

## Acts

**1:1.** “All.” Figure of speech synecdoche (the whole for a part), for “all that was necessary.” John 21:25 makes it clear that there is no way “all” that Jesus did could be recorded.

**1:2.** “until the day in which he was taken up.” This sets the parameters for the book of Luke. It covered all Jesus’ life until he was taken up (which is covered in Acts), including the things Jesus received from his Father via holy spirit.

“he having given commandments.” The Greek verb *entellomai* (#1781 ἐντέλλομαι) is in a masculine singular aorist participle, and thus can be translated “he having given commandments.”

“he having given *the* commandments *he received* through holy spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.” This phrase is very important. First, it clarifies what Jesus said in John 12:49: “For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.” God, via the gift of holy spirit on Jesus, gave him what to say, and even how to say it. Second, it gives us the proper emphasis in the book of Acts. Luke writes that in his former book he covered what Jesus did and taught. From that broad starting point, Luke could have emphasized anything about Jesus’ life: his miracles, his holiness, his love, etc. However, what Luke states, and thus emphasizes, is that Jesus gave the commandments that he received from God via holy spirit, to the apostles. This launches the Book of Acts, and gives unprecedented credibility to the apostles, who now take off where Jesus left off. If there was any doubt that the apostles were qualified to continue the ministry of Jesus, it is now removed.

“holy spirit.” There is no article “the” in the Greek text. This is the gift of holy spirit that God put upon believers before the Day of Pentecost. See Graeser, Lynn, Schoenheit, *The Gift of Holy Spirit: The Power to be Like Christ* from Spirit & Truth Fellowship.

**1:4.** “being assembled together.” This verse has a textual variant that is not easily dealt with, leaving us with three alternatives: assemble together, spend the night together, or eat salt together (which is the literal, usually translated simply “eat together”). The scholars are divided. Less think that “spend the night together” is the meaning here, and we agree. Those who say, “eat salt together,” do so because of the parallel record in Luke 24:43-53, and this may in fact be the record being referred to in Acts 1:4, but it may also be not the same record, but a similar one. Jesus no doubt spoke of the coming holy spirit on a number of occasions. “Being assembled together” is very likely, it is the choice reported in *A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament* (Metzger); and would also have to be the case even if Jesus and his disciples were eating together, so that is the variant we went with in our version.

“to wait for the promise of the Father.” The “promise” is the figure of speech metonymy (cp. Bullinger, *Figures*) for that which was promised, the gift. The apostles did not have to wait for the promise, it had been given long ago. They had to wait for what was promised, i.e., the gift of holy spirit. Dynamic Equivalent versions such as the NIV or paraphrased versions such as the Good News Bible, add the word “gift” so the English reader is not confused.

“which, *said he*, “you heard from me.” The REV translates this as an ellipsis, adding, “said he.” However the Greek text is the figure of speech anacoluthon, non-

sequence. In this case, the indirect address of the first part of the verse suddenly becomes a direct quotation of Jesus.

**1:5.** “because.” The Greek is *hoti* (#3754 ὅτι), and it means, “that, because, or since.” Lenski and Robinson (Greek Grammar) refer to this as the consecutive *hoti*. The question we must ask, and answer, is why did Jesus command his disciples to stay in Jerusalem? It was to wait for what the Father had promised, i.e., the gift of holy spirit. The disciples had already been baptized in water. If water baptism was all that was important and necessary for salvation, there would have been no need for the disciples to wait in Jerusalem or receive the gift of holy spirit. Sadly, many people, in their teaching, reverse what Jesus said here in Acts. Many Christians say water baptism is essential for the believer, and act as if baptism in holy spirit is not really essential but perhaps “nice to have,” or valuable in many ways. Jesus was teaching quite the opposite. He knew the disciples had already been water baptized. He also knew it would no longer be intrinsically valuable after the Church started on the Day of Pentecost. Thus, he commanded his disciples to stay in Jerusalem and receive baptism in holy spirit “because” John [only] baptized in water, but holy spirit was going to be first poured out in Jerusalem.

“with water.” The Greek is *hudor* (#5204 ὕδωρ) in the dative, thus, “with water.” Thus it is clear that the element that people were baptized with was water. However, in the later part of the verse, the specific word “in” (*en* (#1722 ἐν)) is used, emphasizing that the Christian is baptized “in” holy spirit. There is one baptism for the Christian, and it is spirit, not water (cp. Eph. 4:5). John’s baptism was a shadow of what was to come, and even John himself said this (Matt. 3:11; etc.). There is no reason to baptize in water today. Nevertheless, the practice continues, and sadly some even teach that it is necessary for salvation. For more on baptism, see John Lynn, *What is True Baptism* (Christian Educational Services, 2002).

**1:8.** “witnesses.” The Greek is *martus* (#3144 μάρτυς), from which we get our English word, “martyr.” The word “witness” became martyr, because in the great persecutions of the Church in the first three centuries after Christ, many people gave a clear witness of Christ by standing firm in their faith even through torture and death, becoming martyrs for Christ.

**1:14.** “of one accord.” *homothumadon* (#3661 ὁμοθυμαδόν). From *homos* (the same) and *thumos* (related to the soul, the life, the feelings, the passions). “Old adverb in *-don* from adjective *homothumos* and that from *homos*, same, and *thumos*, mind or spirit, with the same mind or spirit. Common in ancient Greek and papyri. In the N.T. eleven times in Acts and nowhere else save Ro 15:6” (Robertson, *Word Pictures*). It means to be of one mind, one passion.

**1:16.** “Men and brothers.” The Greek word “men” is *aner* (#435 ἀνὴρ), the standard Greek word for an adult male. It is used in formal address, and so in the Book of Acts it occurs in combination with “brothers” (as here, 2:29, etc.; “Men, brothers”), “Jews” (2:14; “Men, Jews”); “Israel” (2:22; “Men; Israelites”); “Men, brothers and fathers” (Acts 7:2); “Athenians” (17:22; “Men, Athenians”); “Ephesians” (19:35; Men, Ephesians). Lenski says, “The assembly consisted of men, otherwise *andres* could not have been used; *adelphoi* [brothers] might include *adelphai* [sisters], just as today ‘brethren’ may include ‘sisters,’ but *andres* [men] could not include *gunaiikes* [women], just as to this day the address ‘men’ omits ‘women.’” (Lenski; note on Acts 1:16). We agree that Peter

was only addressing the men, which is why he specifically used the term “men.” However, it seems clear from the context, especially the previous two verses, that there were women in the audience. However, according to the Jewish custom of the day, they would have been protected from freely interacting with the men, and certainly excluded from voting for a replacement for Judas. It was a common custom in the ancient Middle East to only address the men in an audience, and often, only to count them (which is why in cases such as the record we know as “The feeding of the 5000,” the number 5000 included only men. The women and children were stated to be there, and likely outnumbered the men, but were not counted [Matt. 14:21]). As the Christian faith developed through the first century, and God revealed that there was neither male nor female in Christ (Gal. 3:28), women took on greater roles of responsibility in the Church. Thus, Romans 16 mentions Phoebe, a deacon, and Andronicus and Junia, who were apostles (Rom. 16:7; although some theologians dispute that interpretation). Sadly, the chauvinism in the Church regained ascendancy, and so for most of the time since Christ, the Church has denied proper recognition and leadership roles to women. We feel that it is important to understand the Bible in the context of the times it was written and properly reflect the biblical customs. Therefore, we have decided to retain the biblical phrase “men *and* brothers,” rather than to change it to something like “brothers and sisters.” We feel it is more helpful to both Christian men and women to properly understand the biblical customs and thinking of the times, than to artificially include women and thus make Peter (and Paul, and others) say something he really did not say.

**1:18.** This verse, and verse 19, are the figure of speech parenthesis, in this case a *parembole* (a parenthesis complete in itself). This parenthesis was added by Luke for the benefit of his wide audience over the whole Christian world. Many of them would not have heard what happened to Judas and why there needed to be a replacement for him. Peter did not speak the words in verses 18 and 19 to his audience, for they all perfectly understood why Judas needed a replacement. The reason we are sure the verses are a *parembole* is in the note on verse 19.

There is very much discussion about the differences in the account of Judas’ death here in Acts and the account in Matthew 27:5 which simply states that Judas “hanged himself.” Most commentators simply say there were two accounts of his death, and Matthew and Luke recorded different traditions. However, first, the Bible is authored by God, and He would know how Judas died and what His inspired writers would put down. Second, it is unlikely that Luke and Matthew, both very familiar with the apostles and many people who knew Judas and what happened personally, would write differing accounts. Judas was an infamous person, and if his death was as gory as Acts describes, Matthew would certainly have known about it. There is no need to see a contradiction between Matthew and Acts. Matthew says Judas hanged himself. What happened in Acts seems clear enough: Judas fell down prone, broke open in the middle (with a noise), and all his bowels gushed out.

The problem Christians face is how to harmonize the record in Acts with what Matthew says. There are two ways that have been proposed. The first is that at some point when Judas was hanging from a tree, the rope gave way and he fell down prone onto the ground, and the impact of the fall caused him to burst open. This seems unlikely, but it would be more possible if there were roots or rocks on the ground that Judas’ body would have hit, and there were plenty of those around the trees in Judea. Furthermore, if

the tree was an olive tree, it would almost certainly have little protrusions, such as one often sees around cypress trees. Also, Judas may have hung for a couple days before the rope broke, making his body more susceptible to bursting open.

