Notes

on

ACTS

VOLUME TWO - Chapters 13-28

e-Sword Notes from my Bible

The e-Sword "commentary" can be downloaded at the e-Sword module page found at http://home.hiwaay.net/~wgann

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Printed: February 6, 2024

ACTS

Introduction

AUTHOR: ***Acts*** is indeed a continuation of Luke's Gospel. We could well refer to the Gospel as Volume One and Acts as Volume Two. In Acts 1:1 ***"the former treatise"*** addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:3) is a reference back to Luke's Gospel.

Internal evidence, particularly the "***we"*** passages of Acts (Acts 16:10-17; Acts 20:5-21; Acts 20:18; Acts 27:1-28) confirm Luke as the author. Luke by profession was a physician. He is the only Gentile author in the New Testament. He was an eyewitness to many of the events in the book and was Paul's co-worker.

BACKGROUND: The book of Acts begins where the gospel left off at the resurrection and ascension of Jesus into heaven. It takes up the story there and shows the establishment of the Kingdom (the church) and its growth. It is often called ***"the book of conversions"*** because it shows how people in the first century became Christians.

Various titles given the book include:

"The Acts of the Apostles"
"The Acts of the Holy Spirit"
"The Ecclesia Established, Evangelizes and Expands"
"The Message and Method of New Testament Evangelism"
"The Great Commission In Action"
"The Book of Evangelism"
"How To Get Into Christ"

Luke's Gospel	=	*Christ*
Luke's Acts	=	*How to get into Christ*
The Epistles	=	*How to stay in Christ*

"A Book of Beginnings"
"Book of Conversions"
"Acts of Apostles" (Some Acts of Some of the Apostles)

CHARACTER: The book is historical and written in narrative form. The history of the Bible is HIS STORY and the pivot point of the Bible around which all things revolve is the Cross.

[For the charts accompanying this "Walk" lesson see the "Walk" series online at:
http://home.hiwaay.net/~wgann/walk
or http://www.rogersvillecoc.org/resources

The Old Testament says "Someone is coming."
The Gospels say "Someone has come."
The Epistles say "Someone is coming again."

The Book of Acts is a very important book in the New Testament. From the book we glean much background material for the epistles. We see the important theme of early preaching (the resurrection), fulfillment of prophecy and a number of miracles.

DESIGN: The book shows the progress of Christianity from Jerusalem to all Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. The commission of the risen Lord had already been reported by Luke (Luke 24:46-49) and here is the description or how it was accomplished.

The ***key verse*** of the book is Acts 1:8. This verse is actually like Luke's Table of Contents, or outline for the book.

The book was probably composed in about AD 61/62. It begins with the history of AD 29/30, the year of our Lord's death, and ends following two years of Paul's imprisonment at Rome about AD 62.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS:

I. Spread of the Gospel in Palestine with **Peter** as leader. Ch. 1-12

II. Spread of the Gospel Outside Palestine with **Paul** as leader. Ch. 13-28

A CHRONOLOGY BY CHAPTER
(You may need to see this FULL PAGE for the chart to line up correctly.)

ACTS
35 Years of Church History

Key Verse: Acts 1:8 **Author: Luke**
Key Word: "Witness" **Date written: A.D. 62**

DATE:	PLACE	PERIOD	Chapter	
29	Jerusalem	Birth of the	1	Jesus taken back up into heaven church
			2	Pentecost - Holy Spirit
		Growth	3	Gate Beautiful - lame man healed
		thru	4	Peter & John arrested
		Testing	5	The lie told
		"	6	Widows neglected
		"	7	Stephen
33	Judea	Great	8	Philip's preaching
	and	Persecution	9	Saul's conversion
	Samaria	Gospel to	10	Cornelius' conversion
		the Gentiles	11	Peter reports
			12	Herod
45	1st Paul & Barnabas		13	Cyprus & Antioch
	Journey		14	Lystra & Derbe
	Jerusalem		15	Jerusalem council
	2nd	Paul & Silas	16	Philippi
	Journey		17	Athens
			18	Corinth
	3rd	Paul & Silas	19	Ephesus
	Journey		20	A farewell address
	Jerusalem		21	Paul arrested in Jerusalem
	"		22	Stairway sermon
			23	Plot on Paul's life
57/58	Caesarea		24	Felix
59/60	"		25	Festus
	"		26	King Agrippa
60	On way to Rome		27	Shipwreck
60-62	ROME		28	Rome

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÷Act_13:1
Act_13:1

In the church at Antioch -- Antioch of Syria claimed to be the third largest city in the empire at this time, with 500,000 people. The congregation there was the first to deliberately reach out to Gentiles (Act_11:19-21). It was the first to send benevolent help to another congregation in need. Now the church becomes the first with a world-wide vision for souls.

> [It is very important right here to see the sermon ***"The Great Church At Antioch"*** in the e-Sword topic file **"Sermons_Gann.topx"** for additional comments on the Act_11:19-30; and Act_13:1-3.]

there were prophets and teachers: -- Both of these terms are speaking about Spirit-endowed disciples who had these gifts. See Eph_4:11. Just which of these men had which gift is not possible to discern, perhaps they all five had them both.

Barnabas, -- We first met Barnabas in Act_4:36-37. He became Saul's good friend introducing him to the church leaders in Jerusalem, Act_9:27.

Simeon called Niger, -- -- Simeon - **G4826** Luk_2:25; Luk_2:34; Luk_3:30; Act_13:1; Act_15:14; 2Pe_1:1; Rev_7:7; **G3526** Νίγερ, *Niger;* Thayer Definition: *Niger* = "black"; part of speech: proper noun, masculine. 1) surname of the prophet Simeon; Is the "Simon" of Cyrene (Mat_27:32; Mar_15:21; Luk_23:26) the same as this "Simeon" who is called, Niger.

Since "Simeon" was a very common name, he is here called "Black" to differentiate him from other Simons. Apparently he is called "Black" in reference to his dark complexion.

Lucius of Cyrene, -- Lucius' name is Latin, and he may have been one of the Hellenistic Jews of Cyrene who helped establish the church here at Antioch (Act_11:20). Lucius was a common name and several with this name are mentioned in the NT. (cf. Rom_16:21).

Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) --
"Manaen" is the Greek way of spelling the Jewish name Menahem. In just what fashion Manaen had "been brought up with" Herod is unknown. He could have been anything from a foster-brother to just a play-mate with Herod when young. He may have had some connection to the Herodian court.

With Luke providing this description of Manaen it gives consideration to the possibility that he may have been one of the sources for Luke's information on that family.

and Saul. -- In 2Ti_1:11 Paul says he is a preacher, apostle, and a teacher.

÷Act_13:2
Act_13:2

While they were worshiping the Lord -- The word for "worshipping" (ministered) is the usual word used by the LXX for services in the Temple. It seems that the early worship of the church followed much the same pattern as the synagogues. There were hymns, a scripture read from the Law, and another from the Prophets, a sermon or exhortation and prayers.

We take it that the entire church was worshipping (perhaps on a Lord's Day) and these men were "ministering" in that worship.

and fasting, -- Fasting is often connected with vigilant, passionate prayer (cf. Neh_1:4; Psa_35:13; Dan_9:3; Mat_17:21; Luk_2:37), and includes either a loss of desire for food or the purposeful setting aside of eating to concentrate on spiritual issues (*see* Mat_6:16-17).

the Holy Spirit said, -- The message, a direct revelation, came through one of the inspired prophets present at the worship service.

"Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." -- From the appearance of the Lord to Saul on the road to Damascus, he was called to be a chosen "vessel" to preach the Gospel far and wide. Barnabas is now also designated to this special task. He had been the first to introduce Saul to the Church at Jerusalem, and his education may have been much like Saul's.

The Greek text includes the particle *de* that is untranslated in our versions. That particle may either indicate that the command to set apart these men came as an answer to a special prayer, or it may signify the urgency and importance of the command. The command is to be acted upon at once.

When Barnabas and Paul have departed from Antioch, the church there will still be under the capable leadership of the remaining prophets and teachers.

÷Act_13:3
Act_13:3

So after they had fasted and prayed, -- The matter of the church sending out Barnabas and Saul included a solemn dedication service after their worship.

they placed their hands on them and sent them off. -- These church leaders were not conferring a spiritual gift upon Barnabas and Saul, for they were already inspired by the Holy Spirit. But this laying on of hands was an expression of the recognition of them as special representative, ambassadors, or "apostles" of the church at Antioch. When later in Act_14:14 where Barnabas is spoken of as an "apostle" it doesn't mean he was one of the special apostles chosen by the Lord Himself, those being twelve in number; but he was "***one sent***" with the recognition and favor of the church at Antioch.

The elders of a church today may all "shake hands" with a preacher they've selected to send to a mission field, or they may lay their hands on him. This "ordination" seems to confirm the choice or decision made by the church.

It appears that elders had laid hands on Timothy in just such an "ordination" service as this, 1Ti_4:14; (Paul had laid hands on Timothy to confer some spiritual gift, see also 2Ti_1:6; cf. 1Ti_5:22).

÷Act_13:4
Act_13:4

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, -- This mission trip had been instigated by the Holy Spirit (Act_13:2). This repetition marks the solemn character to this form and plan of evangelism.

We note that it was not some universal missionary committee, but a local church sending out the workers in response to the command of the Holy Spirit. (cf. Mat_28:19-20; Mar_16:15-16; 2Ti_2:2).

they went down to Seleu'cia; -- This city served as the port for Antioch, some sixteen miles away at the mouth of the Orontes River.

and from there they sailed to Cyprus. -- Saul and Barnabas chose to begin their missionary outreach in Cyprus; perhaps because it was Barnabas's home, which was only a two-day journey from Antioch, and had a large Jewish population.

÷Act_13:5
Act_13:5

When they arrived at Salamis, -- Salamis, on the eastern end of the island, was the nearest port of Cyprus for voyagers from Seleucia. It was a major commercial city with a large Jewish population. Tradition has it that Barnabas was born here, and stoned to death here by a Jewish mob because of his influence in the church and community here.

they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. -- Saul/Paul routinely went first and preached in the Jewish synagogues when he arrives in a new area (Act_13:14; Act_14:1; Act_17:1; Act_17:10).

The word "synagogues" is plural showing that Salamis had a sufficient number of Jews to need several. Being a noted Jewish scholar Paul (and Barnabas known in the city) had an open door to speak and this gave them an opportunity to introduce the gospel. If they had preached to Gentiles first, the Jews would never have listened to them.

And they had John to assist them. -- This is John Mark (see note on Act_12:12). He travels with Barnabas and Saul for part of this first missionary journey. Just how precisely he helped them is not specified.

But there is implied in the word "assist" or "helper" (sometimes rendered "minister") some degree of service he provided. Perhaps something like the service which in old times Elisha rendered to Elijah (2Ki_3:11). The same Greek word is used for the "minister" or "attendant" in a synagogue (Luk_4:20).

÷Act_13:6
Act_13:6

They traveled through the whole island -- It would be only about 100 miles from Salamis to Paphos. They were probably teaching at other places along the way the same as they had done in Salamis.

until they came to Paphos. -- This was the capital city of Cyprus and the seat of the government and residence of the Roman governor. It had an important harbor (compare Act_13:13).

There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, -- Bar-Jesus, and Simon whom Luke introduced in Act_8:9-10, are both magicians, or sorcerers. Originally, the word carried no evil connotation, but later was used to describe all kinds of practitioners and dabblers in the occult.

The name "Bar-Jesus" means "son of Jesus." Fitting to his name, he is an imitator who is attempting to compete with Jesus Christ. Paul calls him not a son of Jesus but a son of the devil (Act_13:10).

He is one of the "false-prophets" like Jesus warned of in Mat_24:5; Mat_24:11; (Mar_13:5-6; Luk_21:8). He perhaps had heard of Jesus working great miracles and wanted to gain the same notoriety and copied his name, "son-of-Jesus".

Here we see a ***Jew*** involved in sorcery though it was forbidden. Many Romans sought out sorcerers and came under their influence.

÷Act_13:7
Act_13:7

who was an attendant -- There is no word for "attendant" but it is supplied by implication. The sentence just reads "he was with Sergius Paulus" but in what capacity is not clear. Since he is identified as a "magician" he seems to have been some sort of a consultant.

of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. -- After Augustus, there were two classes of Roman provinces with the title of governors. 1) Senatorial - whose governor was called a deputy (KJV) or proconsul. Also see Act_18:12; these were appointed by the Senate. 2) Imperial - These governors were appointed by the Emperor and called procurators, as was Pilate Mat_27:2, as the government administrator.

Cyrus was an imperial province, and therefore under a propraetor, or proconsul. At this time he was Sergius Paulus, of whom we know nothing. But as archaeology is going strong on Cyrus presently, some discovery of his name and office in coin or inscription may turn up.

The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. -- A prudent man, the presence of Elymas among his staff shows that the proconsul was a man with an inquiring mind, and the same is indicated by his desire to hear Barnabas and Saul.

Most likely they have been preaching in Paphos, and that word of their activity had reached the ears of the proconsul, who would want to have knowledge of what was going on in the land he was responsible for governing.

÷Act_13:8
Act_13:8

But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) -- His Arabic name or title ***Elymas***, (Act_13:8) means "wise" and was a self-assumed title. The title "Magus" (magician) was Persian in origin and applied to ***wise*** men of the realm of politics and religions. (See Mat_2:1, the "wise men" from the East are often referred to the "Magi".)

See Act_13:6 for more information on Elymas or Bar-Jesus.

opposed them -- Elymas resisted the message from Barnabas and Saul. We don't know if he tried some spell or hex, or whether he simply utter half-truths about the Christian message. He was probably motivated by the knowledge that if the influence of Barnabas and Paul should succeed with the proconsul, he would be out of a job.

and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. -- He was trying to keep Sergius Paulus from becoming a Christian. "Faith" here stands either for the Christian religion as a whole, or to the doctrine that Christians believed. Such not only points out the right direction to live, but also points out the error of magic and witchcraft.

÷Act_13:9
Act_13:9

Then Saul, who was also called Paul, -- This is the first use of his Roman name in the book of Acts, and the last time Luke calls him "Saul." It was probably one of the three names given to him by his parents at birth as a Roman citizen. Paul is from a Greek term that means "little."

Paul only did what other Jews where in the habit of doing when they went into foreign lands. While Paul was working primarily around Jews, his Hebrew name Saul, was used. But when he was among Gentiles his Roman name was thought to be more appropriate (1Co_9:22). As a Roman citizen, Paul would have had three names.

One might wonder if someone in the first century reading Luke's Acts, for the first time are surprised that this man "Saul" that Luke has been writing about is actually the well-known missionary they knew by the name "Paul."

filled with the Holy Spirit, -- So that the punishment inflicted on Elymas was directed to the Apostle by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit enabled the miracle. In Acts the phrase "filled with the Holy Spirit" is usually associated with a boldness and clarity to proclaim the gospel.

looked straight [intently, fixed his gaze] at Elymas and said, -- Elymas was standing by, doubtless ready to grab at anything which he might be able to turn to the discredit of the Apostles.

÷Act_13:10
Act_13:10

"You are a child of the devil -- By trying to turn the proconsul away from the faith and opposing Paul, Elymas shows his true colors. Far from being a "son of Jesus" (the savior) he is a "son of the devil" (the enemy). Paul also recognizes that the devil is the source of the lying magic and divination that Elymas practiced.

The language is reminiscent of what Jesus told the Jewish leaders who opposed him and sought to kill him: "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire" (Joh_8:44).

and an enemy of everything that is right! -- We may judge from this expression that Paul recognized the proconsul's earnest zeal for learning the truth. Elymas had long-continued leading astray those who desired to know God's way of righteousness.

You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. -- "Deceit" is the rendering of ***dolos***, a word which means "bait," like that used to catch fish or trap animals. The word suggests that Elymas was using his magic to catch or trap the proconsul.

The second word is **ῥᾳδιουργία**, G4468, *unscrupulous conduct, villainy, mischief,* and is only found here in the New Testament.

Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? -- Let it be noted that even today there are men who "make crooked" the way of the Lord and lead others astray either intentionally or by their ignorance.

÷Act_13:11
Act_13:11

Now the hand of the Lord is against you. -- In the OT this phrase often refers to God's judgment (cf. Exo_9:3; 1Sa_5:6; Job_19:21; Jdg_2:15;, as it does here, "The *hand of the Lord* was against them for evil."

You are going to be blind, -- The punishment inflicted on Elymas was much lighter than that of Ananias and Sapphira, (Act_5:1-10). By this sudden and miraculous punishment, Elymas would be awed and humbled, and perhaps encouraged to repent. Bystanders, such as the proconsul, would be convinced that he was a fraud and that the gospel was true.

and for a time [season] you will be unable to see the light of the sun." -- In mercy his blindness would not be permanent and final, but was intended not only as a punishment but as a means of leading him to repentance. "For a time" suggests perhaps that the punishment would cease when his opposition to Christ ceased.

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, -- "Immediately" is Luke's characteristic word meaning "forthwith, on the spot."

"A *mist and a darkness,*" immediately the eyes began to cloud over, and as the film increased upon them he became totally blind.

and he went about [groped about,] seeking someone to lead him by the hand. -- Here is another of those graphic touches, as Luke pictures the man suddenly blind, then stumbling around the room, begging for someone to help him. And the tense of the verb ("he was seeking") seems to imply that no one would offer to help.

"The miracle is so astounding, that the bystanders are thoroughly frightened; and none has the courage even to offer to take him by the hand to help him wherever he wished to go. As he groped

about, calling on one and then another of the frightened bystanders to lead him by the hand, the falsity and iniquity of his pretensions stood practically confessed; and the divine mission of the apostles was demonstrated." - McGarvey.

÷Act_13:12
Act_13:12

Then the proconsul believed, -- It has been said that "the blindness of Elymas opened the eyes of the proconsul." "Believed" is Luke's way of saying that he became a Christian; he committed himself to Christ, repented and was baptized.

when he saw what had occurred, -- Miracles in the Bible were to credential the message, and the same is true here. The conversion of the proconsul is not presented as the result of the miracle alone. There also, as in all cases of conversion, is the hearing of the Word, through which faith comes. (Rom_10:17).

for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. -- He was convinced by the miracle and by the words of the Apostles who taught the way of the Lord. We are not told straight-forward that Sergius Paulus was baptized, but we have other instances where the omission is noticed (see Act_13:48; Act_2:44; Act_4:4; Act_8:12-13; Act_11:21; Act_19:18), yet as baptism was commanded by Christ and marked a new relationship with Him, such omission of the mention of it should not be thought it did not happen.

We know nothing more about the subsequent history of Sergius Paulus or Elymas.

÷Act_13:13
Act_13:13

13:13–41 *Paul and Barnabas continue their ministry farther from Jewish territories, moving into Asia Minor for the first time. Most of this section consists of Paul's sermon in Pisidian Antioch (Act_13:16-41), which presents Jesus' death and resurrection as the fulfillment of the story of Israel and concludes with an invitation to accept the message of the gospel.*

Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, -- They left the island of Cyprus and sailed north. We note that it is now, "Paul and his company" with Paul always pictured as taking the lead, instead of "Barnabas and Saul." (Act_11:30; Act_12:25; Act_13:1; Act_13:2; Act_13:7).

We wonder if there were now others added to the "company" (literally, "those around Paul"), as later on such journeys new converts and others seemed to have tagged along, cf. Act_16:3; as did Luke, cf. the "we" Act_16:11; etc.

and came to Perga in Pamphyl'ia. -- Pamphylia was the Roman Province on the southern coast of what is now Turkey. Perga, a major city, was about 9 or 10 miles inland on a river.

We are not told of any missionary labours in Perga at this time either because there was no opening for them to do so, or it may be that they were troubled over the departure of Mark. They did preach in Perga on their return visit (Act_14:25).

And John left them and returned to Jerusalem; -- John is also called Mark or John Mark (compare note on Act_12:12). There is no reason told for his departure from the company and his return to Jerusalem, but it later becomes a source of contention between Barnabas and Paul (Act_15:37-38).

John Mark is considered to be same person who wrote the second Gospel (which reportedly is the content of Peter's preaching) and who later is a respected coworker with both Peter and Paul. (Col_4:10; 1Pe_5:13).

There are many theories advanced as the reason some think Mark left the missionary group at this point. But we are simply not told the reason nor given any clues. Here are a few suggestions from various scholars:
1. Unhappy that Barnabas is no longer the leader.
2. Afraid of the "perils of robbers" in the mountains of Pisidia.
3. Being young and homesick for his mother in Jerusalem.
4. Some suggest disease (malaria) was feared by him.
5. Not comfortable with the hardships of the future journey.
6. etc.

÷Act_13:14
Act_13:14

but they passed on from Perga -- Which sounds like they didn't stay long or do much preaching there. Probably the time was taken in arranging the passage on to the major city of Antioch through perilous mountains.

Dean Howson (*Life and Epistles of St Paul*, i. 175) suggests that it was perhaps in this journey that St Paul and his companion were exposed to those "perils of robbers" of which he speaks 2Co_11:26. Pisidia was a mountainous district rising gradually towards the north, and the quotations given by Dr Howson from Xenophon and Strabo shew that there was a great deal of brigand-like life there even in these times, from which Paul and his company may have been in danger. - CBSC

and came to Antioch of Pisid'ia. -- This city, know as Pisidian Antioch, (to differentiate it from Antioch of Syria) was located about 100 miles north of Perga across the Taurus Mountains. Antioch was the most important city of southern Galatia and included a rich amalgam of Greek, Roman, Oriental, and Phrygian traditions. Acts tells us that it also had a sizable Jewish population.

And on the sabbath day -- "On the day of the Sabbath" does not necessarily mean that it was the first sabbath after their arrival. Perhaps they have spent some time previously in investigative work in the city before this critical event took place.

they went into the synagogue -- Luke's language "*the* synagogue" leads us to believe there was but one in the city, yet there was a large Jewish community there, for 2000 families had been moved there by Antiochus the Great.

Though he is the apostle of the Gentiles Paul always found his way first to the Jewish synagogue. They were, in today's language, working with the "best prospects" first.

and sat down. -- Some scholars have ventured the idea that they sat down in one of the front seats where the rabbis would usually sit, thus intimating that they expected to be called on to speak. Others think that it is most likely Paul had made previous arrangements with the rulers to participate.

÷Act_13:15
Act_13:15

After the reading of the law and the prophets, -- There were two reading on the Sabbath, one from the Law and one from the Prophets. There was a schedule for the readings in the synagogues so that every three years it all might be read.

The reading of Deu_1:31 as seen from Paul's discussion (Act_13:17) and Isa_1:2 may fix this date as the last week of July or the first week of August [according to the Babylonian Talmud schedule?].

From the present table of Jewish lessons the reading from the Law for the forty-fourth Sabbath in the year is Deu_1:1 to Deu_3:22, while the corresponding lesson from the Prophets is Isa_1:1-22.

Ramsay, St. Paul, p. 100, points out that the present list of Jewish lessons is of later origin, but adds that "probably it [the present schedule] was often determined by older custom and traditional " arrangements.

Alford says, "Before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Law only was read in the synagogues: but, this having been forbidden by him, the Prophets were substituted: ... and, when the Maccabees restored the reading of the Law, that of the prophets continued as well."

he rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it." -- It is not clear if Paul had previously asked permission of the rulers to speak. The rulers of the synagogue would choose someone to read the scriptures, someone to have the prayers, and someone to deliver the sermon. Usually there was only one such sermon.

It may be that it was already known in town that Paul and Barnabas had come to town with a message to deliver. (One wonders if Sergius Paulus had sent any letter of introduction along with this company?)

÷Act_13:16
Act_13:16

So Paul stood up, -- In Judea the readers stood and the speakers sat, but in the Roman-Grecian world they stood to speak.

Here for the only time Luke gives a sample of the message Paul preached in Jewish synagogues. If Paul's defenses are included, five of his sermons are included in Acts. This one recorded here is the longest (26 verses) and it could be just a brief, or outline recorded by Luke.

and motioning with his hand said: "Men of Israel, -- Probably a sweeping gesture toward both the Jews and an acknowledgement of the non-Jews present.

Luke often mentions details that would be remembered (cf. Act_12:17; Act_13:16; Act_19:33; Act_21:40; Act_26:1), The gestures, however, may not all carry the same meaning in each instance, in Act_12:17, Peter's gesture was to silence an amazed crowd.

and you that fear God, -- Paul addresses Jews as well as non-Jewish people who worshiped Yahweh; they were attending synagogue services and perhaps even made pilgrimages to the temple in Jerusalem at festival times (see Act_2:10; Act_8:27; Act_10:2).

listen. -- Paul's message took on characteristics of that which Stephen made in his defense. Paul had heard that sermon, and the appearance of Christ to him on the way to Damascus had taught him to speak with boldness the truth of the resurrection.

Paul's message could be outlined as below:
(1) Jesus is the fulfillment of the history of God's dealings with Israel.
(2) The Jews in Jerusalem rejected Jesus, but in crucifying Him they fulfilled God's purpose.
(3) God fulfilled His promise to the Patriarchs by raising Jesus from the dead.
(4) The blessings of forgiveness and justification, which the Law could not provide, are now offered in Jesus' name to all who believe.

÷Act_13:17
.Act_13:17

The God of this people Israel chose our fathers -- Paul takes his Jewish audience back to God's selection of Abraham and the patriarchs. He wants his hearers to know that his message is not something completely new, but is connected to God's dealings with Israel throughout history.

and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, -- 1) They were made "great" through Joseph's position in the land of Egypt (Gen_41:40), and 2) they became "great" as a numerous people there (Exo_1:7; Exo_1:9-10).

and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. -- The expression "uplifted arm" is symbolic of great power. This is typical OT imagery (cf. Exo_6:1, Exo_6:6) of YHWH in physical terms.

> The Bible speaks of God in human vocabulary (i.e. anthropomorphisms) even though He is an eternal, non-physical, all pervasive Spirit. These biblical analogies are the source of many misunderstandings and literal overstatements. The Bible speaks of God in analogy, metaphor, and negation. God is far greater than fallen, time-bound, earth-bound humans can comprehend or express!

÷Act_13:18
Act_13:18

And for about forty years he bore with [put up with] them in the wilderness. --The Israelites were about forty years going from Egypt to the land of Canaan.

"To put up with" implies that the conduct of the Israelites in the wilderness was such as to exasperate God, yet He fed them manna and cared for them through the wilderness wanderings.

A marginal reading which has the support of many ancient authorities would be "he bare them as a nursing father in the wilderness." This is the expression in Deu_1:31.

÷Act_13:19
Act_13:19

And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, -- These seven groups controlled areas of land usually centered around one or more fortified cities. Together they had a greater population and military strength than Israel. (See Exo_3:8; Jos_3:10; Jos_24:11).

The term "destroyed" means here to subdue, to cast them out of their sovereignty. The Israelites did not put every individual of these seven nations to death, for many of them were left in the land.

he gave them their land as an inheritance, -- This text would refer to the time the promise of a land (Canaan) was made to Abramham, for according to the received chronology about four hundred and fifty years elapsed between that event and the death of Joshua.

The term "an inheritance" [NKJV, "allotment"] is a triple compound term κατεκληροδοτησε (G2624) which is only used here for "inheritance" and means the casting of lots as a means of dividing the Promised Land among the tribes (cf. Josh. 13–19).

for about four hundred and fifty years. -- [Some translations put this phrase with verse 20.] There is controversy over how to count these years: The best seems to be a reference to the 450 years from the time of the promise to give the land to Abraham until the conquest;
Paul is following the traditional chronology used by the rabbis of that day as used also by Josephus.

÷Act_13:20
Act_13:20

And after that -- The things mentioned in verses 17-19.

he gave them judges -- The judges were raised up in an extraordinary manner to administer the affairs of the nation, to defend it from enemies, to settle civil disputes, etc.

until Samuel the prophet. -- Samuel was the last of the judges and the first of the prophets. He was the one who anointed Israel's first king, Saul. (cf. Act_3:24).

÷Act_13:21
Act_13:21

Then they asked for a king; -- In the process of asking for a king like the nations around them, the Israelites were rebelling against God's order of government.

and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. -- 1Sa_9:2. The forty years duration of Saul's reign is only to be gathered indirectly from the Scriptures, but Josephus (*Antiquities,* vi. 14. 9) expressly states that Saul reigned 18 years before Samuel's death and 22 years after it.

The forty years assigned to Saul may include the seven years and six months (2Sa_5:5) which elapsed before David's kingdom was established over all Israel, while the house of Saul was still in power.

÷Act_13:22
Act_13:22

And when he had removed him, -- Saul was removed as king because he rebelled against God in sparing the sheep and oxen and valuable property of Amalek, together with Agag the king, when he had been commanded to utterly destroy it all.

Saul eventually was killed in a battle with the Philistines. Some writers have advanced the idea that "removed him" refers to Saul's death. However, David was anointed king before Saul's death, so it seems more likely that Paul had reference to Saul's being rejected as king.

he raised up David to be their king; -- The anointment of David to be king is found in 1Sa_16:1-13.

of whom he testified -- God bore witness of his selection of David.

and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' -- This sentence is a combination and adaptation from two separate verses out of the OT. First, "*I have found David my servant,*" Psa_89:20, and "*The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people,*" 1Sa_13:14. Some of the words quoted were originally pronounced by God himself, and some of them by Samuel His prophet to King Saul.

"A man after my heart" means simply a man who would not be rebellious and disobedient as Saul had been. David would do the Lord's will, in contrast to Saul who had not done the will of God.

The characteristic of David – that he obeyed the express commands of God by maintaining the worship of God, opposing idolatry, and seeking to promote universal obedience to God among his subjects – is specifically recorded of him in 1Ki_14:8-9.

Some would wondered about this designation for David since he proved to be such a sinner at times. No man after God's own heart is perfect; yet, he will recognize sin and repent of it, as David did (cf. Psa. 32; 38; 51).

We can see that this sermon by Paul followed the basic pattern of Stephen's historical rendition in Acts chapter 7.

÷Act_13:23
Act_13:23

Of this man's posterity [descendants] God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. -- Compare what Peter said in Act_2:30. The Greek word used here, *sperma*, not only refers to the offspring of David, but relates to the Davidic covenant (2Sa_7:12), and Yahweh's promises to Abraham (Gen_22:18-19). By using the word in this context, Paul proclaims that God has fulfilled His promises through Jesus.

The Old Testament is clear that the coming Messiah would be a descendant of David (2Sa_7:12-16; Psa_89). The prophet Jeremiah revealed the same truth, Jer_23:5-6.

÷Act_13:24
Act_13:24

Before his coming John had preached a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. -- No Jew could have gone up to keep a feast at Jerusalem for some years past without having heard something of Jesus or John the Baptist. Paul's tone of voice is that of one who assumes that this story is already vaguely known, and he comes to offer knowledge of greater clearness.

John preached "a baptism of repentance" Mar_1:4; cf. Act_10:37. "A baptism of repentance" was a baptism for forgiveness of sins upon the repentance of sins by the candidate, Mar_1:4. John's preaching of repentance also set the pattern for Jesus' early preaching (cf. Mat_4:17; Mar_1:14-15).

÷Act_13:25
Act_13:25

And as John was finishing his course, -- God had a specific task for John to perform, to prepare the way for the Messiah. John's public ministry lasted only about eighteen months.

he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, -- John made it clear to his audience that he was NOT the Messiah, but only the "voice in the wilderness" preparing the way. Joh_1:20; Joh_1:23; Mar_1:3; Luk_3:4.

but after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.' -- John spoke of a Coming One, greater than himself (cf. Mat_3:11; Mar_1:7; Luk_3:16; Joh_1:27-30; Act_13:25).
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÷Act_13:26
Act_13:26

"The Messiah Has Come" - Act_13:26-37
(see note Act_13:16)

"Brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, -- "Sons of Abraham's family" are Jews who can trace their family trees back to Abraham, through Isaac, the child of promise.

and those among you that fear God, -- The "God-fearers" refers to Gentiles who were attracted to Judaism's monotheism and morality. Paul addresses both groups in his audience.

to us has been sent the message -- The oldest MSS. read "to us," and this is quite in accord with the language of Act_13:17, "God chose *our* fathers." The Apostle through the whole address avoids, as far as may be, wounding any Jewish prejudice and so classes himself with his hearers where the subject allows him to do so

of this salvation. -- This is referring to God's promise to redeem fallen humanity through a Messiah (cf. Gen_3:15). It includes Gentiles (cf. Gen_12:5; Exo_19:5-6; and Act_28:28 and Act_13:46).

The demonstrative ***"this"*** implies that the salvation being preached rested on the work of Jesus. Paul is saying the salvation promised through David has come to pass. And he goes on to show how this Jesus became the savior of the world – by His dying in Jerusalem to atone for sins.

÷Act_13:27
Act_13:27

Paul recapitulates the facts.

For -- "For" means "Let me explain in greater detail what I've just introduced.

those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, -- What was done to Jesus was not done in a corner (Act_26:26). It seems that Paul's listeners were familiar, at least in broad outline, with knowledge of Jesus and his crucifixion. Paul now asserts that Jesus was the Messiah, authenticated by the testimony of the forerunner himself. Now then, if He really was the Messiah, why was He put to death in Jerusalem?

because they did not recognize him -- This is similar to Peter's language that what the rulers did was through ignorance, Act_3:17, but that does not remove their guilt.

The "rulers," including the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and priests, were suppose to be experts in the Scriptures.

nor understand the utterances of the prophets which are read every sabbath, -- This is such a tragic verse. It correctly summarizes the blindness of the Jews in Jerusalem about the Scriptures even though they read them continuously. By missing the prophetic signs (cf. Ps. 22; Isa. 53; Zech.; Mal) and prophecies (Isaiah, Jonah) they became *the prophetic sign*! He came to His own, but His own received Him not (cf. Joh_1:11-12; Isa_53:2-3.)

fulfilled these by condemning him. -- The prophets had predicted that Messiah would be rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The people and the rulers, by crucifying Him, did just as the Old Testament prophets predicted people would do to Messiah. (Isa 53.2-3).

The Jerusalem religious leaders in their ignorance of who Jesus was, "fulfilled" the Scriptures (Act_3:18).

÷Act_13:28
Act_13:28

Though they could charge him with nothing deserving death, -- "*They found no cause of death in him,*" These words are a part of the declaration of Pilate (Luk_23:22).

Technically, the Sanhedrin had condemned our Lord on the charge of blasphemy (Mat_26:66), but they had been unable to prove the charge by any adequate evidence (Mat_26:60). When they came before Pilate they shrank at first from urging that accusation, and contented themselves with stating in general terms that they had condemned Him as a malefactor (Joh_18:30); though afterwards, as if seeking to terrify the wavering governor, they added that by their law He ought to die because He made Himself the Son of God (Joh_19:7), and that by making Himself a king He spake against the emperor (Joh_19:12).

yet they asked Pilate to have him killed. -- Acts records again and again the spiritual responsibility of the Jews in Jerusalem (cf. Act_2:23, Act_2:36; Act_3:13-15; Act_4:10; Act_5:30; Act_7:52; act 10:39; Act_13:27-28).

Pilate several times during the trials of Jesus stated that he found no fault in Him, so Paul in effect is saying that the Jewish religious leaders had asked for the execution of an innocent man.

÷Act_13:29
Act_13:29

And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, -- The Jerusalem religious leaders' ignorance of who Jesus was fulfilled the various prophecies regarding betrayal, harsh treatment, death and burial, and the other circumstances that the Scripture foretold (Act_3:18).

Jesus' life was one of fulfilled prophecy. One strong evidence for the inspiration of the Bible and the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth is predictive prophecy (cf. Luk_22:22; Act_2:23; Act_3:18; Act_4:28; Act_10:43; Act_13:29; Act_24:14; Act_26:22).

they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. -- The OT predicted the death of Christ on a cross (Deut. 21; Ps. 22), at a time when this particular form of execution was not used. His burial in a "tomb" was also prophesied (Isa_53:9), yet victims of crucifixions were commonly tossed into mass graves.

> It is surely true that many of the details of Jesus' life, which we in the church today call prophecy, are in a sense typology. Many events happened in the life of Israel which later seem to also occur in Jesus' life (one example, Hos_11:1). Often ambiguous, oblique passages, which would not have been understood in context as prophetic, seem to jump to life as one views Jesus' earthly experience (ex. Ps. 22; Isa. 53). It takes inspiration and a sense of the flow of redemptive history to fully appreciate the OT foreshadowing of Jesus. - CBSC

÷Act_13:30
Act_13:30

But God raised him from the dead; -- The climax of Paul's message was the Resurrection of Christ, the ultimate proof that Jesus is the Messiah, and the fulfillment of three specific prophecies (*see notes on* Act_13:33-35).

This was the proof that God had now fulfilled the promise made unto Abraham and to David, that of their seed should one come, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Rom_1:4.

÷Act_13:31
Act_13:31

and for many days -- Act_1:3 says "forty days." However, forty is an OT round number.

he appeared -- These recorded appearances are probably not exhaustive of all the times and people who saw him.

1. the women at the tomb, Mat_28:9
2. the eleven disciples, Mat_28:16
3. Simon, Luke 24:34
4. two disciples on road, Luk_24:15
5. disciples, Luk_24:36
6. Mary Magdalene, Joh_20:15
7. ten disciples, Joh_20:17
8. eleven disciples, Joh_20:26
9. seven disciples, Joh_21:1
10. Cephas (Peter), 1Co_15:5
11. the Twelve (Apostles), 1Co_15:5
12. 500 brethren, 1Co_15:6 (Mat_28:16-17)
13. James (His earthly family), 1Co_15:7
14. all the apostles, 1Co_15:7
15. Paul, 1Co_15:8 (Act_9:4-5)

to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, -- The Apostles, and the most of Christ's followers, were drawn from Galilee, insomuch that, before the Crucifixion, Galileans was a name by which they were known (Mar_14:70).

who are now his witnesses to the people. -- Acts stresses the role of witnesses to Jesus' resurrection (e.g., Act_2:32; Act_3:15; Act_10:40-41). Paul states in 1Co_15:5-8 that Jesus appeared to more than 500 at one time.

Even while Paul is preaching in Pisidian Antioch, Jesus' Apostles are even then still witnessing in Jerusalem (and to Jewish people living elsewhere) the announcement that Jesus is the Messiah. Such preaching as Paul was doing in Antioch was not some new doctrine just recently made up by Paul.

÷Act_13:32
Act_13:32

And we bring you the good news -- While the first companions of Jesus are His witnesses, we (Paul and Barnabas) are His Evangelists, the bringers of good news. The "good news" is that the Messiah has come, and brought salvation!

that what God promised to the fathers, -- This refers to the initial promise of YHWH to Abraham for a land and a seed (cf. Gen_12:1-3; Rom. 4). This same promise of God's presence and blessing was repeated to the Patriarchs and to their children (cf. Isa_44:3; Isa_54:13; Joe_2:32). The OT focuses on the land while the NT focuses on "the seed." Paul alludes to this very promise in Rom_1:2-3.

The sentence grammar-structure says "the promise" is the direct object of the preceding verb "we bring." (See the sentence structure of the NASB, Act_13:32.) Paul is saying, 'We are here to tell you that the promise God made to the fathers has been fulfilled, and that's good news!'

÷Act_13:33
Act_13:33

this he has fulfilled -- The verb in the Greek "has fulfilled" is a strengthened compound form and indicates "complete fulfillment."

The "glad tidings" are concerning the promise, and the precise message which is the cause for gladness is contained in the announcement that the promise has been fulfilled.

to us their children -- The Greek order of the words is emphatic, "unto their children, even us." Paul says, "Their children inherited a promise which is now fulfilled." (See Act_2:39.)

by raising Jesus; -- By "raising Jesus" here refers to His resurrection (and subsequently His ascension back into heaven.)

Some would say that the word "raising" here probably speaks of Jesus' appearance in history, rather than to His resurrection from the dead. However the next verse makes it clear it refers to His resurrection.

as also it is written in the second psalm, -- Paul quotes Psa_2:7. The reading of many good MSS. is "in the **first** psalm." What we now call the first psalm was formerly regarded as an introduction to the whole and not counted in the numbering.

This Psalm was understood by the Jews as being a Messianic Psalm, and that is how Paul, by Holy Spirit inspiration, interprets it, too. In Rom_1:4, the Psalm is quoted as being a prediction of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

'Thou art my Son, -- This title alludes to the Davidic covenant, where God states that David's offspring will have a unique relationship with God and that this will be seen in His relationship with David's descendants (2Sa_7:14-15; compare Heb_1:5).

today I have begotten [fathered] thee.' -- When this language is applied to Jesus it describes His resurrection and ascension back into heaven. (Act_13:33; Rom_1:4; Heb_1:5; Heb_5:5)

> Some would see this Psalm as being applied to Jesus on four occasions:
> 1) At his birth in Luk_1:35 being applied to Jesus' incarnation - a special reference to the virgin birth.
> 2) In Rom_1:4 it is quoted as being a prediction of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. (Act_13:33)
> 3) In Heb_1:5 with reference to Jesus' ascension back into heaven (His welcome home!) and completing His High Priestly duty (See note Heb_1:5; and Heb 5.5).
> 4) In Heb_5:5 to Jesus completing His High Priestly duty. (See note on Heb_5:5).

÷Act_13:34
Act_13:34

And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, -- It is clear that Paul is speaking of Jesus' resurrection when he says "he raised him from the dead."

no more to return to corruption, -- This statement refers to Jesus' death and resurrection. He was the first to be resurrected (first fruits of the dead, cf. 1Co_15:20) rather than just resuscitated. Several people were brought back to physical life in the Bible, but they all had to die again. Enoch and Elijah were translated to heaven without death, but they were not resurrected.

he spoke in this way, 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' -- Paul implies that the promises to David (see 2 Sam 7) are fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ. To make this point, Paul quotes from Isa_55:3, the LXX version.

The OT context shows the significance of "you" (cf. Isa_55:4-5 LXX, "Behold, I have made him a testimony among the Gentiles, a prince and commander to the Gentiles. Nations which know thee not, shall call upon thee, and peoples which are not acquainted with thee, shall flee to thee for refuge, for the sake of the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified thee," The Septuagint, Zondervan, 1976, p. 890).

The blessings and promises to David (i.e. Jews) are now the blessing and promises to the Gentiles (i.e. the entire human race).

÷Act_13:35
Act_13:35

Therefore he says -- Perhaps it would be better, **"Because** he says."

also in another psalm, -- Paul quotes Psa_16:10 from the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the OT); Peter also applied this verse to Jesus (see Act_2:27 and note).

'Thou wilt not let thy Holy One see corruption.' -- These words of Psa_16:10 which David was inspired to utter cannot refer to himself (David), and this is what Peter proceeded to explain in Act_2:29-31 (see notes there.)

÷Act_13:36
Act_13:36

For David, after he had served the counsel [will] of God in his own generation, -- The apostle's argument is that, while David's services could benefit only those among whom he lived, and could not be extended to other generations, Christ by His resurrection, never more to die and see corruption, is a Saviour for all generations, and remission of sins through Him can be promised to every one who believes.

fell asleep, -- In 1Ki_2:10 this very expression is used of David's death.

and was laid with his fathers, -- The Greek of verse 36 is exactly the same as that used in the LXX which is translated "gathered to his people."

and saw corruption; -- David's body remained in the grave and returned to the dust it was. This is the second point of the contrast between David and Christ. David's body decayed as it laid in the tomb. Jesus' body was not in the tomb long enough to decay. (Cf. Act_2:29-31).

÷Act_13:37
Act_13:37

but he whom God raised up -- Paul here means Jesus of course.

saw no corruption. -- Jesus' body was raised before it experienced any decay. As David's body did decay, and the body of the Lord Jesus did not, it follows, Paul says, that Psalm 16 must be a prediction about Jesus, not David.

÷Act_13:38
Act_13:38

You Can Be Saved" - Acts 13:38-41 (see note Act_13:16)

Let it be known to you therefore, brethren, -- Paul is coming to his conclusion, and draws his "brethren" into the application of his message.

that through this man -- Literally, *in Him,* as through the accomplishment of His death and resurrection, is where forgiveness is found.

forgiveness of sins is proclaimed [preached] to you, -- Just as Jesus in His lifetime on earth declared that His miracles were signs that "the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," so the apostles preached concerning the resurrection.

Compare Act_10:43, and see the conclusion of Peter's speech in the house of Cornelius.

÷Act_13:39
Act_13:39

and by him every one -- By Jesus. Notice the universal element. God loves all humans and all humans have the opportunity to respond to Him by faith (cf. Act_10:43; Isa_42:1, 4, 6, 10–12; 55; Eze_18:32; Joe_2:28, 32; Joh_3:16; Rom_3:22, 29, 30; Rom_10:9-13; 1Ti_2:4; 2Pe_3:9).

that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. -- Keeping the law of Moses did not free anyone from their sins (cf. Rom_3:28; 1Co_1:30; Gal_2:16; Gal_3:11; Php_3:9). But the atoneing death of Jesus completely satisfied the demands of God's Law, making forgiveness of sins available to all who believe (Gal_3:16; Col_2:13-14). Only the forgiveness Christ offers can free people from their sins (Rom_3:20-22).

Full and complete forgiveness of sins was not provided under the Law of Moses, only atonement until the Christ Himself could provide that "forgiveness" for those who died under the Mosaic covenant.

÷Act_13:40
Act_13:40

> **13:40–41** *Paul calls on his hearers (present active imperative) to respond by trusting Jesus as the Promised Messiah, as the only way to receive forgiveness (cf. Joh_14:6; Act_4:12; 1Ti_2:5). He quotes Hab_1:5 from the Septuagint as a warning.*

Beware, therefore, -- Paul warns his hearers to not allow a catastrophe overtake them like the prophets had warned Israel.

Some say the change of tone in Paul's message is best explained by thinking that Paul observed a disapproving expression in the faces and actions of many of his Jewish hearers.

lest there come upon you what is said in the prophets: -- The prophets warned Israel of a moral and spiritual overthrow as great as the destruction which the Chaldæans and Nebuchadnezzar wrought upon the land and people at the time of the Babylonish captivity. The prophecy of Hab_1:5 is quoted in the next verse.

÷Act_13:41
Act_13:41

> **13:41** *Paul concludes with a quote from Hab_1:5. This passage originally warned Israel about God's impending judgment coming in the form of their exile to Babylon. Here, Paul warns that the rejection of the Messiah would also result in judgment.*

'Behold, you scoffers, and wonder, and perish; -- [This is the rendering of the LXX. The Hebrew text says at Hab_1:5 "Behold, ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously" (KJV).]

for I do a deed in your days, a deed you will never believe, if one declares it to you.'" -- Those who have lived long in wickedness rejecting God's Word will refuse to believe God's judgment coming upon them. (Hab_1:5). Their hearts are allowed to wax gross and their ears to become dull of hearing.

Paul drives home his point, using the words of the prophet, who spoke of severe punishment in store for those who failed to become obedient believers.

÷Act_13:42
Act_13:42

As they went out, -- The synagogue service has concluded and the people dismiss to exit the meeting and Paul and Barnabas are approached by many of those in attendance.

the people begged -- The Greek grammar shows "they kept begging." The desire to learn more was expressed by the congregation of both Jews and proselytes as they left the synagogue. We do not read of the Gentiles joining the throng of listeners until the next Sabbath (Act_13:44).

that these things might be told them -- This refers to the "good news" that Paul had just shared. He was preaching "forgiveness of sins" through Jesus. Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after the Word of God.

the next sabbath. -- The Greek words differ from those below in v. 44, and have been rendered by some "during the intervening week."

> Jewish congregations often had a portion of the Law read in the synagogues not only on the Sabbath, but on the Monday and Thursday mornings, that they might not be for three days without hearing the Scripture. The peculiar expression in this verse may apply to the meetings in the

synagogue on those days, and that the people then desired to hear once more of the message which Paul had just preached to them.

As a different expression is used so immediately, for "on the next Sabbath," it is supposed that Luke had some reason for the variation of his language in the two verses.

÷Act_13:43
Act_13:43

And when the meeting of the synagogue broke up, -- This probably refers to the week-day synagogue services.

many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, -- The phrase "devout converts of Judaism"is literally "worshiping proselytes," who had been circumcised and often made pilgrimages to the Temple and offered sacrifice. This is a different group from the "ones fearing God" of Act_13:16, Act_13:26 (cf. Act_10:2; Act_10:22; Act_10:35).

The phrase "followed Paul and Barnabas" may mean more than just "following" them to their place of lodging, but to "follow" [**α᾽κολουθε΄ω,** G190] them as disciples, believing the teaching that they had proclaimed in the synagogue.

who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. -- It seems that some of the hearers had responded to the gospel message and faithfully understand what was required of them. (This may indicate that Paul's message was much fuller than just what Luke records.)

The verb tense indicates the "urging" was done over a period of time, perhaps all through the next week.

÷Act_13:44
Act_13:44

The next sabbath -- Meaning the next sabbath synagogue service.

almost the whole city gathered together -- This shows that Paul and Barnabas must have been diligently labouring during the week among both Jews and Greeks and giving additional teaching on what he has preached in verse 42.

This is a hyperbole. Not *everyone* in the city attended. But news of what the apostles preached had been circulated by many of the crowd who were present the first Sabbath to hear them, as well as by those who heard during the week. It was a very large crowd that gathered at the synagogue.

to hear the word of God. -- The "good news" preached here by Paul is designated as "the word of God"

÷Act_13:45
Act_13:45

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, -- The Jewish rulers of the synagogue saw the crowd of Gentiles that had come to hear Paul and Barnabas.

they were filled with jealousy, -- The exclusive spirit of these rulers couldn't stand a message that gave the same privileges to all men. They would not tolerate that Gentiles should be made equal with God's ancient people.

and contradicted what was spoken by Paul, and reviled him. -- They were probably interrupting Paul as he was speaking attempting to refute his point.

On what basis they "contradicted" Paul we are not told. But they apparently opposed the doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah, and followed the lead of the Jerusalem Jewish leaders. They then attacked the messenger and "reviled" him.

See the similar conduct of the Jews at Corinth under similar circumstances, Act_18:6.

÷Act_13:46
Act_13:46

And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, -- They were not intimidated, but like the apostles when persecuted, became bold in their preaching. (Act_4:29; Act_4:31).

"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. -- Paul acknowledges that because the Jews were chosen by Yahweh and had unique promises from Him, they were to be presented the gospel first. Rom_1:16.

Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy -- That is, they pronounced the sentence upon themselves by their actions. By their rejection of Paul's preaching of the gospel, they revealed their true selves (cf. Joh_3:17-21).

Compare Mat_22:8, "They that were bidden" to the marriage supper "were not worthy." They had been deemed worthy by him who sent to call them, but had declared they were not so by their refusal to come.

of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. -- Although the thrust of Paul's ministry was to Gentiles, he had a desire to see Jews saved (Rom_9:1-5; Rom_10:1), preaching to them first in many cities (Act_13:5).

÷Act_13:47
Act_13:47

> **13:47** *Paul quotes from Isaiah, which speaks of the Suffering Servant's mission to the entire world (see* Isa_49:6*).*

For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, -- Paul applies the prophecy, Isa_49:6, to the mission of Jesus' followers and more specifically to the efforts of himself and Barnabas. This is his reason for going to the Gentiles, his actions were not arbitrary.

'I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.'" -- This prophecy shows Israel that from prophetic times the reception of the Gentiles was a part of God's plans. Simeon used this quote at the blessing of the baby Jesus in the temple in Luk_2:32 to affirm His Messianic task of universal redemption.

While the Jews might scorn such a command from Jesus of Nazareth, they recognized the authority of their own scriptures

÷Act_13:48
Act_13:48

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God; -- Many of these had been in the synagogue for years and had never heard the inclusive, universal message of God's love and acceptance of all humanity by faith in Christ. When they heard it they enthusiastically received it (cf. Act_28:28) and passed it on to others (cf. Act_13:49).

The Jews were acting so as to proclaim themselves unworthy; the Gentiles were making manifest their desire to be deemed worthy.

and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. -- Those *now* ordained (appointed) to eternal life were *believers* in Jesus Chirst, not keepers of the Law!

Luke means that according to God's plan, the gospel reached the Gentiles in this region (compare Eph_1:5), despite opposition, God's intended purposes are accomplished.

÷Act_13:49
Act_13:49

And the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region. -- The Jews and Gentiles who believe do not keep the good news to themselves, but begin telling others throughout the south Galatian region. By contrast, the unbelieving Jewish leaders harden in their opposition and do all they can to get Paul and Barnabas out of the area.

÷Act_13:50
Act_13:50

But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, -- This illustrates how the Jews in such Gentiles cites were able to extend their influence into political and economic events. They used certain "honorable women," wives of the "chief men of the city," who attended the synagogue worship to influence their husbands and were able to get Paul and Barnabas expelled from Antioch.

and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. -- The animosity of the Jews, excited by the success of the apostles, finally resulted in their expulsion from the city.

÷Act_13:51
Act_13:51

But they -- Paul and Barnabas.

shook off the dust from their feet against them, -- Jesus commanded the disciples to shake the dust off their feet when they left any place that rejected them (Mat_10:14; Mar_6:11; Luk_9:5). This signaled that the people in a location were now responsible for their own fate.

The symbolism of Paul and Barnabas' act is clear that they considered the Jews at Antioch no better than heathen. There could have been no stronger condemnation.

This symbolism is much like that of Act_18:6, "shaking of the raiment," cf. Neh_5:13; (Mat_10:14; Mar_6:11; Luk_9:5).

and went to Ico'nium. -- This was a city in Pisidia, about seventy-five miles to the south-east of Antioch, a five day's journey (Renan). Iconium lay on the high road from Antioch of Syria to Ephesus. It is still a large town, and preserves the trace of its old name, being now called Konya (Konich, or Cogni) on modern maps.

÷Act_13:52
Act_13:52

And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. -- Paul and Barnabas left behind believers in Pisidian-Antioch, who would constitute the church there, who rejoiced in accordance to the Lord's exhortation of Mat_5:12.

The disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit indicates that Paul left them with certain spiritual gifts by the laying of his hands (see Act_8:14-18).

÷Act_14:1
Act_14:1

> **14:1–7** *Paul and Barnabas continue further into Gentile (non-Jewish) territories, where the pattern seen in Pisidian Antioch repeats itself in Iconium (compare Act_13:13-51). They are initially received well in the Jewish synagogue, but later experience opposition from both Jews and Gentiles*

Now at Ico'nium -- Iconium was located in the central region of modern Turkey, about 75 miles (straight line, or 115 on roads) southeast of Pisidian Antioch. It was a cultural melting pot of native Phrygians, Greeks, Jews, and Roman colonists. While it evidently had a Jewish community, the town was predominantly Gentile. (See note on Act_13:51).

they entered together -- "Together" is the Greek *kata to auto,* and means "at the same time" or "after the same fashion." Here, Luke seems to be indicating that Paul's evangelistic methods followed his usual pattern that he employed almost everywhere he went. (See Rom_1:16, "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.")

into the Jewish synagogue, -- Though he is the apostle of the Gentiles Paul always turned to "the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom_1:16). As his custom, where there was a synagogue in a town, he went there first.

and so spoke -- This phrase reminds us that Paul knew the Scriptures, had received revelations from Christ, and was speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This phrase is another example of the doctrine taught in **Romans 10:17,** that "faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ."

that a great company believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. -- "Greeks" here probably means proselytes of the gate, who were in the habit of attending the Sabbath services in the synagogue.

This phrase shows the purpose of Acts. The gospel is spreading vigorously among various people groups. The implications of the OT promises to all humanity (cf. Gen_3:15; Gen_12:3) are now being realized.

These summary statements relating to the rapid growth of the church are characteristic of Acts.

÷Act_14:2
Act_14:2

But the unbelieving Jews -- Or (MT*) "the Jews that were disobedient." The verb is the same which is found Joh_3:36, where the rendering should be "He that *obeyeth not* the Son shall not see life." The word is stronger than "unbelieving," it expresses unbelief breaking forth into rebellion, and so exactly describes the character of these Jews who were persecuting Paul and Barnabas.

Salvation is characterized by "believed" (cf. v. 1), and spiritual blindness is characterized by "disobedience" or "disbelief."

stirred up the Gentiles -- This is a common Septuagint verb for rebellion (cf. 1Sa_22:8; 2Sa_18:31; 2Sa_22:49; 1Ch_5:26), but it is used in the NT only in Act_13:50 and Act_14:2.

and poisoned [embittered] their minds -- "Poisoned" (κακόω, *kakoo*¯ G2559 "evil affected, ill treated") is another common term in the Septuagint to describe evil, oppressive people who mistreat others. Used most by Luke, see this term in Act_7:6; Act_7:19; Act_12:1; Act_14:2; Act_18:10; 1Pe_3:13.
[Luke himself seems to have been very familiar with the language used in the LXX.]

It is the distinguishing feature of nearly all the persecutions in Acts that they originated in the hostility of the Jews, cf. 1Th_2:14-16. (The case of Demetrius at Ephesus, and that at Philippi, furnishes almost the only exception, Act_19:24; cf. Act_16:16-23).

against the brethren. -- Some think that "brethren" is a reference to Paul and Barnabas. Others think the word, which was one of the titles by which the early Christians were known, implies that a congregation had been formed in Iconium.

***MT**=Majority Text, or the Byzantine Greek text.

÷Act_14:3
Act_14:3

So [Therefore] they remained for a long time, -- "Therefore" (therefore, accordingly, consequently, these things being so), points back to both verse 1 and verse 2 – i.e., because multitudes were being converted, and because there was opposition, they stayed a long time.

"Long time" is a relative term. We do not know whether it was a month, three months, or longer.

speaking boldly for the Lord, -- This reminds us of the apostles' prayer in Act_4:29-30, and we see it continues to be fulfilled and it's close connection with the stretching forth of God's hand to heal, and with the signs and wonders that were done in the name of Jesus.

who bore witness to the word of his grace, -- The "word of His grace" here is referring to the gospel, and the "good news" (Act_13:32) that God has made "forgiveness of sins (see Act_13:38) available to all, Jew and Gentile.

granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. -- These acts of such divine power confirmed that Paul and Barnabas spoke for God. (Mar_16:20; Heb_2:4).

÷Act_14:4
Act_14:4

But the people of the city were divided; -- For a similar division see the history of the preaching at Thessalonica Act_17:4-5; and Rome Act_28:24. That His word should cause such division had been foretold by Jesus (Luk_12:51; Mat_10:34-36).

some sided with the Jews, -- No numbers are given, but we may fairly assume that the converts were in a minority (1Co_1:26-27), and that the chief men and women of the city, as at the Pisidian Antioch (Act_13:50), were among those who sided with the Jews.

and some with the apostles. -- Normally the word "apostles" in Acts refers to the twelve apostles (Act_1:12-26), but here and in Act_14:14 it refers to Paul and Barnabas. Here it would be best to translate "apostles" as "messengers" (cf. 2Co_8:23; Php_2:25).

The meaning of the word "apostle" is "one sent"; A person designated and sent to speak and act with special authority. The twelve were special ambassadors who were "sent out" or had a special commission from Jesus himself. So Paul also received a special commission from Christ and could regularly introduces himself as an Apostle in his letters (e.g., 1Co_1:1; Eph_1:1; 1Ti_1:1).

Also remember that the church at Antioch (Act_13:1-4) commissioned and "sent" out Barnabas and Saul/Paul, so they correctly can be called "apostles" of the church at Antioch, (2Co_8:23) also "called" and commissioned by the Holy Spirit.

÷Act_14:5
Act_14:5

When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, -- The wording sounds like the "rulers" were the Jewish rulers of the synagogue, but it is impossible to declare what these authorities were, it may refer to the civil leaders of the city.

to molest them -- The Greek term *hubridzo* is more intense than "mistreat," but "to commit violent acts." Some commentators believe this refers to two persecutions; one by the city leaders, and another by the Jews, but the context implies just one.

and to stone them, -- This method of punishment proves that their Jewish opponents were the instigators, since stoning was a Jewish form of execution, usually for blasphemy.

÷Act_14:6
Act_14:6

they learned of it and fled -- Shortly before the hostile crowd is able to execute their plan, the apostles become aware of it. Perhaps some friend overhead the plot being hatched and warned the apostles. Here seems to have been a narrow escape from stoning.

The same word here translated "learned" or "became aware" is translated "considered" at Act_12:12. It may be that the apostles thought over what was the best course to follow in the light of the intelligence they have just received, and determined that it was best to flee.

to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycao'nia, -- Lystra was about 40 miles to the southeast of Iconium. and Derbe was about 20 miles farther to the east. The location of Lystra has been tentatively identified by archaeologists. Lystra, as we learn later, seems to have been the home of Timothy.

"Lycaonia" was a southern district in the Roman province of Galatia. Paul's letter of "Galatians" was directed to the churches established on this missionary journey of Paul.

and to the surrounding country; -- From the threat of violence excited by the Jews, Paul and Barnabas fled into a region where were fewer Jews. The inclusion of the term "the surrounding country" seems to imply they continued to spread the "Word" everywhere they went.

Paul's method was to work the larger cities and his helpers and converts took the gospel to the nearby villages and towns. But on this occasion Paul himself goes to the smaller towns, Lystra and Derbe, and perhaps he himself also took the gospel to the "surrounding country."

÷Act_14:7
Act_14:7

and there they preached the gospel. -- Paul and Barnabas did not let the threat of violence at Antioch and Iconium stop them from their mission. The verb tense of "preached" means they preached it again and again.

÷Act_14:8
Act_14:8

14:8–20 *Even when Paul and Barnabas are accepted after healing a lame man, they find that the non-Jewish people in Lystra misunderstand their message.*

Now at Lystra there was a man sitting, -- There is no mention of a synagogue in Lystra so probably only a few Jews lived there and they didn't have much influence; (see Act_16:1 for note about Timothy.) This man was sitting in some public square near the entrance to the town, verse 13, (probably placed here by friends for him to beg, see note at Act_3:1-3), a public place where Paul was preaching.

Again it is evident that the man was well known or recognized in the community.

We have Paul and Barnabas, described for us for the first time, as beginning their evangelistic work in a location preaching mostly to Gentiles since there was apparently no ready-made Jewish group here with which to begin.

who could not use his feet; he was a cripple from birth, who had never walked. -- This full description of the man, by a medical observer (Luke, Col 4:14), leaves no doubt the miracle we see performed was genuine and not psychosomatic.

It is interesting that Luke, in many ways, parallels Peter's and Paul's ministries. Peter and John heal a lame man in Act 3:1-10 now so too, do Paul and Barnabas.

÷Act_14:9
Act 14:9

He listened to Paul speaking; -- The indications is that he heard Paul preach on several occasions; that the lame man was at his station and heard repeatedly the teaching of the Gospel. As Paul preached about Jesus, His work and His miracles, the man came to believe in Him.

and Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, -- Paul discerned that the man believed in Jesus and believed that Paul, the Lord's apostle, could heal him if he would. His faith is that Paul, with the Lord's help, could make him well.

