translated, with Notes and Indices* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1843), 292.

Testament times.[343] This means that anyone with a good education in the first century was knowledgeable of Greek writers. Thus, Paul is attempting to reason with the Athenians with their own familiar writings.

17:29 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.

17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

17:30 ***Comments*** – The Greek word ὑπερείδω means, "to overlook, disregard" (*BDAG*).

Acts 17:30 is emphatic about including every man on earth in God's plan of salvation.

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

17:31 **"Because he hath appointed a day"** - ***Comments*** **-** God has appointed a day of reckoning for every man, as Paul writes in Hebrews 4:13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him *with whom we have to do*."

17:31 **"in the which he will judge"** – ***Comments*** **-** In the Greek, this verb is the tendential future, and is translated "He is about to judge."

17:31 **"whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"** - ***Comments*** **-** God is offering faith to every man by having raised up Jesus from the dead.

17:32-34 **The Response of the Athenians –** Acts 17:32-34 records the response of the people as a few accepted the Gospel, while the majority rejected Paul's message. This passage lists the names of two believers, one of whom was an important civil leader.

17:32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

17:32 ***Comments*** **–** Luke records two reactions to Paul's sermon on Mar's Hill. Some scoffed (χλευάζω), making insults at Paul while the curiosity of others was aroused enough to ask him to come back and speak. A third response is recorded in 17:34 by naming a few converts to the Christian faith.

17:33 So Paul departed from among them.

17:33 ***Comments*** **–** John Polhill suggests that Paul stood before the Areopagus council that consisted of about thirty men.[344]

[343]Severus writes, "Then the cobbler said to him: 'I have never heard at all of these books which thou speakest of; but the books of the Greek philosophers are what men teach their children here, and so do the Egyptians.'" (*Saint Mark* 1.2) See B. Evetts, trans., *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Aleandria,* in *Patrologia Orientalis*, tumus primus, eds. R. Graffin and F. Nau (Paris: Kubraurue de Paris, 1907), 144.

[344]John B. Polhill, *Acts,* in *The New American Commentary,* vol. 26, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992), 379, Logos.

17:34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

17:34 ***Comments –*** In Acts 17:34, Luke records the names of several people who were converted to the Christian faith. David Peterson suggests the possibility that these converts were people who returned later to hear Paul again and at length.[345] The title associated with Dionysius as an Areopagite reveals his high status among the civil leaders. He would have been one of the Areopagus council members, the leading government body of Athens. Luke's mention of a woman alongside this distinguished council member's name suggests that she was a notable person of Athens as well.

Perhaps the two names recorded suggest that these individuals played an important role in the founding of a group of believers in Antioch, though there is no early evidence of such roles. Such evidence does not emerge until the fourth century. *Eusebius* (A.D. 260-340) tells us that this Dionysius became the first bishop of the church at Athens.[346] *The Apostolic Constitutions*, a collection of ecclesiastical law that is believed to have been compiled during the latter half of the fourth century, gives us a list of the earliest bishops. This ancient document states that there was a man by the name of "Dionysius" who became the bishop of the church at Athens.[347]

17:32-34 ***Comments – Many Called, Few Chosen –*** Paul did not have a great response in the city of Athens. Jesus told the disciples that "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt 20:16; 22:14).

18:1-17 **Paul in Corinth -** Acts 18:1-17 records Paul's ministry in the city of Corinth. Upon his arrival, he meets two Jews named Aquila and Priscilla (18:1-4). Paul faces rejection by the Jews, but acceptance by some of the Gentiles (18:5-11). Eventually, the Jews cause a civil disturbance, but are unable to prosecute Paul before the proconsul (18:12-17).

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Paul's Arrival in Corinth	18:1-4
ii) Paul's Ministry in Corinth	18:5-11
iii) Paul is Taken before Gallio	18:12-17

18:1-4 **Paul's Arrival in Corinth -** Acts 18:1-4 records Paul's arrival in the city of Corinth. He meets two Jews named Aquila and Priscilla, who provide him a place to stay as well as employment. Thus, he spent his weekdays working and his Sabbath days ministering in the Jewish synagogue.

Paul's Need to be Bi-vocational as a Missionary - Paul's need to find work to finance the missionary trip was a top priority for him and the coworkers. They received gifts from the church at Philippi and others. However, it was important that they appeared not as a group of wandering deceivers out for financial gain, but rather pious and sincere men who worked

[345]David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 504, Logos.

[346]Eusebius writes, "Besides these, that Areopagite, named Dionysius, who was the first to believe after Paul's address to the Athenians in the Areopagus (as recorded by Luke in the Acts) is mentioned by another Dionysius, an ancient writer and pastor of the parish in Corinth, as the first bishop of the church at Athens." (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.4.11) He again writes, "He records, moreover, that Dionysius the Areopagite, who was converted to the faith by the apostle Paul, according to the statement in the Acts of the Apostles, first obtained the episcopate of the church at Athens." (*Ecclesiastical History* 4.23.3)

[347]The Apostolic Constitutions says, "Now concerning those bishops which have been ordained in our lifetime, we let you know that they are these . . . Of Athens, Dionysius." (*Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* 7.4.46)

for their needs. Greece was probably infested with traveling philosophers who made a living by peddling their ideas to the simple-minded. Thus, Paul's friendship with Aquila and Priscilla are placed foremost in his work at Corinth; since this relationship enhanced Paul's ability to make a living and present himself and his coworkers as genuine members of society.

18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

18:2 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.

18:2 **"And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla" –** ***Comments*** **-** Paul first met Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth on his second missionary journey when he established a church there (Acts 18:2-3), for they had been banished from Rome by Claudius (Acts 18:1-2). Paul took them with him on his way back to Antioch and left them in the city of Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19). We find this couple in Ephesus when Paul returns there on his third missionary journey, as he mentions in 1 Corinthians 16:19, "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." This couple had started a church in their home while in Ephesus. In Romans 16:3, which is dated a short time later, we find them back in the city of Rome. It is possible that Paul sent them to Rome before he left Ephesus in order to help establish the church there. Near the end of Paul's life, while writing to Timothy from the city of Rome just before his death, we find this couple back in Ephesus (2 Tim 4:19).

This story would certainly fit the Paul's description of their sacrifices of laying down their lives in the following verse (16:4). They had returned to Rome, which was placing them in risk of their lives. They had served in Ephesus for some years until Paul returned on his next visit. Thus, the churches of the Gentiles had something to thank them for.

The Apostolic Constitutions, a collection of ecclesiastical law that is believed to have been compiled during the latter half of the fourth century, gives us a list of the earliest bishops. This ancient document states that there was a man by the name of "Aquila" who became the bishop of the churches Asia, saying, ""Now concerning those bishops which have been ordained in our lifetime, we let you know that they are these . . . Of the parishes of Asia, Aquila and Nicetas." (*Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* 7.4.46) There is little doubt that this is referring to the same individual.

18:2 **"because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome" –** ***Comments*** **-** This event is mentioned by the Latin writer Suetonius, who writes, "Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome." (*The Lives of the Twelve Caesars: Claudius* 25.4)[348]

18:3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

18:3 ***Comments*** **–** Throughout Paul's missionary career, he labored with his hands so that he was not a financial burden to his new converts; and he laboured to be an example of good work ethics (Acts 18:3; 20:34, 1 Cor 4:12; 9:3-19, 2 Cor 11:7-9, 1 Thess 2:9, 2 Thess 3:8). However, Acts 18:3 is the only place in the Scriptures that records Paul's vocation, which was a tentmaker (σκηνοποιός). The exact meaning of this compound word is much debated,

[348]Joseph Gavorse, trans., *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars by Suetonius,* in *The Modern Library of the World's Best Books* (New York: The Random House, 1931), 226.

which is derived from σκηνή (a place of shelter) and ποιέω (to do, make). Unfortunately, the word is used once within the New Testament and rarely outside of Scripture (*BDAG* and *TDNT* cite several examples), making its meaning more difficult to decide. For this reason, some early church fathers suggest this word takes on the more general meaning of a leather worker. Modern scholarship that supports the meaning of a leather worker base their arguments upon Paul's metropolitan lifestyle where tents would not have been in great demand. *TDNT* provides a practical explanation as to why Paul would have taken up such a trade. He grew up in the Roman province of Cilicia of the town of Tarsus. This region was known for making a course woven cloth from goats hair known to the Romans as *cilicium* (the Latin word for "hair-cloth"). Paul would have been familiar with this trade and perhaps been taught it by his father.

Illustration – I grew up in a small town where certain trades were commonly practiced. For example, we bought used automobiles and learned to do the mechanic work ourselves. We also purchase land and built the home. Such a practice was necessitated because of a poor economy and low wages. In contrast, this practice is almost prohibitive in a large town environment, where people generally purchase new cars for freeway driving and obtain a mortgage for their homes while working a busy job. When I moved to the large city, I quickly found a job that related to home construction and repairs because I was familiar with this trade. At this job, I met others of the same trade and developed these skills while going to school to further my education. It would be easy to imagine Paul coming from a culture where many tradesmen were leather workers or cloth makers and have some familiarity with it, and he would naturally practice this trade during his missionary travels.

18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

18:4 ***Comments –*** Paul was a Jew by birth, and a well-educated Pharisee by vocation. He understood the Jewish mindset as well as anyone; and he knew the protocol of these local Jewish synagogues. So, he entered the synagogues of each city with boldness, confident of his authority to preach the Gospel to the Jews first, and then the Gentiles. In fact, he felt responsible to preach to them as he states in 18:6, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."

18:5-11 **Paul's Ministry in Corinth –** In Acts 18:5-11, Luke records the ministry of Paul in the city of Corinth. He boldly preaches in the synagogue until the Jews reject his message (18:5-6). He begins meeting with the Gentiles and those Jews who believe in the house of Justus (18:7-8). Paul received a vision in the night in which the Lord encouraged him to speak boldly in the name of Jesus (18:9-11).

18:5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

18:5 **"And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia" -** ***Comments*** **-** We have another reference to Silas and Timothy assisting Paul in founding the church at Corinth in 2 Corinthians 1:19, "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea."

"Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ" – ***Comments –*** The Greek word συνέχω means, "wholly absorbed" (*BDAG*). David Peterson identifies this verb as the middle voice, rendering the translation "devoted himself exclusively to preaching (λόγος)."[349] The *Textus Receptus* replaces the word λόγος with

[349]David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 510, Logos.

πνεῦμα, rendering the KJV translation "pressed in the spirit." However, this variant reading has no credible support among biblical scholarship.

The word λόγος must be interpreted within the context of this passage as a reference to the various ways in which Paul "testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ." It essentially means that Paul devoted himself to the ministry of the Word of God through preaching, teaching, and miracles. In a similar statement, Acts 6:4 says that the apostles elected deacons so that they could "devote themselves [προσκαρτερέω] to prayer and the ministry of the word."

18:6 ***Comments –*** Although not mentioned in this passage, Silas and Timothy probably came from Macedonia with an offering from those churches he planted. This idea is supported by Paul's statement to the Corinthians that his needs were supplied by the love offerings from the churches in Macedonia (2 Cor 11:9). In other statement, Paul thanks the church in Philippi for the numerous time in which they gave to him (Phil 4:15-16). Such financial support would have freed Paul to devote himself to the ministry of the Gospel in Corinth.

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

18:7 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.

18:8 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.

18:9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

18:10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

18:11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

18:11 ***Comments –*** Paul had brief stays in the previous cities he had visited. However, this divine oracle in 18:9-10 confirmed his need to remain in Corinth for a while. He was seeing conversions to the Gospel and support for his work.

18:12-17 **Paul is Taken before Gallio -** Acts 18:12-17 records the efforts of some of the Jews to prosecute Paul, but the proconsul of Corinth take action.

Historical Background - Archeologists have identified a number of structures in the ancient ruins of Corinth. One inscription of a Jewish synagogue has been discovered. There is an ornamented gateway that leads to a marketplace where many shops were located. In the center of this large area (600 ft. long and 300 ft. wide) has been found the judicial bench or tribunal platform of the city. There speakers would address the crowds that had gathered in the market center. On either side were built rooms where cases were heard by the judicial magistrates. Acts 18:12-17 records how the infuriated Jews drug Paul before this platform and condemned him before Gallio, the proconsul of the city at that time.

Paul was taken before this tribunal on the charges of propagating an illegal religion. The fact that Gallio refused to hear the matter can be interpreted to mean that he judged it as an internal dispute within the Jewish community. Since Judaism was under the protection of Roman law, this gave Paul the legal right to continue his evangelistic efforts in this region of Greece, provided that public order was maintained.

18:12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

18:12 **"And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia" – *Comments* -** Junius Gallio was the brother of the Roman philosopher Seneca (4 B.C. to A.D. 65),[350] who describes him as intellectual, friendly, and good to all (*Questiones Naturales of Seneca*, preface to book 4).[351] C. M. Kerr says that Achaia was "reconstituted" as a senatorial province in A.D. 44 by Emperor Claudius, and scholars generally agree that Gallio became Roman deputy or proconsul of Achaia around A.D. 51-53.[352]

18:12 **"the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat" - *Comments* -** The Jews in Corinth rejected Paul's teaching about Jesus, so Paul went to the Gentiles (18:6). Now the Jews were being provoked to jealousy (Rom 11:11).

18:13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

18:14 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:

18:15 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.

18:16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

18:17 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.

18:17 ***Comments* -** Some scholars interpret Acts 18:17 to mean that Sosthenes represented the Jewish community that had risen up against Paul. Evidently, the Greeks who were observing this hectic trial understood Gallio to turn against the Jews. After rescuing Paul from the Jews, they felt it their civil duty to punish the instigators of this disruption by beating the "ring-leader" of the synagogue as an act to further humiliate the Jews who lived there, a people whom their Emperor has of recent driven from Rome, and it seems a people whom the Greeks cared very little about. The beating of Sosthenes would have served as a warning to all Jews that lived in Corinth not to stir up their city again with their religious bickering. Towards these events Gallio found very little interest; for his duty was to care for the affairs of Rome, not for some religious dispute that did very little to threaten the stability of the city.

However, we have to recognize that this very Sosthenes was most likely the same person that Paul mentions in the opening verse of 1 Corinthians 1:1, "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother." If Sosthenes were the same person mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:1, then it is possible that Sosthenes was later

[350]Tacitus writes, "But in the senate, whilst all members, especially those with most to mourn, were stooping to sycophancy, Junius Gallio, dismayed by the death of his brother Seneca, and petitioning for his own existence, was attacked by Salienus Clemens, who styled him the enemy and parricide of his country." (*Annals* 15.73) Tacitus also writes, "Mela, son of the same parents as Gallio and Seneca, had refrained from seeking office, as he nursed the paradoxical ambition of equalling the influence of a consular while remaining a simple knight." (*Annals* 16.17) See Clifford H. Moore, and John Jackson, trans., *Tacitus: The Histories* and *The Annals,* vol. 4, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1937), 333, 361.

[351]See John Clarke, trans. *Physical Science in the time of Nero, being a Translation of Questiones Naturales of Seneca* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1910), 161-163.

[352]C. M. Kerr, "Gallio," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* ed. James Orr (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 1167-1168.

converted to Christianity. Another possibility is that he had already been converted, and the Greeks were assaulting Sosthenes as one of the leading figures of Paul's group of converts. The Greeks could have done this in an attempt to teach these "converts" not to disturb their city again. Such persecution against Sosthenes would have lifted him to the forefront of Church respect.

18:18-22 **Conclusion: Paul Returns to Antioch -** Acts 18:18-22 records the account of Paul returning to the city of Antioch from his second missionary journey.

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

18:18 ***Comments* -** There are numerous examples of people making vows in the Scriptures. We can read about the vows made by Jephthah (Judg 11:30), Hannah (1 Sam 1:11), Absalom (2 Sam 15:8), David (Ps 56:12), Solomon (Prov 7:14), Jonah (Jonah 2:9), and Paul (Acts 18:18).

18:19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

18:20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

18:21 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.

18:21 ***Comments* –** Paul told the Ephesians that he would return, if it was God's will. He had answered the Macedonian call (Acts 16:6-10). He had been obedient to the divine instructions while in Corinth (Acts 18:9-11). He had learned the importance of being in God's place in His time-table. Paul was determined to be led by the Holy Spirit.

18:22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

18:22 ***Comments* –** The Scriptures do not specify which church Paul briefly visited after landing at Caesarea. Scholars believe that he possibly visited the believers in Jerusalem because the text says he "went up" to the church, and then he "went down" to Antioch. The road to Jerusalem is a long ascent to Mount Zion. In addition, the word "church" suggests an official congregation more descriptive of Jerusalem than Caesarea.

However, Luke tells us that Philip the evangelist lived in Caesarea and met Paul returning from his third missionary journey (Acts 21:8) Luke also tells us that there were disciples in Caesarea, saying, "There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea." (Acts 21:16)

18:23-19:19 **The Testimony of Paul's Third Missionary Journey (A.D. 54-58) -** Acts 18:23-19:19 records the testimony of Paul's third missionary journey. Luke provides the immediate setting of Paul travelled to those churches he had planted earlier to encourage the brethren. Apollo is brought into this circle of co-workers, teaching in Ephesus as well as the churches in Macedonia (18:23-28). Paul makes his way to Ephesus, where he ministered for several years, as God worked signed and wonders by his hands (19:1-19). Luke concludes perhaps the most effective season of Paul's public ministry by describing the growth and spread of the Word of God throughout Asia (19:20).

Literary Evidence for the Theme – There is literary evidence for the theme of perseverance amidst false doctrines in Acts 18:23-19:19 as Luke records a large number of incidences describing the teaching and defense of the Gospel. In the immediate setting (18:23-28), Paul sets forth on his third missionary journey wth the purpose of establishing the brethren in the Christian faith (18:23). Apollos contends with the Jews concerning the doctrine that Jesus Christ fulfilled the Scriptures. Paul spent two years in Ephesus establishing the Word of God. He first instructed certain disciples of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, after which he disputed in the synagogues and in the school of Tyrannus (19:1-19). This section concludes with a reflection upon the Word of God growing and prevailing in Asia Minor (19:20).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 18:23-19:19 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia amidst false doctrines from within:

Exegetical Idea – Apollos and Paul established the Word of God in Achaia and Asia Minor as they persevered amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Apollos and Paul established the Word of God in Achaia and Asia Minor as they persevered amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has established His Word in the nations through His servants as they persevere amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has established His Word in the nations through His servants as they persevere amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has divine provision to persevere while establishing God's Word in the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Apollo's Ministry in Ephesus	18:23-28
(b) Paul in Ephesus	19:1-19

18:23-28 **The Immediate Setting: Apollo's Ministry in Ephesus -** Acts 18:23-28 records the immediate setting of Paul's third missionary journey. While Paul was visiting the churches he planted, Apollo taught in the church in Ephesus as well as Macedonia.

18:23 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.

18:23 ***Comments –*** After a period of rest, the apostle Paul sets out on his third missionary journey in order to strengthen the disciples in the churches that he had planted. In other words, the purpose of this third trip was to establish the churches against the tricks of the devil, which comes in various forms, such as persecutions, false doctrines and offences with the congregation. His first missionary journey served the purpose of confirming and establishing his divine calling as an apostle to the Gentiles. His second missionary journey focused upon establishing churches amidst persecutions from without. Now, Paul returns to these churches to strengthen those congregations so that they do not fail.

What did the regions of Galatia and Phrygia have in common? Ancient historians tell us that the Roman province of Galatia (Γαλάται) was located in northern Asia Minor and was made up of three tribes (the Trocmi, the Tolistobogii, and the Tectosages) (Strabo, *Geography*

12.5).[353] The Galatians originated from a barbarian tribe called the Celts, with the word Γαλάται being a later form of Κελτοί or Κέλται.[354] Some of the Celts settled in France and became known as the Gauls.[355] A large group of the Gauls are said to have later left their homeland in Gaul during the fourth century B.C., traveling over the Alps and into northern Italy.[356] They continued to migrate southward and eastward into the Grecian peninsula and attacked Delphi in 280 B.C. (Justin 24:4)[357] Having been invited by Nikomedes I, king of Bithynia, they crossed over into Asia Minor to help him in a civil war.[358] Three of these migrating tribes eventually settled in north central Asia Minor and established three centers called Ancyra (modern Ankara), Pessinus and Tavium.[359] During this time of migration, the Gauls became known as "Gallo-Graecians," which became corrupted into the word "Galatians" (Strabo, *Geography* 12.5).[360] Livy tells us that the Gauls continued to expand until they placed the entire region west of the Taurus River under tribute, and even dominated the Syrian kings for a period of time. Livy also tells us that they were a courageous and warring people that brought fear upon the populations around them (*History of Rome* 38.16.1-15).[361] These Galatians were finally defeated by Attalus I, king of Pergamum in 230 B.C. (*History of Rome* 38.17.15),[362] who restricted their confinement to a small northern region of Asia Minor, and thus, the region became known as Galatia. Rome soon grew to power and conquered this group in 189 B.C. under the Roman Consul Manlius Vulso (*History of Rome* 38.12-27).[363] It was the first time that these war-like Gauls had been made subject to foreign powers. Because the Galatians submitted and cooperated with the Romans, such as participating in local wars, their territory was expanded and incorporated into the Roman province called Galatia in 25 B.C. This new province now included the districts of Lycaonia and Isauria as well as portions of Pisidia and Phrygia, and the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra, which names we recognize from the book of Acts in Paul's missionary journeys. Thus, the province of Galatia incorporated many ethnic groups and became the largest Roman province in Asia Minor. It was also one of the most densely populated parts of the known world at this time. E. J. Banks says during Paul's missionary journeys, Phrygia was divided into Galatian Phrygia, and Asian Phrygia, with Galatian Phrygia being referred to in Acts 18:23.[364]

18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

---

[353]H. C. Hamilton, and W. Falconer, trans., *The Geography of Strabo,* vol. 2, in *Bohn's Classical Library* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1856), 319-321.

[354]Pausanias writes, "It was late before the name 'Gauls' came into vogue; for anciently they were called Celts both amongst themselves and by others." (*Attica* 4.1). See *Pausanias: Description of Greece*, vol. 1, trans. W. H. S. Jones, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1918), 19; J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1881), 2; Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament,* vol. 3 (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1865), 2.

[355]Julius Caesar, *Commentaries on Gallic Wars* 6.24. See Julius Caesar, *Caesar's Commentaries Gallic and Wars: With the Supplementary Books Attributed to Hirtius; Including the Alexandrian, African, and Spanish Wars,* in *Harper's Classical Library* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1872), 153.

[356]J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1881), 4.

[357]Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament,* vol. 3 (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1865), 2.

[358]Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament,* vol. 3 (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1865), 2.

[359]Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament,* vol. 3 (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1865), 2.

[360][360]H. C. Hamilton, and W. Falconer, trans., *The Geography of Strabo,* vol. 2, in *Bohn's Classical Library* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1856), 319-321.

[361]Evan T. Sage, trans., *Livy,* vol. 11, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1928), 51-55.

[362]Evan T. Sage, trans., *Livy,* vol. 11, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1928), 59.

[363]Evan T. Sage, trans., *Livy,* vol. 11, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1928), 37-93.

[364]E. J. Banks, "Phrygia," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* ed. James Orr (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 2392.

8:24 ***Comments –*** The city of Alexandria in Egypt was a learning center for the Jews. Founded by Alexandria the Great in 331 B.C., it became the capital of Egypt under the rule of his successor Ptolemy, a Macedonian general. Thus, it became a Greek city in its culture. Although Alexander the Great initially brought Jews to this city as slaves (Josephus, *Wars* 2.487, *Against Apion* 2.35), other Jews followed and developed a large Jewish community.[365] Because the Jews were allowed to retain their cultural identity under Greek rule, they flourished in various aspects, one being in education. Apollos would have been brought up under this well-structured educational system, excelling in Jewish theology as well as public speaking.

18:25 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.

18:25 ***Comments –*** The Lord used Apollos' academic education after he became a follower of the message of John the Baptist. He has probably served in the role as a teacher of the Scriptures, and now he added a new aspect of Jewish theology.

18:26 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.

18:26 ***Comments –*** Luke does not describe the conversion of Apollos; rather, he refers to his fuller understanding of the Scriptures. This type of description suggests that Luke may have been a Jew rather than a Gentile, a view that is currently under debate in biblical scholarship.[366]

18:27 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:

18:27 ***Comments –*** Apollos had already established himself among the Jewish communities in Achaia and probably in Asia Minor and other locations. He was in a position to be a tremendous asset to Paul, who had to leave his newly established congregations and appreciated the help of Apollos in supporting the Gospel. Both Paul and Apollos were educated men who now shared the same theological views, so they would have been compatible in their ministries.

18:28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

18:28 ***Comments –*** In Acts 18:28, Apollos debates with the Jews. The Greek word διακατελέγχομαι means, "to confute, overwhelm in argument" (*BDAG*). The public ministry of Apollos as he contends with the Jews regarding doctrine is a perfect reflection of the underlying theme of this section of the book of Acts (18:23-19:19), which is perseverance from false doctrines from within. In contrast to Acts 16:6-18:22, which emphasizes perseverance from persecutions from without, Acts 18:23-19:19 records events that show how Paul and his companions defended the Gospel against their opponents.

19:1-19 **Paul in Ephesus -** Acts 19:1-41 records the testimony of Paul's ministry in the city of Ephesus. Upon his arrival, he leads a number of disciples into faith in Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (19:1-7). After spending some time in the synagogue, Paul was compelled

[365]Birger A. Pearson, "Alrexandria (Place)," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary,* vol. 1, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 152-153.

[366]David L. Allen, *Lucan Authorship of Hebrews,* in *New American Commentary Studies in Bible and Theology*, vol. 8, ed. E. Ray Clendenon (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010).

to take his followers to a peaceful venue (19:8-10). There he taught and ministered through signs and wonders for about two years (19:11-19).

Here is a proposed outline:

1. The Disciples at Ephesus Receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit	19:1-7
2. Paul Turns to the Gentiles in Ephesus	19:8-10
3. Paul's Miraculous Work at Ephesus	19:11-19

Archeological Discoveries of Ephesus - The archeological discoveries made by John T. Wood between 1863 and 1874 of the ancient city of Ephesus support the reliability of Luke's description. Philip Schaff writes, "The excessive worship of Diana, 'the great goddess of Artemis', the temple-warden, the theatre (capable of holding twenty-five thousand people) often used for public assemblies, the distinct officers of the city, the Roman proconsul (ἀνθύπατος), the recorder or 'town-clerk' (γραμματεύς), and the Asiarchs (Ἀσιάρχης) or presidents of the games and the religious ceremonials, have all reappeared in ruins and on inscriptions, which may now be studied in the British Museum."[367]

19:1-7 **The Disciples at Ephesus Receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit -** Acts 19:1-7 records Paul's arriving in the city of Ephesus, where he immediately leads a number of disciples into faith in Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The Gifts of the Spirit Operated in the Churches Planted by Paul the Apostle - We know from Acts 19:1-7 that the believers at Ephesus were filled with the Holy Spirit with the gifts of tongues and prophecy. We can be pretty certain that the churches in the surrounding region of Ephesus partook of the same, being influenced by this key church. For example, the Church at Corinth operated in the nine-fold gifts of the Spirit, which included speaking in tongues (1 Cor 1:4-7; 12:4-11). The churches throughout Galatia were receiving the Spirit and experiencing miracles (Gal 3:5). The gift of prophecy was active in the church in Thessalonica (1 Thess 5:19-20). Thus, we can be sure that most, if not all, of the churches that Paul established would be considered "Pentecostal" or "Charismatic" by modern definition.

Testimonies to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as a Separate Experience from Salvation - Acts 19:1-7 serves as one witness to the fact that the baptism in the Holy Ghost is a separate experience from salvation, as we see made clear in Acts 19:2, "have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" We additional passages of Scripture that testify of this distinction in Luke 24:49, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." In this verse, Jesus was speaking to believers to wait for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. We see a third witness in Acts 8:16, "(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)" We have a fourth witness in Acts 9:17, "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

Note how Paul the apostle ministered the baptism of the Holy Ghost to the disciples in Ephesus. When he finds out that they had not heard of the Holy Spirit, he endeavors to meet them at their point of faith by asking them where their faith has been placed. When they reply that their faith is in the baptism of John the Baptist, Paul then leads them into a greater revelation of God's Word. Therefore, the disciples followed Paul in his ministry to them.

[367]Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, vol. 1: Apostolic Christianity A.D. 1-100* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), 736.

We can lose our opportunity of a successful ministry to someone by failing to find out where what his point of faith is resting.

19:1 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,

19:1 **"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth" – *Comments* -** It is reasonable to assume that Apollos served as a teacher in the church of Corinth, and perhaps as their pastor upon Paul's departure. We know that the Corinthians were familiar with his ministry and some even preferring him above other apostles (1 Cor 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 4:6). As to how long he stayed, we are not certain. But he could have been there two or three years before he departure (A.D. 52-55), for Paul later asked him to return and continue his ministry there (1 Cor 16:12).

"Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus" - *Comments* – In Acts 18:23, Luke says that Paul travelled throughout the region of Galatia and Phyrgia. A third possible reference to a visit to the churches of Galatia is made in Acts 19:1 where Luke tells us that Paul visited the "upper country" (τὰ ἀνωτερικὰ μέρη) before moving down into Ephesus. This upper country could very likely refer to the upland plateau of the northern part of Asia Minor, which included the district of Galatia.

"and finding certain disciples" - *Comments* – Although Luke does not distinguish these twelve disciples who had been water baptized through the message of John the Baptist as either Jews or Greeks, he does use the phrase "certain disciples" to distinguish them from those who had already heard the Gospel and accepted Jesus as their Lord. Perhaps the reason for this is that later in this same passage Luke includes the story of certain unbelieving Jews who attempted to imitate Paul's public ministry by casting out a demon. Thus, Luke needs to make a clear distinction in this passage between a disciple of Christ and a Jew. These twelve disciples were most likely Jews, having embraced the message of John the Baptist, something that a Greek would be less likely to do.

19:2 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.

19:2 **"He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" – *Comments* –** Acts 19:2 provides the clearest verse in the New Testament that confirms the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a separate experience from one's initial salvation. Paul assumes that these believers had already been saved when he says, ". . . since ye believed." The break between chapters 18 and 19 causes us to forget that Paul had left Priscilla and Aquila about a year earlier to establish a church. Apollos came and taught them for a season. Because they were so new in the faith, they did not know how to lead these Ephesian converts into the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It was not until Paul's return that they were filled with the Holy Ghost after being saved at an earlier date.

The distinction between salvation and the baptism of the Holy Ghost is also seen in Hebrews 6:4 when it describes the gift of salvation as different than partaking of the Holy Ghost, saying, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,"

19:2 ***Comments* –** Paul asks the question in Acts 19:2 concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit simply because he wanted evidence of the conversion of the Ephesians. Throughout the book of Acts, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues provides this evidence of true conversion (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 8:14-17; 11:15-18, 23; 15:7-8; 19:1-7). This connection between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and conversion is established in Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost when he quotes the prophet Joel (Acts

2:16-21), which says, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh . . ." Although the connection is not made in a number of narrative stories, it has become part of the context of conversion because of the numerous testimonies of this important connection. However, it must be stated that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not necessary for conversion; rather, it serves as undeniable evidence of one's genuine conversion.

19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

19:4 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.

19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

19:7 And all the men were about twelve.

19:8-10 **Paul Turns to the Gentiles in Ephesus -** Acts 19:8-10 records Paul's early experience in the synagogue, as many Jews reject the Gospel, compelling him to relocate to a peaceful venue to disciples his followers.

19:8 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.

19:9 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.

19:10 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.

19:10 ***Comments -*** The city of Ephesus was located at the mouth of the Cayster River in western Asia Minor, a valley that hosted other cities, which reached far into the interior of this Roman province. We recognize some of names of these cities from other places in Scriptures. For example, the cities of Laodicea (Col 4:16, Rev 1:11, 3:14-22), Hierapolis, and Colossae (Paul's epistle to the Colossians) are found in this valley; and churches were most likely planted in these cities as well as the other seven churches of Revelation 1:11 as a result of Paul's two-year ministry and outreach in Ephesus.

Paul spent the longest period of time during his three missionary journeys in the city of Ephesus. No doubt, he travelled around this region during these two years evangelizing other cities. He must have used Ephesus as his base. My experience as a missionary shows me that Satan does not give up any of his territory without a fight. All of the strongholds that the devil had established in this region of Asia Minor were being challenged and conquered by the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the kingdom of Heaven was being established upon earth. My greatest battles of opposition took place in the early years of ministry in Uganda. After standing my ground, the Lord began to give us favour with government leaders. After twenty years in Uganda, I am able to go anywhere and reach to the office of the President with a need or request. There is no opposition that can stand against me if they behave unjustly. Uganda has become a nation that honors the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a people who are free to proclaim the name of Jesus any where in the sectors of this society. Tenure is the key to establishing such a presence of the kingdom of God upon the earth. The apostle Paul spend those two years establishing deep roots in Ephesus, and he

sent Timothy and others to oversee this work. Church tradition tells us that the apostle John spent his later years overseeing the church of Ephesus. This region because a stronghold for the kingdom of Heaven in the midst of the Roman Empire.