Another proposal, by Victor Wierwille (*Jesus Christ Our Passover*) is that Judas “hanged” himself by falling on his sword, much like Saul had done many years before (1 Samuel 31:4). Being impaled was a common form of suicide and execution in the ancient biblical world. For example, when Haman was hanged, what happened was a typical execution in the Assyrian and Persian world; he was impaled on a giant stake (Esther 7:10; 8:7; 9:13, 14). The Assyrians used this type of hanging to intimidate their enemies, and it is portrayed on Assyrian rock cuts (Herbert G. May, *Oxford Bible Atlas*, p. 105. Both the second and third editions have the picture, but it is redrawn and therefore much easier to see in the second edition). The problem with that explanation is that when Matthew says that Judas hanged himself, the Greek word is *apagchomai* (#519 ἀπάγχωμαι (ἀπάγχω)), a word that only occurs one time in the NT, and means, to strangle oneself, (Bullinger, Vine, Zodhiates). There is another word for hanging that refers to being suspended, and it is used of the criminals and Jesus hanging on the cross, being suspended there by the nails that were through the wrists and feet. That word is *kremannumi* (#2910 κρεμάννυμι) and it is used in verses such as Luke 23:39 and Acts 5:30. It seems unlikely that Matthew would say that Judas went out and strangled himself by hanging if he could have used a word “hang” that meant to be suspended, i.e., suspended on the stake on which he fell. Interestingly, the Hebrew also makes a difference between hanging that would take place on a stake, i.e., impaling, and hanging that involves strangling. When Haman was hanged, almost certainly by impaling, the Hebrew is *talah* (#8518 תָּלַח), “to hang, to hang up any object, to hang up for display,” but when Ahithophel hung himself, the Hebrew is *chanaq* (#2614 חָנַק), to strangle, or to die by hanging. It is appealing to think that when Matthew wrote that Judas hanged himself, what he meant was that Judas fell on a stake, because then Matthew and Acts would harmonize beautifully. However, given the meaning of *apagchomai* in the Greek from classical times on down, it seems more likely that Judas must have hung himself from a tree and then dropped down prone, bursting in the middle. There would be no need for that whole account to occur in Acts, because the emphasis in Acts was that Judas was a privileged apostle, but due to his selfishness he even acted as the guide of those who arrested Jesus. Thus he met a very ignoble end, broken apart in the middle of a field he had purchased with the money he has stolen from the believers. (The money he got for betraying Jesus he returned to the priests; Matt. 27:3. He had other money that he stole from the gifts given by believers; (John 12:6).

“falling down prone.” The Greek reads *ginomai prenes* (*ginomai* (#1096 γίνομαι) means to become; *prenes* (#4248 πρηνης) means, “prone, headlong, head-first”). Judas “became prone,” which we understand from the context was to fall down prone, or fall down prostrate.

“burst open.” The Greek is *lascho* (#2997 λάσχω (λακάω)), and means to break open, break apart. Meyer gives evidence from Homer and other ancient Greek writers that this is an expression that means to burst open with a noise (Meyer’s Commentary, Acts, p. 33).

**1:19.** “in their language...Akeldama.” The word “Akeldama” is Aramaic. Verses 18 and 19 are a parenthesis, added by Luke to explain why there needed to be a replacement for

Judas (see note on verse 18). Luke was a native Greek speaker, and wrote in Greek. In contrast, Peter's native language was Aramaic, and he would have spoken Hebrew as well. Peter would never have called "akeldama" a word "in their language," because he was speaking to a room full of Aramaic speaking Jews, and "akeldama" was their language. Luke added "in their language" to clarify the meaning of "akeldama" to his Greek-speaking audience. This verse shows that the Book of Acts was originally written in Greek.

**1:20.** Quoted from Ps. 69:25 and Ps. 109:8.

**2:4.** "with holy spirit." The Greek has no definite article, and spirit is in the genitive case. This is not confusing to the Greek reader. We say "filled with," while the Greeks indicated that by saying "filled of" (Cp. Luke 4:28; 5:26; Acts 3:10; 5:17; 13:45 and 52; 19:29).

"the Spirit" with the definite article it, in this instance, refers to Jesus Christ, who was pouring out the language (see v. 33). Jesus was given a spiritually powered body after his resurrection. His body was flesh and bone (Luke 24:39), but he was raised "a spiritual body (cp. 1 Cor. 15:44-46 and commentary). Jesus was sown (died) a "natural" (psuche = soul) body, he was raised a "spiritual" body. In this verse in Acts both the gift of holy spirit and the one who pours out the language to those who speak in tongues, Jesus, are mentioned and contrasted. Jesus is also called "the Spirit" in Romans 8:26 and 27, 2 Corinthians 3:17 and 18; Revelation 2:7, 11 (cp. 8), 17, 29 (cp. 18); 3:6, 13, 22 (cp. 14).

We believe that the second pneuma, "the pneuma," is Jesus for a couple reasons. Jesus, "the Spirit" "poured out what you now...hear (Acts 2:33)." First, it was Jesus who gave the tongues. It comes from Jesus, through the gift of holy spirit to our mind, but Jesus is the source, and the holy spirit inside us never "speaks of itself" but only "speaks what it hears" (John 16:13). Thus the one who "was giving them" tongues was Jesus. Second, note that the Spirit was "giving to them" what to say. "Them" is most naturally the apostles, not the minds of the apostles. If the second spirit in Acts 2:4 is holy spirit, then the holy spirit was giving the minds of the apostles what to say.

"was giving them" is imperfect, continuously in the past.

**2:5.** "deeply religious." The Greek is *eulabes* (#2126 εὐλαβής); see note on "godly man" in Acts 10:2.

**2:13.** "sweet new wine." It is not "new wine" as in wine that was freshly pressed (which would have been *neos oinos* in the Greek); rather this comes from *gleukos* (#1098 γλεῦκος). Most lexicons define this word as "sweet new wine" (BDAG; Thayer; Louw-Nida; Friburg; Gingrich), that is, wine that is still in the process of fermenting. The grape harvest in Palestine ended in August, or September at the latest, which by the time of Pentecost (usually June but sometimes May) would have been many months past (Lenski).

**2:17.** Quoted from Joel 2:28.

"from the *reservoir* of my spirit." The Greek of this phrase gives the sense of God having a large amount of spirit from which he pours some out upon mankind. Literally, it reads, "I will pour out from my spirit." We take this to be a partative genitive; the NAB agrees, translating the phrase, "I will pour out a portion of my spirit." However, to say God pours "from the reservoir" captures both the sense of *apo* ("from") and the partative nature of the phrase. This is the rendering of the Hebrew text of Joel, who Peter is

quoting. The Septuagint introduced the partative idea, as if to say, “some of my spirit,” (*The Acts of the Apostles*; The Anchor Bible commentary; Joseph A. Fitzmyer). Some translations translate the genitive in the Greek in this verse, and have “I will pour out of my spirit,” which if that is the meaning, is more accurately, “I will pour out *some* of my spirit.” We feel that the concept that God only pour out part of His spirit upon people is inherent in the text.

**2:18.** Quoted from Joel 2:29 with some variation.

**2:19.** Quoted from Joel 2:30

**2:20.** Quoted from Joel 2:31

**2:21.** Quoted from Joel 2:32

**2:25-28.** Quoted from Ps. 16:8-11.

**2:26.** “abide.” From the Greek *kataskenoo* (#2681 κατασκηνώω), literally meaning “to pitch one’s tent,” that is to dwell, settle, or live. However, the translation “live” (NIV) could give the misleading impression that David was “alive” while resting in death. Rather, the sense is that after David had died, his flesh would dwell in the hope of resurrection. The point of the passage is not that David was “living” but exactly the opposite, as verses 29 and 34 make clear: “he both died and was buried... [and] did not ascend into the heavens.” BDAG points out how early Christian gravestones used this word as a euphemism for “resting.”

**2:30.** Quoted from Ps. 132:11.

**2:31.** Quoted from Ps. 16:10.

**2:34, 35.** Quoted from Ps. 110:1.

**2:39.** “As many as the Lord our God calls.” Many theologians assert that this verse means a person cannot be saved unless God first calls him, at which point the person can then decide to call upon God and be saved. That is not what this verse is saying. Peter did not know the Christian doctrine, set forth by Augustine, Calvin, and others, that a person could not exercise his free will and be saved unless God first gave him saving grace. Peter was a Jew who had been taught from the Old Testament that God chose and called the nation of Israel, but not the Gentile nations, and Peter thought of “calling” in this context in terms of groups of people, not individuals. Peter did recognize that and individual Gentile could be saved even if God did not call the Gentiles as nations. He certainly would have recognized that Ruth the Moabite, for example, was saved. Furthermore, he was aware that there were many proselytes to Judaism from the Gentile nations. In this address in the Temple, Peter says, “the promise [of the holy spirit] is to you [Jews] and your children,” because he was aware that the holy spirit had been promised to Israel. Furthermore, when he said the promise of holy spirit was to “you,” the word is plural, meaning “you as a group.” The promise was not given to “each of you individually,” even though each person would have to receive the spirit by their own faith.

In spite of the fact Peter was addressing a group of Jews, and knew the holy spirit had been promised to Jews, he also knew that Joel had said the spirit would be poured out on “all people” (Joel 2:28). Thus, likely by revelation he added, “and to all who are far off.” He himself was not thinking of the Gentiles at that time, because years later he argued with the Lord about entering the house of a Gentile (Acts 10:14). Nevertheless, he was inspired to say in his message that God can call whatever peoples or nations He

wanted, and that they too could be baptized and receive holy spirit. This would occur individual by individual for the nations, just as it had for Israel.

**2:46.** “from house to house.” The emphasis is that each house was involved. Some versions read that they broke their bread “at home,” but this misses the point. It is not that each one ate at home, but rather that every home was involved, and they shared with each other.

“in the Temple.” These early Christians were all Jews, so they continued worshipping in the Temple.