Miracles had several functions: (1) to show the love of God; (2) to show the power and truth of the gospel; or (3) and to encourage the other believers present.

÷Act_14:10
Act 14:10

said in a loud voice, -- Paul raised his tone above that in which he was speaking to the rest of the people. While he spoke directly to the lame man, it gathered the attention of all the people in the area.

"Stand upright on your feet." -- A careful understanding would see that the man realized that Paul, being enabled by the authority given him by Christ Himself, was giving him this command.

And he sprang up and walked. -- Some MSS give these verbs in different tenses. The first is aorist, expressing one act, springing upward. The second verb is an imperfect and indicates the act of continual walking.

We note that the lame man did not just gradually began to get well, but the miracle was entire and complete in a moment.

÷Act_14:11
Act 14:11

And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, -- When people are excited, their natural speech comes out and with great volume. All over the marketplace the Lystrians cry out to anyone who will listen, that the gods have come to visit! The verb tense here indicates a sudden outburst of excited speech.

saying in Lycao'nian, -- People almost everywhere were bilingual and Paul had apparently been preaching in Greek (which they would have understood) and didn't understand their local dialect. Paul and Barnabas did not understand the fuss the people were making until the temple priest "brought oxen and garlands" and wanted to offer sacrifice to them.

The reason for believing Paul and Barnabas had not understood the "Lycaonian" dialect, is that they would have corrected the false impression and expressed their horror much sooner than they did.

"The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" -- Nothing was more familiar to the heathen mind than the thought of the gods assuming human shape and going about among mankind.

The strange reaction by the people of Lystra to the healing had its roots in local folklore. According to tradition, the gods Zeus and Hermes visited Lystra incognito, asking for food and lodging. All turned them away except for a peasant named Philemon and his wife, Baucis. The gods took vengeance by drowning everyone in a flood. But they turned the lowly cottage of Philemon and Baucis into a temple, where they were to serve as priest and priestess. Not wanting to repeat their ancestors' mistake, the people of Lystra believed Barnabas to be Zeus and Paul to be Hermes. - MBC.

÷Act_14:12
Act_14:12

Barnabas they called Zeus, -- "Zeus" (or Roman "Jupiter") was the most powerful of all the gods of the pantheon in Greek mythology. Apparently Barnabas was bigger and more impressive in physical features than Paul and the crowd perceived he was "Zeus."

While the locals may have used their Lycaonian names, Luke gives the Greek names of the gods. From local inscriptions we learn this was an area where Zeus and Hermes were worshiped (cf. Act_14:13).

and Paul, because he was the chief speaker, they called Hermes. -- "Hermes" (or Roman "Mercury") was the Greek deity in charge of delivering messages. The people thought of Paul as Hermes, him being the chief speaker. ["Mercury" was pictured on the old US dimes; and the logo of many modern florist.]

That Paul was not really like "Hermes" or "Mercury" we know from his own words, and tradition describes him as "little in height, with a bald head and crooked legs" *(Acta Apocryph.* p. 41, Tischendorf). Though we have no knowledge of this description being correct.

÷Act_14:13
Act_14:13

And the priest of Zeus, -- Even the highest pagan religious officials misunderstand the apostles' identities. It was the duty of the pagan priest to lead the people in worship of the two men they believed to be gods.

whose temple was in front [gates] of the city, -- The temple of Zeus was just outside the city gate at Lystra. The ruins of a similar temple have been found just outside a city near the location of ancient Lystra, indicating that this was the practice of the area.

brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the people [crowds]. -- The people would have brought the items to the priest to use in sacrifice. The Greek has "bulls" (*taurous*), probably there were two brought, one to be sacrificed to each "god."

The word used here in the Greek is the same which is used for the porch or vestibule of the house of Mary the mother of John Mark (Act_12:14) where Peter came after his miraculous escape from Herod's prison. This was the "gate" or vestibule to the house where Paul and Barnabas were residing.

Many think that the priest and the people had come to the house hosting Paul and Barnabas since it was meet to offer the sacrifices to the (supposed) gods in their presence rather than on the altar at Zeus' (Jupiter's) temple.

÷Act_14:14

Act_14:14

But when the apostles -- Barnabas and Paul were "apostles" or "messengers" of the church at Antioch being "sent out" by them. Act_13:1-3. See note at Act_14:4; and 2Co_8:23.

Barnabas and Paul heard of it, -- They were probably unaware what was going on till they heard the clamor and excitement of the would-be worshippers and the priest appearing at the door where they were lodging.

they tore their garments -- Tearing one's garment was a sign of severe distress and/or revulsion in ancient Near Eastern cultures (compare Gen_37:29; Jos_7:6; Mar_14:63-64).

and rushed out among the multitude, crying, -- The Greek reads they "sprang forth among the multitude." They were shocked and horror-stricken at what was contemplated. They sprang forth from the house, through the vestibule, and into the middle of the crowd, renting their garments and crying out with their words, that they might put an end to the delusion of the people,.

÷Act_14:15
Act_14:15

"Men, why are you doing this? We also are men, of like nature with you, -- They make a hasty cry for the people to stop! Denying they are deity!

The term is *homoiopathes*, which is a compound of "the same" and "passions." The locals had thought Paul and Barnabas were gods (*homoiothentes*, cf. Act_14:11), which means "made like" men. Paul uses the same root to denote their common humanity. This term is used only here and in Jas_5:17 in the NT.

and bring you good news, -- They were simply messengers of "good news." News about forgiveness of sins, and news of the One God who is vastly different from the idols they worshipped.

that you should turn from these vain things to a living God -- "Vanity" is a name constantly used in the OT for the false gods of the heathen, who were nothing but dead stone and wood. See 1Sa_12:21. They appealed to the people to turn from servicing idols, and realize the truth about the God who is living, and not a man-made idol.

One may note the similarity between the exhortation to the Lystrians, that they should "turn from these vain things to the living God," and Paul's remark to the Thessalonians, that they had "turned from idols to serve the living and true God;" (1Th_1:9).

who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. -- By using this description, Paul and Barnabas distinguish the God they preached from all other deities. Instead of proclaiming the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he appealed to their rational knowledge of the One universal God who created the world (cf. Act_17:22-26; Jon_1:9).

÷Act_14:16
Act_14:16

In past generations -- (By-gone generations). Or as we would say in "past dispensations," but now, in the present Christian dispensation, God wants **all** men to repent of sin and come follow his instructions for life and worship. (2Pe_3:9; 1Ti_2:4; Eze_33:11; Act_17:30; Joh_3:16-17; Rev_22:17.)

he allowed [permitted] all the nations to walk in their own ways; -- God had chosen only Israel for His own people before the coming of Christ, and had given to the rest of the world no revelation of Himself except what they could read in the book of nature. But that, Paul says, spake clearly of a caring creator and preserver of the world.

The Gentile's ignorance of God is contrasted with the Jews' knowledge of God. The irony is that Gentiles respond in mass by faith to the gospel, while Jews respond in mass by rejection and persecution toward the gospel (cf. Rom. 9–11).

allowed [suffered; permitted] -- This reminds us of The Permissive will of God - What God allows to happen, but does not condone.
(Versus: The Causative will of God - What God causes, or will NOT allow) cf. 1Co_10:13.
Example: Why do little children die? Why do the wicked prosper? (See Eze_33:11.)

÷Act_14:17
Act_14:17

yet he did not leave himself without witness, -- This is the concept of natural revelation (cf. Psa_19:1-6; Rom_1:19-20; Rom_2:14-15). All humans know something about God from creation and an inner moral witness.

for he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." -- Paul uses God's creation and provision through nature (cf. Psa_145:15-16; Psa_147:8; Jer_5:24; Jon_1:9) as his point of contact.

The local pagan tradition said that Zeus was the giver of rain and Hermes was the giver of food. Paul, following Deut. 27–29, affirms God's control of harvest. Paul was God's unique choice (apostle to the Gentiles) to reach the nations!

÷Act_14:18
Act_14:18

With these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them. -- The Lystrians were so fully convinced by the miracle that the gods had appeared (Act_14:9-11), and were so anxious to do them the proper honor, that Paul and Barnabas barely could keep them from going ahead with the sacrifice of the animals.

÷Act_14:19
Act_14:19

But Jews came there from Antioch and Ico'nium; -- Somehow they have learned of Paul's activity in Lystra and are willing to travel 130 miles (a journey of six or seven days on foot) in order to counter the progress of the gospel.

and having persuaded the people, -- The Jews succeeded in "winning the crowd over," managing to convince them that Paul and Barnabas were a threat to their community. How they may have accomplished this is not stated. The people had seen the miracle of healing done for the cripple man. One would think it would take some powerful argument to contradict what they witnessed.

We notice the fickleness of this pagan crowd, Paul and Barnabas are honored as gods one moment and stoned the next! It may be that their pride was injured when Paul and Barnabas refused the sacrifices they first wanted to render to them.

they stoned Paul -- Paul was pelted with rocks until it was assumed he was dead, then dragged outside the city. The fact that "stoning" was chosen as the method to murder Paul indicates that the Jews were the leaders in this persecution. They satisfied themselves thinking they were inflicting punishment on a blasphemer. Paul refers to this event in 2Co_11:25 and more generally in 2Ti_3:11, see also Gal_6:17 .

and dragged him out of the city, -- The stoning had not been in a place set apart for such executions, for there were few Jews in Lystra, but it had been done publicly in the midst of the city, perhaps in the place of public resort where Paul had been wont to preach.

supposing that he was dead. -- "Supposing" usually means "to suppose something that is not true." The main NT use of this word argues that the crowd's supposition was incorrect and that Paul was not dead while they thought he was.

Some think this may be the time/occasion when the vision and revelation occurs that is recorded in 2Co_12:1-6. Others discount this as the time of the third-heaven experience, thinking the date of Paul's account does not reconcile with the time of the stoning.

Four theories have been advanced as to Paul's condition at the conclusion of the stoning:
1) He was not dead but knocked unconscious.*
2) Paul feigned himself dead and waited til they left.
3) He was badly hurt, Lois and Eunice nursed and revived him.
4) Paul may actually have been dead, his soul went out of his body to the"third-heaven" where he heard words that were "unlawful" for a man to speak.
* The view I personally believe.

÷Act_14:20
Act_14:20

But when the disciples gathered about him, -- This verse is the first indication of the evangelistic success in Lystra. (Was there prayer?) This group of sorrowing disciples almost certainly included Timothy who was from Lystra. (Perhaps it was this event that prompted Timothy's tears, cf. 2Ti_1:2-4.)

There evidently was no way these disciples could have prevented the attack on Paul; but now that it is over, they have come, it would seem, with the purpose of giving Paul's body a decent burial.

he rose up -- The CBSC says that the Greek here conveys the impression that this was a resurrection from the dead, and that the apostle's immediate exhibition of vigor and boldness to enter the city again, was the effect of a miracle.

That one stoned and left for dead by a savage mob should revive and go about as if nothing had befallen him was striking evidence to the gathered disciples that the mighty power of God was with Paul. Perhaps seeing he was not dead, some may have given aid and nursed him back to strength.

and entered the city; -- His recovery seems swift, and it is surprising that he would enter the city again, so quickly, where there was such danger.

and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. -- Having been sheltered for the night, perhaps even in the home of Eunice and Lois, the mother and grandmother of Timothy (2Ti_1:5; Act_16:1-3), the next day Paul and Barnabas travel 20 miles southeast to Derbe, probably a long day's journey.

÷Act_14:21
Act_14:21

When they had preached the gospel to that city -- Derbe was also in the Lycaonian part of the Roman province of Galatia. This was as far eastward as Paul and Barnabas traveled on their missionary journey.

and had made many disciples, -- This city also responded wonderfully to the gospel and many became disciples of Christ. Perhaps "Gaius of Derbe," whom Luke mentions as one of Paul's companions in a subsequent journey (Act_20:4), may have been one of these. This is the more probable because he is there

mentioned in the same clause with Timothy, who undoubtedly was converted by Paul during this visit to Lycaonia (Act_14:20; Act_16:1-3).

they returned to Lystra and to Ico'nium and to Antioch, -- The missionaries could have chosen to travel east, pass through the Cilician Gates, perhaps visit Tarsus, Paul's native city, and shortly complete their return to Antioch of Syria. Instead, they determined to retrace their route in order to visit the new congregations they have just started in Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch.

Apparently they did not do much public preaching on this return visit, but were privately organizing and encouraging the believers (cf. Act_14:22-23).

÷Act_14:22
Act_14:22

strengthening the souls of the disciples, -- This verse is a summary of Paul's message to the churches on his return visit: it focused on 1) perseverance and 2) expected tribulations.

Luke uses the term "strengthening" several times to describe Paul's follow-up messages to new churches (Act_14:22; Act_15:32; Act_15:41; Act_18:23). Basically the word ἐπιστηρ ζοντες, G1991, simply means "to render more firm."

exhorting them to continue in the faith, -- "Strengthening" can be done by giving encouragement and warning of dangers for which to watch. This phrase seems parallel to Act_13:43 where at Antioch Paul "urged them to continue in the grace of God."

This is another time where ***"the faith"*** stands for the body of teaching for which the gospel stands.

and saying that through many tribulations -- Paul is speaking of the types of afflictions which came on him at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, and probably adds the general truth that "*all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecutions*" (2Ti_3:12).

we must enter the kingdom of God. -- God's kingdom on earth today is the church. Paul is saying that in being a part of God's kingdom, the church, one can expect such tribulations as had happened to him. (See notes at Col_1:13; Heb_12:28; 2Th_1:5).

Here the "we" does not include Luke personally in the way it does in Act_16:10-12 when at Troas and elsewhere following in Acts it indicates Luke's personal presence with the missionary group.

÷Act_14:23
Act_14:23

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, -- One aspect of strengthening the churches was installing proper leadership to care for the family of believers (see 1Ti_3:1-12; Tit_1:5-8). (See note on Act_11:30).

The term "elders" (*presbuteros*) is synonymous with the terms "bishop" or "overseers" (*episkopos*) and "pastors" or "shepherds" in the NT, cf. Act_20:17 Act_20:28; and Tit_1:5-7. (The terms "elder," "pastors," "shepherds" have a Jewish background, while the term "bishop" or "overseer" has a Greek city-state background. There are only two church offices: overseers and deacons (cf. Php_1:1).

Here at this point where the members in these churches are new and young (in the faith), we see Paul and Barnabas themselves appointing the first "elders" in the congregations. Being guided themselves by the Holy Spirit they could know who the best spiritual leaders, men grounded in the faith, should be "appointed" to give leadership to a new congregation (See also Act_20:28).

Here the word "appointed" ["stretching of hands"] indicates the Paul and Barnabas laid their hands on these "elders" signifying they were set apart to their task of being "overseers." (See Act_13:3 for the laying on of hands.)

Later, Paul, again by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, would set out guide-lines for the type of men who should be selected as "elders" when writing to the young evangelists Timothy and Titus. We notice that each congregation had a plural number of "elders" appointed to give it oversight, not just a single "elder."

with prayer and fasting -- This may be a purposeful parallel to Act_13:2-3. It indicates a service that was especially devout in its nature and dealing with a serious decision seeking God's blessings in the matter.

they committed [commended] them -- In prayer and speech they ask the Lord to take knowledge of them, to bless, strengthen, and keep them in the work to which they are appointed. See Act_20:32.

to the Lord in whom they believed. -- The new "elders" had made a settled decision in time past ("believed" is pluperfect active indicative), which indicated faithful qualities such as needed in leadership.

> **Special Note:** The meaning underlying the word "appoint" (*cheirotonesantes*) [G5500] is helpful to understand. The word is a compound of two words, "hand" and "to stretch," and so the word literally means "to stretch the hands." From this literal meaning, the word came to signify to "choose or appoint by a show of hands," and finally "to elect or appoint by any means." The word occurs in but one other place in the New Testament, at 2Co_8:19, where it is applied to Luke (the common interpretation) and translated, "who was chosen by the churches (i.e., who was elected by the suffrage of the churches) to travel with us. - Reese.

÷Act_14:24
Act_14:24

Then they passed through Pisid'ia, -- The highland province of Pisidia is just north of the coastal province of Pamphylia. It is a mountainous and rugged region without any Jewish population and apparently offered little opportunity for evangelism.

and came to Pamphyl'ia. -- The coastal province, now the south coast of Turkey, where Perga was the chief city of the region.

÷Act_14:25
Act_14:25

And when they had spoken the word in Perga, -- Luke only briefly summarizes the concluding stops in the mission tour. From Pisidian Antioch they descended into the lowlands of Pamphylia. They stopped in Perga, 8 miles inland from the coast, to preach before going to Attalia, which was the main seaport of the region.

We are not told whether Paul and Barnabas preached here on their way inland (Act_13:13). If they did, perhaps now they are wanting to strengthen the disciples here.

It was from here that John Mark had left them to return to Jerusalem. See the note at Act_13:13 for this.

they went down to Attali'a; -- Today known as Antalya, the town was on the sea coast and the busiest port in this region.

÷Act_14:26
Act_14:26

and from there they sailed to Antioch, -- This would be the Syrian Antioch, from where they had left. They did not return to Cyprus. Barnabas will return there after the dispute with Paul over John Mark (cf. Act_15:36-39).

where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. -- The church at Antioch had sent Paul and Barnabas on this missionary tour and they are now coming home. These words remind us of the passage in Act_13:1-4.

They had been "commended to the grace of God." That is, the church had committed these men to God's favor and protection during their perilous tour. As Paul and Barnabas were beginning their tour, the church had prayed that God would care for them, and it is entirely probable the church continued to pray for them while they were gone

÷Act_14:27
Act_14:27

And when they arrived, they gathered the church together -- Whether this was a regular service meeting of the church or a specially called service is not clear. They had been away several years, and during that interval they had probably heard little of them. We can picture to ourselves the eagerness with which the Christians of Antioch gathered to listen to their report.

and declared all that God had done with them, -- They told how God had worked "with them" providing audiences, miracles, and providentially guiding and blessing them along the way.

They shared their report to the entire congregation, not just to the leaders (cf. Act_13:1), and later reported on their mission activity to the congregation in Jerusalem (cf. Act_15:4) and, for that matter, all other congregations along the way (cf. Act_15:3) to Jerusalem.

and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. -- God had made "faith," belief and submission to the will of Christ, the ground for admission into His kingdom. It was now no longer through circumcision that men should enter in and be known as God's people, but the Gospel privileges were offered to everyone that believed.

The apostles' report confirms God's blessing upon their Gentile (non-Jewish) mission. The good news of the Gospel was to be taken to the ends of the earth (Act_1:8).

÷Act_14:28
Act_14:28

And they remained no little time with the disciples. -- This was probably about a year. Paul was naturally more attached to Antioch than to Jerusalem, for here was the centre where Gentiles had first formed a mission-minded Church, and where consequently he found most sympathy with his special labours.

- • The first missionary journey probably started in AD 45; that is, according to Acts 12, it began just shortly after the death of Herod Agrippa I in AD 44.
- • The first missionary journey probably lasted through AD 47 or 48.
- • The Jerusalem Conference was held in AD 49 or 50.
- • Thus, there is a period of 2 to 4 years passing in the words of this verse. - (Date per Reese.)

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÷Act_15:1
Act_15:1

15:1–21 *As the mission to Gentiles continues forward, the early church is faced with how the Gentiles are to be accepted into God's church. The meeting recorded here, regularly called the Jerusalem Council, took place circa AD 49.*

The Jerusalem Council made clear the answer to the most vital doctrinal question of all: "What must a person do to be saved?"

But some men came down -- During the "long time" that Paul and Barnabas labored at Antioch after their first missionary journey (Act_14:18) Judaizers, false teachers who were self-appointed guardians of legalism, came to Antioch teaching a doctrine of salvation by keeping Jewish traditional customs.

from Judea -- The region in which Jerusalem was located.

and were teaching the brethren, -- They were propagating the doctrine in the Antioch church that the Jewish custom or tradition regarding circumcision must be observed by Gentile converts.

"Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, -- The Jews practiced circumcision on the eighth day as established by Gen_17:9-14. These Jewish men here are arguing that a Gentile cannot be a part of God's people except by becoming Jews first.

you cannot be saved." -- Salvation, according to these Judaizers, depended on keeping works and traditions of the Law of Moses.

÷Act_15:2
Act_15:2

And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, -- The first noun rendered "dissension" does not imply any angry disputation, but only a division. They took different sides in the debate.

The word "debate" could well be rendered "questioning" as the subject in dispute is called a "question" at the end of the verse.

Paul in Gal_2:4 refers to these "Judean brothers" as "false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty."

Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed -- The brethren of the church at Antioch "determined" ("appointed") a plan. The verb, as well as the whole context, shows that the mission was sent by the whole Christian community, to which the question was one of the most vital importance, probably affecting a large part of their members. This coincides with Gal_2:2 which informs us that they went up to Jerusalem because of a revelation.

Who were among the "some others" that accompanied Paul and Barnabas is interesting to consider. (A.T. Robertson thinks Titus, a Greek and probably a brother of Luke who is not mentioned in Acts, was taken along on this trip Gal_2:1-3.)

to go up to Jerusalem -- Jerusalem was the place where these Judaizers (Pharisees, Act_15:5) were from.

to the apostles and the elders -- We now find Peter, John, and James at Jerusalem. For a while they had remained there during the first persecutions, but at least some had gone to labor in other places. (See Gal_1:18-19 and Gal_2:9).

Peter called himself an elder in 1Pe_5:1; John calls himself an elder in 2Jn_1:1 and 3Jn_1:1. What is uncertain is how James relates to these groups. He is called an apostle in Gal_1:19, (though not one of the Twelve). He also seems to be one of the elders of the church in Jerusalem.

about this question. -- The Judaizing teachers from Jerusalem had contended for the rite of circumcision (and compliance with all of Moses' Law) claiming they had learned it from the apostles and the church at Jerusalem. Paul knew that they had not been teaching such a doctrine.

÷Act_15:3
Act_15:3

So, being sent on their way by the church, -- This can indicate that the church either provided expenses, and encouraged them by prayers for a safe journey, or that perhaps some of the brethren at Antioch actually accompanied them part of the way, see Act_21:5 where this kind of thing happened.

they passed through both Phoeni'cia and Sama'ria, -- Their journey to Jerusalem was accomplished by a land route. Phoenicia was mostly Gentile, while Samaria was a mixed population of Jews and Gentiles. These areas had previously been evangelized (cf. Act_8:5 ff; Act_11:19).

reporting the conversion of the Gentiles, -- As they traveled through the various towns, Paul and Barnabas told of the results of the first missionary tour. They probably repeated much of the report they had given to the church at Antioch, Act_14:27.

and they gave great joy to all the brethren. -- The verb tense implies continuous action. Wherever they went the tidings of the conversion of the Gentiles were received by the disciples at large with a gladness which presented the strongest possible contrast to the narrowness and bitterness of the Pharisee section of the church of Jerusalem.

÷Act_15:4
Act_15:4

When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church -- "The church" is perhaps named first because there would be an assembly of the whole Christian body to hear the story of the missionary labours of Paul and Barnabas before the question about which they had specially been sent from Antioch came to be discussed.

This presents a mental picture of members of different Christian synagogues in Jerusalem coming together, with the elders who oversaw them.

and the apostles and the elders, -- The "apostles" here refer to the twelve called by Jesus Himself, and the "elders" are the overseers of the local congregations in Jerusalem.

and they declared all that God had done with them. -- The apostles recount their first journey. God's work clearly demonstrates He has opened the door to the Gentiles (see Act_14:27).

This preliminary meeting must have lasted for a considerable time, even if only a mere abstract of the labours, sufferings and success of Paul and Barnabas were given to those who met them.

÷Act_15:5
Act_15:5

But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees -- Apparently several Pharisees had been converted to accept Christ as the promised Messiah. Paul was also a Pharisee (Act_23:6; Php_3:5) but he does not agree with their sentiments. See Joh_7:32.

rose up, and said, -- After Paul's and Barnabas' message was heard by the church certain of "the party of Pharisees" lodged their protest against what had been done.

"It is necessary to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses." -- It seems that Luke here gives the essence of the Pharisees' complaint.

The Pharisees based the necessity of circumcision on such passages as Isa_56:6, where the covenant mentioned was held to be that of circumcision. And they supported their position by such passages as Isa_52:1, where the uncircumcised are excluded from the holy city.

÷Act_15:6
Act_15:6

The apostles and the elders were gathered together -- Comparing the language of verse 6 with that of verse 4, we are led to see that verse 6 and following speaks of a different meeting than verses 4 and 5 did. In the first meeting, Paul and Barnabas had declared in detail the conversion of the Gentiles.

From Paul words in Galatians chapter 2 there was a private meeting which Luke does not record, involving Paul, Barnabas, and Titus on the one hand, and Peter, John and James the brother of the Lord. That meeting apparently was between these two public meetings. See Gal_2:1-10.

We have no data for estimating the number of the "elders" who were present. They probably included those of all the congregations in Jerusalem and perhaps the near-by vicinity.

to consider this matter. -- The "matter" under discussion was of utmost importance. If circumcision was necessary, then following the teaching of Christ was insufficient. Paul saw the necessity of refuting this false stand of the "Pharisees" and therefore would not "*yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you."* -Gal_2:5, (ESV).

The purpose of the second public meeting was to enable the apostles to bring the whole church into agreement with the gospel truth and themselves! If we do not keep this thought in mind as we study the proceedings, we will totally misunderstand them.

÷Act_15:7
Act_15:7

And after there had been much debate, -- For the Pharisaic element would find its warmest supporters at Jerusalem. Both sides of this "matter" was given time for the discussion.

Peter rose -- This must have been the way to get attention to speak to the assembled group (cf. Act_15:5). This is the last mention of Peter in the book of Acts.

and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. --

Peter gives the first of three recorded speeches and cites his own experience with the Gentile Cornelius (ten or twelve years before) and his vision about what was clean food, which he has already explained to the church leadership in Jerusalem (See Acts 10:1–11:18).

÷Act_15:8
Act_15:8

And God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; -- Notice the way God bears *"witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit."* The "Holy Spirit" was NOT given for their salvation. God bore "witness," not Cornelius. Cornelius and his family were saved by "hearing words" and "believing." Act_15:7. cf. Act_10:45; Act_11:14-18

Point: And they had not been circumcised!

÷Act_15:9
Act_15:9

and he made no distinction [difference] between us and them, -- God made no mark of distinction between Jews and Gentiles when it came to justification before God. Obeying the gospel purified the hearts of Cornelius and his house 1Pe_1:22, and the outward observances of the law of Moses were of no account when the heart was clean before Him who alone could judge of the purity thereof.

In these words Peter clearly agrees to all that Paul had taught about the admission of the Gentiles.

but cleansed their hearts by faith. -- The word "faith" here has the article, "the faith," cf. Gal_1:23; 1Ti_5:8; Jud_1:3.

"The faith" here involved "obedience to the truth" Gentile conversion in Acts 10 & 11 involved: 1) Belief Act_10:43; 2) Repentance Act_11:18; 3) water baptism Act_10:48. 1Pe_3:21.

÷Act_15:10
Act_15:10

Now, therefore -- Coming to the concluding point when there is evidence that God has already accepted the Gentiles.

why are you putting God to the test -- The argument is that God had already accepted the Gentiles (Cornelius' household, etc.). God was continuing to show that such rites and ceremonies of the Law were now abolished [fulfilled] in Christ at the cross (Col_2:14). To attempt to impose the rites of the Law upon converted Gentiles would provoke God and show distrust to His guidance.

put a yoke upon the neck -- A description of the law and the legalism of the scribes and Pharisees (Mat_23:4; cf. Luk_11:46). The legalists expected the Gentiles to carry a load they themselves were unwilling to bear.

which neither our fathers -- "Our fathers" would not be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were not under the Law, but it would be those Israelites, after Moses, who lived under the Mosaic code.

nor we have been able to bear -- Peter reminds the audience that no Jew was able to satisfy the law. This reflects the teaching of Jesus, Luk_11:46.

÷Act_15:11
Act_15:11

But we believe -- Peter is speaking on the behalf of "we" the apostles of Jesus Christ.

that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, -- Peter affirmed that salvation now is possible through grace from Jesus, the Son of God, and not by conforming to the Jewish Law.

just as they will." -- Peter is saying, 'We Jews, in fact, are saved in the same way as the Gentiles. Not even we Jews are saved by the keeping of the Law. Instead, we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as the Gentiles are."

÷Act_15:12
Act_15:12

And all the assembly kept silence; -- It is as thought they are awe-struck and amazed at what the heard from Barnabas and Paul.

and they listened to Barnabas and Paul -- Here the imperfect tense implies the steady continuous attention to the whole narrative given by Barnabas and Paul.

as they related what signs and wonders -- Barnabas and Paul give the evidence of God's approval of the conversion of Gentiles on just the basis as Peter had espoused.

God had done through them among the Gentiles. -- They appeal to what ***God*** had done! They make it clear that they were only instruments whom God employed in bring the Gentiles into the fold. See verse 4, where they "declared all that God had done with them."

÷Act_15:13
Act_15:13

After they finished speaking, -- There is an orderly progression of speakers, not an assembly of disorder and confusion. Barnabas and Paul were allowed to say all they wanted to report.

James replied, "Brethren, listen to me. -- This "James" is not the apostle James (who was beheaded in Act_12:2) but the half-brother of Jesus and, according to the early church fathers, the author of the book of James (see Mat_13:55; Mar_6:3; Jas_1:1 and note).

Perhaps Peter was being the spokesman for the "apostles" and James as the spokesman for the "elders."

James points out that a divine revelation had been made to Peter (in the conversion of Cornelius), and that it was in accordance with the words of Old Testament prophecy regarding Gentiles.

What James says can be summarized under two points: (1) what the Old Testament prophets said about the reception of the Gentiles, and (2) the important conditions to be met by the Gentile converts to separate them from the Gentile pagan world.

÷Act_15:14
Act_15:14

Simeon -- (***Symeon***)] This more Jewish form of the name of the apostle Peter is found also at the commencement of Peter's second Epistle.

The Jews had frequently two forms of their name, one of which was employed on religious and solemn occasions, the other in intercourse with non-Jews and in the ordinary transactions of life.

Thus in the Apocrypha (1Ma_5:17, &c.) the name of the Maccabean prince is written "Simon," though on his coins it stands "Symeon."

has related how God first visited the Gentiles, -- James points out how God made it know to Simon (Peter) regarding Cornelius, who was the first acceptance of a Gentile into the church.

to take out of them a people for his name. -- A "people for His name," Cf. Mal_2:2; Mal_2:5; 3Jn_1:7. Thus "the chosen people" were no longer to be Jews only, and ceremonial ordinances as circumcision, which had hitherto marked out Jews from Gentiles, was not to be seen as necessary for them.

÷Act_15:15
Act_15:15

And with this the words of the prophets agree, -- That God would take among the Gentiles a people for His name was the universal emphasis of the OT prophets. Isa_45:20-23; Isa_49:6; Isa_52:10.

as it is written, -- James now turns and gives a free quote from the Septuagint, Amo_9:11-12; See Zec_8:20-23.

÷Act_15:16
Act_15:16

'After this I will return, -- After a period of captivity when Israelites are scattered among the nations.

and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, -- Jesus being a descendant of David was the new King over the Kingdom of God, the church.

which has fallen; -- The fall of the Jewish nation came as Amos predicted; and between the time of that fall and the time when James was speaking, there had been an absence of anyone from David's line ruling.

The nation of Israel had drifted away from being the kind of people God wanted His people to be.

I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up, -- The Christ would rebuilt God's Kingdom upon the promises and prophesies of the OT prophets. Heb_12:28. This Messianic kingdom began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

With Jesus' ascension back into heaven, He began to fulfill Amos' prophecy. Jesus reigns on David's throne as Lord; and once He reigns as Lord, the Gentiles are pictured as seeking the Lord's favor. Mar_16:19; Isa_9:7; Luk_1:32; Psa_103:19; Psa_123:1; Heb_8:1.

That is exactly what Gentiles have been doing ever since Peter's visit to Cornelius' house. What the prophet Amos predicted, James says, is coming true in the conversion of the Gentiles by the gospel.

These changes would be devastating to a "circumcision party" of believers who wanted to maintain the old Law.

÷Act_15:17
Act_15:17

that the rest of men may seek the Lord, -- More than just the Jews will come seeking the Lord.

and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, -- James' point is that Amos makes no mention of Gentiles becoming Jewish proselytes. If Gentiles can be saved without becoming Jews in the kingdom, there is no need for Gentiles to be circumcised.

÷Act_15:18
Act_15:18

says the Lord, -- James is indicating that since the "Lord" has declared these things, that settles this matter.

who has made these things known from of old.' -- The admission of the Gentiles into God's kingdom, the church, was not an innovation, but was in harmony with the plans and purposes God formed back in eternity before creation, (cf. Gal_3:26-29; Eph_3:3-6).

÷Act_15:19
Act_15:19

Therefore my judgment is that -- Since God through His holy prophets of old have foretold of this, we must follow God's Word.

we should not trouble -- The Greek word for "trouble" means "to throw something in the path of someone to annoy them."

those of the Gentiles who turn to God, -- After considering all the evidence:
1) Peter's experience at the house of Cornelius;
2) Paul's and Barnabas' experience with God working signs and wonders with the Gentiles;
3) with what the prophets of old have spoke by inspiration; -- the Judaizers should quit troubling and annoying the Gentile converts.

÷Act_15:20
Act_15:20

but should write to them -- A letter should be written to make it clear that some practices which regularly take place in Gentile culture and worship are to be seen as wrong, not from the Jewish standpoint, but are wrong because of Christian teaching.

to abstain from the pollutions of idols -- The "pollution" seems to cover the practices of the idol temples. The new Christians were not to continue such practices as frequeting these idol temples which often included sexual encounters.

and from unchastity [fornication] -- Sexual sins in general, but particularly the orgies associated with the worship of pagan gods. - MSB

> **fornication..** This injunction must not be understood as a simple repetition of a moral law binding upon all men at all times, but must be taken in connexion with the rest of the decree, and as forbidding a sin into which converts from heathenism were most prone to fall back, and which their previous lives had taught them to regard in a very different light from that in which a Jew would see it. ... Whereas among the heathen unchastity was a portion of many of their temple rites, and persons who gave themselves up to such impurities were even called by the names of the heathen divinities. To men educated in the constant contemplation of such a system, sins of unchastity would have far less guilt than in the eyes of those to whom the law of Moses was read every sabbath-day. - CBSC

> **fornication --** The point is always that in the Gentile world, even among its noblest men, this sin was not considered a sin but something that was entirely innocent and natural. It was a part of their idol worship. The wisdom of some of the Corinthian Christians argued that fornication was merely an external matter. The old pagan ideas about sexual impurities not being impurities kept clinging to the converts from paganism in some form or other. Hence this warning appears as the second in the list of James. Missionaries still have trouble with their converts on this score. - Lenski

and from what is strangled and from blood. -- This dietary restriction goes back beyond the Law of Moses, to a command from God given to all mankind in Gen_9:4 following the flood.

When it is affirmed that the Law is no longer binding, it must be remembered that there are covenants in the Scriptures which precede the Mosaic, and which are still binding.

÷Act_15:21
Act_15:21

For from early generations -- How far back "ancient generations" takes us is disputed, but it is at least as far back as the time when the captivities caused the Jews to be scattered among the pagan nations.

Moses has had in every city those who preach him, -- This verse means (1) to assure the legalists that the Torah was being taught to Gentiles in all localities, or (2) since there were Jews in every locality, their scruples should be respected so that they may be effectively evangelized (cf. 2Co_3:14-15).

for he is read every sabbath in the synagogues." -- On the Jewish manner of reading the law, see additional note at Act_13:15.

÷Act_15:22
Act_15:22

Then it seemed good -- This phrase is one often used in official announcements of what has been decreed by authority, or of public resolutions. (Luk_1:3; Act_15:22; Act_15:25; Act_15:28).

to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, -- Here we see the unity of the church at Jerusalem with Paul and Barnabas.

The whole body commissions two deputies to be sent in the name of the "apostles, elders and brethren" with the letter found in the next few verses, (Act_15:23-29).

to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch -- More literally (with RSV), "to choose men out of their company and send them," which rendering makes it clear that the selection of those sent was the work of the whole assembly.

with Paul and Barnabas. -- The Antioch church would also have the information confirmed by brethren they well knew.

They sent Judas called Barsab'bas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren, -- Many are of the opinion that "Judas called Barsabbas" is the same man who was nominated to fill the vacant place in the apostleship (Act_1:23) with Matthias when he was chosen.

Others consider that this man was possibly the brother of Joseph Barsabbas, who was one of the candidates to replace Judas Iscariot in Act_1:23, with both being sons of a man named Barsabbas.

Otherwise nothing more is know about him except it was a prophet, Act_15:32.

"Silas," also known as Silvanus, is mentioned here for the first time; (Act_15:40; 2Co_1:19; 1Th_1:1; 2Th_1:1). Later he was Peter's amanuensis (scribe) for his first epistle, 1Pe_5:12, which see for more information on Silas.

Silas, or Silvanus, was the man Paul chose to go with him on the second missionary journey after Barnabas and John Mark went back to Cyprus.

A. He is first mentioned in the Bible in Act_15:22, where he is called a chief ("leading") man among the brethren of the Jerusalem Church.

B. He was also a prophet (cf. Act_15:32).

C. He was a Roman citizen like Paul (cf. Act_16:37).

D. He and Judas Barsabbas were sent to Antioch by the Jerusalem Church to deliver a letter (cf. Act_15:22, Act_15:30-35).

E. Paul mentions him in 2Co_1:19 as a fellow gospel preacher.

F. Later he is identified with Peter in writing I Peter. (cf. 1Pe_5:12).

G. Both Paul and Peter call him Silvanus, while Luke calls him Silas (the Aramaic form of Saul). It is possible that Silas was his Jewish name and Silvanus his Latin name (cf. F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free,* p. 213).

÷Act_15:23
Act_15:23

with the following letter: -- From the form in which the document is here given, we should judge that the original was in Greek. A translation from a Hebrew original would hardly have begun with such a greeting and ended with "Fare ye well."

The construction of the Greek in the beginning of this verse is not strictly grammatical, but such irregularities are not unusual in a passage which begins impersonally, as does verse 22.

"The brethren, both the apostles and the elders, -- The writers of the document.

to the brethren who are of the Gentiles -- The letter was therefore addressed to them exclusively (see Note on verse 20), as the Epistle of James had probably been previously addressed to the Jews of the "dispersion," and not to the Gentiles.

in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. -- "Antioch" was the capital of "Syria and Cilicia," which was administered as a single Roman district. The churches in Cilicia, Paul home area, were probably founded by him when he went there after fleeing Jerusalem (Act_9:30).

greeting. -- χαιρειν, G5463, In salutation it might be "hail!" and it is used at the beginning of letters to convey one's greetings, or salutations.

÷Act_15:24
Act_15:24

Since we have heard -- The brethren at Jerusalem first heard about the Judaizers at Antioch when the delegation arrived in Jerusalem from Antioch.

that some of our number -- The Judaizers were "members" (see Act_15:1) of the Jerusalem congregation before they undertook their trip to Antioch. But the leaders had been unaware of these members traveling to Antioch who demanded conformity to the Mosaic Law.

to whom we gave no instruction -- These Judaizers had no authority from the Jerusalem church, though they evidently had been claiming to have been sent by them on an official mission to Antioch.

> The opening paragraph of the letter sent to Antioch is an official denial that the Judaizers had ever been authorized or sent by the church at Jerusalem. We cannot help but wonder if the Judaizers were present in the assemble at Antioch when this epistle was read to the congregation, and if so, what their reaction was. - Gareth L. Reese

have disturbed you with *their* **words --** The word "disturbed" has a number of connotations. Literally, it is used of waters that are "troubled." In a figurative sense the word means to stir up, disturb, throw into confusion, be agitated, or intimidated.

words -- "Words" here might have the connotation that they were mere words, words without true doctrine. They were just words. They weren't the truth. Nevertheless, such words can have a very serious unsettling effect on men's minds.

unsettling your souls -- This verb (α'νασκευάζοντες, *anaskeuazontes*) occurs nowhere else in the N.T. In classical Greek it meant "to collect together the vessels used in a house- the household furniture and silver - for the purpose of carrying it off." Then it meant to dismantle, to overthrow. In a military connotation it was used for plundering (laying waste, or ravaging) a city.

Here the idea seems that of turning the minds of the Gentile converts upside down; throwing them into confusion like a dismantled house.

> Metaphorically it can mean "to break a treaty" or "to destroy an opponent's arguments."

Whenever a man's salvation is called in question, and it appears that the one who has asked the questions have been teaching doctrines (the verb tense here is present tense -- they might still be at it) which unsettled the minds of the Christians, and left them disturbed and anxious.

saying "You *must* be circumcised and keep the law" -- This phrase is omitted from most uncial manuscripts, but found in almost all miniscule manuscripts. The NRSV places this phrase in a footnote saying, "Other ancient authorities add *saying, 'You must be circumcised and keep the law,'"*

Most early manuscripts end the verse with "upsetting your minds," but some witnesses also include "saying, 'You must be circumcised and keep the law.' " The presence of this text explicitly provides the material that has confused the letter recipients. - The Lexham Textual Notes on the Bible

Consider (Act_15:9-10; Gal_2:3-4; Gal_6:12-13).
By teaching "circumcision" the Judaizers engaged the observance of the whole law of Moses.

to whom we gave no *such* commandment -- The Judaizers were mis-representing the Jerusalem church, they did not have such authority from the apostles or Jerusalem elders as they seemed to have claimed (Act_15:1-2). (1Jn_2:19)

The point then is that the apostles (and Jerusalem elders) had given no charge (orders) on the points which the Judaizers had raised.

15:24 This verse shows that the church in Jerusalem had become aware that some of their membership, who had no authority or official standing (cf. v. 1), were (1) traveling to these mission churches and (2) demanding conformity to the Mosaic law (cf. v. 1). - Utley Bible Commentary

On the fundamental matter of the theological necessity of circumcision and a Jewish lifestyle for Gentile Christians, the letter rebukes the Judaizers for going beyond their authority and assures the churches that there are no such requirements for salvation. On the practical issues of fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers in the churches and of preventing needless offense to Jews throughout the empire, the letter asks Gentile Christians to abstain from the four prohibitions mentioned in v.20 - THE EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE COMMENTARY, *New Testament*. Kenneth L. Barker, John R. Kohlenberger III; Zondervan

÷Act_15:25
Act_15:25

it has seemed good to us, -- The "us" would be the apostles and the Jerusalem elders and this shows their unity in this matter. (See Act_14:22 for the way this phrase "it seemed good to us." is used.)

having come to one accord, -- They are in full agreement with one another and with the Lord's teaching. Act_2:1; Act_4:24; Act_5:12.

to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, -- The intention of the whole letter is to shew the honour which the church in Jerusalem felt was due to these missionary laborers. Hence the adjective "beloved" which in NT is specially applied to those who are closely united in faith and love.

Perhaps the word "beloved" reflects what is stated in Gal_2:9. Peter in 2Pe_3:15 applies it to Paul.

The name of "Barnabas" is put first here perhaps because he had been formerly (Act_11:22) sent as a special messenger from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch.

÷Act_15:26

Act_15:26

men who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. -- The Greek makes it plain that these words refer to Barnabas and Paul and to the many dangers they faced in their first missionary journey. They had endured persecution in Antioch of Pisidia and Iconium (Act_13:50) and Paul was nearly killed (Act_14:19-20) at Lystra.

÷Act_15:27
Act_15:27

We have therefore sent -- The verb "sent" is aorist tense, and is an example of what is called an "epistolary aorist." That is, the verb tense reflects the perspective of the readers of the letter, not the writers.

Here it is the verb form "sent," while in the noun form it is the word "apostle." The Greek word is (**απεσταλκαμεν,** G649); meaning "to send" as their emissaries or ambassadors. An "apostle" was "one sent" with the credentials of the "sender."

Judas and Silas, -- See note on Act_15:22 regarding Judas and Silas.

who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. -- They had authority to verbally affirm the same message or truth that was contained in the written document, or what was authorized by the "senders." (Thus, technically Judas and Silas are "apostles" of the Jerusalem church.")

÷Act_15:28
Act_15:28

For it has seemed good -- See note on verse 22 (Act_15:22) for the third time this phrase occurs.

to the Holy Spirit and to us -- The apostles had been promised that they would be given the Spirit of truth, who would guide them into all truth (Joh_16:13) and Luke often speaks of them as "filled with the Spirit." They put forward therefore this unerring guide as the future of the church.

The apostles and elders were of "one accord" (Act_15:25) in the letter they were passing on to the brethren at Antioch, but it was not merely men's opinion, but was the inspired will of God.

to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: -- To demand that the Gentiles keep all the restrictions of the Law of Moses would have been excessively burdensome. The Jews themselves could speak this way of the load of legal observances. (Mat_23:4; cf. Luk_11:46; Act_15:10; Gal_5:1).

While the Gospel alone is sufficient for salvation, the concerns of the Jews that there be a clear distinction between the Gentile believers and the Gentile pagan world is set forth in the next verse.

÷Act_15:29
Act_15:29

> ***See the notes on Act_15:20.***
> *This meant for Gentiles a complete break with their idolatrous past. Gentile pagan worship involved all three of these excluded things!*

that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols -- This is in harmony with what Paul taught in 1Co_8:1-13. 1Co_10:23-28.

1. things sacrificed to idols would refer to meat (cf. 1Co_8:1-13; 1Co_10:23-33)

and from blood --

2. blood could refer to either (Gen_9:4-5).
a. nonkosher meat
b. premeditated murder

and from what is strangled --

3. things strangled must refer to non-kosher ways of killing animals, implying that the previous two also relate to food sensibilities of the Jews (Gen_9:4-5).

and from unchastity [fornication]. --

4. fornication could refer to
a. participation in pagan worship rituals (as well as the food)
b. OT Levitical laws against incest (cf. Lev_17:10-14)

If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. -- Not "ye shall be doing what is right," but "it shall be well with you" (R.V.), "you shall be in a good state."

Farewell." -- This termination and the greeting at the commencement of the letter are in the style of formal Greek epistolary language. See above on verse 23 (Act_15:23).

It is exactly what we would expect in a letter addressed to Greeks. This word is more than the perfunctory "Yours truly" used in a modern letter. It insinuates a prayer for peace and harmony in the church wherever this letter is read.

÷Act_15:30
Act_15:30

So when they were sent off, -- We can imagine with prayer and fasting (Act_13:1-3).

they went down to Antioch; -- This of course is the "Antioch" of Syria, where Barnabas and Paul have been labouring. Even going north from Jerusalem, it is still spoken of as going "down" to Antioch.

The 300-mile trip would take a few days. We wonder as the return trip passed through Samaria and Phoenicia if the contents of the letter was make known to the disciples along the way.

and having gathered the congregation together, -- The congregation gathers like it had come together to hear the report from Paul and Barnabas' missionary journey (Act_14:27-28). The expression "having gathered the multitude" shows how great a concern the question had become to the whole Christian body.

they delivered the letter. -- We can picture to ourselves the eager excitement of that moment, the listening crowds, the letter, which as a formal missive would be sealed and tied round with thread, solemnly opened and read out aloud, probably by Silas and Judas themselves to the church.

÷Act_15:31
Act_15:31

And when they read it, -- Probably referring to the congregation learning of the contents of the letter.

they rejoiced at the exhortation [consolation]. -- These Christians at Antioch are rejoicing. They are rejoicing because they are not to be subjected to the burdensome rites and ceremonies of the Law of Moses. The letter is an encouraged for unity between the Jewish and Gentile believer and fosters a love for each other.

Churches in other places where Paul preached will be troubled by Judaizers for more than twenty years after this, but whether they were the same men who had unsettled the brethren in Antioch, or a wholly different group, we have no data for determining.

÷Act_15:32
Act_15:32

And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, -- Judas and Silas were both introduced at Act_15:22. A "prophet" is one who is speaks with authority from God being moved by the Holy Spirit, 2Pe_1:21. The prophetic office, like the apostolic, was only temporary, (1Co_12:28; 1Co_13:8; Eph_2:20).

exhorted the brethren with many words and strengthened them. -- The time the two prophets spent teaching and preaching to the congregation at Antioch shows they were the very opposite of the Judaizers. These men took a personal interest in the brethren, encouraging and strengthening the unity between the Jewish and Gentile believers.

÷Act_15:33
Act_15:33

And after they had spent some time, -- How many days or months they stayed in Antioch is not specified.

they were sent off in peace by the brethren -- This is the translation of a Hebrew expression, *Shalom*, and does not signify 'they were allowed to go quietly away,' but "in peace" means "with a blessing or prayer for peace, as a parting word."

to those who had sent them. -- They returned to Jerusalem, having been sent out by the apostles and Jerusalem elders.

÷Act_15:34
Act_15:34

[Verse omitted in RSV, ESV, NASB];

However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. -- This is from NKJV. [But it seemed good to Silas to remain there.] NASB.

This verse is not included in many of the Uncial MSS, and in a modified form in the Byzantine MSS. Some think it was included to explain how Silas is able to accompany Paul on the second missionary journey.

÷Act_15:35
Act_15:35

But Paul and Barnabas [also] remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, -- Some think that during this time Paul wrote the epistles to the Galatians.

Some think that this is time that the unhappy incident occurred between Paul and Peter which is recorded in Gal_2:11-14. But we have no chronology on this to be certain, it probably happened before the Jerusalem council recorded in Acts 15.

with many others also. -- This statement informs us that there were "many other" preachers and teachers that we know nothing about. The NT gives us only a fraction of all the preaching of the apostles and others, but we are confident that God knows them! Antioch was one of the five chief cities of the Roman Empire at this time and had a large population and probably had several Christians congregations.

÷Act_15:36
Act_15:36

Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, -- The duration of time is not specified, but it would only be months. Paul takes the lead in this new missionary endeavor.

Notice it is not stated that there was a divine revelation concerning this mission as there was for the first one (cf. Act_13:2).

"Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, ***and see*** **how they are doing." --** In addition to preaching the gospel, Paul also recognized his responsibility to mature the new believers in their faith (Mat_28:19-20; Eph_4:12-13; Php_1:8; Col_1:28; 1Th_2:17). So he planned his second missionary journey to retrace his first one. They could also deliver the Jerusalem letter to these Gentile congregations.

÷Act_15:37
Act_15:37

Now Barnabas was determined [wanted; was minded; desirous] -- The Greek of most MSS gives a weaker verb "wished" than the translation "determined." The reason of Barnabas' choice was probably because Mark was his nephew (Col_4:10).

to take with them John called Mark. -- Mark is a relative of Barnabas, called a nephew in some translations and a cousin in others (see notes at Col_4:10, and Act_12:12).

÷Act_15:38
Act_15:38

But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed [deserted] from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. -- See the note on Act_13:13 for the occasion when this is recorded by Luke, and to possible reasons why Mark had left the group. Paul was not happy with whatever the reason was for Mark's departure from the group, and didn't want to take him on this new mission.

This was a difference of judgment. We are not to understand that the Holy Spirit guided either one of these men; it was a difference in human judgment as to what was expedient in the matter.

÷Act_15:39
Act_15:39

Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. -- This was not an amicable parting, they were in sharp disagreement regarding John Mark. But they eventually did reconcile (1Co_9:6), and Paul came to have high regards for Mark.

The Greek word (from which our English *paroxysm* comes) intimates a temporary rather than a prolonged dispute, although it may for the time be severe. The result to the church was that two missionary journeys were undertaken instead of one.

And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; -- Cyprus was the island locations where Paul and Barnabas initially started their first journey (Act_13:1-12). It is also Barnabas' home area (Act_4:36). and some think that Mark was also born there. (See note at Act_12:12).

Barnabas is not mentioned again in the book of Acts after this chapter. His name occurs in Paul's Epistles, 1Co_9:6; Gal_2:1, and Col_4:10. In this last passage, written no doubt after the events

related here, we can see that Mark had been again received as a fellow-worker by Paul. We learn too from 2Ti_4:11 and Phm_1:24 that Paul became warmly attached to him afterwards.

÷Act_15:40
Act_15:40

but Paul chose Silas and departed, -- Silas was perfectly suited to be Paul's companion, since he was a prophet and could proclaim and teach the Word. Being a Jew gave him access to the synagogues (see note on Act_6:9).

Because he was a Roman citizen (Act_16:37), he enjoyed the same benefits and protection as Paul. His status as a respected leader in the Jerusalem church (Act_11:22) helped to reinforce Paul's teaching that Gentile converts were not required to be circumcised and keep the Law.

being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. -- This obviously implied a full gathering of the church and a special service of prayer on the departure of the two apostles, Paul and Silas. (cf. Act_6:6; Act_13:3 Act_14:26; Act_20:32).

Silas, as now being sent forth by the Antioch church, might now claim that title, apostle (Act_14:14), no less than Barnabas.

÷Act_15:41
Act_15:41

And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. -- "Syria and Cilicia" were two neighboring provinces in modern-day Turkey. While Barnabas serves the church in Cyprus, Paul journeys through these areas toward Derbe and Lystra.

÷Act_16:1
Act_16:1

And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. -- Paul visited these places on his first missionary journey and was looking to strengthen the churches there (Act_14:6).

Jewish people lived in this area, but there seemed to not have been enough Jews at Lystra to form a synagogue or even have much influence. For example, Timothy's mother and grandmother lived here. But even though he was the son of a Jewish mother, Timothy had reached his teens without being circumcised

> It is interesting to notice that the order in which the towns are mentioned is in the reverse of what they were named in Act_14:6, but this is because the missionary party is coming from Cilicia rather than from Pisidian Antioch.

A disciple was there, named Timothy, -- This is the first mention of Timothy, and we learn that he was already a disciple. He may have been converted on Paul's first visit to Lystra, or in the interim. This is the same Timothy to whom the letters 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy are addressed. At this time he is in his late teens or early twenties.

He became highly regarded by Paul who called him a "true child in the faith" (1Ti_1:2; cf. 2Ti_1:2), and who eventually became Paul's right-hand man (1Co_4:17; 1Th_3:2; Php_2:19). In essence, he became John Mark's replacement joining Paul and Silas on the rest of their journey.

the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; -- His mother's name was Eunice, a convert to Christ, and his grandmother was Lois, 2Ti_1:5. Timothy was well taught and grounded in his faith by them, (see 2Ti_1:5; 2Ti_3:14-15).

but his father was a Greek. -- Nothing specifically is known of his father. Whether he was a proselyte of the gate or not, we are not told. If he was still living he apparently had no resentment to Timothy's Jewish training.

The grammar (the imperfect tense "was") suggests his father was dead. But by being Jew and Greek, Timothy had access to both cultures, which was an indispensable asset for his missionary service.

÷Act_16:2
Act_16:2

He was well spoken of -- The same expression, "well spoken of," is used of Cornelius (Act_10:22) and by Paul of Ananias (Act_22:12).

by the brethren at Lystra and Ico'nium. -- Five or six years had elapsed since the Paul had established the churches here on his first missionary journey. They had become somewhat well established, elders had been appoint to oversee their development (Act_14:23) before Paul left them.

The Christians in the churches at these places thought highly of the young man Timothy. The elders at Lystra must have had a part in commissioning and commending Timothy to accompany Paul (1Ti_4:14) and Paul laid hands on him also giving him some spiritual gift (2Ti_1:6).

÷Act_16:3
Act_16:3

Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him -- This was done to aid his acceptance by the Jews and provide full access to the synagogues he would be visiting with Paul and Silas. If Timothy had not been circumcised, the Jews could have assumed he had renounced his Jewish heritage.

Paul's methodology of becoming all things to all men in order to win some (cf1Co_9:21-23) makes people and their salvation his priority!

because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. -- Timothy had not been circumcised since his father was Greek. Paul circumcises Timothy for the sake of the church's mission, in order not to unnecessarily offend the Jews

The phrase "father was a Greek" is in the imperfect tense which would imply that he was dead.

÷Act_16:4
Act_16:4

As they went on their way through the cities, -- This would be the cities throughout Cilicia, Phrygia, and Galatia; all the places where Paul and Barnabas had visited on the first journey.

they delivered to them for observance the decisions which had been reached by the apostles and elders who were at Jerusalem. -- They probably read the letter from the apostles and Jerusalem elders and left a copy for them. It explained to both the Jews and Gentiles the terms which they should be kept.

For the determinations of the Jerusalem Council see the notes on Act_15:23-29.

÷Act_16:5
Act_16:5

So the churches -- This would be those churches in Pisidian Antioch and Iconium, etc. that were established on Paul's previous visit in this region. (Act_16:6; Act_16:2)

were strengthened in the faith, -- The verb is peculiar to the Acts, and is used in the physical sense in (Act_3:7; Act_3:16) of the strengthening of the limbs of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. Here it means "they were made firm in the faith", see Col_2:5.

Paul is sometimes described as having a heart for discipling (cf. Act_14:22; Act_15:36; Act_1:1).

and they increased in numbers daily. -- The barrier to Gentile admission was removed, and so the number of Christians multiplied daily.

÷Act_16:6
Act_16:6

And they went through the region of Phry'gia and Galatia, -- This region included both Jewish and Gentile populations.

having been forbidden [prevented] by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. -- As they had been forbidden one route, they traveled by another. The narrative provides no reasoning for

this, outside of showing that God had other plans (Act_16:8-9), nor does it explain how this occurred.

"Asia" refers to the Roman province of Asia (not the continent) which was located in the western part of present day Turkey. (Act_2:9).

From Act_13:1 we learned that Silas was a prophet, and the H.S speaking through such prophets probably delivered this directive. This shows, though, that Paul and his companions followed as the Spirit directed them.

÷Act_16:7
Act_16:7

And when they had come opposite My'sia, -- Paul and Silas's course of journey seems to have been through Galatia and Phrygia, until they got so far to the west as to be opposite to, and on the borders of, Mysia. From this point they were inclined to go north into Bithynia, rather than further to the west, but were again hindered of their intention.

"Mysia" was the northwestern Roman province of Asia Minor. It was mountainous with several major Roman roads. Its major cities were Troas, Assos, and Pergamum.

they attempted [assayed; tried] to go into Bithyn'ia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; -- In Luke's day "Bithynia" was combined with Pontus as one political unit. Peter later evangelized this area (cf. 1Pe_1:1). We learn from Philo that there were many Jewish colonies in this area.

"Bithynia" was northeast of Mysia, adjacent to the Black Sea. By prohibiting Paul from going northward to this area, the Spirit directs them westward toward Mysia.

"The Spirit of Jesus" would the Holy Spirit. In like manner (Rom_8:9) the "Spirit of God" is called also the "Spirit of Christ." Cf. also Gal_4:6; Php_1:19; 1Pe_1:11.

÷Act_16:8
Act_16:8

so, passing by My'sia, they went down to Tro'as. -- The party apparently passes through the province of Mysia without pausing to do any preaching. They travel through the province from east to west til they came to the major sea port of Troas.

"Troas" was a major port city along the Aegean Sea. It was four miles south from the site of the ancient "Troy" of Trojan horse fame. This Troas was called Alexandria Troas, in honor of Alexander the Great.

÷Act_16:9
Act_16:9

And a vision -- "Visions" inspired by God was one of the ways He gave revelations to his prophets. So also to Ananias (Act_9:10). Compare also Act_10:3; Act_12:9; and Act_18:9. This was a part of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel about which Peter spake on the day of Pentecost (Act_2:17).

appeared to Paul in the night: -- God led Paul several times by supernatural means. **1)** a bright light and Jesus' voice, Act_9:3-4; **2)** a vision, Act_9:10; Act_6:9-10; Act_18:9; **3)** a trance, act 22:17; **4)** an angel of God, Act_27:23.

a man of Macedo'nia was standing -- How Paul knew he was from Macedonia is uncertain. Possibly it was because of accent, clothes, ornaments, or simply stated in the vision.

Some commentators think the man was Luke (cf. Act_16:10), and that he was a resident of Philippi (and who remained there when Paul leaves Philippi, when again the group is called "they" Act_17:1) who now meets Paul in Troas.

Luke is probably already a Christian and some believe that Paul and Luke were already acquainted with each other, perhaps at Tarsus or Syrian Antioch. (Note the "us" in v. 10).

This was a major geographical decision. Paul's efforts now turn to Europe! Thought there was probably already a church in Rome, Act_2:10; Act_18:2-3; Rom_16:5.

beseeching him -- Translations use various words, such as "*urging; appealing; begging; pleading.*" The word is a compound Greek word that literally means *"to call to one's side*," παρακαλ ν G3870. The mental picture one gets is of a man standing with outstretched hands appealing for help.

and saying, "Come over to Macedo'nia and help us." -- "Macedonia" was a Roman province located across the Aegean Sea on the mainland of Greece. The cities of Philippi and Thessalonica were located there.

It was situated approximately 150 miles across the Aegean Sea from Paul's current location in Troas and would require sea travel.

This vision to Paul was very specific and forceful. The grammar tense is used as an imperative.

÷Act_16:10
Act_16:10

And when he had seen the vision, immediately -- The "immediately we sought" pictures a hurried trip to the dock the next morning, with inquiry made as to what ships might be sailing, bound for any port of Macedonia.

we sought to go on into Macedo'nia, -- This is the first time in Acts where Luke (the narrator) changes from the third person pronoun to the first person, "we," including himself in the story, (Act_16:10-17). This implies that Luke has now joined Paul on the journey. (See also the note on the previous verse.)

concluding -- The verb "concluding" [understanding; assuredly gathering] has the sense of "coming to a conclusion from putting things side by side." So it is rendered "proving" in Act_9:22 and elsewhere. Here it means "deeming it to be proved."

that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. -- The Spirit's guidance on this occasion was not for their safety, but for purpose of evangelism.

The "us" implies that Luke, too, is a preacher of the gospel just as Paul and Silas were, and that he was involved in preaching before he joined the missionary party.

Interestingly, there is no record of any missionary work done at this time in Troas by Paul, yet the language of 2Co_2:12 and of Act_20:6 indicates the existence of a congregation of Christians in Troas. Perhaps Luke had established the church in Troas before Paul ever arrived in the city. Possibly, Paul was impressed by the evangelistic work Luke has done; he speaks of Luke as being "famous for the gospel" as he writes 2Co_8:18.

Others believe there are historical indications that Luke was in Syrian Antioch at the time Paul and Barnabas were there working with the church. And that he had now been somewhere in southern Galatia and Mysia, and had now met up with Paul at Troas. [This would correspond well with the evidence that Titus, whom Paul took to Jerusalem with him in Act_15:2; Gal_2:1, was the brother of Luke.]