19:11-19 **Paul's Miraculous Work at Ephesus –** Acts 19:11-19 records the effectiveness of Paul's ministry in Ephesus over a two-year period as God worked with Paul, confirming the Gospel with signs and miracles. Acts 19:11-19 gives us a brief list of some of these miracles. This was perhaps the most effective season of Paul's public ministry.

19:11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

19:12 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.

19:12 ***Comments*** **-** Being healed by the contact of clothing is similar to the woman with the issue of blood being healed by touching the hem of Jesus' garment (Mark 5:25-34). Paul was anointed by the Holy Spirit, and this anointing flowed into these fabrics when he laid hands upon these handkerchiefs and aprons. These miracles were a work of God (Acts 19:12) through the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, many people were healed in this manner in Jesus' ministry. We read in Luke 6:19, "And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all." We read in Mark 6:56, "And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole."

This working of miracles is still testified today. One of my aunts was stricken with polio as a young girl. My Baptist grandmother went to her Pentecostal cousins and obtained a prayer cloth. The minute that this cloth was laid upon my aunt, she began to get better. She was totally healed and lived a perfectly normal life.

19:11-12 ***Comments*** **-** This event could be classified as the gift of the working of miracles, which is listed in 1 Corinthians 12:10, "To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:" Acts 19:12 gives a list of some of the types of the working of miracles that occurred.

19:13 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.

19:13 ***Comments*** **-** Just using Jesus' name alone is not enough. You must add faith in His Name, as we see in Acts 3:16, "And *his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong*, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." In order to use the authority of Jesus' name effectively, you must be a born-again child of God, believing on Jesus.

19:14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

19:15 ***Comments*** **–** The demon replies and says, "Jesus I know (γινώσκω) and Paul I know (ἐπίσταμαι), but who are you?" Thus, Luke uses two different Greek words to convey the concept of knowing. Henry Alford believes there should be no real distinction in meeting

between these two words used together in this context, suggesting it is the author's attempt to distinguish between the Lord Jesus Christ and His servant Paul the apostle.[368]

It is interesting to note how there was no power and authority in the name of Jesus when used by these vagabond Jews. Morris Cerullo helps us to understand why this is so. He said that the Lord once spoke to him and said, "Power does not come from the spoken word. Rather, power comes from relationships."[369] In other words, the power and authority to cast out demons came from Paul's relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. These vagabond Jews did not have such a relationship; and thus, they had no power to cast out demons or to work miracles by that Name. For this reason, the demons asked, "But who are you?" In other words, where does your authority come from to tell us what to do?"

19:16 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.

19:17 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.

19:18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

19:19 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.

19:20 **Conclusion: The Mighty Growth and Prevailing of the Word of God -** Acts 19:20 serves as the conclusion of Acts 15:36-19:20 by describing the spread of the Gospel into Macedonia and Europe. The church continued to proclaim the Gospel with signs and wonders and the propagation of the Word of God. This verse supports the theme of the perseverance of the early Church to establish sound church doctrine.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:20 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission to take the Gospel to Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions completed their commissions to establish the Word of God in Asia Minor, Achaia, and Greece as they persevered amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions completed their commissions to establish the Word of God in Asia Minor, Achaia, and Greece as they persevered amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has raised up His servants to establish His Word among the nations as they persevere amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has raised up His servants to establish His Word among the nations as they persevere amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should fulfill his individual role to establish God's Word in the nations amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

19:20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

---

[368]Henry Alford, *The New Testament,* vol. 2 (London: Rivington's, 1857), 197.

[369]Morris Cerullo, interviewed by Benny Hinn, *This is Your Day* (Irving, Texas), on Trinity Broadcasting Network (Santa Ana, California), television program.

19:20 ***Comments -*** The Word of God is powerful, and when it goes forth through the preaching of the Gospel it carries the power to transform lives. The preaching of the Gospel is accompanied with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, who distributes gifts and anointings as He wills.

Romans 1:16 also tells us that the preaching of the Gospel serves as God's method of releasing His power to transform lives that results in their salvation. Reinhard Bonnke, the German evangelist, has been evangelizing Africa for the last few decades. He has had the largest gathering of people in the history of the Church. In Nigeria alone his crusades are attended by millions and millions are being saved. He has seen miracles of healings and even the dead raised while he was preaching. He said, "The Gospel inherently holds all the power this whole world will every need to change it. The Gospel has the power to change the whole world. They tell me that the rocks on Mars have locked up so much oxygen. If it was released it could provide an atmosphere as we have it on earth. Well, I think the Gospel holds all the energy and the power this world needs to be totally renewed. It is released when it is preached. Lives are changed. We have seen regions changes. We have seen nations shaken."[370]

19:21-28:29 **The Witness of Church Growth unto Rome -** The final section of the book of Acts (19:21-28:29) serves as Luke's testimony of the prophetic fulfillment of the Gospel reaching Rome. This block reflects the themes of perseverance amidst false doctrines/offenses as well as glorification, recording the arrest and trials of Paul the apostle, his trip by sea to Rome, and his preparation for a hearing before the Roman emperor, the highest court in the Roman Empire.

The block opens with the greater setting in which Paul purposes in his spirit to visit Rome (19:21-22). He then brings about a conclusion to his work in Asia Minor and Macedonia as the occasion for his trip to Jerusalem (19:23-20:38).[371] As Paul departs from Asia Minor and makes his way to Jerusalem, Agabus delivers a prophecy to Paul concerning his impending bonds (21:1-14). Luke then records four speeches delivered by Paul in a "judicial procedure" for a Roman citizen (21:15-26:32).[372] This procedure moves from the lowest to the highest order of judgment. That is, Paul first stands before a Jewish mob and gives his defense (21:15-22:29).[373] He is then taken before the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:35), Felix the governor (24:1-27), Festus the governor and King Agrippa (25:11-26: 23), and finally he is sent to Rome where he stands trial (27:1-28:16). Luke records these speeches and trials as evidence of Paul's innocence organized in an ascending judicial order that would have been recognized and endorsed by the courts of Rome. The plot reaches its climax with the conflict that Paul faces during his shipwreck upon the island of Malta, being resolved as Paul miraculous lives after a snake bite, after which he makes his way to Rome. Luke concludes the book of Acts with Paul in Rome preaching the Gospel unhindered for two years under house arrest, serving as a final testimony of the innocence of the Christian faith

[370]Reinhard Bonnke, interviewed by Cecil Steward, *Deciding Your Destiny* (Belfast, Ireland: CCN Europe), on Lighthouse Television, Kampala, Uganda, television program, 30 December 2005.

[371]Peterson says this section "records unprecedented opposition and prepares the reader for events to come in Jerusalem (21:27–40)." See David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 542, Logos.

[372]Schubert writes, "The most striking evidence is that the speeches of cycle III (chs. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27-28 22) are in the 'I' style. It is appropriate because they are given in the setting of a judicial procedure; Paul is a prisoner of the Roman authorities." See Paul Schubert, "The Final Cycle of Speeches in the Book of Acts," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87.1 (March 1968): 4.

[373]Having lived and worked in the mission fields of Africa for twenty years, I have seen the power of mob justice. Because the police and judicial systems are often corrupt, villages and communities often execute non-judicial punishments on their own. The police do not always intervene and arrest those involved in mob justice because they know the potential violence of such mobs.

(28:17-29). Many scholars suggest Luke compiles this sequence of trials in order to reveal Paul's innocence as a legal defense that could have been used during Paul's actual trial.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:21-28:29 emphasizing the glorification of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions found a place of rest in Christ amidst hardships as they preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions found a place of rest in Christ amidst hardships as they preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has provided a place of rest in Christ for those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a place of rest in Christ for those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God must find a place of rest in Christ in order to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

(1) The Greater Setting: Paul Purposes in His Spirit to Visit Rome	19:21-22
(2) The Occasion: Paul Concludes His Work in Macedonia/Asia Minor	19:23-20:38
(3) The Conflict: The Testimony of Paul's Arrest and Trials	21:1-26:32
(4) The Climax-Resolution: The Witness of Paul's Journey to Rome	27:1-28:16
(5) The Conclusion: Paul's Ministry in Rome	28:17-29

19:21-22 **The Greater Setting: Paul Purposes in His Spirit to Visit Rome –** Acts 19:21-22 records the greater setting of Acts 19:21-20:38 as Paul purposes in his heart to close his third missionary journey by visiting Jerusalem, and then the city of Rome.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:21-22 emphasizing the glorification of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul purposed in his spirit to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul purposed in his spirit to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has provided a plan with a destiny for those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a plan with a destiny for those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should strive to fulfill his divine destiny in order to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

19:21 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.

19:21 **"After these things were ended" –** The Greek word πληρόω is used sixteen times in the book of Acts. Five of these uses mean, "to make full" (*BDAG*), and the other eleven occasions describe a "complete period of time" (*BDAG*). Of the eleven uses of πληρόω regarding a completed period of time, three of them refer specifically to the fulfillment of Scripture (1:16; 3:18; 13:27), while four refer to the completion of divine service (12:25; 13:25; 14:26; 19:21). In addition, Luke uses the construction ὡς δὲ + πληρόω on four occasions to refer to the completion of time (7:23; 9:23) or the completion of divine service (13:25; 19:21).

Luke uses the word πληρόω in strategic places concerning Paul's ministry in the book of Acts. For example, Paul fulfilled his divine service after he and Barnabas took aid to the elders in Judea (12:25); Paul and Barnabas fulfilled their service on their first missionary journey (14:26); and Paul fulfilled his work after his third missionary journey (19:21). All of these prophecies are centered upon Jesus' apostolic commission in Acts 1:8 to take the Gospel to the nations. Thus, Luke weaves the prophetic element into the apostolic element throughout the book of Acts. These prophecies are delivered as divine oracles by visions (10:9-16; 16:9), by men (11:27-28; 21:10-11), and as gifts of utterance (13:1-3).

The Greek word πληρόω used in Acts 19:21 allows the literal translation, "and after these things were fulfilled." In other words, Paul had fulfilled God's purpose during his third missionary journey, and he felt the need to return to Antioch. This translation means that Luke is possibly reflecting back on the fulfillment of the prophecies given to Paul by Ananias concerning his divine calling as an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15-16), and by the church of Antioch to go forth on missionary journeys (Acts 13:1-3), and by the night vision to go into Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10). In other words, Paul had successfully established churches in Macedonia as well as Asia Minor in fulfillment of the prophecy he received to go into Macedonia. Evidence of the fulfillment of these prophecies is recorded in the previous verse, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." (Acts 19:20)

"Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem" – ***Comments*** **-** Paul was a man who had learned to be led by the Holy Spirit. Acts 19:21 tells us that Paul decided in his spirit that it was time to make plans to travel back to Macedonia and Achaia to strengthen the churches he has planted there. We read in Acts 19:23, "And the same time there arose no small stir about that way," This refers to an event was about to take place that would make it necessary for Paul's departure, which was the riot in Ephesus. Paul was not taken by surprise. Although God had not revealed to him the details of this upcoming riot, the Holy Spirit was prompting him to prepare himself for this forced departure.

Illustration - It has been my experience during the seasons of change in my life that I become restless in my spirit. I sense a season of change and I have a desire to move towards another purpose. During this season of restlessness, I look for divine experiences, such as dreams or a word from the Lord, to give me guidance and patience to follow the Lord's timetable.

"saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome" - ***Comments*** **–** Paul makes a confession of faith, decreeing what he felt in his spirit he needed to do. He decided what he wanted to do in 19:21a, and he decreed this decision in his confession of faith in 19:21b.

19:22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

19:22 ***Comments*** **-** Erastus was the city treasurer of Corinth (Rom 16:23) who began to travel in Paul's team and minister to the apostle during his third missionary journey (Acts 19:22). He must have been one of Paul's converts while establishing the church of Corinth. Perhaps

Erastus later became a church leader at Corinth since Paul assigned him to that city during the last days of his ministry (2 Tim 4:20). Robert Gundry tells us that a first century inscription was discovered in Corinth reading, "Erastus, the commissioner of public works, laid this pavement at his own expense." He acknowledges to that a commissioner is not the same as city treasurer, they could be "roughly synonymous." Therefore, it is possible that the Erastus of Acts 19:22 is the same individual of the so-called "Erastus inscription" found at Corinth.[374]

It was about this time that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians and sent it by the hands of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:17). Scholars believe that Paul then sent Timotheus and Erastus (who was from Corinth) to the church at Corinth in order to see how the church was responding to his letter. In fact he tells them in 1 Corinthians 16:10 to receive Timothy if he comes. Paul would soon make a quick visit in what is called the "painful visit" (2 Cor 2:1; 12:14; 13:1). So, evidently Timothy did not find the situation favorable upon his arrival and reported to Paul these problems.

19:21-22 ***Comments - Paul's Travel Plans –*** In Acts 19:21-22, Luke records Paul's decision to travel soon into Macedonia and Achaia. We see how he sends Timotheus and Erastus ahead of him to make preparations for him in the cities where he will stay. This event very likely corresponds to 1 Corinthians 4:17-19; for we know that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus.

19:23-20:38 **The Occasion: Paul Concludes His Work in Macedonia and Asia Minor (Perseverance Amidst False Doctrines/Offenses) -** Acts 19:23-20:38 records the final period of Paul's third missionary journey in which he concludes his work in Macedonia and Asia Minor and prepares to return to Jerusalem, and then Rome. These events serve as the occasion for Paul's trip to Jerusalem. At this time, a riot takes place in Ephesus (19:23-41). Paul decides to leave his work in Ephesus and make a brief visit to those churches he planted in Macedonia and Greece before turning towards Jerusalem (20:1-6). Paul stops over in Troas, where he spoke to the disciples until midnight (20:7-12). From Troas, Paul makes his way to Miletus (20:13-16). At Miletus, Paul called the elders of Ephesus and gave his farewell address (20:17-38).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:23-20:38 emphasizing the perseverance amidst offenses/false doctrines of the church's commission unto Rome:

> Exegetical Idea – Paul exhorted the church elders to watch over their churches amidst offenses and false doctrines to that he could visit Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Paul exhorted the church elders to watch over their churches amidst offenses and false doctrines to that he could visit Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has organized His church with divine leadership to defend it against offenses and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has organized His church with divine leadership to defend it against offenses and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should serve his church leadership to enable them to defend the church against offenses and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

[374]Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament,* revised edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House), 278.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Riot at Ephesus	19:23-41
(b) Paul's Journey to Macedonia and Greece	20:1-6
(c) Paul at Troas	20:7-12
(d) Paul Journeys from Troas to Miletus	20:13-16
(e) Conclusion: Paul Exhorts the Elders at Ephesus	20:17-38

19:23-41 **The Riot at Ephesus -** Acts 19:23-41 records the riot at Ephesus in which the businessmen of Ephesus rise up in direct conflict with Paul and his coworkers. A silversmith named Demetrius incites the other businessmen of the city on the allegation that Paul was causing harm to their business of selling idols (19:23-27). This furious crowd assembled in the theatre, where they shouted and raged for about two hours (19:28-34). Eventually, the city clerk managed to calm the crowd, reason with them on a solution, then dismiss them (19:35-41).

Historical Background of the City of Ephesus - It is important to gain some historical insight of the history and culture of the city of Ephesus so that someone can understand why the people of the city became so upset over their goddess Diana and it temple. The city of Ephesus boasted the great Temple of Artemis, which is considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It boasted one hundred twenty-seven (127) columns, each being sixty (60) meters in height. The Greek goddess Artemis was the daughter of Zeus and twin sister of Apollo and was known as the moon goddess, the goddess of hunting, and the patroness of young girls. We learn from Acts 19:21-41 that the Ephesians were very proud of their great Temple and of their goddess Artemis, whom they called by the name of Diana in this passage of Scripture. Because of its mythological heritage, Ephesus hosted a vast number of religious pilgrims annually. The local craftsmen found much profit in manufacturing images of the goddess Diana, which they sold to these pilgrims and other strangers. This gained Ephesus its religious role in the Greek society, so much so that an ancient Roman coin was stamped "Diana of Ephesus". This is the reason that Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen were so threatened by the ministry of Paul the apostle. Their wealthy livelihood became threatened and their reputation as a city that worshipped their goddess Diana was being spoiled. If word spread abroad that the people of Ephesus were turning to this new religion called Christianity, its commercial, political, cultural, and religious importance in the Roman Empire would be diminished. Therefore, these craftsmen, who stood the most to lose, felt compelled to react and try to stop the ministry of Paul and his fellow workers. But since Paul had done nothing unlawful, the town clerk was forced to stop the madness of the riot that these craftsmen started.

19:23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

19:25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

19:26 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:

19:27 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.

19:27 ***Comments –*** The Greek word μεγαλειότης means, "grandeur, sublimity, or majesty" (*BDAG*). This word is used three times in the New Testament (Lk 9:43, Acts 19:27, 2 Pet 1:16).

The financial income of the businessmen in Ephesus was at the heart of the riot. Paul understood this financial greed, and he later writes, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim 6:10) It has been my experience after having worked for decades as a businessman that I can tolerate a lot of abuse and wrongdoing. But once this behavior encroaches into my financial income, I feel compelled to take action.

In Acts 19:27, Demetrius the silversmith brought allegations against Paul and his companions on the basis of financial loss to the community as well as appealing to their religious beliefs. He was probably more concerned about financial loss than religious convictions. Perhaps he used the approach of Paul being a threat to the religion faith of the Ephesians in order to win their favor in his efforts to mobilize the people against Paul.

Obviously, the whole world did not worship Diana, as Demetrius declares to the people. However, the crowds did not take the time to weight the accuracy of his allegations as he incites them to anger.

19:28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

19:29 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.

19:30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

19:31 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.

19:32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

19:33 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.

19:33 ***Comments -*** We know of a Jew named Alexander mentioned in Acts 19:33, who was apparently a leader of the Jewish community in Ephesus. He is mentioned in Acts 19:33 because he was chosen by the Jews in Ephesus to speak to the crowd and appease their anger, but to no avail. Paul mentions a man by this name in his two epistles to Timothy (1 Tim 1:20, 2 Tim 4:14-15). He is called Alexander the coppersmith and described as a harsh opponent to Paul's work in Ephesus. Such a description seen in Acts 19:33 of a well-spoken Jewish leader in Ephesus fits the description of a possible opponent of Paul's evangelist work in this city. It is very possible for this to be the same person.

19:34 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.

19:35 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?

19:36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

19:37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

19:38 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.

19:39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

19:40 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.

19:41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

20:1-6 **Paul's Journey to Macedonia and Greece -** Acts 20:1-6 records a brief account of Paul's journey into Macedonia and Greece at the end of his third missionary journey before making his way to Troas on his journey back to Jerusalem. This passage serves as the resolution to the conflict in Ephesus as Paul departs the city where he had accomplished the most effective ministry of his missionary career.

20:1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

20:2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

20:2 ***Comments –*** Up until now, Paul has used the title for the Roman province of Achaia. He now uses a broader term "Greece," which includes both Achaia and the surrounding Aegean coastal area.[375] This term would be more accurate to describe Paul's final movements throughout this part of the ancient world. However, David Peterson says the term Greece was a popular name for Achaia.[376]

20:3 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.

20:3 ***Comments –*** Many conservative Bible scholars believe that Paul's three-month stay in Greece was the winter season (Dec-Jan-Feb) when much shipping in the Mediterranean comes to a halt because of the hazards on the sea. When the winter had passed, he determined to make his way to Jerusalem with the contribution of the saints. However, because of threats upon his life, Paul did not sail from the port of Cenchrea a short distance from the city of Corinth. Rather, he chose the unlikely route of returning through Macedonia in order to minister to the saints in Philippi, Troas and Ephesus.

20:4 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.

---

[375]Darrell Bock, *Acts*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 617, Logos.

[376]David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 555, Logos.

20:4 ***Comments –*** The numerous mentions of an individual named Tychicus by Luke and Paul suggest that he played an important role in Paul's apostolic ministry (Acts 20:4, Eph 6:21, Col 4:7, 18, 2 Tim 4:12, Titus 3:12). He was a very faithful and trusted servant to Paul, having delivered two of the Prison Epistles to Ephesus and Colossi (Eph 6:21, Col 4:7). If the assumption proposed by many scholars is true, who say that the time of writing of the three Pastoral Epistles is close together, then we can refer to Titus 3:12 for help in piecing together Paul's final travel plans for himself and his team, which says, "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter." This statement suggests that Paul sent Artemas or Tychicus to stand in for Titus while he visited the apostle in Nicopolis. According to 2 Timothy 4:12 Paul now seems to send Tychicus to Ephesus, where Timothy had been deployed (1 Tim 1:1-3) because of his urgent request for Timothy to leave this work temporarily and visit him in Rome (2 Tim 4:9, 21). Paul would not have pulled Timothy away from the important church in Ephesus for any length of time without assigning a faithful person in his place. Perhaps Paul's strategy was to deploy his ministry team throughout the churches they had planted while raising up leaders from the local congregation. While he was unable to do this in the early years of his apostolic ministry, his team grew to a greater capacity, as we see in the book of Acts and in Paul's epistles.

Trophimus was a Greek (Acts 21:28) from the city of Ephesus (Acts 21:29) and we conclude a convert of Paul when planting a church in this city during his third missionary journey. He travelled with Paul's ministry team after his conversion (Acts 20:4, 2 Tim 4:20), accompanying him into Macedonia, Asia, and to Jerusalem to present the love offering from the churches to the poor saints in this holy city. He was with Paul in the Temple in Jerusalem when the apostle was arrested and imprisoned (Acts 21:27-29). He remained faithful to Paul during the years of his first and second Roman imprisonment.

20:5 These going before tarried for us at Troas.

20:6 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.

20:7-12 **Paul at Troas -** Acts 20:7-12 records Paul's ministry at Troas. The most significant event during this stay was the raising from the dead of a certain man named Eutychus. It is very possible that Luke mentions this individual because he played an important role in the church at a later date.

The Founding of the Church at Troas - At some point in Paul's public ministry, a church was planted in the city Troas. We have a record of Paul preaching the Gospel in this city in 2 Corinthians 2:12, "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord." Paul had left Ephesus and was planning on spending the winter in Greece. Mostly like he planted a church here at this time.

20:7 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.

20:8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

20:9 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.

20:10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

20:11 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.

20:12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

20:13-16 **Paul Journeys from Troas to Miletus -** Acts 20:13-16 records a brief account of Paul's journey from Troas to Miletus as he makes his way to meet the elders of Ephesus before travelling to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost.

20:13 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.

20:14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

20:15 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.

20:16 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.

20:17-38 **Conclusion: Paul Exhorts the Elders at Ephesus -** Acts 20:17-38 records Paul's brief visit to Miletus to meet the elders of the church at Ephesus. Upon arriving at Miletus, Paul calls for the elders to Ephesus (20:17). This passage records Paul's emotional speech to them as he warns them of hardships to come (20:18-35). It concludes with a very emotional departure and permanent separation between Paul and the elders of Ephesus (20:36-38).

The importance of this event lies in the fact that the church of Ephesus would become the leading church in the region. After Paul's death, John the apostle became the elder shepherd over the churches of Asia Minor and ministered out of the church in Ephesus.

These verses testify of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth. They also testify of the fulfillment of a secondary prophecy in Acts 16:6-10 exclusive to this block as Paul reflects upon his missionary outreach and the fulfillment of his calling in this speech (20:24).

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

20:18 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,

20:19 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:

20:19 ***Comments -*** Jesus is our example of humility, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil 2:8)

20:20 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,

20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

20:22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

20:22 ***Comments -*** Just as Jesus set His face towards Jerusalem (Lk 9:51), knowing that this decision would cost Him His life, so Paul made the same decision to go to Jerusalem, knowing that afflictions awaited him (Acts 21:11), even possibly death.

20:23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

20:23 ***Comments –*** Acts 20:23 confirms the fact that the gifts of utterance were operating in every New Testament church that Paul established.

20:24 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.

20:24 ***Comments -*** Here, we begin to see that Paul is making a choice. He knows that if he goes to Jerusalem, he would be bound and imprisoned. He knows that it meant possible death. Therefore he says here that he does not count his life dear. He also knew that he must preach the Gospel in Rome, as we read in Acts 19:21, "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*." It was God's will for Paul to go to Rome, according to Acts 23:11, "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, *so must thou bear witness also at Rome*." Yet, the Holy Spirit was warning Paul of its consequences, which was certain death. Here, Paul makes a choice, to finish the work that God's has called him to, resulting in death, or to save his own life, yet never reach Rome. In Paul's visit to Rome, he increased the influence of his ministry, but it cost him his life.

The Lord allowed Paul to make the choice. Paul chose God's will above his own will. Paul had to make a choice many times in his life. When he was taken captive a Caesarea shortly after leaving the Ephesians, he made a choice in his trial before Festus to face death for an opportunity to preach the Gospel before Caesar (Acts 25:11-12). This was the culmination of his ministry, for he had finished his course.

20:23-24 ***Comments – Testimonies of the Suffering of the Godly -*** Since all Scripture is inspired by God, the Holy Spirit is witnessing to us also in many places in the Scriptures. In Acts 20:23-24 we are able to identify with Paul while he awaits bonds and afflictions. Five places in the Scriptures testify of our need to bear these same kinds of afflictions (Ps 34:9, Mk 4:17, Jn 16:33, Acts 14:22, 2 Tim 3:12 and 1 Pet 5:9). So, let us make our confession of faith along with Paul, saying, "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." Let us not be moved or offended by our afflictions.

20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

20:28 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.

20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

20:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

20:31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

20:31 ***Comments –*** Paul made a similar warning to the believers in Philippi, saying, "(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:" (Phil 3:18)

20:32 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.

20:32 ***Comments –*** Acts 20:32 reveals that Paul commended the churches unto God each time he departed from them. When my wife goes out of the home to do errands, she commends my child into the hands of our nanny. It becomes the responsibility of this nanny to care for the child while my wife is away. Paul had to leave one church and minister to other churches. In commending them unto God, he knew that through divine providence the Lord would work in their lives and keep them in the faith. The Lord would bring people like Apollos and others to them to teach them the Word. God would encamp about them by His angels to keep them from many trials that the devil would attempt to bring. I find that the Lord seems to orchestrate my day in greater detail when I commend myself unto His divine care.

Paul also commended the churches to "the Word of His grace," which we know to be the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul did not have material things to leave these churches when he departed, neither did he bring gifts and financial aid to them when he first arrived. He brought to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as Jesus commanded us to do in Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 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." The Great Commission tells us that Jesus did not send His disciples out into the nations to do social impact. Such work should be done by the local churches who understand the needs of their particular communities. Jesus sent His disciples out with the Gospel to change the mindset of the nations. Paul left them with God's Word as a framework for their Christian journey. They not only learned to walk in fellowship with God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, they learned to walk in obedience to His Holy Word. Both are important in the Christian life.

20:33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

20:34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

20:33-34 ***Comments –*** Many preachers have fallen prey to covetousness and material gain from the tithes and offerings. The apostle Paul was careful to avoid such covetousness. Instead, he worked with his hands in planting new churches, receiving financial aid from those churches already established.

20:35 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.

20:35 ***Comments -*** Calvin Coolidge, the thirtieth president of the United States (1923-29), once said, "No person was ever honoured for what he received. Honour has been the reward for what he gave."[377] Someone once said, "The quality of one's life is calculated by one's donation, not by one's duration."

20:34-35 ***Comments -*** In Acts 20:34-35 Paul tells the elders of Ephesus that he had laboured with his hands on many occasions during his three missionary journeys. He worked as a tent-maker with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-3). He refers to these labours in 1 Corinthians 4:12, "And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:"

Alexander Mackay, the famous missionary to Uganda, East Africa, worked daily among the native Africans, realizing it was his access to preaching the Gospel to a naturally lazy culture. These natives saw in him each day a sacrifice was made to serve them, which opened their hearts to the testimony of God's love towards them through Jesus Christ.

> "All through his mechanical work, building, turning, casting, carpentering, glazing, engrossed as he was with these crafts, and earning his bread literally by the sweat of his brow, Mackay's burning desire was to lead the people to Christ. He grudged the time spent in these secular occupations and longed to give himself entirely to teaching and preaching. Indeed, he had serious thoughts of going home, and studying for ordination as a clergyman, in order that he might be able to baptize and administer the communion. But happily for the success of the Mission, and happily for Uganda, he was led to give up this idea of return. After studying the subject long, and with much prayer, he came to the conclusion that the sphere of working missionary was the one in which he had most influence, and to which God had called him. The example of hard work which he set was of great value to the natives, who were naturally lazy. Here was a man who taught that work was noble, and proved that he believed it, by himself working harder than any of them. They called him Mzunguwa-Kazi, which means 'white man of work;' for, from the time that he first came to their country, they had never seen him idle."[378]

20:36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

20:37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

20:38 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.

21:1-26:32 **The Conflict: The Testimony of Paul's Arrest and Trials (Paul's Apostleship Predestined, Called, Justified, Glorified) (A.D. 58) –** In Acts 21:1-26:32, Luke records the accounts of Paul's arrest and trials, describing the conflict of the plot. In these trials, he delivers four speeches in a judicial setting. While the plots of the preceding sections centered around one major speech, this final section collects four speeches together for the

[377]Calvin Coolidge, *Have Faith in Massachusetts,* 2nd ed (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), 173.
[378]C. T. Wilson, *Alexander Mackay: Missionary Hero of Uganda* (London: The Sunday School Union, 1893), 83.

purpose of taking his readers into the courtrooms of Palestine to serve as witnesses to Paul's innocence and the fallacies of his accusers.

Acts 21:1-14 describes Paul's final journey back to Palestine in which he is given two prophecies concerning his arrest. When he enters the Temple, Paul is taken by a Jewish mob where he gives a defense of his innocence on the steps of a Roman military barrack in Jerusalem (21:15-22:29). The following day the Roman commander hands him over to the Sanhedrin, who attempt to condemn Paul, but find themselves in the midst of a violent dispute among themselves. The Roman commander soon orders him to be brought to Caesarea for a civil trial because of Paul's Roman citizenship (22:30-23:35). Luke records Paul's judicial hearing before Felix the governor, in which Paul was asked to give a bribe to free him from imprisonment. The governor keeps Paul in prison for two years hoping for this bribe (24:1-27). After two year, Paul is brought before the new governor named Festus (25:1-12), who turns him over to the judicial authority of King Agrippa. In this passage, the king declares Paul's innocence; then he honors Paul's appeal to the courts in Rome (25:13-26:32). Luke records these speeches and trials as evidence of Paul's innocence organized in an ascending judicial order that would have been recognized and endorsed by the courts of Rome. Thus, many scholars suggest Luke compiles this sequence of trials in order to reveal Paul's innocence as a legal defense that could have been used during Paul's actual trial in Rome.

In addition, Luke also weaves the element of the injustice of his accusers into each trial scene. For example, Luke points out in the first trial scene that the mob was falsely accusing Paul of bringing a Greek into the Temple (21:29), and the Roman commander was attempting to flog him unjustly as a Roman citizen (22:23-29). He points out in the second scene the theological discord among the Sanhedrin to the point that they were unable to find fault with Paul (23:9-10). He points out in the third scene that Felix simply wanted to extort a bribe from Paul rather than execute justice (24:26). He points out in the fourth scene that King Herod found Paul innocent of any wrong doing, but sent him to Rome simply because of Paul's appeal (26:30-32). Thus, Luke concludes each of these four scenes by pointing out the injustices of Paul's accusers.