“sincerity.” The Greek is *aphelotes* (#858 ἀφελότης), and means “simplicity.” The root word comes from a description of land, that it was without rock, hence smooth. Thus the idea is simplicity, or humility of heart. Sincerity captures this feeling more than simplicity, which could be read in a negative sense.

**2:47.** “and having favor with all the people *of the city*.” The italics make clear who “all the people” are: the people of the city, in this case, Jerusalem. This tells us a lot about the early Christians. They were all Jews at this point, and they commended themselves to both God and man. They were joyful, full of praise, often in the Temple, sharing and helping each other and others out, so no wonder they had the favor (grace) of all the people of the city.

**3:1.** “at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.” The ninth hour corresponds roughly to our hour from 3 to 4 PM. The Jews counted twelve hours in the day, with the first starting at what is roughly equivalent to our 6 AM. As early as the time of David (c. 950 BC) the Bible alludes to there being three daily hours of prayer among the Jews: “Evening and morning and at noon I will utter my compliant...” (Ps. 55:17). By the time of Daniel (c. 500 BC) the three times for prayer each day seems to be quite well established, because Daniel prayed upon his knees three times each day (Dan. 6:10).

However, ancient sources disagree as to exactly when the three hours of prayer were observed. According to the Talmud, the Jewish people prayed three times each day: morning, afternoon, and evening.<sup>25</sup> John Lightfoot says that the prayers coincide with the morning and evening sacrifice, and that prayers were also made between those times, “from the sixth hour and a half,” which would be close to noon, around 12:30 PM. Yet he also points out that the Jerusalem Talmud says the practice was “The recital of the Shema in bed is the foundation; that is, after the stars have begun to appear.”<sup>26</sup> After the stars had begun to appear is certainly later than the evening sacrifice, however. F.F. Bruce writes, “a service of public prayer accompanied these two sacrifices [the morning and evening] and there was a further service at sunset.”<sup>27</sup> Acts 3:1 confirms that the ninth hour, about 3 PM, was in fact an hour of prayer.

Adam Clarke refers to rabbis who teach that people should pray when the sun rises, when it reached meridian [i.e., noon], and when the sun has set, “passed just under the horizon.<sup>28</sup> Lange writes: “...in the later age of the apostles, custom had firmly

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<sup>25</sup> Berachoth 1.1-2; 4:1. Referenced in Simon Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Acts* (Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990), p.120.

<sup>26</sup> John Lightfoot, *Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica* (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, reprinted from 1859 edition), p. 36.

<sup>27</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Book of Acts* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, 1980), p. 83.

<sup>28</sup> Adam Clarke, *The New Testament with a Commentary* (Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York), Vol. 5, Matt.-Acts, p. 704.

established the three hours of prayer, namely, the third hour of the day, in the morning . . . the sixth, at noon; and the ninth, in the evening. The first and third coincided with the hours in which the morning and the evening sacrifices were, respectively, offered.”<sup>29</sup> In conclusion, it seems clear that the ancient sources testify to their being three hours of prayer, one of them coinciding with the morning sacrifice and one coinciding with the evening sacrifice. The sources disagree as to whether the third hour is close to noon, or after the evening sacrifice close to when the stars appear in the evening.

In Acts 10:3 the angel appeared to Cornelius at the hour of the evening sacrifice (the ninth hour). In Acts 10:9 Peter went up to the roof of the house in which he was staying and prayed at the sixth hour, about noon, and some commentators have used that to support the idea of an hour of prayer being around noon, but the Bible never says Peter prayed at a recognized hour of prayer, he may have just been moved to pray about that time.

**3:6.** “I have no silver and gold.” The Greek literally reads, “silver and gold do not exist/are not present for me.” The Greek word translated “have” is *huparcho* (#5225 ὑπάρχω), which means, “to exist,” or “have at one’s disposal” (BDAG). The use of this verb does not mean Peter is denying money even exists to him, rather, he is saying he does not have any. There is no money present at his disposal. Thus the translation, “I have no silver and gold.”

**3:15.** “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.”

**3:22, 23.** Quoted from Deut. 18:15, 16, 19.

**3:35.** Quoted from Gen. 22:18.

**4:1.** “commander.” The Greek word is *strategos* (#4755 στρατηγός), in the singular form, and it refers to the top commander of the Temple police. See note on Luke 22:4.

**4:2.** “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “from among the dead.”

**4:7.** “in the midst.” The Greek word is *mesos* (#3319 μέσος), and means midst or middle. Acts is historically accurate in this description, for the Sanhedrin met in a semicircle on a raised semicircular platform so that all the members could see one another, while the accused stood on a lower level, but clearly “in the midst” of them.

“By what power or in what name.” Annas, Caiaphas, and the rest of the Sanhedrin knew that a miracle had been done. While it was proper according to the law to use the name of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Solomon, or some other well-accepted names to appropriate the power or authority of God, it was against Jewish law to use magic. The point of their “investigation” was to discover if the apostles had done the miracle by magic and thus broken any laws, at which point they could imprison them or even perhaps kill them. However, no specific regulation apparently existed concerning the name of Jesus, and the miracle was a great one and well known to all the people of Jerusalem (v. 16), so they felt that all they could do was threaten them not to use “this name” any more (v. 18). We Christians need to realize that there is great power in using the name of Jesus Christ when we walk by revelation and faith.

**4:10.** “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.”

**4:11.** Quoted from Ps. 118:22.

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<sup>29</sup> John P. Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John-Acts* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, reprinted 1980), Acts 3:1.

“rejected.” From *exoutheneo* (#1848 ἐξουθενέω), See commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:20.

**4:13.** “uneducated.” Greek is *agramatos*, (#62 ἀγράμματος), “Illiterate, without learning: (i. e. unversed in the learning of the Jewish schools) (Thayer). This does not refer to having no education. It means that the apostles had not gone to the schools for “higher education,” i.e., in Rabbinic training.

“ordinary.” Greek is *idiotes* (#2399 ἰδιώτης), a “very common in Greek writings from Herodotus down; properly, a private person, opposed to a magistrate, ruler, king.” (Thayer). They held no public office, were not of a noble class, etc. They were regular people. They did not do a miracle because they had special rank or privilege.

**4:25, 26.** Quoted from Ps. 2:1, 2.

**5:4.** “unsold.” Cp. Robertson and ESV; NIV; NASB; NRSV; NET; NAB. Although there is no Greek word for *unsold*, this is clearly the meaning. The literal reading is, “remaining for you did it not remain?” The NASB, like the REV, puts “unsold” in italics, “While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own?”

“contrived.” The Greek is *tithemi* (#5087 τίθημι), and means, “to set, put, or place; to make or to make (or set) for one’s self or for one’s use; to set, fix establish.” Although many versions have “conceived,” Lenski points out that this is not broad enough, and it is more than conceive, it is to think through the entire process. The argument could be made that the translation could be “put,” or “placed,” with the idea that the plan was not started in the heart but “placed” there as it developed, but it makes more sense that the idea was both conceived and planned, in the evil hearts of Ananias and Sapphira.

**5:24.** “commander.” The Greek word is *strategos* (#4755 στρατηγός), in the singular form, and it refers to the top commander of the Temple police. See note on Luke 22:4.

**5:26.** “commander.” The Greek word is *strategos* (#4755 στρατηγός), in the singular form, and it refers to the top commander of the Temple police. See note on Luke 22:4.

**5:35.** “consider carefully.” Cp. NIV; NRSV. Literally, the phrase is “pay close attention to yourselves”, “take care to yourselves,” but the meaning is “consider carefully” what you are going to do.

**6:7.** “of the priests.” The priests in Jerusalem were mainly Sadducees. For them to go from believing that there was no resurrection to believing in the resurrection of Christ and then, of course, of themselves, was a huge shift. The Word of God makes no statement about the impact that converting a large number of the priests to the faith had on the Temple services there in Jerusalem, or even whether or not some of them quit working in the Temple or were forced to leave.

**6:13.** “Place” is capitalized (and in v. 14) because it is a designation of the Temple. The word “place” was a designation of the Temple, see note on *topos* at Matt. 24:15.

**7:3.** Quoted from Gen. 12:1.

**7:5.** Quoted from Gen. 17:8.

**7:6, 7.** Quoted from Gen. 15:13, 14.

**7:27, 28.** Quoted from Exod. 2:13, 14.

**7:32.** Quoted from Exod. 3:6.

**7:33, 34.** Quoted from Exod. 3:5, 7, 10.

**7:37.** Quoted from Deut. 18:15.

**7:40.** Quoted from Exod. 32:1.

**7:42.** Quoted from Am. 5:25-27.

**7:43.** Quoted from Am. 5:25-27.

“worship.” See note on Matt. 2:2.

**7:49, 50.** Quoted from Isaiah 66:1, 2.

**7:59.** “receive my spirit.” The Greek word for “spirit” is *pneuma* (#4151 πνεῦμα). Here “spirit” refers to the natural life of the body. Stephen was being stoned to death, and made a last cry to the Lord Jesus to receive his “life.” Although the vocabulary is different, this is in essence what Jesus said on the cross when he said to God, “into your hands I commit my spirit” (Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46). Jesus would “accept” or “receive” Stephen’s life in the sense that he would remember it and restore it at the resurrection. In that sense, Stephen’s life would be similar to the treasure we store up in heaven as we live for God (Matt. 6:20). There is no actual “treasure” in heaven being stored for us. Rather, saying that we store up treasures in heaven is a way of saying God remembers what we do and keeps an account, and we will be given treasure at the Judgment. Similarly, Stephen saying “receive my spirit” does not mean his “spirit” goes to the presence of Jesus and lives there. Rather, Stephen is asking Jesus to accept his life and remember it, and give Stephen life again in the resurrection. For more on “spirit” in this sense see the note on Luke 23:46.