÷Act_16:11
Act_16:11

Setting sail therefore from Tro'as, we -- Here is one of the many "we" passages that indicates "Luke" was present. He was Paul's faithful traveling friend, co-worker, and physician (cf. Col_4:14; 2Ti_4:11). He was with Paul during many of his preaching stops in Acts. This is confirmed by the "we" statements in Acts (cf. Act_16:11, Act_16:16; Act_20:6-7, Act_20:13; Act_21:1, Act_21:5; Act_21:7; Act_21:10; Act_21:12; Act_21:15; Act_21:17; Act_21:25; Act_27:1; Act_27:18; Act_27:26-27). Luke may have been the "man of Macedonia" in Act_16:9. - Utley

made a direct voyage [straight course] to Sam'othrace, -- "Running a straight course" is one of many nautical terms used by Luke (cf. Acts 27). Here seems an example of providence working to bring a praying Lydia and preacher together. Every word is important when studying the Bible. Here the crossing took only two days, in Act_20:6 it took five days.

and the following day to Ne-ap'olis, -- "Samothrace" is a small rocky island in the Aegean Sea about halfway between Asia Minor and the Greek mainland. The missionary group stayed there overnight to avoid the hazards associated with sailing in the dark.

"Neapolis" (*"new-city"*) was the port city for Philippi which lay abut ten miles inland. On maps today this place is generally identified with the modern *Kavalla*. Here at "Neapolis" the famous Ignatian Way, the major Roman road running east to wet, ended its, eastern trek.

÷Act_16:12
Act_16:12

And from there to Philippi -- The city, located on the Ignatian Way, had been repaired and adorned by Philip of Macedon (the father of Alexander the Great)and the name was changed by Philip from Krenides ("wells" or "fountains") to "Philippi."

In former years, Philippi was a "gold rush" town whose silver and gold mines were found on nearby Mt. Pangaeus. On the plain outside the city the decisive battle between Brutus and Antony was fought during the Roman civil war.

Fifteen years after Paul's first visit, while he was in prison in Rome, he wrote the NT book *Philippians* to the church here.

Which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia -- Four different Greek countries were joined together by the Romans into the province called Macedonia, and so in NT the province was made up of four "districts."

The word "leading city" gives some difficulty, and has been alleged by negative critics as being an instance of Luke's inaccuracy. The KJV reads "the *chief city* of the district," which gives the impression that it was the largest city of the district in which it stood. But this is not true, for Amphipolis was the largest city of the district.

The ASV read "the *first* of the district," by which the translators meant that "Philippi" was the first town you clame to after crossing the border from Trace and entering Macedonia. The NASB takes note of the fact that there is no definite article in the Greek, and so translates "a *leading* city of the district."

Prote polis frequently appears on coins of cities which enjoyed certain Roman privileges such as "Philippi enjoyed. To say that Philippi was a "leading" city of the district is exactly right, and Luke cannot be charged with making a mistake here.

A Roman colony -- The Greeks had two words for "colony" -- one that designated a Greek colony, and one that designated a Roman colony. The latter is used in the NASB rightly adds the word "Roman" to the text.

The English reader needs to be reminded that a Roman "colony" differed from the modern idea of a colony (like the thirteen colonies which were the beginning of the United States). The Roman colony was essentially a military position for the defense of the frontiers, or for keeping the more hostile provincial in order.

Philippi was designated as a "colony" after the battle between Brutus and Anthony. A Roman colony enjoyed three things: 1) *libertas* or self-government, 2) *immuntias* or freedom from paying tribute to the Emperor, and 3) *jus Italicum* or the rights of those who lived in Italy -- including Roman dress, language, coinage, and holidays.

The Philippians were proud of their Roman citizenship, and in the Philippian letter there are several reference to that pride. (Php_3:20; Php_1:27)

And we were staying in this city for some days -- Some of the events that happened during these days are recorded in the following verses.

÷Act_16:13
Act_16:13

And on the Sabbath day -- Apparently several days passed before Saturday, the first Sabbath after their arrival.

We went outside the gate to a river side -- Cities in that day were walled for protection, and you entered and departed through gates in the walls. Out one of these gates the missionaries went, heading for the river side.

See a short devotional on "A Place for Prayer" about Lydia:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6rWp-p8MSA

river side -- the Gangas (Gangites, or Gargites, the ancient name) was about one mile west of the town. Today the river is called by the old former name of the town, the Kenniades.

This plain was where the armies of Brutus and Cassius met the armies of Octavian and Antony in the battle which decided the fate of the Roman Republic. That was in 42 BC, and Brutus and Cassius (who were responsible for the assassination of Julius Caesar) took their own lives as the armies of Octavian and Antony won the battle. Octavian was later known as the Emperor Augustus.

riverside -- "Where there was no Synagogue there was at least a *Proseuche*, or meeting-place, under the open sky, after the form of a theatre generally outside the town, near a river or the sea, for the sake of lustrations." Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Bk 1, ch 6)

where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer -- There had to be at least ten Jewish family heads in a community to have a synagogue. Where fewer Jews than this lived, they often had a meeting place near any body of water suitable for their many ceremonial washings.

Such places of prayer might be no more than a simple circle of stone in a grove of trees.

"Would be" has a more indefinite connotation than the Greek. The Greek is definite enough about a place of prayer being there, that we may suppose the missionaries have inquired around town and were told that if any Jews were worshipping, they could be found out by the river.

Back of the information in this verse may be a fact of contemporary history. Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome; since Philippi was a Roman colony, enjoying all the privileges of Rome itself, that expulsion order would likely have been honored there too.

When the missionaries made inquiry, they would have been told, "There aren't many Jews here anymore, but you might find some meeting out by the river side.

To the women who had assembled -- Was Lydia and several of her servants and friends all the people in Philippi who worshipped the LORD God? It is possible, as indicated above, that the decree of Claudius against the Jews, had been enforced in Philippi.

Come commentators, noting that Lydia was a proselyte of the gate, have suggested that she and a few others like here have attempted to remain true to their new faith, even thought the male Jewish leadership has been expelled from the town.

Others have suggested that the missionaries spoke before the regular worship service-- and that there were other men present also. It is entirely within the range of probability that among the women who had assembled were Euodia and Syntheche, who Paul tells us labored with him in the Gospel, and whose alienation from each other at the time Paul wrote to the Philippians was a cause of concern to the apostle. (Php_1:1-3.)

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EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION:

1. Pentecost- Act_2:22 & Act_2:36-47
2. Samaria- Act_8:4-13
3. Ethiopian eunuch- Act_8:26-39
4. Paul (Saul)- Act_9:1-20 & Act_22:6-16
5. Cornelius– Act_10:1-48 & Act_11:1-18
6. Lydia- Act_16:13-15
7. Philippian jailer- Act_16:23-34
8. Corinthians- Act_18:8

SERMON OUTLINE

The Conversion of Lydia

Act_16:11-15

Introduction

1. Every woman introduced in the Scriptures to any extent is in some way remarkable-- either for her virtues or her vices.

2. As Paul was the first recorded gospel preacher on European soil, so Lydia was the first recorded convert there.

3. Act_16:13 tell us of the meeting at the place of prayer. Notice:

I. Lydia Prior To Conversion

1. An industrious woman. Act_16:14
   a. Busy people are often good hearers and doers of the word.

2. A religious woman.
   a. Found at "the place of prayer" on the Sabbath.
   b. She closed her shop for worship.

II. Lydia In Conversion

1. She heard the word. Act_16:14
   a. Hearing precedes conversion. Rom_10:17

2. The Lord opened her heart.
   a. This marvelous work was done by the influence of God's messenger and the word being explained. (See Luk_24:45).

3. She gave heed--put into practice the things spoken by Paul.
   a. She and her household were baptized.
   b. Of whom did her household consist? Baptism is for those who have been taught (Mat_28:19) and who have become believers (Mar_16:16).

III. Lydia In Christ

1. We get but a glimpse of Lydia the Christian, but how splendid!

2. She was grateful – v. Act_16:15 b

3. She was faithful to the Lord--judged so by Paul. Probably the first church in Philippi met in her home - Act_16:40.

LESSONS

1. Without God's word there can be no conversion. Act_16:14

2. People are both passive and active in the process of conversion.

3. Great blessings for those who attend prayer-meetings!

4. Woman: first in the transgression, often first in obedience.

÷Act_16:14
Act_16:14

And a certain woman named Lydia -- The fact that she, and not her husband, is named as the purple-seller is at least presumptive evidence that she was carrying on the business by herself.

Whether or not this woman was married, or if she had been, and her husband is now dead, is not indicated anywhere in the text. Lydia was a popular name for women.

a seller of purple fabrics -- Purple was a most valuable color, obtained usually from shell-fish. One tiny drop of dye was obtained from each fish. Whether Lydia sold the dye, or the fabric already dyed, is not certain.

Fabric, when colored with this purple dye, was a great demand among the rich, for it was used on the official togos at Rome and in the colonies. The term "royal purple" is still used.

from the city of Thyatira -- Its modern name is Akhisar, and it was in the Roman province of Asia. We learn from Homer that the art of dying had long been one of the things Thyatira was noted form.

Inscriptions found at Thyatira bear witness to the existence of a guild of purple-sellers there, and perhaps Lydia belonged to it. She would have been a woman who possessed a considerable amount of wealth to be able to carry on her business so far from her native city. It may be that the home office of her business was located in Thyatira, and she had a branch in the city of Philippi.

a worshiper of God -- She apparently was a proselyte of the gate, for the Greek word *sebomene* (we learn at Act_13:50) means "God-fearer" or a proselyte of the gate. She could have gained her knowledge of the Jewish religion at Thyatira, for there was a Jewish population there. Or she may have become interested in a better religion than heathenism while living in Philippi.

One wonders why she is not mentioned in the letter Paul later addresses to the Philippians, since she was the first covert to Christ there. Has she moved on with her business to another city, or (as one commentator suggests) has she died in the interval?

See the 7 minute video "A Place Where Prayer was Made"
Windell Gann's YouTube channel
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIMcvWkKTuBj-x9TBWIihmw

was listening [to us] -- The verb tense indicates that she has been listening to the preaching of Paul, Luke and the others over a period of time.

and the Lord opened her heart to respond -- In the conversion of Lydia God worked the same way he did in any other case of conversion. She came to faith through the preaching of the Word of God (Rom_10:17). A person's heart is said to be closed when that person is unwilling to hear and obey God's message. The heart is open when the message is received and believed.

Opened -- "thoroughly opened" Act_16:27 as the open door of the prison.
Open -- = δι νοιξεν = found 8 x, to open thoroughly.
Mar_7:34-35 - open ears
Luk_24:31 - open eyes
Luk_24:45 - open understanding

she attended -- Lydia "heeded" "responded" "gave heed" "paid attention" to Paul's message.

to the things spoken by Paul -- Luke has shared previously what particular things Paul spoke about on such occasions that he does not record the specific message again here. Luke say, "And when she had been baptized..." implying that this was one of the things she had been taught to do.

Be sure to notice the order of events.
a) She "heard us"
b) The "Lord opened her heart"
(Power not in the preacher but in the message)
c) She gave heed to the things spoken.
(Certain things appointed for her to do.)
(The power of germination is within the seed, and not the sower.)

÷Act_16:15
Act_16:15

And when she was baptized, with her household, -- She heard and believed Paul's message and responded without delay by obeying Jesus' command for those believing to be baptized (Mat_28:18-20; Mar_16:15-16). She was most likely baptized in the river beside which the group had been meeting.

with her household -- For similar statements where households are baptized, see note on Act_11:14, also Act_16:33. We are not justified in concluding from such passages that infants were baptized. Here it likely means her family, servants, and workers.

The proper candidates for baptism are those who have come to believe in Christ as our hope of salvation; have repented of sins, committing themselves to following the Lord, (including the life-style He teaches); willing to confess His name before men; and being baptized into a new relationship with God. The Lord Himself then adds those being saved to His Kingdom, which on earth today is His church, or His spiritual family.

she besought [constrained] us, saying, -- This word (**παρεκ λεσεν, G3870**) is used only by Luke in NT, here and Luk_24:29 of the two disciples at Emmaus. The force is that of an earnest plea, to which no one could say, "No."

"If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, -- The "If" is a grammatical construction which assumes the condition to be true.

come to my house and stay." -- Lydia was very assertive in inviting these missionaries to use her house and resources for the gospel. This is in accordance with Jesus' message to the seventy when He sent them out on mission (cf. Luk_10:5-7).

Jews generally avoided staying with non-Jewish people (see Act_10:28 and note). By staying at her home, Paul seems to be embodying the message given to Peter in his vision and, as affirmed by the Jerusalem Council (Act_10:9-16; Act_15:22-29).

And she prevailed upon us. -- The genuine plea to accept her hospitality won the group over, and they made her home the center of their operation in Philippi (see Act_16:40).

Ever after this, the Philippian church keeps sending financial support and encouragement to help Paul in his evangelistic work. No doubt Lydia was one of the generous contributors to these offerings (see Php_4:3; Php_4:15).

÷Act_16:16
Act_16:16

As we -- Luke here includes himself with the group. He was an eye-witness to many of the events.

were going to the place of prayer, -- This would be the location down by the river side when the missionary group had first met Lydia and the other women.

we were met by a slave girl -- We don't know how old she was, but young enough to be called a "young girl" or "damsel." παιδ σκην, G3814, and neither do we know her nationality or how she became the property of others.

who had a spirit of divination -- For the phrase "a spirit of divination" we have two nouns in apposition, having **"a spirit, a Python,"** "a python spirit," or "a spirit of Python." The expression comes from Greek mythology; Python was a snake that guarded the oracle at Delphi. Essentially, this girl was, at least supposedly, a medium in contact with demons that could supposedly predict the future. (See Deu_18:9-12.)

Luke's language is entirely in harmony with the idea that a demon took over and controlled this young girl, enabling her seem to tell the fortunes of the inquirers.

and brought her owners [masters] much gain -- The owners of the slave found that she a strange power and made use of it for their own purposes of gain, and persuaded the people to apply to her with their

questions. She was considered as having the ability to foretell the future or to communicate with the dead. (Here at least the people apparently thought she could.)

by fortune-telling [soothsaying]. -- The word is only found here in the NT, and wherever it occurs in the LXX (the Greek translation of the OT) it is always used of the words of lying prophets (Deu_18:10; 1Sa_28:8; Eze_13:6, Eze_13:23; Mic_3:11); so that here we are constrained to take it in the same sense "by pretending to foretell the future." (**μαντευομ νη, G3132**).

÷Act_16:17
Act_16:17

She followed Paul and us, crying [kept crying out], -- The girl's continued remarks not only pested Paul and the group, but would cause a misunderstanding about the message Paul was proclaiming.

Luke's use of the first person "us" ceases for a time until in Act_20:5, when the apostle Paul comes once again to Philippi, he then takes up using again the first person plural. It is thought that probably Luke was left behind to continue working (preaching, etc.) in the Macedonia area and rejoins Paul's party later.

"These men are servants of the Most High God, -- The lack of Jewish influence in Philippi means that the crowd surrounding Paul would likely assume that the girl was speaking about Zeus as the chief god of the Greek pantheon. Paul would not appreciate the mis-interpretation the woman could cause.

While the spirit in the girl recognized the "God" that Paul was proclaiming (much like that of Mar_5:7), by telling the truth it was apparently causing the people to not understand the truth. Even the truth can be twisted to insinuate something false.

who proclaim to you the way of salvation." -- There is no article "the" with "way." (It should be translated "a way of salvation." She was possibly saying that there were several ways to the Most High God. This demon is not trying to help Paul's ministry. The purpose of this statement is (1) to identify Paul with divination or (2) to present an alternative way, not the way of salvation.

This helps us to understand why Paul is troubled by her speech and sought to shut-up, or keep the "demon" quiet.

÷Act_16:18
Act_16:18

And this she did for many days. -- Whether the girl following them took place only on the sabbaths, when the Apostles were going to the place of prayer, in which case the Apostles must have remained in Philippi some weeks, or whether it was on every occasion on which they appeared in public, we are not told.

But Paul was greatly annoyed [grieved; distressed] , -- The Greek verb is somewhat stronger than just "grieved" , and signifies "to be thoroughly worn out with annoyance." It is used here, and nowhere else but in Act_4:2 of the annoyance of the priests and Sadducees at the teaching of the Apostles. (G1278).

and turned and said to the spirit, -- Notice Paul does not address the slave girl, but the demon indwelling and controlling her. Just as Christ had done when on earth, so Paul now will not allow the cry of the evil spirit to continue, even though the words it proclaims are true. He doesn't want it to mislead the people.

"I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." -- In Christ's name Paul bids the evil power come out of her. The demon left the girl in obedience to Paul's command and his apostolic authority. The ability to cast out demons was a special ability of Christ's apostles (Mar_3:15; 2Co_12:12).

And it came out that very hour. -- Here the history ends, as far as the damsel was concerned; but we see there was no compassion for the girl from her owners, and no thanks to Paul for his work.

÷Act_16:19
Act_16:19

But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, -- Instead of rejoicing that the young girl was healed, they were distressed over their financial loss. There was no compassion that the young girl had been freed from a bondage to evil.

Luke makes a play on words, which is lost to the English reader. He says that when the evil spirit "went out" (*exelthen*), the masters saw that their hope of profit "went out" (*exelthen*).

they seized [caught] Paul and Silas -- They seize the two most prominent members of the mission party as a sort of "citizen's arrest." Luke and Timothy escaped, probably, as less conspicuous or perhaps not present at the time.

and dragged them into the market place -- The "market place," or *Agora*, in Philippi would have been similar to the Roman forum, since Philippi was a colony (made up of a lot of retired Roman miliatry). It was the great place of concourse and where, as in the Roman forum, the seat of the local civil authorities would be located.

before the rulers; -- The Greek word for "rulers" is the general one that signifies "the authorities," and perhaps they were of lower rank than the "magistrates" of the next verse.

÷Act_16:20
Act_16:20

This is the first Gentile persecution recorded by Luke.
All the persecutions that had preceded this one had been instigated by the Jews.

and when they had brought them to the magistrates -- "Magistrates" represents the Greek word *strategois*, and was the regular title for the leader of an army, a general. Outside the army, the term was given to the highest office holders in the colonies.

These *strategoi* were the *duumviri*, the two praetors specially appointed to preside over the administration of justice, in such cases. The Greek title indicates a military authority, which could quickly administer punishment.

they said, "These men are Jews -- The apostles' Jewish ethnicity becomes part of the rhetoric used to stir up the leadership against Paul and Silas. Jews were uncommon in this region and were disliked by non-Jewish people due to their differences in lifestyle and insistence on one true God.

Anti-Semitism was alive even then. The emperor Claudius issued an order around that time expelling the Jews from Rome (Act_18:2). This may explain why they apprehended only Paul and Silas, since Luke was a Gentile and Timothy half Roman.

and they are disturbing [troubling] our city. -- The word for "exceedingly trouble" or "disturbing," (**ἐκταρ σσουσιν, G1613**) is found only here in the NT. A similar kind of "trouble" that was indicated in Act_17:6 was that "*These have turned the world upside down*". The exact charge against them is seen in the next verse.

÷Act_16:21
Act_16:21

They advocate [proclaim] customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice." -- The word "customs" refers to religious rites or forms of worship. Notice this charge has nothing to do with the slave girl's exorcism.

Referring to Paul and Silas, the owners of the young girl charge them with preaching religious practices not in accordance with the Roman way of life.

It was technically true that Roman citizens were not to engage in any foreign religion that had not been sanctioned by the state. But it was a false charge that they were creating chaos.

They were apparently referring to their preaching about Jesus Christ. Judaism was a legal religion in the Roman Empire, but Christianity was destined to be seen as a separate and, therefore illegal, religion.

us Romans -- The people of Philippi, as a *colonia*, had a right to claim the title of Roman citizens, which could not have been claimed by those who were merely inhabitants of a Greek city, such as Thessalonica or Corinth.

÷Act_16:22
Act_16:22

The crowd joined in attacking them; -- The crowd would be other people in the forum on business who joined the aggrieved owners of the young girl in attacking Paul and Silas. The crowd was inflamed by the contemptuous name of "Jews." Whether this "attack" was only verbal or included physical blows is not clear. The literal reads that the "crowd rose up against them."

Though both Paul and Silas were Roman citizens and politically exempt from such treatment, the frenzy of the mob overrode whatever protestations they may have made.

and the magistrates tore the garments off them -- Every Roman colony had two of these men serving as judges. In this case, they did not uphold Roman justice. They did not investigate the charges, conduct a proper hearing, or give Paul and Silas the chance to defend themselves. This was an illegal punishment since they had not been convicted of any crime.

Their garments would be removed from their backs (usually the lictor did this on the orders of the magistrates) where he would then apply the whipping. The question naturally occurs, why did Paul not, on these occasions, claim, as he did afterwards at Jerusalem (Act_22:25), the privileges of a Roman citizen. Some have supposed that the violence of the mob rendered it impossible for his claim to be heard, or the action occurred so quickly.

and gave orders to beat them with rods. -- The lictor (Act_16:35) under the command of the magistrates administered the beating with rods tied together in a bundle. Paul received the same punishment on two other occasions, 2Co_11:25. (Cf. 1Th_2:2).

There was a Roman official, called the "lictor," who carried rods for this purpose when attending on the magistrates. There were no set number of blows but it was not as severe as a Roman scourging.

÷Act_16:23
Act_16:23

And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, -- The words imply a punishment more severe than usual, such as would leave their backs lacerated and bleeding. So in 1Th_2:2, Paul speaks of having been "shamefully entreated" at Philippi.

they threw them into prison, -- So that they should have no opportunity of teaching or spreading their message any longer. The magistrates appear (see Act_16:35) to have intended to keep them one night in prison and then to turn them out of the city.

charging the jailer to keep them safely. -- Roman jailers bore a heavy responsibility for securing their prisoners. (See Act_16:27).

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION:

1. Pentecost- Act_2:22 & Act_2:36-47
2. Samaria- Act_8:4-13
3. Ethiopian eunuch- Act_8:26-39
4. Paul (Saul)- Act_9:1-20 & Act_22:6-16
5. Cornelius– Act_10:1-48 & Act_11:1-18
6. Lydia- Act_16:13-15
7. Philippian jailer- Act_16:23-34
8. Corinthians- Act_18:8

÷Act_16:24
Act_16:24

Having received this charge, he put them into the inner prison -- The jailer, understanding the severity of his orders, places Paul and Silas in the most secure part of the prison. Such places were dark and with poor ventilation, and hence foul and loathsome; perhaps underground, like the Tullianum (dungeon) at Rome.

and fastened their feet in the stocks. -- The stocks (literally *wood)* was a means of additional security and additional torture. The feet were passed through holes and held secure. We read of such instruments being used very early in time (cf. Job_13:27, Job_33:11). The Greeks, as well as early America used such, and sometimes such stocks had five apertures for head, hands and feet.

This particular security measure was designed to produce painful cramping so the prisoner's legs were spread as far apart as possible.

÷Act_16:25
Act_16:25

But about midnight -- They probably could not sleep from the agony of the beating and the painful posture of the stocks. (Did the passage Psa_119:62 pass through their minds?)

Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns -- (The Greek grammar expresses one act rather than two.) Sleep being out of the question, they pass the night in devotions. The imperfect tenses of the verbs in this verse imply that the prayers and singing were continued.

to God, -- While Paul and Silas were "bondservants" to God, they are now literally in "bonds" for His name.

and the prisoners were listening to them, -- The inner prison appears to have held more than Paul and Silas, or it may be that bars in the inner walls allowed the sound to pass into other cells. The verb is not the common one for "hearing," and is rarely found anywhere. It indicates attentive or eager listening.

It is probable that the teachings content of these prayers and hymns (Col_3:16) produced faith (Rom_10:17) in Christ in these prisoners, because none of them escaped either when the earthquake opened the doors (Act_16:26-28).

[Perhaps more than just the "jailer and his household" are converted in this episode?]

÷Act_16:26
Act_16:26

and suddenly there was a great earthquake, -- Earthquakes are relatively common throughout this region. Luke shows that the timing of this earthquake, "suddenly," coincides with Paul and Silas in the process of their devotions.

God had delivered Peter from prison by means of an angel (Act_12:7), but here an event was chosen that gave Paul a chance to preach the gospel to both the prisoners and the jailer.

so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; -- The fact that the "foundations" took a great shock which would loosen stones in the walls and floor accounts of the subsequent results. This "earthquake" was more than just a tremor.

and immediately all the doors were opened -- The earthquake warps the doors and door frames and they no longer secure the prisoners.

and every one's fetters were unfastened. -- We must gather from the full description the sense in which these words are to be taken. The chains (δεσμα) or bonds, which were fastened to the "foundation" or walls of the cell shook and broke the latches of their stocks and warped the doors so they also were released from the masonry.

÷Act_16:27
Act_16:27

When the jailer woke -- We would like to think that the "jailer" had also been listening to Paul and Silas, but if he had, he had drifted off to sleep.

The word for "woke" or "awaking out of his sleep," is found in the NT only here, and has the sense of a *startled rousing*.

and saw that the prison doors were open, -- It appears he was sleeping with his weapon close at hand at a station where he could easily observe the prison doors.

he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. -- Instead of waiting to face humiliation and a painful execution, he was ready to kill himself. A Roman soldier who let a prisoner escape paid for his negligence with his life (Act_12:19; Act_27:42).

It was considered an honorable thing, among the Greeks and Romans, for a man to commit suicide rather than face disgrace.

÷Act_16:28
Act_16:28

But Paul cried with a loud voice, -- There was probably enough light in the passage way for Paul to see what the jailor was about to do. But it was so dark that the jailer, while seeing the cell doors open, couldn't see into the cells and observe that the prisoners were still there.

Paul was far enough away he had to cry with a "loud voice."

"Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." -- There has been much discussion over why the other prisoners had not escaped as the jailer thought they had.

Some suggest they have not had time to escape before the jailer, and apparently his subordinates, have become alarmed.

Luke does not state the exact reason, but it is likely that God's hand was in it. Perhaps the action of these two missionaries had influenced them to not escape.

÷Act_16:29
Act_16:29

And he called for lights -- The jailer apparently had assisting help and when he "called" for "lights," plural, they would quickly come running with some burning torches, so he could make an inspection.

and rushed in, -- We see him making a hasty investigation, only to learn that Paul had spoken the truth.

and trembling with fear -- Being terror-stricken, the jailer connected all that occurred with the two prisoners Paul and Silas, and he judges them to be more than other men. They are spokesmen for God!

he fell down before Paul and Silas, -- From what he has understood, either concerning the reasons of their imprisonment or from what he has learned while they were in his custody, he judges them to have a message not only for other other men, but for him also!

÷Act_16:30
Act_16:30

and brought them out -- How far "out" he brought them we don't know, but apparently out of the "inner prison," the foul dungeon. There could be no fear that they would flee now who had remained when the open doors made flight easy.

and said, Men ["Sirs,"] -- The Greek word **K ριοι,** implies an acknowledgement of them being his superiors. Those who had been his prisoners he now calls "Lords."

"what must I do to be saved?" -- He had probably heard about the testimony of the possessed damsel, that Paul and Silas were men who proclaimed the way of salvation (Act_16:17). He has probably been learning something from their devotions. He now cries out asking to learn more about the teaching they had to give.

The jailer asks about the way of salvation Paul and Silas preached. He was not thinking about temporal safety from the earthquake; the next three verses make the context of the question clear. They immediately begin telling him about how to find salvation.

÷Act_16:31
Act_16:31

And they said, -- We should not loose sight of the plural. Paul and Silas were both the teachers in this situation.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, -- There is a contrast in the Greek which the English reader misses. The jailer had addressed the preachers as "lords (*kurioi*)." They answer, 'There is just one Lord (*kurios*). Believe in Him, and salvation is yours!'

To "believe" in Jesus as Lord, is not just mentally assenting that He is Lord. It means to "trust" in Him and all that He commands us as the "Lord" of our lives. To confess Him as "Lord" is to obey Him and follow His steps (Joh_14:23; Joh_15:10; and 1Pe_2:21).

and you will be saved, -- The salvation promised is deliverance from the penalty of sin, both in this world and the one to come.

you and your household." -- This means that both the jailer and his family who also believe in the gospel as he does, will be saved.

Here we see the progression of conversion:

Hear	Believe	Repent	Baptism	Results-saved
v.32	v.31	v.32	v.33	v.30 saved

÷Act_16:32
Act_16:32

And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. -- How does faith come? It comes by hearing (Rom_10:17). Paul preached so that they might have something to believe.

Paul and Silas preach the "word of the Lord" and the jailor and his family learn what they must do to be saved. We see some specific subjects that must have been touch upon in the next two verses as we see their response to the preaching of God's word.

÷Act_16:33
Act_16:33

And he took them the same hour of the night, -- It was midnight or a later, see Act_16:25. But it becomes a new day form him, a birthday, it will begin with a breakfast feast, and he does his utmost to show his rejoicing by caring for those who made it possible.

and washed their wounds, -- His act of attendance indicates a heart filled with repentance. Paul and Silas had been thrust into the inner prison, with all their wounds bleeding and uncared for.

and he was baptized at once, with all his family. -- In the middle of the night the jailer and his family are baptized. He, too, was cleansed from wounds which were worse than those inflicted by the rods of the Roman lictors.

This shows the importance of baptism. Acts mentions it over and over. Jesus was baptized to give an example (cf. Luk_3:21; 1Pe_2:21). and commanded it (cf. Mat_28:19) and that settles it (cf. Act_2:38).

It also is consistent with other examples in Acts that baptism occurred immediately after their profession of faith (cf. Act_10:47-48). In a sense it was their visible public profession of faith and obedience to Christ.

÷Act_16:34
Act_16:34

Then he brought them up into his house, -- The jailor would not leave them a moment longer in the dungeon. By his hospitality the jailer demonstrates that his life has been radically changed by the gospel. He originally imprisoned Paul, but he now cares for the apostle in his own home.

and set food before them; -- Literally, *set a table before them*. Most likely they had had not food since going to the place of prayer (verse 16) (early morning) and probably fasting until after the time of prayer, but they were brought before the magistrates.

and he rejoiced with all his household -- The Greek adverb which is represented by the last four words in English means simply, (ἠγαλλι σατο, G21, a much stronger word than the usual χαίρειν,) "and rejoiced exceedingly with all his house."

This is the same word Luke used in Act_2:46 to describe the gladness of the early Christians. At the table in the jailer's house, there was deep joy as they ate together. There was the joy that comes from a sense

of sins being forgiven, that comes from having been obedient to the Lord. Observe that the emotion comes after obedience, not before.

that he had believed in God. -- The concluding verb gives the reason for the joy, and is rendered "having believed in God" or "have believed God."

In verse 31 the jailor was told "To believe on the Lord Jesus." By the expression here now, we understand what was meant in the first. The belief on Jesus is to believe what God has revealed concerning Him. This had been explained in "the word of the Lord" which they had heard (verse 32), the word which told how Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies, and by His acts on earth showed that He was the Son of God.

÷Act_16:35
Act_16:35

But when it was day, the magistrates -- The very next day the officials who had ordered the beating and incarceration send word to the jailor.

sent the police, -- The "captains" are probably the lictors who were the attendants to the magistrates who had scoured Paul and Silas the previous day. Their Greek name *rabdouchoi* (G4465)signifies "rod-bearers." A bundle of these rods was the symbol of this political authority.

saying, "Let those men go." -- This amounted to an apology from the Philippian officials and demonstrates their doubt about whether Paul was advocating sedition against the empire.

÷Act_16:36
Act_16:36

And the jailer reported the words to Paul, -- It appears that the jailor is now ready to comply with the order to release Paul. He was probably very happy with this outcome to the situation.

saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go; now therefore come out -- By the jailor saying to Paul and Silas, "now therefore come out," seems to indicate they were now back in confinement.

and go in peace." -- The jailor probably used the phrase in the fulness of its meaning, which is much more expressive in the Greek than in English. He naturally looked upon this offer of release as a happy outcome, a meaning of safety for his new friends, an offer that should be accepted.

÷Act_16:37
Act_16:37

But Paul said to them, -- Paul addresses the lictors, perhaps through the jailor. It is highly probable that the conversation of the Roman officers would be in Latin, and that the proceedings of the previous day may have been conducted in that language. In this way, if Paul and Silas were unfamiliar with the Latin speech, we might account for the non-mention or the disregard of their Roman citizenship.

"They have beaten us publicly, -- The had apparently been lashed to the *palus* or public whipping-post in the sight of the people.

uncondemned, -- The magistrates had only listened to the charge of the accusers, who, leaving out all mention of the real reason of their charge that they had lost a source of money-making, they put forth the charge that the missionaries were disturbers of law and order. The crowd shouted with the accusers and the magistrates, forgetting their duty to justice, joined with the mob (Act_16:22) in the assault on Paul and Silas.

Paul and Silas had not been given a change to speak up and be heard.

men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; -- To inflict corporal punishment on a Roman citizen was a serious crime, and made more so since Paul and Silas were "uncondemned men" who did not receive a trial. As a result, the magistrates faced the possibility of being removed from office, and having Philippi's privileges as a Roman colony revoked

Incidentally we learn here that Silas also had Roman citizenship. Perhaps this had a bearing in him being select to accompany Paul on the journey.

and do they now cast us out secretly? No! -- Paul claims his rights as a Roman citizen. He asks that their dismissal from prison be as widely published as was their punishment.

let them come themselves and take us out." -- Paul requests a public display of his innocence. This would provide official affirmation that Paul and Silas had done nothing illegal and would further strengthen the Church's position and the new believers in the community in Philippi.

÷Act_16:38
Act_16:38

The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid -- A sense of fear now gripped the magistrates, because each Roman citizen had the right of appeal to the Emperor, and the penalty for outraging the rights of such a man was severe.

when they heard that they were Roman citizens; -- They had acted illegally, and they could not shake off their responsibility. They were liable to a prosecution. The tables were turned; the accused had become a possible accuser, and they, instead of hushing the matter up, were compelled to make something like a formal apology.

÷Act_16:39
Act_16:39

so they came and apologized to them. -- The magistrates come humbling to "apologize" for the injustice and inconvience cause to the two missionaries.

And they took them out -- The magistrates themselves seem to come down to the dungeon prison cell and escorts Paul and Silas out.

and asked them to leave the city. -- Then in order to avoid any further embarrassment or opposition from the crowd, they asked Paul and Silas to leave Philippi, which will relieve their anxiety.

÷Act_16:40
Act_16:40

So they went out of the prison, -- Paul and Silas take their leave from the prison and their new converts, the jailor and his family (and perhaps even some the other prisoners who had heard the "word of the Lord" as well.)

and visited Lydia; -- They probably express their appreciation for her hospitality and gathered their travel baggage. Her home was probably also the meeting place for the church.

and when they had seen the brethren, -- The missionaries have been in Philippi long enough to convert some men in addition to the women who were baptized initially. Assuming there were no Jewish men in Philippi these men would be Gentile converts.

Probably Ephaphroditus (Php_2:25) and Clement (Php_4:3) were among the men converted who we know labored with the church there.

they exhorted them and departed. -- There is a deep mutual affection which existed between Paul and these Philippians. They are his greatest joy; they gave him no cause for sorrow, and from the first they ministered to his needs as he continued to evangelize other places.

Luke apparently stays behind in Philippi. Perhaps his presents and continued work there helps to account for this becoming such a great happy church. We find him still here in Act 20:5-6., and joining Paul again as he makes his way to Jerusalem.

÷Act_17:1
Act_17:1

Now when they had passed through Amphip'olis -- Paul and his company travel south and west along the Ignatian Way and in about 33 miles come to Amphipolis. It had been a famous place during the Peloponnesian war and was now an important military station. Paul only passes through, with no Jewish population and therefore no synagogue, he doesn't stop to labor.

and Apollo'nia, -- Apollonia was about 30 miles farther on west of Amphipolis, and was about 37 miles from Thessalonica. Paul and his companions appear not to have made any stay in these towns to preach.

they came to Thessaloni'ca, -- Thessalonica was a major city in the Roman province of Macedonia. It was about 95 miles west of Philippi along the famous Ignatian Way. It served as a port with close ties with Rome. It is still a modern thriving city with the modern name of Salonica (*Saloniki*) and is still an important city in Greese. Today there is still a large Christian and Jewish elements among its population.

where there was a synagogue of the Jews. -- The fact that Paul knew there was a large Jewish population with a synagogue there at Thessalonica was what drew him to go so directly to this city.

÷Act_17:2
Act_17:2

And Paul went in, as was his custom, -- Paul's regular method of evangelism was to first begin his ministry with the Jews, Act_13:14-15; Rom_1:16.

and for three weeks -- This means he only spoke in this synagogue on three Sabbaths, his public ministry to the Jews. The actual amount of time spent in Thessalonica would have been longer, extending perhaps four to six months (cf. Php_4:16), but not for an extended period.

In the intervals between the Sabbaths and weeks following, the Apostle worked, as usual, for his livelihood, probably, as a tent-maker (2Th_3:8).

he argued [reasoned] with them -- The word "reasoned" [διελ ξατο, G1256] means "to discourse using questions and answers" dialogue.

from the scriptures, -- Paul matched Messianic prophecies with Jesus' life, teaching, death, and resurrection. He picked up this pattern from Stephen and his rabbinical training.

from the scriptures There are earlier examples of Paul preaching this type of message (e.g., 13:13–41).

÷Act_17:3
Act_17:3

explaining and proving [opening and alleging] -- "Explaining," or "opening," indicates a reading and explaination of a part of the OT scripture. "Alleging" is literally "to lay beside" and indicates that Paul put the scripture before them in an orderly way and showed how they harmonized with Jesus.

that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, -- Paul was contending that Jesus, and all the happened to him, was the only one who fit the requirements that were prophesied about the Messiah, therefore, Jesus was the Christ!

and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." -- Paul's preaching centers on the death and resurrection of Jesus. He could have supported this viewpoint with Isa_53:10-12.

In "proclaiming" (preaching) Christ, Paul was urging them to accept Jesus as the "Christ" and become fully His disciples, 1Th_1:6; 1Th_2:13. The church at Thessalonica seemed to be composed mostly of Gentiles.

÷Act_17:4
Act_17:4

And some of them were persuaded, -- Paul taught using arguments which they were able to understand and with which they could agree.

and joined Paul and Silas; -- The notion conveyed by the Greek is that they "cast their lots with the disciples," deciding to be a part of their community.

The Jason mentioned in the next verse as Paul's host was probably one of the Jewish converts; Aristarchus and Secundus, identified as Thessalonians in Act_20:4, may have also been converted at this time.

as did a great many of the devout Greeks -- These were Gentiles who worshiped the true God (see note on "devout" in Act_10:2). They did not have the prejudices to which the Jews clung.

The number of converted Jews were but a few in comparison with the "great multitude" of devout Greeks.

and not a few of the leading women. -- These "prominent women" were some in high standing in the city, and perhaps wives of principal citizens. (cf. Act_13:50). In the Macedonian towns of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, there is a specific mention of women among the converts. Women were freer to take part in public activities in Macedonia than in many parts of the Roman empire.

÷Act_17:5
Act_17:5

But the Jews were jealous, -- As happened earlier in Pisidian Antioch (Act_13:45), Iconium (Act_14:2), and Lystra (Act_14:19), the Jews, probably rulers of the synagogue who saw their attendance dwindling became jealous of Paul's success.

and taking some wicked fellows of the rabble, they gathered a crowd, -- The word "rabble" ἀγορα ος, was used to indicate a man who had no work skill and who lingered about the ἀγορὰ, the market-place, looking for any kind of a job, good or bad, that may present itself.

The Jewish leaders secured a crowd of such men, perhaps even paying some of the their leaders to incite others for their purpose. (cf. Act_13:50).

set the city in an uproar, -- No specific charge is mentioned but it was probably like that at Philippi, that Paul and company were enemies of the Romans, teaching things that were against Roman law and customs (see note at Act_16:20-21).

and attacked the house of Jason, -- The mob assumed Paul, Silas, and Timothy were staying there. Nothing is known of Jason except that he was probably Jewish, since Jason was a name adopted by many of the dispersed Jews.

seeking to bring them out to the people. -- The excited mob was ready to inflict violence upon them; perhaps to stone them to death.

÷Act_17:6
Act_17:6

And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brethren -- The exact relationship between Jason and the missionaries is not certain. It is possible that: 1) they stayed in his home; 2) they worked for him; 3) they rented space rom him. But the word in v. 7 means "to receive him as a guest" (c. Luk_10:38; Luk_19:6; Jas_2:25).

Whether Paul and Silas had been warned, or just out on a call, Luke does not say.

dragged ... before the city authorities, -- The word "dragged" is expressive of considerable violence. It is used of Saul (Act_8:3) "haling" (hauling) men and women, and committing them to prison.

The title πολιτάρχης (G4173, "city authorities") is found nowhere in literature but in this chapter. Archaeologists, however, found it inscribed on an arch which spanned a street of ancient Thessalonica. The fact that this title for the magistrates is found there is a striking confirmation of the truthfulness of the account before us.

crying, [shouting] "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, -- The term "world" literally means "the inhabited earth." A phrase used in later Greek to signify the whole Roman Empire, which then embraced a very large portion of the known world (cp. Luk_2:1).

It speaks much for the spread of Christianity and its powerful influence, that words like these should come from the lips of enemies.

÷Act_17:7
Act_17:7

and Jason has received them; -- By receiving them hospitably into his house, Jason is charged with aiding and abetting the crime of which Paul and Silas are accused. This may indicate that the church regularly assembled in Jason's home.

and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, -- Similar to the charges leveled at Paul and Silas at Philippi (see note Act_16:21). What specific "decrees" they have in mind are not stated. But teaching against polytheism and the Roman gods made them to appear as atheists.

saying that there is another king, Jesus." -- By accusing the church of preaching Jesus as a king, the Jewish opponents are trying to make it seen as a threat to Caesar. One of the most serious crimes in the Roman Empire was to acknowledge allegiance to any king but Caesar (cf. Joh_19:15).

÷Act_17:8
Act_17:8

And the people -- This would be those gathered at the market place who saw all the commotion and yelling of the mob who dragged Jason to court.

and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard this. -- The purpose of the Jewish antagonism is to spread alarm at the prospect of an insurrection. They wanted to motivate the officials to punish the Christian leaders.

The Jewish leaders and the mob were the ones who actually caused the most disturbance.

÷Act_17:9
Act_17:9

And when they had taken security -- This was probably a monetary security bond which would be forfeited should Paul and his companions cause more trouble. As a result, the missionaries had no choice but to leave Thessalonica.

from Jason -- Jason is made responsible for keeping the peace and the law by giving some deposit as a pledge of his good conduct.

and the rest, -- It appears that the "rest" of the brothers (Act_17:6) who were "dragged" to the city officials also had to post "security."

they let them go. -- As far as the city authorities could determine, no treason had been committed, so with the bond they allow Jason and the rest to go.

÷Act_17:10
Act_17:10

The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night -- The event at Jason's house prompt the church to realize the danger to Paul and Silas and they leave at night to get out of town as safely as possible.

Paul has probably been here at Thessalonica several months and has accomplished a lot of teaching as seen from his letters. 1Th_4:13-18; 1Th_5:1-5; 2Th_3:7-8;1Th_1:7, ; 1Th_2:13; 1Th_2:20; and Php_4:15-16.

Just as Luke, it seems, was left at Philippi, it seems that Timothy remained behind at Thessalonica to encourage the new converts during their present trials.

to Berea; -- This city was about 75 miles inland west, and very close to the Ignatian Highway. It would be about a three day journey by foot. The old name of Berœa may be recognized in the modern Verria (Voeria), in Greece. The city was far less important commercially than Thessalonica.

and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. -- Here at Berea there was a Jewish population large enough to have a synagogue. This Jewish community was more open to listening to Paul and checking his arguments from the texts he cited from the Scriptures.

÷Act_17:11
Act_17:11

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessaloni'ca, -- Originally, the Greek term used here denoted noble birth. It later came to refer to anyone who had royal bearing— people who were more refined and dignified.

for they received the word with all eagerness, -- The "word" they "received" was the word of God. It was the same teaching which had been given to the Jews in Thessalonica. The "eagerness" indicates they listened attentively with an open mind.

examining -- In nonjudicial contexts, the Greek term used here, *anakrino*, often deals with questioning and discernment (compare 1Co_2:15; 1Co_10:25). Even an Apostle's word is not to be taken for granted. The noble Berœans were ready to listen, and then diligent to examine the grounds of what was said.

The word "examining" or "searching" is not the same as in the well-known passage Joh_5:39. The present verb has more the sense of *examining* and sifting evidence.

the scriptures daily to see if these things were so. -- The Scriptures (The Old Testament) were studied daily to see whether they really did speak of a Christ who should suffer and rise again.

Why does the writer call the Bereans "noble"?
1. The way they heard the word - v.11
2. The way they tested the word - v.11
3. The way they accepted the word - v. 12

÷Act_17:12
Act_17:12

Many of them therefore believed, -- The sincere Jews of the synagogue who studied their Scriptures, accepted the Truth and became disciples.

with not a few Greek women of high standing -- The same word is found in Act_13:50, of the women of Antioch in Pisidia, and signifies that they were of honourable estate, distinguished for their position, influence and wealth.

as well as men. -- The "Greek" adjective refers specially to the women, but it probably is intended to define the men too. The Jewish converts had been mentioned as examiners of the Scriptures. The men and women mentioned afterwards were probably all Gentiles. (cf. Act_17:4).

÷Act_17:13
Act_17:13

But when the Jews of Thessaloni'ca -- This is the Jewish men of Thessalonica who secured "wicked men of the rabble" (Act_17:5) and formed a mob and sought to attack Paul at Jason's house.

learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Beroe'a also, -- The Thessalonian Jews would not have termed the preaching of Paul as "the word of God." Their prejudice and jealousy of Paul's success among the Gentiles blinded their eyes to the truth.

they came there too, -- They too have traveled the 75 miles to Berea, somehow having learned of Paul's work and success among the Jews and Gentiles there. This would indicate Paul being in Berea for several weeks or a few months at least.

stirring up and inciting the crowds. -- The word translated "agitating" ("stirring up") is quite picturesque – it denotes a storm at sea, the boiling of the waves when blown by a strong wind. We are not told what charges the Jews made against Paul, or even who listened to the charges.

Likely the visiting Jews around the people with the same kind of charges they made back at Thessalonica.

÷Act_17:14
Act_17:14

Then the brethren immediately sent Paul off -- The charges against Paul has endangered his life, so from Berea, like that from Thessalonica, his departure is made in all haste.

on his way to the sea, -- This rendering of the *Textus Receptus,* from which the KJV was translated, conveys the idea that for a while the travelers made as though they would go in the direction of the sea, and then to baffle any pursuit by enemy Jews, they turned and took the land road to Athens.

But the reading of ἕως for ὡς, which has the support of other ancient authorities, makes the sense to be "to go as far as to the sea." If Paul were conveyed by sea then it is easy to understand that the next place mentioned in the journey is Athens.

If he had traveled by land one would wonder why he did not preach at other places along the way.

but Silas and Timothy remained there. -- While Silas and Timothy had played their parts in the mission work, they seem not to be in the same peril as Paul. If Timothy was left here at Berea, he may have returned to do further work at Thessalonica.

It was Paul's custom to leave a helper behind to edify the infant churches. In Paul's absence, these two preachers would be involved in that type of ministry, as well as winning more to Christ.

÷Act_17:15
Act_17:15

Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; -- It is encouraging to see these new converts from Berea concerned for Paul's safety and escorting him along the way to Athens. The Greek verb gives the idea that the whole care and ordering of the journey was in their hands rather than the Apostle's.

Athens was the cultural center of Greece. At its zenith, Athens was home to the most renowned philosophers in history, including Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who was arguably the most influential philosopher of all. Two other significant philosophers taught there: Epicurus, founder of Epicureanism, and Zeno, founder of Stoicism— two of the dominant philosophies in that day.

and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him -- The men escorting Paul are to relay a message back to Silas and Timothy.

as soon as possible, -- Paul wants his missionary companions to join him, "with all speed" (NKJV).

they departed. -- The brethren from Berea do not linger with Paul in Athens, but leave him there alone, and they return home with their message for Silas and Timothy.

÷Act_17:16
Act_17:16

> ***17:16–34*** *Paul's ministry in Athens shows how he altered his approach in carrying out his mission to the Gentiles. His earlier speech at Pisidian Antioch depicts his message to Jews and God-fearing Gentiles (Act_13:16-41), but his speech in Athens (Act_17:22-34) shows how he approached Gentiles who had no knowledge of or commitment to the God of Israel.*

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, -- Paul was alone, without any of his missionary friends. He probably secured lodging, visited the market places and observed life in the city.

> It is somewhat difficult to understand the movement of Silas and Timothy during this time. Paul asked that they join him at Athens as soon as possible. It seems that Timothy did indeed join him at Athens where according to 1Th_3:1-2, Paul sent him back to Thessalonica to establish the brethren in their faith.
>
> Silas apparently did not catch up with Paul until he got to Corinth, where he went after leaving Athens, Act_18:5. There at Corinth both Silas and Timothy joined up again with Paul..

his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. -- Paul is perplexed and agitated from seeing the city so given to the worship and influence of the numerous idols erected everywhere. Statues of the gods lined all the avenues and streets, and temples abounded on every corner.

full of idols -- Athens was the religious center of Greece. Virtually every deity known to man could be worshiped there. Paul viewed Athens as a city of lost humanity, all doomed to a lost eternity because of rampant pagan idolatry.

÷Act_17:17
Act_17:17

So he argued [reasoned] in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, -- Paul's natural priority lay in going first to the Jews with his message of salvation. He expected sympathy from them in his excitement against idolatry.

and in the market place every day with those who chanced to be there. -- In addition to preaching in the synagogue, Paul also preached in the economic center of Athens, the agora. There, he could attract the attention of non-Jews.

Paul addressed these various groups in different ways: to the Jews and God-fearers he used the OT Scriptures, but to the pagans he tried to find some common ground.

÷Act_17:18
Act_17:18

Some also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers met him. --
"Epicureans" believed that pleasure or happiness was the highest good and goal of life. They believed in no personal, physical afterlife. "Enjoy life now" was their motto (a form of hedonism). They did not deny the existence of God, but they believed He did not become involved with the affairs of men.

"Stoics" asserted that humans must live in harmony with nature (i.e. god). Reason was the highest good. Self-control, self-sufficiency, and emotional stability in every situation was their goal. They did not believe in a personal afterlife.

And some said, "What would this babbler say?" -- The word "babbler" was used of birds picking up scattered grain in a field. It came to be used metaphorically of itinerant teachers who picked up pieces of information here and there and tried to sell them.

Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities" -- The word δαιμόνια, here rendered "gods," or "divinities" was used in classical Greek mostly to denote some inferior order of divine beings.

because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. -- The subject of Paul's teaching "in the market-place" had not been mentioned until we are told that it was of "Jesus and the resurrection."

The stumbling block of the gospel for the Jews was "a suffering Messiah" and for the Greeks it was "the resurrection" (cf. 1Co_1:18-25). A personal, bodily afterlife did not fit into either the Epicurean or Stoic understanding of the gods or mankind.

÷Act_17:19
Act_17:19

And they took hold of him -- This is in no sense that of an arrest. There is no need to suppose that any violence was used or intended. The same verb is used often of taking by the hand to aid or protect (so Mar_8:23; Act_23:19), and is the word by which the action of Barnabas is described (Act_9:27) when "he took Paul and brought him to the apostles."

and brought him to the Are-op'agus, -- They escort Paul to the **"Areopagus,"** which means the "hill of Aries." Aries was the god of war in Greek mythology, who is called Mars in Latin. This was the name of the location and also of the civil and religious council that met there.

saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you present? -- They understood that Paul was setting forth a new deity that should be added to their library of gods. He was not speaking to them *about* the doctrine, his words were the doctrine.

Utley sees in this inquiry the difference between intellectual curiosity (cf. Act_17:20-21) and revelation. God has made us curious (cf. Ecc_1:8-9; Ecc_1:18; Ecc_3:10-11), but human intellect cannot bring peace and joy. Only the gospel can do this! Paul discusses the difference between human wisdom and God's revelation in 1 Cor. 1–4.

÷Act_17:20
Act_17:20

For you bring some strange things to our ears; -- The word "strange" is not an adjective, but a participle, and signifies "*something which strikes a person as strange.*" So that the effect which his words produced on the minds of the hearers is indicated. The words had filled them with surprise.

we wish to know therefore what these things mean." -- In a sense this was a university setting, and they want to know all about this teaching that Paul espouses.

÷Act_17:21
Act_17:21

17:21 *While the Athenians put Paul and Christianity on trial, Paul puts their philosophies on trial. Thus, what looks to the Athenians like confused thinking actually points to the incoherence in their philosophies.*

Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. -- This verse shows that the politeness of Act_17:19-20 was not true intellectual inquiry, but a current cultural fad. They just enjoyed hearing and debating. They were trying to relive Athens' past glory. (CBSC)

÷Act_17:22
Act_17:22

So Paul, standing in the middle of the Are-op'agus, -- Paul is given the center of attention. They are prepared to hear him out.

said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. -- Paul addresses them exactly in the form of their own orators. This demonstrates his knowledge of Greek culture and literature.

To say they were **"very religious**" is literally "to fear the gods *(daimon)*." This can mean **(1)** in a negative sense, "superstitious," as in the King James Version, or **(2)** in a positive sense, "very precise in the practice of religious detail" (NKJV, cf. Act_25:19). These men had an intellectual curiosity and respect for religious matters, but only within the parameters of their own traditions.

It is evident that Luke has recorded but a mere summary or outline of Paul's discourse; but it is enough to clearly see Paul's course of argument, and the manner in which he met the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.

÷Act_17:23
Act_17:23

For as I passed along, -- Paul has perused the avenues and streets of Athens.

and observed the objects of your worship, -- Such statues and shrines were to be found everywhere in the city. The word "observed" has the force to "fully observe." The Apostle had not only seen the statues but read the inscriptions. The noun can only mean "a thing that is worshipped" not "the act of worship" as is the sense of the KJV.

I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To an unknown god.' -- They freely admitted there could be a deity they were unaware of and they didn't want to arouse its wrath.

In the Istanbul Archaeology Museum there is just such an altar, dedicated to a "nameless" god, on display that was recovered at Palmyra.

What therefore you worship as unknown, -- Paul doesn't reflect on the nature of their worship, but only that they worshipped a God in ignorance, and he is ready to clear up what was "unknown" to them.

this I proclaim to you. -- He takes his stand on their own confession that they are in ignorance about God, and so offers his teaching.

÷Act_17:24
Act_17:24

The God who made the world and everything in it, -- This was not a view of God held by either the Epicureans or Stoics. Paul presents the world as being God's own handiwork, and all things in it are of His creation.

being Lord of heaven and earth, -- The God Paul presented is the supreme Master, possessor and disposer of all things in His creation.

does not live in shrines made by man, -- As Paul spoke about temples made with hands, he could have pointed to the Parthenon just to the east, and also to the temples of Apollo, Vulcan, Theseus, Ares, etc. Paul affirms that God does not live in buildings like these.

Paul's theology is from the OT (cf. 1Ki_8:27; Isa_66:1-2). He was also trained in Greek scholastics and gives several quotes in this context from Greek writers (cf. Act_17:25 and Act_17:28).

1. Act_17:24 - God made "all things"
2. Act_17:25 - God gave "all life"
3. Act_17:26 - God made "all nations"
4. Act_17:30 - God would save "all men"
5. Act_17:31 - God will judge "all men"

I. God is Maker of All - Act_17:24-26
II. God is Within Reach of All - Act_17:27; Act_17:28
III. God Would Save All - Act_17:30
IV. God Will Be the Judge of All - Act_17:31

÷Act_17:25
Act_17:25

nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything,-- The verb "served" implies the sort of service given by a steward to his master, or a minister to his King, a service in which the superior is dependent upon what was done for him, and could not do well without such service.

When the feasts held in the idol's temples were finished, the worshipers would leave food and offerings on the raised platforms overnight with the thought that the gods would come and eat to their satisfaction.

since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything. -- God is preserver and sustainer as well as creator; He provides all things necessary for the preservation of life and breath.

God is not like earthly masters and kings. He gives all, and men can only offer to Him themselves in return. (Compare **Psalms 50, 51** for like teaching.)

÷Act_17:26
Act_17:26

And he made from one [blood] every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, -- Whether by name or not, Paul refers to Adam as the individual from whom all people are descended. He is stressing the Fatherhood of God, Mal_2:10. This teaching was a blow to the national pride of the Greeks, who believed all non-Greeks were barbarians (see note on Rom_1:14).

Some Greek MSS omit the word "blood."

having determined allotted periods -- God sovereignly controls the rise and fall of nations and empires (cf. Dan_2:36-45; Luk_21:24). God not only created all things, but directs all things (history).

and the boundaries of their habitation, -- God is responsible for establishing nations and their specific geographical locations (Deu_32:8) and determining the extent of their conquests (cf. Isa_10:12-15; Job_12:23; Psa_47:7-9; Psa_66:7).

÷Act_17:27
Act_17:27

that they should seek God, -- (This may be another quote from the Greek poet, Aratus.) God created people with a desire to seek Him, but their sin confuses their understanding. (Ecc_3:11).

Men have no excuse for not knowing about God because He has revealed Himself in man's conscience and in the physical world (see notes on Rom_1:19-20; Rom_2:15).

in the hope that they might feel after him and find him. -- The Greek verb "**feel**" here denotes attempting to touch or handle something. In Greek literature, it refers to a blind person walking in the dark. The world was to be man's book in which he should read about God's power and love; which should stimulate a desire to know what relationship God wants with him.

Yet he is not far from each one of us, -- And so God reveals Himself in the world He created, but man must zealously seek Him. Paul may have in mind the passage in Deu_4:7, but applying it all mankind.

÷Act_17:28
Act_17:28

for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; -- Paul may be quoting the poet Epimenedes of Crete (compare Tit_1:12).

All our existence is through His care, therefore He must be near to all of us. The preposition ν is rendered *by* in verse 31, "By that man whom he hath ordained."

and move -- More literally, *are moved*. The word does not refer to the motion of persons from place to place, but to those internal movements of the mind and spirit of which the outward actions are the effect. (CBSC)

as even some of your poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.' -- This is a quotation from one of the ancient poet-philosophers, probably the Stoic poet Aratus. By quoting from their own literature to the Athenians, Paul illustrates his method, wherein "he became all things to all men." With the quotation he arrested the attention of these cultivated hearers, and they understood that Paul was also an educated man of culture.

These two references to Greek poets do not mean Paul endorsed their view of God, but he had no qualms about using pagan poets to support his argument if some of what they had written coincided with revealed truth.

÷Act_17:29
Act_17:29

Being then God's offspring, -- Paul builds on the previous statement. The fact that people are God's offspring shows that the living God is grander than idols.

If man is the offspring of God, as the Greek poet suggested, it is foolish to think that God is be nothing more than a man-made idol.

we ought not to think that the Deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, -- With man being the offspring of God, as the Greek poet suggested, man is of much more honour than material things. It is foolish to think that God could be nothing more than a man-made idol. Such reasoning points out the absurdity of idolatry (cf. Isa_44:9-20).

gold, or silver, or stone. -- The word "**gold"** reminds us of the its lavish use in the colossal statue of Zeus by Phidias. "**Silver"** was less commonly used, but the shrines of Artemis at Ephesus supply an instance of it (see Act_19:24). "**Stone"** was the term commonly applied to the marble of Pentelicus, which was so lavishly employed in the sculpture and architecture of Athens.

a representation by the art and imagination of man. -- If man bears the likeness of God who made him, it is inconsistent for man to imagine he can created a likeness to God out of these material things.

÷Act_17:30
Act_17:30

The times of ignorance God overlooked, -- In context Paul is speaking of man's ignorance in thinking he can made an "idol" to be the likeness of God who created him. Man has been ignorant of who God is and what He wants from Man.

"Overlooked" ("To wink at") only means that God has not imputed the errors which men have committed in ignorance, but now the case is changed. Men cannot plead ignorance, who have heard of Christ (cf. Luk_12:48).

This is a surprising aspect of God's mercy (cf. Rom_3:20; Rom_3:25; Rom_4:15; Rom_5:13; Rom_5:20; Rom_7:5; Rom_7:7-8; 1Co_15:56). But now they have heard the gospel and are spiritually responsible! (Utley)

but now he commands all men everywhere to repent, -- If ignorance mitigated their sins before, their sins are far less excusable now. "Repentance" means that they shall amend the lives which previously they have wrongly lived through ignorance.

Paul specifically seems to be aiming at their idolatry. If they come to recognize the true living God, they can come to know what He expects from them, and come to know Jesus and the truth of the resurrection.

Repent -- See **Jas_2:24** note **"Being Saved"** Repentance and salvation.

JUDGMENT - Heb_9:27, Act_17:30-31, Mat_25:31-46, Luk_11:31-32, 2Pe_2:9, 2Co_5:10-11.

÷Act_17:31
Act_17:31

because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world -- This is given as a reason why God declares that men need to repent. They are going to be judged, and if they have not repented and been pardoned, they must be condemned.

But the Creator has said there is going to be such a day, and the agent has already been appointed! A **"fixed a day**" may mean no more than that God has absolutely determined that there will be a consummation of history, that concludes with a judgment day. In light of 2Pe_3:12, whether the actual day has been set or the date is conditional and flexible, is a moot point.

However, the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, and among them even Epicureans and Stoics, will be judged according to the principles of God's own righteousness.

will judge the world -- Paul has established God as Creator, and as such, God has the right to judge the world.

in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, -- This concept of a judgement day was unheard of and incredible to these Greek intellectuals (cf. 1Co_1:23), but the heart of the gospel witness was that Jesus Christ was appointed to be the Judge on that day. (cf. Joh_5:22-27; Act_10:42; Mat_25:31-33).

and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead." -- Paul's audience wanted to know more about "Jesus and the resurrection" and now Paul ties it all together with the judgement day. The resurrection is at the heart of all the preaching in Acts. The resurrecton of Jesus is both evidence of such a day coming, and assurance of who will sit as Judge.

÷Act_17:32
Act_17:32

Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, -- This subject had been their area of expressed interest, Act_17:18. Paul has tied Jesus' resurrection to Him being the Judge of that final judgment day.

some mocked; -- Neither of these Greek philosophies who wanted to hear Paul believed in a bodily resurrection. Some Jews also "mocked" the apostles on the day of Pentecost, Act_2:13.

but others said, "We will hear you again about this." -- Perhaps those listening were just being polite. Some think the Epicureans were the mockers and that perhaps the Stoics expressed interest in hearing Paul again.

÷Act_17:33
Act_17:33

So Paul went out from among them. -- The assembly is satisfied that Paul's teaching about "strange deities" (Act_17:19-20) does not warrant him to be found guilt of breaking Roman law. Paul is free to walk away from the assembly on the Areopagus.