Finally, Paul's four speeches follow the *ordo salutis* thematic scheme of predestination, calling, justification, and glorification concerning his office of an apostle to the Gentiles. In his first speech, Paul testifies of his divine vision in which the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to him and commissioned him to preach to the Gentiles (predestination). After his second speech, the Lord manifests Himself to Paul at night and reconfirms his call to testify in Rome (divine calling). In his third speech, Paul declares his faith in the God of his Jewish heritage and his innocence of any wrong doing against Judaism (justification). In his fourth speech, Paul declares his obedience to his heavenly vision in which Jesus commissioned him as an apostle to the Gentiles (glorification/fulfillment).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 21:1-26:32 emphasizing the four phases of Paul's apostleship: predestined, called, justified, glorified:

> Exegetical Idea – Paul defended his apostleship as he determined to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Paul defended his apostleship as he determined to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has empowered those who determine to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has empowered those who determine to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God must determine to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission trusting that God will empower him amidst trials and hardships.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) The Immediate Setting: Prophecies of Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem	21:1-14
(a) Paul's Arrest and First Speech to Jewish Mob	21:15-22:29
(b) Paul's Second Speech before the Sanhedrin	22:30-23:35
(c) Paul's Third Speech before Felix the Governor	24:1-27
(d) Paul's Fourth Speech before Festus the Governor and King Herod	25:1-26:32

The Purpose of the Accounts of Paul's Trials and Testimony - G. H. C. MacGregor notes that the large portion of material devoted to Paul's arrest, imprisonment and journey to Rome fills about one fourth of the book of Acts. He suggests several reasons. (1) *Luke was an Eyewitness of these Events* – Luke was an eye witness of these dramatic events of Paul's arrest, trials and journey to Rome. The nature of such events must have created a strong impact upon his life. (2) *The Gospels are Structured with a Similar Disproportion of Jesus' Arrest, Passion and Resurrection* - By comparing this large portion of material to a similar structure in the Gospels, MacGregor suggests that Luke draws a parallel plot between the sufferings of Christ and and the story of Paul. (3) *Luke is Writing an Apology for Paul* – Many scholars believe Luke is writing an apology in defense of Paul. MacGregor supports this view based upon the four speeches of Paul's defense that are recorded in this section of Acts: Paul's speech to the Jewish mob (22:3-21), to the Sanhedrin (23:1-6), to Felix the Roman governor (24:10-21), and to Festus the Roman governor and King Herod (26:2-23). A number of scholars support the proposition that the impetus behind these events was an effort to legalize Christianity in the Roman Empire, which leads to the suggestion that Luke-Acts was prepared by Luke as a legal brief in anticipation of Paul's trial before the Roman court. MacGregor argues that this motif is woven throughout Paul's missionary journeys when Luke carefully records his encounters with Roman authorities in various cities. He notes that Luke records statements by Lysias, Festus, and Felix regarding the failure by the Jews to prove Paul's guilt under Roman Law. He adds that Luke ends the book by portraying Paul as a peaceful man entertaining guests while imprisoned in Rome, in stark contrast to the zealous violence of the Jews that Rome was accustomed to encountering.[379] We may add that Luke's opening to his Gospel and Acts serve as a petition to Theophilus.

The accounts of Paul's four trials and apologetic speeches recorded in Acts 21:1-26:32 show that Paul had exhausted the judicial systems in Palestine, both Jewish and Roman, before departing for Rome. In each of these trials, Luke proves Paul's innocence. The only court left was an appeal to the highest court in Rome. These four trials serve as a testimony that Paul had a legal right to appeal unto Caesar, and that he was beyond doubt innocent of his allegations by the Jews.

We see in these four trials a common thread revealing the heart of Paul's defensive message. His defense before the angry mob of Jews in Jerusalem was his claim to have received a divine visitation of the resurrected Jesus Christ on his journey to Damascus to persecute Christians (Acts 21:37-22:22). His defense before the Jewish Sanhedrin was his claim of the resurrection of the dead (Acts 22:30-23:11). His defense before Felix the governor was the claim that he serves the God of Israel according to the teachings of the Way, which believe in the resurrection of the dead. (Acts 24:10-21). His defense before Festus the governor and

[379]G. H. C. MacGregor and Theodore P. Ferris, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Interpreter's Bible,* vol. 9, ed. George A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954), 284-285.

King Agrippa was the hope of the promise made to Israel of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead (Acts 26:1-29). The emphasis upon the Resurrection of Christ Jesus detracts from the allegations that Christianity was a threat to the civil and criminal laws of the Roman Empire.

One more important aspect of this passage is that divine oracles are embedded within the narrative material of Acts 21:1-28:31. For example, Paul received divine oracles from the seven daughters of Philip the evangelist and the prophet Agabus (Acts 21:8-1); he testifies of his divine vision on the road to Damascus and of the prophecy of Ananias (Acts 22:6-16); Luke records Paul's angelic visitation while in prison at Caesarea (Acts 23:11); Paul testifies again of his divine vision on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:12-19); Luke records Paul's angelic visitation at sea (Acts 27:20-16).

21:1-14 **The Immediate Setting: Prophecies of Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem (A.D. 58) -** Acts 21:1-14 serves as the immediate setting for 21:1-28:29 as it describes Paul's final journey back to Palestine. The emphasis of this passage is placed upon two prophetic utterances predicting Paul's arrest and imprisonment. Certain disciples in Tyre urged Paul by the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem (21:4) and the prophet Agabus predicted Paul's arrest and imprisonment (21:11-12).

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 21:1-14 emphasizing the Paul's decision to fulfill his apostleship by taking the Gospel to Rome:

> Exegetical Idea – Paul decided to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome amidst warnings of persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Paul decided to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome amidst warnings of persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has His servants to make a determined decision to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has His servants to make a determined decision to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God must determine to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission trusting that God will empower him amidst trials and hardships.

21:1 And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

21:2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

21:3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

21:4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

21:4 ***Comments –*** Paul speaks to Paul about his immediate dangers through the gifts of utterance. The Lord is about to speak to him through the voice of Agabus the prophet (Acts 21:10-12). The Holy Spirit speaks through prophets about specific situations in our lives.

21:5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

21:6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

21:7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

21:8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

21:8 ***Comments –*** Perhaps Luke describes Philip as the evangelist in order to distinguish him from Philip, who was one of the twelve apostles.

21:9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

21:10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

21:11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

21:11 ***Comments -*** The prophecy of Paul being bound by the Jews in Jerusalem was fulfilled in Acts 21:11 was fulfilled in Acts 22:25, "And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

21:12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

21:13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

21:14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

21:15-22:29 **Paul's Arrest and First Speech to Jewish Mob (The Predestination of Paul's Apostolic Commission) (A.D. 58) -** Acts 21:15-22:29 records Paul's arrival in Jerusalem, his arrest in the Temple, and his speech before the Jewish mob on the steps of the Roman military barracks in Jerusalem. This is the first speech that Luke records of Paul's defense of the Christian faith. He will also stand before the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:35), Felix the governor (24:1-27), and Festus the governor and King Agrippa (25:11-26:32). These preliminary trials lead up to Paul's trip to Rome to appeal before Caesar (27:1-28:31).

In this section, Paul arrives in Jerusalem to meet with James and the church elders, who warn him of threats from the Jewish community because of his public ministry (21:15-26). Paul is soon seized in the Temple by a mob that turns violent, occasioning his rescue by a Roman commander (21:27-36). Paul delivers his speech to this mob on the steps of a Roman military barrack, which incites the mob to anger (21:37-22:22). In the midst of being beaten by the soldiers, Paul reveals his Roman citizenship, requiring him to be brought into a civil court (22:23-29). In this scene, Luke points out that the mob was falsely accusing Paul of bringing a Greek into the Temple (21:29), and the Roman commander was attempting to flog him unjustly as a Roman citizen (22:23-29). This speech emphasizes the predestination of Paul's apostolic commission to preach before kings and the sons of Israel. Therefore,

Paul testifies of his divine vision in which the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to him and commissioned him to preach to the Gentiles.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 21:15-22:29 emphasizing the predestination of Paul's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul declared his innocence in his first trial before the Jewish mob based upon his heavenly vision and predestined divine commission in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul declared his innocence in his first trial before the Jewish mob based upon his heavenly vision and predestined divine commission in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has predestined His servants to receive their assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has predestined His servants to receive their assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is predestined to receive a divine assignment amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Paul Meets with James and the Elders at Jerusalem	21:15-26
ii) Paul's Arrest in the Temple	21:27-36
iii) Paul's Testimony to the Mob	21:37-22:22
iv) Paul and the Roman Chief Captain	22:23-29

21:15-26 **Paul Meets with James and the Elders at Jerusalem -** In Acts 21:15-26, Paul arrives in Jerusalem and meets James and the elders. At this time, the elders warn Paul of the Jew's hostility towards him because of his effective public ministry in the provinces of the Roman Empire.

Paul's Collection for the Poor Saints in Jerusalem - Acts 21:17-25 records the meeting that Paul had with James and the elders. James is traditionally said to be the first bishop of the church at Jerusalem, which is implied in Acts 12:17; 15:13, and Galatians 2:12. It is most likely that Paul officially handed over the collection for the poor saints at this time with the church leaders serving as eye-witnesses.

Paul's Nazarite Vow in Jerusalem - In this passage of Scripture James and the elders of the church in Jerusalem persuade Paul to join in a Nazarite vow with other Jewish believers, perhaps concerned with his presence renewing Jewish persecutions against the believers living in Jerusalem. In accepting this vow, Paul must have seen the Law as holy, and not as something negative, as he says in Romans 7:12, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." In other words, he saw the vow as a holy act.

21:15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

21:15 ***Comments -*** There is a textual variant in Acts 21:15, where some ancient Greek manuscripts read ἀποσκευάζω, literally meaning, "having discharged our baggage" (*Alford*), or "to lay aside, get rid of" (*BDAG*), but it is translated as "pack up baggage" (*Strong*), "pack up and leave" (*BDAG*) because of the context of this passage. Other Greek manuscripts read ἐπισκευάζομαι, which means, "having packed up" (*Alford*) "we made preparations"

(*BDAG*), or "we took our baggage" (*Zodhiates*), and is the generally favored reading because it is supported with better manuscripts (*Alford*).[380]

The *EGT* tells us the journey from Caesarea to Jerusalem was sixty-four miles.[381]

21:16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

21:16 **"There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea" - *Comments* -** Those who were traveling with Paul understood that they may be putting themselves into mortal danger by accompanying Paul because of the prophecies that went before him (21:1-14). Matthew Henry suggests that Paul's boldness gave his companions courage to take the perilous journey with him.[382]

"and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge" - *Comments* - Mnason is mentioned nowhere else in the Scriptures. His Greek name was commonly used and it suggests he was Greek convert to Christianity.[383]

The phrase "an old disciple" (ἀρχαίῳ μαθητῇ) can mean that he was either an old man, "an aged disciple" (*YLT*), but more popularly believed to me that he was an early convert to the Christian faith, "a disciple of long standing" (*BDAG*) "an early disciple" (*ASV, Rotherham, RSV*), "one of the early disciples."

21:16 ***Comments* -** Because this journey was sixty-four miles and took several days, some scholars surmise that Paul lodged with Mnason of Cyprus along the journey before reaching Jerusalem, and that members of the church at Jerusalem would probably have made accommodations for Paul when he reached there, as the next statement implies, "And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly." (21:17) However, other scholars believe the disciples of Caesarea brought Paul "to Mnason," who was waiting to receive them in Jerusalem. These two views are based upon whether the subject of the Greek participle (ἄγοντες) is "the disciples of Caesarea" being brought to Mnason, or whether the subject is "Mnason," who being brought along with the disciples on their trip to Jerusalem.

21:17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

21:17 ***Comments* –** Henry Alford understands "the brethren" to refer to the believers in general, and not to the church leaders, who will be mentioned in the next verse.[384]

21:18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

21:18 ***Comments* –** Acts 21:18 provides the third of three mentions of James the brother of the Lord in the book of Acts (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18). James had become the leader or bishop over the church in Jerusalem.

---

[380]Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament: With A Critically Revised Text,* vol. 2, third edition (London: Rivington's, Waterloo Place, 1857), 220.

[381]W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* vol. 2 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 447.

[382]Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2161, Logos.

[383]W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* vol. 2 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 447-448.

[384]Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament: With A Critically Revised Text,* vol. 2, third edition (London: Rivington's, Waterloo Place, 1857), 221.

21:19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

21:20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

21:20 **"And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord" - *Comments* -** Paul testified of his ministry in such a way that God received all of the glory and honor.

"and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law" – *Comments* - *Eusebius* gives us an account of the fears of the Jewish leaders when a great multitude of their people believed in Jesus while James the Lord's brother was head of the church in Jerusalem. He writes, "Therefore when many even of the rulers believed, there was a commotion among the Jews and Scribes and Pharisees, who said that there was danger that the whole people would be looking for Jesus as the Christ." (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.10)

Origen believes the number of believing Jews in his day did not exceed 144,000, saying, "But the number of believers is small who belong to Israel according to the flesh; one might venture to assert that they would not nearly make up the number of a hundred and forty-four thousand." (*Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John* 1.2)

21:21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

21:22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

21:22 **"the multitude must needs come together" - *Comments* –** Henry Alford reads, "a multitude (of these Judaizers) will certainly come together."[385]

21:23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

21:24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

21:23-24 ***Comments* -** Paul was accustomed to Jewish vows. For example, in Acts 18:18 Paul made a vow and shaved his head before departing from Corinth during his second missionary journey. Scholars generally agree that the phrase "and be at charges with them" means that Paul should pay their expenses, or at least share in a portion of the expenses for the offerings that were to be brought to the priest.

We read about this Nazarite vow in Numbers 6:1-21, which included the shaving of the head and the presentation of an offering to the priest when the time of separation expires. Josephus records a similar incident when King Agrippa made an offering to the Temple and ordered many of the Nazarites to shave their heads. Thus, his offered served to pay for these Nazarites. (*Antiquities* 19.6.1)

[385]Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament: With A Critically Revised Text,* vol. 2, third edition (London: Rivington's, Waterloo Place, 1857), 222.

21:25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

21:26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

21:26 ***Comments -*** In Acts 21:26, Paul makes an offering (προσφορά) in the Temple. A number of commentators note that in a sense, Paul became a Jew that he might win the Jews, as he says in 1 Corinthians 9:22, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

21:27-36 **Paul's Arrest in the Temple -** Acts 21:27-36 records Paul's arrest in the Temple in Jerusalem. Luke points out the false allegation that the Jews bring against Paul of bringing a Greek into the Temple. Paul is rescued from an enraged mob by a Roman commander, who puts him in chains and brings him into a nearby military barracks.

Paul's Love for Israel Amidst Their Rejection of Him - It is interesting to note that Paul is believed to have written the epistle to the Romans towards the end of his third missionary journey. In this epistle, he states his great love for his fellow Jews and his intense sorrow for their rejection of the Messiah (Rom 9:1-3). He now stands face to face with these same people, who are enraged with in anger and trying to kill him.

21:27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

21:27 **"And when the seven days were almost ended" -** ***Comments -*** Perhaps the traditional period of Jewish purification was seven days. This may be implied from the law of the Nazarite vow described in Numbers 6:1-21, which commands a sacrifice to be brought to the priest on the eighth day (Num 6:10).

"the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him" - ***Comments -*** Paul had been a well-known personality in Jerusalem several decades earlier in his zeal to eradicate the early church. However, most of his Jewish colleagues would have died or retired from an active life in their religious traditions. Therefore, Paul would have seen few if any faces that he could recognize from his years in Jerusalem as a Pharisee.

Paul's reputation was now built upon his missionary work in Asia Minor and Macedonia; and his most effective work was in Ephesus and its surrounding cities in Asia Minor. The Jews of these synagogues were visiting Jerusalem regularly, and some of them recognized Paul among the crowd in the temple.

21:28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

21:29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

21:29 ***Comments -*** Trophimus the Ephesian began to travel with Paul the apostle when he was forced to depart from Ephesus after spending a number of years evangelizing Asia Minor (Acts 19:1-20:4). Paul mentions Trophimus during his second Roman imprisonment just

prior to his execution by Nero the Roman Emperor, saying, "Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." (2 Tim 4:20)

21:28-29 ***Comments – Herod's Temple -*** Josephus gives us a vivid description of Herod's Temple (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.11.1-7, *Wars* 5.5.1-8). This great Temple was designed with a large, outer courtyard where Gentiles were allowed to assemble. Within this outer courtyard was an inner courtyard slightly elevated and barricaded with a three-meter wall, with notices posted that warned Gentiles not to pass beyond this point. (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.11.5. *Wars* 5.5.2; 6.2.4)[386] Deissmann refers to the discovery of one of these ancient inscriptions that reads, "Let no foreigner enter within the screen and enclosure surrounding the sanctuary. Whosoever is taken so doing will be the cause that death overtaketh him."[387] The Jews were accusing Paul of bringing his Gentile friend Trophimus into the inner Jewish court.

21:30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

21:31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

21:31 ***Comments -*** Located at the northwest corner of the complex of Herod's Temple was the "Fortress of Antonia," (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.11.4) a garrison housing Roman procurators and a garrison of Roman soldiers.[388] This garrison's chief captain was named Lysias (Acts 24:22).

21:32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

21:32 ***Comments -*** In Africa today it is common to see a mob beating a thief to death, even burning them to death after pouring gasoline upon the poor victims. The reason such mob justice is carried out is because the police force is seldom available or even cooperative when summoned due to the high level of corruption.

21:33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

21:33 ***Comments -*** Because mob justice is common in undeveloped societies in Africa, it is natural to believe the individual being beaten is a criminal, since this is society's method of justice when a local police force is unavailable or ineffective. The chief captain naturally assumed that Paul had committed a crime.

21:34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

21:35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

---

[386]Ronald F. Youngblood, Herbert Lockyer, Sr., F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, eds., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary,* rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), s.v. "Temple: Herod's Temple," Logos.

[387]Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East,* trans. Lionel R. M. STrachan (New York: 1910), 74-75.

[388]Ronald F. Youngblood, Herbert Lockyer, Sr., F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, eds., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary,* rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995), s.v. "Temple: Herod's Temple," Logos.

21:35 ***Comments -*** *Josephus* tells us that the tower of Antonia, located at the north eastern corner of the Temple, was elevated above the courtyard of the Temple, so that there would have been an ascent into the Roman garrison (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.11.4).

21:36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

21:36 **"Away with him" - *Comments -*** This same cry was made about Jesus in Luke 23:18, "And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:"

21:37-22:22 **Paul's Testimony to the Mob -** Acts 21:37-22:22 records Paul's address to the mob in the Hebrew tongue. He took this opportunity on the steps of the military barracks to testify of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. I this speech, Paul reflects upon his conversion on the Damascus Road, an event mentioned three times in the book of Acts. Paul's divine calling on the Damascus Road and the visitation by Ananias (Acts 9:1-18) served as an anchor for his soul throughout his life. In fact, he seems to refer to this event when the occasion arises. It is during some of his most difficult trials that he stands upon his divine visitations to strengthen him and secure himself in his calling (Acts 22:1-21; 26:1-23).

Three Accounts of Paul's Conversion in the Book of Acts (Acts 9:1-19; 21:37-22:22; 29:12-18) - The account of Paul's conversion in Acts 21:37-22:22 will differ slightly from that recorded in Acts 9:1-18 to the degree that he gives it a "Jewish flavor" in order to make it more palatable to this angry mob.[389] For example, he describes his years prior to conversion by emphasizing his training as a Jew under the famous rabbi Gamaliel, his strict adherence to and zeal for the Law, his efforts to persecute the Christians (22:3-5); he then describes his vision of the Lord on the Damascus Road as a divine visitation beyond his ability to resist, and a visit by Ananias, "a devout man according to the law," who brought a message from the "God of our fathers"; he goes on to describe himself in a trance while praying in the Temple, where he makes a reference to consenting to Stephen's death.

21:37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

21:38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

21:38 ***Comments -*** *Josephus*[390] and *Eusebius*[391] make mention of this Egyptian, who stirred up an insurrection against the Roman government outside the city of Jerusalem during the days

---

[389]William Ormiston, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles by Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer,* second edition, trans. Paton J. Gloag, and William P. Dickson, ed. William Ormiston (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), 420.

[390]Josephus writes, "Moreover, there came out of Egypt about this time to Jerusalem, one that said he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the Mount of Olives, as it was called, which lay over against the city, and at the distance of five furlongs. He said farther, that he would show them from hence, how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down; and he promised that he would procure them an entrance into the city through those walls, when they were fallen down. Now when Felix was informed of these things, he ordered his soldiers to take their weapons, and came against them with a great number of horsemen and footmen, from Jerusalem, and attacked the Egyptian and the people that were with him. He also slew four hundred of them, and took two hundred alive. But the Egyptian himself escaped out of the fight, but did not appear any more." (*Antiquities* 20.8.6)

Josephus also writes, "But there was an Egyptian false prophet that did the Jews more mischief than the former; for he was a cheat, and pretended to be a prophet also, and got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him; these he led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place; and if he could but once conquer the Roman garrison and the people, he intended to domineer over them by the assistance of those guards of his that were to break into the city with him, but Felix prevented his attempt, and met him with his Roman soldiers, while all the people assisted him in his

that Felix was procurator. However, Josephus says that the Egyptian gathered thirty thousand me, rather than four thousand.

21:39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

21:39 **"I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city" -** ***Comments*** **-** Paul the apostle was a man of great zeal and achievement. He was born of Jewish parents in the city of Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia, where Greek culture predominated. In this city was a great university, which Strabo (63 B.C. to A.D. 24?), the Greek historian and geographer, was known for its enthusiasm for learning, especially in the area of philosophy. Strabo said this university surpassed those at Athens, Alexandria, and all others in its passion for learning (*Geography* 14.5.13).[392] It is from this upbringing that we see why Paul was a man of zeal and great achievement; for he was raised in an atmosphere of physical and mental achievement around the university in Tarsus.

Paul's claim to be a Roman citizen from Tarsus tells us that his family was one of wealth and standing. The fact that he was born in Tarsus, but brought up in the city of Jerusalem (Acts 22:3) implies that he did not reach university level before leaving Tarsus, but his early education took place in this environment. Thus, he was strongly influenced by its teachings, and very familiar with the Greek's deep dependence upon human reason. The city's ancient traditions and present greatness explain why Paul would make such a statement.

21:40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

21:40 **"he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying" -** ***Comments*** **-** The Jews of Palestine spoke the Aramaic language among themselves during the first century. Scholars suggest Paul was more correctly speaking Aramaic rather than Hebrew.[393] Thus, the *NIV* reads, "Aramaic." There are a number of other references to the Hebrew/Aramiac tongue in the New Testament (see Lk 23:38, John 5:2; 19:13, 17, 20, Acts 26:14, Rev 9:11).

---

attack upon them, insomuch that, when it came to a battle, the Egyptian ran away, with a few others, while the greatest part of those that were with him were either destroyed or taken alive; but the rest of the multitude were dispersed every one to their own homes and there concealed themselves." (*Wars* 2.13.5)

[391]Eusebius writes, "After other matters he proceeds as follows: 'But the Jews were afflicted with a greater plague than these by the Egyptian false prophet. For there appeared in the land an impostor who aroused faith in himself as a prophet, and collected about thirty thousand of those whom he had deceived, and led them from the desert to the so-called Mount of Olives whence he was prepared to enter Jerusalem by force and to overpower the Roman garrison and seize the government of the people, using those who made the attack with him as bodyguards. But Felix anticipated his attack, and went out to meet him with the Roman legionaries, and all the people joined in the defense, so that when the battle was fought the Egyptian fled with a few followers, but the most of them were destroyed or taken captive.' Josephus relates these events in the second book of his History. But it is worthwhile comparing the account of the Egyptian given here with that contained in the Acts of the Apostles. In the time of Felix it was said to Paul by the centurion in Jerusalem, when the multitude of the Jews raised a disturbance against the apostle, 'Art not thou he Who before these days made an uproar, and led out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?' These are the events which took place in the time of Felix." (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.21.1-3)

[392]Strabo writes, "The inhabitants of this city apply to the study of philosophy and to the whole encyclical compass of learning with so much ardour, that they surpass Athens, Alexandreia, and every other place which can be named where there are schools and lectures of philosophers." See H. C. Hamilton and W. Falconer, trans., *The Geography of Strabo,* vol. 3, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1889), 57.

[393]G. H. C. MacGregor and Theodore P. Ferris, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Interpreter's Bible,* vol. 9, ed. George A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954), 288.

21:40 ***Comments –*** Each of Paul's opening speeches reveals a man unashamed and confident of his innocence. In Acts 21:40 he turns to address the Jewish mob rather than accept deliverance from the Roman soldiers, as would be typical for someone who had committed a crime and wanted to escape punishment. In Acts 23:1 he looks intently upon the Sanhedrin and speaks boldly rather than hanging his head down in shame and guilt. In Acts 24:10 he addresses Felix the governor with cheer. In Acts 25:11 Paul boldly declares to Festus that if any wrong can be found in him, he is ready to die. In Acts 26:1-2 he stretches forth his hand as an orator and speaks unto King Agrippa.

22:1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

22:1 **"Men, brethren, and fathers" -** ***Comments –*** Peter opens his first speech in Acts 1:16 saying, "men and brethren." He opens his speech in Acts 2:14 by addressing those present, "the men of Judaea, and all those dwelling at Jerusalem." Peter opens his speech at Solomon's porch by saying, "men of Israel" (Acts 3:12). He addresses the Sanhedrin by saying, "rulers of the people and elders of Israel" (Acts 4:8). Stephen opens his speech in Acts 7:2 by saying, "brethren and fathers." Peter and James address the elders at the first council in Jerusalem by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 15:7, 13). Paul the apostle also begins his speeches in the same manner. He addresses the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 13:15). He spoke to the Athenians by saying, "men of Athens" (Acts 17:22). He spoke to the angry mob by saying, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." (Acts 22:1) Paul addressed the Sanhedrin by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 23:1).

In Acts 22:1 Paul recognized three groups of men in his audience in his opening statement in Acts 22:1. There were men present who were Gentiles, Roman soldiers, centurions and a chief captain (21:31-32; 22:26); there were Jews present that he called brethren; and there were Jewish elders, or fathers present to hear his speech. He refers to some of these fathers when mentioning the rabbi Gamaliel (22:3), and the high priest and elders (22:5). He greeted them in order of increasing rank in the Jewish mind, beginning with Gentiles and ending with the Jewish fathers. In the same way, it is proper protocol today in Uganda, East Africa, to begin a speech by recognizing all of the special guests, but it begins by giving honor to the most important members of society first, and decreasing in rank.

"hear ye my defence which I make now unto you" – ***Grammatical-Syntactical Study –*** The Greek word ἀπολογία means, "a plea, an answer (for self), clearing of self, defence" (*Strong*) or "a verbal defense" (*Mounce*).

Comments – Within the context of the book of Acts, Paul's apology serves as a legal testimony in defense of the preaching of the Gospel in the Roman Empire. If Luke's account of Luke-Acts serves as a legal brief for Paul's impending trial during his first Roman imprisonment, then the emphasis upon Acts 21-28 is to vindicate Paul's ministry and message.

22:2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

22:2 ***Comments -*** The Hebrew tongue was not normally spoken by the Jews of the Diaspora, but by devout, educated Jews only. We see this in Acts 2:5-12 on the day of Pentecost when the apostles spoke in the languages of the visiting Jews. The Jews heard the apostles and replied, "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" (Acts 2:8) The Palestinian Jews spoke Aramaic. Therefore, Paul's speech in the Hebrew tongue

immediately seized their attention. However, many scholars suggest Paul was more correctly speaking Aramaic rather than Hebrew.[394] Thus, the *NIV* reads, "Aramaic."

22:3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

22:3 **"yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel" - *Comments* -** The concept of "sitting at one's feet" reflects the infant sitting before its mother or father in total dependence, looking to them for food and protection. This image is transferred to the teacher-student relationship in which the child sits before the teacher with the same respect given to his/her parents. G. V. Lechler and K. Gerok tell us that Philo and the Talmud describe the Jewish tradition of rabbis setting in a teaching chair, while his pupils sat on benches or on the floor.[395]

The phrase "sitting at one's feet" is found in other passages of the Scriptures. For example, when Moses blessed the children of Israel, he describes them as sitting down at the feet of the Lord, saying, "Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words." (Deut 33:3) In addition, Mary sat at the feet of Jesus in Luke 10:39, "And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word."

The apostle Paul never forgot the blessings of sitting at the feet of a great Bible scholar. The impact of Gamaliel carried a lifetime influence in Paul's service to the Lord. I sat at the feet of Dr. Jack MacGorman as my New Testament professor of Greek. I remember his influence in my life and thousands of others Bible students almost every day

22:3 **"and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers" - *Comments* -** Lechler and Gerok say the Greek word "perfect manner" ἀκρίβεια more specifically refers to the pharisaical tendencies of the Law, rather than to the Law itself.[396]

22:3 **"and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day" – *Comments* -** Paul identifies with his audience by saying that he was as zealous for God and the Jewish religion as they are today, even to the extent of killing others, which this mob attempted to do to Paul.[397]

22:3 ***Comments* -** Living oversea and meeting new people, it is common for us to ask someone where they are from in an effort to identify one another. Paul's reference to one of the most prestigious cities of the Roman Empire, and the famous rabbi named Gamaliel would have captured any Jew's attention, identifying him as an educated and devout Jew. Paul's years of experience and tribulation on the mission field in confronting Jewish opposition gave him the immediate skills to deal with his situation. Often our difficult experiences of confronting adversity in the business place, in any area of life, serves to prepare us for these times when we need to retain our composure and speak clearly in the midst of opposition. Thus, Paul's

---

[394]G. H. C. MacGregor and Theodore P. Ferris, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Interpreter's Bible,* vol. 9, ed. George A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954), 288.

[395]G. V. Lechler and K. Gerok, *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, Specially Designed and Adapted for the Use of Ministers and Students,* vol. 2, trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. John P. Lange, in *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, third series, vol. 25 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1864), 314.

[396]G. V. Lechler and K. Gerok, *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, Specially Designed and Adapted for the Use of Ministers and Students,* vol. 2, trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. John P. Lange, in *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, third series, vol. 25 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1864), 314-315.

[397]G. V. Lechler and K. Gerok, *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, Specially Designed and Adapted for the Use of Ministers and Students,* vol. 2, trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. John P. Lange, in *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, third series, vol. 25 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1864), 315.

years of confrontation with Jews in foreign synagogues had seasoned him to stand strong and courageous in the midst of adversity.

22:4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

22:4 ***Comments –*** Paul adds to this description of persecuting the church in Acts 26:9-10, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them."

What crimes within the Mosaic Law was he able to use to condemn these early believers? Most likely, the Sanhedrin accused these early believers of the same crimes for which they arrested the apostles Peter and John (Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-42). Soon afterwards, Stephen the martyr was arrested and tried before false witnesses, being accused of blasphemy against the Temple and the Law (Acts 6:8-15). Once Herod the king killed the apostle James and arrested Peter, the Sanhedrin felt empowered to continue the arrest of these early believers far beyond Jerusalem. Although the arrest and punishment of these believers was unjustified, the Sanhedrin was able to practice such persecutions under the endorsement of Herod the king.

22:5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

22:5 ***Comments –*** The Sanhedrin, which consisted of the high priest and Jewish elders, were allowed to persecute the church unhindered under the sanction of King Herod.

22:1-5 ***Comments - Paul's Opening Defense -*** Paul begins his defense in Acts 22:1-5 by recognizing those in the audience of various ranks in his society in order to show respect (22:1), then he immediately associates himself with this Jewish mob by speaking in the Hebrew tongue (22:2), and explaining that he was a Jew by birth (22:3), a Pharisee by training (22:3), and a persecutor of the church in his zeal for Jewish traditions (2:4). This was Paul's way of identifying with his audience. He supports this testimony by referencing the Jewish high priest and the elders that held office with him (22:5). Paul will follow this with his personal testimony of a divine visitation from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Comments - Paul Describes His Zeal as a Jew - John Chrysostom says the reason Paul describes his excessive zeal as a Jew to persecute the Church in the opening of his testimony is that it helped the crowd understand that his conversion to Christianity was not his "human intent," but "by a Divine power." Chrysostom explains that if Paul was an ordinary, uneducated man, such a conversion would have been understandable; but it would have been unheard of for a man of bound to the Law to make such a quick conversion. He believes the phrase "at the feet of Gamaliel" further emphasizes Paul's zeal and fortitude to commit himself to the teachings of such a great rabbi. The phrase "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers" means that Paul completed his Jewish education to its fullness, achieving the highest degree of academics. The phrase "and was zealous toward God" means that Paul made the Law his career. In other words, he did not just get the best Jewish education; he went on to join the league of zealous, religious Jews, practicing the Law daily. The phrase "as ye all are this day" is Paul's attempt to identify himself as closely to his audience as possible before giving his personal testimony. Paul's reference to the high priest and Jewish elders as his witness leaves his audience with little recourse but to believe his words. Thus, Acts 22:3-5 introduces this man Paul to the audience as a devout Jew that would do anything for God, a man so radical that he would persecute fellow Jews who

joined the ranks of those believing in Christ. Therefore, Paul's description of his conversion in the following verses explains to the Jews that Paul was indeed following his zeal for God by his conversion to faith in Christ Jesus. Chrysostom explains that Paul's testimony of himself prior to his conversion was supported by eye-witnesses, perhaps in the crowd, so that the testimony of his conversion would carry an almost equal weight.[398]

God gives every believer a testimony, which we are to take with us during the course of our life's ministry.

22:6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

22:6 ***Comments -*** Paul mentioned the fact that his vision took place at noon day, perhaps to explain that this was not a night vision or a trance. It was an actual event that took place during the day, as Paul will later say was seen as well by his traveling companions (22:9).

22:7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

22:8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

22:8 ***Comments -*** Lechler and Gerok suggest that the phrase "Jesus of Nazareth," which is not used elsewhere in the parallel passages of Paul's testimony (Acts 9:5, 26:15), is placed in Acts 22:8 as a way of identifying Jesus to those Jews yet unfamiliar with him.[399] In other words, it may be used to identify Jesus as a Jew from Palestine.