**8:2.** “*deeply* religious.” The Greek is *eulabes* (#2126 εὐλαβής); see note on “godly man” in Acts 10:2.

**8:5.** “a city.” There is a textual variant that reads “the city,” rather than “a city.” This reading is portrayed by such versions as ESV, NASB, NRSV, KJV, and ASV. In this case “the city of Samaria” would not be referring to the city Samaria itself, because by NT times the city no longer went by that name; it had been called Sebaste since the time of Herod the Great (BDAG). All through the NT, Samaria refers to the district and not the town. So the understanding would be “the (main) city of Samaria” (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*; BDAG; NET translation note), which is how the NET translates the phrase. We feel, however, that the original reading was most likely “a city” (cp. NIV, HCSB, NJB, YLT). As Kistemaker notes, “the historical context seems to favor a less important city, perhaps Shechem (or Sychar).” Shechem would have been the center of religious activity of Samaria, it is “here the magician Simon would most naturally establish himself” (Lenski). Given the fact that it was most likely not the “main” city of Samaria, and given the problems with the textual witnesses for the reading “the city” (“Aleph has the reading ‘Caesarea’ in place of ‘Samaria,’ and B has ‘Paul’ instead of ‘Phillip’ in v.6” [Lenski]), we have rendered the phrase “a city of Samaria.”

**8:22.** “Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.” Cp. F.F. Bruce’s translation: “So repent of this wickedness of yours and pray to the lord that the intent of you your heart may be forgiven” (see also HCSB). The Greek of this phrase has a condition, the sense of which most versions misunderstand entirely. It is often rendered as something like the NIV: “Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart”; or the NASB: “pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you.” This gives the impression that God might not forgive Simon, or that it might not be possible for Simon to be forgiven. Neither is true. 1 John 1:9 affirms that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” There is no question as to if God will forgive.

Scripture tells us he is faithful and just to do so. The question lies in whether Simon will perform the prerequisites for forgiveness. As Lenski has written, “The implication of this conditional form is not regarding the Lord’s willingness to remit but in regard to Simon’s contrition and begging as being necessary for enabling the Lord to extend remission. Unless Simon’s heart changes, he himself will prevent the Lord’s remission.” Likewise, Kistemaker writes, “This conditional statement relates not to God’s ability to forgive sin but to Simon’s willingness to repent.” In this case the doubt is not placed on God, but on whether or not Simon will fulfill his part.

Because of the great potential for misunderstanding, we have translated the sense of the conditional phrase, rather than stick with a more literal rendering, “repent... and pray... if perhaps the intent of your heart will be forgiven you [depending upon whether you fulfill the conditions].”

**8:27.** “worship.” See note on Matt. 2:2.

**8:30.** “heard him reading.” It was very common in ancient times to read to oneself out loud. This was due to the fact that the writing was all upper case letters with no punctuation, and not even spaces between the words. All the letters, line after line, were just in a string. Thus, Isaiah, which the Eunuch was reading, if it were English, would have looked like this:

HEWASLEDLIKEASHEEPTOTHESLAUGHTERANDASALAMBBEFOREIT  
SSHEARERSISSILENTSOHEDIDNOTOPENHISMOUTN.

Reading out loud helped keep the eye and mind from being confused or losing the place, so as Philip approached the chariot, he could hear the eunuch reading.

**8:32, 33.** Quoted from Isaiah 53: 7, 8.

**8:37.** This verse, *And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,”* is not in the original Greek text. Metzger (*Textual Criticism*) writes: “Verse 37 is a Western addition. There is no reason why scribes should have omitted the material, if it had originally stood in the text. The formula... was doubtless used by the early church in baptismal ceremonies, and may have been written in the margin of a copy of Acts. Its insertion into the text seems to have been due to the feeling that Philip would not have baptized the Ethiopian without securing a confession of faith, which needed to be expressed in the narrative. Although the earliest known New Testament manuscript that contains the words dates from the sixth century, the tradition of the Ethiopian’s confession of faith in Christ was current as early as the latter part of the second century, for Irenaeus quotes part of it (*Against Heresies*, III.xii:8). Although the passage does not appear in the late medieval manuscript on which Erasmus chiefly depended for his edition, it stands in the margin of another, from which he inserted it into his text because he “judged that it had been omitted by the carelessness of scribes.”

**9:28.** “going in and going out.” This phrase is both an idiom and the figure of speech *polarmerismos*. Polarmerismos occurs when two extremes are put for what happens between them, thus indicating a totality. A polarmerismos in English is, “That is the long and short of it,” meaning that is all there is to the situation. A polarmerismos in the Bible occurs in Genesis 1: “And there was evening, and there was morning.” The evening and morning are put for the whole day. In the case of “going in and going out,” the reference is an idiom and primarily refers to the daily life of going in to one’s house, and out of it, in other words, living all of daily life. Solomon used almost the exact words when he

became king. He prayed, “And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in” (1 Kings 3:7, KJV). Solomon said to God he was not confident as a king, he did not know how to live his life in front of the people, but God stepped in and gave him great wisdom. Here in Acts, the verse is saying that Paul lived daily life with the apostles; he went in and out with them.

**9:38.** “Lydda was close to Joppa.” Joppa is about 10 miles northwest of Lydda, and could have been reached in under half a day’s walk.

**10:2.** “godly man.” The word comes from *eusebes* (#2152 εὐσεβής), which emphasizes the outward actions of one’s devotion. It can be contrasted with *eulabes* (#2126 εὐλαβής), a similar word that denotes one’s inward attitude of reverence and devotion to God. Vine writes, “While *eulabes* especially suggests the piety which characterizes the inner being, the soul, in its attitude towards God, *eusebes* directs us rather to the energy which, directed by holy awe of God, finds expression in devoted activity.” Bullinger points out that *eulabes* is more about the “avoidance through godly fear of doing anything contrary to right,” than performing one’s devotion in deeds; thus it concerns the type of person one is. On the other hand, he writes that *eusebes* is “reverence for God which shows itself in actions, practical piety of every kind.”

**10:7.** “godly soldier.” See Acts 10:2 note on “godly man.”

**10:8.** “related.” See note on “related” in Luke 24:35.

**10:10.** One of the definitions of *ekstasis* is a “state of suspended consciousness.” Most versions say “trance.” The word “trance” is correct in some contexts, but not in this one. There are many reasons for suspended states of consciousness, but the two we are concerned with as students of Scripture are those caused by God or the Lord Jesus when they give a person an experience by revelation, and the kind caused by demons, which we refer to as a “trance.” When God or the Lord Jesus give such a profound and inclusive revelation that a person’s conscious experience of the other things happening around him are suspended, the person still maintains control of themselves, is aware of what is happening, like Peter can participate in the experience by talking, etc., and will remember what has occurred. In contrast, a demonically produced trance is a type of suspended consciousness, but the person is usually not in control of himself, and frequently has no memory of what happened, including any actions he took while in the trance.

**10:13.** “Kill.” The word is from the Greek word *thuo* (#2380 θύω), meaning “to sacrifice.” It is used to refer both to the Pascal Lamb (Mk. 14:12; Lk. 22:7) and pagan sacrifice (Acts 14:13, 18; 1 Cor. 10:20). The same word can describe “pure” and “unpure” religious sacrifice. Nevertheless, the Jews had very strict rules as to which animals were clean and able to be offered as sacrifice, and which animals were unclean and thus unfit for sacrifice. It is also helpful to remember that many of the animals that were sacrificed were eaten by the people in part, or in whole. The Lord is making a point in a way that would be very powerful to Peter, a first century Jew. By telling Peter to kill as a sacrifice and eat these unclean animals, Jesus was showing Peter that even things that had been considered unclean were acceptable to God; Even though he had felt they were unfit for religious use, the Lord was showing he had made them clean.

**10:14.** “Lord.” This refers to the Lord Jesus, not the Lord God. Peter was in the habit of dialoging with Jesus, and referring to him as Lord, which in part explains the tenor of the conversation, and Peter’s willingness to argue, i.e., “Surely not, Lord, . . .” It is difficult to

imagine Peter arguing with God in that manner. Further, verse 19 say “the Spirit” said..., which would be Jesus Christ, see note on Romans 8:26.

**10:19.** “the Spirit.” In this case “the Spirit” refers to Jesus. Peter spoke frankly with him as he had when Jesus lived among the apostles, and here the Bible refers to Jesus as “the Spirit” as it does in many other places after the resurrection. See note on Rom. 8:26.

**10:22.** “divinely instructed.” See entry on Matthew 2:12.

**10:25.** “Now it came to pass that when Peter entered.” A difficult construction in Greek. A Hebraism (cp. Robertson, *Word Studies*).

“bowed down before *him*.” See note on Matt. 2:2.

**10:41.** “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24.

**11:5.** “state of suspended consciousness.” See note on Acts 10:10.

**11:7.** “Kill.” See note on 10:13.

**11:16.** “how he used to say.” A more literal rendition of the Greek would be, “how he was saying,” using the perfect tense, active voice of the verb. We might idiomatically say something like, “he was always saying....” The NASB does the same thing we do in this verse.

**11:17.** “I, who was I.” There is a double use of I here. Lenski notes that there are two questions fused into one: “Who was I” and “Was I able.” (cp Robertson; *Word Pictures*). Peter aggressively defends his actions to the Jews, as well he should. However, his humanity shows through later when he gives in to pressure from the Jews about eating with Gentiles (Gal. 2:11).

**11:23.** “the purposes of their hearts.” The Greek word translated “purposes” is *prothesis* (#4286 πρόθεσις), and here means, that which is planned or purposed in advance. The heart can have plans or purposes, things it plans for the future.

**11:25.** “diligently searching.” See entry on Luke 2:44.

**13:4.** “Selucia.” This is Selucia Pieria, which served as a sea port of Antioch about 16 miles further upstream, at the mouth of the Orantes River.