÷Act_17:34
Act_17:34

But some men joined him and believed, -- We don't later hear specifically of a church at Athens; however, Athens was a part of the region termed "Achaia" and the church there could be included in allusions to the churches of that area (Rom_15:26; 1Co_16:15; 2Co_1:1; 2Co_9:2; 1Th_1:7; 1Th_1:8).

certain men -- Athens may seem a failure for Paul's work, but in the first half of the second century the church produced Athenagoras and Aristide, who defended the faith against pagan ranks.

among them Dionys'ius the Are-op'agite -- While it is unclear whether Paul was appearing before an official meeting of the Areopagus (see Act_17:19), at least one member of upper council of Athens who was present became a believer.

To be a member of this council a man must be in a position of influence, and no one could be a member unless he filled some high office of state, and was above 60 years of age.

Some works which circulated among the Christians of the area are attributed to Dionysius who also suffered martyrdom according to tradition.

and a woman named Dam'aris -- She may have been a "prominent woman" (Act_13:50; Act_17:4; Act_17:12) who was a bystander at the meeting on the Areopagus.

It is usually believed that Luke names only these two converts because they are likely the only ones who would have been known to the original readers of Acts.

and others with them. -- While the disciple Stephanas is not mentioned by name here, he and his house are described in 1Co_16:15 as being Paul's first fruits in Achaia.

Achaia was the term for the southern part of Greece which included Athens and Corinth. Since Stephanas is not recorded as a convert of Paul's preaching in Corinth in Acts 18, he may have been one of the "others" converted in Act_17:34. When Paul mentions the "household of Stephanas"it might include more than just his immediate family, but all those who lived there.

÷Act_18:1
Act_18:1

After this he left Athens and went to Corinth. -- "Corinth" in NT times about 400,000, one of the larger and most immoral city in the Roman Empire and home to a famousTemple of Aphoditius.

The 1000+ priestess' of the temple were said to come into the city each evening wearing sandals that left the message "follow me" in the sand behind them. The city was known for it sexual rituals within the famous temple. Today the population of the area is only about 20,000.

The city was also made famous for its connexion with the Isthmian games, from which Paul in his Epistles draws frequent illustrations when writing to the Corinthian Church. (See 1Co_9:24-27, &c.)

÷Act_18:2
Act_18:2

And he found a Jew named Aq'uila, a native of Pontus, -- The name "Aquila" is a Latin word, and it is not likely that this was the man's Jewish name, but as the custom was among the Jews, he had probably assumed a Roman name during his dwelling in Italy and in his intercourse with the Gentiles.

Pontus was a region of northern Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) near the Black Sea. In Act_2:9-10 many of these districts are mentioned as contributing to the number of worshippers who had come to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. Peter later writes his epistles to Christians in this region, 1Pe_1:1.

lately come from Italy -- Many Jews were escaping to other parts of the Roman Empire for a while, later to return. The reason is stated next.

with his wife Priscilla, -- Luke refers to her as Priscilla but Paul speaks of her as Prisca (see 1Co_16:19; Rom_16:3-5; 2Ti_4:19), which was a famous Roman family Prisci that had supplied a long line of praetors and consuls to the Roman government. Tradition also says she was from a wealthy blue-blooded family.

This husband - wife team are mentioned six times. Always together, three of the times she is mentioned first. See the short devote about their life together here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sl9-6Y0l7K4

See the full sermon on Aquila and Priscilla here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87Er3AIUnFY

because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. -- Claudius' expulsion of Jews from Rome occurred in AD 49, a year or two before Paul arrived in Corinth.

The Roman historian Suetonius (*Claudius* ch. 25) says this particular exile (which lasted only to Claudius' death) was due to a disturbance among the Jews over one Chrestus (or Christus). Whether Suetonius was mistaken thinking the agitator was this "Chrestus" or whether it had arisen from the Jewish expectation of "the Christ", we cannot tell.

And he went to see them; -- It appears Paul calls on them knowing they are Christians, and because they are of the same trade he lodges with them.

Found -- <u>What Paul Found At Corinth</u>
1. Christian Fellowship - Act_18:1-2
2. Energetic Enemies - Act_18:6; Act_18:12, 1Co_16:8-9
3. Providential Care - Act_18:9-10
4. Hearts Receptive to the Gospel - Act_18:8; Erastus, Rom_16:23, Act_18:11

Aquila and Priscilla -- (see Sermons)
1. They had Togetherness
2. Able to Adjust
3. God in the Center of their Life

Aquila and Priscilla - six times
1. Act_18:2 A&P
2. Act_18:18 P&A
3. Act_18:26 A&P
4. Rom_16:3-4 P&A
5. 1Co_16:19 A&P
6. 2Ti_4:19P&A

÷Act_18:3
Act_18:3

and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them, -- It appears that after Paul calls on them he learns they are of the same trade as his, and he lodges with them.

This is more evidence that Aquila was already a Christian, for an unbelieving Jew was not likely to have admitted Paul into partnership in his business.

and they worked, for by trade they were tentmakers. -- Among the Jews every Rabbi deemed it proper to practise some handicraft, and they had a proverb, "He who doesn't teach his son a craft, teaches him to steal."

This is the only reference to Paul's trade as a tentmaker, though he writes in his letters about working with his hands in some places rather than accepting financial assistance (e.g., 1Co_4:12; 1Th_2:9; 2Th_3:7-8). This craft not make tents, but sails, and it could also refer to leather works.

÷Act_18:4
Act_18:4

And he argued in the synagogue every sabbath, -- The synagogue developed during the Babylonian exile as a place of worship, education, and prayer. It was designed to foster and maintain Jewish culture. The first-century-A.D. Jewish philosopher Philo emphasized the city of Corinth as a home for many Jewish people.

Paul was active every Sabbath both "reasoning" and "trying to persuade" those present that Jesus was the "Messiah." No doubt, as in other Gentile cities, the religion of the Jews in Corinth gained the attention of many among the Gentiles, who as proselytes or those inclining toward monotheism would form part of the Sabbath audience in the synagogue. According to his rule St Paul addressed himself to the Jews first.

and persuaded Jews and Greeks. -- Greeks in a synagogue context were those often termed "God-fearers."

÷Act_18:5
Act_18:5

When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedo'nia, -- Silas and Timothy are both with Paul now, all together for the first time since Macedonia. Timothy had apparently joined Paul in Athens (Act_17:15) only to be sent back to Thessalonica (1Th_3:1-6) to see how they were doing.

Paul had evidently sent Silas somewhere back to Macedonia, probably to Philippi (cf. 2Co_11:9; Php_4:15) and now has caught up with Paul at Corinth, probably with monetary funds that enable Paul to now give full time to preaching.

Paul was occupied with preaching, -- He had been having to take time for "tentmaking" but it seems that Silas brought fund from Macedonia enabling Paul give full time to preaching. (Php_4:15; 2Co_11:9).

testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. -- The heart of Paul's preaching was giving witness to Jesus as the promised Messiah proven by his resurrection. Paul used the OT scriptures and showed how Jesus fulfilled them.

÷Act_18:6
Act_18:6

And when they opposed and reviled him, -- Paul had met similar opposition before, such as at Pisidian Antioch Act_13:44-47. Paul will spend a lot time with audiences where there is interest and response, even if they don't immediately believe (Act_18:4), but he will not spend time where he simply faces hostile opposition.

he shook out his garments -- Paul shaking out his clothes alludes to Neh_5:13 as well as Jesus' words concerning those who reject God (Mat_10:14; Mar_6:11; Luk_10:11). Compare note on Luk_9:5.

This was a Jewish cultural sign of rejection. The rabbis did this whenever they had to travel through Gentile areas before reentering Jewish areas. It was also used in the book of Acts (cf. Act_13:51). This may have been a subtle way of treating Jewish unbelievers the way they treated Gentiles.

and said to them, "Your blood be upon your heads! I am innocent. -- Paul's prophetic words from the OT prophet Eze_33:4; (cf. also Jos_2:19; 2Sa_1:16; 1Ki_2:37; Eze_18:13; Mat_27:25), demonstrates that Paul is fulfilling his responsibility as witness to the Jews; they are responsible for their reaction. His symbolic shift is completed with his literal move of teaching from the synagogue to a house next door.

From now on I will go to the Gentiles." -- Paul does not mean that he is completely giving up on his mission to the Jews (compare Act_18:19; Act_19:8; Act_28:17-22). Rather, he indicates that he will focus the rest of his time in Corinth elsewhere.

÷Act_18:7
Act_18:7

And he left there -- Paul leaves off his teaching mission in the synagogue.

and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God; -- Being called "a worshiper of God" tells us he was a Gentile who showed interest in the God of Israel and was associated with the synagogue next door to his house.

This phrase is hard to define. The same phrase is used of Lydia in Act_16:14 and several Greeks at Thessalonica in Act_17:4 and in Berea in Act_17:17. They seem to be Greeks who were attracted to Judaism, attended the synagogue when possible, but were not full proselytes.

his house was next door to the synagogue. -- His name indicates he was a Roman, and since Romans usually had three names, his may have been Gaius Titius Justus, meaning he was the same Gaius mentioned in Rom_16:23 who was Paul's host, and host to the whole church, when he wrote the letter to Roman Christians and one whom Paul is recorded as baptizing in 1Co_1:14.

Paul's Jewish opponents cannot have been very pleased about his choice of a new location in such close proximity to the synagogue. Paul may have setup a semi-school or conducted classes there (see Act_19:9-10; Act_18:11).

But we can see how this gave Paul the opportunity of meetings those who came to the synagogue. This was likely the cause of bitterness (Act_18:12), especially when the number of Paul's adherents began to increase, and a ruler of the synagogue (Crispus) was counted among them (Act_18:8).

÷Act_18:8
Act_18:8

Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, -- In a large city like Corinth there would likely be several synagogues, and each synagogue would have several "rulers" and Crispus was one of them, perhaps even the "chief ruler" of the one located next to Jason's house. Crispus is mentioned as one of those whom Paul personally baptized, 1Co_1:14.

We read in Act_18:17 of Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and he may have succeed Crispus as the "ruler" or he may have served in the same congregation or in a different synagogue in Corinth.

believed in the Lord, together with all his household; -- The conversion of such a respected leader must have sent shock waves throughout the Jewish community (see note on Act_6:9); "all his household" see note on Act_11:14.

Crispus' previous distinguished position among the Jews, and the conversion of his whole family, would make him noticeable among the Christian converts.

and many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. -- Paul's labors in Corinth were bearing fruit. Paul mentions that he himself only baptized Crispus and Gaius. But Silas and Timothy were now by his side and would care for the baptizing of the new converts to Christ.

hearing believed ... baptized -- Often just a portion of the conversion process is mentioned to represent the entire process. For example, "repentance" is not mentioned here but we know it was part of the conversion process (Luk_13:3; Act_17:30).

baptized -- Baptism was the public opportunity for new believers to express their faith and a change of relationship to Jesus in a very public and decisive way. No NT believer would ask, "Must I be baptized to be saved?" Jesus did it! Jesus commanded the church to do it! Baptism is still a major decisive public declaration of one's personal faith, especially in non-Christian cultures.

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION:

1. Pentecost- Act_2:22 & Act_2:36-47
2. Samaria- Act_8:4-13
3. Ethiopian eunuch- Act_8:26-39
4. Paul (Saul)- Act_9:1-20 & Act_22:6-16
5. Cornelius– Act_10:1-48 & Act_11:1-18
6. Lydia- Act_16:13-15
7. Philippian jailer- Act_16:23-34
8. Corinthians- Act_18:8

÷Act_18:9
Act_18:9

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, -- God has uses various means to communicate with His servants (see Heb_1:1-2). Here we have similar way of a vision as used in the call to come over into Macedonia (Act_16:9-10), except here the Lord Himself appeared to Paul.

We may judge from the language used to him that for some reason the heart of the Apostle was beginning to grow weary, and that he was in danger of being bodily harmed.

This was the third of six recorded visions given to Paul (cf. Act_9:3-6; Act_16:9-10; Act_22:17-18; Act_23:11; Act_27:23-24).

"Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; -- The grammatical constructions means to stop something that is already in process. It is an exhortation to keep preaching and let nothing stop his testimony.

Jesus appears to Paul to encourage him. He exhorts Paul to not fear what might happen. Unlike his experiences in previous cities, Paul would be able to remain in Corinth to preach the gospel and not be driven away by persecution.

Some Various Comings of Christ

***1 Emmanuel**, Mat_1:23; Joh_1:14; Joh_6:38; Gal_4:4 This was the coming of the Lord in the flesh, his birth at Bethlehem.

2 Pentecost, Mat_16:28 (Mar_9:1) Mar_14:62, Mat_26:64 In some significant way it could be said that Christ also came on Pentecost representatively when he sent his promise of the Holy Spirit.

3 To Paul at His Conversion __ Act_26:16, Act_22:7-9 ; 1Co_15:8 The Lord came to Paul so he could see him alive after his crucifixion and thus qualify him to be an apostle.

4 In Visions -- To Paul at Jerusalem, Act_22:17-18 (after conversion); At Corinth, Act_18:9; again at Jerusalem, Act_23:11

5 AD 70, His coming in judgment upon the Jews for their rejection. Mat_24:27, Mat_24:30, Mat_24:44, Mat_24:39; Mar_13:26-30; Luk_21:20-27; Heb_10:37; Jas_5:8

This brought an end to their nation, the temple, the physical priesthood coming from Levi, the end of animal sacrifices, etc. ("Last days"[of the Jewish dispensation] plural)

***6 The Resurrection Day** (His Second Coming, -- Cf. "Last Day" singular) 1Th_4:13 ff to 1Th_5:11; 1Co_15:23-24 ff; Joh_14:1-3;

Joh_5:28; Joh_11:24; Joh_6:39; Joh_6:40; Joh_6:44;

÷Act_18:10
Act_18:10

for I am with you, and no man shall attack you to harm you; -- The pronouns, ***"I"*** and the ***"you***" are expressed emphatically in the Greek. Christ did not promise he would not be attacked, but the enemy would not be able to do him violence. The appearence of Christ to him would give Paul confidence.

for I have many people in this city." -- That Paul's success in Corinth was extensive can be gathered from the duration he spent there and the letters he afterwards wrote back to this church. In such a large city there were many with open ears to receive the gospel.

÷Act_18:11
Act_18:11

And he stayed a year and six months, -- This was Paul's longest stay in any city, except three years at Ephesus (Act_20:31) and two at Rome (Act_28:30). In these words the historian Luke seems to be expressing the content of the Apostle's mind after the vision.

teaching the word of God among them. -- And beside his teaching to the Corinthians he wrote at this time the two Epistles to the Thessalonians which, along with epistle to the Galatians, are the earliest among the Paul's letters.

÷Act_18:12
Act_18:12

But -- The narrative is about to enter on something which was adverse to the spirit of quiet rest mentioned in the previous verse, therefore **"but"** is the fitting conjunction.

when Gallio was proconsul of Acha'ia, -- This Gallio, who was the brother of the famous philosopher Seneca, was Proconsul of the province where Corinth was located, AD 51 - AD52. The character of Gallio as described by his Roman contemporaries is that of a most bright, popular, and well liked man.

> Again we see evidence of Luke's historical accuracy. Achaia was a Roman province. Such provinces belonged either to the Senate or to the Emperor. When they were senatorial the governor was styled Proconsul. Now Achaia had been a senatorial province under Augustus, but under Tiberius was an imperial province for a time, but after A.D. 44, under Claudius, who was the emperor when these events in Paul's life occurred, it was once more made a senatorial province and so had a **Proconsul** at this period for its governor.

the Jews made a united attack [insurrection] upon Paul -- One translation reads that the Jews "rose up" with one accord against Paul. They probably thought to avail themselves of the inexperience of a newly arrived Proconsul, and by appearing in a large body they could pressure him and obtain the expulsion of Paul from the city.

and brought him before the tribunal, -- The location of the "tribunal" or *bema* (judgement seat) was a large, raised stone platform in the marketplace, situated in front of the residence of the Proconsul, where he would try public cases. (cf. Mat_27:19; Joh_19:13; Act_25:6, Act_25:10, Act_25:17; 2Co_5:10).

> To Gallio they would seem a company of Jews accusing one of their own race of some erroneous teaching. If he had only lately come from Rome, he would be likely to have heard there of the troubles about "Christus" (see above on Act_18:2), and he would consider that he had come into the midst of a quarrel about the same matter.

÷Act_18:13
Act_18:13

saying, "This man is persuading men to worship God contrary to the law." -- While Judaism was not an official religion, it was officially tolerated in the Roman world, and Christianity was not viewed different from Judaism. The Jews in Corinth claimed that Paul's teaching was contrary to Judaism, and therefore should be banned.

Gallio was too smart to be dragged into settling a quarrel between members of a merely "tolerated" religion. Had Gallio ruled in the Jews' favor, Christianity could have been outlawed throughout the Roman Empire. But, as it was, Christianity enjoyed political protection under Roman law until Nero's persecution, 10–12 years later.

> It is even possible that one of Luke's purposes in writing Acts was to document that Christianity was not a threat to Roman authority. Every Roman official is recorded as recognizing this fact.

÷Act_18:14
Act_18:14

But when Paul was about to open his mouth, -- Paul was not given any opportunity to present a defense, Gallio was dropping the case against him without even hearing Paul's side.

He does not need to hear both sides of a question about which he will give no ruling.

Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, -- The two things of which the Gallio would take notice were: **(1)** any evil doing (cf. Act_24:20), an act of injustice, or **(2)** any unscrupulous conduct involving moral wrong.

I should have reason to bear with you, O Jews; -- By his language, Gallio understands that no crime had been committed, that the dispute was over semantics, and threw the case out.

÷Act_18:15
Act_18:15

but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; -- The legal issue was, in reality, a religious issue. Gallio wisely recognized the true motive of the Jews. He could not and would not act as a judge in these kinds of matters.

Some think that by Gallio using the word "names," he shows that he apparently understood the controversy to be over whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was entitled to wear the name Messiah

I refuse to be a judge of these things." -- Gallio's judgment established the important legal precedent that Christians were innocent of transgressing Roman law when merely teaching and following Christian doctrine. A similar judgment comes later, in Act_25:19.

÷Act_18:16
Act_18:16

And he drove them from the tribunal. -- This is the only occurrence of this verb in the NT, but it was used several times in the Septuagint. It is an intensified form of *elauno*, (G556) which means to expel forcibly.

These words probably imply that Gallio gave an order to his lictors to clear the court. Any of the Jews who did not immediately retreat would expose themselves to blows from the lictors' rods.

÷Act_18:17
Act_18:17

And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, -- There is a question whether this "Sosthenes" Is he the same as Crispus in Act_18:8? Or is he a different ruler of the synagogue. In great cities like Corinth there was likely more than one synagogue; and there might be several called ***rulers*** over the same synagogue.

Compare 1Co_1:1-2 where he seems to be an associate with Paul in preaching the gospel and joins him in the greetings sent back to the church at Corinth. Of course, there may well be more than one man with the same name.

and beat him in front of the tribunal. -- The question here is "who" beat Sosthenes, and why? Was he beaten because he was a Christian? (see 1Co_1:1-2 and above). Or because he was a Jew? And who did the beating?

Wayne Jackson suggests the rebuffed Jews were furious over Sosthenes' failure to press the case and they beat him. (Understanding the nearest noun to this pronoun "they" would be "Jews.")

Gareth Reese surveys several posibilities as to who the "they" were that did the beating. He suggests it was a thorough beating (imperfect tense, *of continued action*).

1) the "Jews" may have beaten Sosthenes for presenting the case against Paul so poorly that the case was thrown out;

2) "Greeks" beat him because they saw it as Jewish persecution of Paul, a Roman citizen;

3) the court "lictors" beat Sosthenes (and possibly the Jewish delegations) for their failure to leave and clear the court area. Possibly the Jews tried to continue pressing their arguments even after it was dismissed.

Personally I would hold the #3 view above. - WG

But Gallio paid no attention to this. -- Some believe that Luke is simply commending Gallio for his indifference about judgment on this case.

÷Act_18:18
Act_18:18

After this Paul stayed many days longer, -- This phrase probably covers a period of some months. The fact is noted following Gallio's repression of action by the Jews. The Apostle could stay and work on without molestation.

Corinth is one of the few places where Paul was able to remain as long as he wished. Paul later wrote at least three letters to the Corinthians, including the letters known today as 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. (Compare Act_20:3.)

and then took leave of the brethren -- Paul doesn't have to leave Corinth in haste as at some other places. He makes his rounds saying good-by to his friends before leaving.

and sailed for Syria, -- Paul is returning to Antioch in Syria, from which he launched his first and second missionary journeys (Act_13:1-3; Act_15:40-41).

and with him Priscilla and Aq'uila. -- That they could accompany Paul means there was sufficient leadership in Corinth, with men such as Gaius, Sosthenes, Stephanas, and Crispus. He will leave them at Ephesus.

At Cenchreae -- This is the eastern port of Corinth. A church had been established there also, Phoebe mentioned in Rom_16:1-2, was from there.

he cut his hair, for he had a vow. -- Many believe the vow Paul may have taken was a temporary Nazirite vow (see (cf. Num_6:2-5, Num_6:13-21). The cutting or shaving of the head would denote the end of the vow. Such a vow was usually completed with a sacrifice in Jerusalem, which Acts does not explicitly record.

The vow generally lasted a specific period of time, although Samson (Jdg_13:5), Samuel (1Sa_1:11), and John the Baptist (Luk_1:15) were Nazirites for life.

In Paul's day, if someone made the vow while away from Jerusalem, at the termination of his vow he would shave his head, as Paul did, and afterwards present the shorn hair at the temple within thirty days. (see Act_21:23-26).

Both A. T. Robertson and M. R. Vincent think this was not a Nazarite vow because it could only be terminated in Jerusalem according to Jewish custom. Paul did become all things to all men to win some (cf. 1Co_9:19-23). We can be sure this vow as for evangelism, not legalism!

÷Act_18:19
Act_18:19

And they came to Ephesus, -- Ephesus was the busiest and most populous city in the Roman province of Asia, on the coast of western Turkey today. It was the principlal city for the worship of Artemis (Diana).

Ephesus became one of the principle cities of Paul's labor, staying there from some three years. (Act_20:31)

and he left them there; -- Priscilla and Aquila remained in Ephesus to establish a ministry; they probably had busness connections there. Apparently, they lived in Ephesus for several years, a church met in their home (1Co_16:19). Paul will return to Ephesus after visiting the sending church in Antioch of Syria. (Act_18:22.)

but he himself went into the synagogue and argued [reasoned] with the Jews. -- Paul's first at sharing the Gospel was always with the Jews. In Ephesus however his message seems to have been received with less hostility among them. The cosmopolitan character of the Ephesian population may have had something to do with this.

÷Act_18:20
Act_18:20

When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined; -- In Ephesus however these Jews were like the Bereans. They were willing to listen. Paul's message seems to have been received with less hostility, for those who heard him begged him to stay a longer time.

Paul seems to be wanting to get on his way. There has been much discussion on the question whether it was the feast of the Passover or the Pentecost which the Apostle desired to keep in Jerusalem. But he wanted to go up to Jerusalem and then up to the church at Antioch. However, see the next verse.

÷Act_18:21
Act_18:21

but on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," -- Paul believed his life was in God's hands, not his own (cf. Rom_1:10; Rom_15:32; 1Co_4:19; 1Co_16:7). This is the biblical world view (cf. Heb_6:3; Jas_4:15; 1Pe_3:17).

Paul does return to Ephesus (Act_19:1 ff) and remains there three years (Act_20:31).

"I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing." -- Some MSS have this comment. It is not only on the authority of a small number of uncials that the words are rejected; their omission is supported by several cursives, as well as by the Vulgate and some other versions. Some think the words should be omitted here believing them to have been an insertion suggested by Act_20:16.

and he set sail from Ephesus. -- Ephesus, though inland, had a harbor which required constant dredging to keep the silt carried down by the Cayster River from closing the channel. It usually required about a month to sail from Ephesus to Caesarea.

÷Act_18:22
Act_18:22

When he had landed at Caesare'a, -- (For information on Caesarea see Act_10:1).

Because of the absent of data from Luke and the abrupt arrival at Caesarea, some think this may have been one occasion where Paul was again shipwrecked (See 2Co_11:25).

This was the home of Philip in whose house Paul lodged "for some days" on a later visit passing through Caesarea (Act_21:8-10). But there is no mention of him on this occasion.

he went up and greeted the church, -- We would surmise that Paul "went up" and greeted the church at Caesarea where Philip worked, before going north to Antioch. In favor of this is that Paul's intention on leaving Corinth was to sail "to Syria" (Act_18:18).

But that may not the meaning of "going up" here. Because Jerusalem was elevated over the surrounding region, travelers had to go "up" to get there. While the name of "Jerusalem" is not specified here, some believe that Paul went there from Caesarea (to keep the feast as he had planned, Act_18:21), and did his business there before going back to Antioch to give his report to them.

In meeting with the Jerusalem church Paul could have given his report on his recent journey, as he had reported the success of his first (Act_15:3-4). And he may have spoke to churches all along the way if he had time.

Usually a vow like Paul had taken at Cenchreae (Act_18:18) was concluded with an offering at the Temple. Paul may have done that but its just not recorded here. Another alternative is that he did not conclude the vow and make the offering until he came back to Jerusalem the next time as recorded in Act_21:24-27.

and then went down to Antioch. -- Paul returned to the church that had commissioned these journeys. This ended the second missionary journey. It had extended over a three-year period of time, about the years AD 50-53. Likely Paul gave a report of what God had done with them to the church as he had done at the end of the first (cf. Act_14:26-27).

* The more I reflect on this verse I tend to think that Paul had planned to sail to Syria (Act_18:18) which would have landed him at Seleucia (Act_13:4; Act_14:26). But instead, after being picked up at sea after a shipwreck (2Co_11:25) he lands at Caesarea, the rescue ship's destination. He hastens to Antioch as they would probably be very worried about him if they had learned of a shipwreck. - WG

÷Act_18:23

Act_18:23

After spending some time there -- Possibly from the summer of AD 53.

he departed -- Starting from Antioch as on both his former missions. Some think this would now be about AD 54.

and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phryg'ia, -- Paul's return to regions he visited on his first and second missionary journeys and this marked the beginning of his third. Taking no doubt the same direction as before, and so visiting Lystra and Derbe, before he came to the more northern portions of Asia Minor.

This phrase "**Galatian region**" is still the source of controversy among scholars as to whether this refers to racial or political divisions within modern central Turkey.

The **Phrygian region** is first mentioned in Act_2:10. Some who were present at Pentecost were from this area. Paul was forbidden to preach in this area in Act_16:6.

strengthening all the disciples. -- The verb is elsewhere rendered "confirming" and sometimes "stablishing" containing the idea of "making firm" their faith (Act_14:22).

Luke is not personally traveling with Paul and he covers a journey of several months, and some 500 or 600 miles, in just a few brief words.

÷Act_18:24
Act_18:24

With Paul now on his way back to Ephesus, the record of events there is brought up to date (Act_18:24 ff) before we are told of Paul's return to that city (Act_19:1).

Now -- A preposition that serves to interpose a narrative about Apollos in preparation for what will be mentioned in the following chapter.

a Jew named Apol'los, -- Apollos the name of a Greek god, which seems unusual for a Jews. His influence as a Christian teacher will make him well known and respected in Corinth (cf. 1Co_1:12; 1Co_3:5; 1Co_4:6).

a native of Alexandria, -- Literally, an Alexandrian by birth. Jews abounded in Alexandria, a major Roman city in Egypt where the Septuagint version of the OT was made.

It was the home of Philo, a contemporary Jewish scholar, and a great university. Jews were more influence by Graeco-Roman culture here then they were in Judea and other regions.

came to Ephesus. -- He arrives in Ephesus during a time when Paul is not there, and before Paul's three years of residence there.

He was an eloquent man, -- The word in the original expresses not only ability as an orator, but also the possession of stores of learning. He was learned and could use his learning with effect.

well versed [competent; mighty; learned] in the scriptures. -- This phrase, used only here, refers to Apollos's knowledge of the OT Scriptures. That knowledge, combined with his eloquence, allowed him to crush his Jewish opponents in debate (Act_18:28).

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Apollos --

Act_18:24	1) speaking ability
	2) knows the scriptures
Act_18:25	3) zealous
Act_18:26	4) courageous
	5) seeking
Act_18:27	6) good commendation
Act_18:28	7) helpful
	8) converting others to the faith
	attitude, knew the scriptures

÷Act_18:25
Act_18:25

He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; -- He was knowledgeable of the OT Law and the Prophets but he was not acquainted with Jesus as the fulfillment of all the Messianic Scriptures. We don't know who had been Apollos's "instructor," perhaps it was by John the Baptist, or by one of the Baptist's disciples.

and being fervent in spirit, -- He was a man zealous for the truth. Wanting to know the Truth himself, and to teach it to others.

he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, -- The "things of the Lord" seems to have the suggestion that he did not have the full information about the subject. He had been teaching "accurately" what he knew, but his knowledge was deficient. .

though he knew only the baptism of John. -- We know from Josephus *(Antiquities*, XVIII. 5. 2) that the teaching and baptism of John produced great effect among the Jews, not only in Judea but among those dispersed Jews. We should not be surprised to learn that Jews (such as at Alexandria and Ephesus) had accepted the Baptist's teaching and knew what he said about Jesus. [See Reese on speculations how Apollos came to his knowledge.]

Apollos seems ignorant of how John's baptism was to prepare Israel for the Messiah's arrival (cf. Luk_1.16-17; Mat_3:6) and the coming of the Kingdom. He didn't understand Christ had baptized his apostles with the Holy Spirit and how they passed on the gifts of the Holy Spirit to others. (Act_2:1-4; Act_8:14-18.)

÷Act_18:26
Act_18:26

He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; -- Apollos spoke in the synagogue with the same "boldness" as had Paul in Act_13:46; Act_14:3; Act_19:8, and as before Festus in Act_26:26. Apollos was a powerful and effrective preacher.

but when Priscilla and Aq'uila heard him, -- First, we might note that Priscilla and Aquila, like other Judaeo-Christians, still attended the worship of the synagogue.

Since Priscilla's name is so identified with her husband here, this would indicate her a woman of knowledge and zeal herself among the Christians.

they took him [aside] and expounded to him the way of God more accurately. -- Apollos must have been excited to find someone who knew even more about this subject of "Jesus" than himself! The word "accurately" is the same as that used in the previous verse describing Apollos' teaching. Priscilla and Aquila gave the same earnestness and zeal toward the Truth that Apollos himself did.

We get the picture of a teachable man being privately updated on some fuller information by his friends and responding well to it. They filled-in some gaps for Apollos.

÷Act_18:27
Act_18:27

And when he wished to cross to Acha'ia, -- This Roman province of Achaia lay across the Aegean Sea from Ephesus, and included Corinth and Athens. We find from Act_19:1 that the centre of his first labour there was Corinth.

We are not told why this was his wish. 1) Some think visitors from Corinth heard Apollos speak and invited him to come and help them. 2) Perhaps he had heard of Corinth from Aquila and Priscilla and he wished to see it for himself.

the brethren encouraged him, -- The construction is not quite clear: Did the brethren encourage Apollos to go to Corinth, or did they encourage the Achaia church to receive him?

and wrote to the disciples to receive him. -- Such letters of commendation were common in the early church (cf. Rom_16:1-2; 1Co_16:10; 2Co_3:1-2; Col_4:10). The Ephesian Christians wrote to inform their Corinthian brethren that Apollos was a Christian in good standing with them, and to give him their full support and encouragement.

When he arrived, -- When Apollos got to Corinth he immediately began heling the church.

he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, -- This may be the way of expressing his help to the Jewish believers who were the objects of Jewish antagonism and pressure to return to the Jewish faith. Because of the next verse this seems to be the best understanding.

Since God's "grace" had especially been extended to the Greek who believed as a result of Paul's ministry, this could be the way to express that Apollos also was beneficial in helping the Gentile converts to grown in their new Christian faith.

÷Act_18:28
Act_18:28

for he powerfully confuted [refuted] the Jews in public, -- The Jewish disciples who believed were already suffering from Jewish gainsayers. Apollos' power with the Scriptures answered all the Jewish attempts to refute the truth. The Greek is a compound verb, indicating he thoroughly, completely refuted them. His ability to publicly uphold the truth must have cut the ground from under the feet of the Jewish opposition.

showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. -- Apollos' powerful handling of the Scriptures showing that Jesus was the Messiah the Jews were expecting was devastating to the opposing Jews. They could not counter his argument.

÷Act_19:1
Act_19:1

19:1–10 *During Paul's third missionary journey (circa AD 52–57; Act_18:23; act 19:1–21:26), he returns to Ephesus, where he stopped briefly on his second missionary journey (circa AD 49–51; act18:19–21). This time, he stays in the city for about three years (Act_19:10; Act_20:31).*

While Apol'los was at Corinth, -- Apollos has moved on from Athens to Corinth. (See Act_18:27-28; Compare 1Co_1:12-13; 1Co_3:4-6.)

Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. -- The area of Asia Minor north of Ephesus, where we saw Paul before the interlude describing Apollos's ministry (Act_18:23).

The Apostle's journey was most likely through the districts of Lycaonia, Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening the church, which he had visited before. By going through that area, Paul took the direct route to Ephesus, not the more common trade route.

There he found some disciples. -- While the term "disciple" usually refers to followers of Jesus, these people were likely originally followers of John the Baptist, since they had received his baptism (Act_19:3). They may have been taught by Apollos before he came to know the full truth from Aquila and Priscilla (Act_18:24-26).

÷Act_19:2
Act_19:2

And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" -- Paul seems to be speaking of the miraculous measure or the Holy Spirit which came by the laying on hands by an apostles. cf. Act_8:17-18; Act_19:6; Such had not given by Apollos for he did not know about it.

An evidence that he gift of the HS is what is meant by Paul is the context in verse 6 where one of the gifts is mentioned.

And they said, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." -- It must be remembered that John's message was one of preparation, not fulfillment (cf. Isa_40:3; Mat_3:3). John was the last in the line of the OT prophets and a transitional preacher and preparer for the coming of the Messiah. He pointed people to Jesus (cf. Joh_1:19-42).

They had not yet received Christian baptism (having been baptized only "into John's baptism") and who had embraced John's doctrine that the Messiah was soon to appear.

÷Act_19:3
Act_19:3

And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." -- They were most likely disciples of Apollos having been baptized by him before he was more full instruction by Aquila and Priscilla.

Where are Aquila and Priscilla? They had taken Apollos aside and finished teaching him about Jesus. Why had they not taught these twelve more correctly? According to Rom_16:3-4, this couple is back in Rome when Paul writes that epistle late in this third missionary journey. We are not told just when they left Ephesus, but perhaps when Apollos went to Corinth, or before Paul has arrived back at Ephesus.

÷Act_19:4

Act_19:4

And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, -- This is what John was preaching in the wilderness when multitudes came to hear him. See Mar_1:4; Mat_3:11; Luk_3:3.

telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." -- Paul here summarizes the thrust of John's preaching. John told of One coming after him who was mightier by far (Mat_3:11; Mar_1:7-8; Luk_3:16; Joh_1:15). John did not want to make disciples for himself; he wanted men to believe on Jesus.

Paul explained to these disciples, as Priscilla and Aquila had undoubtedly explained to Apollos. John's baptism was looking forward to the coming of the Christ, and Christian baptism is looking back to the cross where redemption of sins was purchased by the blood of Christ.

÷Act_19:5
Act_19:5

On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. -- Christian baptism is in the name of the Lord, which is the same as in the "name [singular, denoting unity] of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." (Mat_28:18-20).

Here we have an example of re-baptism when such had not been done properly for the right purpose previously. Rom_10:9; Christian baptism is for those who believe that God has raised Jesus from the dead. These men at Ephesus didn't know anything about Jesus' resurrection.

÷Act_19:6
Act_19:6

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, -- Spiritual gifts were given with the laying on apostles' hands (See Act_8:14-18).

the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. -- After their baptism and the laying on of Paul's hands they receive the gift the Holy Spirit had for them. The gifts the Holy Spirit dispensed upon them was "tongues and prophecy." (See note on Heb_2:4).

÷Act_19:7
Act_19:7

There were about twelve of them in all. -- The Greek is more precise indicating they were "men." However, when Luke is usually so precise, is has prompted wonder when he says "about" twelve.

This has prompted a lot of speculations about trying to make these "twelve" some kind of resemblance to the 12 apostles, or to the patriarchs. (However, perhaps the number is simply indicating about how many? Jos_7:5.)

It seems simply that Paul found a group that the taught before he visited the synagogue which is mentioned next.

÷Act_19:8
Act_19:8

And he entered the synagogue -- After teaching some disciples more perfectly about Jesus, Paul turned to met in the synagogue with Jews as was his custom to begin first with the best prospects for teaching.

and for three months spoke boldly, -- This is Paul's longest recorded stay teaching in any synagogue, with the possible exception of the one at Corinth (Act_18:4). The Ephesian synagogue shows an unusual degree of openness in allowing Paul such opportunity for so many Sabbaths. This is a tribute to Paul's abilities.

Paul believed in giving his Jewish brethren full opportunity of hearing all his reasoning and seeing that what he taught was in accordance with the Scriptures. He undoubtedly won many converts here.

arguing [disputing; reasoning] and pleading -- These two verbs have been used regularly of Paul's activities as he opens the Scriptures to show that Jesus is the Messiah. (Act_17:2).

about the kingdom of God; -- In God's kingdom Christ is the King (His anointed One) and His subjects on earth are His church (Mat_6:10; Col_1:13; Rev_1:6; Rev_1:9). Christ's Kingdom on earth is looking forward to His heavenly Kingdom (2Ti_4:18).

Paul's subject "the kingdom of God" (cf. Act_8:12; Act_14:22; Act_28:23), is often a shorthand expression in Acts for the whole message about Jesus Christ, namely, the gospel. As such it refers to Christ's rule over men now and in the future.

÷Act_19:9
Act_19:9

but when some were stubborn and disbelieved, -- When men hardened their hearts and further "reasoning" was useless, Paul moved on to better opportunities.

speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, -- Evil speaking of Paul's message was the final manifestation of the stony-hearted hearers.

"**The Way"** was a distinctive expression to speak of "the Christian religion" Act_9:2; Act_19:9; Act_19:23; Act_24:14. (Consider also why it may have taken this expression, Mat_3:3; Mat_7:14; Joh_14:6; Act_16:17). And see Heb_10:20 "by the new and ***living way*** that he opened for us..."

he withdrew from them, taking the disciples with him, -- The Jewish disciples he had won over to Christ from his synagogue debates.

and argued daily in the hall of Tyran'nus. -- This was probably a lecture hall or school building. Tyrannus either owned this hall or was its major teacher. Paul probably used the hall when it was otherwise unoccupied.

÷Act_19:10
Act_19:10

This continued for two years, -- This two years in Tyrannus' hall was only part of the total length of his ministry at Ephesus, see Act_20:31. Paul's lengthy stay in Ephesus allowed him to use the city as his base of ministry operations for the whole region.

Churches that we read about elsewhere in the N.T. (and others even unrecorded) that have no record of their establishment probably got their beginning while Paul was here at Ephesus.

so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. -- Paul was here long enough for the gospel to spread into the various regions of the provence of Asia. (cf. Act_2:9; Act_6:9; Act_16:6; Act_19:10; Act_19:22; Act_19:26; Act_19:27; Act_19:31; Act_20:4; Act_20:16; Act_20:18; Act_21:27; Act_24:18; Act_27:2; 1Co_16:19; 2Co_1:8; 2Ti_1:15; 1Pe_1:1; Rev_1:4; Rev_1:11;)

Because Ephesus was a key city for travel and business, it allowed Paul's testimony of Jesus to spread throughout the Roman province of Asia (a region on the west coast of modern-day Turkey; see

Act_16:6 and note). People visiting Ephesus had the opportunity to hear Paul preach the gospel, and those who believed would have then spread the message to the various places they visited and lived.

÷Act_19:11
Act_19:11

> **19:11–20** *Paul continues his work in Ephesus to establish it as a base location for his missionary work. This narrative is primarily concerned with Jesus' true power versus the counterfeit authority of other exorcists.*

And God did extraordinary [unusual; special] miracles -- These confirmed that Paul was God's messenger, since there was no completed NT to use to determine the truth of his message (cf. 2Co_12:12; Heb_2:3-4).

The imperfect tense of the verb in the Greek implies that these manifestations of God's power continued during the Apostle's stay. This was no mere spasmodic excitement over some powerful discourse.

by the hands of Paul, -- "By the hands" is probably only the Jewish mode of expressing "by." See note on Act_5:12. Cf, (Jos_14:2) But as in the description of our Lord's miracles we very often read "he laid his hands upon a few sick folk" (Mar_6:5), and as it is said of the Apostles (Mar_16:18) "*they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover,*" it seems better to understand the words here of such acts of imposition of hands, though we presently find (Act_19:15) that the multitudes believed that a cure could be wrought without such an act.

They were "extraordinary" in the sense that they occurred without personal contact with the patient, possibly without even consciousness on the part of Paul (see verse 12). In a city where demonic "miracles" were commonplace, it would take extraordinary miracles to credential the true message from God that Paul was delivering.

÷Act_19:12
Act_19:12

so that handkerchiefs or aprons -- "Handkerchiefs" were probably sweat bands tied around the head during work. The word "aprons" refers to the aprons of skilled workers. These were items that worn by Paul in his work.

were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them -- In a city where demonic "miracles" were commonplace, it would take extraordinary miracles to credential the true message from God that Paul was delivering.

and the evil spirits came out of them. -- Here these demons (cf. Luk_10:17; Act_8:2) are called **"evil spirits**" (cf. Mat_12:45; Luk_7:21; Luk_8:2; Luk_11:26; Act_19:12-13; Act_19:15-16). But Luke also calls them ***"unclean spirits***" (cf. Act_5:16; Act_8:7). In Act_16:16 the demon is called "the spirit of python (divination)."

All of these phrases seem to be synonymous. Paul often speaks of demonic categories like "all rule and authority and power and dominion" (Eph_1:21), "the rulers and the authorities in heavenly *places*" (Eph_3:10), or "against the rulers, against the power, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly *places* (Eph_6:12).

÷Act_19:13
Act_19:13

Then some of the itinerant [vagabond; strolling] Jewish exorcists -- Jewish exorcists are also spoken of in Luk_11:19. With the existence of evil spirits in those days such exorcists were common. Simon Magus

(Act_8:9-25) and Bar-Jesus (Act_13:6-12) were other possible examples of such charlatans (cf. Mat_12:27). If this passage were not so sad it would be funny!

Josephus tells of a Jewish exorcism rite in *Antiquities,. 8.2.5* by one Eleazar, using Solomon's incantations. (We read there that "God gave Solomon skill against demons for the help and cure of men.") These Jews we read of here at Ephesus were professors of this pretended art of healing.

undertook to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, -- In contrast to claiming authority in themselves, these Jewish exorcists attempted to rely on someone they knew had such power over demons. It is a subtle recognition that Jesus and his apostles had such authority expel evil spirits.

saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." -- We can understand that as the fame and success of Paul spread in the Ephesus area, with the name of Jesus connected to him, how these men would make a pretence to possess the same secrets of Paul's success.

÷Act_19:14
Act_19:14

Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva -- There was a band of seven (or eight) men, traveling around the country, apparently claiming to be "sons" of a Jewish high priest. But there is no record Jewish High-Priest (or "chief" priest) by that name, he was assuming the title falsely to impress people.

He may have claimed to be a "High Priest" is some Jewish cult.

were doing this. -- These men had adopted a formular of naming Jesus and Paul in their exorcisms.

÷Act_19:15
Act_19:15

But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; -- The man (or the demons that possessed him) demonstrates awareness of both Jesus and Paul. "Evil spirit" is used for the man in whom the spirit was, cf. Mar_3:11.

but who are you?" -- Even the evil spirit recognizes the unique authority of Jesus' name. Because the sons of Sceva were not servants of the true God, the evil spirit essentially proclaims that they are illegitimately using Jesus' name. Jesus and the apostles had the power to cast out demons, but not those without authority from the Lord.

÷Act_19:16
Act_19:16

And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, -- The possessed man is able to overpower the sons of Sceva; they were not able to use the name of Jesus.

mastered [subdued; prevailed] all of them, and overpowered them, -- Such power seems more than natural, but often madmen display extraordinary strength. (cf. Mar_5:1-4).

The ASV reads "both of them," which seems to imply that only two of the seven were attempting to practice upon this evil spirit. However, the Greek word *amphoteron* may mean "all of them;" hence, all seven evidently are included. Most of the modern versions (e.g., NASB, NIV, ESV, RSV, NEB, Phillips, etc.) render it, "He mastered all of them."

so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. -- The fraudulent claims of the sons of Sceva leave them humiliated. Instead of casting out the evil spirit from the man, the sons of Sceva are driven out of the house. The man tare their clothes to shreds, and left marks of the fierce tearing on their bodies.

÷Act_19:17
Act_19:17

And this became known to all residents of Ephesus, -- There was no doubt a gradual spreading of the story throughout the community. We may be sure that the "sons of Sceva" said little about it.

both Jews and Greeks; -- The news spread through the entire community reaching all segments of the Ephesian population.

and fear fell upon them all; -- The occult was fascinating then as it is to many in our day, and so are attempts at exorcisms. The Ephesians learned to have a healthy respect for the dangers of the occult when they heard what the demon had done to the sons of Sceva.

The transaction showed that the miracles performed in the name of the Lord Jesus by Paul were real.

and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. -- The Ephesians also learned that the name of the Lord Jesus stood on a very different level from the names the exorcists liked to employ in their charms. "Magnified" is an imperfect tense verb; it suggests a continuous growth of profound respect for the name of the Lord.

÷Act_19:18
Act_19:18

Many also of those who were now believers came, -- This is speaking of those who became disciples of Jesus as taught by Paul. From the action described in verse 19 these "believers" were probably not converts from Judaism, but were Greeks, that is, Gentiles.

Often the term "believed" or single stage of conversion is put for the whole process of conversion: see Eph_1:13 they heard and believed; Act_20:21 repentance and faith; Act_19:5; Eph_4:5 baptism; etc.

confessing and divulging their practices. -- It is unclear whether the people described here were formerly mixing Christianity with pagan religion or if they had only chosen to believe in Jesus following the event with the sons of Sceva.

The verb "confessing" implies making a public announcement; and their "practices" or "deeds" seem to connect them with witchcraft, sorcery, and exorcism, which were inconsistent with the Christian life.

÷Act_19:19
Act_19:19

And a number of those who practiced magic arts -- Whether this "number" is speaking of only the Christian believers, or perhaps others also in the community who now rejected such "arts" from the evidence of Paul's preaching and practice.

The "magic" arts, or "curious arts" were such practices that pretended to call upon supernatural agency, or like astrologers and magicians, to intercede.

brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; -- Book were valuable assets, but these were books of secret magical spells and such like. Destroying their books, or rolls of written material, proved the genuineness of their repentance and prevented themselves or others from using them again.

and they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. -- The Greek text here could refer to *drachmas* or to *denarii*, two different kinds of silver coins. They were both a worker's daily wage, so this amount would equal approximately 135 years' worth of wages.

This astonishing amount indicates how widespread superstitious practices were in Ephesus. And now the gospel has set the people free.

÷Act_19:20
Act_19:20

So the word of the Lord grew -- The gospel message is personified and summarized. This verse is one of Luke's typical summary statements, and an indication that he is about to introduce a new phase of Paul's evangelistic work. The summaries of the six sections are found in Act_6:7; Act_9:31; Act_12:24; Act_16:5; Act_19:20; Act_28:31.

and prevailed mightily. -- The full sense of the words rendered "mightily" is "with overpowering force and strength, which nothing could resist."

When faith overcomes problems of dissension, idolatry, and pagan practices, it will spread widely and grow rapidly.

÷Act_19:21
Act_19:21

> **19:21–41** *Paul's time in Ephesus ends with a riot, and there follows a dramatic impact of God's work through the gospel in the city.*

Now after these events -- After the gospel was firmly established at Ephesus and in Asia, Paul's presence there was no longer so necessary. The young churches could be left in the hands of Paul's helpers.

Paul resolved [purposed] in the Spirit -- While previous missionary journeys (cf. Act_13:1-4) it was the Holy Spirit who had a hand in directing Paul's steps, it seems this is Paul's own personal resolve. Some commentators however believe the Holy Spirit, even this time, is prompting Paul to make his plan to go to Rome.

to pass through Macedo'nia and Acha'ia -- Paul took this roundabout route to collect an offering for the needy in the Jerusalem church (Rom_15:25-27; 1Co_16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8, 9).

and go to Jerusalem, -- The epistles Paul wrote about this time indicate that he wanted to carry an offering from the Gentile churches to Jerusalem.

saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." -- Paul's aim is to journey to the center of the Roman Empire to preach the good news of Jesus and demonstrate that the gospel cannot be hindered.

In addition, Paul intended to use Rome as a jumping off point for ministry in the region of Spain (Rom_15:22-24). This simple declaration marked a turning point in Acts; from this point on, Rome became Paul's goal. He would ultimately arrive there as a Roman prisoner (Act_28:16).

÷Act_19:22
Act_19:22

And having sent into Macedo'nia two of his helpers, -- They are sent on ahead to made arrangements completing the collection for the poor in Jerusalem.

Each church or region also selection one of their own to accompany the funds being sent to Jerusalem. This safe guarded the integrity of the group as well as providing a security escort.

Timothy and Eras'tus, -- For more on Timothy see Act_16:1 and 1Ti_1:2 and notes.

The name **Erastus** occurs two other times in the NT (Rom_16:23; 2Ti_4:20). Because Erastus was a common name at the time, it is difficult to determine if the person mentioned here should be identified with the other references to Erastus.

he himself stayed in Asia for a while. -- We may perhaps infer from this that Paul did not remain constantly at Ephesus, went but into other districts of the province of proconsular Asia.

÷Act_19:23
Act_19:23

About that time there arose no little stir -- This calamity is described in the following verses.

concerning the Way. -- With regards to "the Way," see the note on Act_19:9. "The Way" was one of the earliest designation for Christianity. It speaks of the OT concept (ex. Psa_1:1, 6; Psa_5:8; Psa_25:4, 8, 9, 12; Psa_27:11; Psa_37:5, 7, 23, 34) of lifestyle faith (cf. Act_9:2; Act_19:9, 23; Act_22:4; Act_24:14, 22; also possibly Act_18:25-26).

÷Act_19:24
Act_19:24

For a man named Deme'trius, a silversmith, -- This is probably not the individual commended by John (3Jn_1:12), since the name was a common one.

who made silver shrines of Ar'temis, -- This refers to miniature representations of the Greek goddess of the moon, who was called Diana by the Romans. Artemis was the patron deity of Ephesus.
There were numerous shrines to her in the city, and the temple devoted to her was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. - FSB

brought no little business to the craftsmen. -- Their business appears to craft models in silver either of the temple or of Artemis. Smaller replicas might be carried about and worn as ornaments and amulets and larger ones could be kept in the houses as a sign of wealth as well as of devotion.

÷Act_19:25
Act_19:25

These he gathered together, -- This statement suggests Demetrius may have been the head of the silversmiths' guild— which would explain his taking the lead in opposing the Christian preachers.

with the workmen of like occupation, -- The materials had to pass through many hands in preparation, and from the smelter of the metal up to him who added the final touches of adornment and polishing, all were concerned in the threatened loss of trade.

and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. -- Demetrius appeals to the livelihood of the Ephesian artisans to incite them against Paul.

÷Act_19:26
Act_19:26

And you see and hear -- They were eyewitnesses of what had taken place in Ephesus, and the falling-off in the demand for their shrines.

that not only at Ephesus but almost throughout all Asia -- The Roman province of Asia, with its capital Ephesus, was the area Paul has been evangelizing for the past three years. This remark shows us the extent of Paul's labors.

this Paul -- Demetrius is laying the blame for their poor business squarely at the feet of one man, Paul.

has persuaded and turned away a considerable company of people, -- And this remark show us the effectiveness of Paul's labors. He has turned people away from devotion to Artemis, and from the purchase of such shrines.

saying that gods made with hands are not gods. -- Paul has established the folly of worshipping created objects, since the only true God is the Creator, Yahweh (Act_17:16-34), and gods created by people are false. Compare 1Co_8:4-6.

A half century later, Pliny in his letter to the emperor Trajan uses language which is as strong a Demetrius' alarm. He speaks of "deserted temples," "worship neglected," "hardly a single purchaser" found for sacrificial victims, because the Christians have so converted the whole area."

÷Act_19:27
Act_19:27

And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute -- Demetrius cleverly played upon his hearers' fears of financial ruin, religious zeal, and concern for their city's prestige. The Christian preachers, he argued, threatened the continued prosperity of Ephesus.

but also that the temple of the great goddess Ar'temis may count for nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, -- No expense had been spared on this temple and its worshippers maintained it in full splendour. Even the fragments of its architecture in the British Museum make it plain that the whole temple must have been a work of unsurpassed magnificence.

Such temples also served as the "banks" during this time. One could make deposits and received receipts that could be traded or redeemed at locations in other cities.

she whom all Asia and the world worship." -- Ephesus took great pride in the temple. For it to be discredited would be an enormous insult to the city and to its economic detriment. Compare Act_19:24.

There are numerous passages in Greek literature of the first century that mention Artemis of the Ephesians. Apparently there were thirty-nine separate cities of the Mediterranean world which were involved in the fertility worship of this goddess.

÷Act_19:28
Act_19:28

When they heard this they were enraged, -- Demetrius' appeal to their self-interest first, and their pride and superstition afterwards, was successful with his audience.

Having heard that their city could fall into disrepute, the people rallied to protect the honor of the city and were ready to attack those who oppose them.

and cried out, -- The verb tense indicates continuous action.

"Great is Ar'temis of the Ephesians!" -- While Artemis was worshiped all over the Graeco-Roman world, the Ephesians took pride in the temple dedicated to her in their city. Artemis was the patron god of the city.

÷Act_19:29
Act_19:29

So the city was filled with the confusion; -- The city could hear the shouting from the meeting place of all the craftsmen, and were disturbed and confused over what was happening.

and they rushed together into the theater, -- The violence of the craftsmen sound like a serious threat of some kind, and the people, taking is seriously, gather like a mob at a large central arena.

The theater was cut into the side of Mount Pion and faced west, toward the harbor was a central location.. Today the preserved remains indicate that it could seat around 24,000, but its capacity was somewhat smaller in Paul's day.

dragging with them Ga'ius and Aristar'chus, Macedo'nians who were Paul's companions in travel. -- Two men were recognized as Paul's companions and got caught up in the mob's action. The people were apparently looking for Paul and couldn't find him.

This Gaius was not the one describe in Act_20:4 since that one's hometown was Derbe; nor the one mentioned in Rom_16:23, and 1Co_1:14 for he was from Corinth. (Cf. 3Jn_1:1.)
We hear of Aristarchus again in Act_20:4 and Act_27:2, for he accompanied Paul to Rome and is mentioned in his epistles in Col_4:10, and Phm_1:24.

÷Act_19:30
Act_19:30

Paul wished to go in among the crowd, -- Paul considered this crowd just another opportunity to defend the gospel and preach God's word. Either he didn't realize the threat to his life or minimized it.

but the disciples would not let him; -- The other believers sensed the danger and would not allow Paul to show himself and become the target of their violence.

÷Act_19:31
Act_19:31

some of the A'si-archs also, -- The "Asiarches" were "men of substance and influence" who were elected to the council that administered the civic business of Ephesus.

who were friends of his, -- These powerful, influential men were acquainted with Paul and were concerned about his physical safety.

sent to him and begged him not to venture into the theater. -- Paul was probably hidden away in safety by the disciples, but Paul's civic friends pleaded with him to not come to the theater.

The theater was cut into the side of Mount Pion and faced west, toward the harbor. The preserved remains indicate that it could seat around 24,000. Since it was expanded over the course of the first century, the capacity may have been somewhat smaller in Paul's day.

Utley says, "It is verses like this one that cause some commentators to surmise that Acts was written to be read at Paul's trial in Rome. Again and again the church came into conflict with Jews, but not with government!"

÷Act_19:32
Act_19:32

Now some cried one thing, some another; -- This pictured a frenzied mob that his shouting all kinds of accusations. We can imagine some crying "Artemis for ever" or even "Hurrah for Demetrius."

for the assembly was in confusion, -- The term of "assembly" is the same Greek word (*ekklsia*) that is used for the church. In Act_19:32, Act_19:39, and Act_19:41 it refers to an assembly of townspeople.

However this was not a lawful assembly as the town clerk pointed out in Act_19:39-40.

and **most of them did not know why they had come together. --** This is typical of a mob scene. Most didn't really know what was going on, or why some where ready for violence.

÷Act_19:33
Act_19:33

Some of the crowd prompted [push to the front] Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. -- He was a Jew who is otherwise unmentioned in the NT. Acts does not mention whether Alexander was a Christian. Probably not the one mentioned in 1Ti_1:20 or 2Ti_4:14, though some try to identify him with "Alexander the coppersmith" who at some point did harm to Paul.

And Alexander motioned with his hand, -- This was a cultural way of seeking silence so that one could speak (cf. Act_12:17; Act_13:16; Act_19:33; Act_21:40).

wishing to make a defense to the people. -- He wanted to quieten the crowd so he could speak and apparently made a defense for the Jews.

There are various view of who he may have been:
1) He seems to be spokesman for the Jews, some think a synagogue ruler, who wanted to disassociate themselves from the Christians. 2) It has been suggested he was a Jewish Christian who was put forward by the Jews maliciously intending him to be a sacrifice to the mob.

÷Act_19:34
Act_19:34

But when they recognized that he was a Jew, -- By his dress and features they could recognize Alexander as a Jew. There was not much distinction made between Jews and Christians.

for about two hours they all with one voice cried out, "Great is Ar'temis of the Ephesians!" -- The crowd didn't give Alexander an opportunity to speak, but shouted him down.

The crowd takes up the cry of the craftsmen. Perhaps out of support for them and to show their own devotion to Artemis. These words were the exact language used to invoke the help of Artemis and praising her when worshipping in her temple.

÷Act_19:35
Act_19:35

And when the town clerk [city secretary] -- The clerk was the chief executive who managed the records and accounts for a Roman city and was the liaison between the city and Rome.

had quieted the crowd, -- His presence and influence had an effect on the crowd, prompting them to mitigate their clamor and give him a hearing.

he said, "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Ar'temis, -- The clerk appeals to the honor of the city. The word translated "guardian of the temple", or "temple keeper," has been found on inscriptions on coins from this time. It was

regarded a high honor to have charge of one of the temples of the gods and to keep them in order. Ephesus could boast of having been designated by Rome as the guardian of the temple of Artemis.

and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? -- The refers to the myth surrounding Artemis that intended to high-light her divine origin. Some think the image was a meteorite.

÷Act_19:36
Act_19:36

Seeing then that these things cannot be contradicted, -- Paul had spoken against idols and such worship, but nobody could dispute the fact that Ephesus had a temple to Artemis.

you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. -- The main point of the secretary (or clerk) is that if the audience acts consistently with their beliefs, they would maintain the civic peace. If Artemis worship is so strong and powerful, then she has no need for the crowd to act on her behalf.

The word "rash" describes their headstrong, outrageous, action of seizing two persons who were not offenders, and an action that could result in dier consequences.

÷Act_19:37
Act_19:37

For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious [robbed temples] nor blasphemers of our goddess. -- The clerk is referring to Gaius and Aristarchus (Act_19:29) whom the people had seized and dragged to the theater. He points out that the men they had apprehended were not guilty of any crimes. In referring to "our goddess" the clerk identified himself with his fellow-citizens.

The temple of Artemis at Ephesus had a great treasure-chamber which was under the guardianship of the goddess and stealing anything there would be considered sacrilegious.

While Paul preached on the principle that idols were not gods, they measured their speech to not personally offend such worshippers. Paul had practiced the same restraint while in Athens (See Act_17:22-24).

÷Act_19:38
Act_19:38

If therefore Deme'trius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against any one, -- The clerk turns to speak directly to the instigators of the mob-action. He calls attention to the proper channels for Demetrius and the craftsman to use if they had any grievance.

the courts are open, and there are proconsuls; -- Legal matters properly should be brought to the attention of the courts. These courts were customarily held in the forum. (See Act_18:12). This is a colloquial way of saying "there are courts and judges available."

let them bring charges against one another. -- The town clerk is arguing that any complaint that Demetrius had should be brought before judges. There the accused would have the opportunity to present any "charges" of his own.

÷Act_19:39
Act_19:39

But if you seek anything further, -- Those with complaints should "seek" to find them addressed through the legal process.

it shall be settled in the regular assembly. -- The days and time of the meeting of the city courts were defined by law. He is referring to the ordinary, legal, appointed days of hearing in the regular courts.

÷Act_19:40
Act 19:40

For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, -- Roman officials would consider rioting an act of rebellion and would take military steps to resolve the situation, resulting in violence and loss of life; in addition, they would likely strip Ephesus of certain privileges and rights, especially of self-governance.

The town-clerk doesn't seem to want to call the matter a "riot," but he intimates that other people may do so. There was a Roman law which made it a capital offense for anyone to be engaged in promoting a riot.

there being no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." -- The clerk acknowledged that the riot was unjustified and the assembly had not been summoned in a lawful fashion.

÷Act_19:41
Act 19:41

And when he had said this, he dismissed the assembly. -- The argument of the town clerk proves effective, and he proceeds to formally dismiss the assembly and the crowd disburses.

÷Act_20:1
Act_20:1

20:1–6 *Paul's third missionary journey (circa AD 52–57) focuses on his efforts to strengthen churches.*

After the uproar ceased, -- Some little time has elapsed following the near riot in the theater. Paul probably didn't feel it wise to leave till he saw the situation quiet once again.

Paul sent for the disciples and having exhorted them took leave of them and departed for Macedo'nia. -- In chs. 16–17, Paul ministered in Macedonia. He now retraces his steps. He meets with the disciples undoubtedly to tell them of his travel plans to go to Jerusalem after visiting Macedonia and Achaia, Act_19:21-22.

We learn from 2Co_2:13 that he went first to Troas expecting to meet Titus there. He did not find him till he reached Macedonia, from which area he wrote the second letter to Corinth. On these visits he is gathering the funds to aid the poor saints in Judea and secure additional men to escort the delivery of the money. (Cf. Act_20:4).

÷Act_20:2
Act_20:2

When he had gone through these parts-- Going through Macedonia means stops at the various churches in the area, at least Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, and possibly even more that have been established in the mean while.

Paul's feelings at this time are given at 2Co_7:5."When we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no relief, but we were afflicted on every side; without were fightings, within were fears." Finally, the long-looked-for Titus came, meeting Paul somewhere in Macedonia and brought news that partly cheered Paul.

and had given them much encouragement, -- Paul's usual custom when revisiting the churches he has planted, was to give them further instruction in the gospel. (Act_15:41; Act_18:23; Act_14:22).