22:9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

22:9 ***Comments -*** The story of Paul's conversion first recorded in Acts 9:1-9 says that those who were with him heard a voice, although they saw no man (Acts 9:7). Chrysostom reconciles this by saying Paul's companions heard Paul speaking, but not the voice of the Lord. He notes that had these other people heard and been converted, their testimony would not be as powerful as one coming from a devout Jew, who indeed saw the light but heard nothing, for a Jew would have no reason to lie and defend Paul's testimony, while another Christian would have every cause to favor Paul.[400]

22:10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

22:11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

---

[398]John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices, Part I Homilies XXIX-LV*, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852), 626-627.

[399]G. V. Lechler and K. Gerok, *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, Specially Designed and Adapted for the Use of Ministers and Students,* vol. 2, trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. John P. Lange, in *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, third series, vol. 25 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1864), 315.

[400]John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices, Part I Homilies XXIX-LV*, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852), 628.

22:11 ***Comments -*** Paul wanted the Jews to realize that from the time this vision took place, Paul no longer conducted his life by his own decisions, but by the lasting impact this divine encounter had on his life.[401]

22:12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

22:12 ***Comments -*** Paul described Ananias as a man who showed great reverence for the Mosaic Law and of Jewish traditions. This was part of Paul's attempt to present a favorable testimony to these irate Jews.

22:13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

22:13 ***Grammatical-Syntactical Study –*** The Greek word ἀναβλέπω literally means, "to look up," but carries the meaning, "to regain sight" (*BDAG*).

22:14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

22:14 **"And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee" –** ***Comments -*** Christianity has its origin in the Jewish faith in God, which faith we are to take to the nations of the world.

22:14 **"and see that Just One" -** ***Comments -*** Chrysostom notes that if Jesus is called "the Just One," then all of the Jews stand condemned as unjust outside of the Messiah.[402]

22:14 ***Comments –*** Paul experienced a number of heavenly encounters with the Lord Jesus Christ, beginning on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:1-9) and during the course of his public ministry (2 Cor 12:1-9). Paul's statement in Acts 22:14 reveals how he became aware of his calling as an apostle to the Gentiles through these divine encounters, often being able to talk to the Lord and receive instructions and understanding from Him.

Lechler and Gerok understand the phrases "God of our fathers" and the "Just One" to be "purely Old Testament names."[403] Paul was persuading his Jewish audience to accept the fact that this vision along the Damascus Road was a divine encounter of the same God of Israel that they themselves have been serving since the time of the patriarchs.

22:15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

22:15 ***Comments -*** In Acts 22:15 Paul was told to bear witness to all men of his conversion experience. Thus, Paul testifies to the Jews in their rage to kill him. Paul had learned to make opportunities in the midst of catastrophes.

22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

---

[401]G. V. Lechler and K. Gerok, *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, Specially Designed and Adapted for the Use of Ministers and Students,* vol. 2, trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. John P. Lange, in *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, third series, vol. 25 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1864), 316.

[402]John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices, Part I Homilies XXIX-LV*, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852), 629.

[403]G. V. Lechler and K. Gerok, *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, Specially Designed and Adapted for the Use of Ministers and Students,* vol. 2, trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. John P. Lange, in *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, third series, vol. 25 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1864), 316.

22:16 ***Comments -*** Paul wants his Jewish audience to understand that this vision required him to make an immediate decision about his faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Chrysostom notes that it would have been unlawful for a Jew to call upon anyone but the God of Israel, so calling Jesus "Lord" declares Him to also be God.[404]

22:17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

22:17 **"And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem" -** ***Comments –*** Paul writes to the Galatians concerning this trip to Jerusalem, saying, "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days." (Gal 1:18) According to Galatians 1:18, there was at least a three-year interlude before Paul returned to Jerusalem after his conversion.

"**even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance**" – ***Comments -*** Paul's trance in Jerusalem is mentioned nowhere else in the Scriptures, except for a possible reference to his divine revelation in 2 Corinthians 12:2-3. He is telling the Jewish mob about this experience on the Damascus Road in order to place emphasis upon the fact that the God of Israel was supernaturally intervening in his life during the course of his conversion to Christianity. In other words, these supernatural events were imposed upon his life despite his zeal for Judaism, and they compelled him to embark upon this divine commission to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We can see the importance of such emphasis in Acts 23:9, where the Pharisees said, "We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God."

22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

22:19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

22:20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

22:20 ***Comments –*** The Greek word μάρτυς literally means, "a witness" (*Strong, BDAG*). For example, it is used in Acts 1:8, "ye shall be witnesses unto me . . ." This word was used by the early Church to also mean, "a martyr."

For each of us as children of God, there stand particular events that mark the lowest period in our lives. For Paul, the stoning of Stephen had to be an event that lived in his mind forever as the time in which he was so distance from God. He would often recall the face of this martyr with the glory of God shining forth as a testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In his book *The Call,* Rick Joyner is told in a vision by Paul the apostle that the memory of the light that was on Stephen's face during his stoning carried Paul through many trials. Paul felt that Stephen has somehow died for him, so that he could see the true light.[405]

22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

---

[404]John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices, Part I Homilies XXIX-LV*, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852), 629-630.

[405]Rick Joyner, *The Call* (Charlotte, North Carolina: Morning Star Publications, 1999), 213-4.

22:22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

22:22 ***Comments –*** A number of scholars, such as Thomas Scott, note that Paul's mention of the Gentiles serves as the cause for this burst of outrage, cutting off Paul's message.[406] Their anger was rekindled when Paul began to discuss the Gentiles, anticipating that he was about to defend himself for teaching against the Mosaic Law. Paul's efforts to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles had agitated the Jews, leading to his arrest and imprisonment. The Jews thought that Paul was propagating a distorted Jewish doctrine regarding Jesus of Nazareth, and that he was teaching the Jews to forsake the Law of Moses (Acts 21:21). They viewed him as a heretic and worthy of death.

22:23-29 **Paul and the Roman Chief Captain -** Acts 22:23-29 records the account of Paul defending his right to a fair trial as a Roman citizen before the Roman chief captain, who was preparing to flog him. This is the first statement that would eventually lead Paul to the high court in Rome as he appealed unto Caesar, the highest authority in the Roman judicial system. Thus, Luke concludes this scene of Paul's first trial by pointing out that the Roman commander was attempting to flog him unjustly as a Roman citizen (22:23-29).

22:23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,

22:23 ***Comments –*** There are two evenly divided views as to the meaning of the phrase "and cast off their clothes." This debate centers upon whether the Greek participle ῥιπτούντων is derived from the words ῥιπτέω or ῥιπίζω. If this word is derived from ῥιπτέω, it means, "to toss up, to cast off" (*Strong*) or "to throw off (clothing)" (*BDAG*).

This view supports the idea of throwing off garments (ῥιπτέω or ῥιπτω), as we see in modern English versions: "threw off their garments" (*ASV*), "casting off their clothes" (*KJV*), "throwing off their cloaks" (*NIV*).

However, *Mouce* says ῥιπτούντων is derived from ῥιπίζω so that the word means, "to fan, blow, ventilate; to toss, agitate, e.g. the ocean by the wind." This view supports the idea of tossing about, or tearing, their garments in rage (ῥιπίζω) in order to stone Paul, since he was in custody of the Roman soldiers. We see this translation in modern English versions: "shaking their garments, as shaking off the dust, abominating such an expression and him who uttered it" (*Alford*), "tossing about their garments" (*EGT*),[407] "tearing their garments" (*LITV*), "tearing their mantles" (*Rotherham*), "waving their garments" (*RSV*).

22:24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

22:24 ***Comments -*** Some commentators suggest that the Roman commander did not understand Paul's Hebrew speech.[408] The commander decided to take an action that would reveal to them the reason for this hostility.

---

[406]Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible; Containing the Old and New Testaments, According to the Authorized Version: with Explanatory Notes, Practical Observations, and Copious Marginal References,* vol. 5 (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1866), notes on Acts 22:22-30.

[407]W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* vol. 2 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 461.

[408]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* second edition, trans. Paton J. Gloag, and William P. Dickson, ed. William Ormiston (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), 420.

22:25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

22:25 **"And as they bound him with thongs" – *Comments* -** The Greek word προτείνω means, "to stretch, to protend, to tie prostrate (for scourging)" (*Strong*), or "to stretch out, to spread out a criminal who is to be flogged" (*BDAG*), or "to extend before, to stretch out" (*Mouce*).

The idea in Acts 22:25 is that the Roman soldiers were stretching Paul out with ropes to a pillar or a post in order to scourge him. Paul's bondage with thongs was prophesied in Acts 21:11, "And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

22:25 **"Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned" – *Comments* -** It is possible that the death penalty was invoked upon anyone who falsely claimed Roman citizenship. Suetonius tells us of a decree by the Roman emperor Claudius (A.D. 41-54) that made such a statement, "He forbade men of foreign birth to use the Roman names so far as those of the clans were concerned. Those who usurped the privileges of Roman citizenship he executed in the Esquiline field." (*The Lives of the Twelve Caesars,* bk 5 "The Deified Claudius," 25)[409]

22:26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

22:27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

22:27 ***Comments* -** Paul was very likely dressed in traditional Jewish clothing, which would have been different than that of the Romans.

22:28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

22:28 **"And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom" – *Comments* -** The Roman historian Cassius (155-229 A.D.) tells us that Roman citizenship could be purchased, at first for a high price, then later for a cheap sum of money (*Roman History* 60.17.4-5).[410]

22:28 **"And Paul said, But I was free born" - *Comments* -** One commentator says that Paul was a Roman citizen probably because Tarsus was a Roman colony, and all those born in such a city were Roman citizens by birth. However, the Roman commander of the garrison did not

[409]J. C. Rolfe, *Suetonius*, vol. 2, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, W. H. D. Rouse, L. A. Post, and E. H. Warmington (London: William Heinemann, 1959), 51.

[410]Cassius Dio writes, "A great many other persons unworthy of citizenship were also deprived of it, whereas lie granted citizenship to others quite indiscriminately, sometimes to individuals and sometimes to whole groups. For inasmuch as Romans had the advantage over foreigners in practically all respects, many sought the franchise by personal application to the emperor, and many bought it from Messalina and the imperial freedmen. For this reason, though the privilege was at first sold only for large sums, it later became so cheapened by the facility with which it could be obtained that it came to be a common saying, that a man could become a citizen by giving the right person some bits of broken glass." (*Roman History* 60.17.4-5) See Earnest Cary, trans., *Dio's Roman History,* vol. 7, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, W. H. D. Rouse, L. A. Post, and E. H. Warmington (London: William Heinemann, 1955), 411.

associate Tarsus with Roman citizenship for Paul, so this must not have been given to all citizens of Tarsus.[411]

22:29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

22:30-23:35 **Paul's Second Speech before the Sanhedrin (The Divine Calling of Paul's Apostolic Commission) (A.D. 58) -** Acts 22:30-23:35 records Paul's second trial as he stands before the Jewish Sanhedrin. This is the second speech in Paul's legal defense of the Christian faith. Paul has spoken before the Jewish mob at the Temple (21:15-22:29); he now stands before the Sanhedrin and addressed the Jewish leaders (22:30-23:35); he will stand before Felix the governor (24:1-27); and he will stand before Festus the subsequent governor and King Agrippa (25:1-26:32). These preliminary trials lead up to Paul's appeal to Caesar.

In this scene, the Roman commander assembles the Sanhedrin. Paul's speech creates an uproar among the Sanhedrin, resulting in the dismissal of this trial (22:30-23:11). While Paul is held in the barracks, his nephew overhears the Jews plotting against his life (23:12-22). As a result, the commander organizes a detachment of soldiers to take Paul to Caesarea to be handed over to Felix the governor (23:23-35). Luke points out in the second scene the theological discord among the Sanhedrin to the point that they were unable to find fault with Paul (23:9-10). This speech emphasizes the divine calling of Paul's apostolic commission to preach before kings and the sons of Israel. Therefore, the Lord manifests Himself to Paul at night and reconfirms his call to testify in Rome.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 22:30-23:35 emphasizing the calling of Paul's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Jesus reaffirmed His divine calling to Paul after his second trial amidst hostilities in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Jesus reaffirmed His divine calling to Paul after his second trial amidst hostilities in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has called His servants to fulfill their assignments amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has called His servants to fulfill their assignments amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is called to fulfill their assignments amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Paul before the Sanhedrin	22:30-23:11
ii) The Jews Plot against Paul's Life	23:12-22
iii) Paul is Sent to Felix the Governor	23:23-35

22:30-23:11 **Paul before the Sanhedrin -** Acts 22:30-23:11 records Paul's testimony before the Sanhedrin. The immediate setting for Paul's second speech is recording in 22:30 as the Roman commander assembles the Sanhedrin. Paul's speech creates an uproar among the two major sects of the Sanhedrin, resulting in the dismissal of this trial by the Roman commander (23:1-10).

[411]Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible; Containing the Old and New Testaments, According to the Authorized Version: with Explanatory Notes, Practical Observations, and Copious Marginal References,* vol. 5 (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1866), notes on Acts 22:22-30.

22:30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

23:1 **"And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren" - *Comments* –** Peter opens his first speech in Acts 1:16 saying, "men and brethren." He opens his speech in Acts 2:14 by addressing those present, "the men of Judaea, and all those dwelling at Jerusalem." Peter opens his speech at Solomon's porch by saying, "men of Israel" (Acts 3:12). He addresses the Sanhedrin by saying, "rulers of the people and elders of Israel" (Acts 4:8). Stephen opens his speech in Acts 7:2 by saying, "brethren and fathers." Peter and James address the elders at the first council in Jerusalem by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 15:7, 13). Paul the apostle also begins his speeches in the same manner. He addresses the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 13:15). He spoke to the Athenians by saying, "men of Athens" (Acts 17:22). He spoke to the angry mob by saying, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you." (Acts 22:1) Paul addressed the Sanhedrin by saying, "men and brethren" (Acts 23:1).

Each of Paul's opening speeches reveals a man unashamed and confident of his innocence. In Acts 21:40 he turns to address the Jewish mob rather than accept deliverance from the Roman soldiers, as would be typical for someone who had committed a crime and wanted to escape punishment. In Acts 23:1 he looks intently upon the Sanhedrin and speaks boldly rather than hanging his head down in shame and guilt. In Acts 24:10 he addresses Felix the governor with cheer. In Acts 25:11 Paul boldly declares to Festus that if any wrong can be found in him, he is ready to die. In Acts 26:1-2 he stretches forth his hand as an orator and speaks unto King Agrippa.

"I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" - *Comments* – Paul tells the Sanhedrin that he has lived with a good conscience before God. The voice of the heart or spirit is the conscience. Thus, Paul reveals in Acts 23:1 that he learned how to follow his conscience rather than the voice of his mind, which is human reason, or the voice of his physical body, which are our senses, or our feelings. Paul makes a similar statement in Acts 24:16, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men"; 2 Timothy 1:3, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day." Paul had exercised himself, or trained himself, to follow his conscience, which is the same as being led by the Spirit. For the Holy Spirit speaks to us and guides us through our spirits.

23:2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

23:3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

23:3 ***Comments* -** Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees by the phrase "whited sepulchers" (Matt 23:27). Perhaps Paul had heard this Gospel story from the disciples who were with Jesus.

23:4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

23:5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

23:5 ***Comments –*** In Acts 23:5 Paul quotes from Exodus 22:28, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people." Other New Testament passages make an indirect reference to this Old Testament passage: 2 Peter 2:10-11, "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord"; Jude 1:8, "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities."

23:6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

23:6 **"But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council" -** ***Comments -*** It appears from Paul's opening statement in Acts 23:1 that he had prepared a strong defense and was ready to deliver it unto the Sanhedrin. However, a slap in the face can be intimidating and cause one to lose his focus, concentration, and composure. However, in Acts 23:6 the Spirit of God intervenes and gives Paul a new strategy. This is a perfect example of what Jesus told the apostles in Matthew 10:18-20, "And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

23:6 **"Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" –** ***Comments -*** In his trials, Paul focuses upon the theme of the resurrection of the saints before the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:6) and before King Agrippa (Acts 26:3, 23). Before King Agrippa, he says, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8). He also says, "That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." (Acts 26:23)

23:7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

23:9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

23:9 ***Comments –*** The Pharisees took seriously the testimony of a fellow Jew who had received a vision or divine oracle. When reflecting back on Paul's first defense in Acts 22:1-21, we see that he relied heavily upon the visionary aspects of his conversion, which was more likely to appeal to the Pharisees

23:10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

23:19 ***Comments –*** At this point in the plot of Luke's narrative, it becomes apparent that the Roman commander is obligated to protect Paul as a Roman citizen.

23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

23:11 ***Comments –*** Jesus appears to Paul and tells him to be of good cheer. He told the paralytic lying on the bed to be of good cheer (Matt 9:2). He told the woman with the issue of blood to be of good cheer (Matt 9:22). Jesus walked on the waters of the storm at sea to meet His disciples in the boat tossed about and told them to be of good cheer (Matt 14:27, Mark 6:50). He told blind Bartimaeus to be of good cheer (Mark 10:49). At His final meeting with His disciples, He told them that they would have to endure tribulation in this world, but to be of good cheer because He has overcome the world, and they would do so as well (John 16:33). All of these people were facing a crisis in the lives, as was the apostle Paul. Yet, God tells us to be of good cheer in the midst of our crisis because He is there to take us through to victory.

The Lord Jesus Christ then tells Paul that he would be ablel to preach the Gospel in Rome. The Lord's statement to Paul reconfirmed the commission of Jesus to the apostles in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The vision of Jesus Christ appearing and speaking to him served to anchor his soul in difficult times. God often speaks to His children in such times. Paul knew that his mission and vision would not be halted by his present circumstances. He was able to look far beyond his obstacles and believe God's Word to press towards his vision and goal, which was to take the Gospel to the Imperial Palace of Rome.

23:12-22 **The Jews Plot against Paul's Life -** Acts 23:12-22 records the Jews' plot against Paul's life, in which Paul's nephew reports this plot it to the commander.

23:12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

23:13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

23:14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

23:15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

23:16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

23:17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

23:18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

23:19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me?

23:20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

23:21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

23:22 So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

23:22 ***Comments –*** The chief captain charged Paul's nephew to keep silence about this plan to bring Paul out of Jerusalem and to Caesarea, the headquarters of Rome's presence in Palestine where the Roman governor sat. This captain knew how volatile Jewish mobs could behave, endangering Roman soldiers and making it difficult to manage the Palestinian region. He did not want his life endangered by Jewish zealots as well by having someone disclose him as the one who brought Paul out of the hands of the Jews.

23:23-35 **Paul is Sent to Felix the Governor -** Acts 23:23-35 records Paul being sent to Felix the governor. In his letter to Felix, the Roman commander acknowledges that he has found Paul innocent and the Jews behaving in an uncivil manner. Thus, Luke concludes each of these four scenes by pointing out the injustices of Paul's accusers.

23:23 And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

23:23 ***Comments –*** Four hundred and seventy men seems to be more than enough men to safely escort Paul to Caesarea. However, this Roman captain understood how difficult the Jews were to manage when incited by religious issues. Therefore, he had the authority to make such a large scale escort, and he would not take any chance of having a Jewish mob threaten his men, or Paul, whom he knew was a Roman citizen.

23:24 And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.

23:24 **"And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on" -** ***Comments -*** Paul was given this grand escort because it was now known that he was a Roman citizen.

"and bring him safe unto Felix the governor" – ***Comments -*** *Josephus* records the appointment of Felix as procurator of Galilee, and Samaria, and Peraea by Emperor Claudius (*Antiquities* 20.7.1, *Wars* 2.12.8).

23:25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:

23:26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting.

23:26 ***Comments -*** Claudius Lysias is mentioned a number of times in the previous passage as the chief captain (Acts 21:33, 37; 22:26-28). The *EGT* suggests that his Greek name was Lysias and his Roman name Claudius, which may have been inferred upon him when he purchased his Roman citizenship (Acts 22:28).[412]

23:27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

[412]W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* vol. 2 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 463.

23:28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

23:29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

23:30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.

23:31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.

23:31 ***Comments -*** The city of Antipatris is mentioned only one time in Scripture (Acts 23:31). This city is also mentioned by *Josephus* on seven occasions (*Antiquities* 13.15.1; 16.5.2, *Wars* 1.4.7; 1.21.9, 2.19.1, 9; 4.8.1). *Easton* says this city lay along "the great Roman road from Caesarea to Jerusalem." *Smith* says its ancient name was Capharsaba, but it was rebuilt by Herod, who changed it to Antipatris, in honor of his father, Antipater. *Easton* says the proposed ruins of ancient Antipatris are identified today with the modern, Ras-el-Ain, where the springs of Aujeh, which are largest springs in Palestine, rise out of these foothills. Thus, it would have served as a refreshing stop along such a journey.[413]

23:32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

23:33 Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

23:33 ***Comments -*** The city of Caesarea was the capital of this part of the Roman Empire, just as Jerusalem was the capital of the Jewish nation.

23:34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

23:35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

23:35 **"And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall" –** ***Comments -*** The Greek word πραιτώριον is translated "judgment hall" in the *KJV* in Acts 23:35. The word πραιτώριον is of Latin origin, and according to Lightfoot it properly means, "the general's tent," or "the head-quarters in a camp."[414] *BDAG* says it originally referred to "the praetor's tent in camp, with its surroundings," but that this word was later used to refer to the residence of Roman governor, who presided over a province. The *ISBE* says that the Romans customarily seized the existing palaces of local kings or princes and made it into their official "praetorium." According to *BDAG*, the πραιτώριον mentioned in the Gospels where Jesus was tried refers either to Herod's palace located in the western part of the city of Jerusalem, or "to the fortress Antonia" located "northwest of the temple area." (see Matt 27:27, Mk 15:16, John 18:28a,b, 33; 19:9) In Acts 23:35 Paul's trial would have taken place in Herod's palace in Caesarea, which was used as the residence of the Roman governor. Thus, these palaces were used to hear disputes by the governor and pass judgment. Regarding the use of this word in Philippians 1:13, since Paul's imprisonment is generally believed to be in Rome, Lightfoot supports the popular view that the word πραιτώριον refers more specifically to "the imperial guard," rather than to a building. Lightfoot believes that

[413]Matthew George Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1893), s.v. "Anripatris."

[414]J. B. Lightfoot, *Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (London: MacMillan and Co., c1868, 1903), 99.

"in Rome itself a 'praetorium' would not have been tolerated." He thus translates this word as "the imperial guards."[415]

24:1-27 **Paul's Third Speech before Felix the Governor (The Justification of Paul's Apostolic Commission) (A.D. 58-60) -** Acts 24:1-27 records Paul's speech before Felix the governor as he defends himself against the charge of sedition. This is the third speech that Luke records of Paul's defense of the Christian faith. Paul has spoken before the Jewish mob at the Temple (21:15-22:29); he has been taken before the Sanhedrin and addressed the Jewish leaders (22:30-23:35); he now stands before Felix the governor (24:1-27), and he will stand before Festus the subsequent governor and King Agrippa (25:1-26:32). These preliminary trials lead up to Paul's appeal to Caesar. Many scholars suggest Luke compiles this sequence of trials in order to reveal Paul's innocence as a legal defense that could have been used during Paul's actual trial.

In this scene, the Jews employ a lawyer named Tertullus to present their accusations against Paul (24:1-9). The governor then gives Paul the opportunity to defend himself (24:10-21). Luke points out in the third scene that Felix simply wanted to extort a bribe from Paul rather than execute justice (24:22-27). He points out in the third scene that Felix simply wanted to extort a bribe from Paul rather than execute justice (24:26). This speech emphasizes the justification of Paul's apostolic commission to preach before kings and the sons of Israel. Therefore, Paul declares his faith in the God of his Jewish heritage and his innocence of any wrong doing against Judaism.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 24:1-27 emphasizing the justification of Paul's commission unto Rome:

> Exegetical Idea – Paul declared his innocence in his third trial before Felix based upon his faith in the Jewish Scriptures and the resurrection from the dead in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Paul declared his innocence in his third trial before Felix based upon his faith in the Jewish Scriptures and the resurrection from the dead in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has justified His servants who obey Him through their faith in the resurrection of Jesus in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has justified His servants who obey Him through their faith in the resurrection of Jesus in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God should endeavor to obey Him through his faith in the resurrection of Jesus in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Tertullus Accuses Paul before Felix	24:1-9
ii) Paul's Defense before Felix	24:10-21
iii) Felix Requests a Bribe	24:22-27

24:1-9 **Tertullus Accuses Paul before Felix –** In Acts 24:1-9, the Jews employ a lawyer named Tertullus to present their charges against Paul before Felix the governor.

24:1 And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

[415]J. B. Lightfoot, *Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (London: MacMillan and Co., c1868, 1903), 101-102.

24:1 ***Comments –*** Although Tertullus is a Roman name, and this orator appears to be hired by the Jewish leaders to argue in behalf of Sanhedrin, he was not necessarily a Roman or Greek. C. M. Kerr says there were many Jews that bore Latin names during this period of Jewish history, and he was very likely trained in the East.[416]

24:2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,

24:3 We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

24:4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

24:5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

24:6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.

24:7 But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,

24:8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

24:9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

24:10-21 **Paul's Defense before Felix –** In Acts 24:10-21, Paul defends himself before Felix the governor. In his speech, Paul reveals that his primary adversaries are certain Jews from the province of Asia.

24:10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

24:10 ***Comments –*** Each of Paul's opening speeches reveals a man unashamed and confident of his innocence. In Acts 21:40 he turns to address the Jewish mob rather than accept deliverance from the Roman soldiers, as would be typical for someone who had committed a crime and wanted to escape punishment. In Acts 23:1 he looks intently upon the Sanhedrin and speaks boldly rather than hanging his head down in shame and guilt. In Acts 24:10 he addresses Felix the governor with cheer. In Acts 25:11 Paul boldly declares to Festus that if any wrong can be found in him, he is ready to die. In Acts 26:1-2 he stretches forth his hand as an orator and speaks unto King Agrippa.

24:11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

24:12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

24:13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

---

[416]C. M. Kerr, "Tertullus," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* ed. James Orr (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 2949-2950.

24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

24:14 **"that after the way which they call heresy" - *Comments* –** Acts 24:14 reveals the atmosphere in which Paul was preaching the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire. To the Jews, Christianity was a Jewish heresy, and to the Romans, it had not yet been recognized as a group of legal status as the Jews had been recognized. It was Paul's intent to stand before Caesar and appeal the legality of the Christian faith so that it might become recognized and acceptable throughout the Empire. This was his underlying motive for appealing to a higher court as he stood in defense of the legality of the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. While in prison at Rome, he wrote to the church at Philippi and said, "I am set for the defence of the Gospel." (Phil 1:17)

24:15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

24:16 ***Comments* -** The voice of the heart or spirit is the conscience. Thus, Paul reveals in Acts 24:16 that he learned how to follow his conscience rather than the voice of his mind, which is human reason, or the voice of his physical body, which are our senses, or our feelings. Paul makes a similar statement in Acts 23:1, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day"; 2 Timothy 1:3, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day." Paul had exercised himself, or trained himself, to follow his conscience, which is the same as being led by the Spirit. For the Holy Spirit speaks to us and guides us through our spirits.

24:17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

24:18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

24:19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.

24:20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

24:21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

24:22-27 **Felix Requests a Bribe –** In Acts 24:22-27, Felix postpones his verdict in this case, hoping to delay it while he tries to extort a bribe from Paul. Thus, Luke concludes each of these four scenes by pointing out the injustices of Paul's accusers.

24:22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

24:23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

24:24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

24:25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

24:26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

24:27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

25:1-26:32 **Paul's Fourth Speech before Festus the Governor and King Herod (The Glorification/Fulfillment of Paul's Apostolic Commission) (A.D. 60) –** Acts 25:1-26:32 records the lengthy testimony of Paul standing trial before Festus the governor and King Agrippa. This is the fourth and final speech that Paul will make before his accusers before setting forth to Rome to face the highest court in the Roman Empire. Paul has spoken before the Jewish mob at the Temple (21:15-22:29); he has been taken before the Sanhedrin and addressed the Jewish leaders (22:30-23:35); and he has stood before Felix the governor (24:1-27). He now stands before Festus the subsequent governor (25:1-12), who asks King Agrippa to oversee this complex trial (25:13-26:32). These preliminary trials lead up to Paul's appeal to Caesar. Many scholars suggest Luke compiles this sequence of trials in order to reveal Paul's innocence as a legal defense that could have been used during Paul's actual trial, from the angry mob, to the Sanhedrin, to the governors, the king, and finally to Roman.

In this scene, Paul is brought before the new governor named Festus, who presses Paul into a defensive position of appealing to Caesar (25:1-12). Festus discusses this case to King Agrippa (25:13-22). He then convenes a new hearing at the request of King Agrippa, who now oversees the trial (25:23-27). In this hearing, Luke records Paul's fourth speech in a trial setting, this last hearing before King Agrippa (Acts 26:1-29). The king's verdict is that Paul is officially innocent, but his appeal to Caesar must be honored (Acts 26:30-32). He points out in the fourth scene that King Herod found Paul innocent of any wrong doing, but sent him to Rome simply because of Paul's appeal. This speech emphasizes the glorification or fulfillment of Paul's apostolic commission to preach before kings and the sons of Israel. Therefore, Paul declares his obedience to his heavenly vision in which Jesus commissioned him as an apostle to the Gentiles.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 25:1-26:32 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of Paul's commission unto Rome:

> Exegetical Idea – Paul declared his innocence in his fourth trial before King Agrippa based upon his service to his Jewish people as well as his obedience to a heavenly vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Paul declared his innocence in his fourth trial before King Agrippa based upon his service to his Jewish people as well as his obedience to a heavenly vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has required His servants to fulfill their divine assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has required His servants to fulfill their divine assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God should endeavor to fulfill their divine assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Here is a proposed outline:

i) Paul's Defense before Festus the Governor	25:1-12
ii) Festus Recounts Paul's Defense to King Agrippa	25:13-22
iii) The Opening Speech of Festus	25:23-27
iv) Paul's Speech to King Agrippa	26:1-29
v) The Verdict of King Agrippa	26:30-32

25:1-12 **Paul's Defense before Festus the Governor -** Acts 25:1-12 records Paul's defense before Festus the governor, resulting in his appeal to stand trial in the court of Caesar at Rome.

25:1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

25:2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

25:3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

25:4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither.

25:5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

25:6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.

25:7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

25:8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.

25:9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

25:10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

25:11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

25:10-11 ***Comments* –** Each of Paul's opening speeches reveals a man unashamed and confident of his innocence. In Acts 21:40 he turns to address the Jewish mob rather than accept deliverance from the Roman soldiers, as would be typical for someone who had committed a crime and wanted to escape punishment. In Acts 23:1 he looks intently upon the Sanhedrin and speaks boldly rather than hanging his head down in shame and guilt. In Acts 24:10 he addresses Felix the governor with cheer. In Acts 25:11 Paul boldly declares to Festus that if any wrong can be found in him, he is ready to die. In Acts 26:1-2 he stretches forth his hand as an orator and speaks unto King Agrippa.

Paul's right to appeal unto Caesar came as a result of his Roman citizenship. Pliny the Younger tells us that Christians who were also Roman citizens were given the right to appeal unto Caesar, while others were either forced into renouncing their Christian faith, or

put to death (*Letters* 10.96).[417] Paul's appeal means that he submits himself to the will and judgment of Caesar, which judgment takes authority over the previous judgments issued by the Sanhedrin, and governors Felix and Festus.

25:12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.

25:12 ***Comments -*** In the same way that Paul the apostle had a destiny to stand before Caesar, so did Jesus Christ have a destiny to stand before Pilate.

25:13-22 **Festus Recounts Paul's Defense to King Agrippa -** In Acts 25:13-22, Festus the Roman governor recounts the events of Paul's defense to King Agrippa, which results in the king's request to hear Paul's defense.

25:13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus.

25:13 **"And after certain days" –** ***Comments -*** *BDAG* translates this phrase, "several days afterward."

"king Agrippa" - ***Comments -*** Acts 25:13 refers to Herod Agrippa II, the son of Herod Agrippa I and great-grandson of Herod the Great, who slew the children of Bethlehem (Matt 2:16-18). The death of Herod Agrippa I is recorded in Acts 12:20-25. Josephus tells us that Herod Agrippa I died when Agrippa II was only seventeen years old, and living in Rome, being brought up with Claudius Caesar. Because of his youth, he was not immediately entrusted with the vast region of his father. In A.D. 48, his uncle died, Herod king of Chalcis and brother of Agrippa I, and Claudius gave him this throne (Josephus, *Wars* 2.12.1), as well as the oversight of the Temple and the authority to select the high priest. As time progressed, Claudius and Nero appointed Agrippa II over the former tetrarchies that had belonged to Philip and Lysanias, and he was crowned king (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.7.1, *Wars* 2.12.1, 8). Herod Agrippa II later sided with Rome during the Jewish wars. After the destruction of Jerusalem he and his sister Bernice retired to Rome where he died in A.D. 100. Although he was not a king over the region of Palestine, he was nonetheless the fifth king of the Herod lineage and last ruling king that Rome appointed over the Jews.[418] There are no further references to King Agrippa II and Bernice in the Scriptures outside of Acts 25:13-26:32.