**13:12.** “teaching of the Lord.” A very good example of a genitive of relation, well translated as “the teaching about the Lord” (NIV).

**13:22.** Quoted from Ps. 89:20, and 1 Sam. 13:14.

**13:30.** “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.”

**13:33.** Quoted from Ps. 2:7.

**13:34.** Quoted from Isaiah 55:3.

“out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “up from among those who are dead.”

**13:35.** Quoted from Ps. 16:10.

**13:41.** Quoted from Hab. 1:5.

**13:43.** “God-fearing.” The Greek is *sebomai* (#4576 σέβομαι). In the New Testament *sebomai* is always used of worship or veneration of a god or deity, but in the Greek literature it is also used of veneration or respect of a person. It has two distinct meanings in the New Testament; the basic meaning in the Greek literature—and the one that occurs in Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7; Acts 18:13; and Acts 19:17—is “worship; venerate.” However, the Rabbis used the word in a specific sense, usually to indicate a Gentile who worshipped the God of Israel, but usually without becoming circumcised and thus becoming a full-fledged proselyte, and that use of the word spread throughout the

Biblical world, even appearing in the New Testament. Robertson says the word *sebomai* was used “of the uncircumcised Gentiles who yet attended the synagogue worship...the rabbis used it also of proselytes of the gate who had not yet become circumcised” (Robertson; *Word Pictures*). “*God-fearers, worshipers of God* is a term applied to former polytheists who accepted the ethical monotheism of Israel and attended the synagogue, but who did not obligate themselves to keep the whole Mosaic law; in particular, the males did not submit to circumcision (Jos., Ant. 14, 110)” (BDAG). These “God-fearers,” or “God-fearing Gentiles,” are mentioned six times in the book of Acts (Acts 13:43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7), and often their connection with the Jews in the synagogue shows up in the context. For example, in Acts 13:43, these God-fearing people obviously heard Paul speak in the synagogue, and followed him after the service ended. In Acts 13:50 the Jews agitated the God-fearing women. The Jews had significant influence over those particular women because they were the ones who worshipped in the synagogue. In Acts 16, Lydia, a seller of purple cloth, was worshipping outside the city of Philippi (which did not have a synagogue), and was open to Paul’s teaching about the Messiah, because she herself was already a God-fearing Gentile (Acts 16:14). At Thessalonica, Paul went into the synagogue and taught. Quite a few people believed, not only among the Jews, but of the God-fearing Gentiles as well, who were in the synagogue and heard Paul teach (Acts 17:1-4). In Athens, Paul went into the synagogue and talked with “the Jews and God-fearing *Greeks*” (Acts 17:17). In Corinth, Paul went into the house of Titus Justice, a God-fearing Gentile whose house was right next to the synagogue. Once we know that the “God-fearing” Gentiles were not just “devout” as some versions say, but were actually committed to the God of Israel, we can better understand the verses that mention them. It would be possible for a Gentile to be “devout” to pagan gods without having any relationship to the God of Israel; however, that is clearly not the case with these Gentiles who were devoted to Yahweh.

**13:47.** Quoted from Isaiah 49:6.

**13:48.** “as many as appointed themselves to life *in the Age*.” It is very important to properly understand this phrase. The verb is *tasso* (#5021 τάσσω), and the form of the verb in this verse can be either middle voice or passive voice (cp. Lenski; and *Expositor’s Greek Testament*; although the lexicons say it is passive, but note Friberg).

The verb *tasso* means, “to place in a certain order,...to arrange, to assign a place, to appoint...to consecrate (R. V. set) oneself to minister unto one, 1 Cor. 16:15...Middle [voice] (as often in Greek writings) properly, to appoint on one’s own responsibility or authority,” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*).

This verse is a great example of the importance of utilizing the scope of Scripture to help translate and understand a word. The translation and interpretation of the verse depends on whether the verb *tasso* is in the passive or middle voice. But in this case, both forms are the same, so that determination cannot be made from the Greek text itself, but from the context and scope of Scripture.

If the verb is in the passive voice in this verse, then versions such as the NASB properly represent the text: “and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed” (other versions that use “appointed” include the Amplified Bible, ESV, NIV, and NKJV). Of course, the theology that usually develops from that rendering is that God chooses, or “appoints,” who will be saved and who will not. This is clearly expressed in the NLT (New Living Translation), which reads, “and all who were chosen for eternal life became

believers.” This is exactly what those who follow the theology set forth by Augustine, John Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards, teach, and it is the formal theology of denominations such as the Roman Catholics and Presbyterians. It also is the reason why denominations such as the Roman Catholics and Presbyterians do not have altar calls for salvation as a part of their church services. Their official doctrine is that people do not have the ability or power to decide whether to be saved or not. They assert that salvation God’s choice, not the individual’s, so any altar call would be pointless.

There are commentators who do not see the need to draw that conclusion, however, even though they take the verb to be in the passive voice: “There is no countenance here for the *absolutum decretum* [absolute decree] of the Calvinists, since ver. 46 had already shown that the Jews had acted through their own choice. . . .the Jews as a nation had been ordained to eternal life—they had rejected this election” (*Expositor’s Greek Testament*). In this theology, being “ordained” or “appointed” to everlasting life does not mean one has to accept the ordination. This is more correct than believing God only appoints some people to everlasting life, and all those who are appointed believe. However, on a practical note it seems to miss the point. First, because actually God appoints everyone to everlasting life. It is quite unthinkable that God would want all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4), but then only appoint some to everlasting life. But if all who were appointed to life believed, all those present to hear Paul, both Jews and Greeks, would have believed. Secondly, if the verb is read as a passive, then the verse does in fact say that all those who were “appointed” to everlasting life believed, as if some were appointed and some were not. Yet it is clear from the scope of Scripture that God wants all people to be saved, but only some accept the invitation.

We assert that in this verse, Acts 13:48, the verb *tasso* is in the middle voice, and thus the meaning is reflexive. It is we humans who respond to God’s call and believe unto salvation. God’s desire is that all people would be saved, but only some will “appoint themselves” to everlasting life by answering the call. Many commentaries note that the context (v. 46) shows that the Jews “judged themselves” unworthy of life. We agree, and point out that in contrast to those Jews, the Gentiles “appointed themselves” to life in the Age to Come. “The meaning of this word [*tasso*] must be determined by the context. The Jews had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life; the Gentiles, as many as were disposed to eternal life, believed” (Alford, *The Greek Testament*, cp. the translation, “as many as had set themselves for eternal life,” *New International Biblical Commentary*).

No doubt some people will take exception to our translation, “appoint themselves,” but we feel it is a good representation of both the Greek text and the scope of Scripture. God offers everlasting life to anyone who will accept it, and so we “appoint ourselves” for it, just as we might appoint ourselves to any other job or position. Especially since some very notable translations use the word “appointed” as a passive, our using “appointed themselves” (the middle voice) seems quite appropriate. Furthermore, it is exactly what happens when we decide to make Christ our personal Lord and savior. The Living Bible catches the sense of this, even though in our opinion their translation is too liberal a departure from the meaning of the Greek word *tasso*: “and as many as wanted eternal life believed.” That translation expresses what happened in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:14) some 2,000 years ago: Paul taught the Word of God in the Synagogue to the Jews and Greeks assembled there. The Jews judged themselves

unworthy of eternal life by rejecting both the message and the messengers. However, the Gentiles wanted it and appointed themselves to everlasting life by believing.

The point of the verse is that each person has the opportunity to accept or reject God, and in this case, the Jews, by their actions, rejected life, but the Gentiles appointed themselves to everlasting life by accepting God's call.

**13:50.** "God fearing." See note on Acts 13:43.

**14:3.** "Therefore." This important word shows that Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium because of the persecution by the Jews mentioned in verse 2. Paul and Barnabas were not ones to abandon their new converts to the pressures and persecutions of the Jews and unbelievers. They stayed "a long time," and fought for them, "speaking boldly for the Lord." The Lord Jesus honored their fearless, selfless commitment by energizing signs and wonders that further testified to the truth of what they were teaching. This verse teaches a wonderful lesson about how important it is to raise up new converts in the Lord, and help them grow in the faith.

**14:12.** "Chief" is actually a participle, "leading speaker."

**14:15.** "vain things" (3152) = "fruitless," here and all other places

**14:19.** "Dragged" = *suro*.

**15:2.** "no small." Figure of speech, *Tapeinosis* (demeaning, or understatement).

**15:3.** "sent." The Greek word is *propempō* (#4311 προπέμπω), and it has two distinct meanings: "to send on ahead, send on one's way;" and "to accompany or escort." The KJV and the ASV of 1901 opted for the second definition, "to accompany." However, that does not fit this particular context, which is why other versions opt for the first definition, "send on one's way." Verse 2 makes it clear that Paul, Barnabas, and a few others were appointed to travel from Antioch to Jerusalem. Since they were specifically appointed for the journey, it makes no sense that others in the congregation who were not appointed to go would go anyway, even part of the way.

**15:5.** "rose up" (1817). Although this certainly refers to standing up, which is how many versions translate it, it may refer to more. It probably also refers to a "rising" of indignation, self-righteousness, etc. In that case, simply saying "stood up" is weak.

**15:8.** God "bore witness to" the Gentiles, that He had accepted them, by giving them the gift of holy spirit. "Bore witness to" is a good translation here, because it allows both that God bore witness to the Gentiles themselves, and that He also bore witness to the acceptance of the Gentiles to the Jews. The concrete evidence that the Gentiles had received holy spirit was that they spoke in tongues.