His exhortation would include directions for the completion of the offering which was being gathered for the relief of the poverty-stricken Jewish Christians at Jerusalem. A three- to six-month period of time may be indicated.

he came to Greece. -- Perhaps this included Athens, but definitely Corinth.

÷Act_20:3
Act_20:3

There he spent three months, -- The three months he spent in Greece were the winter months (January to March) of AD 58. (1Co_16:6).

During this time, he wrote the epistle to the Romans, in which he prepared that church for the visit which he hoped to make to their city quite soon, and to warn them about the Judaizers. As he writes to them he is enjoying the hospitality of Gaius. (Rom_15:23; 1Co_1:14).

According to Rom_15:24-25, Paul's plans were to go to Jerusalem with the offering, and then to visit the church in Rome, and then to go on to Spain. It will not work out quite as Paul anticipated, but he will get to Rome.

and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedo'nia. -- Luke does not record the details of the Jews' plot, but it undoubtedly

involved murdering Paul during the voyage to Palestine. The apostle would have been an easy target on a small ship packed with Jewish pilgrims. Because of that danger, Paul canceled his plans to sail from Greece to Syria. Instead, he decided to go N into Macedonia, cross the Aegean Sea to Asia Minor, and catch another ship from there. That delay cost Paul his opportunity to reach Palestine in time for Passover; but he hurried to be there in time for Pentecost (Act_20:16).

÷Act_20:4
Act_20:4

20:4 *These are probably men from various churches sent to accompany Paul's special monetary gift to the church in Jerusalem (cf. 1Co_16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8–9).*

Sop'ater of Beroe'a, the son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; -- We know nothing of Sopater beyond the mention of him in this verse.

and of the Thessalo'nians, Aristar'chus and Secun'dus; -- Aristarchus has been before mentioned (Act_19:29), and in the Epistles written during the Roman imprisonment, to Philemon (Phm_1:24) he is one of those who sends greeting, and also to the Colossians (Col_4:10) in which place the Apostle calls him his fellow-prisoner, showing that he shared in a great degree the whole hardships of St Paul's life at Rome.

Secundus is only mentioned here. These three represented the Macedonian congregations, and the next two the Galatian churches.

McGarvey has an interesting conjecture regarding him. "Secundus (second) was probably so named because he was his father's second son; as were Tertius and Quartus (third and fourth) because they were the third and fourth sons of their respective fathers, Rom_16:22-23. As all three had been with Paul in Corinth, it is possible they were brothers."

and Ga'ius of Derbe, -- Apparently their representative in caring for the oversight of the funds. Whether the funds were in lump sum or the individual representatives carried the portion from the church they representative, we don't know.

and Timothy; -- We know that he was from Lystra and perhaps served as their representative in regards to the funds.

and the Asians, Tych'icus and Troph'imus. -- Tychicus is mentioned in Eph_6:21-22; Col_4:7-8; 2Ti_4:12 and Tit_3:12. Perhaps like Trophimus he was an Ephesian by birth.

Trophimus (Act_20:4, Act_21:29) was an Asian co-worker apparently of Ephesus and was one of eight friends who accompanied Paul at the end of the 3rd missionary journey to Jerusalem. [see 1Co_16:3-4; 2Co_8:19-20] He was the innocent cause of the riot in the Jewish Temple that almost cost Paul his life.

Apparently after Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment he continued to travel with Paul, for we read in 2Ti_4:20 that the Apostles at that time had left him at Miletus detained by sickness.

None from Corinth are list in Act_20:4, where the representatives to Jerusalem with this offering are mentioned. Some have asserted that it was possible that **Titus**, who went earlier, was their representative, but there is no mention of him in Acts. cf. 1Co_16:3-4; 2Co_8:6; 2Co_8:16; 2Co_8:19-20.

(See 2Co_12:16 and context where Paul seems to have been accused of planning to steal this money by deceit. But it is noteworthy that he took no chance of handling the money, not only for the safety of the funds, but also to avoid any charge of thievery against him.)

÷Act_20:5

Act_20:5

These went on and were waiting for us at Tro'as, -- Troas was a major port city along the Aegean Sea in the Roman province of Asia and modern Turkey, northwest of Ephesus. Some think that it was only the last two men mentioned that went on ahead to Troas.

Still others suppose that all the messengers had to be told of Paul's change of plans to not sail from Corinth. That instead he would meet them at Troas, and from there they would go to Jerusalem together.

One can reconstruct the elements of this journey to Jerusalem by understanding the seven go by ship from Cenchrea to Troas. Paul, accompanied by Luke and Titus, goes overland from Corinth toward Macedonia, and thence to Troas. This is how the "waiting for us" is to be explained.

÷Act_20:6
Act_20:6

but we sailed away from Philip'pi -- The "we" again denotes that somewhere along the way Luke has joined Paul's party again. Since the Philippian church was planted nearly 5 years earlier, Luke has been working in that city, save for a trip to Corinth a few months earlier.

Having accompanied Paul from Corinth, and having been appointed by the Philippians to carry their part of the offering, he now travels with Paul on toward Jerusalem. They would have gone down to Neapolis to catch a ship bound for Troas.

after the days of Unleavened Bread, -- [Apparently, Paul was hoping to be Jerusalem by the time of the Passover, but had remained (or delayed) in Corinth for three months, probably due to the threat against him.]

and in five days we came to them at Tro'as, -- From Philippi they went to the coast and sailed to Troas. It took them five days, whereas earlier in Act_16:11 it took only two days to sail from Troas to Philippi.

where we stayed for seven days. -- Some think that since Paul didn't have the time on his first visit to Troas (Acts 16.8-11) to plant a church he took this time to do so now.

However it seems more reasonable to think that during his three years in Ephesus a church had been established at Troas and this visit is used to strengthen the church and he wanted to be with them in assembly on the first day of the week (1Co_16:1-3).

÷Act_20:7
Act_20:7

On the first day of the week, -- Sunday, the day the church gathered for worship, honoring the day of Christ's resurrection. Cf. Mat_28:1; Mar_16:2, Mar_16:9; Luk_24:1; Joh_20:1, Joh_20:19; 1Co_16:2.

The writings of the early church Fathers confirm that the church continued to meet on Sunday after the close of the NT period. Scripture does not require Christians to observe the Saturday Sabbath: **1)** the Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic Covenant (Exo_31:16-17; Neh_9:14; Eze_20:12), whereas Christians are under the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3**;** Heb. 8); **2)** there is no NT command to keep the Sabbath; **3)** the first command to keep the Sabbath was not until the time of Moses (Exo_20:8); **4)** the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) did not order Gentile believers to keep the Sabbath; **5)** Paul never cautioned Christians about breaking the Sabbath; and **6)** the NT explicitly teaches that Sabbath keeping was not a requirement (*see notes on* Rom_14:5; Gal_4:10-11*;* Col_2:16-17). - MSB

Note: This is the same wording used for the contribution- 1Co_16:1-2 and for the Sabbath- Exo_20:8, meaning a "weekly" practice.

when we were gathered together to break bread, -- **LORD'S SUPPER -** Mat_26:26-28, 1Co_11:23-29. The Syriac translations renders it, "to break the eucharist," making it clear this was the memorial observation the Lord had commanded.

"Upon first day of the week," Act_20:7, honoring the great victory day of the Lord's resurrection, and the day on which the Holy Spirit introduced the gospel age (Act_2:1-4) and the beginning (Act_11:15) of the church, the saints came together and observed the memorial (1Co_11:24-25) of the Lord's sacrifice on the cross for the sins of the world (Mat_26:27-28).

The "first day of the week" perhaps even symbolizing the importance of putting the Lord "first" in our lives (Mat_6:33) and making our relationship the Father and the Son the priority of our lives. Act_17:27; Heb_11:6.

Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and he prolonged his speech until midnight. -- Paul is intent to get to Jerusalem before Pentecost (Act_20:16), but he wanted to ground these disciples in the faith, so his preaching is not just a short devo.

Most think this was an evening service that was done to facilitate the time when many of the members who were slaves could assembly. Paul "discoursed with them" in a meeting where there was reasoning and questions. Luke informs us of the long night-time service in preparation for us to understand the situation with Eutychus.

÷Act_20:8
Act_20:8

There were many lights -- This must have been a hot, stuffy, even smoky atmosphere from the fumes given off by these oil-burning lamps. It seems Luke is trying to explain why Eutychus fell asleep. (Act_20:9).

in the upper chamber where we were gathered. -- Luke's description of this event gives evidence of an eye-witness. The upper chamber, and the boy sitting in a window, explains the danger possible from the fall that Eutychus suffers.

Our thoughts go back to the upper room in Jerusalem where the Lord met with his apostles (Mar_14:14-15) to observe the Passover, and in (Act_1:13) where the disciples met after the Lord's ascension.

÷Act_20:9
Act_20:9

And a young man -- The Greek term here is different from the term used to describe him in Act_20:12. The Greek words suggests he was between 7 and 14 year old. Eutychus was likely a pre-teen or a young teenager.

named Eu'tychus was sitting in the window. -- The window was only an opening in the wall, and in that season and situation any shutters would be opened.

This is also an indication that the room was crowded and sitting space was at a premium. Such a crowd would also explain the need for an open window in a smoky room.

He sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer; -- His youth, the fumes from the lamps, and the lateness of the hour (Act_20:7) gradually overcame Eutychus and he dozed off.

"Sleep" is sometimes the by-product of a late, long sermon, especially for young people.

and being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story -- The upper room was not just a second floor level, but was at third story. It further explains the harm done to the young man from this height of a fall.

and was taken up [picked up] dead. -- Apparently he was dead! This is what Luke says of him.

÷Act_20:10
Act_20:10

But Paul went down -- Probably a number of those in the upper room hastened down to check on the boy, and Paul was among them. Usually there were outside stairs in such buildings.

and bent over him, -- Paul's actions recall the action Elijah and Elisha in the OT, who also raised the dead in this same manner (cf. 1Ki_17:21; 2Ki_4:34).

and embracing him -- As he clasped the child in his arms, he would feel the returning motion, and know that his prayer was heard.

said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." -- Eutychus was dead (Act_20:9), but because of Paul's actions, he is raised from the dead. Paul makes this statement either because he is confident of Eutychus' resurrection or because at this point Eutychus has already been resurrected. Compare Act_9:36-42.

As a physician, Luke knew whether someone had died, as he plainly states (Act_20:9) Eutychus was dead.

÷Act_20:11
Act_20:11

And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, -- Paul went back to the upper room and took refreshment. As this is spoken of Paul only, it is evidently distinguished from the celebration of the Lord's Supper. (Barnes)

The words "broken bread and eaten" shows this was a more substantial meal than the Eucharist, or Lord's supper.

he conversed with them a long while, -- The verb implies the talking of persons one with another; the exchange of friendly conversation back and forth, as distinguished from as a monologue sermon.

until daybreak, and so departed. -- Paul continued talking with these disciples until daybreak. He and the Troas Christians realized that this might be their final opportunity to meet together, so in spite of the unusual incident involving Eutychus, they made the most of their opportunity.

The whole service must have lasted some seven or eight hours, sunrise at that time of the year being between 5 and 6 a.m. Maybe this meeting at Troas is an example of the "watchings often" (KJV), or "sleepless nights" (NASB) that Paul wrote of in an earlier epistle (2Co_11:27).

Paul now leaves at daybreak and travels overland to Assos, intending to meet Luke and his traveling companions there. (Act_20:13).

÷Act_20:12
Act_20:12

And they took the lad away alive, -- McGarvey thinks it means they took the boy to his own home from the place of meeting.

and were not a little comforted. -- Luke continues to give information on the incident, informing us that apparently those in charge of the lad found great comfort in Paul's action. This must have been an example of disciples rejoicing with those who rejoice.

÷Act_20:13
Act_20:13

But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, -- Luke and probably most, or all of those mentioned in Act_20:4-5 as joining Paul at Troas, leave by ship for Assos, another port city located on the Roman province of Asia. It was about 20 miles south of Troas on the neck of a small peninsula.

intending to take Paul aboard there; for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. -- Because the ship had to sail around the peninsula, Paul could have arrived in Assos not long after it did. Paul may have desired to walk to Assos so he could continue to teach any disciples from Troas who accompanied him. (Cf. Act_28:14-15; Act_20:36-38; Act_21:5).

÷Act_20:14
Act_20:14

And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mityle'ne. -- The ship hugs close to the coast, spending the nights in some harbour. **Mitylene** was the capital of large island in the Agean Sea, just off the west coast of the province of Asia.

Since Paul was now in a hurry to reach Jerusalem before Pentecost there was very little time to spend with disciples along the way.

÷Act_20:15
Act_20:15

And sailing from there we came the following day opposite Chi'os; the next day we touched at Samos; -- They could have just stayed overnight in the ship in the harbor, departing the next morning, or they could have deboarded the ship to actually be on the island itself (briefly of course).

Act_20:15 is the only biblical mention of Samos. Samos is a place-name meaning "height." It is a small island (only 27 miles long) located in the Aegean Sea about a mile off the coast of Asia Minor near the peninsula of Trogyllium.

In the strait between Samos and the mainland, the Greeks defeated the Persian fleet about 479 B.C. and turned the tide of power in the ancient Near East.

and the day after that we came to Mile'tus. -- Miletus had been a most famous sea-port in earlier Greek history, but in the days of Paul its fame was eclipsed by Ephesus. It lay on the coast of Caria, about 30 miles distant by land southward from the city of Ephesus.

It is to here that Paul asks the elders of Ephesus to meet him, Act_20:17.

÷Act_20:16
Act_20:16

For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, -- This indicates that Paul had deliberately picked a ship that did not stop at Ephesus.

so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; -- In a large congregation like Ephesus, there would have arisen many causes for delay which Paul desire to avoid.

Perhaps too there might have been some hostility roused against him, and lest such problems should consume his time, he resolved to send for the elders of the church to confer with him at Miletus.

for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, -- The imperfect tense verb "hastening" (or "hurrying") expresses the desire for speed during this whole voyage.

if possible, on the day of Pentecost. -- Still trying to reach Jerusalem before Pentecost (fifty days after Passover), Paul decided to have the elders (i.e., shepherds, pastors, overseers, bishops) of the Ephesian church meet him in Miletus.

÷Act_20:17
Act_20:17

> **20:17–38** *Paul's speech describes his desire for the church in Ephesus to grow strong and play a leading role among the churches in the region.*

And from Mile'tus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders *[presbyteros]* of the church. -- At Miletus the Apostle and his party must have tarried more than one day. It would take quite that time to send his messenger and summon those whom he wished to see. While Paul intends to hurry through this region, he makes an effort to have one last moment with the elders from Ephesus.

÷Act_20:18
Act_20:18

And when they came to him, he said to them: -- This is one of the Paul's speeches in Acts made to Christians where Luke was a witness.

"You yourselves know -- The fact that Paul states his argument here so strongly in Act_20:18-19 probably indicates he had some critics at Ephesus.

how I lived among you all the time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, -- To know about all of Paul's ministry in Asia, from its earliest days in the synagogue, these men who are now elders must have been among the first fruits of the gospel in Ephesus.

Paul bases his argument on the fact that his actions have consistently supported his character. His walk and talk confirmed his relationship with Christ.

> Just as the sermon in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Act_13:16 ff) is a sample of Paul's approach to synagogue audiences, and his speeches at Lystra (Act_14:15 ff) and Athens (Act_17:22 ff) are samples of his approach to pagan audiences, so we may say that his speech at Miletus is a sample of his ministry to church leaders.

÷Act_20:19
Act_20:19

serving the Lord -- Paul speaks of the manner which the elders have seen how he has discharged his apostolic duty.

with all humility -- "Humility" (ταπεινοφροσ νης, G5012) is one of Paul's favorite words. (Eph_4:2; Php_2:3; Col_2:18; Col_2:23; Col_3:12. Elsewhere in the New Testament "humility" appears only at 1Pe_5:5.)

> [The word "humble" (G5014) appears some 4 times in the NT (Luk_1:48; Act_8:33; Php_3:21; Jas_1:10).]

Not until Jesus had shown what a virtue this characteristic could be, and not until Christians began following His example, did men come to know that "humility" was anything other than a lowly, vile characteristic that should be avoided.

and with tears -- Paul wept because of: (1) those who did not know Christ (cf. Rom_9:2-3); (2) struggling, immature believers (2Co_2:4); and (3) the threat of false teachers (Act_20:29-30).

and with trials which befell me through the plots of the Jews; -- Ironically, it was the plot of the Jews at Corinth that allowed the Ephesian elders this opportunity to spend time with Paul (see note on Act_20:3).

There are several examples of these plots in Acts (cf. Act_9:24; Act_13:45, Act_13:50; Act_14:2, Act_14:4-5; Act_14:19; Act_17:5, Act_17:13; Act_18:12; Act_20:3; Act_21:27; Act_23:12; Act_23:27; Act_23:30; Act_24:5-9; Act_24:18-19).

÷Act_20:20
Act_20:20

how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything -- The word "how" takes up the "after what manner" of verse 18. The first verb implies the wrapping up of something to keep it out of sight, or out of the way, and is used of "furling" sails.

Hence the metaphorical sense of "wrapping up" or "cloaking" what ought to be spoken out. The Apostle declares that he had never from fear or under any circumstances held back the truth.

that was profitable, -- What he means by "that which was profitable," we may learn from his own expression (1Co_10:33) *"the profit of many, that they may be saved."* This would call for rebuke as well as encouragement, and would not always be a congenial work, however necessary.

and teaching you in public and from house to house, -- Paul taught in the synagogue (Act_19:8; see note on Act_6:9) and the school of Tyrannus (Act_19:10). He reinforced that public teaching with practical instruction in individual homes and households.

÷Act_20:21
Act_20:21

testifying both to Jews and to Greeks -- Paul preached the same message to all men, whatever their nationality. By the word "testifying" Paul means this message was witnessed by these elders themselves.

of repentance to God -- "Repentance" to the Jews meant turning away from their sins against God (cf. Mar_1:15; Act_3:16; Act_3:19; Act_2:38). While "repentance" for the Gentiles meant a change of one's mind about the pagan-gods and a change in conduct and action (Act_17:30-31). This speaks of one changing his belief in God and leading him to the action stated next.

and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. -- "Faith" in Jesus Christ means not only mentally believing in Him, but to trust Him so fully that one obeys Him committing to follow His way of life (Heb_5:9; 1Pe_2:21).

÷Act_20:22
Act_20:22

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, -- Paul conveyed his planed destination to the Ephesian elders. They likely knew of the funds he conveyed as the churches of Asia and Galatian had made contributions (1Co_16:1; Act_20:4).

bound [constrained] in [*my*] the Spirit, -- Paul's deep sense of duty toward the Master who had redeemed him and called him to serve as an apostle, drove him onward despite the threat of danger and hardship (Act_20:23).

not knowing what shall befall me there; -- Paul did not know the particulars regarding what awaited him except [save] what the H.S. had revealed about imprisonment and afflictions (Act_20:23). He would learn more details later from Agabus (Act_21:10-11).

÷Act_20:23
Act_20:23

except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city -- In the various cities along Paul's way to Jerusalem, prophets (men inspired by the Holy Spirit) foretold what was waiting for Paul. (See Act_21:4 and Agabus in Act_21:10-13).

that imprisonment and afflictions await me. -- Along with being constrained in body he would suffer mental grief along with physical hardships.

÷Act_20:24
Act_20:24

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, -- Paul consider the accomplishment of the mission God had given to him to be more precious than anything else in his life. Paul had given his life to Christ; now he was willing to die, if necessary, in order to further the cause of Christ.

if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, -- Finishing the ministry that he had received from Jesus as recorded from the first in Act_9:15-16; (1Ti_1:12), was more important than preserving his own life.

to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. -- Paul's mission was to preach the message of Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection, which allows people to be made right before God the Father. There is no way that man deserves or can earn the atonement made possible by this sacrifice, it is bestowed out of the Lord's grace and favor. (Eph_2:8-9; Tit_2:11).

÷Act_20:25
Act_20:25

And now, behold, I know -- Paul knew and believed what the Holy Spirit had revealed about what awaited him in Jerusalem.

that all you among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom -- The "kingdom" of God is His rule among men, on earth His kingdom is His church, and in the spiritual realm it is Heaven.

will see my face no more. -- We cannot be sure that the Apostle never again came to Ephesus. For we learn from Phm_1:22 that, toward the close of his imprisonment at Rome, he had hopes and the intention of visiting Philemon, who was at Colossæ, and we can hardly think that if he went to Colossæ he would fail on the way to stay at Ephesus.

Some have therefore been inclined to lay a great stress on the word **"all"** in this clause, as though the Apostle only meant that he was sure some of them to be dead before he paid their city another visit.

÷Act_20:26
Act_20:26

20:26–28 *Paul states that he has completed his responsibilities to the Ephesian believers. Paul can make this statement because he has shared the complete message of the gospel to those in Ephesus and because he now will pass his responsibilities to the elders (or overseers) of Ephesus. The language seems to borrow from* 1Sa_12:2-5, *where Samuel declares his innocence and holds the audience accountable.*

Therefore -- "Therefore" sums up all he has just said about his past ministry and labors among them.

I testify to you -- The Greek word here translated "testify" is spelled a bit differently than the one in verse 24. This one means "I call you to witness." Paul is saying, "You know how hard I labored in an effort to reach men with the gospel."

this day -- The very day of his departure, he thought for good, from this area of service.

that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, -- . If some individuals were to be lost at the judgment, Paul would not be to blame. He had discharged his duty in faithfully warning and teaching them. (Cf. Eze_33:7-9; Jas_3:1.)

÷Act_20:27
Act_20:27

for I did not shrink -- See the note at Act_20:20 about the word "shrink."

from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. -- Paul's preaching has covered all the core principles God has revealed to him. Here he seems to be specifically referring to the message of salvation in Jesus, but he could also more broadly be speaking of passing along the necessary knowledge for the Ephesian elders to continue the work of the gospel.

We must always proclaim God's full message, not just our favorite part! This may be an allusion to the Judaizers who claimed that Paul left out part of the message about keeping the Mosaic Law.

÷Act_20:28
Act_20:28

Take heed to yourselves -- Paul calls for the leaders to be aware of the leadership themselves. Some of the first departures from the faith came from among church leaders. An elder or bishop who claimed more authority than the others which led to a single man assuming dictatorial authority in a congregation, and then over several congregations in an area.

We could say that the "Pope" is an "elder" of the church who went astray from the teaching of church leadership in the Bible. (See Act_20:30.)

and to all the flock, -- The "shepherds" are to see that the flock (a metaphor for the congregation of believers) is feed the truth, and not allow poison to be consumed.

in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, -- There were multiple "overseers" in each congregation or "flock." We never see in the N.T. where there is a single elder, bishop, overseer, or pastor having leadership responsibility in a church.

The Holy Spirit through inspired men, called prophets, would know which men to ordain to be "overseers." Today the Holy Spirit through the inspired Word directs the church as to the character and qualification of men who are to be ordained as the elders (presbyters, bishops, or shepherds) in a congregation. (cf. 1Ti_3:1-10; and Tit_1:5-14).

to care for the church of God -- These men are to have the "care" of the church on the heart. They are responsible for the spiritual life and faithfulness of the church.

which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. -- The church is precious to God. It is composed of those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

ELDERS & DEACONS Tit_1:5-9, 1Ti_3:1-13 & 1Ti_5:17, Act_20:28, Heb_13:17.

CHURCH -- Mat_16:18, Eph_5:23-27, Act_20:28.
The Church is the "Body of Christ," Eph_1:22-23, Col_1:18; Col_1:24, all believers are in that one body- Eph_4:4-6, 1Co_12:12-13, Col_3:15. When men are saved they are "Added by the Lord,"not "voted in," Act_2:47, 2Jn_1:9-10 .

÷Act_20:29
Act_20:29

I know that after my departure -- Paul is probably not referring to his death, but to his leaving Asia thinking that he would return no moe.

fierce [savage] wolves -- Since Paul has called the church a flock and the elders its shepherd, he extends the metaphor to label false teachers as wolves. (See Mat_7:15; Mat_10:16).

will come in among you, -- Even more deadly than attacks from outside the church are the defections of those (especially leaders) within the church (1Ti_1:20; 2Ti_1:15; 2Ti_2:17; cf. Jud_1:3-4; Jud_1:10-13).

not sparing the flock; -- Such false teachers really had not care or concern for the spiritual welfare of the church. They disrupted and consumed the flock itself.

FALSE TEACHERS - 2Co_11:13-15, 2Ti_4:2-4, 1Ti_4:1-3, Mat_24:24, Act_20:28-30, Gal_1:7-9, Deu_18:21-22.

To Support false teachers is Sinful- 2Jn_1:10-11.

÷Act_20:30
Act_20:30

and from among your own selves will arise men -- (See the note on Act_20:28, where Paul warned "Take heed to yourselves.") Paul warns that apostasy in the church would rise up from among the leadership of the church.

Hymenaeus, Alexander, and Philetus are N.T. examples of men who strayed from the truth. (1Ti_1:20; 2Ti_2:17).

Paul has spoken of two sources of potential trouble for the Ephesian elders: false teachers from the outside (Act_20:29), and defections from within their own ranks (Act_20:30).

speaking perverse things, -- The Greek word means "distorted," or "twisted." False teachers twist God's Word for their own evil ends (Act_13:10; 2Pe_3:16).

to draw away the disciples after them. -- False teachers love the applause of men rather then a love for the Lord. The verb here implies the *tearing away* of disciples already attached to the Lord. Paul is repeating the warning that Christ himself gave in Mat_24:24. (See note on Act_20:29.)

It is dangerous when disciples become more attached to a certain preacher or teacher that their faithfulness to the Word is weakened.

÷Act_20:31
Act_20:31

Therefore be alert, -- The men who were shepherds of the flock were to be vigilant in view of all the possible dangers that could led the sheep astray.

remembering that for three years -- Paul is referring to the total time he had labored in the area of Ephesus and the province of Asia. (Act_19:8; Act_19:10.)

I did not cease night or day to admonish -- "Admonish" is a word that appears only here and in Paul's writings in the New Testament. It speaks of giving another a loving warning.

There is a difference between teaching and admonishing. Teaching is instructing others of the truth as given by God. Admonishing has to do with correcting, warning, disciplining, and encouraging for the purpose of getting the listener to do as he had been instructed.

every one with tears. -- (See Act_20:19.) Paul felt such an urgency for men and women to obey God that it left him in tears when they rejected the Savior.

÷Act_20:32
Act_20:32

And now I commend you to God -- Paul loves them, but is going to be leaving them, so now he "entrusts" them to the Lord who will help and guide them. (1Ti_1:18; 2Ti_2:2).

and to the word of his grace, -- The Scriptures are the record of God's gracious dealings with mankind. Here it is a synonymous phrase for "the Gospel" which contains the gracious promises of the Lord.

which is able to build you up -- God's Word, the Scriptures, are the source of spiritual growth (1Th_2:13; 2Ti_3:16-17; 1Pe_2:2) for all Christians.

The Greek construction here may refer to either "God" or the "word of his grace" as the source which is able to build them up. But actually it makes no difference, for God uses his word to accomplish his purpose, Rom_1:16; Heb_4:12; Isa_49:2; Jer_23:29.

and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. -- (See note on 1Pe_1:4.) Believers are God's children and as such will receive the inheritance He has waiting for them. (Gal_4:6-7; Col_1:12.)

The word "sanctified" here refers to believers in the Lord who have been made holy (forgiven, justified) because of Christ's sacrifice on their behalf.

÷Act_20:33
Act_20:33

I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. -- Another point that Paul said, "You yourselves know how I lived ..." (Act_20:18; Act_20:34), had to do with his attitude toward money. Love of money is a hallmark of false teachers (cf. Isa_56:11; Jer_6:13; Jer_8:10; Mic_3:11; Tit_1:11; 2Pe_2:3), but did not characterize Paul's ministry. See note on 1Ti_6:5.

One's clothing ("apparel") was a mark of one's wealth, and thus "coveted." Remember that Naaman brought "changes of raiment" as well as money among the rewards which he expects to give for his cure (2Ki_5:5). Notice other OT scriptures: Cp. Gen_24:53; Gen_45:22; 2Ki_7:8.

÷Act_20:34

Act_20:34

You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, -- Paul had the right to earn his living from the gospel (1Co_9:3-14) and sometimes accepted support (2Co_11:8-9; Php_4:10-19). Yet, he often worked to support himself so he could "present the gospel of Christ without charge" (1Co_9:18).

and to those who were with me. -- Paul's labor helped support his traveling companions, who perhaps were less able to work with their hands as he was, 1Co_4:12.

Some appeal to Phm_1:17 as evidence that Philemon also was a partner in the same trade, along with Aquila and Paul.

÷Act_20:35
Act_20:35

In all things I have shown you -- Paul is appealing to his example among them while at Ephesus.

that by so toiling -- The verb implies "wearying toil." He had spared for no fatigue. He speaks of this toil (2Co_11:27), "in labour and travail."

one must help the weak, -- By "weak" Paul here is here speaking of those standing in need of material help. They are the poor, perhaps through sickness or persecution, etc. Paul, even now, is conveying funds for the "poor" in Jerusalem.

remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" -- This is the only direct quote from Jesus' earthly ministry recorded outside the gospels. Paul cites it as though it was already well known. This phrase is not recorded in the Gospels, though Jesus did more than is recorded there (compare Joh_21:25).

÷Act_20:36
Act_20:36

And when he had spoken thus, -- Paul has finished his message to the Ephesian elders.

he knelt down and prayed with them all. -- Taking the posture of kneeling marks the special character and solemnity of the prayer. We find the Apostle doing the same in his parting from the brethren at Tyre (Act_21:5).

Luke doesn't record the words of the prayer but some of the thoughts may have been similar to what he expressed in Eph_3:14-21.

÷Act_20:37
Act_20:37

And they all wept and embraced Paul and kissed him, -- The NKJV reads "and fell on Paul's neck," which was a common biblical way of expressing extreme emotion and affection (cf. Gen_33:4; Gen_45:14; Gen_46:29).

The word is not the simple verb but, as the NASB expresses it, "repeatedly kissed him," showing an earnest, sorrowing parting.

÷Act_20:38
Act_20:38

sorrowing most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. -- The Greek word here for "sorrowing," or "distressed" (G3600) has the connotation of severe agony. Here it emphasizes their emotions as they understand that they will not see Paul again.

And they brought him to the ship. -- So as to not miss one word that Paul might utter, they accompany him to his ship, and probably watched it sail out of their sight before returning home to Ephesus. (cf. Act 15:3; Act 21:5).

÷Act_21:1
Act_21:1

When we had parted from them and set sail, -- The word "departed" (G645) literally "to tear away." Being a strong word it reiterates the difficulty of Paul's parting from the Ephesian elders (Act_20:37-38).

The vessel in which they sailed from Troas to Patara seems to have been under charter to Paul and his group, therefore they could stay wherever and as long as they pleased.

we came by a straight course -- This is a nautical term meaning to sail a direct course (cf. Act_16:11) and indicates they had excellent sailing weather. Luke was very familiar with sailing terms (cf. Act_21:3). Most of the "we" sections of Acts involve sailing.

to Cos, -- Cos (or Coos, a small island now call Stanchio) was the chief city of the island of Cos on the coast of Asia Minor.

On the island was a temple of Aesculapius to which was attached a medical school which flourished for many years.

and the next day to Rhodes, -- An island about 50 miles SE of Cos; also the name of its capital city. The city of Rhodes and the island of which it is the capital were famous in the times of the Peloponnesian war.
Its harbor was home to the great statue known as the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the 7 Wonders of the Ancient World.

and from there to Patara. -- "Patara" was a busy port city in the extreme southern portion of Asia Minor. Paul and the others had now rounded the southwestern corner of Asia Minor. Each of the ports they stopped in represented one day's sailing; the ship did not sail at night.

Being a larger and more important port Paul and his group left the coasting vessel and could find a larger vessel to carry them to Syria (Act_21:2).

÷Act_21:2
Act_21:2

When we found a ship bound for Phoenicia, we went on board and set sail. -- A journey of more than 400 miles. Such a voyage would have taken three to five days.

Paul is hurrying to be at Jerusalem by Pentecost, we can think of a couple of reasons for the change of ships. Either the coasting vessel was chartered only to come this far and so they must now find other transportation, or the coasting vessel is going to continue a slow journey from port to port, while the ocean-going vessel promises a speedier trip toward their destination.

÷Act_21:3
Act_21:3

We came in sight of Cyprus; -- Paul and Barnabas had preached in Cyprus as recorded in Act_13:4-6. (cf. the note at Act_11:19).

and leaving it on our left, -- They sail eastward on the southside of the island.

we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, because the ship was to unload its cargo there. -- The voyage across the Mediterranean from Patara to Tyre normally took 5 days. With regard to Tyre, also see the note on Act_12:20.

Tyre was one of the chief ports of Phœnicia, and a city of very great antiquity. It is noticed as a strongly fortified city as early as Jos_19:29. We read of its fame in the time of Solomon in connexion with the building of the temple.

On one of Christ's journeys from Galilee he traveled into the neighborhood of Tyre, if not to the city itself, which was about 30 miles from Nazareth. (cf. Mat_15:21-28; Mar_7:24-31; Cf. also Mat_11:21).

÷Act_21:4
Act_21:4

We looked up the disciples -- The church in Tyre was probably formed by some of those who fled Jerusalem after Stephen's martyrdom (Act_11:19), a persecution Paul himself had spearheaded.

The term "looked up" indicates that they had to inquire from the people where they could find Christians. Paul may have visited this city about 12 years earlier according to Act_15:3.

and stayed there for seven days. -- The Apostle now finds that he can easily accomplish his journey to Jerusalem in time, and so he no longer hastens as he did when all the probable mishaps of a coasting voyage were before him.

A week's stay would again allow Paul and his company, at some point in his visit to Tyre, to have at least one Lord's Day worship service (or may even two) and share in communion with them (cf. Act_20:7) and to teach and exhort them.

Paul and group may have been waiting to a ship that would carry them on Ptolemais (Act_21:7).

Through the Spirit they told Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. -- The believers know through the Spirit what will happen to Paul in Jerusalem, and they then worry about the dangers facing Paul there. Paul is ready to suffer for the gospel, but they do not want him to.

"Through the Spirit" means there was a inspired revelation made known to them. Such as one like Agabus in Act_21:10-11, and see the note on Act_20:23.

÷Act_21:5
Act_21:5

When our days there were ended, we left and proceeded on our journey; -- When the seven day had ended (Verse 4). Some think this wording has the meaning "to fit out," proposing to understand it as *"when we had refitted [*reloaded] *(the ship) during those days."*

and all of them, with wives and children, escorted us outside the city. -- The entire Christian community at Tyre seems to have escorted the Apostle to the shore. These were "the disciples," or the church meeting at Tyre (Act_21:4).

There we knelt down on the beach and prayed -- This was similar to the actions of Ephesian elders when they parted from the company of Paul (Act_20:36). This is a beautiful picture of Christian love and concern. There may have been a special service there on the beach.

÷Act_21:6
Act_21:6

and said farewell to one another. -- This should be read together, *"And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed and said farewell to one another."* By the plural "we prayed" may indicate several different ones led the prayers.

Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home. -- With the definite article appearing here in the Greek "**the** ship" it seems to indicate it was the same ship that had brought them, which after finishing the unloading and reloading of cargo was not ready to left anchor and sail to the next port.

One wonders if the Christians at Tyre watch the ship sail out of sight before returning to their homes.

÷Act_21:7
Act_21:7

When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; -- This was a city on the southern Phoenician coast about 25 miles south of Tyre. In the OT the city was known as Acco (Jdg_1:31), today known as Acre.

and we greeted the believers and stayed with them for one day. -- This indicates there was a church there in Ptolemais. There was also a great high road along the coast, and the news of Paul's coming may have proceeded him.

The "greeting" would involve an embrace and a holy kiss (Act_20:37; Rom_16:16). The "one day" was how long the ship was in port (unloading and reloading cargo?) before sailing on to Caesarea.

÷Act_21:8
Act_21:8

The next day we left -- With the frequent repetition of similar wording as "the next day," "the day after," appearing in Luke's narration after leaving Troas (Act_20:13; Act_20:15; Act_21:1; Act_21:4) one wonders if he had kept a diary.

With Paul leaving Philippi (Act_20:7) after Passover one can count the days and keep up with his plans to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost (50 days after leaving Philippi.)

and came to Caesarea; -- Caesarea was a major seaport constructed by Herod the Great. (See note on Act_10:1.) From here they would go over-land to Jerusalem.

and we went into the house of Philip the evangelist, -- No one else in Scripture is called an evangelist, though Paul commanded Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (2Ti_4:5). The word means "one who is proclaiming the gospel."

We find him earlier in Act_8 ministering in Samaria (Act_8:5) and to the Ethiopian treasurer (Act_8:26-38).

one of the seven, -- This refers to the seven men Luke has told us about in Act_6:3-5, who were select to meet the needs of the Greek-speaking widows in the early church in Jerusalem. It seems they all became powerful preachers and we are told specifically about two of them.

and stayed with him. -- Once enemies (Paul was responsible for the death of Philip's friend, Stephen, Act_8:1-4) Philip and Paul are now fellow preachers of the Gospel of Christ, and illustrates what can happen "in Christ."

÷Act_21:9
Act_21:9

He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy. -- The main emphasis of "prophecy" is inspired teaching. Sometimes it also involves "fore-telling."

Joe_2:28-32 proclaims the coming of the Holy Spirit on both men and women, and Peter cites this prophecy in Act_2:17-18. Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church indicates that at least some women there prophesied (1Co_11:5).

Luke does not reveal the nature of their prophesy. They may have had an ongoing prophetic ministry, or prophesied only once. Since women are not to be preachers or teachers in the church (1Co_14:34-36; 1Ti_2:11-12), they probably ministered to individuals or to classes of girls and women.

Eusebius quotes both Polycrates and Papias (cf. *Eccl. Hist. 3:31:2–5*), that Philip's daughters lived long lives serving God to a very old age.

÷Act_21:10
Act_21:10

While we were staying there for several days, -- The time spent here is indefinite, but Paul wants to get to Jerusalem and deliver the gifts to the poor there by Pentecost.

a prophet named Agabus -- We first meet Agabus in Act_11:28, where he is mentioned as a prophet coming to Antioch from Jerusalem and foretelling a famine. New Testament prophets' task is proclaiming a message from God by inspiration.

came down from Judea. -- Although Caesarea was located in Judea, since it was the seat of the Roman government, the Jews considered it to be a foreign city. (See comments on Act_18:22).

÷Act_21:11
Act_21:11

He came to us and took Paul's belt, bound his own feet and hands with it, -- Agabus, in the likeness of many OT prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.), acts out the prophesy against Paul. (cf. 1Ki_11:29-39; Isa_20:2-6; Jer_13:1-11; Eze_4:1-3; Eze_5:1-4).

and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, -- Agabus makes it clear that he is quoting the words the Holy Spirit had revealed to him.

'This is the way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" -- Agabus' proclamation involving the Jews and the Gentiles together indicates a serious threat to Paul's freedom and life.

÷Act_21:12
Act_21:12

When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. -- Luke is among those hearing what Agabas said, and together with the believers of Caesarea Paul's traveling group counsels him not to continue to Jerusalem. The tense of the verb indicates a repeated action.

÷Act_21:13
Act_21:13

Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? -- Paul's companions and the Caesarean Christians were so moved in their pleas to Paul that tears accompanied their begging.

Paul often respected the judgment of his friends (Act_19:30-31) but despite their pleas "breaking" his heart he was determined to proceed to Jerusalem.

For I am ready not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." -- The pronoun "I" stands emphatically in the Greek (twice in this verse), and shows that Paul had long ago counted the cost of serving Christ, and found the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the glory that was to be revealed (Rom_8:18).

Paul knew about the possibility of being bound and imprisoned, but he also believed that his mission to serve Christ was not over.

÷Act_21:14
Act_21:14

Since he would not be persuaded, we remained silent -- The disciples quietened their minds gathering that Paul had a leading to serve Christ at any cost and that He still had a purpose for his life.

except to say, "The Lord's will be done." -- The disciples had a confident faith to trust God's will in the matter (cf. 1Sa_3:18; Mat_6:10; Luk_22:42; Jas_4:13-15).

This phrase seems to be used in the sense of a prayer. They came to believe that God did have a plan and purpose for Paul's life and they would yield to it.

÷Act_21:15
Act_21:15

After these days we got ready and started to go -- The King James Version has "took up our carriages" (NKJV has "packed"). This is a graphic word used of travel preparation and is found only here in the NT. The word is used in the OT in this sense, 1Sa_17:22; Isa_10:28.

up to Jerusalem. -- Jerusalem was SE of Caesarea which was located on the coast, so travelers were always said to "go up" to Jerusalem, which was located in the central mountain range.

÷Act_21:16
Act_21:16

Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came along -- Like at other cities, local disciples accompany Paul some of the way on his journey, but these seem to have gone all the way to Jerusalem with him. Possibly however, these were security purposes. Paul and his company must be carrying a large sum of money, and his enemies probably have got wind of it.

and brought us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, -- He was a Jewish Christian from the same island as Barnabas, Cyprus (Act_4:36). His name indicates he was one of the Hellenistic Jews, like the Seven of Acts 6. He would be comfortable around both Jew and Gentile Christians.

an early disciple, -- Mnason is described as "an old [early] disciple." Undoubtedly one of the earliest Christian. Some translate this to mean "an original disciple" "a charter member." He was possibly one of those baptized on the day of Pentecost, or a disciple of Jesus even earlier. By this introduction to Mnason, Luke seems to be earmarking him as one of the sources of his information about the beginning of the early church (Luk_1:1-3).

It is probable that during Paul's two year imprisonment at Caesarea that Luke had all this time and opportunity to meet and interview the eye-witnesses of whom he speaks. Apparently among those interviewed were Mnason, Mary the mother of Jesus Luk_2:19; Luk_2:33; Luk_2:51; and many others who were close to Jesus personally.

with whom we were to stay. -- Paul lodged with him in Jerusalem, and Luke was with this party. Mnason undoubtedly had a large house to accommodate Paul's party. The estate was likely enclosed and secure, keeping Paul safe while in the city.

If Luke wrote his Gospel during this two year period (AD 56-58) we should date the Gospel to about AD 58. It is probable that Luke then used the two year period (AD 59-61) during Paul's Roman imprisonment Act_28:30 to write his account of Acts about AD 61 before the the outcome of Paul's trial could be revealed. (This has caused some to speculate that Luke wrote both volumes as a legal brief for Theophilus Luk_1:3 who was either Paul's lawyer or the official who heard his case for Nero's court.)

÷Act_21:17
Act_21:17

And when we had [arrived] come to Jerusalem, -- Paul and the bearers of the offering made the journey from Caesarea to Jerusalem in about two days.

the brethren received us gladly. -- This was, perhaps and informal welcome, given in Mnason's house (with whom they were to lodge) by those who came there to greet the expected guests.

This happy reception could be because Paul's company brought much needed financial help. But they probably also rejoiced to hear of the successful ministry in the many foreign places all these men represented.

÷Act_21:18
Act_21:18

The next day Paul went with us to visit James; -- Luke includes himself in the company meeting with the Jerusalem elders. He was probably a part of the delegation bearing he gifts to the Jerusalem saints from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia (Rom_15:26).

James was regarded a "pillar" in the church there in Jerusalem (Act_15:13; Gal_2:9), but he was not the "ruling elder" or "the bishop" over the eldership there as some would claim. Such a position did not develop until much later and was push by Ignatius (2nd century) and was met with some rejection. The New Testament knows of no such position.

This reads almost as if James (the brother of Jesus and also an elder in the Jerusalem church) is frail or incapacitated by this time. He would probably be about Paul's own age.

Remembering Paul's wish in Act_20:16, and noting Luke's counting of the passing days as they sailed toward Jerusalem, the time now would be near, if not on, the day of Pentecost.

and all the elders were present. -- It appears the elders have gathered to give a formal welcome to Paul and his company. This would give Paul the opportunity to learn if there is opposition to the work he is doing among the Gentiles.

Utley points out that there is no mention of the Apostles, that they apparently were away on mission trips of their own, or perhaps some were even dead by now.

÷Act_21:19
Act_21:19

And after he had greeted them, -- What is involved in such a "greeting" see the notes on Act_18:22; Act_21:7. Usually an embrace and a holy kiss.

he began to relate one by one -- Paul is giving his report in detail, reporting about place after place, and the acceptance of the Gospel in each.

Paul's rehearsal of the things which God had worked through his ministry probably went back no farther than the time of the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15) for at that time he had rehearsed to those present there all that preceded that date, Act_15:4.

the things which God had done among the Gentiles -- Notice Paul emphasized that God had done the work. God was working through Paul.

through his ministry. -- It is not difficult to imagine some of the things Paul would have said in his report. He would have told how many Gentiles had forsaken their idols and were living faithful to God, even to the point where attendance at idols' temples had greatly fallen off.

He would have explained about how the gratitude of those Gentiles had led them to undertake a generous contribution for the brethren at Jerusalem. He would then have introduced the messengers of the churches who had carried the offering.

Perhaps he told about the individual congregations they represented as he introduced each man. We can imagine that Paul would make reference to the admonition he was given at the close of the Jerusalem conference, that should remember the poor (Gal_2:10). The offering, he would say, was just one example that he had made every effort to practice his care for others.

Perhaps as he spoke, Paul experienced some of the anxiety he had spoken about in the letter to the Romans, an anxiety about how the offering would be received (Rom_15:31). (cf Act_20:4). Now he was at the moment of finding out! - Reese.

÷Act_21:20
Act_21:20

And when they heard it they began glorifying God. -- The tense of the verb "glorifying" implies continued actions; and its meaning would be satisfied by assuming there were continued, heartfelt expressions of wonder and praise.

It is also probable that there were more formal thanksgiving to the messengers from the churches. Luke does not at this place speak of the offering (cf. Act_24:17) but it seems implied from their glorification of God that they gratefully received their gifts.

Their praises to God also show that they were in full accord with Paul and his teaching and practice among the Gentiles, and keeps us from putting a wrong connotation on the suggestion about to be made by James. - Reese

The reception of Paul by the leaders of the Jerusalem church flatly contradicts the liberals' reconstruction of early church history wherein they have proposed there was a split in doctrine and practice between Paul and the leading Jewish Christians.

and they said to him, -- The offering Paul brought with him was an attempt by Paul to heal the breach between the Jewish and Gentile Christians. It seems to have been partly a unity measure as well as a means of relief.

you see brother -- Paul is recognized as a "brother"; the word will also help us to keep from putting a wrong connotation on the suggestion by James.

you see -- This implies that this fact of the large numbers of Jewish people who had become Christians was something Paul already was cognizant of from his own observations.

how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, -- Myriads means tens of thousands. This might seem to be too large a total if we think of the population of Jerusalem only; but if there are crowds of Jews present from all over the world for the feast of Pentecost, then the statement is justifiable.

and they are all zealous for the law; -- Evidently we are to see that the majority of Jewish Christians continued to come to the feasts, and they continued keeping other regulations prescribe by Moses.

[See Reese, p. 794 for why these Jewish Christians would continue to observe the Mosaic rites since the Law was abolished, nailed to the cross, Col_2:14.]

÷Act_21:21
Act_21:21

They have been told about you -- Paul was well known among the believers everywhere, both Gentiles and Jews. What the Judean Christians heard about Paul probably came from the Judaizers spreading false reports about Paul forsaking his Jewish heritage.

that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, -- Paul's message and action had been incorrectly, probably maliciously, reported to the Jerusalem Jews.
The report was not true since Paul himself continued to observe Jewish customs (see Act_16:3; Act_18:18; 1Co_7:18-19).

and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs. -- Paul had not forsaken his Jewish cultural heritage, he continued to keep its customs but realized that salvation was not found in the Law, but in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It gives us insight into the difference between keeping one's cultural practices while realizing our salvation is grounded in what Christ has done for us and the life He calls us to under the new covenant

Paul did teach that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to those who believe. He did teach that once the Christian faith had come, believing Jews were no longer under the law. He taught that if a man received circumcision as a means of obtaining justification, then such a man cut himself off from salvation in Christ Jesus. He taught that to depend on the types and shadows of the law for salvation, after Christ had come, was dishonoring to Christ. In view of this, it is not hard to see why the Jews should think of him as they did.

÷Act_21:22
Act_21:22

What then is to be done? -- The Jerusalem elders want to set it straight before the Jewish believers about the charges against Paul. They are considering how to offset the false reports about Paul.

They will certainly hear that you have come. -- This is the reason why something must be done. The report of Paul's arrival in Jerusalem was sure to spread.

÷Act_21:23
Act_21:23

So do what we tell you. -- The elders, after deliberation, believe that some visual assurance is needed to offset the rumors against Paul and to show the Jerusalem believers they had been misinformed.

We have four men who are under a vow. -- The four men are evidently Jewish Christians. Comparing what is said of these men here with the law of the Nazarite, these four were under a Nazarite vow (Num_6:1-21). See note on Act_18:18.

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The events of Act_21:18-26 are most challenging to students of the New Testament. A number of ***questions*** *comes to one's mind:*

1) Are James and the Jerusalem elders still insisting that Jewish Christians continue to hold to their Jewish customs and rites, such as circumcision and purification sacrifices?

2) Is Paul inconsistent with his own teaching and compromising his faith to accommodate the leaders of the church at Jerusalem?

Here are some **replies** to the questions:

1) The mission of the Jerusalem church was directed to Jews, and many thousands (Act_21:20) were believing. It was therefore expedient to retain Jewish customs which did not violate the faith and teaching of forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ. (Mat_17:27; 1Co_9:22.)

2) It would be expedient for Paul not to offend the Jerusalem brethren and hold to the roots of his Jewish customs. He had already shown such consideration in Act_18:19.

3) In the absence of more detailed information one should be very careful in charging either the Jerusalem brethren or Paul with doing wrong in this matter.

[For further study see *The Acts of the Apostles*, Wayne Jackson, pp. 286-291; and *Acts Commentary* by Gareth L. Reese, pp. 791-799.]

[See Gal_2:12 for more comments on James and Jewish Christians keeping Jewish customs.]

See Hardeman Nichols' article, pp. 141-150, *Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained,* edited by Wendell Winkler, (The Fourth Annual "Fort Worth" Lectures, the Brown Trail Church of Christ, Bedfort, TX) 1981.

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÷Act_21:24
Act_21:24

take these men and purify yourself along with them -- The elders apparently knew of Paul's previous observance of a like vow (Act_18:18). Since such a vow was to be concluded by a gift that was to be made at the Temple, they urge Paul to let these men join him in the completion of their vows.

After the cutting of one hair to fulfill the Nazarite vow a gift was to be made at the Temple. It seems that to complete Paul's vow made at Cenchrea he still needed to make the Temple gift according to the Jewish custom of completing a vow. (See note at Act_18:22 regarding Paul's vow.).

and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. -- For the temple ceremony in which the 4 would shave their heads, and the sacrifices associated with the Nazirite vow. Paying those expenses for

another was considered an act of piety, and a great honor. By so doing, Paul would give further proof that he had not forsaken his Jewish heritage

Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. -- By doing this, Paul will show that he is still sensitive to Jewish culture, which James believes will overturn their fellow Jews' concerns about Paul. This action demonstrates that Paul is not encouraging Jews to abandon their traditions or cultural identity.

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> We do not know much about what this **vow** involved. The details are veiled in obscurity. But all we need to know is that it was a *Jewish* **vow**, and that if the Jews saw the apostle going through the ritual connected with it, they would **know** assuredly that he was not turning others away from the cultural traditions of the Jews.
>
> The action of the apostle in taking on himself this Jewish **vow** has been defended and criticized. In *defense* of Paul it has been argued that he was acting according to his own principle to be all things to all men, if by any means he might save some (1Co_9:19-23).
>
> On the other hand, Paul has been *criticized* for going too far in an effort to conciliate the Jews, and thus creating the impression that he was under the law. In other words, Paul has been charged with being inconsistent with his view that the believer is not under the law, either for justification or as a rule of life (Gal. 1 and 2). We tend to agree with this criticism, but we also feel that one should be careful in judging the apostle's motives.

÷Act_21:25
Act_21:25

But as for the Gentiles who have become believers, -- Gentiles converted to Christ were not expected to keep Jewish cultural traditions. The "But" confirms the liberty of the Gentiles in Christ. They had no obligation to keep the Law of Moses.

we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication." -- This is an affirmation of the decision of the Jerusalem Council (Act_15:19-20). The four points enjoined upon Gentiles are a part of what God requires of them as Christians, not as a Jewish addendum.

Paul would have considered his actions a purelsy social, showing respect of his Israelite heritage and customs. From his epistles it is clear he didn't rely on them for salvation.

÷Act_21:26
Act_21:26

Then Paul took the men, and the next day, -- Paul wasted no time, and the very next day he consented to the advice of James and the elders.

This has been taken by some for a contradiction of the words and character of the Apostle as represented in his own writings. But he has testified of himself (1Co_9:19-23) that for the Gospel's sake he was made all things to all men, unto the Jews becoming as a Jew that he might gain the Jews,

having purified himself, -- Having just returned from an extended stay in Gentile lands, Paul was considered ceremonially unclean. He therefore needed to undergo ritual purification before participating (as their sponsor) in the ceremony marking the end of the 4 men's vows.

he entered the temple with them, making public the completion of the days of purification when the sacrifice would be made for each of them. -- It appears that the completion of the seven days of purification for Paul would all terminate when the four others did; and upon completion there would be an offering made.

÷Act_21:27
Act_21:27

> **21:27–36** *Paul is falsely accused of bringing Gentiles into the parts of the temple they were not allowed in. The disturbance ends in Paul's arrest.*

When the seven days were almost completed, -- Purification rites affiliated with the Nazirite vow took about seven days to complete (see Num_6:9; compare note on Act_21:24).

the Jews from Asia, who had seen him in the temple, -- The Jews from this province - which is roughly equivalent to modern Turkey and northern Greece - recognize Paul from his missionary journeys. They stir up the crowd to oppose him.

These Jews, probably from Ephesus here to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, recognize Paul and had seen him with Trophimus, a Gentile, and think Paul has brought him into the temple (Act_21:29).

stirred up the whole crowd. They seized him, -- The crowd of Jewish worshipers in the temple are aroused by the cry of these Asian pilgrims (verse 28), and Paul is seized and manhandled.

÷Act_21:28
Act_21:28

shouting, "Fellow Israelites, help! -- The Asian Jews were few in numbers compared to the entire crowd of worshippers, and they cry "Men of Israel, come to our aid!" (NASB). They incited the crowd to become a mob and seize Paul.

This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place; -- They have already been spreading vicious rumors (Act_21:21) against Paul. The charges against Paul are similar to those brought years before against Stephen (Act_6:11-13).

People who don't want to understand the truth can twist what they think they know into false accusations that ignorant people will believe.

more than that, he has actually brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." -- This action would have violated the sanctity of the temple and would have been understood as carrying the death penalty. The Romans had granted the Jews permission to execute any Gentile who so defiled the temple. (See note at Eph_2:14.)

> There was a wall in the court of Herod's Temple that separated the area where Gentiles had access, from the inner courts of the Temple reserved only for Jews. Archaeologist have recovered carved inscriptions embedded at the entrances in the wall, that read that Gentiles who entered any further could blame only themselves for their death.

÷Act_21:29
Act_21:29

For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, -- Trophimus had been recognized by the Ephesian Jews as a Gentile citizen of Ephesus in the company of Paul. (Act_20:4; 2Ti_4:20.)

and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. -- The Asian Jews accused Paul of having brought Trophimus past the Court of the Gentiles into the part of the temple which Gentiles were forbidden. Paul would certainly not risk his friend's life to do this (the Romans had granted the Jews permission to execute any Gentile who so defiled the temple).

These men were so ready to find a cause for attacking Paul that they jump to "suppositions."

÷Act_21:30
Act_21:30

Then all the city was aroused, and the people rushed together. -- We can picture Jewish men running from every direction and becoming a mob similar to that in Ephesus Act_19:29-32. (It sounds like possibly Jews outside the Temple heard the commotion and rushed to form the mob also.)

They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, --
Paul is perceived to have violated the sanctity of the temple, and the Jews are determined to kill him. Their design was to get Paul out of the Temple precincts where they could beat or stone him to death.

and immediately the doors were shut. -- The gate between the Court of Israel and the outer Court of the Women would be closed by the temple guards, since Paul's death on the temple grounds would defile the temple (cf. 2Ki_11:15). The Temple had its own police force of Levites who kept order but they make no effort to rescue Paul from the crowd, which was intent on beating him to death.

÷Act_21:31
Act_21:31

While they were trying to kill him, -- The intention of the mob is very clear, and they're in the process of escorting him of the Temple complex to beat or stone Paul to death.

word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. -- The formal cohort was composed of 1,000 soldiers, and the tribune is Clausias Lysias (Act_23:26), the highest ranking officer stationed in Jerusalem at this time.

Their headquarters was Fort Antonia, located on the NW corner of the Temple and had a vantage point where Roman sentries could survey the entire Temple complex. At feast times, such as Pentecost, the population of the city would swell exceedingly and there was a greater likelihood for mischief.

The Greek expressing that the "word cam to" or "tidings came unto" the tribune is φ σις, G5334, which could indicate either a soldier on watch saw the action and or informer came revealing secret plans against Paul.

÷Act_21:32
Act_21:32

Immediately he took soldiers and centurions -- The use of the plural "centurions" suggest Lysias had high ranking experienced soldiers with him and a large force, perhaps as many as 200 soldiers or more.

During Jewish feasts the soldiers stationed in the adjacent Fort were in constant readiness to suppress any tumult that might arise.

and ran down to them. -- There were stairs (Act_21:35; Act_21:40) from the observation point on Fort Antonia down to the Temple court that provided quick and direct access to where the mob action was happening.

According to Josephus, there were four towers to the fortress, one of which overlooked the temple area. The fortress was connected to the temple area by two flights of stairs, one of which entered the temple area on the north side, the other on the west side.

When they saw the tribune [commander] and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. -- At this point the officer's presence saves Paul's life. The sight of several hundred armed men paralyzed the mob for a moment. Paul's "beating" would seem to have been rough treatment with fists and perhaps clubs.

÷Act_21:33
Act_21:33

Then the tribune came, arrested him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; -- From Paul's questions in Act_21:38, it appears the soldiers first think he was an insurrectionist. The "two chains" could mean he was bound (1) hands and feet or (2) between two Roman soldiers. They assume Paul to be a desperate criminal, guilty of something, and very dangerous.

By binding Paul the tribune indicated to the crowd he was not helping someone escape justice but merely restoring public order.

he inquired who he was and what he had done. -- The inquiry was made of the crowd, not of Paul. The tribune thought he knew who his prisoner was, Act_21:38.

÷Act_21:34
Act_21:34

Some in the crowd shouted one thing, some another; -- This reminds one of the riot at Ephesus in Act_19:32. The violent outcries of the crowd (cf. Luk_23:21) certainly shows the potential for a riot which the tribune wants to avoid.

and as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, -- Lysias could not make sense out of what the mob was shouting. Many are shouting different things and the "uproar" ("tumult") is so confusing that the crowd don't know the facts themselves what the clamor was about.

he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. -- The tribune gives his soldiers order to bring the prisoner into the fortress where they were stationed. If he is to learn what the facts are he will have to try some other means.

÷Act_21:35
Act_21:35

When Paul came to the steps, -- This was the flight of steps leading from the Temple area up to the Tower of Antonia where the soldiers were stationed. The stairs were open, not covered in, for Paul is able to address the multitude while standing on them (Act_21:40).

the violence of the mob was so great that he had to be carried by the soldiers. -- Either the mob is still pressing upon Paul, or that his injuries was so great the soldiers have to help him move along. As a body, the soldiers began to move up the stairs into the fortress.

÷Act_21:36
Act_21:36

The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Away with him!" -- The volent mob follows the soldiers leading Paul to the stairs, continuing to shout at them, "Away with him," or "Kill him," Act_22:22; Luk_23:18; Joh_19:15. The same cry they used before Pilate in Jesus was tried.

÷Act_21:37
Act_21:37

Just as Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, -- They are up the stairs enough to allow Paul to stand. Perhaps nearing the door into the fortress at the top of the stairs.

he said to the tribune, "May I say something to you?" -- Paul, speaking Greek, courteously addresses the leading officer with the request to speak to him. Paul is hoping to clear up the matter and perhaps even win his freedom before becoming a prisoner indefinitely.

The tribune replied, "Do you know Greek? -- Paul surprises the tribune with his request in eloquent Greek showing his education and refinement as a speaker. He had considered his prisoner to be an uneducated Egyptian rabble, (Act_21:38) but Paul's language and a cultured Hellenistic dialect is a surprise.

÷Act_21:38
Act_21:38

Then you are not the Egyptian who recently stirred up a revolt -- The tribune had supposed his prisoner was the Egyptian Jew who lead a revolt promising to drive out the Romans.

Josephus tells of an Egyptian false prophet who led a few thousand followers in an attack on the authorities in Jerusalem. When Felix had first become governor he led Roman troops out against him and killed a number of his adherents and took others prisoners but their leader had escaped.

and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?" -- The word for "assassins" was "sicarii" (i.e. men armed with a dagger) which were a terrorist group of Jewish nationalists who murdered Romans and Jews sympathetic to Rome. They used the cover of a crowd to stab their victims, hid their small dagger under their clothes and mixed with the crowd in the outcry against the crime.

÷Act_21:39
Act_21:39

Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, -- Paul is saying, "No, I'm not an Egyptian Jew, I'm from Tarsus, I'm not a rebel." Cilicia was the region along the coast in what is today south-east Turkey. Tarsus was the metropolis of that region and a city remarkable for it culture.

a citizen of an important city; -- Paul claims Tarsus as his birth place or home town, and remarks upon the significance of that city whose university rivaled Athens and Alexandria.

Being a "citizen" would indicate to the tribune that Paul had full rights to vote in the civic matters of the city. This would have immediately raised the tribune's estimation of him. Citizenship in such cities was limited to those who had rank and fortune. (See notes on Act_9:11; Act_9:30; Act_11:25; Act_22:3).

I beg you, let me speak to the people." -- Paul again politely has a request. Hoping that the tribune knowing something now of his background will grant the request.

÷Act_21:40
Act_21:40

When he had given him permission, -- Perhaps the tribune is hoping to learn something more about the cause of the raucous against his prisoner.

Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the people for silence; -- Paul is standing elevated above the people who have continued in their cries against him. Paul seems to have used the universal gesture of raised hands in an effort to get the people to quiet down so he can be heard.

and when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying: -- Paul is successful in getting their attention to listen to them.