Perhaps Luke uses the name "Agrippa" in this section of his book in order to distinguish him from the King Agrippa in Acts 12:1-23.

"and Bernice" - ***Comments -*** Bernice was the eldest daughter of King Herod Agrippa I and sister to Herod Agrippa II and Drusilla, the wife of Felix. The Scriptures tell us that Drusilla was Jewess (Acts 24:24), and Josephus adds Mariamne to the list of siblings (*Wars* 2.11.6), so that there were three daughters and one son born to Agrippa 1, all of these of Jewish descent. Bernice was first married at the young age of thirteen to Herod king of Chalcis, the

[417]Pliny writes, "In the meanwhile, the method I have observed towards those who have been denounced to me as Christians is this: I interrogated them whether they were Christians; if they confessed it I repeated the question twice again, adding the threat of capital punishment; if they still persevered, I ordered them to be executed. For whatever the nature of their creed might be, I could at least feel no doubt that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy deserved chastisement. There were others also possessed with the same infatuation, but being citizens of Rome, I directed them to be carried thither." See William Melmoth, trans., *Pliny: Letters,* vol. 1, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1915), 403.

[418]See Josephus, A*ntiquities* 19.9.1-2; J. Rawson Lumby, *The Acts of the Apostles with Maps, Notes and Introductions,* in *Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools,* ed. J. J. S. Perowne (Cambridge, The University Press, 1891), 420-421; W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* vol. 2 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 495.

brother of King Herod I, who was her uncle. At his death in A.D. 48, she moved in with her brother Agrippa II and remained a widow for a lengthy period of time. She was accused of having a relationship with her brother Herod Agrippa II, so quickly persuaded Polemo, king of Cilicia, to marry her in order to squelch this rumor. However, this marriage was short-lived when she left him and moved back in with her brother, which is the time when Acts 25:13, 23; 26:30 records that King Agrippa II and Bernice came to visit Festus the governor and sat to hear Paul's defense (A*ntiquities* 20.7.2-3).[419] There are no further references to King Agrippa II and Bernice in the Scriptures outside of Acts 25:13-26:32.

"came unto Caesarea to salute Festus" – *Comments* - Caesarea was the official residence of the Roman governor over this region of the Empire. Festus had recently been appointed as governor in place of Felix by Nero (Acts 24:27) (Josephus *Antiquities* 20.8.9, *Wars* 2.14.1), so that King Agrippa's royal visit appears to be an official greeting to congratulate him in his new office.[420]

25:14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

25:14 **"And when they had been there many days" - *Comments* -** The fact that much time passed during Paul's Caesarean imprisonment shows the inconsistency of his prosecution. There was simply insufficient evidence to bring about a final verdict.

"Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix" – *Comments* - King Herod Agrippa II was Jewish and would have understood the cause of the dispute between Paul and the Jewish leaders better than Festus, a Roman. Festus was new to his appointment as governor, so naturally would be hesitant to make quick decisions while still unfamiliar with the Jewish culture.

25:15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

25:15 ***Comments* -** The Jewish leaders desired to have Paul condemned of a crime, not considering a fair trial to be adequate for him. King Herod would understand the views of the Jewish leaders much better than Festus.

25:16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

25:16 ***Comments* -** Festus wants King Agrippa II to know that he has tried to deal fairly with issues concerning his new office, and particularly with the Jewish people.

25:17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth.

25:17 ***Comments* -** Festus declares to King Agrippa II his efforts to quickly address Jewish matters. Paul would have been brought into Herod's judgment hall of the magnificent palace in Caesarea (Acts 23:35; 25:6). The Jewish leaders would have assembled themselves and Paul brought in just before or immediately after Festus enters and finds his seat.

---

[419]E. M. B. Green and C. H. Hemer, "Bernice," in *New Bible Dictionary, second edition,* ed. J. D. Douglas (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishing, c1962, 1982), 132.

[420]Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2177, Logos.

25:18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:

25:18 ***Comments -*** Festus has been educated in the history of Jewish insurrections and efforts to repel Roman dominion. He would have heard stories of particular Jewish zealots who murdered Roman soldiers, or riots caused by the Jews. Paul's accusers presented none of these typical criminal acts, which left Festus, desiring to begin his office with justice, without a judgment. However, fearing the wrath of the Jews, he kept Paul imprisoned, as did Felix his predecessor (Acts 24:27).

25:19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

25:19 ***Comments -*** Festus could describe the Christian faith as a δεισιδαιμονία "superstition" without offending King Herod Agrippa II, who was of Jewish birth. Because neither Festus nor King Agrippa had any sympathy for Jesus and His followers, Festus took the liberty to speak of Christians with open contempt. Using a similar word, Paul uses the Greek adjective δεισιδαίμων "superstitious" to describe the Greco-Roman myths in his sermon on Mar's Hill (Acts 17:22).

25:20 And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

25:21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar.

25:21 ***Comments –*** The Greek word σεβαστός means, "revered, worthy of reverence, august" (*BDAG*). The *TDNT* says σεβαστός is the Greek translation of the Latin word "augustus," which means, "holy, sacred."

The title "Augustus," which literally means, "the exalted" (*TDNT*), was initially conferred upon Octavian, the first Roman emperor (27 B.C. to A.D. 14) (Suetonius, *Octavius Augustus* 7).[421] This title was transferred upon subsequent reigning Roman emperors, so that it designated Emperor Nero (A.D. 54-68) when used in Acts 25:21, 25.

In Acts 25:21 Festus the governor refers to Emperor Nero as Augustus and as Caesar. These two names were handed down from Octavius Augustus, the first official Roman emperor, and from his predecessor Julius Caesar. Tacitus tells us the people called Emperor Vespasian (A.D. 69-79) by "Augustus" and "Caesar" (*Histories* 2.80).[422] The name "Augustus" was a personal name given to Roman Emperors, as a way of deifying him before the people, while the word "Caesar" was an official title, and more closely equivalent to "king."[423] The distinction between the two terms "Augustus" and "Caesar" can be seen in modern societies when addressing the leader of certain nations. For example, in Africa a nation's president (equivalent to Caesar) is directly addressed by calling him "Your Excellency" (equivalent to Augustus).

---

[421]Philemon Holland, trans., *History of Twelve Caesars,* vol. 1, in *The Tutor Translations,* vol. 21, ed. W. E. Henley (London: David Nutt, 1899), 85.

[422]Tacitus writes, ". . . as Vespasian stepped from his quarters, a few soldiers who were drawn up in their usual order to salute him as their Legate, saluted him as Emperor. Then the rest ran up and began to call him Caesar and Augustus; they heaped on him all the titles of an emperor." See Clifford H. Moore, and John Jackson, trans., *Tacitus: The Histories* and *The Annals,* vol. 2, in *The Loeb Classical Library,* eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1925), 289.

[423]W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* vol. 2 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 497.

25:22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

25:22 ***Comments -*** The *EGT* says the imperfect verb "I would hear" implies "a wish entertained for some time." Perhaps King AgrippaII had heard about Paul or at least the Christian faith in general and was interested in knowing more about this issue. However, some scholars "soften" this imperfect tense to says, "I should like."[424]

25:23-27 **The Opening Speech of Festus -** Acts 25:23-27 records the opening comments of Festus concerning Paul's trial, his apparent innocence, and the dilemma of preparing a letter to the courts in Rome made to King Herod and those in attendance.

25:23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

25:23 **"And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing" -** ***Comments -*** The "royal" pomp stands in stark contrast to the humility of Paul the apostle as he stands trial before the Roman court.

"with the chief captains, and principal men of the city" – ***Comments -*** *Josephus* says that there were five cohorts of Roman soldiers deployed in Caesarea, with a thousand footmen per cohort (*Wars* 3.4.2). Thus, we can consider these five chief captains in attendance with their governor and the king. The possibility that additional chief captains from other cities attended this event is very likely.

"at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth" - ***Comments -*** In this scene, Paul the apostle was probably brought into the courtroom bound in chains as he stood before this predominately Roman crowd. Thus, Luke is able to paint a vivid contrast between the pomp of the rich leaders and the humility of Paul, innocent but on trial.

25:23 ***Comments -*** John Chrysostom notes the attendance in the meeting of many great men. The King and his wife, the governor over this region of the Roman Empire, the chief captains of the Roman military, the leaders of the city, which were perhaps Jewish and Roman, and all of the guards of these men of renown, were either seated or standing to hear Paul preach the Gospel to them.[425] Therefore, this was clearly not a Jewish trial, but rather a Roman trial.

Jesus told the twelve apostles that they would be brought before governors and kings for His name sake (Matt 10:18, Lk 21:12), and Paul describes the office of an apostle as being "made a spectacle unto the world" (1 Cor 4:9).

25:24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.

25:24 ***Comments -*** Festus follows protocol in his opening speech by addressing the chief guest first, then others of dignified political and social rank.

---

[424]W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* vol. 2 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 498.

[425]John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices, Part I Homilies XXIX-LV*, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852), 683.

25:25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

25:26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

25:26 ***Comments -*** Festus has referred to Emperor Nero as "Augustus" and "Caesar" (25:21). In Acts 25:26 he now calls him "Lord." A few commentators note that some Roman emperors were not fond of being called by the title κύριος (lord). Citations from Suetonius suggest that Octavian and Tiberius despised this title (*Augustus* 53, *Tiberius* 27).[426] However, it appears from Acts 25:26 that Nero gladly accepted such flattering titles. Adam Clarke tells us that Pliny the Younger uses this term frequently in his letters for Trajan.[427]

25:27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.

25:27 ***Comments -*** In Acts 25:27 Festus admits that he could not justify sending Paul to Rome without first presenting this case to King Agrippa. Perhaps the Roman legal system necessitated Paul standing trial before Governors Felix and Festus and King Agrippa prior to being sent to Rome to stand before the Emperor. Festus could not hold Paul, a Roman citizen, indefinitely in prison without a criminal charge being officially placed upon him. We see Festus looking for a solution to a problem that has been inherited the previous governor Felix.

26:1-29 **Paul's Speech to King Agrippa -** Acts 26:1-29 records Paul's speech before King Agrippa. This speech will be the third testimony of his conversion on the Damascus Road recorded in the book of Acts (see Acts 22:1-21, Acts 26:1-23). Paul's divine calling on the Damascus Road and the visitation by Ananias (Acts 9:1-18) served as an anchor for his soul throughout his life. In fact, he will often refer back to this event. It is during some of his most difficult trials that he stands upon his divine visitations to strengthen him and secure himself in his calling.

John Chrysostom notes that Paul's argument in this speech builds itself upon two testimonies: the Old Testament Scriptures testify of the hope of the resurrection of the dead, and Paul himself encountered the resurrected Christ Jesus on the road to Damascus through a divine vision.[428]

---

[426]Suetonius tells us that Octavian despised the term "lord," saying, "He always shrank from the title of Lord as reproachful and insulting. When the words 'O just and gracious Lord!' were uttered in a farce at which he was a spectator and all the people sprang to their feet and applauded as if they were said of him, he at once checked their unseemly flattery by look and gesture, and on the following day sharply reproved them in an edict. After that he would not suffer himself to be addressed by that term even by his children or his grandchildren either in jest or earnest, and he forbade them to use such flattering terms even among themselves." (*Augustus* 53) Suetonius tells us that Tiberius did not like to be called by flattering terms, "He so loathed flattery that he would not allow any Senator to approach his litter, either to pay his respects or on business, and when an ex-consul in apologizing to him attempted to embrace his knees, he drew back in such haste that he fell over backward. In fact, if any one in conversation or in a set speech spoke of him in too flattering terms, he did not hesitate to interrupt him, to take him to task, and to correct his language on the spot. Being once called 'Lord,' he warned the speaker not to address him again in an insulting fashion." (*Tiberius* 27) See Joseph Gavorse, *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars by Suetonius,* in *The Modern Library of the World's Best Books* (New York: Random House, 1931), 36, 138.

[427]Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* vol. 1 (New York: G. Lane & C. B. Tippett, 1846), 883.

[428]John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices, Part I Homilies XXIX-LV*, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1852), 686.

26:1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

26:1 ***Comments –*** Each of Paul's opening speeches reveals a man unashamed and confident of his innocence. In Acts 21:40 he turns to address the Jewish mob rather than accept deliverance from the Roman soldiers, as would be typical for someone who had committed a crime and wanted to escape punishment. In Acts 23:1 he looks intently upon the Sanhedrin and speaks boldly rather than hanging his head down in shame and guilt. In Acts 24:10 he addresses Felix the governor with cheer. In Acts 25:11 Paul boldly declares to Festus that if any wrong can be found in him, he is ready to die. In Acts 26:1-2 he stretches forth his hand as an orator and speaks unto King Agrippa.

Paul had gained years of experience in oratory skills debating with Jews in their synagogues about the resurrection of Jesus and His claim as the Messiah. While still bound with chains handing down from his outstretched hands (which are mentioned in Acts 26:29), he speaks with confidence, while showing proper respect to those whom he is addressing.

Albert Barnes notes that ancient statues express the posture of an orator, with the right hand extended.[429]

26:2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

26:2 ***Comments -*** Paul opens by saying he considers it a privilege to address the king with the opportunity to defend himself. Adam Clarke notes that until now, Paul had stood before Roman magistrates who were unqualified to sort out such disputes.[430] Paul now stood before a Jew who held some interest and personal knowledge of Jewish traditions and the issues surrounding this dispute.

26:3 Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

26:3 ***Comments –*** King Herod Agrippa II and his two sisters Bernice and Drusilla were Jewish (Acts 24:24). Therefore, the king was naturally mindful of Jewish customs.

26:4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

26:4 ***Comments -*** Although Paul was born in Tarsus (Acts 9:11; 21:39; 22:3), he was educated in Jerusalem beginning at a young age. In his earlier testimony to the Jewish mob at the time of his arrest, he says that he had been "brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers . . ." (Acts 22:3) Adam Clarke suggests that Paul was brought to Jerusalem at the age of twelve, noting that this was the same age when Jesus went to the Temple and debated with the scribes (Luke 2:41-42).[431] The significance of the age of twelve in a young Jewish boy's life is believed to be a time of transition from childhood towards adulthood. Nolland quotes a number of Jewish rabbis and sources to support the increase of duties at this time saying this was "the age at which vows

[429]Albert Barnes, *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1863), 329.

[430]Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* vol. 1 (New York: G. Lane & C. B. Tippett, 1846), 884.

[431]Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* vol. 1 (New York: G. Lane & C. B. Tippett, 1846), 884.

became binding, parental punishment could become more severe, and fasting could be expected to be sustained for a whole day."[432] John Gill list similar duties implemented at this age.[433]

26:5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

26:4-5 ***Comments -*** In Acts 26:4-5 Paul begins his defense by first identifying himself as a devout Jew before King Agrippa, who himself was a Jew. Paul describes himself as someone unlikely to agitate his Jewish brothers. Thus, the king could understand Paul's mindset, as a person having been raised and educated in strict Jewish customs. The *EGT* notes that the Pharisees adhered not only to the Mosaic Law, but a long list of customs of the elders.[434] Paul includes King Agrippa into this description by calling the Jewish faith "our religion." Thus, in the religion of King Agrippa II and Paul, the apostle clearly excelled the more abundantly in these Jewish traditions and virtues, a fact that should have impressed Agrippa II.

26:6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

26:7 Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

26:7 **"instantly serving God day and night" –** ***Comments -*** The phrase "day and night," or "night and day," is used on seven occasions by the Gospel writers (Mk 4:23; 5:5, Lk 2:37; 18:7, Acts 9:24; 20:31; 26:7) and five times by Paul (1 Thess 2:9; 3:10, 2 Thess 3:10, 1 Tim 5:5, 2 Tim 1:3).

26:6-7 ***Comments – The Promise -*** The *EGT* notes that Israel's promise was of Israel's full restoration in the form of a Messianic kingdom, preceded by the resurrection from the dead.[435] Alfred Edersheim says this hope expressed itself when the multitudes of Israel came out to hear the preaching of John the Baptist, and when they gathered in Galilee to listen to Jesus Christ teach about the kingdom of heaven, and when they opened their homes to those whom Jesus sent out by twos. This hope also expressed itself in the apocalyptic literature[436] that has become popular among the Jews for several centuries.[437] This hope kept Anna in the Temple night and day praying for her people. This hope moved various Jews to rise up in sedition against Roman rule in Palestine. This hope is why various Jewish sects emerged, such as the Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes, all preparing themselves for the coming of the Messiah. In other words, this hope and expectation of the Messiah and all that the rabbis

---

[432]John Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20,* in *Word Biblical Commentary,* vol. 35A, eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1989), 129, Logos.

[433]John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament,* vol. 1 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: William W. Woodward, 1811), 543-544.

[434]W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* vol. 2 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 501.

[435]W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* vol. 2 (New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.), 501.

[436]Apocalyptic literature became popular among the Jews several centuries before Christ. The Jewish apocalyptic books entitled *1 Enoch, The Assumption of Moses (The Testament of Moses), 4 Ezra (2 Esdras), 2 Baruch,* and *Apocalypse of Abraham* are believed to have been written from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D. Other Jewish writings, such as *Sibylline Oracles, Jubilees,* and *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,* contain passages that are apocalyptic in nature. See R. J. Bauckham, "Apocalyptic," in *New Bible Dictionary, second edition,* ed. J. D. Douglas (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishing, c1962, 1982), 54.

[437]Alfred Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, n.d.), 67.

taught in the synagogues concerning him were continually upon the minds of the Jewish people. Thus, King Agrippa clearly understood Paul's references to this hope of Israel.

26:8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

26:9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

26:10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

26:11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

26:11 **"I persecuted them even unto strange cities" – *Comments* -** The phrase "strange cities" literally reads "the outside cities." Paul travels to those cities outside of the land of Palestine.

26:12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

26:13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

26:14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

26:14 **"And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me" - *Comments* –** In the Parable of the Judgment of the Nations (Matt 25:31-46) Jesus says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Therefore, when Saul of Tarsus was persecuting Christians, he was persecuting Jesus.

26:14 **"it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" – *Comments* –** The Greek word κέντρον means, "a pointed stick, a sting, a goad" (*BDAG*).

Within the context of Acts 9:5, the word "pricks" refers to the ox-goad, which was made from a long stick with some sharp object fastened on its end, being used to poke the ox and get him to move forward in his harness to pull the cart. We can imagine Paul traveling along the Damascus road in a convoy of horses, men, and wagons, with a team of oxen being prodded along the way using an ox goad. This metaphor that Jesus uses would have immediate application to what Paul was doing to the Christian in his efforts to persecute and imprison them.

Heinrich Meyer translates the phrase "kick against the prick" as, "It is for thee a difficult undertaking."[438]

The classical Greek and Latin writers used the phrase "kick against the prick" often enough to assume that it was, as Basil Gildersleeve suggests, an ancient proverb.[439]

---

[438]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 275.

[439]Basil L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (New York: American Book Company, 1885), 267. The ancient Athenian tragedian Euripides (480-406 B.C.) writes, "Better to yield him prayer and sacrifice, Than kick against the pricks, since Dionyse, Is God, and thou but mortal." (*The Bacchae* 191) See Gilbert Murray,

26:15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

26:17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

26:17 ***Comments -*** The Scriptures list three people groups that God has used throughout His redemptive history: the Church, the Jews and the Gentiles. These groups are all listed together in 1 Corinthians 10:32, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:" We see a reference to such a distinction of people groups in Acts 26:17.

26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

26:14-18 ***Comments – Paul's Divine Commission –*** In Acts 26:14-18 Paul recounts an aspect of his divine commission from the Lord during his Damascus Road conversion that he did not mention in the two earlier accounts of this event (Acts 9:1-8; 22:6-11). Saul was commissioned by the chief priests to go to Damascus on their "divine" assignment. The Lord instead gives him a new assignment in the midst of his Jewish one, appointing him to a far greater commission than his task at hand. While the Jewish leaders were sending Paul as far as Damascus, the Lord tells Paul that he was destined to travel to the nations. In this vision, the Lord also says, "unto which I myself will send you;" thus, such a heavenly commission radically altered how Paul understood a divine assignment. He now understood that he was to receive his directions for divine service from the Lord and not from men. This is why Paul opens his epistle to the Galatians saying, "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)" (Gal 1:1)

26:19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

26:20 ***Comments -*** Paul's summary of his ministry and missionary efforts in Acts 26:20, beginning in Damascus, Jerusalem, Judaea, and to the Gentiles, reflects the commission that Jesus gave the Church in Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The fact that Paul said in one of his earliest epistles to the Galatians that he was unknown *by face* unto the churches of Judaea (Gal 1:22) does not contradict the fact that his ministry extended into this region, if only by word of testimony among the churches. In other words, Paul's statement in Acts 26:20 does not necessitate him visiting and preaching in Judaea, because his fame certainly spread

---

trans., *The Bacchae of Euripides* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, c1904, 1920), 46. The ancient Greek lyric poet Pindar (522-443 B.C.) writes, "But he, the patient and the wise. Who to the yoke his neck applies, Lifts not, like oxen prone to feel Each casual sting, his angry heel Be my complacent temper shown, Conversing with the good alone." (*The Second Pythian Ode* 2.173-175) See C. A. Wheelwright and Thomas Bourne, trans., *Pindar and Anacreon* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1846), 106. The ancient Roman playwright Terence (195/185-159 B.C.) writes, "Yes, yes, it is folly kicking against the pricks." (*Phormia* 1.2.27) See John Sargeaunt, *Terance*, vol. 2, in *The Loeb Classical Library*, eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1959), 15.

there. However, he does say that he preached "throughout all the coasts of Judaea," an event that is not necessarily recorded in Scripture.

26:21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

26:22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

26:23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

26:24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

26:25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26:26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

26:26 ***Comments*** **-** Paul proves his denial of madness by appealing to fact that the Gospel was well-known by many. At this time in early Church history, approximately thirty years since the resurrection of Christ Jesus (A.D. 30 to 60), the stories of Jesus Christ had embedded themselves among the Jews, and among many Gentiles throughout the Roman Empire. It was not a story that was easily forgotten, as were other Jewish insurgents in Palestine. This story was now being proclaimed with passion and conviction from all corners of the Roman Empire.

26:27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

26:28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

26:28 **"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" -** ***Comments*** **-** Heinrich Meyer translates the phrase ἐν ὀλίγῳ in the instrumental case, thus reading "With little thou persuadest me to become a Christian." Others render it as a temporal phrase, "In a short (time) thou persuadest me to become a Christian." Still others understand it temporally to mean, "for a little, i.e. almost, thou persuadest me to become a Christian."[440]

26:28 ***Comments*** **-** A man must be convicted of sin to see the need of salvation, not merely persuaded, as Jesus says in Luke 16:31, "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, *neither will they be persuaded*, though one rose from the dead."

26:29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

26:30-32 **The Verdict of King Agrippa -** Acts 26:30-32 records the final verdict of King Agrippa in which he officially declares Paul's innocence, but honors his appeal to be taken to the courts in Rome. Thus, Luke concludes each of these four scenes by pointing out the injustices of Paul's accusers.

26:30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

[440]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 283.

26:30 ***Comments -*** Meyer notes that such a direct question from Paul to King Agrippa may have embarrassed him to the point of ending this meeting and departing. He also comments on the fact that those who had gathered to hear Paul now arose according to "the order of rank," the king, then the governor, Bernice, then those who had accompanied them.[441]

26:31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

26:32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

26:32 ***Comments -*** Both King Agrippa and Festus realized that Paul was not guilty of any offence worthy of death. The early Church tradition tells us that Paul stood before Caesar and was acquitted during his first Roman imprisonment.[442] King Agrippa's advice gave Festus the authority needed to send Paul to Rome.

27:1-28:16 **The Climax-Resolution: The Witness of Paul's Journey to Rome (Glorification) (A.D. 60-62) -** Acts 27:1-28:16 records Paul's perilous journey to Rome by sea, which many scholars estimate took place around A.D. 60. This passage provides the climax and resolution to the plot of this section. Paul is placed in a ship under the leadership of a Roman centurion named Julius (27:1-12). At this time, Paul gives a prophetic oracle of impending danger. The inevitable storm at sea does arrive, of which Luke gives great detail in 27:13-38. During this two-week period, an angel appeared to Paul and assures him that God was watching over him, from which he comforts those on board with assurance of their ultimate deliverance from the storm. The ship eventually comes aground on an island during the night (27:39-44). The climax of the plot is reached as Luke records their three-month stay on this island called Malta, in which Paul was miraculously delivered from a snake bite as well as healing the father of a leader of the island (28:1-10). As a result, Paul is given much honor by the islanders. The resolution of the climax to the plot is reached as Paul eventually arrives in Rome, where he is received by fellow believers and allowed to live under house custody (28:11-16). This passage of Scripture reflects the theme of the church's glorification/rest in that it records the church's fulfillment of Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8.

Luke organizes the narrative material of Paul's arrest, trials, and journey to Rome (Acts 21:1-28:31) as a testimony of Paul's innocence, perhaps as a legal brief to be presented at Paul's first trial in Rome. Paul has been brought to trial four times leading up to his journey by sea to Rome. Within this context, Acts 27:1-28:16 records at least three events that testify to Paul's innocence: he is visited by an angel in the midst of the storm, he is bitten by a snake and suffers no harm, and he is given liberty in Rome to minister to those who visit him.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 27:1-28:16 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of the church's commission unto Rome:

---

[441]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 284.

[442]Clement of Rome says Paul was "a teacher of righteousness unto the whole world" and that before Paul died, he "reached the furthest bounds of the West and bore testimony before the ruling powers." (*1 Clement* 5:6-7) Eusebius says, "Festus was sent by Nero to be Felix's successor. Under him Paul, having made his defense, was sent bound to Rome. Aristarchus was with him, whom he also somewhere in his epistles quite naturally calls his fellow-prisoner. And Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, brought his history to a close at this point, after stating that Paul spent two whole years at Rome as a prisoner at large, and preached the word of God without restraint. Thus after he had made his defense it is said that the apostle was sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and that upon coming to the same city a second time he suffered martyrdom. In this imprisonment he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions his first defense and his impending death." (*Ecclesiastical History* 2. 22.1-2)

Exegetical Idea – Paul found a place of rest in Christ as God vindicated him during his voyage at sea through a miraculous deliverance in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul found a place of rest in Christ as God vindicated him during his voyage at sea through a miraculous deliverance in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants as He vindicates their injustice in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants as He vindicates their injustice in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a place of rest in Christ amidst injustice in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Here is a proposed outline:

(a) Paul Sails for Rome	27:1-12
(b) The Storm at Sea	27:13-38
(c) The Shipwreck	27:39-44
(d) Paul on the Island of Malta	28:1-10
(e) Paul Arrives in Rome	28:11-16

The Historical Details Provided in the Account of Paul's Voyage to Rome - This story of Paul's voyage and shipwreck at sea provides more detail about ancient navigation than any other work of Latin or Greek literature. It reveals the historical reliability of the book of Acts as well as the support that the author of Acts was an eyewitness of this event. No less than sixteen technical terms are used by Luke to describe the navigation and management of an ancient ship at sea, all of them found to be accurate. Luke is also accurate is his description of the locations of numerous islands and cities that were encountered on this voyage.

The Time of Year When Paul Sailed to Rome – In these final two chapters of the book of Acts, Paul embarks on a journey by sea, most likely during the late fall or early winter months (Acts 27:9). Most shipping ceases in the Mediterranean Sea during the winter because of the unpredictable weather conditions.

27:1-12 **Paul Sails for Rome -** In Acts 27:1-7, Paul is placed in a ship under the leadership of a Roman centurion named Julius (27:1-12). At this time, Paul gives a prophetic oracle of impending danger.

27:1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

27:1 **"And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy" -** ***Comments –*** The "we" passages resume again, having broken off at 21:18, when Paul visited James the bishop of the church in Jerusalem. We have no record of Luke's movement during this two-year interval.

"they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band" - ***Comments -*** The Roman army of the first century was divided and subdivided into various units. The largest military unit was called a legion (λεγιών), made up of approximately six thousand soldiers, depending upon the need of that location within the Empire. The legion was divided into ten cohorts (σπεῖρα) or bands, consisting of a group of six hundred men. Each cohort was subdivided into tactical units called a maniple, and administrative units called a century. This century was commanded by an officer called a

centurion (ἑκατοντάρχης). The centurions within a particular cohort held various ranks among themselves. They could obtain promotions up to the position of a "first centurion" who took part in the councils of war conducted by the higher ranking commanders.[443]

The New Testament refers to a Roman cohort on five occasions and to various centurions on twenty occasions. Jesus was handed over to a cohort of Roman soldiers prior to His crucifixion, which mocked and scourged Him (Matt 27:27, Mk 15:16) Luke refers to a cohort on three occasions (Acts 10:1; 21:31; 27:1), recognizing two of them by their prestigious titles as the Italian and Augustine cohorts.

Like Cornelius (Acts 10:1), Julius was one of the centurions in a prestigiously named cohort called the Sabasten (Σεβαστῆς) band/cohort, also called the Augustine band. Some scholars have associated this cohort with the *cohorts Sebastenorum,* which T. R. S. Broughton describes as "auxiliary cohorts of Samaritans such as had formed part of Herod s garrison in Jerusalem." According to Josephus, this cohort formed a part of the military garrison at Caesarea under King Herod Agrippa II's rule.[444] These Samarians were enlisted from the local population and incorporated into the Roman army and later participated in the Jewish war.[445]

27:2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

27:2 **"And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia" - *Comments* –** Darrell Bock describes Adramyttium as "a seaport of Mysia, opposite the isle of Lesbos, 110 miles north of Ephesus."[446] The captain of the ship determined to sail along the coast of Asia.

"one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us" – *Comments* – Two of Paul's companions accompany him on this perilous journey to Rome, Luke, and Aristarchus. Luke lists him as one of Paul's travelling companions in Acts 20:4. In Paul's letter to the Colossians, which he would later write from his Roman prison, he warmly refers to Aristarchus as "my fellowprisoner" (Col 4:10). He is probably referred to again in Philemon 24 as a "fellowlabourer" along with Marcus, Demas, and Lucas. These kind words must include a reference to the incredible voyage that they experienced together, as they became life-long friends during this journey.

---

[443]T. R. S. Broughton, "The Roman Army," in *The Beginnings of Christianity: Part 1 The Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 5, eds. F. J. Foakes Jackson, Kirsopp Lake, and Henry J. Cadbury (London: MacMillan and Co., 1933), 427-445.

[444]Josephus refers to the inhabitants of Sebaste, saying, "Now Agrippa, the son of the deceased, was at Rome, and brought up with Claudius Caesar. And when Caesar was informed that Agrippa was dead, and that the inhabitants of Sebaste and Caesarea had abused him, he was sorry for the first news, and was displeased with the ingratitude of those cities. He was therefore disposed to send Agrippa, junior, away presently to succeed his father in the kingdom, and was willing to confirm him in it by his oath." (*Antiquities*, 19.9.2) Josephus refers to the cohort of Sebaste, saying, "When Cumanus heard of this action of theirs, he took the band of Sebaste, with four regiments of footmen, and armed the Samaritans, and marched out against the Jews . . ." (*Antiquities*, 20.6.1) Josephus mentions Agrippa's auxiliary cohorts in *Wars*, 3.4.2.

[445] Josephus mentions the cohort of Sebaste again, saying, "There were also a great many of the king's party who deserted the Romans, and assisted the Jews; yet did the most warlike body of them all, who were three thousand of the men of Sebaste, go over to the Romans. (*Wars*, 2.3.4) Josephus mentions the warlike men of Sebaste saying, ". . . and he [Simon] had soon burnt down all the fine edifices, if Gratus, the captain of the foot of the king's party, had not taken the Trachonite archers, and the most warlike of Sebaste, and met the man." (*Wars*, 2.4.2). See T. R. S. Broughton, "The Roman Army," in *The Beginnings of Christianity: Part 1 The Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 5, eds. F. J. Foakes Jackson, Kirsopp Lake, and Henry J. Cadbury (London: MacMillan and Co., 1933), 443.

[446]Darrell Bock, *Acts*, in *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament,* eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 731, Logos.

27:3 And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

27:4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

27:5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.