**15:9.** "by the faith." The difference between "by the faith," which is the way the Greek text reads, and "by faith," as most versions read, is important. "Faith," (the Greek is *pistis* (#4102 πίστις)), is a noun, but most people read it in this verse as if it was a verb, i.e., that faith was something they did to purify their hearts. This can lead to teachings such as "just have faith and your heart will be purified," which is not what the verse is saying. "The faith" that purifies the heart is the Christian faith, which is the entire Christian lifestyle, including both actions and beliefs. When an unbeliever becomes a Christian, he or she almost always enters the faith with an impure heart. However, as that person lives the Christian lifestyle and learns, believes and lives the Word of God day after day, his or her heart will be purified.

**15:12.** "as they were recounting." See note on "related" in Luke 24:35.

**15:14.** “Simeon.” “Simeon” is the Hebrew form of Peter’s Jewish name. “Simon” (#4613 Σίμων) was considered the equivalent of the Hebrew patriarchal name Symeon (#4826 Συμεών), and was widely used by both Greeks and Jews. It is likely that Simon Peter acquired the name “Simon” due to the Greek influence in the Galilee and in his hometown, Bethsaida. It is noteworthy that his brother also has a Greek name. “Andrew” means “manly” in Greek. Peter is usually referred to as “Simon,” but here and in 2 Peter 1:1, Simeon is used instead of Simon. It is likely that James used “Simeon” to good effect on his Hebrew audience, anchoring Peter’s good Hebrew name to the perspective he had just given on the subject (vs. 7-11).

“related.” Same word as “recounting” in verse 12. See note on “related” in Luke 24:35.

“a people.” Israel had been the “people” of God. Now God was making his “people” out of both Jews and Gentiles.

**15:16-17.** Quoted from Amos 9:11, 12.

**15:17.** “called—says.” The figure of speech anacoluthon, or non-sequence. A breaking off of the sequence of thought. See Bullinger, *Figures*.

The ending of the verse 17 and how it relates to verse 18, and what is the proper Greek text of verse 18 are debated by scholars. Verse 18 is almost certainly textually, “γνωστὰ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος” (“known from the ages,” i.e., “known from long ago.” This short sentence was expanded in time to make the longer ending that appears in the Byzantine text (cp. KJV) and other longer textual variants were produced as well (cp. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*; and cp. the apparatus of NA-27 or UBS 4). The problem is that the quotation from Amos was well known, and ended with the Greek words “ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν τὰυτα” (“God, who makes all this” or “God, who does all this” (the Greek word ποιῶν can be “do” or “make”). However, that makes verse 18 the short and disconnected sentence, “known from the ages.” The question is, when James quoted Amos, did he modify it, giving it a new ending, and making it end: “the Lord, who is making this known from long ago” (as per ESV, NASB, RSV), or would James have left the quotation from Amos intact, and then said something that is represented in the NT text with the figure of speech ellipsis, thus making the end of 17 and verse 18 read, “the Lord who had done all this. *This has been* known from long ago” (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*).

To us it makes more sense that James would quote Amos as it was known, and then add his point, that “*This has been* known from long ago.” James is arguing to make a point, and it would weaken his argument to misquote an OT verse, trying to make a point using his changed verse. We believe that James would correctly quote Amos (except he changed “God” to “Lord,”) and then add the fact that what he was saying had been known for a long time. The real confusion, then, is caused when Acts is written, and Luke (by revelation) uses the figure ellipsis in recording James’ words, leaving out “This has been.” The figure ellipsis emphasizes what is in the text, and de-emphasizes what is left out. To God, the fact that it was known for a long time that God would rebuild the tent of David is very important, so that gets emphasized.

**15:18.** See note on verse 17 above.

**15:20.** This verse has many textual variants, and there has been much theological discussion on what this Apostolic Decree means. Metzger (*Textual Commentary*) has a well written section on the most probable original text (represented in the REV).

“pollutions of idols.” This refers specifically to food sacrificed to idols, as verse 29 and 21:25 make clear. It would not refer to idolatry as such, because the Gentiles had forsaken their idols. This was a huge part of the decision to become a Christian in the first century, because other religions did not ask anyone to forsake idols. In the Roman religions, for example, if you worshipped one god you could and should still recognize other gods. What set Christianity and Judaism apart was that in those religions a person rejected other gods and exclusively recognized the God of the Bible. This was a major reason Jews and Christians were persecuted by pagans.

**15:22.** “it was decided.” This is an idiom used at the start of decrees (Robertson, Word Pictures). Lenski writes, “*dokeo* with the dative means that the assembly passed a formal resolution. This was probably done by a show of hands as in 14:23.

**15:23.** “They wrote through them.” This is an anacoluthon, and the figure of speech idiom. The Greek is literally, “having written through their hand.” The anacoluthon is “having written, and sending the letter through their hand.” The idiom is the use of “hand” as power or agency. Through their hand is a very Hebraic way of saying, through their them, i.e., by their power.

**15:25.** “we decided.” See notes on *dokeo* in verse 22.

“of one accord.” See note on Acts 1:14.

“and.” Figure of speech *Polysyndeton*, “many ands” (Cp. Bullinger, *Figures*).

**15:26.** “risked.” The Greek word is *paradidomi* (#3860 παραδίδωμι) and means “to hand over, give over, deliver, entrust.” Most of the commentators say it means “risk” in this context, but there is certainly the overtones that Paul had more than just “risked” his life. He had “given over” (Field says “pledged” see BDAG), fully to the Lord.

**15:28.** “the Holy Spirit.” Here “the Holy Spirit” is a name or title of God. The use of “Holy Spirit” as an appellative for God is directly related to the subject at hand, which is the obedience of some of the parts of the Levitical Law by the Gentiles. They were directed to avoid food sacrificed to idols, sexual immorality, things strangled, and blood, which are all commandments mentioned in the OT, given by God. Obedience to these commandments would not be a factor in the salvation of the Gentiles, but in their holiness, and their ability to fellowship with Jewish Christians, who at this time in Acts were still keeping the Law. The emphasis on “Holy Spirit” would bring to mind statements such as “Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy” (Lev. 19:2b).

**15:34.** This verse [*But it seemed good to Silas to remain there.*] should be omitted from the text. It was a late addition, and even so it has several variations. It was added to explain how Paul could have traveled with Silas if Silas went back to Jerusalem. However, Silas did go back to Jerusalem. First, it was “a necessary exigency of the commission which he had received” (Meyer). Silas would have to report back to Jerusalem about how things went in Antioch. Also, the fact that verse 33 says “they were sent off” makes it clear that Silas traveled back with Judas to Jerusalem. Thus the attempt of some scribe to explain the apparent contradiction in Acts actually creates a contradiction. Silas may have returned on his own to Antioch some time later, or Paul could have sent for him before starting his missionary journey.

**15:39.** “sharp disagreement.” The Greek is *paroxusmos* (#3948 παροξυσμός) and it has three distinct definitions: 1. A rousing to activity, stirring up, provoking. 2. A state of irritation expressed in argument, sharp disagreement. 3. A severe fit of a disease, attack

of fever, esp. at its high point: convulsion (BDAG). Here it means a sharp disagreement, in Hebrews 10:24 it means to stir up to action.

Barnabas was a pastor, and a Jewish Levite. His original name was Joseph, which means “He will add,” but the apostles, recognized his pastoral ministry and renamed him. Acts 4:36 says: “Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement). Although Barnabas disappears from Acts here, it does not necessarily mean he was wrong. He was a better judge of character than Paul in this case. Barnabas took John Mark and went to Cyprus (his home country) where he continued the work of the ministry. Paul later writes about Barnabas in 1 Cor. 9:6, written later than this record in Acts. As for John Mark, he later became one of Paul’s helpers (Col. 4:10), and was very dear to Paul by the end of his life (2 Tim. 4:11). Mark was also with Peter (1 Pet. 5:13), who calls him a “son.” John Mark is best known for the Gospel of Mark, which he wrote.

**16:2.** “spoken of.” The Greek is *martureo* (#3140 μαρτυρέω), to witness or testify to or about. Timothy was recommended by others, who gave a good testimony about him.

**16:4.** “decrees.” The Greek is *dogma* (#1378 δόγμα), a noun that occurs 5 times in the New Testament and means: a formal statement concerning rules or regulations that are to be observed; an imperial declaration, a decree; something that is taught as an established tenet or statement of belief, doctrine, dogma (BDAG). The English word “decree” means an order having the force of law; a religious ordinance enacted by a council. Hence, “decree” is a good translation here.

**16:6.** “by the Holy Spirit.” The Greek is *Hupo ho hagios pneuma* (ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος) with *hupo* being with a genitive (the holy), thus meaning “by.” Paul was forbidden by “the Holy Spirit” (i.e., by God) or “by way of the holy spirit,” referring to the gift of holy spirit. The verse can mean either one. In the first century, before the doctrine of the Trinity confused Christian doctrine by making “the Holy Spirit” a separate person from God in the Trinity, the distinction between the Holy Spirit and the holy spirit was not often as critical, and in many cases, as here, it actually served to leave the meaning someone ambiguous. God, the Holy Spirit, directs by the holy spirit, and we are directed from the holy spirit because of God or the Lord Jesus.