The Greek term for "Hebrew" here is *hebrai*s, and can refer in the NT to *Hebrew* or *Aramaic*. Hebrew was the old language used in formal worship in the synagogue and temple. Aramaic was the more common language spoken at the time.

Critics are divided on which language Paul used. Since the tribune doesn't understand what Paul is saying we are inclined to believe Paul is speaking educated religious Hebrew, which would certainly get their attention (Act_22:2). It is the language of study at the feet of Gamaliel; the language they would hear in the synagogue as the Law was read. The tribune would probably know something of the Aramaic but he doesn't understand what Paul is saying (Act_22:24).

Most critics, however, believe Paul, being a Hellenistic Jew, who instead of speaking Greek speaks to them in the common language of the people of Jerusalem getting their attention.

÷Act_22:1
Act_22:1 *Paul addresses the people from the steps.*

22:1–22 *Paul's first of 6 defenses (cf.* Act_22:30 – Act_23:10*;* Act_24:10-21*;* Act_25:1-12*;* Act_26:1-29*;* Act_28:17-29*).*

"Brothers and fathers, -- The Greek is "Men, brothers, and fathers." It is the same opening that Stephen had used for the Sanhedrin (Act_7:2) and was probably the regular form used when addressing a mixed group of men his own age and others older who were to be respected.

This is considered an idiom because Paul was over sixty by this point and this does not likely fit the age of the mob.

hear the defense that I now make before you." -- Paul pleads for them to listen to him as he vindicates himself. We get the English term "apology" from this Greek word (*apologia*). It means a legal verb defense. This term is used several times in Acts related to Paul's trial (cf. Act_25:16; 2Ti_4:16).

÷Act_22:2
Act_22:2

And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, -- See the note on Act_21:40 for the language Paul may have used on this occasion. Either it was Aramaic, the language commonly spoken in Palestine, or pure Hebrew as used in the synagogue and Temple.

From the reaction of the people, and the fact that the tribune doesn't understand it, I think Paul is using pure Hebrew to get their attention.

they became even more quiet. -- The noun in the original refers not only to peace from cries and shouts, but to general quietness, such as would be produced by refraining from all movements. It expresses a very high degree of quietness.

And he said: -- Paul is able to proceed with his defense.

÷Act_22:3
Act_22:3

"I am a Jew, -- Paul proudly proclaims he is a Jew. This emphasizes to the audience that the allegations against him by the Asian Jews are false

born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, -- (See note on Act_21:39.) He states his close connection with Jerusalem itself. He had been born as an Hellenistic Jew, but had moved to Jerusalem (or been sent there by his father) as a young man to be schooled in Jewish law and history.

educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, -- (See the note on Gamaliel at Act_5:34 regarding this distinguished teacher.) Paul had studied under the most celebrated rabbi of that day. He had received extensive training in both the OT law and the rabbinic traditions.

Though he doesn't mention it on this occasion he had been a Pharisee (Act_23:6; Php_3:5).

being zealous for God as all of you are this day. -- Paul proudly emphasizes to the audience that the allegations against him are false; he worships the same God as they all do. His studies has its effect, he became zealous in serving God.

÷Act_22:4
Act_22:4

I persecuted this Way -- "The Way" was one of the early designations for describing those following the teachings of Jesus. See note on Act_9:2.

This description of Christianity apparently came from Jesus' description of Himself (Joh_14:6), appears several times in Acts (Act_19:9; Act_19:23; Act_22:4; Act_24:14; Act_24:22).

to the death, -- As the leading persecutor of the Christian church after Stephen's martyrdom (cf. Gal_1:13), Paul's zeal for his Jewish heritage far outstripped that of his hearers.

We are not told of any Christians who were put to death through Saul's zealous persecution except Stephen. But we have his own statement in this verse, and the stronger expression Act_26:10, "when they were put to death I gave my voice against them," make it certain that the persecutions in which he took part were carried beyond imprisonment even to the martyrdom of the accused.

binding and delivering to prison both men and women, -- Cf. Act_8:1-3. Paul apparently traveled to various cities and searched towns and synagogues for those who professed to believe in Jesus as the Christ (Act_9:1-2).

÷Act_22:5
Act_22:5

as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. -- Paul was well known among the elite of the Jerusalem. The "council of elders" refers to the Sanhedrin (Act_4:15).

Josephus tells of the rights the Sanhedrin had to extradite false Jewish teachers from foreign cities, (1st Maccabees 15.21) 1Ma_15:21 *'Therefore if any pestilent men have fled to you from their country, hand them over to Simon the high priest, that he may punish them according to their law."*

From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. -- Cf. Act_9:1-4.

In Paul's earnestness against the Christians he had obtained a commission from the Jewish authorities to carry his persecution as far as Damascus.

Though it was now more than twenty years since Paul's conversion, yet it was probable that some members of the Sanhedrin which granted him his commission were still alive, and the records of the transaction were doubtless preserved and could be appealed to.

÷Act_22:6
Act_22:6

The second of 3 NT accounts of Paul's conversion, see also Act_9:1-19; Act_26:12-18.

"As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, -- There was a large Jewish population in this city and the Jerusalem leaders had apparently heard of many of "the Way" there also.

about noon -- Paul's reference to the time of day emphasizes how bright the light from heaven really was. It outshone the sun at its peak.

a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. -- It was not just a vision that appear to Paul alone, it was something real that all those with him could witness in part to.

a great light -- See Act_9:1 notes for "What Saul Saw While Blind."

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EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION:

1. Pentecost- Act_2:22 & Act_2:36-47
2. Samaria- Act_8:4-13
3. Ethiopian eunuch- Act_8:26-39
4. Paul (Saul)- Act_9:1-20 & Act_26:12-18
5. Cornelius– Act_10:1-48 & Act_11:1-18
6. Lydia- Act_16:13-15
7. Philippian jailer- Act_16:23-34
8. Corinthians- Act_18:8

÷Act_22:7
Act_22:7

And I fell to the ground -- From Act_26:14 we find that Saul and all his companions fell to the ground, dazzled by the intense brightness. More in the vision was made evident to Saul than to the others. (Act_9:7)
This experience of Jesus' glory is so overwhelming that it forces Saul to the ground (compare Eze_1:28; Dan_10:9; Rev_1:17).

and heard a voice -- Paul's hearing was different from the hearing of his companions. He hear intelligible words, while the others heard the voice but did not understand the speech (Act_9:7; Act_22:9). The reasons was that Paul heard the Lord speaking to him in Hebrew (Act_26:14) which apparently those traveling with Paul didn't understand.

saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, -- Jesus' repetition of Saul's name may suggest a sense of urgency or of compassion (compare Luk_10:41; Luk_22:31)

why are you persecuting me?' -- In persecuting the Church, Saul was persecuting Jesus Himself (Act_8:1-3; Act_9:1-2). The emphasis in the Greek is on the word "me."

Four of Life's Greatest Questions:
(All on one page of my Bible)

1 v. 7	Why persecutiest thou me?
2 v. 8	Who arth thou Lord?
3 v.10	What shall I do?
4 v.16	Why tarriest thou?

Some Various Comings of Christ

***1 Emmanuel**, Mat_1:23; Joh_1:14; Joh_6:38; Gal_4:4 This was the coming of the Lord in the flesh, his birth at Bethlehem.

2 Pentecost, Mat_16:28 (Mar_9:1) Mar_14:62, Mat_26:64 In some significant way it could be said that Christ also came on Pentecost representatively when he sent his promise of the Holy Spirit.

3 To Paul at His Conversion __ Act_26:16, Act_22:7-9 ; 1Co_15:8 The Lord came to Paul so he could see him alive after his crucifixion and thus qualify him to be an apostle.

4 In Visions -- To Paul at Jerusalem, Act_22:17-18 (after conversion); At Corinth, Act_18:9; again at Jerusalem, Act_23:11

5 AD 70, His coming in judgment upon the Jews for their rejection. Mat_24:27, Mat_24:30, Mat_24:44, Mat_24:39; Mar_13:26-30; Luk_21:20-27; Heb_10:37; Jas_5:8

This brought an end to their nation, the temple, the physical priesthood coming from Levi, the end of animal sacrifices, etc. ("Last days"[of the Jewish dispensation] plural)

***6 The Resurrection Day** (His Second Coming, -- Cf. "Last Day" singular) 1Th_4:13 ff to 1Th_5:11; 1Co_15:23-24 ff; Joh_14:1-3;

Joh_5:28; Joh_11:24; Joh_6:39; Joh_6:40; Joh_6:44;

÷Act_22:8
Act_22:8

And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' -- Why does Saul call Him "Lord" if he didn't know who He was? 1) "Lord" was a title of respect, like "sir" (Joh_4:11); or, 2) he used "LORD" like in the OT (Gen_2:4).

Saul is aware of the Divine nature of the vision, and shows this by his address "Lord."

The appearance of Jesus, though in a glorified body, seems not to have been recognized. We may conclude from this that Paul had not seen or known Jesus during His ministerial life.

And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, -- Jesus is often identified as being a Nazarene to differentiate him from others of the same name (Act_2:22; Act_3:6; Act_4:10; Act_6:14; Mat_2:23; Mar_14:67). The name "Jesus" was a name found among the Israelites.

Saul was aware of who "Jesus of Nazareth" was. He had been put to death while His disciples claimed He was resurrected and now returned to heaven.

whom you are persecuting.' -- It is impossible for us who have heard the story of Jesus from infancy to fully realize the thoughts and feelings which flashed through the heart of Saul upon hearing these words. Here, suddenly Saul is realizing a terrible mistake he had made in his life.

> Up to this moment he had held Jesus to be an imposter, cursed of God and man, and His followers blasphemers worthy of death. But now this hated being is suddenly revealed to him in a blaze of divine glory. The evidence of eyes and ears cannot be doubted! There stands Jesus, with the light of heaven and the glory of God around Him, and He says, "I am Jesus." Stephen was right then, and I have shed innocent blood. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" - (McGarvey)

÷Act_22:9
Act_22:9

Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. -- From the information given in Act_9:7; Act_22:9 and Act_26:14 we learn that all the men with Saul saw the light, fell to the ground, and heard a voice speaking but did not understand what was being said, apparently because the Lord was speaking in Hebrew to Saul.

We are reminded of what occured in Dan_10:7, where people around the prophet Daniel could not understand the entire event but knew the vision was terrifying.

÷Act_22:10
Act_22:10

And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' -- One of the great questions in the Bible. Wise men will still ask this of the Lord. Paul is ready to be submissive to the Lord's directions.

And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, -- Time for Paul to get up off the ground and make his way into the nearby city.

The Lord will send a man to Straight Street, to the house of Judas where Paul will be lodging, and this man will deliver instructions to him.

and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' -- The mission that the Lord has for Saul/Paul will be communicate to him by a man the Lord will send. That man, Ananias, will explain the significance of the Lord appearing and speaking to Paul directly. Act_9:6; Act_26:16.

See Act_9:9-17 for the account where Ananias is visited by the Lord and given instructions for him to deliver to Paul.

At this point in Paul's rehearsal of his conversion to King Agrippa in Acts 26, he explains what he learned from the Lord through Ananias about his mission as a witness to the Gentiles, Act_26:16-17.

While Paul now comes to believe in Jesus Christ, he is still in his sins (See note on Act_22:16). So Paul is not "saved on the road" to Damascus, but when he obeys the Lord's command (Mat_28:19-20; Mar_16:15-16) and his sins are washed away by the blood of Christ Rev_1:5.

÷Act_22:11
Act_22:11

And since I could not see because of the brightness [glory] of that light, -- Here Paul explains the problems of his blindness. His companions saw the light, but only Paul saw the Lord Jesus Christ (Act_22:14; Act_9:7, Act_9:17, Act_9:27; Act_26:16; 1Co_9:1; 1Co_15:8).

I was led by the hand by those who were with me, -- This indicates that the group was traveling by foot. Those with Paul are not blinded by the light. The blindness, like the healing, were supernatural.

and came into Damascus. -- Damascus was probably in sight of the men, or not more than a half-day journey. Act_9:8; Act_26:16;

÷Act_22:12
Act_22:12

"And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, -- Paul described Ananias as devout by the standard of the Mosaic Law. This is the third time Luke describes a man as "devout" (Act_2:5; Act_8:2)

In Luke's account in Act_9:10 he is also described as a disciple, and therefore an obedient believer in Jesus as the Messiah.

well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, -- He was a man who had a good reputation among his fellow Jews. Paul sought to impress his hearers with the fact that a pious Jew had communicated God's mission to him, Act_9:10 ff.

When Paul recounts his conversion to King Agrippa in Acts 26 he does not mention the role Ananias played in his healing or baptism but condenses the story (Act_26:19-20).

÷Act_22:13
Act_22:13

came to me, -- Ananias was told he could find Saul/Paul in the house of a man by the name of Judas who lived on Straight street. It appears that Ananias, being well known among the Jews, knew Judas and where he lived.

and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, -- Ananias is ushered to Saul's presence and addresses him as a "brother" Jew, because he not a "brother in Christ" just yet. He will be shortly instructed in verse 16 how he is demonstrate his obedience to Christ and received forgiveness of his sins.

Ananias will in Act_22:14-15 inform him why the Lord had appeared to him.

receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. -- Ananias had been told by the Lord in a vision about Saul's blindness and that he was to heal him, (Act_9:11-12; Act_9:17). He told Saul about the vision and laid his hands on him and he received his sight. Act_9:18 describes it as *"something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight."*

÷Act_22:14
Act_22:14

And he said, 'The God of our fathers -- Paul reinforces the truth to his Jewish audience from the stairs that the God who commissioned him is the God of Israel, Yahweh. This phrase is used in the OT to refer to Yahweh and to His promises (compare Deu_1:11; Deu_26:7).

appointed [chosen] you -- The verb, which is found only in the Acts in the NT, has the sense of committing a work into someone's hands.

to know his will, -- For this reason Paul often in the opening of his Epistles speaks of himself as an Apostle according to the will of God. 1Co_1:1; 2Co_1:1; Eph_1:1; Col_1:1, and the whole passage Eph_1:1-11 is a comment on this clause.

to see the Righteous [Just] One -- Again this title is used in the prophecy of the Suffering Servant in Isa_53:11, to refer to how the Suffering Servant makes others right before Yahweh via His death and resurrection (cf. Isa_53:10; ; see note at Act_3:14; Act_7:52; 1Jn_2:1).

and to hear a voice from his mouth; -- By seeing and hearing the voice of Jesus Paul is qualified to truly be a witness to His resurrection, and to preach that Jesus is alive. In this way Paul was taught by Jesus as was the other Apostles.

÷Act_22:15
Act_22:15

for you will be a witness for him -- The commission given to Paul was in the same terms as Christ spoke to the eleven in Act_1:8, before His ascension. Compare Act_9:15-16.

to everyone of what you have seen and heard. -- This was the subject of Paul's preaching everywhere, and why he undertook the three mission trips.

÷Act_22:16
Act_22:16

And now why do you wait? -- In Paul's work of persecuting the Christians he had come to know their practice when committing themselves to Jesus as the Christ and pledging to follow him and all his teaching; to make Him the LORD of their life.

Rise and be baptized, -- Ananias now asks Paul to make that confession of faith in Jesus and obey his command to be baptized and receive the forgiveness of his sins. (Rom_10:9-10; Mar_16:15-16; Act_2:38; 1Pe_3:21; see note on Rom_6:3-6).

and wash away your sins, -- In one's obedience to Christ his sins are wish away by the blood of Christ (Rev_1:5). Baptism is spoken of as a "washing" in other contexts as well (1Co_6:11; Eph_5:26; Tit_3:5; Heb_10:22). The nature of this "washing" is spiritual, not physical (1Pe_3:21.)

calling on his name.' -- This is the term often used to indicate one is trusting Jesus, His commands, His way of life, for salvation. It embraces the full process of being saved according to God's plan through Christ.

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What are the components the scriptures speak of as leading to salvation:

[See also note "**What Does God Want From Us?**" at **Heb_11:6**.]

One must **Hear** the Gospel message: Rom_10:17, Mat_7:24-27

One must **Believe** in Christ: Heb_11:6, Mar_16:16 (Not faith only- Jas_2:24, Joh_12:42) (To put one's trust, and commitment to Christ and his teaching.)

One must **Repent** of his sins: Act_2:38, Act_17:30, Luk_13:3

One must **Confess** his faith in the Lord: Mat_10:32-33, Act_8:36-37; Rom_10:10; 1Ti_6:12-13; 2Ti_1:8; 1Jo_4:15;

One must be **Baptized** into a union with Christ:

Purpose: Act_2:38, Mar_16:15-16, Act_22:16, 1Pe_3:20-21, Act_10:48, Joh_3:5, Luk_7:30.

Read 2Co_5:17 with Gal_3:27.

The Action is a burial: Rom_6:3-5, Act_8:36-38, Mar_1:9-10, Joh_3:23.

Proper Candidates for baptism:
Those taught- Mat_28:19, (See also Isa_28:9),
Believers- Mar_16:15-16, Act_8:36-37,
Those who repent- Act_2:38,
Those confessing their faith- Act_8:36-38, Mat_10:32-33.
(Therefore Infants are not proper candidates: Mat_18:3, Mar_10:13-15, Eze_18:20, Rom_14:12.)

One must remain **Faithful**: Rev_2:10

÷Act_22:17
Act_22:17

"When I had returned to Jerusalem -- Paul on this occasion does not tell of his 3 years in Arabia (Gal_1:17-18) or his brief ministry in Damascus before escaping that city (Act_9:20-25).

Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion was short. Barnabas had introduced him to the disciples there (Act_9:26-27) but the Hellenists Jews sought to kill him (Act_9:29).

and was praying in the temple, -- It is worthy to note how often in his address Paul incidentally expresses himself in such a way as to conciliate the crowd. His visit to the temple for the purpose of prayer was again proof that he was not likely to despise Jewish ordinances and religious observances.

I fell into a trance -- Here again he saw Jesus speaking to him and warning him of the danger to his life. (See the notes at 2Co_12:1 and Gal_1:12, regarding Christ's revelations to Paul.)

Six of Paul's visions are recorded in Acts (Act_9:12; Act_16:9-10; Act_18:9; Act_22:17-18; Act_23:11; Act_27:23-24), and his letters speak of revelations he had received (cf. Gal_1:12; Gal_2:2; Eph_3:3).

÷Act_22:18
Act_22:18

and saw him saying to me, -- No mention is made in Act_9:29-30 of the vision that had appeared to Saul commanding him to depart from Jerusalem. It is only said that "the disciples" sent him away. But these two statements are not inconsistent with each other. Saul might be warned to go, and the disciples at the same time prompted to send him. Paul did not just desert them by leaving them without their knowledge.

'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, -- We know from Gal_1:18 that the duration of the Apostle's stay in Jerusalem was but fifteen days.

because they will not accept your testimony about me.' -- While Paul thought (Act_22:19-20) surely they would listen to him, the Lord knew they wanted to kill him (Act_9:29).

÷Act_22:19
Act_22:19

And I said, 'Lord, -- (Paul is still repeating what he had said to the Lord when He appeared to him in the Temple in Jerusalem, see verse 17.)

The grammatical reference of "Lord" could be either to "the God of our fathers" (Act_22:14) or "the Righteous One" (Act_22:14). The Jewish mob would have understood YHWH, but any believers present there would have understood Jesus.

The transference of "Lord" is common in OT quotes where the fulfillment is seen in Jesus in the NT.

they themselves know -- The Greek pronoun here is emphatic. "They themselves" is not regular English, but there seems to be no other way of indicating in our language the emphasis which is expressed in the original. Saul is confident that he will be well known by many to whom he is speaking, and that his zealous persecution of the Christians only a few years before cannot have escaped their memory.

that in one synagogue after another -- The synagogues were places where such punishment was inflicted (cp. Mat_10:17; Mat_23:34, Mar_13:9, Luk_21:12. They were also the places where the believers could reply to the charges against them, Luk_12:11.

I imprisoned and beat those -- The Greek tense here indicates multiple actions in the past. Paul's persecution had been wide-spread and had been severe for a spell.

> The *chazan*, or synagogue attendant, was normally responsible for beating wayward Jews as public discipline for their crimes, after judges (probably elders; rabbis in a later period) pronounced judgment. If Paul had been given this responsibility, it was due to some respected authorization (similar to that mentioned in Act_22:5).- IVPBBCNT

who believed in you. -- The Jews who had come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. It would refer to those like who like the 3,000 had obeyed on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

÷Act_22:20
Act_22:20

And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by -- (Note that Paul is still repeating what he had said to the Lord when He appeared to him in the Temple in Jerusalem, see verse 17.)

Most likely Saul/Paul was one of those, if not the ring-leader, in the Hellenists synagogues in Jerusalem that debated with Stephen (Act_6:9-10). Stephen got the best of Paul in that debate, so the Hellenists had turned on Stephen to kill him (Act_7:54-60).

and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.' -- Act_7:58. Paul asserts that he consented to the martyrdom of Stephen, the first recorded Christian martyr.

÷Act_22:21
Act_22:21

And he said to me, -- Paul continues to report what the Lord had communicated to him in the vision in the Temple (Act_22:17).

'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" -- The Lord Himself gave Paul a special commission to go to the "far away" Gentiles. And implied, is that he is to take to them the message that Christ is the chosen Messiah of God, and the Savior of all those of "The Way" (Act_22:4).

Paul explains to his fellow Jews that he undertook these mission trips to the Gentiles because he was commissioned by the LORD Himself.

Up to this point Paul had kept back the word despised among the Jews ("Gentiles") which he knew would arouse their anger. He had proceeded this far with a conciliatory tone in much of his speech to keep their attention.

÷Act_22:22
Act_22:22

> **22:22–29** *Paul's audience reacts violently to his speech, and the Roman commander seeks to learn why the Jewish people are so upset with Paul by using torture. Paul escapes flogging by calling attention to his Roman citizenship (see Act_16:37).*

Up to this word they listened to him. -- While attentive they were surely not well-pleased with much of what they heard. At Paul's mention of "Gentiles" they probably remembered the current charge against him of bringing Gentiles into the Temple.

Paul was probably planning to tell how God had blessed his work among the Gentiles in his travels, but he never had the opportunity.

Then they raised their voices -- Paul's reference to "Gentiles" triggers the resumption of their shouting against him.

and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live." -- It is the sentiment of the mob that Paul should be put to death. They considered him a man who was not "fit" to live.

÷Act_22:23
Act_22:23

And as they were shouting -- They began again crying out against Paul and the confusion is such that the tribune doesn't understand why they are shouting against him (Act_22:24).

and throwing off their cloaks -- Paul's Jewish audience at the foot of the stairs may be actually tearing their garments because they believe he is committing blasphemy (see Act_14:14 and note) or taking them off in order to kill Paul by stoning him (Act_7:58).

and flinging dust into the air, -- Perhaps unable to find stones to cast at Paul all they could find in the Temple complex was dust to throw (2Sa_16:13; Job_2:12; Rev_18:19).

It as been suggested that their acton was similar to Paul's shaking the dust off his garments to indicate that those who opposed him had been rejected (Act_13:51; Act_18:6).

÷Act_22:24
Act_22:24

the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, -- Paul would be safer from the mob by being held in the quarters of the Roman soldiers.

saying that he should be examined by flogging, -- The tribune is going to turn the prisoner over to a centurion to question and get the truth out of him. The standard operating procedure for the Romans to do this was by flogging him. They didn't expect a criminal to tell the truth until it was beaten out of him.

to find out why they were shouting against him like this. -- By a brutal interrogation the tribune expected to find what the raucous was all about.

÷Act_22:25
Act_22:25

But when they had stretched him out for the whips, -- In preparation for the scourging Paul was stretched out, either 1) by hoisting him into the air with the chains that bound him, or 2) by stretching him over a flogging pillar.

This may well have been the same quarters where Jesus had been scouraged by the Romans on the order of Pilate (Mat_27:26; Mar_15:15; Joh_19:1).

Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, -- The centurion had been left to carry out the procedure by Claudius Lysias, the tribune, who was in charge of entire Roman force in Jerusalem.

"Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?" -- Roman citizens were exempted from such brutal methods of interrogation. Roman law forbade the punishment of a citizen without a trial. Paul now exerted his rights as a Roman citizen.

The tribune then questions him (Act_22:27-28) regarding his Roman citizenship because the penalty for falsely claiming Roman citizenship was death.

÷Act_22:26
Act_22:26

When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune -- The centurion must have been shocked to hear this from Paul, and now it was time for the tribune to be shocked.

and said to him, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen." -- The centurion informed his commander of Paul's citizenship, cautioning him against an act that could have ended Lysias' military career—or even cost him his life.

It was forbidden, under heavy penalty, by the *Lex Porcia*, to scourge a Roman citizen (Liv. 10:9). [This text can be read on Google.]

÷Act_22:27
Act_22:27

So the tribune came and said to him, -- Alarmed by the report the centurion brought, the tribune came quickly to the place of the scourging.

"Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" -- The "you" is emphasized. This Roman officer was skeptical in believing Paul was a Roman citizen. They are probably now conversing in Greek.

Paul's body would now have welts and bruises from the attempts of the Jewish mob to kill him before the Romans intervened. He surely didn't look the part of a Roman citizen at the moment.

And he said, "Yes." -- Roman citizenship was a valuable asset, and claiming it falsely was a capital offense. Its principal benefits were the prohibition of scourging and the right to appeal to the emperor (Act_25:11).

Each city had a citizenship list, and it would not be too difficult to find out whether a prisoner was making a false claim to being a Roman citizen. The punishment for making such a false claim was death. (Suetonius, *Claudius*, XXV)

÷Act_22:28
Act_22:28

The tribune answered, "I bought this citizenship for a large sum." -- Roman citizenship was not officially for sale, but could sometimes be obtained by bribing corrupt officials.

It has been suggested that it was by both wealth and influence that Lysias had become a superior officer in the Roman army. (Bruce, p. 416.)

Paul said, "But I am a citizen by birth." -- How Paul came to be a Roman citizen by birth is unknown; some ancestor may have been rewarded with citizenship for meritorious conduct or service. Tarsus was a free city, and had its own laws and magistrates, but just living there did not automatically provide Roman citizenship.

By learning Paul had Roman citizenship he was suddenly elevated in the mind of the tribune. It could indicate to him that Paul was from a wealthy and an important influential family.

÷Act_22:29
Act_22:29

So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, -- The words "to examine him" is euphemistically put for the scourging which had been proposed to obtain information from Paul. The centurion and soldiers immediately unbind their prisoner.

and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen -- The tribune had not even considered that his prisoner could be a Roman citizen. He was about to break a Roman law which could have serious consequence for him.

and that he had bound him [put him in chains]. -- To just bound a Roman citizen who was a prisoner was not prohibited. But to bind one for the purpose of scourging was a major offense. This is what worried the commander.

Paul often speaks in the Epistles written during his imprisonment at Rome, of the bonds and the "chain" with which he was afflicted. (Compare. Php_1:7, Php_1:13-14, Php_1:16; Col_4:18; Phm_1:10-13; also Act_28:20.)

The next verse in this chapter shows that though the Apostle was unloosed from the whipping-post, he was still kept in bands.

÷Act_22:30
Act_22:30

But on the next day, -- The commander does not waste time, he is anxious that justice be done, and he acts speedily to see the matter through.

desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, -- The tribune still doesn't know what the raucous was about and believes the best way to get to the bottom of the matter is to have a meeting between Paul and the Jewish leaders and allow both sides to state their grievances.

he unbound him -- For the meeting Paul is given freedom from his chains or bonds.

and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, -- He had apparently discovered that the offence charged against his prisoner was concerning the religion of the Jews. He therefore summons the chief religious authorities who were best able to decide whether any wrong had been done.

With his authority, he summons the Jewish Sanhedrin to come to a meeting. Just where this meeting takes place is not specified. But it seems to have been in some part of the facilities of Fort Antonia. (See note at Act_21:31.)

The place where the Sanhedrin met for their own consultations was called *Lishkath-Haggazith* and was a hall built of cut stone so situated that one half was built on holy ground while the other half on profane ground; and it had two doors, one admittance to each separate section.

and he brought Paul down -- The fort was located on the highest part above the temple mound, so that wherever he had to go, the Commander must "come down" with his prisoner.

and set him before them. -- The Commander appears to have withdrawn to watch over the meeting and gave Paul over to them for examination, still taking care that he should not let him become the victim of a mob again (see Act_23:10).

÷Act_23:1
Act_23:1

And looking intently at the council, -- The "council" was the Sanhedrin, the governing Jewish body in Jerusalem over religious matters. The group consisted of both Pharisees and Sadducees who held many opposing viewpoints. (See Act_23:7-8).

Paul said, "Brothers, -- Paul calls Jews "brothers" several times (Act_13:26; Act_13:38; Act_22:1; Act_22:5; Act_23:1; Act_23:5-6). The Jews call Paul brother in Act_13:15. Ananias called him brother in Act_9:17, as does the church in Jerusalem in Act_21:20.

However, Christians also called each other by this title (example Act_9:30; Act_10:23; Act_11:1; Act_11:12; Act_12:17; Act_15:3; Act_15:7; Act_15:13; Act_15:22).

I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day." -- The pronoun "I" is emphatic in the Greek. Paul referred to his conscience as his guide in 2Co_1:12; Act_24:16; 2Ti_1:3; (cf. notes there).

Paul had learned that just having a "good conscience" is not the judge of what is right or wrong, but only God. It is only when one's conscience has been enlightened by the Word of God can one trust his conscience's approval.
- - - -
Good conscience -- SINCERITY NOT ENOUGH
Paul was- Act_23:1 & Act_26:9-11, 1Ti_1:12-16, Act_7:58-60 & Act_8:1.
Cornelius was--- Act_10:1-2 & Act_11:13-14.
See also Pro_14:12, Luk_16:15, Isa_55:8-9.

÷Act_23:2
Act_23:2

And the high priest Ananias -- Ananias, who was head of the Sanhedrin council, was the corrupt high priest who ruled around AD 47–58. First-century Jewish historian Josephus records that he was quick-tempered (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.197–99), and one of the most disgraceful men who held the office of high priest.

This is not the same as the Ananias of Luk_3:2, Joh_18:13, or Act_4:7, but a later one (Ananias, son of Nedebaeus). Josephus tells us that later he and his brother were killed by insurrectionists (*Wars* 2.17.9).

commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. -- This was an illegal action according to Jewish Law, but it was in keeping with Ananias' brutal character. The verb translated "strike" is used of the mob's beating of Paul (act 21:32) and the Roman soldiers' beating of Jesus (Mat_27:30). It was not a mere slap on the face, but a vicious blow.

÷Act_23:3
Act_23:3

Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, -- This was perhaps a prophecy put in Paul's mouth by the Lord; for it is a fact that not many years later the reprobate Ananias was murdered by his own people at the time of the beginning of the Jewish war.

you whitewashed wall! -- It is uncertain whether Paul was using this term as a Jewish metaphor for hypocrisy (cf. Mat_23:27) or if it was meant to be an allusion to Eze_13:10-15.

Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?" -- Paul called attention to the high priest's own flagrant violation of Jewish law as hypocrisy on his part. (See Lev_19:15.)

Paul later admits that Ananias, who held a God-ordained office, was to be granted the respect that his position demanded.

÷Act_23:4
Act_23:4

Those who stood by said, -- The other members of the council was appalled by Paul's harsh rebuke of the high priest.

"Would you revile God's high priest?" -- "Revile" is the same word used in Joh_9:28 to describe the Jewish leaders' insulting remarks to the blind man whom Jesus had healed. Peter used it to speak of the abuse Jesus endured (1Pe_2:23).

÷Act_23:5
Act_23:5

And Paul said, "I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, -- It is possible Paul had never seen Ananias and was not aware he was the high priest. This was a meeting called by the Roman commander and not an official meeting of the council where the high priest would be wearing his official garments.

It is also possible that Paul was speaking sarcastically: He did not recognize Ananias because Ananias was not acting the way the high priest was supposed to act.

Some believe this is addition evidence that Paul had eye problems (cf. Gal_4:15).

for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'" -- Paul is quoting Exo_22:28.

÷Act_23:6
Act_23:6

Now when Paul perceived -- Ananias' haughty attitude and illegal act convinced Paul he would not receive a fair hearing before the Sanhedrin. Accordingly, he decided on a bold step. As a Pharisee, and possibly a former member of the Sanhedrin (cf. Act_26:10), Paul was well aware of the tensions between the Sanhedrin's two factions.

that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, -- The "Sadducees," being very political, were the ruling religious class in Judea in the first-century AD. See Mar_12:18.

The "Pharisees" were devoted to the practice and teaching of the law (Joh_7:32).

"Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. -- When he refers to himself as "a son of Pharisees" he is stating that by descent and birth his family had for generations been members of that party. Having said this, he then threw out a theological issue that the Sadducees and Pharisees disagreed about.

It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial." -- The Sadducees denied the resurrection and an afterlife, while the Pharisees affirmed it (cf. Job_14:14; Job_19:23-27; Dan_12:2). This set the two factions of the council against each other (cf. Act_7:1-10).

÷Act_23:7
Act_23:7

And when he had said this, a dissension arose -- There were major social, political, and theological differences between the Sadducees and Pharisees. The division between these two Jewish sects was always just under the surface. Paul fanned the flames.

between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. -- Paul is using the truth of the resurrection, with it being also the central theme of Christianity, to put the Pharisees in his corner against Sadducees.

÷Act_23:8
Act_23:8

For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, -- (Mar_12:18) In spite of the mention of angels in the OT they appear to have explained the language in such wise as to deny the existence of any spiritual beings distinct from God Himself.

In political matters the Sadducees were on the side of Rome, and in consequence are found uniting at times with the Herodians.

but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. -- Significantly, the Scripture records the conversion of some Pharisees (Act_15:5; Joh_3:1), but not of Sadducees.

÷Act_23:9
Act_23:9

Then a great clamor [cry] arose, -- The noise was of an excited mob. It is the same word that is used in the parable of the Ten Virgins, (Mat_25:6) to describe the shout (G2906) "the bridegroom cometh."

and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' party stood up and contended sharply, -- So intense was their theological disagreement with the Sadducees that some were willing to defend Paul, even though he was a leader of the hated sect of the Christians (cf. Act_24:5).

"We find nothing wrong in this man. -- This was the acquittal that could have won Paul's freedom, but this was not said as a vote by a judge. It was said in the heat of argument, and perhaps with a tone of delight.

What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?" -- These scribes were asserting that Paul had seen something from the spiritual realm, but exactly what they were not sure. Their immediate and forceful defense of Paul shows how biased they were against the Sadducees in their own group.

Some manuscripts close verse 9 with the words, "Let us not fight against God" (cf.NKJV). If these words were part of the original text, they would be an almost exact reproduction of the advice given years before by Gamaliel (Act_5:39)

÷Act_23:10
Act_23:10

And when the dissension became violent, -- With yelling matches going on among the Sanhedrin members, and physical scuffling among some, it was becoming a dangerous place for the prisoner.

Some were defending Paul, and others wanted him dead, even more today than they did the day before. It must have quickly become clear to the commander that he was not going to learn much more about the charges against Paul on this occasion.

the tribune [chief captain], -- While certainly not presiding over the meeting he must have been in some position where he could watch all the proceedings.

afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, -- The Pharisees began to consider themselves as protector of Paul and the possession of his person began the object of a struggle between them and the Sadducees.

commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force -- This gives credence to the belief that the meeting was conducted in close proximity to the tower of Antonia, where the soldiers could do as they were bidden without offense to the Jewish sanctity of the Temple (see note on Act_22:30).

and bring him into the barracks. -- Twice now the Roman government had saved Paul's life in Jerusalem. In Rom_13:4 Paul expresses the government as a minister of God. (And this may also relate to "the one who restrains" in 2Th_2:6.)

÷Act_23:11
Act_23:11

The following night the Lord stood by him -- The designation "Lord" here refers to Jesus, who had also appeared to him earlier and did so on several crucial occasions in his ministry (See note on Act_22:17).

Paul was probably shaken from the danger he had been in that day, and the Lord appears to strengthen him.

and said, "Take courage [take heart; be of good cheer], -- This is the only use of this term in Luke's writings. We can hear in our minds, Paul himself sharing these exact words from the Lord with Luke. Jesus used the term several times (cf. Mat_9:2, Mat_9:22; Mat_14:27; Joh_16:33).

for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, -- Paul had stood faithfully for the truth of Jesus as the resurrection Messiah (Act_22:8-10). This appearance reminds us of the vision at Corinth, Act_18:9.

so you must testify [bear witness] also in Rome." -- Jesus encouraged Paul by telling him that his desire (Rom_1:9-11; Rom_15:23) to visit Rome would be granted.

÷Act_23:12
Act_23:12

> **23:12–35** *The Jewish conspiracy to kill Paul is discovered by Paul's nephew. For his protection, the Romans transfer Paul to Caesarea, the seat of the Roman government in Judaea*

When it was day, -- While the Lord comforted Paul in the night, some Jews wasted no time, they made ready a plot to destroy Paul.

the Jews made a plot -- We are not told what Jewish party planned this plot, but most likely they were members of the *Sicarii,* or the party of assassins who resented strongly the Romans protecting Paul. (See note at Act_21:38).

and bound themselves by an oath -- It was an invocation of God's vengeance upon themselves if they failed to do the work which they pledged to undertake. (cf. 1Sa_14:44; 2Sa_3:35; 2Sa_19:13; 1Ki_2:23; 2Ki_6:31).

neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. -- This was to assure themselves that there was no time to be lost; their work must be promptly executed.

÷Act_23:13
Act_23:13

There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. -- By showing the strength of the plot against Paul, Luke (the narrator) illustrates God's power and involvement to overturn such a plot.

It also shows the excited popular feeling among the Jewish opponents of Paul. They apparently had no confidence that any of their accusations against him would succeed in getting the Roman authorities to execute him.

÷Act_23:14
Act_23:14

They went to the chief priests and elders -- Most likely it is to the Sadducees in the council that the assassins reveal their plot. This makes the Sanhedrin a part of the conspiracy by their foreknowledge of the plan.

It is significant that being omitted from being notified are the scribes who, being mostly Pharisees, had already shown their willingness to defend Paul (Act_23:9).

and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. -- This was a Hebrew mode of expressing the intensity and earnestness of their planned action.

These oath-takers did not kill Paul. One wonders if they starved to death? Apparently the oral tradition allowed a way out of these blood oaths.

÷Act_23:15
Act_23:15

Now therefore you, along with the council, -- The chief priests and elders, of the Sadducees' party, were to use their influence in the council, that a request might proceed from the whole body of the Sanhedrin, that Paul should be again brought before them by the chief captain. From what we read of the Sadducees, in the N. T. and Josephus, it is easy to believe that they would be in a majority.

give notice [notify] to the tribune to bring him down to you, -- That is, from the tower of Antonia to the place where the Sanhedrin held its meetings. The word "notify" is used as a legal term for giving official notice of a formal investigation.

as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. -- The intention of the council to give Paul a fair hearing would cover up any suspicion of their complicity in the crime.

And we are ready to kill him before he comes near." -- Their plot would mean they planned to way-lay Paul on his way to the meeting. Their number of forty was such that they considered they would have to engage the soldiers who would try to protect Paul.

÷Act_23:16
Act_23:16

Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, -- It is unclear how Paul's nephew was in a position to hear of the plot.

This is only clear reference in Scripture to Paul's family (for other possible references see Rom_16:7, Rom_16:11, Rom_16:21). Why he was in Jerusalem, while the family home is Tarsus, is not known. Nor is it evident why he would want to warn his uncle, since Paul's family possibly disinherited him when he became a Christian (Php_3:8).

> This verse raises many tantalizing questions about Paul's family relationships, and is, in fact, one of the few passages in the New Testament that gives any information at all. The verse indicates a friendliness towards Paul, yet it also tends to raise more questions than it answers. Did the sister live in Jerusalem? If so, why did Paul stay with Mnason rather than with his own relatives? Or did only Paul's nephew live in Jerusalem? If only the nephew lives there, was he there as a rabbinical student as Paul himself had been a generation before (Act_22:3)? Or may we assume that he has come up to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost? Is it possible that the son is friendly to Paul even though the sister wasn't? ... Or at this point, has she too become a Christian, and thus would be friendly toward Paul with a friendliness that influences her son to attempt to help Paul? (Reese).

so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. -- Since Paul was not under arrest, but merely in protective custody, he was able to receive visitors.

÷Act_23:17
Act_23:17

Paul called one of the centurions and said, -- The centurion was one of the Roman officers in charge of Paul's military guard. He was under the tribune who was the chief commander of the Roman forces stationed currently in Jerusalem. These forces were usually enlarged during Jewish festival times, such as the current Pentecost holiday.

"Take this young man to the tribune, -- How old was Paul's nephew, here styled a "young man"? The Greek word for "young man" is the same one used of Paul when he was about 35 (Act_7:58), and of Eutychus, who is also called a "boy" (Act_20:9).

for he has something to tell [report] him." -- We have nothing to guide us to know how Paul's nephew came to have knowledge of the plot to murder his uncle. He had perhaps heard among the Jewish population talk about the plans of the would-be assassins.

÷Act_23:18
Act_23:18

So he took him and brought him to the tribune -- The centurion escorted the young man to the presence of the tribune.

and said, "Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, -- "Paul the prisoner" is a term that will become familiar. This is the first time such a title is used, but it afterwards was used by Paul to apply to himself. (Eph_3:1; Eph_4:1; Phm_1:1; Phm_1:9). Some years later, Paul used it as a title of honor and the basis of making pleas to the churches he founded, when he wrote to them

as he has something to say to you." -- The fact that Paul did not tell the centurion the message, but sent the young man, would indicate to the tribune that the message was somewhat confidential and important.

÷Act_23:19
Act_23:19

The tribune took him by the hand, -- This action is probably meant to encourage the young man and to assure him he considered any message from a Roman citizen as important.

and going aside asked him privately, -- The tribune Lysias understands the message to be confidential (see also Act_23:22) and he protects himself against any possible eavesdropping.

"What is it that you have to tell me?" -- Such tip-offs given to the authorities were important and given due consideration. Advance knowledge of any conspiracy in the political climate of that era was a different advantage.

÷Act_23:20
Act_23:20

And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, -- There was apparently just one day interval between the meeting recording in Act_23:9, in which the assassins' plot was hatched, and the day they planned their attack.

as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him. -- The plans for the attack on Paul's life involved the Sanhedrin making a request to meet with Paul again and the pretense they wanted to "inquire more closely" about some things.

÷Act_23:21
Act_23:21

But do not be persuaded by them, -- The young man is warning the commander to not fall into the trap for another requested meeting with Paul.

for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. -- The full plan of the assassins is made known to the commander, along with the oath with which they have bound themselves (see Act_23:12).

The number of "forty men" in the plans for the assault on Paul indicates that the assassins realized they may have to kill some of the Roman soldiers escorting him.

And now they are ready, waiting for your consent." -- It appears the Sanhedrin had already applied to the commander for such a meeting and was waiting for it to be scheduled.

÷Act_23:22
Act_23:22

So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of these things." -- Before the commander lets the young man get away he charges him to keep this meeting with him secret. He doesn't reveal to the young man anything about what his response may be.

÷Act_23:23
Act_23:23

To foil the conspirators' plot, avoid a potentially explosive confrontation with the Jews, and save Paul's life, Lysias realized he had to get the apostle out of Jerusalem and to his superior, Governor Felix in Caesarea.

Then he called two of the centurions -- Undoubtedly these two commanding officers were men he trusted and considered capable of defending the party against any attack.

and said, "Get ready two hundred soldiers, -- The "soldiers" were legionnaires, the elite soldiers of the Roman army. They would be the agressive warriors.

with seventy horsemen -- The "horsemen" were from the garrison's cavalry detachment.

and two hundred spearmen -- The "spearmen," were armed with javelins, (or lancers) and would stand to protect the prisoner. It is estimated that the garrison force in Jerusalem at this time was about 1,000 men (a single cohort), so Lysias sent almost half of his garrison out on this mission (470 plus solders) showing how seriously he viewed the plot against Paul.

Some think this term is referring to 200 extra horses rather than soldiers.

to go as far as Caesarea -- Caesarea was the residence of the Roman governor and the seat of the chief jurisdiction for Judea. The distance between Jerusalem and Caesarea is about 70 miles.

at the third hour of the night. -- This would be Roman time, so leaving at nine o'clock at night allows the military to use the cover of darkness to protect Paul.

÷Act_23:24
Act_23:24

Also provide mounts for Paul to ride -- The mounts (in the plural) for Paul suggest the presence of friends; perhaps Luke was one since he gives such a detailed listing of the escort.

and bring him safely to Felix the governor." -- Obviously Claudius Lysias did not want the assassination of a Roman citizen on his record, so he took precautions to protect Paul. Paul's guards continued to treat him with the respect due a Roman citizen.

Tiberius Claudius Felix, originally a slave, became procurator of Judea in AD 52. He had convinced Drusilla to divorce her husband and marry him (Act_24:24). He secured his position because he and his brother Pallas were slaves in the household of Claudius and given freedom because his brother was well liked by the Emperor Claudius.

Tacitus reports that Felix was corrupt, "having a king's authority but a slave's mind" (from a Roman aristocrat's account). He was removed from office around AD 59 for mishandling conflicts between Jews and Gentiles in Caesarea.

÷Act_23:25
Act_23:25

And he wrote a letter to this effect: -- The empire (except perhaps for Egypt) had no postal service except for official government business; most people sent letters via slaves or friends. The commander sends this letter with the soldiers.

As both the writer and receiver of the letter were Romans, it is most likely that Latin would be the language of the original, and Luke tells us that he gives a representation of the substance of the document rather than its very words. Probably both he and Paul heard the letter read in the presence of the governor.

÷Act_23:26
Act_23:26

"Claudius Lysias, -- Here for the first time the full name of the Jerusalem commander is mentioned.

to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. -- The title "most excellent" is that which is given by Luke at the beginning of his Gospel to the Theophilus for whom he wrote it (Luk_1:3-4). Hence it is probable that Theophilus held some official position. (See the note at Luk_1:3, for more regarding this title.)

Felix was the Governor of Judea from A.D. 52 to 59. He was a former slave whose brother (a favorite of Emperor Claudius) had obtained for him the position as governor, which he retained even after the death of Claudius. He was not highly regarded by the influential Romans of his day and accomplished little during his term as governor. He defeated the Egyptian and his followers (see note on Act_21:38), but his brutality angered the Jews and led to his ouster as governor by Emperor Nero two years after Paul's came into his charge (Act_24:27).

÷Act_23:27
Act_23:27

This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. -- The charge against Paul is a Jewish issue irrelevant to the Romans, but they must take interest because he is a Roman citizen. Lysias is giving himself more credit than he deserves; he did not know Paul was a Roman citizen until after he was in custody and about to be flogged (Act_21:31-36; Act_22:24-29).

Lysias neglected to mention his order to have Paul scourged (Act_22:24), and his mistaken assumption that he was the notorious Egyptian assassin (Act_21:38).

÷Act_23:28
Act_23:28

And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. -- The first method by which captain Lysias proposed to learn the charge against Paul was by scourging the prisoner, which he does not mention to Governor Felix (cf. Act_22:24).

The "council" was a meeting of the Sanhedrin, which was composed of Pharisees and Sadducees. (cf. Act_22:30; Act_23:10.)

÷Act_23:29
Act_23:29

I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, -- cf. Act_23:6-9.

but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. -- This verse fits Luke's pattern of showing that when Christianity and her leaders were accused before governmental officials, they were always acquitted and deemed innocent. Rome had nothing to fear from "the Way"!

÷Act_23:30
Act_23:30

And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, -- The plot against Paul's life rendered any further hearings at Jerusalem unsafe. The plot had been revealed to him by Paul's nephew, Act_23:16 ff.

ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him." -- Lysias implies by his language that he felt that Governor Felix was a more fit person than himself to deal with such a case. Lysias obviously knew that Felix has a better understanding of the religious climate of Judea than he did (cf. Act_24:22).

Undoubtedly, after Paul has been spirited away, Claudius Lysias told the Jewish leaders to go to Caesarea if they wanted to prosecute Paul any further.

÷Act_23:31
Act_23:31

So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul -- All the soldiers the two centurions had gathered formed a party for escorting Paul.

and brought him by night -- Staring early in the night, 9 p.m., they traveled during night-time getting away from Jerusalem before any ambush of the Jews could be prepared.

to Antipatris. -- This was about half way between Jerusalem and Cæsarea. It was an old town rebuilt by Herod the Great and named it Antipatris in memory of his father Antipater. It lay in a beautiful part of the Vale of Sharon and was both well watered and wooded. The exact location of the town is unknown today, but the remains of an old Roman road have been found running through this area.

÷Act_23:32
Act_23:32

And on the next day -- It must have been something of a forced march for the infantry. It was over a route through hilly country. At Antipatris the foot soldiers rested and returned, because at this point (1) it was primarily a Gentile area and (2) the topography was open and flat, so there was little danger of surprise attack.

they returned to the barracks, -- They may be needed in Jerusalem (should the Jews decide to riot over the tribune's spiriting away of Paul), they turn right around after an all-night march and return to the fortress of Antonia.

It is saying something about the Roman army's size, readiness and ability in occupied Jerusalem to gather such a large force quickly and move it out secretly at night with a calvary.

letting the horsemen go on with him. -- Only the seventy cavalrymen travel the 35 miles from Antipatris to Caesarea with Paul. Now that they are out of the hills and on the plain, there is less danger of surprise attack or ambush, and they can travel faster without the infantry.

÷Act_23:33
Act_23:33

When they had come to Caesarea -- (For Caesarea see note also at Act_8:40.)

It would be a half-day journey from Antipatris to Caesarea. They probably entered Caesarea late in the day, and a parade of seventy horsemen with a prisoner would have attracted many curious eyes.

One wonders if Philip and some of the other Christians at Caesarea spotted Paul in the midst of this group. Would they now reflect on how quickly the prophecy of Paul's being bound at Jerusalem had been fulfilled.

and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. -- The prisoner, a Roman citizen, is now turned over to the charge of the governor's forces.

÷Act_23:34
Act_23:34

On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. -- Paul must have been in the Governor's presence while the letter was being read. Felix was inquiring whether Paul, being a Roman citizen, belonged to his jurisdiction or would he need to consult the ruler of another province before trying Paul.

And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, -- Paul's hometown of Tarsus was in Cilicia, which was a part of the Roman province of Syria (Gal_1:21) at this time, so Felix learns that he has the jurisdiction in Paul's case.

÷Act_23:35
Act_23:35

he said, "I will give you a hearing -- The verb implies a complete and thorough hearing of a case. Paul would receive a "full hearing."

when your accusers arrive." -- Felix is assuming that Paul's accusers would appear, since they had been bidden to do so by the chief captain, as he had explained in his letter. Of course Lysias had not said a word of this to the Jews when his letter was written, but intended to do so when Paul was safely on the road to Cæsarea.

And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium. -- Felix's official residence in Caesarea was a grand complex that had been built by Herod the Great, perhaps the greatest and most extensive builder of the first century BC. Here also were quarters fit for the confinement of a Roman citizen. Paul being a Roman and uncondemned would be allowed a certain amount of privileges and visits from friends. He would frequently have visits with Felix himself (Act_24:26-27).

This confinement was to be Paul's home for two years. It is my belief that during this time Luke was visiting back and forth with Paul and consulting eye-witnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus. It is probably during this time that Luke's account of the Gospel is written (Luk_1:1-4).

÷Act_24:1
Act_24:1

And after five days -- A very short period of time for the Jewish leaders to put their case together, hire an attorney ("orator"), and make the trip to Caesarea. Perhaps they feared Felix would dismiss the case against Paul if they did not pursue it rapidly.

the high priest Ananias came down -- See note on Act_23:2 regarding Ananias. He would be hot against the Apostle after Paul's speech about being a "whitewashed wall" (Act_23:3).

with some elders -- These would be other important members of the Sanhedrin (see note on Act_4:5). It is not likely that all the members would make the trip.

and a spokesman, one Tertullus. -- While Tertullus has a Latin name, it is possible he was an Hellenistic Jew (cf. Act_24:6). The Jewish leadership hires an attorney to persuade Felix that Paul had committed a crime against the empire.

They laid before the governor their case [brought charges] against Paul. -- The word for "case" (or "charges") seems to be a technical word which implies an indictment of charges.

÷Act_24:2
Act_24:2

And when he had been summoned, -- The "summoning" is like to that of the crier of the court calling on the participants in the case. Paul is "summoned" from the quarters where he has been kept.

Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: -- Luke has given us but the digest of the advocate's speech. The seven verses, in which it is included, and a large part of which is occupied with compliments to the judge, would not have occupied three minutes in the delivery.

"Since through you we enjoy much peace, -- Tertullus praises Felix for bringing peace to the nation, a rhetorical ploy to gain the sympathy and goodwill of the governor. This may be empty flattery but Tertullus had seized on almost the only good that could be said of Felix, he had restored a degree of tranquility. He had routed bands of robbers, assassins and defeated an Egyptian assassin (Act_21:38) and the nation had more peace than it had in in along time.

and since by your foresight [providence] most excellent Felix, -- The word could be pronounced "provide-ence," like that of God. There were coins minted that read "Providence of Caesar" in flattery.

The adjective "most excellent" (G2903) is the same title which was given to Felix in the letter from Claudius Lysias (Act_23:26), and which is afterwards given to Festus by Paul (Act_26:25). (See note on Luk_1:3). It was an address for officials and people of high social standing.

reforms are being made for this nation, -- Felix's "reforms" were more like purges. They were for the benefit of Felix himself.

÷Act_24:3
Act_24:3

in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude. -- Felix defeated the Egyptian and his followers (see note on Act_21:38), but his brutality angered the Jews and led to his ouster as governor by Emperor Nero two years after Paul's hearing (Act_24:27).

÷Act_24:4

Act_24:4

But, to detain you no further, -- The NKJV uses the word ***tedious*,** which simply means they didn't want to weary, or to detain Felix too long. Tertullus wished to imply that Felix was so deeply engaged in his public duties that every moment was precious.

I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. -- The word here for "kindness" or "clemency" (G1932) contains the idea of equitable consideration. It is flattery for Felix who was an avaricious man, and not a lover of righteousness or justice unless it benefited him.

÷Act_24:5
Act_24:5

For we have found this man a plague [a pestilent fellow], -- This comes from a word meaning *plague* (cf. Luk_21:11). In the OT (LXX) it also had the meaning of plague, but could be used metaphorically of a person (cf. Pro_19:25). The statement reflects the Sanhedrin's hatred of the apostle and Christianity and was not a specific charge of wrongdoing.

one who stirs up riots [insurrections] -- Riots were illegal and viewed by the Roman Empire as equivalent to rebellion (cf. Act_19:40). Rome did not tolerate those who incited rebellion, and this was a serious charge if the Jewish leaders were able to substantiate it.

among all the Jews throughout the world -- It is probably that Jews from Thessalonica, Corinth and Ephesus were present in Jerusalem at Pentecost and informed the Sanhedrin of the run-in they had Paul. "The world" at this time meant "the whole Roman Empire." (Cf. Caesar's decree, Luk_2:1, that "all the world" should be taxed.)

and is a ringleader of the sect -- The word "ringleader" is a compound Greek term from "first" and "to stand." It was used in the Septuagint of "a captain of the first rank" and is found only here in the NT. The word "sect" is (G139) "a body of men following their own tenets," a sect, or heresy.

of the Nazarenes. -- Tertullus associates followers of Jesus with His hometown. This was not what Christians called themselves (cf. Act_24:14). The Sanhedrin intended to portray Paul as the leader of a messianic sect posing a danger to Rome (cf. Act_6:14; Joh_1:46; Joh_7:41, Joh_7:52)

Some assert that the term comes from the city of Nazareth but others relate it to *nezer* or "branch," a title for the Messiah (cf. Isa_11:1; Isa_53:2).

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Charges: Paul is an "epidemic", charged everywhere!
1. Insurrection - a) Antioch; b) Iconium; c) Ephesus; d) Thessalonica
2. Leader of an illegal religion - one not licensed by the Roman Empire
3. He "tried" to profane the temple (Act_24:6)

÷Act_24:6
Act_24:6

He even tried to profane the temple, -- This would have been a violation of Jewish law and a sacrilege if they could prove it. It is noteworthy that the Jews no longer adhere to their definite charge as made Act_21:28, but only impute to Paul the attempt at profanation.

but we seized him. -- They took him by force with the intent to kill him, but they don't mention their attempt to murder him.

[***and wanted to judge him according to our law***. NKJV] -- Tertullus identifies himself, advocate-like, with the Jews whose mouthpiece he is. They were incorrect about Paul bringing Gentiles into the excluded area of the temple, but were ready to murder him nevertheless.

÷Act_24:7
Act_24:7

NKJV [***But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took him out of our hands,***] -- Cf. Act_21:31-33.

Tertullus is attempting to shift the blame for the incident. Actually, it was the Jewish mob that was guilty of violence; Lysias put a stop to the riot and rescued Paul.

The NIV has in brackets: [***But the commander, Lysias, came and with the use of much force snatched him from our hands***]

Tertullus is accusing Lysias of the cause of violence for overstepping his authority by meddling in a proper Jewish legal proceeding.

Act 24:8 [***and ordered his accusers to come before you***.]

÷Act_24:8
Act_24:8

[***and ordered his accusers to come before you***.] - See NIV and NKJV.

By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him." -- It is unclear whether Tertullus is claiming that Lysias himself, were he examined, would confirm the Jewish leaders interpretation of the events, or if he is asking Felix to examine Paul.

The Greek grammatical construction would affirm that Lysias is the object of examination; and that upon the arrival of the chief capitan Felix could question him and learn the truth of what had taken place.

Probably unknown to the Jewish leaders is that Lysias had already given a written report to the governor. They apparently were hoping Lysias would not be available to dispute their claims against Paul.

÷Act_24:9
Act_24:9

The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so. -- We can picture the Jewish leaders all nodding their heads and vocally affirming that Tertullus is telling the truth. They may have even presented themselves as witnesses and swearing falsely with their accusations against Paul.

÷Act_24:10
Act_24:10

And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied: -- Paul has been summoned to this hearing in Act_24:2, and having heard the charges the Jewish leaders were pressing against him he was now given the opportunity to respond.

"Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. -- Paul is affirming he believes Felix's experience in the land will qualify him to be a fair judge. Not only has the duration of time (he had been appointed procurator in A.D. 52, "many years" before), but the fact that his

wife was Jewish would acquaint him with the culture and religious disposition in Israel at this time (cf. Act_24:14; Act_24:22).

÷Act_24:11
Act_24:11

You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up -- Paul affirms it could be established it had only been twelve days since he had gone up to Jerusalem and five of those he had been in custody (Act_24:1). His point is that he had not been there long enough to incite a revolt.

to worship in Jerusalem, -- This being the Pentecost season, he like thousands of others had gone there to worship. Felix would be aware that this was a pilgrimage season. Paul's purpose had been peaceful, certainly not hostile or to profane the place of worship.

÷Act_24:12
Act_24:12

and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, -- The crowd that gathered was called for by the Jews (Act_21:27-28). Paul had not been disputing or in any discussion with any one (Act_21:26). Paul denies the charge of creating an insurrection, the only thing Fexlis would have been concerned about.

either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. -- Paul asserts that all his public activities had been normal, and his presence in the temple was in performing an acceptable ritual.

÷Act_24:13
Act_24:13

Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. -- Paul asserts that nothing about their accusations against him can be proved. All that was presented to this point was hearsay. Paul challenges his accuser to bring evidence, i.e., two or three witnesses, against him. The proof must be such as the law required, not the mere assertions by the accusers.

÷Act_24:14
Act_24:14

But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, -- Paul has denied Tertullus' accusation that he started riots, but he does admit to being a Jewish Christian. The description of the Christian religion as "the Way" seems to have derived from Jesus' description of Himself in Joh_14:6. This term is used in several places, Act_19:9; Act_19:23; Act_22:4; Act_24:14, and Act_24:22. (See the note on Act_24:5).

> This description is appropriate because Christianity is the way to God (Act_18:26), the way into the Holy Place (Heb_10:19-20), and the way of truth (Joh_14:6; 2Pe_2:2).

I worship the God of our fathers, -- Paul points out he has not rejected God, but worships the God these Jewish leaders profess to be following.

believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, -- The "Law and the Prophets" refers to the OT (see Mat_7:12). The Sadducees rejected much of the OT (see note on Act_23:8), while both they and the Pharisees rejected the OT's witness to Jesus Christ (cf. Luk_24:27; Luk_24:44; Joh_1:45; Joh_5:39, Joh_5:46). In contrast, Paul viewed the entire OT as the inspired Word of God, and believed everything it taught.

÷Act_24:15
Act_24:15

having a hope in God, -- Paul centers the disagreement on theological matters, knowing that Roman officials generally stayed out of internal religious disputes of the Jews. The great "hope" of the Jewish people was the resurrection (Job_19:25-27; Isa_25:8; Isa_26:19; Dan_12:1-4).

which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection -- Paul's belief in a resurrection was shared by the Pharisees but not by the Sadducees.

of both the just and the unjust. -- The Bible is replete with this concept of a general resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. Jesus plainly spoke of it in Joh_5:28-28. (cf. 1Co_15:1-58; Dan_12:1-4; Isa_25:8; Dan_12:2; Mat_25:46; Rom_2:6-11; Rev_20:11-15).

Speaking in the presence of Felix, the Apostle' reference to the resurrection of the "unjust" was probably chosen to touch the conscience of the Procurator. The fear of the "coming day of judgment" unnerved Felix in a subsequent conversation with Paul (Act_24:25).

When Paul wrote of the resurrection his emphasis was on the righteous (1Co_15:1; 1Th_4:13-18). However, he often mentioned the judgment of both the righteous and the wicked, which presupposes the resurrection (Rom_2:5-11; 2Co_5:10; 2Th_1:6-10; 2Ti_4:1).

÷Act_24:16
Act_24:16

So [herein] I always take pains -- "Herein" i.e. in the worship, faith and hope spoken of in the two last verses. While holding this belief, and because I hold it, I try to keep my conscience clear. "I exercise myself" that I may, by constant training and striving, at length get near to what I aim after.

to have a clear [blameless] conscience -- (See Act_23:1). To preserve the Greek order, puts "always" at the end of the verse. A man who strove for such an object was neither likely to be a profaner of the Temple, nor a pestilent mover of sedition. His religion was worked into his life.

(cf. Act_20:27; Act_20:33; Act_23:1; 1Co_4:4; 2Co_1:12; 2Co_4:2; see 2Ti_1:3).

toward both God and man. -- Paul repeatedly insisted, not merely as reported in Acts, but in his epistles as well, that he had done his best throughout life to live conscientiously toward God and men always. That he did, in fact, commit sins persecuting Christians, and he does not deny this; for conscience is not an infallible guide. The conscience must be taught and regulated by the word of God before it can be a safe monitor of human behavior.