27:6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

27:7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone;

27:8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

27:9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,

27:9 ***Comments –*** Heinrich Meyer and others says the fast in Acts 27:9 refers to the Day of Atonement when the nation of Israel afflicted their souls by fasting for a day (Lev 16:29-31; 23:27).[447] This fast, which is the only one required in the Mosaic Law, is mentioned by Jews and others in antiquity to refer to the fast on on the Day of Atonement (see Philo the Jew [*Special Laws* 1.186; 2.193, *Mostelleria* 2.23]; Josephus [*Antiquities* 14.66; 17.165; 18.94]; Strabo [*Geography* 16.2.40]).

The Day of Atonement took place on the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month called Tisri, which is equivalent to late September or early October on the Roman calendar used today.[448] This time of change in seasons was subject to stormy weather, which made sailing in the Mediterranean risky and dangerous.

27:10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

27:10 ***Comments -*** In the midst of life's storms, the Lord will always speak to us if we will listen. In this situation, the Lord spoke His will through Paul the apostle, but the centurion chose to believe circumstances instead of Paul's words and when a soft wind blew (27:13), the men in charge of the ship made their decision to sail. So often in life's storms, people tend to make decisions based upon circumstances instead of taking the time to wait upon the Lord and listen to His divine direction. There is always trouble for those who do not find God's direction in the midst of troubled times.

Kenneth Hagin uses this verse as an excellent illustration of someone being led by his inward witness. Paul did not say that an angel appeared to me or that the Lord spoke to him, but he says that he heart perceives a truth about the voyage.[449]

---

[447]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 2, trans. Paton J. Gloag and William P Dickson, in *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1877), 291-292.

[448]Albert Barnes, *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1863), 342.

[449]Kenneth Hagin, *Following God's Plan For Your Life* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1993, 1994), 101.

27:11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

27:12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

27:13-38 **The Storm at Sea -** Acts 27:13-38 records the storm at sea, of which Luke gives great detail.

27:13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.

27:13 **"supposing that they had obtained their purpose" – *Comments* -** Hendrich Meyer says this phrase literally means, "to have become masters of their purpose," and within the context of this verse, it means, "to be able safely to accomplish it."[450]

27:14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

27:15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

27:16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:

27:16 **"we had much work to come by the boat" – *Comments* -** They had great difficulty in securing the small boat that was being towed behind.

27:17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

27:17 ***Comments* –** They brought up the small boat into the larger ship in order to secure it, then used what robes or cords available on board to undergird the ship by wrapped them under the keel. Because of the fear of being stuck on sandy shoals, and the ship torn apart in the sea, the sails were hoisted down from the mast so that the waves drove the boat slower.

27:18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;

27:18 ***Comments* –** The sailors proceeded to toss overboard the cargo of the ship, anything that was not necessary for survival.

27:19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

27:19 ***Comments* –** On the third day of the storm, everyone joined in to toss overboard additional items, perhaps meaning the ship's equipment for sailing and navigating. We read later about the ship's anchors (27:29), the small boat (27:30-32), food (27:33-36), wheat (27:38), and the main sail (27:40) being in the ship. Thus, there were a number of items that remained on board until the end.

27:20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

---

[450]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 2, trans. Paton J. Gloag and William P Dickson, in *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1877), 293.

27:20 ***Comments -*** The stars were used for navigation, so when the clouds prevented the moon and stars from appearing, the sailors had no way to identify their location at sea. They because lost at sea with no ability to navigate.

27:21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

27:22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.

27:23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

27:23 ***Comments -*** Paul lived in a polytheistic society, where people believed there were many gods. Therefore, he was making a clear distinction between their pagan gods and His one true and living God, who alone was able to save.

27:24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

27:25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

27:25 **"for I believe God" -** ***Comments –*** Paul was on an unstable ship, surrounded with people who had no hope, with nothing in the natural showing any signs of stability or hope. This story is a clear illustration that, ultimately, the only thing in life that is stable is the Word of God, as the prophet Habakkuk says, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments." (Hab 3:17-19)

27:25 ***Comments -*** In this passage Paul made a clear confession of faith that set his course for divine deliverance. He said that he had heard and that "I believe" and "it shall be." He had heard from God, he believed God's Word and he spoke God's Word. This principle is taught in Robert Tilton's book *Decide Decree Declare*.[451]

Illustration - Today, as I had just listened to the international news reports of the storm and flooding in Louisiana and Mississippi, I turned to the story of Paul's shipwreck recorded in Acts 27-28. I then understood that Paul was saved and those with him during a similar storm because he heard from God. We, too, are going to have to hear God's voice during these difficult days leading up to the Rapture of the Church and the Great Tribulation Period. Otherwise, many Christians are going to perish are they are now. They will go to heaven, but they did not heed the voice of God about impending danger that lay ahead. (September 1, 2005)

27:26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

27:20-26 ***Comments - Paul's Vision –*** Acts 27:20-26 records a divine vision given to Paul in the mist of this perilous storm at sea. These divine oracles are embedded within the narrative material of Acts 21:1-28:31. For example, Paul received divine oracles from the seven daughters of Philip the evangelist and the prophet Agabus (Acts 21:8-1); he testifies of his divine vision on the road to Damascus and of the prophecy of Ananias (Acts 22:6-16); Luke records Paul's angelic visitation while in prison at Caesarea (Acts 23:11); Paul testifies

[451]Robert Tilton, *Decide Decree Declare* (Dallas, Texas: Robert Tilton Ministries, c1989, 1991).

again of his divine vision on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:12-19); Luke records Paul's angelic visitation at sea (Acts 27:20-16).

27:27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;

27:28 And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

27:29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

27:29 ***Comments -*** Bob Cornuke has written a book entitled *The Lost Shipwreck of Paul* in which he describes the discovery of large four ship anchors, which now lie in government storage on the island of Malta. The University of Malta has dated these anchors back to the time of Paul. They are believed to have come from an ancient Alexandrian grain freight ships that sailed the Mediterranean Sea during the first century. Cornuke believes that these four anchors belong to the very ship that Paul sailed upon when it wrecked on the island of Malta, making these four anchors the first biblical artifacts that have been confirmed as genuine.[452]

27:30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

27:31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

27:32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

27:32 ***Comments -*** The soldiers were beginning to perceive Paul as a man of great wisdom and stature. Earlier in the voyage, Paul's words were ignored (Acts 27:11).

27:33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

27:34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

27:35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

27:36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.

27:37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

27:38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

27:39-44 **The Shipwreck -** Acts 27:39-44 records the shipwreck on the island of Malta. During this two-week period, an angel appeared to Paul and assures him that God was watching over him, from which he comforts those on board with assurance of their ultimate deliverance from the storm.

[452]Bob Cornuke, *The Lost Shipwreck of Paul* (Global Publishing Services, 2005).

Paul's Shipwrecks **-** This shipwreck was not Paul's first. His second epistle to the Corinthians, written prior to his arrest in Jerusalem, testifies of three shipwrecks that he suffered as well as a night and a day floating in the sea (2 Cor 11:25). Thus, we can assume that the shipwreck recorded in Acts is Paul's fourth life-threatening experience at sea.

27:39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

27:40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

27:41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

27:42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

27:42 ***Comments*** **–** These soldiers were responsible for delivering the prisoners to their destination. Their escape could result in punishment upon the soldiers, even unto death.

27:43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:

27:43 ***Comments*** **–** The centurion was the only person aboard this ship that could save Paul's life. He had the authority to make the decision to spare the lives of these prisoners. Therefore, God gave Paul favor with man. This is because Paul walked in mercy and truth, as we see in Proverbs 3:3-4, "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man."

27:44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

28:1-10 **Paul on the Island of Malta -** The climax of the plot is reached as Luke records their three-month stay on this island called Malta, in which Paul was miraculously delivered from a snake bite as well as healing the father of a leader of the island (28:1-10). As a result, Paul is given much honor by the islanders.

28:1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

28:2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

28:2 ***Comments*** **-** The term "barbarous" is comparable to the Jewish term "Gentiles" in the sense that a barbarian was anyone who did not speak the Greek language. The Romans used in to refer to anyone who was not a Roman citizen. Paul the apostle uses this same term to contrast it with the Greeks (Rom 1:14) and as a person who does not understand the spoken language of the people (1 Cor 14:11, Col 3:11). Luke would not have used this term in Acts 28:2, 4 in a derogatory manner after the kindness that the people of Malta had showed them.

28:3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

28:3 ***Comments*** **-** Paul was a hard worker with a servant's heart.

28:4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

28:4 ***Comments –*** Donald Guthrie and others note the suggestion by David Ladouceur that it was a pagan belief in New Testament times that survival of a shipwreck proved a man's innocence. Perhaps Luke included this lengthy story as a defense for Paul's innocence.[453]

This view finds support in Acts 28:4 which alludes to such a belief when it says, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." We also see this belief alluded to in Jonah 1:4-10 when the men of the ship sought the cause of the storm in their belief that someone on board had sinned against his god.

28:5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

28:6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

28:7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

28:8 ***Comments –*** These hands of Paul most likely carried the puncture wounds of the snake bite, which served as an outward witness of the presence of God in his life. These people are able to see on this occasion the power of God that rested in His life because of the presence of God.

28:9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

28:10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

28:11-16 **Paul Arrives in Rome -** The resolution of the climax to the plot is reached as Paul eventually arrives in Rome, where he is received by fellow believers and allowed to live under house custody (28:11-16).

28:11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

28:11 ***Comments -*** In Acts 28:11, Luke was describing a ship in which the figures of Castor and Pollux were carved or painted on the forepart of the ship. The Greek word Διόσκουροι refers to Castor and Pollux, the mythological twin sons of Zeus and Leda (*BDAG*). Albert Barnes says this compound word is derived from κῦρος (*Liddell-Scott* "son") and Διός (meaning "god," but particularly "Zeus" in Greco-Roman mythology), and it refers to the twin sons of Zeus named Castor and Pollux. He says according to Greek mythology, Castor and Pollux were "the twin brothers, sons of Jupiter and Leda, the wife of Tyndarus, the king

[453]Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grover, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1990), 373; see David Ladouceur, "Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a context for Acts 27-28," *Harvard Theological Review* 73 (1980): 435-449; G. B. Miles & G. Tromph, "Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27-28 in the Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution and Shipwreck," *Harvard Theological Review* 69 (1976): 259-267.

of Sparta. After their death, they are fabled to have been translated to heaven, and made constellations under the name of Gemini, or the Twins. They received divine honours, and were called the sons of Jupiter."[454] In astronomy, they refer to the two bright northern stars in the constellation Gemini, Castor being the northernmost, a constellation placed within the Zodiac. *Smith* says that these two deities were considered guardians for sailors, watching over them in the midst of stormy seas. Thus, John Gill says their images were placed as figure-heads on the bows of ships. John Gill says that sailors would often make their vows to these two images before casting out to sea and endeavour to fulfill them upon their safe return.[455] Whether or not the captain chose this ship out of a selection of ships for its good omen is not mentioned.

28:12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.

28:13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

28:14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

28:15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

28:15 ***Comments –*** The Greek word απάντησις means, "a meeting" (*BDAG*). According to Moulton and Milligan, this Greek word appears to carry a technical meaning for an official welcome of an arriving dignitary.[456] F. F. Bruce says that it was often used when an important person was approaching a town to pay an official visit. The leaders of the town would go out to meet him and escort him to his final destination. Bruce says that this Greek word was so distinct in its meaning that it was carried over into Latin, where it was used with the same meaning. He says Cicero used it when Julius Caesar went on diplomatic visits. Because of this απάντησις was often used with its counterpart παρουσία, which refers to the official visit of a king or other dignitary.[457]

In each of its four New Testament uses (Matt 25:1, 6, Acts 28:15, 1 Thess 4:17), the word απάντησις carries the same meaning. We now know that the believers in Rome met Paul with a royal welcome in Acts 28:15, although he arrived as a prisoner. We know now that this is the reason that we will meet Jesus in the air in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, and not on the ground or in heaven. This is why the five virgins went out to meet the bridegroom in Matthew 25:1, 6.

It is interesting to note that I have seen this formal welcome given to important people in Uganda, East Africa on many occasions. The greater a man's importance in this culture, the larger the crowds that will welcome such dignitaries.

28:16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

---

[454]Albert Barnes, *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1863), 351.

[455]John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament,* vol. 2 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: William W. Woodward, 1811), 422.

[456]James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914-1929), 53.

[457]F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), 68-70.

28:16 **"And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard" – *Comments* –** The phrase "the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard" is omitted from the UBS[4].

The centurion that had custody of Paul was named Julius (Acts 27:1, 3). This centurion now favored Paul and probably instructed the captain of the guard to give Paul special privileges, such as being given living quarters by himself. Nevertheless, Paul still held the status of a prisoner under Roman military custody. Therefore, scholars suggest that an arrangement was made with one Burrus the Praetorian Perfect until A.D. 62, as Roman history leads us to believe, to confine Paul to his own hired house with one soldier being assigned to him instead of placing him within the Praetorian barracks with a multitude of other prisoners. The condition to this special confinement was the Paul had to be chained to a private guard 24-hours a day. Thus, Paul may have been subjected to some of the rough treatment that Roman soldiers so often inflicted upon their prisoners or with the successor of Burrus named Tigellinus.[458]

28:16 **"but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him" – *Comments* -** God gave Paul favor with man. This is because Paul walked in mercy and truth, as we see in Proverbs 3:3-4, "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man."

28:16 ***Comments* -** While in prison Paul wrote a number of epistles. We can more easily hear God's voice when we have time to be still and quiet. The Lord often speaks to me early in the mornings, or while sitting in church, or while flying an airplane or driving a car. It is in these times of quietness that I often hear from God.

28:17-29 **The Conclusion: Paul's Ministry in Rome (Glorification) -** Acts 28:17-29 records Paul's ministry in Rome while awaiting his first trial before the empire's highest court. These verses testify of the fulfillment of the primary prophecy in Acts 1:8 in which Jesus called the church to preach the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth. They also testify of the fulfillment of a secondary prophecy in Acts 21:11-12 exclusive to this block concerning Paul's arrest in Jerusalem. This passage of Scripture reflects the theme of the church's glorification/rest in that it records the church's fulfillment of Jesus' commission in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 28:17-29 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of the church's commission unto Rome:

> Exegetical Idea – Paul's mission to preach the Gospel in Rome fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of Israel's rejection of the Gospel.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Paul's mission to preach the Gospel in Rome fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of Israel's rejection of the Gospel,* God has watched over His Word to fulfill the prophecies of His servants concerning Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has watched over His Word to fulfill the prophecies of His servants concerning Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a role in biblical prophecy as he fulfills his divine calling.

The apostle Paul had followed the legal course of the Empire's judicial system since his arrest in Jerusalem four to five years earlier. He now writes Philippians 1:12-18 while sitting in chains awaiting trial in the highest court. We can glean two criminal accusations launched

[458]Bernard W. Henderson, *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Nero* (London: Methuen & Co., 1903), 135-136.

against him during the numerous trials of which he had progressed leading up to his hearing in Rome. David Garland tells us that Paul was accused of being an "apostate Jew" that incited the Jews to worship contrary to the Law (Acts 18:13; 21:21, 28). However, the more serious accusation that probably took him to the court of Rome was the claim that he was troubling cities by causing the populace to worship someone other than Caesar (Acts 16:20; 17:7, 18:12-17).[459] This second accusation was cause of concern in that it could result in the penalty of death for Paul.

28:17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

28:17 ***Comments –*** The Jewish population in Rome seems to have averaged about 50,000 during the first century out of a general population of perhaps one million people. After their expulsion by Tiberius, they soon returned in similar numbers. At least thirteen Jewish synagogues have been identified in Rome through ancient inscriptions and fragments. These Jewish synagogues were very organized in their administration, education, and jurisdiction, operating through community governments.[460] Therefore, it makes sense that these various synagogues in Rome would appoint a general overseer, which Paul describes as the chief of the Jews in Acts 28:17.

28:18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

28:19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

28:20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

28:20 **"I am bound with this chain" –** ***Comments*** **-** Heinrich Meyer notes that practice of chaining prisoners to a soldier was a Roman custom, and he gives several references.[461] Josephus tells us about Agrippa being chained to a soldier while in bonds (*Antiquities* 18.6.7). Pliny the Younger refers to sending a prisoner in chains (*Letters* 10.65).[462] Lucius Seneca writes, ". . . the same chain fastens the prisoner and the soldier who guards him . . ." (*Epistles on Morals* 5)[463]

28:21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

28:21 ***Comments*** **-** The Jews in Rome saw themselves under the authority of the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem, which was understood as the central authority of all Jewry. Therefore, Jewish leadership was able to exert tremendous influence over the Jewish synagogues of the

[459]David E. Garland, *Philippians,* In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Ephesians–Philemon,* revised edition, vol. 12, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 198, Logos.

[460]George la Piana, "Foreign Groups in Rome during the First Centuries of the Empire," *Harvard Theological Review* 20.4 (October 1927): 346-351.

[461]Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles,* trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884), 230.

[462]William Melmoth, trans., *The Letters of Pliny the Consul* (Boston, Mass: R. Larkin, 1809), 231.

[463]Richard M. Gummere, trans., *Seneca Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales,* vol. 1, in *The Loeb Classical Library*, eds. E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse (London: William Heinemann, 1935), 23.

Diaspora. In Acts 28:21 the Jews interpreted Paul's teachings in light of their Jewish heritage.

28:22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

28:24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

28:25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

28:26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

28:27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

28:29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

28:30-31 **The Establishment of the Gospel in Rome -** Acts 28:30-31 serves as a conclusion to the book of Acts, reflecting the theme of divine rest (glorification). The apostle Paul stands as the towering example of the office of the New Testament apostle in the book of Acts. He finds rest in fulfilling his destiny of taking the Gospel to Rome, which testifies of the primary divine commission of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8), and of his specific prophetic commission delivered by Ananias (Acts 9:15-16). In addition, Luke weaves within the plot of the book Paul's intent to preach in Rome (Acts 19:21; 23:11; 25:10-12; 27:24).

Literary Elements of the Structure - Each of the major sections of the book of Acts deals with the progressive expansion of the early Church (Jerusalem, Judea/Samaria and Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome). These sections generally follow a common plot of the proclamation of the Gospel, the response of persecution, and a victorious demonstration of the Holy Spirit to establish church growth. The concluding verses of these sections serve as "progress reports" on the expansion and establishment of the early Church (5:41-42; 9:31; 11:25-26; 12:24-25; 15:33-35; 19:20; 28:30-31) as a fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1:8.

Central Ideas - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 28:30-31 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul found a place of rest in Christ as he fulfilled his calling to take the Gospel to Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul found a place of rest in Christ as he fulfilled his calling to take the Gospel to Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God

has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants who fulfill their callings in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants who fulfill their callings in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a place of rest in Christ as he endeavors to fulfill his divine calling.

Paul's Two-Year Imprisonment (A.D. 61-62) – Acts 28:30-31 is considered a somewhat abrupt ending to the book of Acts, which leaves Paul in Roman imprisonment and his fate unresolved. If we consider the third imperative theme of Luke/Acts, we easily see these concluding remarks as a fulfillment of the office and ministry of the prophet and apostle. Ananias had prophesied that Paul was a chosen vessel to bear Christ's name to the Gentiles and kings and children of Israel (Acts 9:15-16). Paul fulfilled this prophecy as an apostle to the Gentiles by planting many churches in the Roman Empire, and by standing before the Emperor to appeal his case for recognition of the Christian faith, and by writing the book of Hebrews towards the end of his ministry. I believe that the book of Acts does not record Paul's public ministry after his release from this first Roman imprisonment because he had fulfilled his divine calling.

Comments on the Abrupt Ending to the Book of Acts - Many explanations for an abrupt ending to the book of Acts have been proposed by scholars; for the story ends with Paul sitting in prison preaching the Gospel and receiving all who came to him. Such an ending suggests that Luke may have intended on writing a third volume and failed? Perhaps Luke's death brought an abrupt end to his writing of the book of Acts? A popular view suggests that Luke's underlying intent was to write Acts as a defense for Paul's upcoming trial, since this writing clearly shows events that prove the innocence of those who lived and preached Christian faith. *Eusebius* tells us that Luke continued "his history down to the period when he was with Paul." (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.22.6)[464] Thus, Luke did not write after Paul's first imprisonment because Luke no longer traveled with him.

The most likely explanation of the abrupt ending lies in the understanding of the purpose of this book and how ancient historians wrote not only to provide information about historical events, but also to teach a moral or ethical lesson. It is important to understand the literary structure of the Gospels and Acts, that they are not just historical records, but that they were intended to be teaching tools for the early Church. The book of Acts is not intended to be a biography of Peter or Paul. Luke ends where he does because his purpose has been accomplished, which is to show that the early apostles had been empowered by the Holy Spirit to spread the Gospel "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Ending in Rome, Paul had taken the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Jeffrey Arthurs says that this ending "creates a sense of forward momentum. The gospel has reached the capital. Nothing can stop it! Stay tuned for updates."[465] In addition, this abrupt ending justifies the preaching of the Gospel as Luke proves that God has vindicated the apostolic ministry of the early Church.

In defense of the view that the abrupt ending of the book of Acts is intentional, Lechler and Gerok note that both Luke and Acts close with a double participial sentence structure. Luke

[464]Eusebius writes, "And Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, brought his history to a close at this point, after stating that Paul spent two whole years at Rome as a prisoner at large, and preached the word of God without restraint." (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.22.1)

[465]Jeffery D. Arthurs, *Preaching With Variety* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2007), 82.

closes with the phrase "praising and blessing God" (Lk 24:52-53), and Acts closes with "preaching . . . teaching" (Acts 28:30-31)[466]

Perhaps Paul's missionary journeys after his two-year Roman imprisonment are not recorded (although the Pastoral Epistles reveal some of his later ministry) because he finished his course, fulfilled his purpose and plan upon earth. Thus, this later material of Paul's life would serve no redemptive purpose in the overall scheme of the Holy Scriptures.

Finally, we know that the outcome of Paul's trial would not destroy the foundation that Paul had laid. The Church was now established and the gates of Hell could not prevail upon it nor overcome it, as Jesus told the apostle Peter, saying, "thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt 16:18)

Paul Writes Some of His Greatest Epistles During His Two-Year Imprisonment - It was during Paul's two-year imprisonment in Rome that he wrote some of his greatest epistles. William Burkitt said, "Satan had better have let these two holy men alone [referring to Paul and Luke], than have them cast into prison, for by their pens they battered the walls of his kingdom and made them shake about his ears."[467]

The Prison Epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon reveal how much freedom Paul had to visit and discuss issues with fellow Jews and believers. On one of these occasions when guests arrived to visit Paul, he received news from Epaphras about the believers at Colossi. This faithful messenger and perhaps the founding missionary of the church at Colossi (Col 1:7) had recently come to Rome and briefed Paul about the progress of the Gospel in this church that Paul had never actually visited. He informed Paul about their faith in Christ and of their love for one another (Col 1:4, 8). We know from the context of the short epistle of Philemon that Onesimus, a slave that belonged to Philemon, had fled to Paul for freedom. We do not know the cause of his flight nor why he sought Paul. During his exile in Rome Paul had led him to the Lord (1:10). The need to bring reconciliation to this situation resulted in Paul's letter to his owner named Philemon. From these two occasions, Paul also took the opportunity to write his less personal letter to the church at Ephesus, which he intended to be circulated among the other churches in this region. At a later date, the church at Philippi sent Epaphroditus to Paul with a love offering and with instructions to minister to his needs (Phil 4:18; 2:25). The events of this visit could have occasioned Paul's letter to the Philippians. For we assume that Epaphroditus brought news of the progress of church growth at Philippi and any pending problems. While in Rome this messenger becomes gravely ill, near unto death. When he was strong enough to return, Paul sent him back to inform the church of this illness (Phil 2:26-30). This return gave Paul the opportunity to write them a thank you letter for their offering to him and to give Epaphroditus the praise the he was worthy of receiving for his deed. Therefore, he is most likely the one who carried this epistle to the Philippian church. In addition, Paul was now intending to send Timothy to Philippi to deal with several issues that Epaphroditus has reported to him. Paul would first send Timothy and then follow up with a personal visit (Phil 2:19, 2:24). This letter thus serves to notify the church at Philippi to prepare for such visits.

Paul's Anointing in Relation to His Imprisonments – During a dream one night in May 2001, I was told that in each of Paul's imprisonments, he received a greater anointing of the Spirit in which to walk. When Paul writes his second epistle to the church at Corinth, he

[466]G. V. Lechler and K. Gerok, *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, Specially Designed and Adapted for the Use of Ministers and Students,* vol. 2, trans. Paton J. Gloag, ed. John P. Lange, in *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, third series, vol. 25 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1864), 456.

[467]William Burkitt, *The Acts of the Holy Apostles,* in *Expository Notes, with Practical Observations, The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Sorin & Ball, 1844), 589.

reveals to them the secret of his strength. He explains that it is in the midst of his persecutions that the grace of God rests upon him (2 Cor 12:10).

The Author's Rhetorical Use of Chiasm – Chiasm is a literary device used in antiquity that arranges thoughts and words into a symmetrical order. David Allen notes how Luke uses the rhetorical device of "chiasm" in the prologue and conclusion to the book of Acts. In his prologue to Acts, we find the key words "Jesus," "teach," and "kingdom of God" mentioned in this order, while the conclusion reverses this word order as "kingdom of God," "teaching," and "Jesus." Allen says this structure served as a "linguistic signature" of Luke.[468] Ancient literature used such rhetorical devices for emphasis or for the purpose of persuading one's listeners towards a particular view.[469] In this rhetorical device, Luke is testifying to the expansion of the kingdom of God through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the apostolic office of Paul and others.

28:30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

28:30 ***Comments -*** Apparently, it took two years for the process of his trial to be completed. The Roman court system would have required that Paul's accusers appear before Caesar in Rome. This would have taken time for his Jewish accusers to prepare their case and appoint a prosecutor to represent them. Thus, the distance that would be traveled, the nature of the Roman court system and the convenience of the Emperor would have probably accounted for the fact that Paul spent two whole years in prison.

28:31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

28:31 **"Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" –** ***Comments –*** The kingdom of God is the first (1:3) and last (28:31) topic mentioned in the book of Acts. This message was not only the center-piece of the preaching and teaching of Jesus Christ in the Gospels, but it dominates the book of Acts as well. While few scholars offer comments on the two phrases "Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ," a variety of views emerge from those that do comment. Some view these as parallel phrases; others interpret them as a distinction between Paul's evangelistic and teaching ministry; and others interpret them as a description of the principles of the kingdom of God plus the role of Jesus Christ as King.

1. Parallel Phrases - Some scholars suggest that there is no distinction between the phrases *preaching the kingdom of God* and *teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ* mentioned in Acts 28:31. For example, David Peterson says that these are two "parallel phrases."[470]

2. A Distinction between Paul's Apostolic and Teaching Ministries - Other scholars make attempts to distinguish between these two phrases. One group of scholars describes Paul's preaching as largely apostolic and his teaching as a focus towards those believers who were willing to listen to more in-depth exposition. For example, F. W. Stellhorn suggests that Paul's preaching in Acts 28:31 reflects his public ministry while his teaching reflects his

[468]David L. Allen, "Class Lecture," Doctor of Ministry Seminar, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 25 July to 5 August 2011.

[469]Gaston Boissier, *Tacitus and Other Roman Studies,* trans. W. G. Hutchison (London: Archibald Constable and Company, Ltd., 1906), 3.

[470]David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 722, Logos.

private ministry.[471] Joseph Alexander says Paul's preaching describes him "proclaiming as a herald" while his teaching reflects "explaining, as well as heralding, announcing" Jesus as the Messiah who fulfilled Old Testament Scriptures.[472]George Clark says Paul preached the kingdom of God to those who were new to this message, and he taught "the brethren and inquirers" about Jesus Christ.[473] John Calvin gives a great explanation to distinguish between the two phrases while acknowledging that they are still inseparable. He says Paul's teaching reflects "exposition" to explain how the kingdom of God is grounded in the understanding of the redemption of Christ Jesus. He says that the kingdom of God is established upon earth as men embrace Christ as their Saviour.[474]

3. A Description of the Principles of the Kingdom of God Plus the Role of Jesus Christ as King - Another group of scholars draws the distinction between Paul's preaching and teaching with a different focus. They say that Paul's preaching the kingdom of God incorporated the teachings of Christ Jesus in the Gospels concerning the establishment of this new kingdom upon the earth; and they define Paul's teaching as an explanation of Jesus' role as the ruler of this heavenly kingdom. For example, Melancthon Jacobus says Paul was "Preaching the kingdom of God—announcing that kingdom for which the Jews so anxiously inquired, as having already come . . . setting forth its spiritual nature and its world-wide plan—one feature of which was this, that this Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified on the charge of setting Himself up against Caesar—was to be King of the Nations . . ."[475] Thus, Paul explained the role of Jesus Christ as he announced the establishment of this world-wide kingdom of God. This interpretation fits best with the message of the kingdom of God that Jesus taught in the four Gospels. Prior to Jesus' ascension, He preached about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3) and He taught concerning His role in fulfillment of Scripture (Lk 24:27, 44-48).

A study of the introduction to the book of Acts supports this distinction between these two phrases. The "kingdom of God" is mentioned seven times in the book of Acts (1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). Three of these references make a distinction between the kingdom of God and the office and ministry of Jesus (8:12; 28:23, 31).

Acts 1:1-11 records that Jesus taught the disciples about things concerning the kingdom of God during the forty days following His resurrection (1:3). Nevertheless, the disciples understood this in a narrow sense to mean the restoration of the nation of Israel, so they asked Him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" The disciples understood that Jesus was the Messiah, who would rule and reign from Jerusalem, delivering Israel from Roman oppression. Yet, they lacked understanding regarding the role of the Gentile church. Therefore, Luke answers this question in Acts 1:6 through the speeches recorded in the book of Acts, which reveals how the kingdom of Israel would be restored. God has predestined the restoration of Israel in the fullness of time according to prophecy when He restores all things through the establishment of the kingdom of God and the lordship of Jesus Christ, a restoration which includes the Gentiles who have accepted Israel's Messiah. Thus, the sermons of Peter and Paul included the element of the restoration

---

[471]F. W. Stellhorn, *Annotations on the Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Lutheran Commentary: A Plain Exposition of the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament,* vol. 6, ed. Henry Eyster Jacobs (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1896), 416.

[472]Joseph Addison Alexander, *The Acts of the Apostles Explained,* vol. 2 (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1857), 496-497.

[473]George W. Clark, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles: Explanatory and Practical* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1892), 413.

[474]John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. second (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 431.

[475]Melancthon W. Jacobus, *Notes, Critical and Explanatory, on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1859), 429.

of all things through the prophetic fulfillment of the passion, resurrection, and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 3:14-26; 10:40-42; 17:30-31).

The disciples believed that the restoration of the kingdom of Israel included the restoration of their economic, educational, religious, and cultural livelihoods. The disciples were hoping that Jesus would restore their livelihoods in the sense that the Jews would have the liberties to enjoy life as God had ordained mankind to enjoy, having been delivered from Gentile dominance. However, the kingdom of God incorporates the Gentile church as well as the future restoration of Israel. Paul's ministry proved that the restoration of the kingdom of God included the Gentiles, and Israel's restoration must be achieved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, the preaching of the kingdom of God would have incorporated the teachings of Jesus Christ in the Gospels as He revealed the principles that were to govern the live of God's children. The teachings of things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ would have include the Old Testament prophecies of His life and ministry and atonement, justifying His role as the Messiah in the kingdom of God.

"with all confidence" – *Comments* - The Greek word παρρησία (boldness) is used five times within the book of Acts, as well as other synonyms. Therefore, the motif of preaching the Gospel boldly is woven throughout the book of Acts as the early Church preached boldly amidst much opposition (Acts 4:13, 29, 31; 9:27-28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 26:26).[476]

"no man forbidding him" – *Comments* - Luke develops at least six plots within the book of Acts that develop into a climax before reaching a resolution. The conflict of the final plot is the shipwreck and Paul's miraculous deliverance from the snake bit. The resolution of this plot is reached when Paul arrives in Rome and preaches the Gospel unhindered for two years. The fact that Paul was unhindered (ἀκωλύτως) while in Roman prison serves as evidence that the opposition to the Gospel that Luke recorded throughout the book of Acts was unjustified. Because Paul preached and taught in the imperial city of Rome for two whole years without causing an uprising against the Emperor, Luke ends the book of Acts with a final testimony to prove that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was not a threat to Rome.

[476]David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles,* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary,* ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 723, Logos.