**16:7.** “the Spirit of Jesus.”

**16:10.** “we.” Here the narrative of Acts changes pronoun usage from “he” (i.e., Paul), “him,” and “they” (Paul and those traveling with him) to “we” and “us.” Luke, the author of both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, joins Paul, and begins to write Acts in the first person plural, “we.” There are three “we” sections in Acts where Luke traveled with Paul; Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; and 27:1-28:16. The first time Luke traveled with Paul is Acts 16:10-17, during Paul’s second missionary journey (Acts 15:40-18:22). Luke joined Paul at Troas (Acts 16:10) and left him sometime at Philippi, the last “we” being Acts 16:17. For reasons unstated in the text, Luke was not arrested and imprisoned with Paul and Silas, and where he went after Philippi is not known. He might have stayed close to Philippi, because the next “we” section is Acts 20:5-21:18. Luke rejoined Paul in the middle of his third missionary journey when Paul came back to Philippi (Acts 20:6), and traveled with him back to Jerusalem, stopping at many cities. Luke is no longer recorded as being with Paul in Jerusalem after they met with James (Acts 21:18). Shortly after the meeting with James, Paul was arrested in the Temple in Jerusalem, and sent to Caesarea, where he spent two years in jail. Although Luke is not recorded as being there,

it is likely that Luke stayed close by, sending Paul extra food and clothing, and tending to any needs he might have, because as soon as Paul was sent to Rome, Luke rejoined him (Acts 27:1). Luke traveled with Paul to Rome, and the last “we” is 28:16, showing Paul and Luke entering Rome together. The book of Acts does not specifically say what happened to Luke, but the evidence seems to favor that Luke lived with Paul in the house they rented in Rome. It was certainly big enough to accept many guests, and when Paul wrote Colossians from this time in Rome, he sent greetings from Luke (Col. 4:14).

**16:11.** “So.” The Western Text (see Stephen’s text) replaces the *de* (but, now, so, and) with *oun* (therefore). Later scribes changed the text in an obvious attempt to make Paul look better (cp. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*). There is no necessary immediacy in *de*, but there is much more so in *oun*. That is not to say that *de* cannot happen immediately, or on the basis of verse 11, but it is not demanded by the word, whereas *oun* directly connects verses 10 and 11. This change is relatively small, but changing Scripture to make our heroes look better is bad business. Besides, as we stated earlier, the “so” does not preclude Paul’s immediate attention to the task at hand.

“ran a straight course.” Paul would have been in a sailing ship, not one driven by oars, and it is common in sailing to speak of “running before the wind.”

**16:12.** Neapolis. Neapolis (*neos* = new; *polis* = city; “New City”) A port city of the Roman province of Macedonia (before the Roman conquest it had been a Greek city of Thrace) on the western side of the Aegean Sea. It is about 10 miles southeast of Philippi. Neapolis has the honor of being the first city in Europe ever reached by the Apostle Paul. Besides being a port city, it was on the Egnation Way, which was one of the major roads of the Roman Empire. The Appian Way (“Way” = Road) and the Egnation Way were land and sea roads/routes. These two major routes together formed the Great East Road, which connected the Roman Empire and the Middle East. The Appian Way began in Rome at the *miliarium aureum*, i.e., the “Golden Milestone” (many major Roman roads were marked by milestones, allowing travelers to tell how far they had traveled or how far they had to travel). From the Golden Milestone it went south along the Italian coast, eventually cutting east across the Italian peninsula to Brundisium. East bound travelers then had to decide to cross the Adriatic Sea to either to Dyrrhachium or Apollonia, cities in Macedonia (northern Greece), both of which were on branches of the Egnation Way. From the coast, the Egnation Way crossed the Balkan Mountains to Thessalonica. From Thessalonica there were two routes heading east that travelers could take. They could go east through Macedonia into Thrace and to the straight of the Bosphorus, or they could go south, hugging the Grecian coastline and heading down into Achaia, and then travel east to the Roman province of Asia and the rest of what is now Turkey. The Appian Way was started in 312 B.C. by the Roman Caesar Claudius, who thought it would help Rome to establish trade with the Mediterranean cultures, and knew a paved, well-maintained road made it easier for people and goods (and armies) to travel through the empire. The Appian Way and Egnation Way took generations to build, but provided easy and usually safe east-west travel by the time of the apostle Paul.

**16:13.** “habitually used for prayer” (International Commentary, *Acts*, F.F. Bruce). The word “*nomizo*” relates to law, custom, habit. We translate it “assume” many times in our version because people make assumptions based on what is done by law or custom. However, in this case, Paul did not “assume” there was prayer by the riverside. He would

have asked in Philippi, and been told that prayer was made “by custom” at the riverside, thus the translation “habitually.”

**16:14.** “one who was a worshipper of God.” See note on Acts 13:43.

“whose heart the Lord opened.” The Lord Jesus cannot make someone believe, but he can work, in the person or through the circumstances, to open people to pay attention to the message of the Word. The Bible does not say specifically how he did that with Lydia to the end that she paid attention to Paul, but he did. Part of our prayers for “everyone” (1 Tim. 2:1) should be that the Lord opens their hearts to pay attention to the things of God, and then go on from that point to salvation and living the Christian life.

“pay attention to.” The Greek is *prosecho* (#4337 προσέχω), and according to BDAG, has three basic definitions: 1) to be in a state of alert, i.e., be concerned about, care for, take care; 2) to pay close attention to something, i.e., pay attention to, give heed to, follow; 3) to continue in close attention to something, i.e., occupy oneself with, devote or apply oneself to. As with any word with multiple meanings, the meaning in any given verse must be determined by the context and the scope of the subject. Since we know that the Lord always honors a person’s free will, he cannot open a person’s heart to “respond” to the message, as some versions translate the verse, instead, he must wait for the person to believe. However, many theologians (Calvinists, etc.) teach that a person cannot believe in God unless God first gives them the power to believe, and so according to that theology, “respond” would be an accurate translation of *prosecho* here, although we assert that kind of Calvinist theology is in error.

**16:16.** “slave-girl.” The Greek word can mean a servant-girl or a slave-girl. The context determines which is more likely. Here, the woman was owned, so slave-girl is correct.

“spirit of divination.” The Greek reads *pneuma puthoma*, “spirit of python.” The python spirit was the spirit that was reputed to possess the oracle of Delphi, the most famous oracle in ancient Greece. According to legend, a serpent, Python, lived in Phocis, a district of ancient Greece. Python was killed by Apollo, whose followers built a city and Temple to honor Apollo on the southern side of a limestone mountain called Parnassus. The city was called Pytho at first, and Delphi later. A natural cave in the mountain, called Pythium, was part of the Temple. Over the roof of the cave was placed a tripod throne, on which the priestess of Delphi sat. A hole in the roof of the cave and beneath the tripod supposedly brought the breath of Apollo up to the priestess, who then spoke at the inspiration of Apollo (hence the saying, *ex tripode*, used of obscure sentences spoken dogmatically). When the demon took control of the priestess, “Her face changed color, a shudder ran through her limbs, and her mouth. This excitement soon turned to fury. Her eyes sparkled, her mouth foamed, her hair stood on end, and almost suffocated by the ascending vapor, the priests were obliged to retain the priestess on her seat by force; then she began, with dreadful howlings, to pour forth detached words, which the priests collected with care, arranged them, and delivered them in writing to the inquirer... [The oracle} enjoyed the reputation of infallibility for a long time;...” (Encyclopedia Americana, 1947, p. 626, 627). The designation “python spirit” was later used of anyone who revealed the future, then it eventually degenerated to refer to ventriloquists as well. This slave girl had a python spirit, and was delivered of it.

**16:19.** “had gone out.” The owners of the slave girl were not Christian, but they clearly understood that their slave had the power she had because of an indwelling demon. They were very angry when Paul commanded it to leave in the name of Jesus. This is a good

example of how ignorance and greed can be very hurtful to people. The owners did not care about the woman, and actually probably thought that the demon was a blessing of some sort, bringing her notoriety.

“agora.” The word agora is an interesting one to translate because it was the name of a specific part of the Greek and Roman cities (the Latin word is *forum* which is related to the word *foris*, meaning “outside” and from which we get our English “forum”). In the Gospels, the character of the “agora” was typically oriental, and corresponded to the oriental (Semetic) marketplace, the bazaar, where there are rows upon rows of shops, all crowded together, or else streets lined with shops. Thus “marketplace” is a good translation of “agora” in the Gospels. However, the Greco-Roman agora was completely different. The agora was the center of town and public life. It was an open area surrounded by shops. In larger towns it could be an acre or more in size. The open area usually had an altar (for divining the will of the gods by sacrificing an animal and looking at its liver, or some other similar ritual), statues of the gods or prominent people, a judgment seat or place for a tribunal (which is why the people dragged Paul there to be judged; Acts 16:19). Like our “malls” today, it was more than a place to shop. It was a place to meet people, hang out, get the news, see what the local government was doing, eat, and, of course, shop. Translating “agora” as “marketplace” in Acts does not accurately communicate the meaning of the word, because it gives a wrong impression. It is better to learn what the Greco-Roman agora is. One final note: although it is true that Herod the Great did try to model some Jewish cities, after Roman cities and build agoras in them, those cities were few, and the nature of the Jewish religion, being against pagan sacrifice, divining, and statues, made the Jewish agoras more like the oriental marketplaces than the agoras in Greek and Roman cities. In the REV there are a number of verses in which *agora* is translated as “marketplace,” reflecting the oriental marketplace or bazaar of the typically eastern city (Matt. 11:16; 20:3; 23:7; Mark 6:56; 7:4; 12:38; Luke 7:32; 11:43; 20:46), and verses in which agora was left untranslated, reflecting the Greek agora or Roman forum which was in those cities (Acts 16:19; 17:17; and Acts 17:5, which mentions the *agoraios*, those who loiter at the agora. (For more: *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*; *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; *Holman Bible Dictionary*).

**16:30.** “what must I do to be saved?” In the Greek this is a purpose-result clause with *hina* and the subjunctive mood. See Matt. 2:15 entry, “resulting in...what was spoken being fulfilled.” The man was asking, what must I do for the *purpose* of getting saved, which *results* my salvation. There is both the sense of purpose and result in the jailor’s question.