÷Act_24:17
Act_24:17

Now after several years I came -- He had come to Jerusalem on the return from his second missionary journey in A.D. 53. It was now A.D. 58, so that his absence had lasted four or five years (cf. Act_24:10).

to bring alms -- The only reference in Acts to the delivery of the large sums of money Paul had been collecting from Gentile churches he had established on his missionary journeys. He collected on his third journey for the poor saints in Jerusalem (see note on Act_19:21). Far from seeking to stir up strife, Paul had gone to Jerusalem on a humanitarian mission (e.g., Rom_15:26; 1Co_16:1-4).

to my nation -- Paul uses *ethne* ("nation") rather than *laos* ("people") because the latter term, to many Gentiles, would have included a certain assumption of superiority to the judge (and any other Gentiles) before whom he stood.

and to present offerings. -- These offerings were connected with the Nazarite vow which Paul had undertaken (cf. Act_18:18; Act_21:24). They must be offered in the Temple upon completion and the offerer was not likely to be one who thought of profaning the holy place.

÷Act_24:18
Act_24:18

While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, -- Paul was in the temple precinct finishing up the purification ritual (Act_21:17-26) that was probably meant to placate the legal Jewish believers in the church.

without any crowd or tumult. -- Paul was in the temple performing a religious ritual and had caused no disturbances and he did not defile the temple (Act_21:24).

But some Jews from Asia, -- (This phrase should go with the next verse.) Paul is making an important legal point in his defense (cf. Act_24:19). The eyewitness accusers were not present! Those who were accusing Paul of world-wide mischief had no evidence (cf. Act_24:20)!

÷Act_24:19
Act_24:19

they ought to be here before you -- The Jews from Asia who had actually caused the near riot (Act_21:27-28) were not present. These were probably on their way home, now that the Pentecost feast was over.

and to make an accusation, -- The Asian Jews, probably from Ephesus, had seen Paul in the city in the company of his Asian Gentile friends and thought he had brought them into the temple precinct where Gentiles were not allowed (cf. Act_21:27-29; see the note on Act_21:28).

should they have anything against me. -- The charge that Paul had brought Gentiles into the Temple could not be proved and there was no charge that could be made that would interest the Roman government.

÷Act_24:20
Act_24:20

Or else let these men themselves -- A reference to the high priest Ananias and the elders who came down to Caesarea from Jerusalem (Act_24:1).

say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, -- Paul had faced the Sanhedrin council when he was Jerusalem. (cf. Act_22:30; Act_23:9-10). They had been unable to sustain a charge against Paul at that time.

÷Act_24:21
Act_24:21

other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: -- (cf. Act_23:6-9). Paul quotes what he had lifted up his voice and said earlier in the council meeting (Act_23:6).

It has been suggested that Paul is reporting how he had to shout in order to make himself heard on that occasion. That is, he was not the cause of any disturbance even in the Sanhedrin; the calamity among the Council members themselves had become so disorderly it was necessary for him to shout to be heard.

'It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.'" -- Belief in the resurrection was not a crime under either Jewish or Roman law. Nor was Paul responsible for the longstanding feud between the Sadducees and Pharisees that erupted into open dissension when he made his statement.

÷Act_24:22
Act_24:22

But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, -- Felix was well aware of the animosity between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the hatred these Jewish leaders had against the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. (See note on Act_24:10).

The fact Felix had been governor here for "many years" (Act_24:10) and his Jewish wife, who was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I, helped him to understand the religious climate in Israel.

more accurate knowledge of ***the*** **Way** -- Luke seems to be saying that Felix had a better knowledge about "the Way" (Christianity) than these Jewish accusers gave him credit. He knew enough about the life and teachings of the Christians to know that Paul was guilty of no crime such as his accusers were alleging. Felix knew the Jews were not presenting things as they really were.

It is interesting to consider just where Felix obtained his knowledge about Christianity. The Romans had an excellent spy system to keep abreast of developments among the people. One of Rome's finest centurions, Cornelius, could have informed him about "the Way." Has Felix learned about Christianity through some contact with Philip the evangelist, who has lived at Caesarea for years? Did he learn some details from his wife, Drusilla, who was a member of the Herod family, a family whose fortunes have been intertwined with Christianity for half a century?

put them off, -- This is equivalent to adjourning the procedings. There were no witnesses against Paul and the council failed to prove him guilty of any crime.

saying, "When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case." -- Referring to Claudius Lysias, the Roman commander who had already given his testimony in his letter to Felix (Act_23:26-30), so Felix was stalling for Paul's and his own benefit. There is no record of Lysias ever being summoned.

÷Act_24:23
Act_24:23

Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody -- Paul's confinement here seems to have been much the same as his two years in Rome in Act_28:30-31 (see also Act_28:16-17). (Would it be unreasonable to think that the centurion in charge of Paul's confinement could be Cornelius? Act_10:1-4.)

but have some liberty, -- Perhaps Paul even had the liberty of attending services of the church here in Caesarea, and to teach and preach. Some have even suggested that Paul's "prison epistles" were written during this time, but they fit much better into the two year confinement in Rome in Act_28:30.

and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs. -- This shows that Felix did not see Paul as a threat and allowed some freedom and access. Here again is a Roman official who does not sense Christianity as a political problem.

We can picture in our mind Luke and many other of Paul's friends going in and out of the quarters where Paul was in custody.

During the two years of Paul's confinement in Caesarea Luke is probably going about the county interviewing eye-witnesses (Luk_1:1-4) in preparation for writing the gospel account that bears his name. Since both Cornelius (Acts 10) and Philip (Acts 8) lived here in Caesarea, it also provided excellent opportunity to interview them and later incorporate his notes into his volume which we call "*Acts*."

÷Act_24:24
Act_24:24

24:24–27 *Paul proclaims the gospel message to Felix and his wife*

After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, -- Felix was connected with the Herodian family by his marriage to the notoriously beautiful Drusilla (his third wife), the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I (who had murdered the apostle James and imprisoned Peter, and a sister of Bernice and King Agrippa II, Act_25:13). She had been lured away by Felix and disobeyed Jewish law by divorcing her husband and marrying him. She was 16 years of age according to Josephus in his *Antiquities 19:9:1*, when Felix took her for his wife. (She was six years old when her father had died here at Caesarea.)

and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. -- He knew that Paul was a leader of the followers of "the Way" and he could learn first-hand the teachings of this group and what they thought about "Christ Jesus" who was at the heart of this controversy between the Jews and those of "the Way." Felix sent for Paul "often and conversed with him" Act_24:26.

Two on trial - Act_24:23
The accusation - Act_24:24-25
The outcome - Act_24:25-27

÷Act_24:25
Act_24:25

Paul's discourse: *(cf. Joh_16:8)*
1. righteousness -
2. temperance -
3. judgment to come -

And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, -- Paul preached about "righteousness" or justice to man who was un-just, wicked and corrupt and who took bribes (see Act_24:26).

He preached about "self-control" or temperance to a man who stole away another man's wife. (This kind of preaching got John the Baptist beheaded!)

He preached about the "coming judgment" to a man who was in danger of hell-fire. (2Th_1:7; Act_17:31.) Perhaps Felix expected some philosophical discussion on the subject of the resurrection and the life after death.

Felix was alarmed and said, -- The expression implies that he was filled with fear. The realization that he faced God's "judgment" alarmed him, and he hastily dismisses Paul.

"Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you." -- The moment of conviction passed and Felix foolishly passed up his opportunity to repent (2Co_6:2). After two more years of his rule he is superseded by Festus and banished to Gaul. How long he lived there we don't know. But Drusilla is reported to have perished at Pompeii in the eruption of Vesuvius.

÷Act_24:26

Act_24:26

At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. -- Apparently bribes, which Roman law prohibited, were so common in cases such as Paul's that Felix expected it. The bribe Felix expected might have been to ensure Paul received a hearing, not necessarily to free him.

He had heard Paul himself tell about the alms which he had delivered to the Jerusalem poor, so he knew Paul had ways of getting his hands on money.

So he sent for him often and conversed with him. -- The verb "conversed" or "communed" implies that he brought about friendly exchanges with his prisoner. In this way the proposal for any terms of release would have been made easy.

Luke gives two reasons why Felix "often" sent for Paul. First he desired to hear about faith in Christ, (Act_24:24), and secondly to give the Apostle a chance of offering him a bribe.

÷Act_24:27
Act_24:27

When two years had elapsed, -- During the two years of Paul's confinement in Caesarea Luke is probably going about the county doing his many interviews of eye-witnesses (Luk_1:1-4) in preparation for writing the gospel account that bears his name. Since both Cornelius (Acts 10) and Philip (Acts 8) lived here in Caesarea, it also provided excellent opportunity to interview them and later incorporate his notes into his volume which we call "Acts."

Felix was succeeded -- After his return to Rome, on the appointment of Festus to be governor in his stead, Felix was accused by the Jews of Cæsarea of brutality and only saved by the influence which his brother Pallas had with Nero.

by Porcius Festus. -- Festus was a member of the Roman nobility, unlike Felix who had formerly had been a slave. He was appointed to his position by Nero in A.D. 60. He died two years after assuming office, but the Jewish historian Josephus described him as better than either his predecessor or his successor.

And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison. -- It was customary to release all the political prisoners at the time of the change of administrations. Felix seems to have recognized Paul's innocence, but he was more concerned about currying the favor of the Jewish leaders than administering justice.

This verse shows the political situation in Palestine and the weakness of the Roman leaders, as well as the power of the Sanhedrin.

÷Act_25:1
Act_25:1

Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, -- (See note Act_24:27 re "Festus.")

Festus is appointed the new procurator of the Judean province and promptly after his arrival at the seaport of Caesarea and becoming acquainted with his principal residence he gets right to the difficult part of his work.

he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. -- While Caesarea is the seat of the Roman government in Judea, he realizes the Jewish national leaders reside in Jerusalem and he proceeds to make himself acquainted with them and with all the situations under his new responsibility.

÷Act_25:2
Act_25:2

And the chief priests -- This probably included Ananias who had been put out of office in AD 59, and Ishmael, who was now the new high priest, and others of this class. This may refer to the heads of the twenty-four courses of priests, as at Act_4:23.

and the principal men of the Jews -- This probably refers to the Sanhedrin, or to those who were wealthy and belonged to the Sadducees.

laid out their case against Paul, -- The verb indicates that the proceedings followed a legal form. Some charge was made, no doubt in the same terms which Tertullus had used before (Act_24:1; Act_24:5).

and they urged him, -- The grammatical tense indicates there was something they asked again and again. They are requesting a concession from the new governor, who, to remain in their good graces may grant it.

÷Act_25:3
Act_25:3

asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem, -- They asked that Paul's case be transferred to Jerusalem, and allow their own Sanhedrin court to sit in judgment. This was a ploy to get him away from the protection of the Romans in Caesarea.

because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way. -- Knowing they had no legal grounds for the capital punishment of Paul, they knew the only way to be sure of his death was to ambush to him and the escort on their way to Jerusalem.

Whether Festus has had time to read the letters and court documents regarding Paul's case is unknown. He was probably not aware of any previous plans to assassinate him.

÷Act_25:4
Act_25:4

Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea -- The governor's position was that the prisoner had been placed by his predecessor in Roman custody, and that this should not be interfered with. As the headquarters of Roman government in Judea, Caesarea was the proper place for Paul, a Roman citizen, to be tried.

and that he himself intended to go there shortly. -- To make all the legal arrangements for the jurisdiction of the case to be changed would take some time (cf. Act_25:9). The accused, who was a Roman citizen, would have to agree to the venue change.

÷Act_25:5
Act_25:5

"So," said he, "let the men of authority among you go down with me, -- Festus says that the men of influence who would have legal charge should accompany him to Caesarea and state the case against Paul.

He is willing to conciliate the influential people in Israel though he refused to break the regulations his predecessor had established.

and if there is anything wrong about the man, -- The construction of conditional "if" clause assumes the statement to be true (Festus assumed Paul to be guilty of something, why else would the Jerusalem leaders be so persistent.)

let them bring charges against him." -- At this point it seems that Festus is certain that with all the ferocity the leading Jews had shown, Paul is guilty of some serious crime (see Act_25:18).

÷Act_25:6
Act_25:6

> **25:6–9** *This quick hearing reveals to Paul that he had no real hope for justice with Festus. He knew what awaited him if he agreed to go to Jerusalem (cf. Act_15:3). He also knew Jesus wanted him to go to Rome (cf. Act_9:15;* Act_23:11*).*

After he stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. -- We can imagine the Jewish leaders wined and dined Festus as they tried to manipulate him.

Luke uses a phrase to mark the shortness of the stay, a form which would seem to describe ten days as a long visit to Jerusalem. Festus was evidently full of business and anxious to get it done.

And the next day -- The Jewish authorities must have accepted the governor's invitation and traveled back with him (Act_25:7). They are eager to have the hearing begin at once.

he took his seat on the tribunal -- The Greek word here, *bema*, indicates the place where a ruler would make civic decisions including criminal proceedings. This signified that this hearing was an official Roman trial (see Act_25:10; Act_25:17; Act_18:12; Mat_27:19; Joh_19:13).

Coffman says here, "Commentators have lavished praise on Festus for this prompt hearing; but there is no indication that his promptness was due to anything other than the insistence of the high priestly conclave on action as soon as possible. What is in evidence here is not a new governor's anxious desire to further justice, but a servile willingness to appease Paul's bitter enemies in Jerusalem."

and ordered Paul to be brought. -- Paul is brought into the hearing room and appears before Festus for the first time.

÷Act_25:7
Act_25:7

When he had arrived, -- When Paul enters the hearing room he must have been surprised to find himself standing in the midst of his Jewish enemies. He had already been tried by the former governor and found innocent.

the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, -- The Jewish leaders (Act_24:1; Act_25:2) surround him; it looks, humorously, like they are afraid he may try to escape. They must have been beaming with anticipation of finally getting their way.

bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove. -- They hurl charges like before (Act_24:5-6), but while their complaints were many and serious, there were none they could support with evidence.

÷Act_25:8
Act_25:8

Paul argued in his defense, -- While the Jewish leaders probably had with them their skilled orator (lawyer, see note on Act_24:1), Paul spoke up alone in his own defense, *apologia*.

"Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, -- He did not make a defence against the unsubstantiated charges, but alluded only to those points on which they would try to prove their case, i.e. his alleged attempt to defile the Temple, his breaches of the Jewish law.

nor against Caesar have I committed any offense." -- His accusers would allege he was a leaders in insurrectionary outbreaks and picture him in opposition to the Roman government. They cannot prove it, and the only way Paul could be found guilty was if he admitted it! Paul simply has to deny it.

÷Act_25:9
Act_25:9

But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, -- Festus, like Felix in Act_24:27, knows that the best way to handle these troublesome Jews is to try and appease them.

said to Paul, "Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?" -- Festus acquiesces to the Jews' wish for Paul to be tried in Jerusalem, but he offers to preside at the trial. Paul's response indicates that he suspects Festus is really intending to hand him over to the Jewish authorities.

Festus realizes that Paul, a Roman citizen, has not broken any Roman laws. The charges the Jewish leaders made had only to do with their religious laws which Festus considered not to be life-threatening.

÷Act_25:10
Act_25:10

But Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. -- Paul is saying (and Festus clearly understood), "I'm a Roman citizen, I should stand in a Roman court, and be judged by Roman law. Caesar's judgment seat is here in Caesarea."

Festus is Caesar's representative when he makes judicial decisions. Paul is saying that, since he has discredited the Jewish accusations that he violated the Mosaic law, a Roman court is the only place where he should be tried.

To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourselves know very well. -- To believe in a resurrection was not against either Jewish or Roman law. It was not a violation of law to believe in an after-life.

Festus' compromise gave the Jewish leaders all that they hoped for; they intended to murder Paul before he got to Jerusalem. The apostle therefore rejected Festus' attempt at compromise and reminded the governor that he was standing at Caesar's judgment seat where, as a Roman citizen, he had every right to be judged.

÷Act_25:11
Act_25:11

If then I am a wrongdoer -- Paul has asserted that he was innocent of any of the Jewish accusations. If there be anything against him, it is for a decision from the jurisdiction of Rome, not for the religious tribunal at Jerusalem.

and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, -- See **Rom_13:4** note on ***"Capital Punishment"*** Paul said if I'm guilty of doing something wrong that is worthy of death, I agree that the death sentence would be right.

I do not seek to escape death. -- Paul is not disputing Roman law that sometimes issued a death penalty. Paul recognized the power of the state (cf. Rom_13:4). The OT perspective on capital punishment can be found in Gen_9:6.

But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. -- The full idea of the verb is expressed by the margin of the Revised Version, "no man may grant me [up to others] by favour." The use of this word confirms the notion that Paul saw through what the governor was doing. He realized that Festus was trying to impress the Jewish leadership by giving them the prisoner!

I appeal to Caesar." -- As a Roman citizen (see Act_22:25) Paul could appeal to Caesar for an official trial. The emperor at this time was Nero (AD 54–68).

To us who know Nero's record in relation to Christianity, it may seem strange that Paul should have appealed with such confidence to him. But the first five years of Nero's reign, when he had several good men influencing him, were the golden years of his rule. There was little in AD 59 or AD 60 that gave warning of the events of AD 64 and after.

÷Act_25:12
Act_25:12

Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, -- The "council" here is Festus' own group of legal advisers and not a reference to the Sanhedrin council. Such a council of local experts would be specially helpful for a new governor.

Paul's sudden appeal caught Festus off guard and he and his close advisors reflect on what this means to the case.

answered, "To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go." -- By granting the appeal, the governor removed himself from the case and transferred it to the emperor. It gets him out of the dilemma of being fair with Paul and trying to give a favor to the Jewish leaders at the same time.

It effectively brings this hearing to a close and adjourns the assembly.

÷Act_25:13
Act_25:13

Now when some days had passed, -- Indefinite time has passed but probably not months. Paul has not yet been shipped off to Rome.

Agrippa the king and Bernice --

Who was King Agrippa
1) Great grandson of Herod the Great - who murdered innocents in Bethlehem

2) Grand nephew of the Herod who imprisoned / beheaded John & mocked Jesus.
3) Son of the Herod of Acts 12 who put James to death and tried to kill Peter.
And who had died a miserable death here in Caesarea.
Agrippa, now 30 years old, was 17 yrs when father died. Lived in Rome much of his youth, but being well versed in Jewish affairs (Act_26:3) he was made King over Galilee and Perea some four or five years earlier to rule under the authority of Rome.

Who was Bernice
The eldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I. She was the sister of this Agrippa, and Drusilla (Felix's wife, see note Act_24:24). She had been married but had returned to live with her brother.

arrived at Caesarea -- Agrippa, Bernice and Drusilla had once lived in these very quarters with their father that now served as the residence of the Roman governor.

and greeted Festus. -- King Herod Agrippa II, serving Rome in adjacent territory of Galilee and Petra, had come to pay Festus a courtesy call and welcome him.

÷Act_25:14
Act_25:14

And as they stayed there many days, -- How long they stayed in Caesarea is not known, but it was evidently several days. They must have enjoyed visiting this Mediterranean coastal town that they were acquainted with from their youth.

Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a man left prisoner by Felix, -- Festus has a problem case he had inherited from his predecessor. The subject of Paul's case seems to have come up in the course of conversation between the two. Agrippa II had the reputation of being an authority in the Jewish religion, and Festus probably thought that Agrippa could shed light on this case he had on his hands.

÷Act_25:15
Act_25:15

and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews laid out their case against him, -- Festus repeats to King Agrippa how the Jewish leaders jumped him at Jerusalem when he first came into the country (Act_25:1-1-3).

asking for a sentence of condemnation against him. -- The Jewish leaders at Jerusalem contended that only a condemnatory sentence could be pronounce against Paul. They meant by this a death sentence, and only Roman authority could issue this legally.

Festus felt this would be condemning and executing a prisoner without trial, and so he had refused to allow this.

÷Act_25:16
Act_25:16

I answered them that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up anyone before the accused met the accusers face to face -- Festus stated the facts of the case to Agrippa II with fair accuracy, but there is a ring of disdain for the Jews when he invokes "the custom of the Romans."

and had opportunity [licence] to make his defense concerning the charge laid against him. -- This comment by Festus is not recorded in the earlier account of his interactions with the Jewish leaders (Act_25:3-5). But now we learn that Festus he never intended to hand Paul over to the Jews without an opportunity to make a defense.

÷Act_25:17
Act_25:17

So when they came together here, I made no delay, -- Festus is repeating to King Agrippa his response to the Jews was quick. He did't delay hearing their complaint.

but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal -- The meeting with the Jewish leaders became an official Roman hearing.

and ordered the man to be brought. -- The man the Jewish leaders were so agitated over had been kept for two years in Roman custody under the auspices of governor Felix.

Again while accurately states the facts, this impression is that Festus was trying to justly administer his office; while he had been trying hard to please his new subjects, he would not be unfair to the prisoner Paul.

÷Act_25:18
Act_25:18

When the accusers stood up, -- Paul's accusers state their case against him.

they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed. -- This shows the intensity and nature of the Jewish opposition. It was not criminal, but religious. They had no charges of Paul violating any Roman law.

Festus was probably expecting charges against Paul of sedition and bloody rebellion, or of atrocious crimes against other men's persons or property.

Out of Felix's mouth is the verdict of Paul's innocence of any Roman charges and that the man should be set free, but did Festus have the moral fiber to make this announcement?

÷Act_25:19
Act_25:19

Rather they had certain points of dispute with him about their own religion -- Festus rightly concludes that the primary cause of contention over Paul's message is of a theological nature. Such charges did not belong in a Roman court.

The noun used here for "religion" (G1175) is cognate to the adjective employed by Paul when speaking to the Athenians (Act_17:22). It is a term which might be employed by any one without offence in speaking of a worship with which he did not agree. Addressing Agrippa, Festus would not wish to say a word that might annoy, any more than Paul wished to irritate the Athenians by his speech.

and about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive. -- In none of the previous hearings before Felix nor when Festus made his inquiry, does Luke record any mention of the name of Jesus, but it is clear from the explanation given here that not only had Paul stated the doctrine of the resurrection generally, which the Pharisees accepted, but had also asserted in proof of it that Jesus had risen and "become the firstfruits of them that sleep." (1Co_15:20; 1Co_15:23.)

Festus' words seem to indicate that he was ignorant of Jesus (whom he calls a "certain dead man") before he came to Judea.

> "It is interesting that by this stage the question of Paul's alleged desecration of the temple has quite disappeared from sight, and the topic of the resurrection (Act_23:6; Act_24:21) has replaced it. … The real ground of dispute is that Paul preaches the resurrection of Jesus, something which the Sadducees

refused to believe on principle and which the Pharisees likewise refused to believe although they admitted the fact of a final resurrection of all men." (Marshall)

÷Act_25:20
Act_25:20

Being at a loss how to investigate these questions, -- Festus, a pagan Roman and new in Judea, could not be expected to understand the theological differences between Christians and Jews.

I asked whether he wanted to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding them. -- As a Roman citizen the govenor Festus would not the juristiction over to a Jewish court unless the prisoner agreed the change.

÷Act_25:21
Act_25:21

But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, -- Paul viewed the whole suggestion about going to Jerusalem as evidence that Festus was being partial to the Jews, at the expense even of the defendant's life.

The **emperor** at this time was Nero, (see notes on Act_25:10-11). The KJV call him "Augustus" meaning "revered" or "worshipped one," a title commonly applied to emperor.

I ordered him to be held until I could send him to Caesar." -- Caesar at this time was the infamous Nero (see the note on Act_25:11).

÷Act_25:22
Act_25:22

Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear the man myself." -- The Greek verb tense implies Agrippa (who was the last of the "Herod" family) had been wanting (or wishing) to hear Paul for a long time. As an expert on Jewish affairs (cf. Act_26:3), he seems eager to hear what Paul, a leader among those of "the Way," had to say about Jesus and his faith.

[One could speculate that Agrippa knew already that Paul had been in custody at Caesarea and he came to see Festus hoping for the opportunity to hear him first-hand.]

"Tomorrow," said he, "you will hear him." -- The task of finding something for his visitors to do the next day was now settled.

This doesn't seem to be Agrippa's the first time to hear about Paul, and certainly not the first time he has heard of Jesus. His family had crossed path many times before with those who followed Jesus.

It was Agrippa's great-grandfather who had attempted to kill Jesus in the cradle at Bethlehem. (Mat_2:16).
It was his uncle who had killed John the Baptist and sat as judge in a trial of Jesus on the day He was crucified. (Luk_23:7-8).
It was his own father who had tried to suppress Christianity and thereby please the Jews by killing the apostle James and imprisoning Peter with the intention of killing him. (Act_12:1-3).

The names of Jesus and the apostles would have been familiar in the household of Agrippa II, but he could not lower himself to go hear one of the apostles preach. Now, though, he could satisfy his long-cherished desire to hear one of these men preach

÷Act_25:23

Act_25:23

25:23–26:32 *Paul is tried before King Agrippa so that Festus may determine what Paul should be charged with when he is sent to Rome, to be tried before Caesar (*Act_24:20-21*).*

So on the next day -- We can be impressed with the promptness Festus in arranging such a large audience to hear Paul.

Agrippa and Bernice came -- These two are inseparable in Luke's account (cf. note at Act_25:13; Act_26:30).

with great pomp, -- The children follow in the steps of their father, who formerly had sat on his throne in Cæsarea arrayed in royal apparel, to listen to the flattery of the Tyrian deputation (Act_12:21).

Here is the only appearance in the New Testament of this word "pomp." The touch of the eyewitness narrator is evident; and one may imagine the ostentatious display of royal apparel, military uniforms, soldiers at attention, the decorations and flags that adorned the hall of meeting, and, over all, the proud demeanor of the Roman deputy Festus, who would hardly have allowed himself to be surpassed in splendor by his royal guests. (E. H. Plumptre.)

and they entered the audience hall -- The word for the place of hearing (G201) is found nowhere else in N. T. It was no doubt some special room attached to the governor's palace, where causes were tried. In classical Greek it signifies "a lecture-room."

with the military tribunes -- History tell us that 5 tribunes commanding the 5 cohorts were stationed in Caesarea at this time. (see note on Act_10:1). One wonders if Cornelius was also present for this hearing of Paul?

and the prominent men of the city. -- The "prominent men" are likely civil officers of the Jewish and Gentile local government of Caesarea. That the tribunes and prominent men were present suggests that they have been given a special invitation.

Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. -- Paul is summoned and he must have been surprised to see such a large gather of these very important people. What an audience he form preaching the gospel on this occasion.

Jesus had said in Mat_10:18 that there would be opportunities when "brought before governors and kings .. as testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

Ananias, when instructed to go to Paul and restore his sight, had been informed by Jesus that Paul would "bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel" Act_9:15.

÷Act_25:24
Act_25:24

Act 25.24-27 -- *Festus presents Paul's case as a serious matter based on the amount of unrest he has caused.*

And Festus said, -- Festus, as recorded in verses 24-27, uses great oratorical flourish to introduce the case to those who were assembled.

"King Agrippa" -- Luke very carefully notes that Agrippa II did have the title "king," but he is not called "king of Judea." He was the last man in Roman times to bear the title "king" in Palestine.

and all who are present with us, -- We can see in our mind how Festus, like a great orator jesting with his hand and the nod of his head, addresses the various groups assembled.

you see this man about whom the whole Jewish people petitioned me, -- The Jews have done a good selling job on Festus, for when he says "all the people of the Jews appealed to me," he speaks as though the feeling against Paul among the Jews was well-nigh universal.

both in Jerusalem and here, -- But it is also possible, in the light of previous statement, that the language means no more than that both in Jerusalem and later at Caesarea the Jerusalem Jews demanded Paul's death.

shouting that he ought not to live any longer. -- No doubt the Sadducees from Jerusalem had been able in the course of two years to work up a great deal of feeling against Paul among their party in Cæsarea. So when Festus came he was appealed to by the great men of the residential city as well as by those from Jerusalem.

÷Act_25:25
Act_25:25

But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. -- To ask for the life of a prisoner because of some offence against the religious observances of the Jews would be absurd in the eyes of a Roman officer. (See note Act_23:9.)

How quickly this public announcement would have spread through the city, and how happy Philip and all of the Christians there must have been upon hearing of the governor's verdict.

And as he himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to go ahead and send him. -- The implication is that Festus was thinking about setting the prisoner free, when the prisoner himself appealed to Caesar, and there was nothing Festus could do now, but to send him.

÷Act_25:26
Act_25:26

But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. -- The main purpose of the hearing was for Agrippa to advise Festus on what he should write in the appeal to Caesar, for there was no clear charge against Paul, and Festus himself believed Paul had done nothing deserving death.

Therefore I have brought him before you all, -- Since Festus did not understand the nature of the charges against Paul, he did not know what to write in his official report to Nero. For a provincial governor to send a prisoner to the emperor with no clear charges against him was foolish, if not dangerous.

and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write. -- Festus hoped Herod's expertise in Jewish affairs (Act_26:3) would enable him to make sense of the charges against Paul.

÷Act_25:27
Act_25:27

For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him." -- Festus is concerned what the officials in Rome would think about him sending a prisoner who had no charges against him. Festus is in an embarrassing position.

÷Act_26:1
Act_26:1

So Agrippa said to Paul, -- While the hearing is in Festus' venue, there is every appearance that Agrippa is given charge of the investigation. Many of Paul's expressions are addressed directly to Agrippa, and when Agrippa rises (Act_26:30) that signals the end of the proceedings.

"You have permission to speak for yourself." -- Since no one was there to accuse Paul, Herod permitted him to speak in his defense.

Then Paul stretched out his hand -- A common gesture at the beginning of a speech (cf. Act_12:17; Act_13:16; Act_19:33). Paul takes on the posture of an orator, which implies he had training in classical rhetoric and was well educated. This could be very dramatic especially if his arm was encumbered by a chain.

and made his defense: -- The verb (G626) is the same as in (Act_19:33; Act_24:10; Act_25:8) and intimates that what is coming is an *apologia*. Luke here as in other places notices the gesture of the speaker.

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See the sermon" **Agrippa: Case of Non-Conversion** (Act_26:29) Acts 25 & 26
https://home.hiwaay.net/~wgann/e-Sword%20Modules/Sermons%20_%20Gann.topx

AGRIPPA: Case of Non-Conversion

Acts 25 & 26

Introduction:

1. There are two principle men in the assembly in Acts 26 who hear Paul preach the gospel-- two very different men.
   a. One is King Agrippa - and when the sermon is finished he is a man not far from the kingdom. (Mar_12:34)
   b. The other is Governor Festus - and he is a man with little understanding and quite far from the kingdom.

I. Acts 25

1. FESTUS was a politician in the Roman empire. And whatever may be said about corruption in American politics is modest in comparisons with the corruption in the Roman empire in the time of Nero.

2. Ch. 25 tells us of the way that Festus became acquainted with Paul. Act_26:4, 16f.
   a. Paul refused to go to Jerusalem to have his case tried there-- Act_25:10. He appealed to Caesar and his case was transferred to the Imperial court of Caesar.

3. While Festus was waiting for a ship to send Paul to Rome-- King Agrippa came to pay formal complimentary visit with his sister Bernice to newly appointed governor.

   a. Such visits from royalty involved a great deal of ceremony, feasting, and processions. So Festus had on his hands the task of getting acquainted with and entertaining his royal guests for a few days.
   b. In his private conversation with Agrippa on one of those days he says: (Act_25:14-19) "Agrippa, there is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, asking for sentence against him, to whom I answered that it is not the custom of the Romans to give up any man before the accused has the

accusers face to face, and has had opportunity to make his defense. When his accusers stood up they brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed, but had certain questions about their own superstition [religion] and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive."

1) I want you to notice what light this speech throws upon Festus.
2) Here is a man with a high position in the Roman empire. He is probably well acquainted with Roman history, politics, and wars, -- but religion?
3) Jesus Christ has been preached in the empire for more than twenty years. Churches in His name have been established all over it, and in Rome itself a powerful church has been built up; Paul has written to it!
4) Yet, when this man hears of the dispute between Paul and the Jews about Jesus, he speaks of it as a controversy about "One Jesus" who was dead, and whom Paul affirmed to be alive; and it seems as if this was the first time this poor wretched heathen had ever heard the name of Jesus.
4) He knew so little of either Judaism or Christianity that the difference a mere question of "demon-worship."
5) How do you account for this amazing ignorance?
   a) There are some men who have a great deal of knowledge about the affairs of State, and of wall street, about labor situations and the prime rate; or who know all the sporting statistics; but know little or nothing about the Bible or Christ. They have no time to look to the condition of their soul.
   b) Yet, there are others that are acquainted with these same situations in the world, who have given time to learn about Christ and His word and looked to the welfare of their soul.
   b) Oh, how far this man Festus was from the kingdom of God! Paul knew that. No hope with Festus. Paul in his answer turns from Festus to King Agrippa.

4. While Festus knows nothing of Judaism or Christianity, how different is the background of this young king. Who was this King Agrippa?
   a. He was the Great-grandson of Herod the Great, who was responsible for the slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem in the vain effort to kill Jesus in the cradle.
   b. He was the great-nephew of the Herod who beheaded John the Baptist; and before whom Jesus was mocked and arrayed in a purple robe.
   c. He was the son of the Herod who is mentioned in Acts 12; who murdered the apostle James and intended to kill Peter, and who died a miserable death a few days later eaten of worms. Agrippa was only 17 yrs old at the time that Herod his father had died right here in the city of Caesarea where this hearing is being held. Agrippa was living in Rome at the time of his father's death, and is 30 years old, with the title of King.

5. When Festus spoke as he did about "one Jesus" Herod Agrippa must have laughed within himself as the poor man's ignorance.
   a. How familiar the name was to him and his family. All his life long he had heard Jesus and the Church and the apostles spoken about, but he had heard it from the lips of men who cursed that name, and whose hands were stained with the blood of the friends of Jesus.
   b. What a surprise it is then to hear Agrippa say (25:22) "I could wish to hear the man myself." -- that one of that bloody, persecuting family has come to the point of wanting to hear an apostle preach!
   c. If someone had predicted something like this 10 years before-- we would have called him a false prophet or a fool.
   d. But Festus says, "Tomorrow you shall hear him." And so, another days's entertainment is now provided for.
   e. On the next day, we are told, Festus and King Agrippa, and Bernice, and the chief captains, and the chief men of Caesarea came together into the audience room of the palace, with great pomp. Festus in his purpose robes of a governor; King Agrippa with is crown, the beautiful Bernice in all her royal apparel, and the military officers arrayed in the splendid uniforms. Never before had

such a gorgeous assembly ever heard the gospel. When all were seated, an officer was sent for the prisoner.

6. I have tried to imagine how Paul felt, and what he thought when that office came into his cell and said to him, "Paul, King Agrippa has sent for thee, to hear thee concerning the faith in Christ."
   a. If the messenger had said, King Agrippa has sent for you Paul, that he may send you headless into eternity after james and the others that he and his fathers have murdered, Paul would not have been surprised. But, he has sent that he might hear thee. I'm not sure anything could have astonished Paul any more!
   b. What an opportunity to be able speak about the resurrected Lord to a Herod! Within Paul's mind there must have been the thought, is there a possibility of reaching the heart of this young King with the glorious gospel and winning him to the Savior? It seems to me that such must have been the thoughts of Paul.
   c. So, I'm not at all surprised that this is considered by scholars as the greatest sermon of Paul's ever recorded.

7. Festus arises and makes the opening remarks: Act_25:24-27
   a. What a predicament this ignorant man was in. He had a prisoner he was sending 2000 miles to Rome and had no charge against him. "I don't understand the case well enough and I need help in formulating the charges. He hoped that King Agrippa, being an expert in the Jewish faith would help him out of his difficulty and tell him what to write. "
   b. Agrippa now assumes control of the meeting-- Act_26:1. He says to Paul, "Thou art permitted to speak for thyself." Go-ahead now, and say what you please. This gave Paul a free and open sea in which to set his sails and direct his course.

II. Chapter 26 Paul's Speech

1. Paul wanted to win this young King if he could; did you ever notice how he began his remarks? Act_26:2.
   a. "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, that I am to make my defence fore thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews." And Oh how happy he did feel to be permitted to speak to a Herod about these things, "especially," he said, "because I know thee to be expert in all questions and customs that are among the Jews."-v.3. That was as much to say that I'm happy that you aren't as dull and ignorant as this man beside you."
   b. Agrippa must have been pleased with these first words he had ever heard from an apostle. By expressing his gratification at being allowed to speak of these matters before him, Paul partly bridged over the gulf between them, and the two were coming a little closer together, don't you see.
   c. But now, how would you open your message to such a King? This is a masterpiece. Paul had the Holy Spirit with him!

2. Vs. 4-7. "My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation, and at Jerusalem, known all the Jews; having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, how that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain;" --
   a. --and then, looking around upon the heathen assembly who did not believe as he and Agrippa did, he asks -- "Why is it judged incredible with you, if God should raise the dead?" The King and I believe in that doctrine.
   b. Why did Paul confess to Agrippa that he was a Pharisee believing in the great doctrine of the resurrection of the dead? Because Agrippa was a Pharisee too and it marks another common link between him and Paul. You and I King Agrippa, stand together against this audience in believing in this great doctrine. Can't you feel King Agrippa's sympathy being drawn closer to Paul.

3. Notice his next remarks, Vs. 9-11.

a. "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." This is the first time he speaks of Jesus.
b. "And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities."
c. Why tell Agrippa about his wickedness? It must have made Agrippa think within himself, "Why this man was once with us. He was once on the side of my father and uncle and grand-father. He persecuted these Christians as brutally and bloodily as my family did." Here was another point of contact with this young king, drawing these two ever closer together.
d. Paul wants to win that young King if he can. That is what he is aiming at.
e. You see, all this tends to raise a question in Agrippa's mind-- If that man once stood where my father did, and uncle and grand-father, what on earth could have changed him? What made Paul change? What made him turn about and become a great proclaimed and defender of the faith that he once persecuted?

4. Vs. 12-19 Paul's next remark was intended to answer this question, just as if he had heard Agrippa speak it out.

a. "Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. and when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet; for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee: delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that thy may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."
b. We can almost hear the king's heart saying: "Well, Paul, if God appeared to you... you ought not be disobedient."
c. If this is true, if you heard that and saw that, then our family has been mistaken, just as you were. You had a good cause for changing-- and I wonder if we ought not to change too.

5. After a few more words on the subject of the Lord's resurrection, Paul is interrupted by Festus. He has been sitting there, listening to this speech and wondering, but not a single ray of light had penetrated his understanding.
a. V.24. "Paul, thou art mad: thy much learning doth turn thee to madness." Paul saw there was no use in trying to do anything with him. Agrippa was the man. The only answer Paul gave to Festus was this: "I am not mad, most excellent Festus [this was the customary form of address of men of high rank], but I speak forth words of truth and soberness."
b. He turns right back to Agrippa: "For the king knoweth of these things: unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner."
1) Don't think, Festus, because you are ignorant of it, that it was done in a corner. The king knows all about it. And well did Agrippa know about it; only he had heard of it from the wrong side! He had only heard slanders and lies.

6. Paul now makes a personal appeal to Agrippa. Perhaps he sees something in his eyes-- "I have this man almost in the arms of Christ, I must bring him in if I can." v. 27
a. "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" Then he saw the answer in the king's face.
b. "I know that thou believest."

c. Agrippa was in an uncomfortable position. He is impelled to speak. "Paul, with but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian." ASV, or KJV "Almost thou persuadest me to be Christian."
d. V. 28. Paul would you try to make me a Christian in just one short speech!
e. V. 29 He saw through Paul's design. He arose and wrapped his robes about him, and stared for the door. Bernice, Festus, and all that gorgeous company, one by one filed out thought the door, and left Paul alone with the solider who guarded him.
f. I think Paul's heart must have sank within him when he was left alone -- so close--.
g. A song that we sing says: "Almost persuaded-- sad, sad that bitter wail, Almost, but lost.!"
h. Oh, what a sad moment for Paul, when after having the young Herod almost in the arms of Christ, he loses him, and he is led back to his lonely prison cell in his bonds.

7. Outside, the people began speaking to one another. It seems like it was a solemn mood and that no one felt like speaking at first.
   a. They all had been profoundly moved. Paul's sincerity was felt by them. "That man has not done anything worthy of death or of bonds." They had heard the gospel of Christ proclaimed from an earnest and truthful heart. V. 31.
   b. Agrippa was the last to speak. After the others had expressed themselves, he said, "Festus, this man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar;"-- And this from the lips of Herod! (V.32)
   c. It was as much as to say, "Father did wrong in killing such men. Our family have been on the wrong side of this question. We ought not to have murdered these Christians" This man ought to be set at liberty! if he had not appealed to Caesar.
   d. My friends, We have seen how near the gospel come to saving Agrippa.
      1) All he needed was to accept the truth and throw himself upon the mercy of God.
      2) If Agrippa, when he heard that sermon, had risen to his feet and stepped down to Paul and taken Paul's hand and said, Paul, you are right; our family has been wrong; you are right; I will confess Jesus and stand by you the rest of your days.
      3) Paul, I am sorry for all the wrong my family has done, I repent of all my sins, and I want to be baptized and become a Christian.
   e. How the name of Herod Agrippa would be honored by us today. No doubt more so than 1) Lydia; or the Philippian jailor, or the centurion Cornelius, or even the treasurer of the Ethiopian queen Candace.
   f. How differently his name would have gone down into history; but more importantly, how differently he would have passed into eternity!

Conclusion:
1. Friend, it can be different for you! You don't have to have your name go in history as lost! You can have your name added to the Lamb's book of life.
   a. If you will turn from your sins and confess the name of the Lord Jesus, and be baptized in his name into the Kingdom of God.
   b. Friend-- will you to the Lord-- as we sing this hymn?

÷Act_26:2
Act_26:2

"I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, -- Paul could honestly say he was happy to speak before a king and governor for he knew Agrippa was sure to understand his defense which would be obscure to a Roman magistrate.

Agrippa's interest in the law was known, and his realm became a safe haven for Jewish Christians during and after the Jewish-Roman war of AD 66–70.

Paul could make his position clear, and get it explained through Agrippa to the Roman authorities.

King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today -- Paul had the opportunity to speak his full mind freely. To give all the details, the reasons, and the why he followed "the Way." (see note on Act_19:9.)

against all the accusations of the Jews, -- "The Jews" here means those leaders of the Jewish nation who were like dogs nipping at the heels of Paul everywhere he went.

÷Act_26:3
Act_26:3

especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. -- The word "familiar" (G1109) could probably best be translated "expert." [NASB] Agrippa's knowledge of the "customs and controversies" made Paul more confident in making his defense .

Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently. -- the inference being that he would speak at length, which it may be assumed he did. This entire chapter may be read aloud in less than five minutes; and when it is considered that Paul certainly must have spoken for at least half an hour, the brevity of the Scriptural record is apparent.

Paul's main purpose was not to just defend himself but to convert Agrippa and the others (Act_26:28-29).

A suggested outline of the different points that Paul emphasized is:
1. A complimentary introduction. Verses 2,3
2. Paul speaks of his Pharisaic heritage. Verses 4-8
3. Then he speaks of his former persecuting zeal. Verses 9-11
4. Then of his vision on the Damascus road. Verses 12-18
5. Then of his lifelong obedience to the vision. Verses 19,20
6. Then of his arrest. Verse 21
7. And finally of the doctrine he teaches. Verses 22,23

(Bruce)

÷Act_26:4
Act_26:4

"My manner of life from my youth, -- The Apostle though born in Tarsus came early to Jerusalem for his education, and it was in the Holy City that his character was formed and his manner of life showed itself. (see Act_22:3).

From the time Paul came to Jerusalem as a rabbinical student, Jewish people were acquainted with him. "Youth" here likely means a "teenager."

spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, -- This would imply that even before coming to Jerusalem, the Apostle had always dwelt among his own people, and so was not likely to be one who would undervalue Jewish privileges or offend against Jewish prejudices.

is known by all the Jews. -- He was known as a student of Gamaliel and in training to study the Law and traditions of the elders. And then because in the persecution of the Christians he had made himself a conspicuous character, he had been in favour with the chief priests and allowed to undertake the mission to Damascus. (Act_9:1-2)

÷Act_26:5
Act_26:5

They have known for a long time, -- The word "known" in this context suggests that Paul's reputation was established from his childhood.

if they are willing to testify, -- This intimates that there were some among those Jewish leaders who were now his accusers who could provide evidence about his past if they chose to do so.

that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. -- Paul's statement that he lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest party of their religion indicates that he was a devout follower of the Pharisees, who were known for their strict adherence to the Law and rituals (Php_3:4-5). However, the Pharisees became bitter enemies of Jesus because he denounced them as hypocrites (Joh_7:32; Mat_23:27.)

÷Act_26:6
Act_26:6

And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, -- Israel's hope lay in the coming of the Messiah, His Kingdom, and eternal life. Paul is on trial for claiming that the hope of Israel is fulfilled in Jesus.

Some could maintain that the "promise" from God is Eternal Life, 1Jn_2:25; Joh_6:63.

Paul's view of the "hope" and the "promise" embraced the doctrine of the resurrection (Rom_1:4), because that was God's assurance to the world (Act_17:31) that He who was so raised up was to be the judge of quick and dead.

÷Act_26:7
Act_26:7

to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, -- Paul claims that his hope is shared by every Jew, including himself as a Jew.

The term "***twelve tribes"*** is common NT designation for Israel (cf. Mat_19:28; Jas_1:1; Rev_21:12). The 10 northern tribes were not lost. Representatives from each intermingled with the two southern tribes before and after the Exile --a process that had begun during the reigns of Hezekiah (2Ch_30:1-11) and Josiah (2Ch_34:1-9).

as they earnestly worship night and day. -- The hope of the resurrection (eternal life) is why they continue the worship in the temple.

The hope of the resurrection of the dead is proven by the resurrection of Christ, who leads the way.

And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! -- The word structure emphatically marks the inconsistency of the Jewish leader's position. The Jews accuse Paul because he looks for the promise which was made to the forefathers of the Jewish race.

÷Act_26:8
Act_26:8

Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? -- By this question Paul expresses his continuing surprise that the members of his audience are still unconvinced concerning the resurrection.

"You" is plural in the Greek, and this plural shows that Paul is not, at this moment, addressing Agrippa II in particular, but has turned to the whole audience.

The source of controversy is Jesus' death and resurrection (Act_26:23). Paul understands it as the fulfillment of what Jews hoped for (see Dan_12:1-4; Ezek 37; Isa_53:10 and note).

God raises the dead -- The center of the controversy between Paul and Jewish leaders was Jesus' death and resurrection (cf. Act_26:23). Paul understands it as the fulfillment of what Jews hoped for (see Dan_12:1-4; Ezek 37; Isa_53:10).

Paul provides three evidences in this and the following verses to show that Jesus indeed is the Messiah. (1) The first of these appears in this verse: namely, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. (2) his own conversion to Jesus Christ. (3)

÷Act_26:9
Act_26:9

26:9-18 *Paul tells of his conversion.*

"I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. -- Paul tells that there was a time in his life (about 25 years before) when he didn't believe in Jesus' resurrection either. He was actively persecuting those who believe in Him.

Paul thought he was doing God's service in "opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth."
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SINCERITY NOT ENOUGH
Paul was- Act_23:1 & Act_26:9-11, 1Ti_1:12-16, Act_7:58-60 & Act_8:1.
Cornelius was--- Act_10:1-2 & Act_11:13-14.
See also Pro_14:12, Luk_16:15, Isa_55:8-9.

÷Act_26:10
Act_26:10

And I did so in Jerusalem. -- He actively persecuted Christians in the city of Jerusalem. Those Jewish leaders would know that.

I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, -- Paul must have been a most active and prominent agent for the chief priests in locating and locking up the believers in Christ.

He had received legal authority to do what he did, going even to Jewish synagogues in foreign cities. He was the "official" persecutor for the Sanhedrin.

Although Paul had avoided calling the Christians **"saints"** when he spoke in Jerusalem, here before an unbiased audience he did so, "in order to bear witness for Christ and his church."

but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. -- We can see that the slaughter of the Christians was not in all cases the result of a sudden outburst of rage at some act or speech, as had been done to Stephen. But that some of the Christians were imprisoned, then subjected to a form of trial, and afterwards put to death as men condemned by law.

This action is covered in Act_8:1-4, and must have been more extensive than we may think, since only Stephen's name is provided us in Acts.

Paul says, **"I cast my vote against them**." Literally "I threw my pebble"— a reference to the ancient custom of recording votes by means of colored pebbles. This verse may also indicate that Paul had once been a member of the Sanhedrin. If this was true, then it would also mean that he was married at one time.

÷Act_26:11

Act_26:11

And I punished them often in all the synagogues -- Paul had received legal authority to do what he did, going even to Jewish synagogues in foreign cities. He was the "official" persecutor for the Sanhedrin.

and tried to make them blaspheme, -- He coached them blaspheme Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ.

and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities. -- We know he had authority to travel to Damascus (Act_9:1-3), but there may have been many other cities to which he had gone doing this.

÷Act_26:12
Act_26:12

26:12–14 *The third NT account of Paul's conversion (see notes on Act_9:1-19; Act_22:6-21).*

"In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. -- cf. Act_9:1-3 , and see the notes there.

with the authority -- Paul was commissiondr sent by the Jewish Temple magistrates (Act_26:10), and at this particular time Damascus had been assigned as the district where he was to search for the Christians.

Paul provides three evidences to show that Jesus indeed is the Messiah. (1) The first is namely, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; (2) Paul's own conversion to Jesus Christ - vs.12 -18; (3)

÷Act_26:13
Act_26:13

At midday, -- See note on Act_9:3. Both in Acts 9 and Acts 22, there were given accounts of Saul's conversion; and all that is said in those chapters is applicable here.

The fact that there is variation in details in all three places where Paul shares his conversion speaks to the accuracy of Luke's recording of Paul's legal defenses (and, thereby, also the sermons) in Acts!

O king, -- It seems that Paul has zeroed in on giving attention to King Agrippa as if this was just a meeting between the two of them.

I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, -- There could be no question about the supernatural character of a light which overpowered the midday glare of an Eastern sun.

that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. -- Note that the light shone around Paul and all those with him.
(Act_9:2-4; Act_22:6; Cf. Eze_1:26-28; Rev_1:16.)

The light was brighter than the sun (Act_26:13).
The light enveloped the whole company (Act_26:13).
The whole company fell to the earth (Act_26:14).
Jesus spoke in Hebrew (Act_26:14).
He said, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad" (Act_26:14).
There is a fuller account of what Jesus said (Act_26:16, Act_26:18) (H. Leo Boles, p. 403).

÷Act_26:14

Act_26:14

And when we had all fallen to the ground, -- Note that Paul's entire traveling group saw the light and all fell to the ground.

I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, -- From the information given in Act_9:7; Act_22:9 and Act_26:14 it appears that the men with Saul saw the light and hear someone speaking but did not understand it apparently because the Lord was speaking in Hebrew to Saul.

'Saul, Saul, -- His name is is not the usual form of his proper Greek name, not "Saulos", but is "Saoul" a transliteration of his Hebrew name.

Here is my take on how his name is to be stress; the proper sound of his name is not a loud "shout," but a soft, long, sad moaning of his name, "S a u l, S a u l." (Gann)

why are you persecuting me? -- In persecuting Christians (those who believed in Jesus as the Christ) Paul was doing the same to Jesus Himself.

It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' -- Like a stubborn animal attempting to fight the sticks used as prods, Paul cannot succeed in fighting against God.

The words would imply that God had been guiding Saul towards the true light for some time before, and that this zeal for persecution was a resistance of the divine urging.

This phrase is unique to this context, possibly because it was a Greek/Latin proverb, not Jewish. Paul always knew to what audience he was speaking and how to communicate to them!

"**It is hard for you to kick against the goads."** -- The expression "to kick against the goad" is derived from the action of a stubborn and unyielding ox kicking against the goad. As the ox would gain nothing by the struggle and would injure no one but itself by the kicking, it comes to denote an obstinate and refractory disposition and course of conduct.

What was Paul kicking against? Paul makes it clear that he had acted in all good conscience, even amidst his opposition to Christianity. In his effort to make men adhere to the Law of Moses he was kicking against the grace of God which had been revealed in Christ. Yet the more he kicks (i.e., persecutes), the more the church grows!

÷Act_26:15
Act_26:15

And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' -- Paul speaks most respectfully to the voice as "Lord." See the notes at Act_9:5; and Act_22:7;

Paul saw Jesus at this time (Jesus said "I have appeared to you ...") and heard his voice. By not recognizing Him, it makes us conclude that Paul had never seen or heard Jesus in person while he was on earth.

And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting. -- Now there is no doubt who is speaking to him. Paul must have heard many speak and praise the name of Jesus from those he was trying to make blaspheme this name. See the notes on Act_9:5.

÷Act_26:16
Act_26:16

26:16–18 P*aul records what Jesus said to him on the road to Damascus, elaborating both on the earlier account in Acts and what he has previously articulated during his former trials (compare* Act_9:1-19*;* Act_22:1-21*).*

But rise and stand upon your feet, -- Paul had fallen to the ground (Act_9:4) and was in that position when the Lord first spoke to him. (cf. Act_9:7). When he arose from the ground and opened his eyes he could not see. (Act_9:8).

for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me -- Paul is given a special "appointment" from Jesus the Christ. (cf. Gal_1:1; 1Co_1:1; Rom_1:1; etc.) The verb "appoint" is that which in Act_22:14 (NIV, etc.) is rendered "has chosen," (ESV "appointed"), and implies a deliberate selection and appointment. Saul was "a chosen vessel" (Act_9:15).

For **"witness"** cf. Act_1:8. As the other 12 apostles were to be "witnesses" for the Lord, so Paul is given that commission as well. Seeing Christ qualifies him as a witness to His resurrection; that He is alive and in heaven, at the right hand of the Father. (1Co_9:1; 1Co_15:8; etc.)

and to those in which I will appear to you, -- Jesus indicated there would be additional appearances to Paul beside this initial on the Damascus road. (See Act_18:9-10; Act_22:17-21; Act_23:11; 2Co_12:1-7; Gal_1:11-12.)

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Some Various Comings of Christ

***1 Emmanuel**, Mat_1:23; Joh_1:14; Joh_6:38; Gal_4:4 This was the coming of the Lord in the flesh, his birth at Bethlehem.

2 Pentecost, Mat_16:28 (Mar_9:1) Mar_14:62, Mat_26:64 In some significant way it could be said that Christ also came on Pentecost representatively when he sent his promise of the Holy Spirit.

3 To Paul at His Conversion __ Act_26:16, Act_22:7-9 ; 1Co_15:8 The Lord came to Paul so he could see him alive after his crucifixion and thus qualify him to be an apostle.

4 In Visions -- To Paul at Jerusalem, Act_22:17-18 (after conversion); At Corinth, Act_18:9; again at Jerusalem, Act_23:11

5 AD 70, His coming in judgment upon the Jews for their rejection. Mat_24:27, Mat_24:30, Mat_24:44, Mat_24:39; Mar_13:26-30; Luk_21:20-27; Heb_10:37; Jas_5:8

This brought an end to their nation, the temple, the physical priesthood coming from Levi, the end of animal sacrifices, etc. ("Last days"[of the Jewish dispensation] plural)

***6 The Resurrection Day** (His Second Coming, -- Cf. "Last Day" singular) 1Th_4:13 ff to 1Th_5:11; 1Co_15:23-24 ff; Joh_14:1-3;

Joh_5:28; Joh_11:24; Joh_6:39; Joh_6:40; Joh_6:44;

÷Act_26:17
Act_26:17

delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles-- Paul was fore-warned by the Lord that there would be troublesome and dangerous times but not to fear, he would be delivered and from their hands.

Both the Jewish leaders and Gentiles would present dangers to Paul.

to whom I am sending you -- This extended message from the Lord was conveyed to Paul through Ananias as the Lord's spokesman, see Act_9:11-12; and Act_22:12-16.

÷Act_26:18
Act_26:18

to open their eyes, -- Unbelievers are blinded to spiritual truth by Satan (2Co_4:4; 2Co_6:14; cf. Mat_15:14).

so that they may turn from darkness to light -- Satan works to close our minds and hearts (cf. 2Co_4:4) while the gospel gives light to men.

This verse recalls the divine commission of the Messiah. In the OT, particularly the prophecies of Isaiah, the Messiah was to bring sight to the blind. It was both a physical prediction and also metaphorical for truth (cf. Isa_29:18; Isa_32:3; Isa_35:5; Isa_42:7; Isa_42:16).

and from the power of Satan to God, -- This articulates the idea that those who do not belong to Christ are in many ways influenced by evil and as such opposed to God's purposes (compare note on 2Co_6:15).

that they may receive forgiveness of sins -- Putting one's trust (faith) in the Lord's mission and message, and turning from one's sinful ways to following Christ in obedience to the gospel brings one into a new relationship with Him, one who receives the forgiveness of sins. Eph_1:7; Col_1:14; Heb_9:22.

and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' -- The word "sanctified" here refers to believers in the Lord who have been made holy (forgiven, justified) because of Christ's sacrifice on their behalf. Men whose faith leads them to obedience will find forgiveness and justification (Heb_5:9; Rom_6:3-5).

÷Act_26:19
Act_26:19

"Therefore [consequently], -- "Therefore" or "consequently" points back to everything from verses 12 to 18.

O King Agrippa, -- Paul is engaging the King directly in his message affirming Jesus to be the Messiah, (1) providing eye-witness testimony to the Lord's resurrection; and (2) Paul's calling by Him to the work of an apostle.

I was not disobedient -- Paul affirms to the King of his compelling and conscience response to duty to spread this good news. If Paul could not do otherwise than to obey the Lord, then neither should King Agrippa.

to the heavenly vision, -- The language "heavenly vision" conveys to Agrippa that the commission to Paul had come from God Himself. King Agrippa, a Pharisee in his sympathies, would respect it, and would also respect Paul's emphasis on obedience.

÷Act_26:20
Act_26:20

but declared -- The word signifies the delivery of a message. Saul was henceforth God's evangelist.

first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, -- These areas are not necessarily chronological, but territorial. Paul's preaching eventually spread to these areas. (Act_9:29-30; Act_23:34).

and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, -- Repentance is linked to a changed life-style. Act_2:38; Mat_3:8; Jas_2:18; and 1Th_1:9.

performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. -- Works of obedience and living a life-style in harmony with the teaching of the Lord. Paul is informing the King that there would need to be some repentance in his own life-style. (Rom_8:28-29; Gal_4:19; Eph_1:4; Eph_2:10).

÷Act_26:21
Act_26:21

For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple -- It was because of his preaching and inclusion of "the Gentiles" (vs. 20) that caused the riot in the Temple. The word "seized" implies an arrest with violence.

and tried to kill me. -- The verb tense indicate Paul is talking about they tried again and again, several times, to kill him. Paul combines the riot in the Temple with the subsequent plot before he was sent to Caesarea. (Act_21:31 ff; Act_23:10; Act_23:19-21).

÷Act_26:22
Act_26:22

To this day I have had the help that comes from God, -- Paul stresses that God has seen to it that all the attempts to kill him came to failure. The word for "help" means the assistance of an ally, and recalls God's promise "Surely I will be with thee."

and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, -- The "small and great" is an inclusive Semitic idiom. It is Paul's affirmation (like Peter's, cf. Act_10:38) that he, like God, is not respecter of persons (cf. Deu_10:17; 2Ch_19:7, see fuller note at Act_10:34). He preaches to all mankind.

saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: -- Throughout Acts, the good news about Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of promises made by God in the OT Scriptures (e.g., Act_2:24-36; Act_3:22-26; Act_13:32-39; compare Luk_24:25-27).

The term "Moses" is used interchangeably with the term "Law," since he was the author of the Pentateuch, the 5 books of Law. The phrase is usually "Moses and the Prophets" or "the Law of Moses and the Prophets." (Luk_16:29; Luk_16:31; Luk_24:27; Luk_24:44; Joh_1:45; Act_26:22; Act_28:23)

÷Act_26:23
Act_26:23

that the Christ must suffer -- Paul could be referencing a variety of OT passages (e.g., Isa 52:13– 53:12; Psa 22). Paul has explained this message in his earlier speeches in Acts and used a variety of passages to do so (see Act_13:30-37).

and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, -- Jesus was not raised from the dead temporarily, as other people were (e.g., Mar_5:42; Luk_7:11-17; Joh_11:43-44). He was the first who absolutely conquered death and was the guarantee that others would as well (Act_2:24; 1Co_15:20; Col_1:18; Rev_1:5).

he would proclaim light -- Light is an ancient metaphor of truth and purity (cf. v. 18; Isa. 9:2; 42:6–7).

both to our people and to the Gentiles." -- The "our people" is reference to the Jewish nation. The term "Gentiles" are all other non-Jews.

Notice the inclusiveness of Paul's witness was both *social* ("small and great" **acts 26.22**) and *racial* ("our people and ... the Gentiles.)

There is only one gospel for both groups (cf. Eph. 2:11–3:13). This was the mystery that had been hidden from the ages, but is now fully revealed in Christ. All humans are made in the image of the one creator God (cf. Gen_1:26-27). Gen_3:15 promises that God will provide salvation for fallen humanity. Isaiah affirms the universality of the Messiah (e.g. Isa_42:4-6, ; Isa_42:10-12; Isa_45:20-25; Isa_49:6; Isa_51:4; Isa_52:10; Isa_60:1-3; and also Mic_5:4-5).

÷Act_26:24
Act_26:24

And as he was saying these things in his defense, -- The present participle here indicates that Festus broke in and interrupted Paul's defense.

Up to this point, Paul has shown to Agrippa II and the others why he and the unbelieving Jews differed. They looked for a Messiah yet to come; he (because of several lines of evidence) looked upon Jesus as the Messiah who had already come and fulfilled God's promises to Israel.

Festus said with a loud voice, -- He cried out loud enough to interrupt while Paul was preaching. As Paul's defense stretches to some length, just as he had suggested to Agrippa II that it would when he begged for "patience" (Act_26:3). Festus finds himself increasingly unable to follow the course of the argument.

"Paul, you are out of your mind; -- The statement means that Paul's enthusiasm (in Festus' opinion) has overcome his better judgment.

Paul's message was unbelievable to him. His world-view and culture, education, and position biased his ability to understand. To Festus, and the Gentile world, the Gospel of the Cross did appear as "foolishness" (1co 1.23).

your great learning is driving you out of your mind." -- The Greek reads, "Your many writings are turning you to madness." Festus speaks of "writings," the very word used by the Jews for their collected body of sacred books.

He has been listening to a long quotation of passages from those writings as Paul adduces passage after passage and compares what it says to what Jesus did. This constant study of the Old Testament, is what Festus is speaking of.