APPENDIX 1: THEMATIC SCHEME OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="7">Gen 1:1-2:3—Predestination (The Creation Story)</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="7">Gen 2-11—The Calling of the Seventy Nations
Gen 12-50—The Calling of Israel as a Nation</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="7">Exodus—Deliverance (Justification) & Doctrine</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="7">Leviticus—Divine Service</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="7">Numbers—Perseverance: Persecutions</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="7">Deuteronomy—Perseverance: False Doctrines</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="7">Joshua-Judges—Israel's Glorification (Rest) & Failure</td><td colspan="2">Ruth – Predestination of the Davidic Lineage</td><td colspan="2">1 Samuel – Calling of the Davidic Lineage</td><td colspan="2">2 Samuel – Justification of the Davidic Lineage</td><td colspan="2">1-2 Kings – Doctrine of the Kingdom & Redemption in Davidic Lineage</td><td colspan="2">1-2 Chronicles – Divine Service of Israel & Redemption in Davidic Lineage</td><td colspan="2">Ezra – Perseverance of Israel (Persecution)</td><td colspan="2">Nehemiah – Perseverance of the Israel (False Doctrine)</td><td colspan="2">Esther – Glorification of the Davidic Lineage</td><td colspan="2">Job – Our Example</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Lamentations – Our Example</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Psalms – Our Example</td><td colspan="2">Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Nahum, Zephaniah, Obadiah, Habakkuk</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="28" rowspan="6">Israel's Monarchy
The Acts of God
(Rom 15:1, 1 Cor 6, 11)</td><td colspan="2">Proverbs – The Mind</td><td colspan="2">Isaiah – Jesus' Role in Israel's Redemption</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Ecclesiastes – The Body</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Jeremiah – The Father's Role in Israel's Redemption</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Songs – The Heart</td><td colspan="4" rowspan="4">Daniel
The Times of the Gentiles</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="4">Ezekiel– The Spirit's Role in Israel's Redemption</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Poetry of Israel The Heart of God</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Prophecy of Israel
The Mind of God
(1 Pet 1:10-11)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="14">Israel's Theocracy</td><td colspan="28">Serve the Lord with all thine heart, mind, and strength (Deut 6:4-6)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="42">God's Plan of Redemption for the Nation of Israel</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="42">Foreknowledge of God The Father</td></tr>
</table>

APPENDIX 2: THEMATIC SCHEME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew – Testimony of Scripture	Mark - Testimony of Christ's miracles	Luke – Testimony of John & others Acts - Testimony of Apostles	Ephesians – His Role	Philippians - Our Role	Colossians –- His Role	Galatians –- Our Role	1 & 2 Thessalonians –- His Role	1 & 2 Corinthians –- Our Role	1 & 2 Timothy – Role of Our Spirit	Titus – Role of Our Mind	Philemon - Role of Our Body	Hebrew – The High Priesthood of Jesus Christ	James – Our Sanctification by the Holy Spirit	1 Peter – Our Divine Election by God the Father	2 Peter - Mind	1, 2, 3 John - Spirit	Jude - Body	The Book of Revelation
			Foreknowledge of the Father		Justification Thru Jesus Christ		Sanctification by Holy Spirit										
			Romans - Justification thru God the Father (Rom. 8:28-30)						Pastoral Epistles - Church Order & Discipline			Persecutions From Without (1 Pet. 1:2)			False Doctrines From Within			Glorification of the Church
			Church Epistles - Doctrine									General Epistles - Perseverance in the Faith						
John - Testimony of Jesus as the Son of God			Sanctification by the Holy Spirit - New Testament Epistles															
Justification in Jesus Christ																		
Foreknowledge of God The Father																		

APPENDIX 3: CENTRAL IDEAS FOR SERMON PREPARATION

"An exegetical outline displays a passage's thought flow; a homiletical outline organizes a preacher's explanation, development, application, and communication of a passage's truths."[477]
(Bryan Chapell)

The introductory material of this bible commentary searches for the theological framework of the book in order to identify the author's thought flow, allowing for more accurate exegesis of the biblical text. The following collection of central ideas of the text has come out of this research to aid the preacher in sermon preparation. The three-fold sets of central ideas in this collection attempt to identify the ideas the writer intended for his original readers (exegetical ideas), the enduring and timeless doctrinal statements that remains true throughout history (theological ideas), and the Gospel's call towards men for a particular response to the text (homiletical ideas). As such, the following exegetical, theological, and homiletical ideas provide an outline that endeavours to shape the flow of thought of the biblical text into messages that can be clearly communicated to a modern audience. In this way, the preacher/teacher of this book of the Bible can lead his audience towards the intended destination of the author.[478] These central ideas are an effort to understand what the author meant to say to his original recipients and to communicate this message to a modern audience.

Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures defines 'exegetical idea' as the main idea of a block, a section, a subsection, or a pericope of the text within the theological framework of a book that best expresses what the writer intended for his original readers. Therefore, this idea is written using verbs in the past tense. For example, the exegetical idea of Matthew 1:1-2:12 says 'The Old Testament Scriptures testify that Jesus Christ was predestined to be the Messiah, having fulfilled the Messianic prophecies concerning His humanity, deity, and Davidic kingship'.

Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures defines 'theological idea' as the primary theme of a block, a section, a subsection, or a pericope of the text within the theological framework of a book that best reflects and supports its primary theme. The theological idea is an enduring and timeless, doctrinal statement that remains true throughout history. Therefore, this idea is written using verbs in the present perfect tense. This idea uses the evidence of the exegetical idea to reflect the primary theme of the book. For example, the theological idea of Matthew 1:1-2:12 says 'Because He has proven to be both fully man and fully God, destined to reign as Lord over all (secondary theme), Jesus Christ is the Messiah and the Son of God (primary theme)'.

Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures defines 'homiletical idea' as the imperative theme of a block, a section, a subsection, or a pericope of the text within the theological framework of a book that best reflects the required response of the reader. The homiletical idea reflects the Gospel's call towards men for a particular

---

[477]Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching – Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 129.

[478]The advantage of this three-fold approach to biblical studies has been recognized by the authors of *Theologisch-homileticsches Bibelwerk: Die Heilige Schrift. Alten und Neuen Testaments mit Rücksicht auf das theologisch-homiletische Bedürfniss des pastoralen Umtes in Berbindung mit namhasten evangelischen Theologen* (Bielefeld: Belhagen und Klasing, 1857-77), edited by Johann Peter Lange. This work was later translated into English as *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal, and Homiletical with special reference to ministers and students* in twenty-five volumes (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1865-80) under the general editorship of Philip Schaff. The commentary notes in this series are divided into the same three categories: (1) exegetical and critical, (2) doctrinal and ethical, and (3) homiletical and practical. Later biblical commentary series can be grouped into three major categories: critical, devotional, and homiletical. These groups also reflect the exegetical-theological-homiletical approach used in *Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures.*

response based upon the theological idea. This idea best expresses what the book means for today's readers. Therefore, this idea is written using verbs in the present tense. For example, the homiletical idea of Matthew 1:1-2:12 says, 'Because Jesus is the Son of God (primary theme), as testified through His predestined birth as the Messiah (secondary theme), the Gospel calls men to place their faith in Jesus Christ as both the Son of man and Son of God, destined to reign as Lord over all (imperative theme)'.

This collection of central ideas provides a theme-based approach for crafting exegetical studies on a book into a cohesive, text-driven, expository sermon series with a clear destination for its hearers. This approach to the biblical text follows the book's theological framework, which is the key to avoiding fragmentation. Crafting sermons around the book's framework aids the expository preacher in the delivery of a sequence of connected sermons/teachings with a clearly defined destination for the hearers.[479]

A sermon series requires theological cohesion at its macro and micro-levels if the expository preacher is to take his congregation on the spiritual journey shaped from a book of the Bible. Each sermon of this spiritual journey should continually echo the book's central theme within its theological framework throughout the series. A clear, central theme supported by secondary themes allows the congregation to follow the preacher's messages as he leads them toward the spiritual transformation specific for that book. Therefore, an individual sermon text should hinge upon the central idea of its context, and this context should reflect the theological framework of the book itself.[480]

In addition, the preacher should design the sermon series within the Christocentric framework of the Scriptures themselves. Specifically, the book's theological framework should support the central theme of the book itself, as well as the overarching theme of the major division of the Bible into which it is placed. Therefore, every sermon should reflect an aspect of the central theme of the book, and this central theme must fit properly within the theme of its major division in reflecting the overarching, Christocentric theme of the Holy Scriptures.[481] In order to design a sermon series into this type of cohesive unity at all levels, the preacher needs a theological, or theme-based approach that effectively identifies the central ideas at the macro-level as well as micro-level of the book's sermon pericopae.[482]

This approach allows the text-driven preacher to follow the book's theological framework when preparing sermon outlines that reflect a clear and focused set of connected messages. He is able to develop a sermon series that clearly navigates through the biblical text and presents a clear destination for the congregation. This theme-based approach serves to bridge the gap between exegesis and homiletics by revealing a book's theological framework. A book's theological framework is the 'bridge' between exegesis and homiletics.

The proposed theological framework of for the book of Acts reveals an outline that accommodates either a 7-sermon series as a brief survey of the book, or an exhaustive 23-sermon series addressing each pericopae. (A pericope consists of an entire unit of thought within a passage of scripture.) With these options, the preacher can determine the length of the sermon series without compromising the focus of its journey toward preaching the Gospel to all nations. With larger books of the Bible, such as the book of Acts, he may choose

---

[479]Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), xiv. Graeme Goldsworthy says, "In my experience the preaching of a series of sermons, say, from an epistle, easily leads the preacher to fragmentation. . . ." He says fragmentation disconnects Paul's doctrinal message in the first part of the epistle from his practical message in the last part.

[480]For this reason, homileticians recommend reading the entire book numerous times in several versions in preparation for exegesis of its individual passages.

[481]Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 57. Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix echo the view of modern, conservative biblical hermeneutics by saying, "From beginning to end, the Bible has one overarching theme: the redemption of God's creation."

[482]Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching—Redeeming the Expository Sermon,* 2nd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 16. Bryan Chapell discusses the need for preachers to find a place for each passage of Scripture in "the historical sweep of God's redemptive plan." He believes a preacher will find more success in preaching sermons as he discovers the redemptive message of Scriptures at both the micro and macro-levels.

to break this lengthy series into blocks by returning to the book after scheduled sermons on other books or topics.[483]

Here is the collection of central ideas of the text for the book of Acts:

The Church's Duty (Act 1:1-26)
(The Lord's Commission)

Survey 1 (Acts 1:1-26) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 1:1-26 emphasizing the duty of the church through Jesus' apostolic commission to the church and calling of the Twelve:

Exegetical Idea – Jesus Christ established the church with its duties through a divine commission and the calling of the Twelve.

Theological Idea – Because Jesus Christ established the church with its duties through a divine commission and the calling of the Twelve, God has established the church with its duties through Jesus' divine commission and the calling of the Twelve.

Homiletical Idea – Because God has established the church with its duties through Jesus' divine commission and the calling of the Twelve, every child of God has a duty in the church in God's plan of redemption as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations.

Introduction (Predestination)

Sermon 1 (Acts 1:1-14) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 1:1-14 emphasizing the predestined plan of the church through Jesus' apostolic commission to the Twelve:

Exegetical Idea – Jesus Christ commissioned the apostles to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Theological Idea – Because Jesus Christ commissioned the apostles to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth, God has predestined the church to be a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations.

Homiletical Idea – Because God has predestined the church to be a witness to the nations, every child of God is predestined to serve a role in God's plan of redemption as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations.

The Witness of the Calling of Twelve Disciples (Calling)

Sermon 2 (Acts 1:15-26) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 1:15-26 emphasizing the divine calling of the church:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples returned to Jerusalem and selected Matthias to replace the office of Judas Iscariot in fulfillment of Scripture to establish the church so that it could go forth to fulfill its divine calling.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples returned to Jerusalem and selected Matthias to replace the office of Judas Iscariot in fulfillment of Scripture to establish the church so that it could go forth to fulfill its divine calling,* God has called out and appointed believers to the offices of the church to establish it as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Scripture.

[483]Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 66. Chapell echoes the popular view that the average preacher should limit a sermon series to a maximum of a few months. However, it is possible to break a lengthy series into blocks so that they are not delivered in sequence, but rather spread out over an extended period of time.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has called out and appointed believers to the offices of the church to establish it as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Scripture*, every child of God is called to serve a role in God's plan of redemption as a witness of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Scripture.

The Church's Power (Acts 2:1-5:42)
(Preaching the Gospel with Miracles, Signs, and Wonders)

The Witness of Church Growth in Jerusalem (Justification)

Survey 2 (Acts 2:1-5:42) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:1-5:42 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit and preached the Gospel with signs following as God authenticated the church to those in Jerusalem in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit and preached the Gospel with signs following as God authenticated the church to those in Jerusalem in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has authenticated the church with the baptism of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church with the baptism of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by preaching the Gospel with signs following through the baptism of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 3a (Acts 2:1-4) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:1-4 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The Holy Spirit was sent from Heaven to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit was sent from Heaven to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His Spirit to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has sent forth His Spirit to authenticate and empower the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should be authenticated through the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to testify of the Gospel in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 3b (Acts 2:5-41) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:5-41 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Peter boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus was both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures, authenticating the church and adding three thousand souls to it as a fulfillment of the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus was both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures, authenticating the church and adding three thousand souls to it as a fulfillment of the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has authenticated the

church through the preaching of Jesus as both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church through the preaching of Jesus as both Lord and Christ according to the Scriptures in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermons 4-5 (Acts 2:42-5-40) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:42-5:40 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Peter boldly preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter boldly preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 4 (2:42-4:31) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 2:42-4:31 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Peter boldly declared in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord after healing the blind man, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter boldly declared in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord after healing the blind man, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders,* God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church as it boldly declares that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 5a (4:32-5:40) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 4:32-5:40 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The Lord vindicated Peter as he preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition by judging the church and working miracles, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Lord vindicated Peter as he preached the Gospel in Jerusalem with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition by judging the church and working miracles, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* the Lord has

provided vindication for those who preach the Gospel with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because the Lord has provided vindication for those who preach the Gospel with signs following amidst wrongdoing and opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Sermon 5b (Acts 5:41-42) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 5:41-42 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Jerusalem confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples fulfilled Jesus' apostolic commission by boldly preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Jerusalem, rejoicing amidst persecutions, and authenticating the church.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples fulfilled Jesus' apostolic commission by boldly preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Jerusalem, rejoicing amidst persecutions, and authenticating the church,* God has anointed the church to fulfill Jesus' apostolic commission by bolding preaching the Gospel while rejoicing amidst persecutions.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church to fulfill Jesus' apostolic commission by bolding preaching the Gospel while rejoicing amidst persecutions*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by bolding preaching the Gospel as they rejoice amidst persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

The Church's Structure (Acts 6:1-11:26)
(The Development of the Five-Fold Ministries and Office of the Deacon)

The Witness of Church Growth in Judea/Samaria (Indoctrination)

Survey 3 (Acts 6:1-9:31) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 6:1-9:31 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples were anointed to preach the Gospel accompanied with signs and wonders as God authenticated the church to those throughout Judea/Samaria in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples were anointed to preach the Gospel accompanied with signs and wonders as God authenticated the church to those throughout Judea/Samaria in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has authenticated the church with the anointing of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has authenticated the church with the anointing of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every anointed child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by preaching the Gospel with signs following through the anointing of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 6a (Acts 6:1-7) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 6:1-7 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The Holy Spirit anointed disciples to serve the body of Christ so that the apostles could dedicate themselves to prayer and ministry of the word and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit anointed disciples to serve the body of Christ so that the apostles could dedicate themselves to prayer and ministry of the word and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* the Holy Spirit has anointed believers to serve the body of Christ so that the five-fold ministry can attend to preaching the Gospel and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit has anointed believers to serve the body of Christ so that the five-fold ministry can attend to preaching the Gospel and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, believers are to be filled with the Spirit and serve the body of Christ so that the five-fold ministry can attend to preaching the Gospel and authenticate the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 6b (Acts 6:8-8:1a) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 6:8-8:1a emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Stephen boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst signs and wonders, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders who killed him.

Theological Idea – *Because Stephen boldly testified in Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst signs and wonders, authenticating the church and creating opposition from the Jewish leaders who killed him,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following amidst opposition, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declare that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following amidst opposition, in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermons 7-8 (Acts 8:1b-9:30) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 8:1b-9:30 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The church scattered throughout Judea and Samaria after Stephen's death, bolding testifying that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions, authenticating the church and being vindicated by the Lord in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the church scattered throughout Judea and Samaria after Stephen's death, bolding testifying that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions, authenticating the church and being vindicated by the Lord,* the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they boldly testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they boldly testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly testifying that Jesus Christ is Lord amidst opposition, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Sermon 7 (Acts 8:1b-40) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 8:1b-40 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – Philip boldly testified in Judea/Samaria that Jesus Christ was Lord accompanied with signs and wonders, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Philip boldly testified in Judea/Samaria that Jesus Christ was Lord accompanied with signs and wonders, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ accompanied with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus is Lord and Christ accompanied with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 8a (Acts 9:1-30) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:1-30 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The Lord vindicated the church through Paul's conversion as the disciples boldly declared that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Lord vindicated the church through Paul's conversion as the disciples boldly declared that Jesus Christ was Lord amidst persecutions, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they declare that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because the Lord has provided vindication for the church amidst wrongdoing and opposition as they declare that Jesus is Lord and Christ with signs following, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to authenticate the church by boldly declaring that Jesus Christ is Lord amidst opposition, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Sermon 8b (Acts 9:31) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:31 emphasizing the justification (authentication) of the church's commission in Judea/Samaria confirmed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the working of miracles:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples were strengthened throughout Judea/Samaria after Saul's conversion and multiplied amidst the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples were strengthened throughout Judea/Samaria after Saul's conversion and multiplied amidst the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has edified those who walk in the fear of the Lord amidst persecution through the comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has edified those who walk in the fear of the Lord amidst persecution through the comfort of the Holy Spirit, authenticating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, believers are to walk in the fear of the Lord amidst persecution so that they can be strengthened by the comfort of the Holy Spirit and authenticate the church.

The Witness of Church Growth unto Antioch (Indoctrination)

Survey 4 (Acts 9:32-11:26) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:32-11:26 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – The disciples boldly preached the Gospel and taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the disciples boldly preached the Gospel and taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to indoctrinate the church by preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 9a (9:32-42) **-** Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:32-42 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Peter testified of Jesus Christ throughout Judea and Samaria with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter testified of Jesus Christ throughout Judea and Samaria with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His servants to testify of Jesus with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has sent forth His servants to testify of Jesus with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to testify of Jesus with signs following in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 9b (9:43-10:48) **-** Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 9:43-10:48 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Peter testified of Jesus Christ to the household of Cornelius the Gentile through a divine vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter testified of Jesus Christ to the household of Cornelius the Gentile through a divine vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God divinely sends forth His servants to testify of Jesus to all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God divinely sends forth His servants to testify of Jesus to all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to go forth divinely to testify of Jesus to all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 10 (Acts 11:1-24) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:1-24 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Peter and Barnabas confirmed that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel through the baptism of the Holy Spirit as God vindicated His church amidst persecution, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Peter and Barnabas confirmed that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel through the baptism of the Holy Spirit as God vindicated His church amidst persecution, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has vindicated His servants amidst persecutions as they testify that Jesus Christ is Lord of all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has vindicated His servants amidst persecutions as they testify that Jesus Christ is Lord of all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to boldly declare amidst opposition that Jesus Christ is Lord to all nations, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Sermon 10a (Acts 11:1-18) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:1-18 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

> Exegetical Idea – Peter confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Peter confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has confirmed to His servants through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Word of God is to indoctrinate all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has confirmed to His servants through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the Word of God is to indoctrinate all nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a mandate to teach God's Word to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 10b (Acts 11:19-24) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:19-24 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

> Exegetical Idea – Barnabas confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the grace of God that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel and taught the Word of God in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas confirmed to the church in Jerusalem through the evidence of the grace of God that the Gentiles are recipients of the Gospel and taught the Word of God in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has confirmed to His servants through the evidence of His grace that all nations are recipients of the Gospel in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission.
>
> Homiletical Idea – *Because God has confirmed to His servants through the evidence of His grace that all nations are recipients of the Gospel in fulfillment Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a mandate to teach God's Word to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 10c (Acts 11:25-26) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:25-26 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul taught the Word to both Jews and Gentiles as far as Antioch, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations, indoctrinating the church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has anointed the church with the Holy Spirit to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to indoctrinate the church by preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

The Church's Organization (Acts 11:27-28:31)
(The Writing of New Testament Epistles to Establish Church Order)

The Witness of Church Growth to the Gentiles

Surveys 5-7 (Acts 11:27-28:31) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:27-28:31 emphasizing the divine service, perseverance, and glorification of the church's commission unto Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commi*ssion*,* God has appointed the church to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Greater Setting: Missionary Outreach Shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch

Sermon 11 (Acts 11:27-12:25) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 11:27-12:25 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Jerusalem and Antioch:

Exegetical Idea – Missionary outreach shifts from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch amidst famine and persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because missionary outreach shifts from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch amidst famine and persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has watched over His church so that it is able to take the Gospel to the nations amidst hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has watched over His church so that it is able to take the Gospel to the nations amidst hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is a part of the mandate to take the Gospel to all nations amidst hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission, trusting that the Lord will watch over him.

Sermon 11 (Acts 12:24-25) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 12:24-25 emphasizing the indoctrination of believers in Judea/Samaria:

Exegetical Idea – The Word of God grew and multiplied in Antioch through the teaching ministries of Barnabas and Saul in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Word of God grew and multiplied in Antioch through the teaching ministries of Barnabas and Saul in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has established His Word upon the earth through His church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has established His Word upon the earth through His church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God is a part of the mandate to established His Word upon the earth in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

The Witness of Church Growth unto Asia Minor (Divine Service)

***Survey 5 (Acts 13:1-15:35)* -** Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 13:1-15:35 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions were sent forth by the Holy Spirit into divine service as far as Asia Minor to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions were sent forth by the Holy Spirit into divine service as far as Asia Minor to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has appointed the church to divine service in order to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church to divine service in order to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has a role in divine service to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 12a (Acts 13:1-3) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 13:1-3 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul were appointed for divine service by the Holy Spirit and the church in Antioch to take the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul were appointed for divine service by the Holy Spirit and the church in Antioch to take the Gospel to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has appointed the church to various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church to various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should seek to understand his role in divine service in preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 12b (Acts 13:4-48) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 13:4-48 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews and Gentiles as far as Asia Minor with signs and wonders amidst opposition from the Jews in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews and Gentiles as far as Asia Minor with signs and wonders amidst opposition from the Jews in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His servants in various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has sent forth His servants in various roles of divine services to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has a role to support those sent forth in divine service in preaching/teaching the Gospel to the nations with signs following amidst opposition in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 13a (Acts 14:1-15:32) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 14:1-15:32 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul established the churches they planted in Asia Minor and confirmed God's acceptance of the Gentiles without circumcision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul established the churches they planted in Asia Minor and confirmed God's acceptance of the Gentiles without circumcision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has sent forth His servants to establish churches among the nations in the liberties of the Gospel Jesus Christ in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul established the churches they planted in Asia Minor and confirmed God's acceptance of the Gentiles without circumcision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has a role to support those sent forth in divine service to establish the church among the nations in the liberties of the Gospel Jesus Christ in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 13b (Acts 15:33-35) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 15:33-35 emphasizing the divine service of the church's commission unto Asia Minor:

Exegetical Idea – Barnabas and Paul served in the church in Antioch after having fulfilled their task to take the Gospel to Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Barnabas and Paul served in the church in Antioch after having fulfilled their task to take the Gospel to Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has appointed His servants to serve out of the local church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed His servants to serve out of the local church in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should support the local church in divine service in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

The Witness of Church Growth to Macedonia (Perseverance amidst Hardships)

Survey 6 (Acts 15:36-19:20) **-** Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 15:36-19:20 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Macedonia in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Macedonia in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has made provision so that the church can persevere and preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has made provision so that the church can persevere and preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has divine provision so that he perseveres and preaches/teaches the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 14a (Acts 15:36-16:5) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 15:36-16:5 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia:

Exegetical Idea – Paul goes forth with Silas from the church in Antioch to strengthen believers in Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul goes forth with Silas from the church in Antioch to strengthen believers in Asia Minor in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has appointed the church leaders to strengthen and establish fellow believers in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has appointed the church leaders to strengthen and establish fellow believers in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should support church leaders in strengthening fellow believers in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 14b (Acts 16:6-18:22) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 16:6-18:22 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia amidst persecutions from without:

Exegetical Idea – The Holy Spirit led Paul and his companions as far as Macedonia as they persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because the Holy Spirit led Paul and his companions as far as Macedonia as they persevered amidst hardships and persecutions to preach the Gospel in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has planted His church among the nations through His servants as they can persevere against hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has planted His church among the nations through His servants as they can persevere against hardships and persecutions in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has divine provision to persevere amidst hardships and persecutions while preaching/teaching the Gospel among the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 15a (Acts 18:23-19:19) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 18:23-19:19 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission unto Macedonia amidst false doctrines from within:

Exegetical Idea – Apollos and Paul established the Word of God in Achaia and Asia Minor as they persevered amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Apollos and Paul established the Word of God in Achaia and Asia Minor as they persevered amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,*

God has established His Word in the nations through His servants as they persevere amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has established His Word in the nations through His servants as they persevere amidst false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God has divine provision to persevere while establishing God's Word in the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 15b (Acts 19:20) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:20 emphasizing the perseverance of the church's commission to take the Gospel to Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions completed their commissions to establish the Word of God in Asia Minor, Achaia, and Greece as they persevered amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions completed their commissions to establish the Word of God in Asia Minor, Achaia, and Greece as they persevered amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has raised up His servants to establish His Word among the nations as they persevere amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has raised up His servants to establish His Word among the nations as they persevere amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should fulfill his individual role to establish God's Word in the nations amidst hardships and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

The Witness of Church Growth unto Rome

Survey 7 (Acts 19:21-28:29) **-** Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:21-28:29 emphasizing the glorification of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul and his companions found a place of rest in Christ amidst hardships as they preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul and his companions found a place of rest in Christ amidst hardships as they preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has provided a place of rest in Christ for those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a place of rest in Christ for those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God must find a place of rest in Christ in order to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 16a (Acts 19:21-22) **-** Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:21-22 emphasizing the glorification of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul purposed in his spirit to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul purposed in his spirit to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has provided a plan with a destiny for

those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a plan with a destiny for those who preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should strive to fulfill his divine destiny in order to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermons 16b (Acts 19:23-20:38) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 19:23-20:38 emphasizing the perseverance amidst offenses/false doctrines of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul exhorted the church elders to watch over their churches amidst offenses and false doctrines to that he could visit Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul exhorted the church elders to watch over their churches amidst offenses and false doctrines to that he could visit Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has organized His church with divine leadership to defend it against offenses and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has organized His church with divine leadership to defend it against offenses and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God should serve his church leadership to enable them to defend the church against offenses and false doctrines in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermons 17-21 (Acts 21:1-26:32) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 21:1-26:32 emphasizing the four phases of Paul's apostleship: predestined, called, justified, glorified:

Exegetical Idea – Paul defended his apostleship as he determined to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul defended his apostleship as he determined to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has empowered those who determine to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has empowered those who determine to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God must determine to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission trusting that God will empower him amidst trials and hardships.

Sermon 17 (Acts 21:1-14) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 21:1-14 emphasizing the Paul's decision to fulfill his apostleship by taking the Gospel to Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul decided to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome amidst warnings of persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul decided to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ as far as Rome amidst warnings of persecution in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has His servants to make a determined decision to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has His servants to make a determined decision to fulfill their assignments to preach/teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, every child of God must determine to fulfill his mandate to preach/teach the Gospel to the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission trusting that God will empower him amidst trials and hardships.

Sermon 18 (Acts 21:15-22:29) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 21:15-22:29 emphasizing the predestination of Paul's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul declared his innocence in his first trial before the Jewish mob based upon his heavenly vision and predestined divine commission in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul declared his innocence in his first trial before the Jewish mob based upon his heavenly vision and predestined divine commission in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has predestined His servants to receive their assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has predestined His servants to receive their assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is predestined to receive a divine assignment amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 19 (Acts 22:30-23:35) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 22:30-23:35 emphasizing the calling of Paul's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Jesus reaffirmed His divine calling to Paul after his second trial amidst hostilities in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Jesus reaffirmed His divine calling to Paul after his second trial amidst hostilities in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has called His servants to fulfill their assignments amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has called His servants to fulfill their assignments amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God is called to fulfill their assignments amidst hardships in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 20 (Acts 24:1-27) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 24:1-27 emphasizing the justification of Paul's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul declared his innocence in his third trial before Felix based upon his faith in the Jewish Scriptures and the resurrection from the dead in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul declared his innocence in his third trial before Felix based upon his faith in the Jewish Scriptures and the resurrection from the dead in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has justified His servants who obey Him through their faith in the resurrection of Jesus in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has justified His servants who obey Him through their faith in the resurrection of Jesus in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God should endeavor to obey Him through his faith in the resurrection of Jesus in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 21 (Acts 25-26:32) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 25:1-26:32 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of Paul's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul declared his innocence in his fourth trial before King Agrippa based upon his service to his Jewish people as well as his obedience to a heavenly vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul declared his innocence in his fourth trial before King Agrippa based upon his service to his Jewish people as well as his obedience to a heavenly vision in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission*, God has required His servants to fulfill their divine assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has required His servants to fulfill their divine assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God should endeavor to fulfill their divine assignments in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Sermon 22 (Acts 27:1-28:16) - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 27:1-28:16 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul found a place of rest in Christ as God vindicated him during his voyage at sea through a miraculous deliverance in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul found a place of rest in Christ as God vindicated him during his voyage at sea through a miraculous deliverance in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants as He vindicates their injustice in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants as He vindicates their injustice in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a place of rest in Christ amidst injustice in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission, trusting that the Lord will vindicate all wrongdoing and work miracles.

Sermon 23a (Acts 28:17-29) – *Central Ideas* - Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 28:17-29 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul's mission to preach the Gospel in Rome fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of Israel's rejection of the Gospel.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul's mission to preach the Gospel in Rome fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of Israel's rejection of the Gospel,* God has watched over His Word to fulfill the prophecies of His servants concerning Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has watched over His Word to fulfill the prophecies of His servants concerning Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a role in biblical prophecy as he fulfills his divine calling.

The Establishment of the Gospel in Rome

Sermon 23b (Acts 28:30-31) – Here are proposed statements expressing the central ideas of Acts 28:30-31 emphasizing the glorification/fulfillment of the church's commission unto Rome:

Exegetical Idea – Paul found a place of rest in Christ as he fulfilled his calling to take the Gospel to Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Theological Idea – *Because Paul found a place of rest in Christ as he fulfilled his calling to take the Gospel to Rome in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* God has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants who fulfill their callings in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission.

Homiletical Idea – *Because God has provided a place of rest in Christ for His servants who fulfill their callings in fulfillment of Jesus' apostolic commission,* every child of God has a place of rest in Christ as he endeavors to fulfill his divine calling.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bible Commentaries

Alexander, Joseph Addison. *The Acts of the Apostles,* 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner, 1858.

Alford, Henry. *The Greek Testament: With A Critically Revised Text,* 4 vols., third edition. London: Rivington's, Waterloo Place, 1857.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected out of the Works of the Fathers,* vol. 1, part 1, second edition. Oxford: John Henry, 1864.

Arrington, French L. *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary.* Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1988.

Barnes, Albert. *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Acts of the Apostles.* New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1863.

Beasley-Murray, George R. *John.* In *Word Biblical Commentary,* vol. 36, second edition. Eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1999. Logos.

Bingham, Geoffrey C. *The Acts of the Apostles*. In *New Creation Publications Commentary Series.* Adelaide, South Australia: New Creation Publications, Inc., 1982.

Block, Daniel I. *Judges, Ruth.* In *New American Commentary,* vol. 6. Ed. E. Ray Clendenen. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999. Logos.

Bock, Darrell L. *Acts.* In *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.* Eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007. Logos.

Bruce, F. F. *The Acts of the Apostles.* London: Tyndale, 1951.

Bruce, F. F. *The Book of Acts.* In *The New International Commentary on the New Testament.* Ed. Gordon D. Fee. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988. Logos.

Burkitt, William. *The Acts of the Holy Apostles.* In *Expository Notes, with Practical Observations, The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* vol. 1. Philadelphia: Sorin & Ball, 1844.

Calvin, John. *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke,* 3 vols. Trans. William Pringle. Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1845.

Calvin, John. *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles,* 2 vols. Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1844.

Clarke, Adam. *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 6 vols. New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1837.

Clarke, Adam. *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 vols. New York: G. Lane & C. B. Tippett, 1846.

Clark, Albert C. *The Acts of the Apostles, a Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes on Selected Passages.* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933.

Clark, George W. *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles: Explanatory and Practical.* Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1892.

Davies, W. D. and Dale C. Allison. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew: Commentary on Matthew XIX-XXVIII,* vols. 1-3. In *The International Critical Commentary.* London: T. & T. Clark Ltd, 1988. Logos.

Dunn, James D. G. *Romans.* In *Word Biblical Commentary,* vols. 38A-B. Eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher 1988. Logos.