In a roundabout way this shows the depth, clarity and persuasiveness of Paul's defense. Festus was astonished that a learned scholar like Paul could actually believe that the dead would live again — something no intelligent Roman would accept.

As the same word is taken up in the following verse, it is better that it should be rendered alike in both places.

÷Act_26:25
Act_26:25

But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, -- Paul uses the same words the governor used, but with a denial.

most excellent Festus, -- Paul uses the same title of respect which is given to Felix (Act_23:26; act 24:3). As Chrysostom remarks the Apostle now answers with gentleness, not as to the high priest (Act_23:3).

but I am speaking true and rational words. -- The word "rational" (G4997) has the meaning of "reasonable," "soberness," "soundness of mind" which is the opposite to that of "madness" which Festus had said of Paul.

÷Act_26:26
Act_26:26

For the king knows about these things, -- Paul asserts that Agrippa would be aware of the ministry of Jesus, his miracles, and work of the Sanhedrin to crucify Him and the claims His disciples that He arose from the grave on the 3rd day.

and to him I speak boldly [with confidence]. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, -- King Agrippa' family-history was intertwined with Jesus and His disciples. He was acquainted with the life and works of Jesus, of His death and resurrection, of the marvelous events of Pentecost, and the preaching of the Gospel since Jesus had been crucified.

for this has not been done in a corner. -- The death of Jesus and the Christians' claim that He rose from the dead were not secrets but common knowledge in Palestine.

÷Act_26:27
Act_26:27

King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? -- Paul knew that Agrippa knew the OT Scriptures, so he should believe the fulfillment of OT promises. Paul has made it clear how they pointed to Jesus as the Christ! Paul is claiming that his message was not a "new" or "innovative" message! It was fulfilled prophecy.

I know that you believe." -- Paul answers his own question. He has made his message personal to the King. "If you believe the prophets, can't you see how that Jesus has fulfilled them, and His resurrection is the ultimate proof!"

÷Act_26:28
Act_26:28

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" -- The term "Christians" is found also at Act_11:26; 1Pe_4:16, see the notes there.

The first time the name "Christian," was used was at Antioch in AD 44 (see note at Act_11:26), and had come to be widely accepted by AD 59-60. Agrippa II was familiar with it. It is difficult, however, to determine how he was using the word. If he is rejecting Paul's appeal, then he likely used the term in a contemptuous way. If he is serious, he would have been using the name with respect and reverence.

The Greek phrase is very difficult, and, literally translated, says, "In a little me persuading a Christian to become." If we had been there and heard Agrippa's tone of voice, and seen the expression on his face, we could better understand his reply.

ν [G1722, in] ὀλ γῳ [G3641, a little, short] με [G3165, me] πε θεις [G3982, would persuade] Χριστιανὸν [G5546, a Christian] ποι σαι [NA26, G4160 (G5658) to make] [TR read γενεσθαι; G1096 (G5635) to become.]

[The textual difference is that some MSS read *"to make"*; others read "*to become"*; see above.]

It is possible that Agrippa was being sarcastic and ironical, in disdaining and rejecting Paul's appeal that he become a Christian. If so, the translation of the RSV would be correct, "In a short time, you think to make me a Christian!" [This seems to be way the translators of the RSV and NASB understood the response.]

It is possible, on the other hand, that Agrippa was sincere and serious. If so, the ASV translators are correct, "With but a little (more) persuasion, you would make me a Christian."

÷Act_26:29
Act_26:29

And Paul said, "Whether short or long, -- Whether it would take a "short" time, or a "long" time ["one sermon or a hundred"] to convince the King to become a Christian ..."

I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am-- Paul makes it sound like the King's reply was serious; he certainly turns it into a positive situation by stressing that he like to see everyone there as Christians like he was!

except for these chains." -- Paul would have been escorted to the hearing chamber shackled at the wrists, or perhaps to a soldier. At this point he probably holds them up in a dramatic way.

÷Act_26:30
Act_26:30

Then the king rose, -- This signals that the hearing is over. Just how long Paul has been speaking is unknow, but he had probably gone into detail with many OT prophecies that spoke of the Messiah. We understand Luke has just given us the gist of Paul's speech.

and the governor and Bernice -- The exodus from the chamber is orderly. Whether Paul had first been escorted out and back to his cell, or was left standing there we don't know.

and those who were sitting with them. -- The entire audience of "military tribunes and prominent men of the city" (Act_25:23) pass out from the hearing following the King and the governor.

÷Act_26:31
Act_26:31

And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, -- This seems to be the consensus of all those present.

"This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment." -- They had not heard of any crimes the man had committed; and wonder why he should still be imprisoned.

÷Act_26:32
Act_26:32

And Agrippa said to Festus, -- Privately the King and the governor discuss the case. King Agrippa, looking at the question from the Jewish standpoint, confirms the opinion of the Roman magistrate (cf. Act_25:25).

"This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." -- They found no grounds for imprisonment and suggest he could have been acquitted and set free, but because of Paul's appeal, the case was now in the hands of the Emperor.

Probably in keeping with one of Luke's purpose of writing this treatise he shows again that Paul has never been found guilty of breaking Roman law in any court. (See note on Act_1:1) about the identity of Theophilus.)

÷Act_27:1
Acts 27:1

27:1–44 *This section contains a detailed account of Paul's sea voyage to Rome.*

And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, -- Festus had decided to send Paul on to Rome according to Paul's appeal to Caesar. The plans and arrangements are all made for the escort and transportation.

By the term "we" Luke includes himself in this portion of the story as he has also done earlier. He had likely been living near Caesarea and doing his "eye-witness" interviews and caring care for Paul as his physician during his imprisonment. Now he rejoins the apostle for the journey to Rome in the longest "we" section of Acts.

The officers and ship crew would be happy to have a physician like Luke aboard.

they delivered Paul and some other prisoners -- Paul is not the only prisoner being shipped to Italy. We do not know anything about any of the others but probably none of them were Christians. They may have been men who also appealed to Caesar, or men who were already condemned to death and being shipped for the Roman gladiatorial games.

Aristarchus in mentioned in Colossians 4:10 (see note there, and see the note at Philemon 1:23) as Paul's "fellow prisoner" in Rome, but he may be meaning that Aristarchus was accompanying and serving his needs. We know from the next verse that Aristarchus is on this same voyage with Paul.

to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius. -- The "Augustan Cohort" (regiment) probably refers to the Cohort Augusta I, which is known from various ancient inscriptions to have been stationed in Palestine during the reign of Agrippa II. Some think this unit had the duty as imperial couriers and escorts.

Just what size the detail Julius had under his authority for this voyage is not stated. He may have been one of the officer present at Paul's hearing (Acts 25:23) and heard that he had done nothing wrong. From early in the course of the voyage the centurion Julius treat the prisoner Paul with kindness. (cf. Acts 27:3; Acts 27:11; Acts 27:31; Acts 27:43.)

Julius would be given a diploma which would allow him to requisition goods and services for their journey. In the case of Julius, this involved sea passage to the capital.

÷Act_27:2
Acts 27:2

And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, -- The ship was destined for a city on the NW coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey) near Troas. Along the way at some port the centurion planned to change to another ship sailing to Italy. Acts 27:6.

which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, -- This was a small coastal ship which had cargo for various ports. At the seaport of Mysia in Asia Minor (Acts 27:5) the party was to leave this ship. This is the first stage of the long and dangerous trip to Rome.

accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. -- Aristarchus was a Gentile friend of Paul who traveled with him and took care of him (while perhaps he and Luke performed services like slaves, they were devoted friends. Roman law allowed a prisoner to be attended by servants.).

He had been seized by the crowd during the riot at Ephesus (Acts 19:29). He accompanied Paul to Jerusalem with the gift offering (Acts 20:4). Aristarchus would be with Paul during the apostle's first Roman imprisonment (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 1:24).

Although some Jews in Thessalonica opposed Paul's work (Acts 17:5-8), Aristarchus' presence here shows the support Paul received from the church he founded there.

÷Act_27:3
Acts 27:3

The next day we put in at Sidon. -- About 70 miles north of Caesarea, Sidon was a well-known seaport on the coast of Phoenica. The coasting vessel probably put in here to load or unload some cargo. Jesus had visited this area during His ministry (Matthew 15:21-28).

And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for. -- Paul, being a Roman citizen, may have received preferential treatment and seems to have asked for this favor. Most likely he was escorted by Roman soldiers (but not bound, Acts 22:29-30) as he visited friends who resided there.

The compound term translated "kindly," or "with consideration" (used also in Acts 28:2, and Titus 3:4) shows that Julius was a compassionate person (somewhat surprising for a Roman occupationary soldier). He probably knew about Paul's case.

It is well to note, as in other instances, the favorable impression that Paul's conduct made on official persons who came in contact with him (cf. Acts 18:14; Acts 19:31; Acts 19:37).

The indication is that these "friends" are Christians (Acts 15:3) who ministered to Paul, possibly by providing him with provisions for his trip.

÷Act_27:4
Acts 27:4

And putting out [launch] to sea from there -- The ship headed north after leaving the harbor at Sidon. But because of a contrary wind they couldn't said directly to Mysia from Sidon.

we sailed under the lee [*the shelter*] of Cyprus, -- The coasting vessel encountered strong winds as it sought to pass Cape Kleides at northeast Cyprus and so was forced to sail under the island's lee along the southern coast.

(Others maintain this meant passing between Cyprus and the mainland, having Cyprus on their left, they were seeking shelter from the strong winds.)

because the winds were against us. -- They were protected by the island from the contrary winds.

÷Act_27:5
Acts 27:5

And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, -- Once they have passed the island of Cyprus, there was a stretch of open sea to be crossed between Cyprus and the southern coast of Cilicia. Once they came near to the coast of Cilicia, they would have begun working slowly westward, just offshore first of the country of Cilicia, and then of Pamphylia. The voyage would have been

helped by local land breezes and by the steady westward current which runs along the southern coast of Asia Minor.

Ramsay writes, "The Adramyttian ship crept from point to point up the coast, taking advantage of every opportunity to make a few miles, and lying at anchor when the westerly wind made progress impossible." (Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen,* p. 317).

we came to Myra in Lycia. -- Lycia was a province in the southwestern part of Asia Minor. Pamphylia was on its eastern boundary, and the province of Asia was on its western side. Phrygia and Pisidia lay to the north.

The city of **Myra**, situated on the river Andriacus, lay some two miles inland from its harbor Andriaca. The city stood on a hill where two valleys met, and its harbor became one of the main ports of the Imperial grain fleet, whose ships brought Egyptian grain to Italy.

÷Act_27:6
Acts 27:6

There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy -- Alexandria was an important Egyptian city that exported grain and other goods to Rome.

The centurion found a large grain ship (Acts 27:37-38) capable to carrying many passengers. Two centuries earlier, Egypt had become the bread basket of Rome, but the grain grown in Egypt had to be shipped to Rome. A whole fleet of ships was devoted to this trade, the fleet being organized under the department of state and directly responsible to the Roman government.

Such large ships, often 180 feet by 45 feet by 43 feet, served passengers as well. There are 276 abord this ship (Acts 27.37). Josephus reports that one such ship carried 600 passengers besides its cargo.

and put us on board. -- This ship being a part of the Royal grain fleet was easy for the centurion to book official passage on to Italy for his party. They may have considered themselves fortunate to find a ship so quickly, because it was getting late in the year (Acts 27:9) for safe sailing in the Mediterranean.

÷Act_27:7
Acts 27:7

We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, -- They were slowed by the same head-winds they had been facing already. Being located on the extreme SW of Asia Minor, this was a famous seaport town in ancient times and also served ships of the imperial grain fleet.

and as the wind did not allow us to go farther, -- Having reached Cnidus, the ship could not sail farther west due to the strong headwinds.

we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. -- The ship was forced to turn south and head for the island of Crete. This large island off the SW coast of Asia Minor provided some relief from the strong NW winds buffering the ship by sailing under the south side of the island. Salmone was on the eastern end of Crete's coast.

÷Act_27:8
Acts 27:8

Coasting along it with difficulty, -- Prevailing winds limited progress for the huge grain ship, and by the time it arrived at Fair Havens, halfway along Crete's southern coast, it was "after the Fast" (Acts 27:9). The Fast refers to the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), which in AD 59 occurred on October 5.

we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea. -- It was nearly mid-October then when the ship finally arrived in Fair Havens.

÷Act_27:9
Acts 27:9

Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast was already over, -- Some days passed there before wind conditions allowed the ship to sail farther (Acts 27:12-13).

The Fast refers to the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), which in AD 59 occurred on October 5. Alexandrian grain ships adhered to a tight sailing program between April and October. Therefore, the ship's departure from Fair Havens occurred toward the end of October.

Paul advised them, -- Paul had a good deal of experience in sea travel, perhaps more than the Roman tribune and maybe even the ship owner himself. His sea travel, beyond even what is recorded in Acts involved being in three shipwrecks and spending a night and a day adrift at sea (See the note at 2 Corinthians 11:25, and this was written before the shipwreck recorded in Acts 27).

÷Act_27:10
Acts 27:10

saying, "Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives." -- (See notes on Acts 27:9 and 2 Corinthians 11:25.) Ramsay suggests that a ship's council was held. Evidently the character of the Apostle had won him the regard and respect of those in charge of the vessel as well as of the centurion. He had some experience of sailing in the Mediterranean, and so was fitted to speak on the question which was now being debated.

Because of the lateness of the season, and the difficulties they had already experienced, Paul wisely counseled them to spend the winter at Fair Havens.

÷Act_27:11
Acts 27:11

But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot [helmsman] and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. -- Because the ship was part of the Imperial grain fleet (see notes on Acts 27:5-6) Julius, not the helmsman nor the ship's owner, was the ranking authority on board.

÷Act_27:12
Acts 27:12

And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, -- The professional sailors deemed Fair Havens an unsuitable location to wait out the winter (see note on Acts 27:9). Usually when the season for sailing closed they stopped wherever they were.

the majority decided to put out to sea from there, -- Apparently there was a counsel where all the passengers had an input. They decided (voted?) to leave Fair Haven and put out to sea to reach Phoenix.

on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, -- The location of this harbor is unknown today, but many think it is possibly the modern Phineka Bay, or Lutro Bay, located several miles west from Fair Havens whose harbor would provide better shelter from a winter storm, and a larger town to accommodate the passengers.

facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there. -- Here they planned to put into port for the winter. Phœnix is no doubt the correct orthography of the name at that time. The place is mentioned both by Strabo and Ptolemy, and has been identified with the modern port of Lutro (Spratt's Crete, ii. 250)

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÷Act_27:13
Acts 27:13

Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, -- The storm appeared to have in some degree abated, and the change of wind must have been very complete, for (Acts 27:7-8) they had previously sailed under the lee of Crete to get shelter from the north wind.

they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to the shore. -- They put to sea again and sailed along the southern coast of Crete, hugging the shore line, with the intention of putting into the Phoenix port in three or four hours.

The word for "close in shore" is *asson*, and it has been by some taken for a proper name and endeavors have been made to discover traces of some place so named in Crete.

÷Act_27:14
Acts 27:14

But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster, struck down from the land. -- Soon after setting sail the ship was caught in a northeasterly typhoon-force wind called Euroclydon. The Greek word used here, *eurakylon*, refers to a cold Mediterranean wind from the northeast, known today as the *gregale*.

Luke describes the fourteen-day storm and subsequent shipwreck in great detail using precise nautical terminology (Acts 27:13-44).

÷Act_27:15
Acts 27:15

And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, -- The normal way in a storm is to face the ship into the wind and into the waves. They were not able to maintain this position.

we gave way to it and were driven along. -- The literal rendering is "having given way we were driven." The general usage of the verb in the sense of "yielding to superior force" makes it to indicate that the wind was blowing so violently that the ship was being blown sideways. This is extremely dangerous to the ship, it could breaking up or be filled with water and sink.

÷Act_27:16
Acts 27:16

Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, -- Cauda was an island 23 miles south of Crete, known today as Gozzo. The "lee" side is the side sheltered from the wind. This would be the southwest side of the island.

we managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat. -- This was a smaller vessel used to transport people from the ship to land. It had probably filled with water and was hard to lift on deck. (Luke tells about this, because it later has a part to play in their survival.)

÷Act_27:17
Acts 27:17

After hoisting it up, -- They hauled the ship's boat aboard and secured it on deck.

they used supports to undergird the ship. -- There was probably a slight break in the wind while they did this. Cables, were wrapped around the hull and winched tight, in a procedure known as frapping, to help the ship endure the battering of the wind and waves.

Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, -- The Syrtis was an area of sandbars off the North African coast where a ship could be stranded.

they lowered the gear, -- The noun is a very general one, signifying"tackling" or "implements" of any kind. Some think this means the lowered all the sails, but in a storm they would already have done this. Other think it refers to putting out a sea anchor which is not an anchor that gripped the bottom, but a parachute-like sheet which served as a sort of brake to slow down the ship from drifting southward.

and thus they were driven along. -- There is no way for the sailors to manage the direction of the ship, but they are left to the discretion of the wind and waves.

÷Act_27:18
Acts 27:18

Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. -- The storm was very violent and evidently the ship was taking on water, and they began to dispense of what weight they could. Throwing all unnecessary gear and cargo overboard would enable it to ride more easily over the waves.

÷Act_27:19
Acts 27:19

And on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. -- This shows how violent and dangerous this storm seemed to these seasoned sailors. They have become truly afraid for their lives. They have thrown the cargo, and all the ship's tackle overboard to lighten the weight.

÷Act_27:20
Acts 27:20

When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, -- Without stars or the sun they could not navigate or discern their position. (Before the advent of the compass, sailors depended for their bearings on the sun and stars.)

This phrase reveals that they had no clue as to where they were. They were afraid of the coast of north Africa, but they could not tell if they were nearing any danger (cf. Acts 27:17; Acts 27:29).

and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned. -- The length of the raging storm has drained away all hope of surviving the sea.

This sets the stage for Paul's encouragement based on his previous vision (cf. Acts 27:21-26). Their resources were all gone!

÷Act_27:21
Acts 27:21

Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them -- Those aboard are all weak and sea sick. Probably because of the storm food preparation was impossible and probably most were too sea-sick to eat.

Apparently there is no leader among them, but Paul being a natural leader takes his place to encourage them.

and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. -- Paul presumably did not mention his former advice at Fair Havens just to gloat but to encourage his fellow travelers to believe what he was about to tell them. What he had predicted had just come to pass, and what he was about to predict would as well.

÷Act_27:22
Acts 27:22

Yet now I urge you to take heart, -- Paul's advice is sound, and now he tells them there is reason to be encourage and to be confident.

for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. -- Formerly, in speaking of injury and loss (Acts 27:10) he had reasoned from the probabilities of the case out of his own experiences (2 Corinthians 11:25). The Apostle will now inform them of the reason he is confident, God has given him a revelation (Acts 27:23-24). Paul says that now "only the ship" will be lost, Acts 27:26.

÷Act_27:23
Acts 27:23

For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, -- Again, note that this time Paul claims direct revelation from heaven for this message, which he did not claim when he spoke in the conference at Fair Havens.

Paul here gives the authority behind his specific prediction about no loss of life but loss of the ship;. "**The God to whom I belong to,**" said Paul. He identifies the source of his revelation as the One Creator worshiped by Paul and the other Christians.

Usually the Lord Himself appeared to Paul, but here an angel was sent rather than Jesus, likely because Paul's pagan shipmates would be more likely to understand "**an angel**" than "Jesus" said to me. Compare the language of Jonah when he was among the heathen sailors. (Jonah 1:9.)

This is the last of 6 visions Paul received as recorded by Luke (cf. Acts 9:3-6; Acts 16:9-10; Acts 18:9-10; Acts 22:17-18; Acts 23:11). God had an evangelistic plan and purpose for Paul's life (cf. Acts 9:15) and a storm was not going to stop it.

÷Act_27:24

Acts 27:24

and he said, -- Paul conveys to his shipmates what God's angel said to him.

Do not be afraid, Paul; -- The tense usually means stop an action already in process (cf. Acts 23:11; Proverbs 3:5-6). Paul was not afraid of dying, but of not being able to finished the work he wanted to do in Rome.

you must stand before Caesar. -- The ultimate reason for Paul's deliverance was his testimony in Rome (cf. Acts 19:21; Acts 23:11). **"Stand"** is the proper word for standing before a judge. Since Paul is promised that he will be tried before Caesar, it must be that he will not perish at sea.

The angel reaffirmed the promise Jesus Himself had earlier made to Paul (Acts 23:11).

And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' -- This is understood as in answer to prayer on the part of Paul. His prayer was not limited to his own interests; he had been interceding for those who, like him, were on board that ship in that raging storm.

This does not mean that they would all be converted to Christ, but that their lives would be preserved. The world has no idea how much it owes, in the mercy of God, to the presence of righteous men in its midst. For ten righteous men, Sodom would have been spared.

Paul's life and faith impacted the destiny of his companions. His presence assured everyone's deliverance.

÷Act_27:25
Acts 27:25

So take heart, men, -- Paul encouraged his despairing (and perhaps seasick) companions twice (Acts 27:22; Acts 27:25).

for I have faith in God -- Paul's words imply, 'I would have you to have faith too.' His reference to God's promise would gather the interest the other passengers in his God. And when later the promise is fulfilled, none of those aboard the ship would ever forget meeting Paul.

that it will be exactly as I have been told. -- Here we see that "faith" involves believing that God will do exactly as He promises He will do. Such faith gave Paul confidence and hope. His faith was a total commitment to the Lord: "to whom I belong, whom I also serve" (Acts 27:23).

÷Act_27:26
Acts 27:26

But we must run aground on some island." -- Paul does not minimize his message, he tells the whole truth, there will be danger and a catastrophe to the ship. It will "run aground."

Being told of "some island" may indicate that the vision gave Paul more details of the manner of their preservation than we have recorded.

÷Act_27:27
Acts 27:27

When the fourteenth night had come, -- That is, since they had sailed from Fair Havens, Acts 27:13. Since that time they had been constantly driven to and fro. During this time they have traveled 476 miles at about 36 miles per 24-hour period.

as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, -- Here the "Adriatic Sea" is a reference to the central Mediterranean Sea, which lay between Greece, Italy and Africa, as it was called in the past, and not the present Adriatic Sea located between Italy and Croatia. The modern Adriatic was known in Paul's day as the Gulf of Adria.

about midnight the sailors suspected [sensed; surmised] that they were nearing land. -- Their knowledge of the sea would enable them to form an opinion from things which others would hardly notice, some alteration in the currents or the different character and sounds of the waves, dashed as they would be against the land.

÷Act_27:28
Acts 27:28

So they took a sounding -- With a weight attached to a length of rope they measured the depth of the sea. In ancient times, this was a means of feeling their way in dark and stormy weather.

and found twenty fathoms. -- This would be about 120 feet.

A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. -- After an interval of time, the depth now measured only about 90 feet. The drop in depth shows that they were approaching land and the ship was in danger of running aground.

÷Act_27:29
Acts 27:29

And fearing that we might run on the rocks, -- Experienced sailors could tell that rocks were nearby from the dashing sound of the waves.

they let down four anchors from the stern -- This was not sea-anchors like they may have done previously (see note Acts 27:17). But this was an attempt to grip the sea bottom and to hold the ship in place and keep the bow pointed toward the shore.

and prayed for day to come. -- It was still dark. They did not know exactly where they were. They wanted to slow down or stop the ship's approach to land until they could see where the ship was heading.

÷Act_27:30
Acts 27:30

And as the sailors were seeking to escape [flee] from the ship, -- The sailors being experienced handlers of the ship knew it would break in pieces on the rocks being unable to guide it. They were fleeing for their lives. The smaller boat, being easier to manage, was their change for safety.

and had lowered the ship's boat [skiff] into the sea -- This was the same dinghy that had been hauled aboard earlier with difficulty, see note at Acts 27:16.

under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, -- They professed to be anxious to make the ship secure fore as well as aft, and to lay anchors from the foreship. They intended to avail themselves of the dinghy and row towards the shore.

÷Act_27:31
Acts 27:31

Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, -- These would probably be able to stop the intended desertion better than the captain of the vessel. At all events they were strong enough in numbers to take the matter into their own hands, and cut the boat adrift.

Perhaps from Paul's own experience at sea he detected the intention of the sailors to escape. Paul went to the centurion Julius and warned him of the sailors plan to flee.

"Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." -- The skill of the sailors was to be exerted to carry out what God had promised. Although God had revealed to Paul that they should all be saved, some still trusted human effort alone for their salvation. "Saved" here is in the sense of physical deliverance.

÷Act_27:32
Acts 27:32

Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go. -- While the soldiers did not listen to Paul before (Acts 27:11), now they follow his advice. In an instant we see them drawing their swords and cutting cut the ropes which attached the boat to the ship. The sailors' possibility of fleeing the ship was taken away.

÷Act_27:33
Acts 27:33

As day was about to dawn, -- With daylight they would be able to see the shore and what they were facing.

Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, -- Paul now encourages them to eat a proper meal while they could for soon they would need their strength to survive.

The verb tense indicates Paul made continual entreaties through the morning hours for the people to eat. The food would serve as a source of energy, and would perhaps take their minds away from their fears for a while.

"Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. -- Because of seasickness and the difficulty of preparing and preserving food, the passengers and crew had eaten little or nothing in the two weeks since they left Fair Havens.

÷Act_27:34
Acts 27:34

Therefore I urge you to take some food. -- Paul persisted in his urging for them to eat something.

It will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you." -- The phrase "not a hair" was a common Jewish saying to denote absolute protection (1 Samuel 14:45; 2 Samuel 14:11; 1 Kings 1:52; Luke 21:18).

While God assures Paul that everyone will be saved, they all need to cooperated in doing their part. Some wonder if these words were aimed particularly at the sailors who had attempted to save themselves.

÷Act_27:35
Acts 27:35

And when he had said these things, he took bread, -- We can picture Paul himself going to the galley and getting some food to distribute to those who refuse to follow his suggestion to go get some for themselves.

and giving thanks to God in the presence of all -- Before he passed it out, he paused to offer thanks to God. Paul teaches that prayers of thanksgiving are to be offered by grateful people (cf. Colossians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; 1 Timothy 4:3-4; Matthew 15:36).

he broke it and began to eat. -- Paul encouraged them by example which is better than just words. In the sight of the heathen soldiers, sailors, and passengers, Paul shared the food after solemn thanksgiving for their food and deliverance.

This does not refer to the Lord's Supper, but it does show to everyone Paul's faith in the God who was about to deliver them. And his faith influenced others (cf. verse 36).

÷Act_27:36
Acts 27:36

Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. -- Paul's hearty cheerfulness, his words of encouragement, and his own example began to influence others on board the ship. His own hopeful spirit infused hope in the whole company and doubtless Paul's prayer was not without a calming influence.

The words present a striking contrast to the growing abandonment of hope in Acts 27:20.

÷Act_27:37
Acts 27:37

(We were in all 276 persons in the ship.) -- Some translations put this verse in parenthesis when Luke inserts this passenger information here. This was an ocean-going vessel and much larger than the smaller vessel Paul's group had sailed from Caesarea to Lycia.

Such large ships, often 180 feet by 45 feet by 43 feet, served passengers as well. Luke tell us there were 276 aboard this ship (**Acts 27.37**). Josephus tells us there were 600 people on board the ship, beside cargo, on which he set sail for Italy, and which, too, went down in the sea of Adria in the year AD 63. (*The Life of Flavius Josephus*). (See the note on Acts 27:6 about these large grain ships.)

÷Act_27:38
Acts 27:38

And when they had eaten enough, -- The food refreshed them and gave them strength to do some needed work aboard the ship. (The Greek wording seems to indicate that they were now satisfied and there was no use in trying to save more of the food they had, so they set about lightening the ship.) It seems as if the passengers join the ship hands in doing this.

they lightened the ship, -- Lightening the ship allowed it to float higher. It would run aground in shallower waters, closer to dry land.

throwing out the wheat into the sea. -- They had already lightened the ship by throwing cargo and the ships tackle overboard (Acts 27:18-19). Now they throw any remaining food, wheat, probably rain soaked and heavy, or anything they could, overboard.

÷Act_27:39
Acts 27:39

27:39–44 *The ship runs aground and everyone makes it safely to shore, as Paul had earlier proclaimed would happen. The centurion also ensures that the prisoners are not executed—confirming Paul's prediction that nobody would die.*

Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, -- They were now close to a shore, not a harbor or sight they recognized.

but they noticed a bay with a beach, -- The word is used to signify such a sandy or pebble each as might allow a ship to be run aground upon it without the danger of her immediately coming to pieces.

This was a "beach" as opposed to a high rugged coastline.

on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore. -- They took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon the beach. Apparently they discussed the best way of landing there in the ship's damage condition.

÷Act_27:40
Acts 27:40

So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, -- The easiest way to rid themselves of the anchors would be to release their tie to the ship and leave them in the sea as they would not be needing them again.

at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. -- On such ships there were dual rudders, one at each side of the stern with a rod connecting them so they could be steered in unison by the pilot. They had been tied down during the storm, now they would be used to steer the ship toward the beach.

Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. -- The "foresail" *(artemon),* a small sail on the bow, would provide the wind-power to move the ship forward toward the beach.

÷Act_27:41
Acts 27:41

But striking a reef [place of crosscurrents], they ran the vessel aground. -- Such reefs or underwater sand-bars are often created where the waves from the sea meet the bay waters. Such have caused many a ship wreck.

The reef (a sand bar or mudbank) could probably not be spotted from the ship before they made the run for the shore.

[On the NW side of the Maltese coast a bay today called "St Paul's Bay" exactly fits such a position as is described here.]

The bow stuck and remained immovable, -- The front of the ship gets stuck on the reef and they are unable to free it.

and the stern was being broken up by the surf. -- Unable to move the ship off the reef it is breaking up from the sea surf pounding against the stern. Such waves can be strong and violent, especially following a storm. The verb in the Greek expresses a continuous but gradual process.

÷Act_27:42
Acts 27:42

The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, -- The advice of the soldiers was to kill the prisoners, because, by the Roman law, they would have to pay the same penalty their prisoners would have received if the prisoners escaped. (cf. Acts 12:19; Acts 16:27; Matthew 28:13-14.)

lest any should swim away and escape. --The soldiers were afraid that in the general confusion of abandoning the ship some of prisoners would escape.

÷Act_27:43
Acts 27:43

But the centurion, wishing [desiring] to save Paul, -- The Greek word indicates that the centurion had an active desire, and not a mere willingness to save Paul. He could not fail to feel that it was to the Apostle that the whole party owed their safety, after all he had seen of him.

From the first (Acts 27:3) he had been well disposed toward Paul, and the subsequent events would not have lessened his regard for him. So to save him, he stops the design of his men, and saves alive the whole number of prisoners.

kept them from carrying out their plan. -- Whether the soldiers had come to the centurion and asked for his permission for their plan, or had schemed it on their own, we don't know. He does stop the design of his men, and saves the lives of all the prisoners.

[One scholar viewed the history of Julius' Augustan Cohort showing it had been assigned to King Agrippa's authority, and that somehow he had loaned it to Festus for the purpose of transporting Paul and other prisoners to Rome. That Julius knew of King Agrippa's favorable feeling of innocence toward Paul and this influenced his treatment of him.]

He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, -- The centurion orders any of the soldiers who can swim to dive in and make for shore. Once they are ashore, they can stand watch and round up the prisoners as they in turn arrive on the beach. Once the prisoners made shore, they could be taken back into custody.

The centurion was just as anxious as the soldiers that none of the prisoners should escape, and his plan was intended to keep that very thing from happening.

÷Act_27:44
Acts 27:44

and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. -- Those who could not swim (or perhaps encumbered by bond-chains), were to secure pieces of the breaking vessel to aid their floating-swimming to shore.

And so it was that all were brought safely to land. -- The emphasis in this verse in the Greek is that "all safely" arrived on land.

We are informed in 2 Corinthians 11:25 that previous to this point Paul had been shipwrecked three time (this would be at least his 4th time), and had spend a day and a half adrift in the sea, apparently before being rescued.
(See note at Acts 18:22 for possibly one of his other shipwrecks.)

÷Act_28:1
Acts 28:1

After we had escaped [were brought safely through], -- Again, notice the first person plural, "we." They have escaped the dangers of the sea. This is the term *sozo* (cf. Acts 27:31) with *dia* prefixed. It was used regularly for someone reaching safety (cf. Acts 23:24; Acts 27:44; Acts 28:1; Acts 28:4). Luke even uses it for physical healing in Luke 7:3.

By Luke using the passive voice shows he attributed the safely as being provided by God, Acts 27:21-26.

we then learned that the island was called Malta. -- Malta, an island 17 miles long and 9 miles wide, is located about 60 miles south of modern Sicily. None of the sailors had previously been to this bay where they were shipwrecked (today known as St. Paul's Bay).

Malta was on the main route from Myra (27:5) to Rome. God's providence had brought them through the storm and back on course.

÷Act_28:2
Acts 28:2

The native people showed us unusual kindness, -- In Greek the native people are designated "barbarians" (*barbaroi*), a word that did not carry negative connotation but simply referred in a general way to those who did not speak Greek. No doubt the island also had a number of educated people who did speak Greek.

The local citizens showed a "special" kindness where the same Greek expression is used Acts 19:11 of Paul's miracles. In both places the word "special" or "extraordinary" expresses the idea. The "kindness" was expressed by the native inhabitants going of their way and kindling a fire for the cold, wet, survivors coming up out of the raging sea.

for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. -- The storm had also dumped a large quantity of rain and the late autumn weather was turning cold. Later the "kindness" is also shown in providing a stay for three months for everyone.

÷Act_28:3
Acts 28:3

When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, -- Paul worked along with the others, there is no elitism here for the apostles. It would take a large fire, or most likely, several fires along the beach for the large number of survivors. Fire wood needs gathering and Paul joins in collecting it. The "bundle of sticks" fitly applies to the brushwood along the beach.

a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. -- Luke, a medical man, said that a venomous snake hiding in Paul's bundle and numbed by the cold is aroused by the warmth of the fire and bites Paul on the hand and hangs on briefly untill he flings it into the flames (Mark 16:18).

÷Act_28:4
Acts 28:4

When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, -- Lenski suggests by it "hanging from his hand" was God's way of turning all eyes on Paul from his first moment on Malta.

Luke uses the regular word *therion* ("creature") used in medical writers for venomous snakes. Compound words made from *therion* are used for "bitten by a viper" (*theriodektoi*) and for an antidote made from the flesh of vipers (*theriake*).

"No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." -- And so the Maltese, seeing that he was one of the prisoners, but not knowing why he was a prisoner, in harmony with their pagan and mythological notions of the divine government of the world, rushed to the conclusion that they were looking at another example of the work of "Justice," a mythological goddess whose responsibility it was to see that men got what was coming to them.

÷Act_28:5
Acts 28:5

He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. -- The verb is the same which is used (Luke 9:5) of shaking off dust from the feet. The idea conveyed is that Paul was quite composed in what he did, and that the beast was no cause of alarm to him.

This term for "creature" became the medical term for poisonous snakes (cf. Acts 10:12; see note on Acts 27:3).

Jesus had promised His apostles that serpents would not harm them (Mark 16:18). The event that happened to Paul on Malta is often pointed to as a demonstration of one fulfillment of that promise.

÷Act_28:6
Acts 28:6

They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. -- The people were familiar with the results of a bite by this kind of venenous serpent and that the usual effect would make itself apparent in a very short time. "To swell up" is one of many medical terms used by Luke (cf. Acts 28:8) and is found only here in the NT.

But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, -- They were very expectant of what they knew would come to the man as a result of his encounter with the serpent, but it was not happening. Nothing was happening; no swelling, no inflammation, or rash, no difficulty breaching!

they changed their minds and said that he was a god. --
The word "change their minds" is *metaballo*, and is a different word than the ones used for repentance (*metamellomai* and *metanoeo*) which are sometimes rendered "change the mind."

The lack of fatal consequences were obviously miraculous, leading the people to believe that if such a miraculous event could occur then Paul must be a deity of some sort. (cf. Acts 14:11-12.)

When the Lystrans took Paul as a god they proceeded and attempted to worship him (prompting Paul and Barnabas to protested vigorously, cf. Acts 14:14-15). The situation is different here and no attempt to worship him is related.

÷Act_28:7
Acts 28:7

Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands -- Near the place where the shipwreck occurred were the lands of the Roman governor at Civita Vecchia, the old capital city of Malta, located about five miles southeast of St. Paul's Bay.

belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, -- Evidence of the use of this title translated "chief man" has been confirmed by inscriptions found on the island as the official title of the Roman governor of Malta.

who received us -- It was only natural for the Roman official to receive the group under the charge of a Roman officer, and who were on their way for hearing before the Roman Emperor.

and entertained us hospitably for three days. -- This official lodging and was only until arrangement could be made for a more permanent lodging. They were to remain on the island through the winter months.

÷Act_28:8
Acts 28:8

It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. -- The expression does not mean that Publius' father took ill after the arrival of Paul, but rather he was already ill.

The words are technical such as a physician, as Luke, would be likely to use in describing the disease. It was apparently a gastric fever (caused by a microbe found in goat's milk that was common on Malta). Dysentery, often the result of poor sanitation, was widespread in the ancient world.

And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him. -- Thus Publius' kindness to the shipwreck suvivors was repaid. In being able to work such a wonder, Paul verified the truth of Jesus' promise that his apostles should suffer no hurt from deadly serpents, and that they should lay hands on the sick and recover them (Mark 16:18).

J. R. Dummelow noted, "Here we have first hand evidence of a competent medical witness to the reality of Paul's miraculous cures."

E. H. Trenchard said "Although Luke does not mention preachings and conversions, the analogy of the Ephesian ministry … suggests that miracles always opened the way for the Word."

÷Act_28:9
Acts 28:9

And when this had taken place, -- Paul working this miracle became widely known.

the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. -- What Paul had done for Publius' father was known throughout the island and during the 3 months there others ("the rest") also sick came to Paul to be healed. The wording indicates that the number healed was numerous.

Some scholars suggest that perhaps Luke, being a physician himself, may have been involved as well as Paul. (Verse 10 indicates that both Paul and Luke were "honored" by the people of the island.)

The verb tense implies repeated or continuing action in past time. They kept coming, God kept healing them. There is a change from the word "healed" *(iaomai)* in verse 8 to where the word in verse 9 for "were cured" is *therapeuo*, from which we get the English word "therapy" which is the regular word for a physician's work of helping the sick.

> Reese says of this, "...we have both miracles (by Paul) and medicine (by Luke), it is but one more example of the truth that gradually the dependence on miracles is ceasing, and divine providence is allowed to take over, where possible."

÷Act_28:10

Acts 28:10

They also honored us greatly, -- The "they" is reckoned to be those on the island who particularly had been healed. The "us" could mean all the survivors, but the more immediate context would apply the "honor" was to Paul and Luke.

The word *"honorarium"* was the regular word used of a fee paid to a physician for his services, and Luke used the word to describe what the people of the island gave out of gratitude.

and when we were about to sail, -- Paul, Luke, and all the party, had been on the island of Malta for three winter months and was now preparing to leave.

they put on board whatever we needed. -- The "honoring" of Paul and Luke (which benefited the rest of the party) was manifested by giving them a bounty of supplies replacing what they had been lost in the shipwreck, such as food, money, and clothes.

÷Act_28:11
Acts 28:11

> **28:11–16** *This section narrates the final leg of Paul's journey to Rome and his initial reception there.*

After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, -- Sea travel was dangerous during this period.

a ship of Alexandria, with the twin gods as a figurehead. -- When the spring sailing season was at hand, Julius secured passage for his prisoners on another Alexandrian grain ship bound for Italy that had wintered in Malta. Its figurehead depicted the Dioscuri - the twins Castor and Pollux - who were regarded as the patron gods of sailors.

> Danny Davis notes that their "centuries-long adherence to a strict and conservative sailing schedule appears to have been a mark of prudence and a strategy of minimizing financial risk; sailing during periods of unsettled weather with such large and valuable cargoes, along with a typically large complement of passengers, was simply too chancy."
>
> The ship "Dioscuri" thus departed in early March as soon as sea travel was safe. It could then reach Puteoli in time to offload its cargo and join the fleet of grain ships returning to Alexandria around April 1.

÷Act_28:12
Acts 28:12

Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. -- A short sail of one day brought Julius and his party to the southeastern coast of Sicily and the southern commercial harbor of Syracuse. Here his party had a three-day layover (Acts 28:12), transacting ship's business or probably waiting for favorable winds. Some suggest perhaps to replace the prisoners' chains lost in the shipwreck.

> Syracuse was founded by colonists from Corinth around 734 BC, and was one of the wealthiest of the numerous Greek cities collectively referred to as Magna Graecia by the Romans. These cities were founded in Sicily and in southern Italy by colonists from the Greek East. Paul would have felt right at home in such a Hellenic environment.

÷Act_28:13
Acts 28:13

And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium. -- As the grain ship sailed up Sicily's northeastern coast, it passed in the shadow of Mount Aetna and another Greek city named Tauromenium. To starboard, Paul soon saw the toe of Italy, ancient Bruttium, come into view. A single day was sufficient to sail the 78 miles to the port of Rhegium (Reggio Calabria).

And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. -- After a one-day stopover, Paul's ship utilized a favorable south wind to continue its voyage.

Lionel Casson has calculated the length of the voyage between Rhegium and Puteoli to be 175 nautical miles (201 mi.), taking approximately a day and a half at an average speed of five knots.

÷Act_28:14
Acts 28:14

There we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. -- After their arrival in Puteoli, the party took a week long break, unusual since they could have arrived in Rome within that time.

If a Jewish community existed in Puteoli, Paul would customarily visit the synagogue first (cf. Acts 13:14; Acts 14:1; Acts 17:4; Acts 18:1; Acts 19:8). Such a community is known to have existed in Puteoli because of a strange tale told by Josephus (*Jewish War* 2.101–104)

The Christian "brothers and sisters" (*adelphoi*) that Paul found in Puteoli were undoubtedly both Jewish and gentile. These believers "implored" Paul and his party to stay with them. Most translations say "invite," but the Greek word (*parakaleo*) suggests a strong entreaty. This shows us how the teachings of Jesus have been spreading through the empire by a notice like this.

Having the renowned apostle with them, the local believers did not want to let him get away so soon. But why did Julius allow Paul to stay seven days in Puteoli? Various reasons have been advanced. James Dunn has suggested that Julius left a guard with Paul while he himself took the other prisoners to Rome. Since the party had traveled this far together, it is unlikely that Julius would now leave his noteworthy charge behind.

Part of the answer might also be that Julius did it as a favor to Paul who wished to spend time teaching and encouraging the local Christians. While a free man, Paul had made similar seven-day visits to Christians at the port cities of Troas and Tyre (Acts 20:6; Acts 21:4).

C. K. Barrett proposed that this period was needed to unload and load the ship again. However, since Paul's party had now disembarked, why would they have any further dealings with the ship?

Julius had undoubtedly received a diploma from Festus before he left Caesarea so needed no further authorizations (cf. *Pliny the Younger, Epistles* 10.64). Is it possible that his diploma had been lost in the shipwreck and that this week was spent in obtaining a new one from Rome?

Others (Thompson and Wilson) have argued that Paul on an earlier visit to Troas missed the weekly Christian assembly so decided to stay an additional seven days to meet with them the following Sunday evening.

It is also possible that Julius, seeing Paul's reception by the believers, was merely showing deference to a man of perceived superior social status. Paul would soon be standing in front of important officials in Rome, and Julius did not wish any complaints about his treatment of the prisoners or reminders of the misjudgment that led to the shipwreck.

And so we came to Rome. -- Many would argue that to arrive at Puteoli would be already considered as arriving at Rome, his divinely appointed destination (Acts 19:21; Acts 23:11). But it seems rather to mean on the outskirts of the metropolis of Rome itself.

÷Act_28:15
Acts 28:15

And the brothers there, when they heard about us, -- Paul has previously (perhaps more than once) written to the church at Rome and he had friends and family there (cf. Romans 16:1-16). With constant communication between Puteoli and Rome the Christians there heard of Paul's company arriving in Italy.

came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. -- The "market of Appius" (a family name) became the name of a town (about 45 miles south of Rome) which also gave it's name to the great road between Rome and Brundusium. The "Three Inns" was another community on the Appian Way, about 30 miles south of Rome with an Inn by that name and other shops.

The practice of going some miles from the city to meet someone in order to honor him was common. It appears there were at least two different groups which met Paul at different places. One wonders what Julius thought of these two groups joining his procession toward Rome.

On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage. -- Paul was thankful for a safe journey and getting to see his Roman friends and realizing his hope was now becoming a reality (Romans 1:15). Paul found reason to take courage and fresh assurance of God's leading.

÷Act_28:16
Acts 28:16

And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier that guarded him. -- After his initial arraignment, Paul was accorded what was considered a relatively mild form of detention, the *custodia militaris* ("military custody"). He was kept under house arrest with his right wrist chained to the left wrist of a praetorian guardsman, thus restricting his movement. Paul must have been given a positive report by the centurion, which may have influenced the apostle's conditions as he awaited trial. Perhaps the chain was only imposed when he left his dwelling.

> Lightfoot and others suggest that Paul actually appeared before Sextus Afranius Burrus, the praetorian prefect from AD 50 until his death in early 62. He was a friend of Seneca the Younger, a Stoic philosopher, and the former tutor to the young Nero, although after AD 59 he lost his influence. In his position as prefect, Burrus served as instructor in criminal trials.
>
> Since Tiberius's reign, the praetorian prefect led the prosecution in cases of *lese majesty* and high treason. It is an interesting coincidence that Burrus served as procurator of the province of Galatia at the time of Paul's first journey there. During that time might Burrus have met Paul, or at least heard of him? If so, Paul perhaps requested to meet Burrus and present his case personally before the prefect.

After temporary housing at the camp, Paul was expected to arrange for his own lodging at a nearby inn for which he would pay himself. This is exactly the terminology found in Acts 28:23. At such an inn he had his preliminary meetings with local Jewish leaders. But when it became apparent that there might be a significant delay in the proceedings against him, he moved into a longer-term rental *(misthoma*; Acts 28:30).

The local Christians undoubtedly helped in the search and other arrangements. However, regarding payment, he remained on "his own," that is, Paul paid for it (Acts 28:30). Once again Paul appears in Acts as an individual with access to money (cf. Acts 24:26). The terms of his custody prevented him from living as the guest of a local Christian. The text also states that he remained for "two full years" (διετίαν ὅλην; d*ietian holen*; Acts 28:30), perhaps reflecting that Paul remained in the rented space even after his acquittal until the lodging contract expired.

÷Act_28:17

Acts 28:17

28:17–31 *Luke concludes his narrative with Paul arriving in Rome and final defense of the gospel.*

After three days -- Paul needed to make lodging arrangements, probably meet with friends and relatives and others from the Rome church, but his main agenda was always to share his message.

he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, -- Paul goes to the Jews first upon his arrival, as he usually does in Acts (e.g., Acts 13:14; Acts 14:1; Acts 17:10; Acts 19:8). He meets with the most prominent men, the rulers and elders of Rome's synagogues and heads of the principle Jewish families in Rome.

he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, -- Paul begins with calling them "Brothers" emphasizing their common Jewish heritage. Paul denies that he was guilty of any infraction against the Jewish people or their traditions (cf. Acts 22:3; Acts 24:14; Acts 26:4-5).

He has never forbidden circumcision to Jewish families but insisted that Gentile converts should not be forced to submit to the Jewish law to be received into Christian fellowship.

yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. -- He describes the results rather than the steps by which this was brought about. But for the Jerusalem Jewish leaders he would never have been a Roman prisoner. When the Sadducees in Jerusalem found that he was not to be given up to them, they became his sole accusers before Felix and Festus.

÷Act_28:18
Acts 28:18

When they had examined me, -- Various Roman officials in Caesarea who heard the case against Paul didn't find any guilt of wrong doing on his part. These would be Felix, Festus, and even King Agrippa.

they wished to set me at liberty, -- Paul is probably alluding to Agrippa's remark (Acts 26:32) and the statement of Festus (Acts 25:25). It seems that Felix would have found a way to set Paul free had a bribe been offered to him (Acts 24:26). All were convinced of his innocence.

because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. -- No Roman magistrate had ever condemned Paul. They could not find him guilty of the things the Jews charged.

Paul had used a similar expression concerning Jesus as he spoke to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:28).

÷Act_28:19
Acts 28:19

But because the Jews objected, -- The Jerusalem Jewish leaders did not want Paul set free. They had for two years carried on their mischievous charges and plots against Paul.

Paul probably doesn't mention how the Jews had planned on two occasions to have him assassinated (Acts 23:12-14; Acts 25:3).

I was compelled to appeal to Caesar -- When it seemed that Festus was about to give in to the Jewish appeal for Paul's case to be transferred to the Sanhedrin court in Jerusalem he made his appeal as a Roman citizen to stand in Caesar's court , see Acts 25:9-10).

though I had no charge to bring against my nation. -- Paul assures the his Roman Jewish audience that when his case is heard by Caesar, he will not say anything inflammatory against the Jews, for that would only cause the government to bring more hardships on the Jews. He assures his listeners that he would not do like others before him had done and make counter-accusations. All he was interested in was having his innocence established.

÷Act_28:20
Acts 28:20

For this reason, therefore, -- He wanted to explain to them why he, a prominent Jew, was here in Rome as a prisoner.

I have asked to see you and speak with you, -- Paul was wanting to communicate to them, not just for them to see him. He didn't want any fable report to cause them to misunderstand why he was in chains.

since it is because of the hope of Israel -- This makes us think that most of the Jews present would have identified themselves as Pharisees. See notes on Acts 24:15; Acts 26:6. The great "hope" of the Jewish people was the resurrection (Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 25:8; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:1-4). Paul wants them to know he held to the same hope as they did.

Another way of understanding this was to view that the coming of the Messiah attested to the future resurrection of all men as proved by the Messiah's own resurrection.

that I am wearing this chain." -- That Paul was presently chained to his Roman guard would be evident to all present.

÷Act_28:21
Acts 28:21

And they said to him, -- The Jewish leaders in Rome respond to Paul's words.

"We have received no letters from Judea about you, -- There had been no correspondence from the Jewish leaders in Judea. Most like the ships that enabled Paul to reach Rome had been the first to get there from Judea. This was apparently why Paul wanted to quickly to meet with the Roman Jewish leaders, before they set their minds against him.

It would take the Jerusalem leaders time to draw up letters of accusation and dispatch them to Rome.

and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. -- This lack of information concerning Paul is surprising in light of his ministry on three mission journeys and the events and rumors in Jerusalem.

And it is conceivable that during the time between Paul's first arrest two years before and his arrival in Rome many opportunities might have arisen for news about Paul to have been sent to Rome Jewish leaders.

Earlier (Acts 18:1-2), Roman Jews had been expelled from the city during Claudius' reign. Therefore the Jewish leaders in both Jerusalem and Rome were probably reluctant to call public attention to their nation by appearing before the court of appeal in a cause connected with their religion.

÷Act_28:22
Acts 28:22

But we desire to hear from you what your views are, -- From Paul's very manner they could detect certain things about him, such as him being an educated man and well inform on this movement in which he was involved.

These Jewish leaders are certainly being very open and fair in their dealings with him. They will hear from Paul himself before they make up their minds, rather than being influenced simply by what they hear second-hand from others.

for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against." -- It is obvious that the news about Jesus was spreading and that many were responding to the gospel. In Jewish circles this was not good news! However, these Jewish leaders were willing to give Paul a hearing.

Paul did not regard Christianity as a "sect" in the way that the Jews regarded it (Acts 24:5; Acts 24:14). To him, Christianity was not a split off the Jewish religion, but was the rightful fulfillment of their whole religion; the old foretold this new; the hopes of the old centered in the very Messiah he was preaching.

÷Act_28:23
Acts 28:23

When they had appointed a day for him, -- Paul's explanation of his chains had been satisfactory, but there was not enough time to give more exhaustive information about "the Way." Paul probably also wanted a larger group present for his teaching. So they mutually agreed on a time and place for another meeting.

they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. -- For this meeting Paul's "rental" house (Acts 28:30) has not yet been arranged and he is still in temporary "lodging" at some inn that also has space to accommodate a large meeting (perhaps a banquet hall or theater).

The Greek word is the comparative degree, and implies that the first visitors had been only a small deputation or representation, but that on the set day they and their fellow Jewish leaders appear "in greater numbers."

From morning till evening -- With this length of time Paul was able to give a more through coverage to the matter he wanted to present, and probably allowed time for questions and clarification to any misunderstandings.

he expounded to them, -- He "expounded" (G1620) the subject by bearing witness that the messianic hope had now been revealed, which all the Jews spoke of as the "kingdom of God."

testifying to the kingdom of God -- The content of Paul's message was the kingdom of God and Jesus (see also Acts 28:31). The kingdom represents the fulfillment of God's saving promises to his people through the Messiah (see Matthew 12:28).

and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. -- It was Paul's practice, and that of the NT preachers (Stephen, Phillip, Peter, etc.) to point to the OT texts and show how Jesus was the fulfillment. (See how Jesus himself also did this in Luke 24:44; Luke 24:45; See Peter's practice in Acts 2:31; Acts 3:11-26; Acts 3:24.)

"The Law of Moses and the Prophet" was a way of expressing the Old Testament Scriptures. It is proper to appeal to the Scripture in teaching Truth.

The present Jews gave the Apostle a better hearing than the Sanhedrin did for Stephen (Acts chs 6 , 7). Those in Jerusalem were biased in trying to justify their conduct toward Jesus and not wanting to admit they had put to death their own Messiah.

÷Act_28:24
Acts 28:24

And some were convinced by what he said, -- Hearing the Word of God produces faith (Romans 10:17).

but others disbelieved. -- This divided response is typical of many groups of Jews to whom Paul has preached (e.g., Acts 13:42-45; Acts 14:1-2; Acts 17:4-5; and see Jesus' words in Mark 16:15-16.

÷Act_28:25
Acts 28:25

And disagreeing among themselves, -- They disagreed on believing Paul's message. It may well be that both the Sadducees and the Pharisees had their representative here as elsewhere among the Jewish population. Usually, most of those outside Judea proper were Pharisee however.

Paul was not without a party of Jewish supporters among the Rome Jews.

they departed after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: -- Here Paul affirms that the Holy Spirit was speaking through Isaiah, the inspired prophet.

Jesus used this verse often of human unbelief (cf. Matthew 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:39-40).

÷Act_28:26
Acts 28:26

28:26–27 *Jesus quoted this same passage that Paul does (Isaiah 6:9-10 when noting the unbelief of many of his fellow Jews (Matthew 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10).*

"'Go to this people, and say, You will indeed hear but never understand, -- A quote from Isaiah 6:9-10. This passage had been quoted by the Lord himself against the Jews (Matthew 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; see also John 12:40) when He was explaining why all His teaching was given in parables.

Jesus would have had far less chance of acceptance than when His message was veiled under a parable; and next He so spake that those only who cared to manifest a desire to know the deeper meaning of His words might be able to do so. His words were for those who had ears to hear. But most of those to whom He spake did not have ears to hear.

and you will indeed see but never perceive. -- "Hearing" and "seeing" were not about their physical organs, but about having a heart for the message, and then being able to understand.

÷Act_28:27
Acts 28:27

For this people's heart has grown dull, -- "Become dull" in the Hebrew is imperative (in the prophetic style), and it means "made fat" or "shut." They have deliberately shut their hearts (i.e., their minds) to the truth.

and with their ears they can barely hear, -- This speaks of a willful deafness. In rather pointed language, Paul is saying (in the words of God to Isaiah) that there are none so deaf as those who refuse to hear, and there are none so blind as those who refuse to see.

and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn [be converted], and I would heal them.' -- They had eyes to see, ears to hear, but the heart, their thinking, their willing, and deciding, failed to respond.

The Old Testament prophetic passages from Isaiah spoke not only of Jewish rejection of God's Word in Isaiah's day but it spoke of how the message of God's Messiah would be rejected.

The significance of its being repeated here lies in the fact that the same blindness that closed the hearts of Israel to the Christ was still what closed their hearts against the gospel.

÷Act_28:28
Acts 28:28

Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God -- The Apostle was anxious to emphasize that the doctrine which he was preaching to them and which they were rejecting, that "this" was God's very message of salvation.

has been sent to the Gentiles; -- Paul's statement here reflects Jesus' words at the beginning of Acts: The gospel must go from Jerusalem outward to the ends of the earth. This is a prominent OT theme as well (e.g., Psalms 67:2; Isaiah 49:6; Isaiah 66:18; Zechariah 2:11). The NT actuality of the commandment, Acts 11:18; Acts 13:46-47; Acts 14:27; Acts 15:14-17; Acts 18:6.

This universal aspect of Christianity is what caused the riot in Jerusalem and the ongoing problem for many Jews. This is logical from Genesis 1.26-27; Genesis 3:15; Genesis 12:3. It was prophesied in Isaiah, Micah, and Jonah. It is clearly stated as God's eternal plan by Paul in Ephesians 2:11–3:13! (See Acts 10:1-8).

they will listen." -- The Jews rejected the Messiah because He did not fit their expectations and because the gospel opened the door of faith to all people. The NT issue really is not Jew vs. Greek, but believer vs. unbeliever. The issue is not who is your mother, but is your heart open to Christ and the Word of God?

÷Act_28:29
Acts 28:29

NKJV [**And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.** --] As was often the case, some believed and some did not. The disagreement was surely over whether "Jesus" was truly the "Christ" and why would the Messiah be crucified?

[This verse is not found in most modern critical texts; the NASB, NIV included it in the margin of the text. It is found in many Byzantine text.]

÷Act_28:30
Acts 28:30

Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, -- These two years would be about AD 60-62. Paul had some source to pay for this rental. He may have worked at this profession, tent-making (Acts 18:3). He also had churches (we know of Thessalonica and Philippi, but perhaps many others) sending to help support him in his trials.

The prisoner had the right to select any rented house where he could be supervised by his guard. Paul's choice of location would be influenced by his usual considerations, namely, ease of communication with his countrymen, fellow believers, and evangelistic prospects.

Mommsen and Harnack pointed out that the actual trial would be held before a praetorian council composed of the praetorian prefect and his assistants. We hear nothing about Paul's trial and it seems most probably that his case was just eventually dropped after two years.

and received [welcomed] -- Luke uses this term often with the connotation of "heartily welcome" (cf. Acts 18:27; Acts 28:30 and *paradechomai* in Acts 15:4). It is used of the crowd welcoming Jesus in Luke 8:40 and Luke 9:11. It is used of welcoming (receiving) the gospel as preached by Peter in Acts 2:41.

all who came to him, -- Paul preached a gospel that had a universal reach. It was "good news" for all mankind, not just Jews.

÷Act_28:31
Acts 28:31

preaching the kingdom of God and teaching -- Some theologians try to make a distinction between these two ways of presenting truth. The body of sermons recorded in Acts (Peter, Stephen, Paul) is called the *Kerygma* (proclamation, cf. Acts 20:25; Acts 28:31; Romans 10:8; Galatians 2:2; 1 Corinthians 9:2; 2 Timothy 4:2), while the teaching of Jesus interpreted in the Epistles is called the *Didache* (teaching, cf. Acts 2:42; Acts 5:28; Acts 13:12; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 14:20).

the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, -- One famous pulpit had the words imprinted, facing the preacher that only he could see, which read "***Sirs, we would see Jesus***!" (John 12:21)

> **the Lord --** Lord" is the translation of the Hebrew term *adon*, which meant "owner, husband, master, or lord." The Jews became afraid of pronouncing the sacred name YHWH lest they take it in vain and break one of the Ten Commandments. Whenever they read the Scriptures, they substituted *Adon* for YHWH. This is why our English translations use all capitals LORD for YHWH in the OT. And GOD when YHWH is pronounced Elohim.
>
> **Jesus --** "Jesus" is the name given to the baby in Bethlehem by the angel (cf. Matthew 1:21). It is made up of two Hebrew nouns: "YHWH," the covenant name for deity, and "salvation" (i.e. Hosea). It is the same Hebrew name as Joshua (which in NT times it was pronounced YESHUA). When used alone it often identifies the man, Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary (ex. Matthew 1:16, Matthew 1:25; Matthew 2:1; Matthew 3:13; Matthew 3:15-16).
>
> **Christ** -- "Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Messiah (i.e. an Anointed One). It asserts Jesus' OT title as YHWH's promised One sent to bring redemption and the Kingdom of God.

no one forbidding him [without hindrance] -- No one stopped Paul's ministry, helped by his loyal fellow workers (cf. Colossians 4:10; Philemon 1:24) he continued to evangelize Rome (cf. Philippians 1:13; Philippians 4:22). Even though he was essentially under house arrest he continued his ministry with complete freedom. Luke (the narrator) concludes by reasserting a major theme of Acts: The progress of the gospel cannot be stopped.

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FOOTNOTE:

The book of Acts ends on a triumphant note, or "paradoxically triumphant" as Ryan Schellenberg observes: "triumphant because 'the Word' is proclaimed in the heart of the empire, paradoxical because Paul arrives as a prisoner." For two years Paul welcomed anyone, both Jew and gentile, to his rented house. There he proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about Jesus Christ (Acts 28:30-31).

Knox is likely correct when he observes that the ending of Acts presupposes a sequel: "It is of course quite possible that the third part was never begun, but it seems unthinkable that it was never intended."

The imprisonment recorded here did not with his death. We conclude that he was released and perhaps journeyed to Spain to fulfill his contemplated ministry there (Romans 15:24; Romans 15:28).

If Paul's letter to the Philippians is dated to this first imprisonment, his message reached not only the entire praetorian guard (Philippians 1:13) but also the household of Caesar (ε'κ τη ς Καίσαρος οι'κίας. *ek tes Kaisaros oikias*; Philippians 4:22) "Household of Caesar" (*familia Caesaris*) was a common expression that included not merely the members of the imperial family but all the slaves, freedmen, and other retainers working for or belonging to it.

A reconstruction of his Prison Letters suggests Paul later returned to Asia where he was arrested in Troas (2 Timothy 1:15; 2 Timothy 4:13-14; 2 Timothy 4:20) and returned to Rome for a second trial (2 Timothy 4:16-17). However, on this occasion Paul was not destined for release. According to the earliest traditions, he was caught up in Nero's persecution of Christians after the fire in Rome in AD 64, beheaded at the site of the Church of Tre Fontane, and buried at the location of the Church of St. Paul Outside the Walls.

Despite confinement and possible manacles, Paul remained free in spirit. This attitude is evident in Luke's four closing words that describe him living in Rome "with great boldness, unhindered" (Acts 28:31).

However, the details of Paul's final years go beyond the scope of Acts and his arrival in Rome provides the climax for the book of Acts. The great apostle, whose travels dominate the second half of the book, is seen preaching his message in the imperial capital in chains but unhindered. Just as all roads were said to lead to Rome, so from there his message now spreads along those same roads "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

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