Edwards, James R. *The Gospel According to Mark.* In *The Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002. Logos.

Exell, Joseph S., ed. *Acts,* 3 vols. In *The Biblical Illustrator*. New York; Chicago; Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1905.

Exell, Joseph S., ed. *Matthew.* In *The Biblical Illustrator*. New York; Chicago; Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1905.

Garland, David E. *Philippians.* In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Ephesians–Philemon (Revised Edition),* vol. 12. Eds. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006. Logos.

Gill, John. *An Exposition of the New Testament,* 3 vols. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: William W. Woodward, 1811.

Gill, John. *An Exposition of the Old Testament,* 6 vols. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: William W. Woodward, 1817-1819.

Green, Joel B. *The Gospel of Luke.* In *New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997. Logos.

Guelich, Robert A. *Mark.* In *Word Biblical Commentary*, vols. 34A-B. Eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1998. Logos.

Gloag, Paton J. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* 2 vols. Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1870.

Hackett, Horatio B. *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* in *An American Commentary on the New Testament.* Ed. Alvah Hovey. Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, c1882.

Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume.* Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Logos.

Hervey, A. C. *Acts,* 2 vols. In *The Pulpit Commentary.* Eds. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph Exell. New York; Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company, n.d.

Jacobus, Melancthon W. *Notes, Critical and Explanatory, on the Acts of the Apostles.* Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1859.

Jamieson, Robert, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown. *The Portable Commentary: A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments,* 2 vols. Glasgow: William Collins, 1863.

John Chrysostom. *The Homilies of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, On the Acts of the Apostles, Translated, With Notes and Indices, Part I Homilies I-XXVIII*, in *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1851.

John Chrysostom. *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, Translated, with Notes and Indices.* Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1843.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Acts of the Apostles.* In *Sacra Pagina,* vol. 4. Ed. Daniel J. Harrington. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Gospel of Luke.* In *Sacra Pagina,* vol. 3. Ed. Daniel J. Harrington. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991.

Koester, Craig R. *Hebrews.* In *The Anchor Bible.* Eds. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 2001.

Kösterberger, Andreas J. *John.* In *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004. Logos.

Lange, Johann P., ed. *Theologisch-homileticsches Bibelwerk: Die Heilige Schrift. Alten und Neuen Testaments mit Rücksicht auf das theologisch-homiletische Bedürfniss des pastoralen Umtes in Berbindung mit namhasten evangelischen Theologen.* Bielefeld: Belhagen und Klasing, 1857-77.

Lange, John P. *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal, and Homiletical with special reference to ministers and students.* Ed. Philip Schaff. Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1865-80.

Lange, John Peter. *The Gospel According to Matthew, Together with a General Theological, and Homiletical Introduction to the New Testament,* in *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal, and Homilectical, with Special Reference to Ministers and Students.* Trans. Philip Schaff. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke, 1872.

Lea, Thomas D., and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr. *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*. In *The New American Commentary,* vol. 34. Ed. David S. Dockery. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992. Logos.

Lechler, G. V., and K. Gerok. *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 2. Trans. Paton J. Gloag. Ed., John P. Lange. In *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*, third series, vol. 25. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1864.

Liefeld, Walter L. and David W. Pao. *Luke.* In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Revised Edition)*, vol. 10. Eds. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 2007. Logos.

Lightfoot, J. B. *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.* London: Macmillan and Co., 1881.

Lightfoot, J. B. *Paul's Epistle to the Philippians.* London: MacMillan and Co., c1868, 1903.

Lightfoot, John. *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles,* vol. 8. In *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot, D.D.* Ed. John Rogers Pitman. London: J. F. Dove, 1923.

Lightfoot, John. *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae: Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations Upon the Gospels, the Acts, Some Chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans and the First Epistle to the Corinthians,* vol. 4. Ed. Robert Gandell. Oxford: The University Press, 1859.

Longenecker, Richard N. *Acts.* In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Revised Edition)*, vol. 10. Eds. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 2007. Logos.

Lumby, J. Rawson. *The Acts of the Apostles with Maps, Notes and Introductions.* In *Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools.* Ed. J. J. S. Perowne. Cambridge, The University Press, 1891.

MacDonald, William. *Believer's Bible Commentary.* Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1995. Logos.

MacGregor, G. H. C. and Theodore P. Ferris. *The Acts of the Apostles.* In *The Interpreter's Bible,* vol. 9. Ed. George A. Buttrick. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954.

Marshall, I. Howard. *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary.* In *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries,* vol. 5. Ed. Leon Morris. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1980. Logos.

McGee, J. Vernon. *Thru the Bible With J. Vernon McGee,* 5 vols. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1998. Logos.

Metzger, Bruce M., David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, eds. *Word Biblical Commentary.* Dallas, Texas: Word Incorporated, 1989-2007.

Meyer, Heinrich August Wilhelm. *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles.* Trans. Paton J. Gloag. Ed. William P. Dickson. New York: Funk and Wagnalis, 1884.

Nicoll, W. Robertson, ed. *The Expositor's Greek Testament,* vol. 2. New York: George H. Doran Company, n.d.

Nolland, John. *Luke.* In *Word Biblical Commentary,* vols. 35A-B-C. Eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1989-93. Logos.

Ormiston, William. *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles by Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer,* second edition. Trans. Paton J. Gloag, and William P. Dickson. Ed. William Ormiston. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884.

Ogilvie, Lloyd J. *Acts.* In *The Preacher's Commentary,* vol. 28. Ed. Lloyd J. Ogilvie. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983. Logos.

Osborne, Grant R. *Matthew.* In *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.* Ed. Clinton E. Arnold. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010. Logos.

Parsons, Mikeal C. *Acts.* In *Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008.

Peterson, David G. *The Acts of the Apostles.* In *The Pillar New Testament Commentary.* Ed. D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009. Logos.

Pfeiffer, Charles and Everett F. Harrison, eds. *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary.* Chicago: Moody Press, c1962.

Plummer, Alfred. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Luke.* In *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.* Eds. Charles A. Briggs, Samuel R. Driver, and Alfred Plummer. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902.

Polhill, John B. *Acts.* In *The New American Commentary,* vol. 26. Ed. David S. Dockery. Nashville, Tenn: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992. Logos.

Poole, Matthew. *Annotations upon the Holy Bible,* 3 vols. New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1852.

Radmacher, Earl D., Ronald B. Allen, and H. Wayne House, eds. *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary.* Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999. Logos.

Scott, Thomas. *The Holy Bible; Containing the Old and New Testaments, According to the Authorized Version: with Explanatory Notes, Practical Observations, and Copious Marginal References,* vol. 5. London: James Nisbet and Co., 1866.

Spence, H. D. M. and John Marshall Lang. *Luke,* 2 vols. In *The Pulpit Commentary.* Eds. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph Exell. New York; Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1889.

Stein, Robert H. *Mark.* In *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.* Eds. Robert Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008. Logos.

Stellhorn, F. W. *Annotations on the Acts of the Apostles.* In *The Lutheran Commentary: A Plain Exposition of the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament,* vol. 6. Ed. Henry Eyster Jacobs. New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1896.

Stokes, G. T. *The Acts of the Apostles,* 2 vols. In *The Expositor's Bible.* Ed. William R. Nicoll. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1891.

Talbert, Charles H. *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel.* New York: Crossroads, 1982.

Trapp, John. *A Commentary or Exposition Upon All the Books of the New Testament.* London: R. W., 1656.

Webb, Barry G. *The Book of Judges.* In *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament.* Eds. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. Grand Rapids, Michigan; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012.

Williams, David J. *Acts.* In *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series.* Eds. W. Ward Gasque, Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., and Robert K. Johnson. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1990. Logos.

Willington, Harold L. *The Acts of the Apostles.* In *The KJV Bible Commentary*, eds. Edward E. Hindson and Woodrow M. Kroll. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1994. Logos.

Wordsworth, Christopher. *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in the Original Greek: with Introductions and Notes*, vol. 1, fifth edition. London: Rivington's, Waterloo Place, 1867.

Wright, N. T. *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary.* In *Tyndale New Testament Commentary*, vol. 12. Ed. Leon Morris. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1986. Logos.

Zahn, Theodor. *Die Apostelgeschicte des Lucas: Erste und Zweite Hälfte,* in *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, Band 5. Zeipzig: A. Deichertsche, 1919, 1921.

Reference Books

Allen, David L. *Lucan Authorship of Hebrews.* In *New American Commentary Studies in Bible and Theology*, vol. 8. Ed. E. Ray Clendenon. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010.

Arthurs, Jeffery D. *Preaching With Variety.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2007.

Barrack, William. *Lexicon to Xenophon's Anabasis.* London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1872.

Baxter, Mary K. *A Divine Revelation of Heaven.* New Kensington, Pennsylvania: Whitaker House, 1998.

Beloe, W., trans. *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius,* vol. 3. London: J. Johnson, 1795.

Bentley, Todd. *Journey Into the Miraculous.* Victoria, BC, Canada: Hemlock Printers, Ltd., 2003.

Berkhof, Louis. *New Testament Introduction.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans-Sevensma Co., 1915.

Blass, Fridericus, *Acta Apostolorum sive Lucae ad Theophilum Liber Alter.* Lipsiae, Aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1896.

Blass, Friedrich. *Grammar of New Testament Greek.* Trans. Henry St. John Thackeray. London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1905.

Blomberg, Craig L. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels,* 2nd ed. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2007.

Boissier, Gaston. *Tacitus and Other Roman Studies.* Trans. W. G. Hutchison. London: Archibald Constable and Company, Ltd., 1906.

Bonnke, Reinhard. *Holy Spirit: Are We Flamable or Fireproof?.* Orlando, Florida: Christ for All Nations, 2017.

Booth, G., trans., *The Historical Library of Diodorus the Sicilian in Fifteen Books,* vol. 2. London: J. Davis, 1814.

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Brown, Robert. *The Phainomena, or 'Heavenly Displays' of Aratos.* London: Longman and Co., 1885.

Bruce, F. F. *The Books and the Parchments.* Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963.

Brüll, Adolf. *Das samaritanische Targum zum Pentateuch, I. Anhang: Kritishe Studen über Osforder Manuscript-Fragmente.* Frankfurt: Verland von Wilhelm Erras, 1875.

Bullinger, E. W. *The Witness of the Stars.* London: E. W. Bullinger, c1893.

Burton, Ernest de Witt. *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek.* Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1892.

Cary, Earnest, trans. *Dio's Roman History,* vol. 7. In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, W. H. D. Rouse, L. A. Post, and E. H. Warmington. London: William Heinemann, 1955.

Chapell, Bryan. *Christ-Centered Preaching – Redeeming the Expository Sermon.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

Charles, R. H., trans. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English With Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books*, 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913.

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, 1993, 2003.

Clarke, John, trans. *Physical Science in the time of Nero, being a Translation of Questiones Naturales of Seneca.* London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1910.

Coolidge, Calvin. *Have Faith in Massachusetts,* 2nd ed. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919.

Cornuke, Bob. *The Lost Shipwreck of Paul.* Global Publishing Services, 2005.

Cross, F. L. and E. A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* revised. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Dakyns, Henry G., trans. *Anabasis.* In *The History of Xenophon,* vols. 1-2. In *The Historians of Greece,* vols. 8-9. Ed. Thomas M. Alexander. New York: The Tandy-Thomas Company, 1909.

Deane, Anthony C. *How to Understand the Gospels.* In *Hodder and Stoughton's People's Library.* Ed. Sidney Dark. London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.

Deissmann, Adolf. *Light from the Ancient East.* Trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan. New York: 1910.

De Lorenzana, Francisco Antonio, ed.. *Caelii Sedulii Opera Omnia.* Romae, 1893.

Douglas, J. D., ed. *New Bible Dictionary, second edition.* Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishing, c1962, 1982.

Easton, Matthew George. *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature.* New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1893.

Edersheim, Alfred. *The Bible History Old Testament.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, c1876-1887, 1984.

Edersheim, Alfred. *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ.* New York: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.

Edersheim, Alfred. *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services as they were at the Time of Jesus Christ.* London: The Religious Tract Society, 1908.

Evetts, B., trans. *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria.* In *Patrologia Orientalis*, tumus primus. Eds. R. Graffin and F. Nau. Paris: Kubraurue de Paris, 1907.

Filson, Floyd V. "The Journey Motif in Luke-Acts." In *Apostolic History and the Gospel.* Eds. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1970.

Filson, Floyd V. *Opening the New Testament.* Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1952.

Foakes Jackson, F. J., Kirsopp Lake, and Henry J. Cadbury, eds. *The Beginnings of Christianity: Part 1 The Acts of the Apostles,* 5 vols. London: MacMillan and Co., 1933.

Forbush, William B., ed. *Fox's Book of Martyrs.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston: c1926, 1965.

Freedman, David Noel, ed. *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary,* 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Gavorse, Joseph. *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars by Suetonius.* In *The Modern Library of the World's Best Books.* New York: Random House, 1931.

Gibson, Margaret Dunlop, ed. and trans. *The Commentaries of Isho'dad of Merv Bishop of Hadatha (c. 850 A.D.) in Syriac and English,* vol. 5. In *Horae Semiticas no XI.* Cambridge: The University Press, 1916.

Gildersleeve, Basil L. *Pindar The Olympian and Pythian Odes.* New York: American Book Company, 1885.

Godley, A. D., trans. *Herodotus,* 4 vols. In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heinemann, c1920-25.

Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching.* Eerdmans: Michigan, 2000.

Gooding, David. *True to the Faith: A Fresh Approach to the Acts of the Apostles.* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990.

Goodspeed, Edgar J. *An Introduction to the New Testament.* Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1937.

Goodwin, Frank J. *A Harmony and Commentary on the Life of St. Paul according to the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1951.

Goodwin, William W. *Plutarch's Essays and Miscellanies,* vol. 3. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1911.

Gregory, D. S. *Why Four Gospels? Or, The Gospel for All the World.* New York: Sheldon and Company, 1877.

Gummere, Richard M, trans. *Seneca Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales,* vol. 1. In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heinemann, 1935.

Gundry, Robert H. *A Survey of the New Testament,* revised edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, c1970, 1981.

Gunkel, Hermann. *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction.* Trans. Thomas M. Horner. In *Biblical Series,* vol. 19. Ed. John Reumann. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1967.

Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction.* Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1990.

Hagin, Kenneth. *The Believer's Authority.* Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1984, 1992.

Hagin, Kenneth. *Bible Faith Study Course.* Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1991, 1999.

Hagin, Kenneth. *Bible Prayer Study Course.* Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1991, 1999.

Hagin, Kenneth. *Following God's Plan For Your Life.* Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1993, 1994.

Hagin, Kenneth E. *The Gifts and Calling of God.* Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, c1986, 1992.

Hagin, Kenneth. *Plans Purposes and Pursuits.* Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1988, 1993.

Hagin, Kenneth. *Understanding the Anointing.* Tulsa, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, c1983, 1994.

Hamilton, H. C., and W. Falconer, trans. *The Geography of Strabo*, 3 vols. In *Bohn's Classical Library.* London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854-56.

Harnack, Adolf. *Luke the Physician: Author of the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.* Trans. J. R. Wilkinson. In *Crown Theological Library.* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908.

Harman, Henry M. *Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures,* vol. 1. In *Library of Biblical and Theological Literature.* Eds. George R. Crooks and John F. Hurst. New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1878.

Harrison, Everett F. *Introduction to the New Testament.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c1964, 1990.

Hastings, James, ed. *A Dictionary of the Bible Dealing With its Language, Literature and Contents Including the Biblical Theology,* vol. 4. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911.

Hayes, John H. and Carl A. Halloday, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, revised edition. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1987.

Henderson, Bernard W. *The Life and Principate of the Emperor Nero.* London: Methuen & Co., 1903.

Hobart, William Kirk. *The Medical Language of St. Luke.* London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1882.

Holland, Philemon, trans. *History of Twelve Caesars*, vol. 1. In *The Tutor Translations,* vol. 21. Ed. W. E. Henley. London: David Nutt, 1899.

House, Paul R. "The Rise and Current Status of Literary Criticism of the Old Testament." In *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism.* Ed. Paul R. House. In *Sources for Biblical and Theological Study,* vol. 2. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992.

Ioanne Baptista, R. P. and Georgius Moesinger, trans. *Evangelii Concordantis Expositio facta a Sancto Ephraemo Doctore Syro.* Venetiis: Libraria PP. Mechitaristarum in Monasterio, 1876.

Jameson, Anna. *Sacred and Legendary Art,* vol. 1. Boston, MA: Houghton Miffin & Co., 1900.

Jones, Horace Leonard, trans. *The Geography of Strabo*, 8 vols. In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heinemann, c1917-32.

Jones, W. H. S., and H. A. Ormerod, trans. *Pausanias Description of Greece.* In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heinemann, 1918.

Joyner, Rick. *The Call,* Charlotte, North Carolina: Morning Star Publications, 1999.

Jukes, Andrew. *The Characteristic Differences of the Four Gospels.* London: James Nisbet and Co., 1853.

Julius Caesar. *Caesar's Commentaries Gallic and Wars: With the Supplementary Books Attributed to Hirtius; Including the Alexandrian, African, and Spanish Wars.* In *Harper's Classical Library*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1872.

Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003. Logos.

Koester, Helmut. *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, c1990.

Kösenberger, Andreas J. *Excellence: The Character of God and the Pursuit of Scholarly Virtue.* Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2011.

Lardner, Nathaniel. *The Works of Nathaniel Lardner,* 10 vols. London: Joseph Ogle Robinson, 1829, 1838.

Lightfoot, J. B. *Essays of the Work Entitled Supernatural Religion.* London: MacMillan and Co., c1889, 1893.

Mair, A. W., and G. R. Mair, trans. *Callimachus and Lycophron* and *Aratus.* In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heineman, 1921.

Manson, T. W. *On Paul and John: Some Selected Theological Themes.* Ed. M. Black. In *Studies in Biblical Theology* 38. London: Student Christian Movement, 1963.

Marshall, I. Howard. *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel.* Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Melmoth, William, trans. *The Letters of Pliny the Consul.* Boston, Mass: R. Larkin, 1809.

Melmoth, William, trans. *Pliny: Letters,* vol. 1. In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heinemann, 1915.

Metzger, Bruce M. *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, Content.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003.

Meyer, Eduard. *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums,* 3 vols. Stuttgart; Berlin: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1921-24.

Miller, Frank J., trans. *Ovid: Metamorphoses with an English Translation,* vol. 1. In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heinemann, 1951.

Moffatt, James. *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament.* In *International Theological Library.* Eds. Charles A. Briggs and Stewart D. F. Salmond. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911.

Moffatt, James. *The Theology of the Gospels.* In *Studies in Theology.* London: Duckworth and Co., 1912.

Moore, Clifford H., and John Jackson, *Tacitus: The Histories* and *The Annals*, 4 vols. In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heinemann, c1925-1937.

Morgenthaler, Robert. *Die lukanische Geschichts-schreibungals Zeugnis: Gestalt und Gehalt der Kunst des Lukas.* Zurich: Zwingli, 1949.

Moulton, James Hope, and George Milligan. *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources.* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914-1929.

Murray, Gilbert, trans. *The Bacchae of Euripides.* London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, c1904, 1920.

Niebuhrii, B. G., ed. *The Dialogue of Philopatris.* In *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Pars XI: Leo Diaconus.* Bonnae: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1828.

Novum testamentum: Grece & Latine in academia complutensi nouiter impressum. Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros and Diego López de Zúniga, 1514.

Orr, James, ed. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* 5 vols. Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915.

Osborne, Grant. "Redaction Criticism." *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation.* Eds. David Alan Black and David S. Dockery. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.

Phillips, J. B. *The Young Church in Action: The Acts of the Apostles Translated into Modern English.* London: Cox & Wyman Ltd., 1955.

Porter, Stanley E. "Literary Approaches to the New Testament: From Formalism to Deconstruction and Back." In *Approaches to New Testament Studies.* Eds. Stanley E. Porter and David Tombs. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995.

Rackham, H., trans. *Pliny: Natural History*, vol. 2. *Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, L. A. Post, W. H. D. Rouse, and E. H. Warmington. Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press; William Heinemann Ltd., 1961.

Ramsey, William M. *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen.* New York: G. P Putnam's Sons, 1896.

Riley, H. T. *The Pharsalia of Lucan.* London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853.

Roberts, Frances J. *Come Away My Beloved.* Ojai, California: King's Farspan, Inc., 1973.

Robertson, A. T. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research.* New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914.

Rohl, David M. *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1995.

Rolfe, J. C. *Suetonius*, vol. 2. In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, W. H. D. Rouse, L. A. Post, and E. H. Warmington. London: William Heinemann, 1959.

Sanday, W. *The Cheltenham List of the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament and the Writings of Cyprian*, in *Studia Biblica ed Ecclesiastica: Essays Chiefly in Biblical and Patristic Criticism,* vol. 3. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1891.

Sargeaunt, John. *Terance*, vol. 2. In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1959.

Sage, Evan T., trans. *Livy,* vol. 11. In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heinemann, 1928.

Saunders, Stanley P. *Preaching the Gospel of Matthew: Proclaiming God's Presence.* Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.

Sharp, Granville. *Remarks on the Use of the Definitive Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament.* London: Vernon and Hood; f. and C. Rivington; J. White and J. Hatchard; and L. Pennington, Durham, 1803.

Schaff, Philip. *History of the Christian Church,* 3rd edition, 8 vols. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955-58.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, second edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, c1990, 2011.

Sheldon, Henry S. *New Testament Theology.* New York: The Macmillian Company, 1922.

Singh, Sadhu Sundar. *At the Master's Feet.* Trans. Arthur Parker. London: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1922.

Thielman, Frank. *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing Company, 2005.

Tilton, Robert. *Decide Decree Declare.* Dallas, Texas: Robert Tilton Ministries, c1989, 1991.

Vine, W. E. *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words with their Precise Meanings for English Readers.* Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, c1940, 1966.

Vines, Jerry and Jim Shaddix. *Power in the Pulpit.* Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1999.

Warren, Jr., William F. "Interpreting New Testament Narrative: The Gospels and Acts." In *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture,* second edition. Eds. Bruce Corley, Steve W. Lemke, and Grant Lovejoy. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002.

Weima, Jeffery A. D. "Literary Criticism." In *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues.* Eds. David Alan Black and David S. Dockery. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2001.

Westcott, Brooke Foss. *A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament,* fourth edition. London: Macmillan and Co., 1875.

Wheelwright, C. A., and Thomas Bourne, trans. *Pindar and Anacreon.* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1846.

White, Horace, trans. *Appian's Roman History.* In *The Loeb Classical Library.* Eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. H. D. Rouse. London: William Heinemann, 1961.

Wiens, Delbert L. *Stephen's Sermon and the Structure of Luke-Acts.* North Richland Hills, Texas: BIBAL Press, 1995.

Wigglesworth, Smith. *Smith Wigglesworth On Spiritual Gifts.* New Kensington, Pennsylvania: Whitaker House, c1998.

Wilson, C. T. *Alexander Mackay: Missionary Hero of Uganda.* London: The Sunday School Union, 1893.

The World Book Encyclopedia, 22 vols. Chicago: World Book, Inc., 1994.

Wrangham, Digby S., trans., *The Liturgical Poetry of Adam of St. Victor,* 3 vols. London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1881.

Wrede, William. *The Origin of the New Testament.* Trans. James S. Hill. In *Harper's Library of Living Thought.* London: Harper and Brothers, 1909.

Wright, Wilmer C. *A Short History of Greek Literature.* New York: American Book Company, 1907.

Wuest, Kenneth S. *Wuest's Word Studies From the Greek New Testament for the English Reader*, vol. 1. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973.

Yonge, C. D., ed. *The Works of Philo Judaeus, Contemporary of Josephus,* vol. 2. London: George Bell & Sons, 1894.

Yonge, C. D., trans. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers by Diogenes Laërtius.* In *Bohn's Classical Library.* Ed. Henry Bohn. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853.

Youngblood, Ronald F., Herbert Lockyer, Sr., F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, eds. *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary,* rev. ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995. Logos.

Zadai, Kevin. *The Agenda of Angels.* Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2019.

Articles and Papers

F. F. Bruce, "The Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles." Paper presented at the Tyndale New Testament Lecture, Wadham College, Oxford, 19 December, 1942.

Burton, Ernest De Witt. "The Purpose and Plan of the Gospel of Matthew." *The Biblical World* 11.1 (January 1898): 37-44.

Cadoux, C. J. "A Tentative Synthetic Chronology of he Apostolic Age." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 56.3 (September 1937): 177-191.

De Bruyne, Donatien. "Les plus anciens prologues latines des Évangiles." *Revue Bénédictine,* vol. 40, (October 1928): 193-214.

deSilva, David A. "Paul's Sermon in Antioch of Pisidia." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 151 (January-March 1994): 32-49.

Dragutinović, Predrag. "The First Miracle of the Son of God in the Gospel of Mark (Mark 1,21-28). A Contribution to Mark's Christology." *Sacra Scripta* 8.2 (2010): 185-201.

Goulder, Michael D. "The Chiastic Structure of the Lucan Journey" *Studia Evangelica*, vol. II, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1964): 195-202.

Ferreira, Johan. "The Plan of God and Preaching in Acts." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 71.3 (1999): 209-215.

Heard, R. G. "The Old Gospel Prologues." *Journal of Theological Studies* 6 (1955): 1-16.

Kistemaker, Simon J. "The Speeches in Acts." *Criswell Theological Review* 5.1 (1990): 31-4.

Ladouceur, David, "Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a context for Acts 27-28." *Harvard Theological Review* 73 (1980): 435-449.

Miles, G. B. and G. Tromph. "Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27-28 in the Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution and Shipwreck." *Harvard Theological Review* 69 (1976): 259-267.

Muilenburg, James. "Form Criticism and Beyond." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 1-18.

Ridderbos, H. N. "The Speeches of Peter in the Acts of the Apostle" (Paper presented at the Tyndale New Testament Lecture, Cambridge, 11 July, 1961: 5-51.

Piana, George la. "Foreign Groups in Rome during the First Centuries of the Empire." *Harvard Theological Review* 20.4 (October 1927): 183-403.

Schubert, Paul. "The Final Cycle of Speeches in the Book of Acts." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87.1 (March 1968): 1-16.

Schubert, Paul. "The Structure and Significance of Luke 24." in *Neutestamentliche Studien Für Rudolf Bultmann zu seinem 70. Geburtstag am 20. August 1954.* Ed. Walther Eltester, in *Beihefte Zur*

Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Äteren Kirche 21 (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1957): 165-186.

Wallis, Ethel E. "The First and Second Epistles of Luke to Theophilus." *Journal for Translation and Textlinguistics* 5.3 (1992): 225-251.

Washburn, David L. "The Chronology of Judges: Another Look." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147 (Oct-Dec 1990): 414-25.

Wolfe, Kenneth R. "The Chiastic Structure of Luke-Acts and Some Implications for Worship" *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 22 (1980): 60-71.

Dissertations and Research Papers

Bain, Bruce Alan. "Literary Surface Structures in Mark: Identifying Christology as the Purpose of the Gospel." PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1997 [on-line]. Accessed 29 August 2013. Available from http://search.proquest.com.aaron.swbts.edu/pqdthss/docview/304487757/1402E6CEA4242E4E21D/1?accountid=7073; Internet.

Dongell, Joseph Robert. "The Structure of Luke's Gospel." Ph.D., Union Theological Seminary, 1991 [on-line]. Accessed 15 August 2013. Available from http://search.proquest.com.aaron.swbts.edu/pqdthss/docview/303964742/13FE535467A5E5F1E32/2?accountid=7073; Internet.

Keating, Corey. "The Criteria Used for Developing the New Testament Canon in the First Four Centuries of the Christian Church." Research Paper, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2000 [on-line]. Accessed 15 April 2012. Available from http://www.ntgreek.org/SeminaryPapers/ChurchHistory/Criteria%20for%20Development%20of%20the%20NT%20Canon%20in%20First%20Four%20Centuries.pdf; Internet.

Malas, William H., Jr. "The Literary Structure of Acts: A Narratological Investigation into its Arrangement, Plot, and Primary Themes." Ph.D diss. Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 2001 [on-line]. Accessed 26 June 2012. Available from http://search.proquest.com.aaron.swbts.edu/pqdthss/docview/304783567/13DB037B43A625B8AE2/1?accountid=7073; Internet.

Internet Documentation

The Anti-Marcionite Prologues to the Gospels. Trans. Roger Pearse (2006) [on-line]. Accessed 16 April 2010. Available from http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/anti_marcionite_prologues.htm; Internet.

The Complete Jewish Bible with Rashi Commentary. Ed. A. J. Rosenberg. New York: The Judaica Press Company, 1963 [on-line]. Accessed 13 December 2009. Available from http//www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/16445/showrashi/true; Internet.

Grant, Robert M. "A Historical Introduction to the New Testament - Part Two: New Testament Literature, Chapter 10: The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts." New York: Harper and Row, 1963 [on-line]. Accessed 12 August 2010. Available from http://www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=1116; Internet.

Higgins, Robert. *Untapped Power* [on-line]. Accessed 16 July 2009. Available at http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon.asp?SermonID=132931&Page=2; Internet.

Keathley, III, J. Hampton. "Introduction and Historical Setting for Elijah." (Bible.org) [on-line]. Accessed 23 May 2012. Available from http://bible.org/seriespage/introduction-and-historical-setting-elijah; Internet.

Sophronius. *The Life of the Evangelist Matthew.* In *Orthodox Classics in English.* House Springs, MO: The Chrysostom Press [on-line]. Accessed 1 December 2010. Available from http://www.chrysostompress.org/the-four-evangelists; Internet.

"Space Lunar Eclipse Offers Spectacular Show." 9 January 2001. The Associated Press and Reuters [on-line]. Accessed 17 May 2009. Available from http://www.cnn.com/2001/ASIANOW/east/01/10/china.space.ap/index.html; Internet.

Wallace, Daniel B. *Acts: Introduction, Outline, and Argument.* In *Biblical Studies Foundation*. Richardson, Texas: Biblical Studies Press, 1998. [on-line]; Accessed 1 September 2000. Available from http://www.bible.org; Internet.

Wallace, Daniel B. *Luke: Introduction, Argument, and Outline. In Biblical Studies Foundation*, Richardson, Texas [on-line]. Accessed 6 July 2010. Available from http://bible.org/seriespage/luke-introduction-argument-and-outline; Internet.

Zadai, Kevin. "The Agenda of Angels, Session 1." (The Warrior Notes TV) [on-line]. Accessed 23 May 2020; Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lS5CoeARhoU&t=2191s; Internet.

Television, Radio, and Film

Bonnke, Reinhard. Interviewed by Cecil Steward. *Deciding Your Destiny.* Belfast, Ireland: CCN Europe. On Lighthouse Television, Kampala, Uganda. Television program, 30 December 2005.

Cerullo, Morris. Interviewed by Benny Hinn. *This is Your Day* (Irving, Texas). On Trinity Broadcasting Network (Santa Ana, California). Television program.

Hinn, Benny. *This is Your Day* (Irving, Texas). On Trinity Broadcasting Network (Santa Ana, California). Television program.

Larson, Bob. *Bob Larson in Action.* On Trinity Broadcasting Network (Santa Ana, California). Television program.

Murdock, Mike. Interviewed by Benny Hinn. *This is Your Day* (Irving, Texas). On Trinity Broadcasting Network (Santa Ana, California).Television program.

Sermons and Teachings

Allen, David L. "Class Lecture." Doctor of Ministry Seminar. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 25 July to 5 August 2011.

Brooks, James A. "Class Notes." New Testament Greek and Textual Criticism, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 21 January 1982.

Hinn, Benny. "Fire Conference." Miracle Center Cathedral, Kampala, Uganda, 5-6 June 2009.

Nichols, Bob. "Sermon." Calvary Cathedral International, Fort Worth, Texas, 25 June 2014.

Gary Everett received his Master of Divinity (1992) and Doctor of Ministry (2015) degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as a pastor for five years and taught in Bible college for ten years.

Since 1997, he has served as the station manager of Lighthouse Television, located in Kampala, Uganda, an affiliate of Trinity Broadcasting Network. The station is owned by Calvary Cathedral International in Fort Worth, Texas, and the chairman of the board and president of Lighthouse Television is Dr. Robert B. Nichols.

Gary served seven years as the director of the Joyce Meyer Ministries outreach in Uganda. He currently serves on the board of directors of Andrew Wommack Ministries Uganda.

Gary is the author of *Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures*, a 10,000 page commentary on the Holy Bible, published by Logos Bible Software, e-Sword, the Word, Bible Analyzer, as well as an online version at StudyLight.org. *Study Notes* is also available along with his sermons and teachings on his website www.geverett.org. His commentaries are also available at https://swbts1.academia.edu/GaryEverett.

Gary was married to Menchu in 1996. They have four children, three of whom were born and raised in Uganda.