**17:1.** “Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia.” Both cities were on the Egnation Way, the great Roman road that connected Rome with the Eastern Empire, but the reason Paul did not stop to evangelize there is clear from the last half of the verse and the first part of Acts 17:2. Apparently, neither city had a synagogue. Paul’s custom was to go into synagogues in cities he visited, because that is where he could be most immediately effective. He had a common background with the Jewish people; the God fearing Greeks who were there would have already been looking to the Law for truth, and his credentials of being from Jerusalem and even being trained by the well-known and greatly respected Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) would have given him some credibility.

**17:3.** Paul worked hard to get the people in the places he visited saved; born again. Acts 17:3 records him teaching in the synagogue in Thessalonica, and his message contains both elements of what it takes to be saved according to Romans 10:9, that Christ is Lord and that God raised Jesus from the dead. That Jesus was lord is not explicitly stated in the verse because it did not need to be in the context of a first-century synagogue. The first century Jews to whom Paul was speaking knew very well from many verses in the Old Testament that the Messiah (the Christ) would be “lord” and would rule over God’s creation (cp. Ps. 2:7-12; 110:1; Isa. 9:6-8; 11:1-5; Dan. 7:13, 14; Micah 5:2-5). What they needed to know was that the man named Jesus was in fact their Messiah, that the Messiah had to suffer and die (many Jews did not know this about the Messiah; cp. Matt. 16:22; John 12:34) and that God had raised Jesus from the dead. Paul specifically taught all those things.

“that they know you,” not “that they may know you” see Lenski and Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 992.

“out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among the dead.”

**17:4.** “God fearing.” See note on Acts 13:43.

“Prominent women.” Women may not have had a outwardly prominent place, such as a seat in the senate, but as always, they had great influence. Not unexpectedly, some scribes had a problem with that and altered the text to “wives of prominent men.” (Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*). The alteration is easily dismissed, but it shows that there has been a bias against women in the Church.

“not a few.” Figure of speech; *Tapeinosis* (demeaning, or understatement). The number of prominent women who believed Paul is understated to magnify it.

**17:5.** “those who loitered at the agora.” The Greek is *agoraios* (#60 ἀγοραῖος), and means those who stood idle at the market, those fellows who have nothing to do but to hang around waiting for daily work, or to cause trouble. For a study of the Agora see note on Acts 16:19.

**17:6.** “dragged.” The Greek word is *surō* (#4951 σύρω), and means to “drag, drag away, pull, or draw.” The Jews fomented a mob which was angry and dangerous, and “assaulted” (“to come near with the intention of harm; attack” BDAG) the house of Jason. When they could not find Paul, they grabbed the disciples they could find and dragged them to the agora (where the Jews got the rabble in the first place) before the rulers. There is every indication the “dragging” was literal. Although we today use “drag” as a hyperbole to indicate we did not want to go (“I got dragged to the mall by my sister”), there is no indication that it was used that way in the first century, especially in this context.

**17:7** “decrees.” The Greek is *dogma* (#1378 δόγμα), see note on Acts 16:4.

**17:9.** “had taken money as a security.” Literally, the words mean “had taken enough.” The Greek word *ikanos* (#2425 ἰκανός; pronounced *hī-ka-nos*) means “enough, sufficient, adequate, considerable,” but the phrase, λαβόντες τὸ ἰκανόν, is an idiom in the Greek, and referred to the sufficient amount of money that had to be given for a bond, bail, or security. Idioms in any language do not usually make good sense when translated literally, so it is the meaning of the idiom in the original language must be translated into the receptor language.

In this instance, the Jews had incited a mob against Paul and his companions, who could not be found at the time, so the mob brought Jason to the rulers. Especially since Thessalonica was the largest city in Macedonia and the Roman capital of the province, the rulers did not want any trouble with Rome, especially when Paul was, according to the speakers of the mob, promoting that there was another king besides Caesar, one Jesus. The rulers of the city took a large sum of money from Jason to assure (or secure) that nothing would happen, which meant that Paul's activities in the city would have to stop. This put both Paul and Jason in a bind, because if Paul did defy the rulers and continue to preach, Jason would lose a sizeable amount of money. Paul had to leave Thessalonica at night to protect both himself and Jason (Acts 17:10), and it may also explain why Paul wrote that he was "orphaned" from the Thessalonian believers, as if he had been forcibly torn from them (1 Thess. 2:17 and 18). The literal meaning of *aporphanizo* (#642 ἀπορφανίζω) in 1 Thessalonians 2:17 is to be separated by becoming an orphan.

**17:17.** "God fearing." See note on Acts 13:43.

**17:18.** "foreign divinities." The word for "divinities" is *daimonion* (#1140 δαιμόνιον), which for the New Testament authors meant demons. However, here it must be understood from the viewpoint of the Athenians, who would not have used the term to refer to demonic forces but standard divinities (Lenski; cp. *Barnes' Notes*). "This is the only place in the NT where *daimonia* has the neutral Greek sense 'divine beings' rather than the normal NT sense of 'evil spirits'" (*Oxford Bible Commentary*). The Athenians were so lost in polytheism that they assumed Paul was just preaching about another set of gods.

"Jesus and the resurrection." It is likely that the Athenians thought "the Resurrection" was a foreign god (*IVP Bible Background Commentary*; Lenski; *Barnes' Notes*). The Greek word *anastasis* (#386 ἀνάστασις) was also a female name and the Greeks were accustomed to turning concepts, such as Fate, into female gods. They had no conception of the one true God, and believed that other lands each had their own peculiar divinities. This is why they used the plural, "foreign divinities," they thought Paul was preaching two gods, Jesus and Anastasis.

**17:19.** "Are we able to learn [know]" The figure of speech, "irony." (See Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*. Sometimes irony can make a powerful impact.

**17:24.** "shrines." This is the same Greek word usually translated "sanctuary," *naos* (#3485 ναός). However, because the context deals with pagan worship, "shrine" is a better translation: the word "can be understood in the more restricted sense *shrine*, where the image of the goddess stood" (BDAG).

**17:29.** "divine nature" Acts, FF Bruce. The Greek word is an adjective.

**17:31.** "with justice." The phrasing in Greek is in the dative case; it is the preposition *en* and the word usually translated "righteousness," *dikaiousune* (#1343 δικαιοσύνη). This usage is most likely a dative of manner, meaning, God will judge the world in a manner that is righteousness, or righteously (Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*). The dative of manner is meant to answer the question, "how will God judge the world?" He will judge it justly.

"out from among the dead." See Romans 4:24. Wuest: "out from among those who are dead."

**18:5.** "wholly occupied." The word is *sunecho* (#4912 συνέχω) and in this context means "to occupy someone's attention intensely; to be occupied with or absorbed in" (BDAG). It can also mean to "impel to action; direct; or urge on." Even though Paul was working

with Aquila and Priscilla (18:3), he was nevertheless wholly absorbed with the message and preaching of the word. It seems a misunderstanding of this verb led to a textual corruption, reading “impelled by the spirit” (Cp. KJV) rather than “absorbed in the word” (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*).

**18:7.** “God fearing.” See note on Acts 13:43.

**18:22.** “And when he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church.” Verses such as this one require the reader to be familiar with the geography of the Mediterranean. Paul sailed from Ephesus, which at his time had its own harbor not far from the city, eastward to the major port city of Israel, which is Caesarea. From there “he went up and greeted the church.” Going east, and uphill from the coast, Paul would have traveled to Jerusalem, the headquarters of the Christian Church, and where some of the apostles, especially James, were located. From Jerusalem, he traveled back “down” (not “south” as in our English, for he went north but down hill) to Antioch, where he had begun his second itinerary journey a couple years earlier. Robertson gets it correctly (Word Pictures): “He went up and saluted the church (*anabas kai aspasamenos tēn ekklēsian*). The language could refer to the church in Caesarea where Paul had just landed, except for several things. The going up (*anabas*, second aorist active participle of *anabainō*) is the common way of speaking of going to Jerusalem which was up from every direction save from Hebron. It was the capital of Palestine as people in England today speaking of going up to London. Besides ‘he went down to Antioch’ (*katebē eis Antiocheian*, second aorist active indicative of *katabainō*) which language suits better leaving Jerusalem than Caesarea. Moreover, there was no special reason for this trip to Caesarea, but to Jerusalem it was different. Here Paul saluted the church in the fourth of his five visits after his conversion (9:26; 11:30; 15:4; 18:22; 21:17). The apostles may or may not have been in the city, but Paul had friends in Jerusalem now. Apparently he did not tarry long, but returned to Antioch to make a report of his second mission tour as he had done at the close of the first when he and Barnabas came back (14:26-28). He had started on this tour with Silas and had picked up Timothy and Luke, but came back alone. He had a great story to tell.”

**19:18.** “kept coming.” The Greek verb is in the imperfect tense, so “kept coming” (as the NASB) is better than just “came” particularly in this context. Those who had believed kept coming forward, little by little, confessing their deeds. Some had the courage to come forth immediately, others did as they saw other believers go before them. This is the value of public confession and repentance: there are some who draw their courage to go forward from seeing others go forward first.

**19:24.** “shrines.” See entry on Acts 17:24.

**20:5.** “we.” This verse starts the second “we” section of Acts, when Luke joins Paul on his travels. The three “we” sections are: Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; and 27:1-28:16. See note on Acts 16:10.

**20:12.** “Not a little comforted.” This is the figure of speech *tapeinosis*, or demeaning. It is the deliberate demeaning, or lessening of something in order to elevate or increase it. It often comes in the form of an understatement. We are aware that sometimes the most powerful way to emphasize something is to understate it. “Not a little comforted?!” The believers probably threw quite a party. The understatement in the text causes the reader to add emphasis that is greater than a plain statement of fact could provide. Thus Versions such as the NIV and NASB, which just say, “were greatly comforted,” not only eliminate

the beautiful figure *tapeinosis*, but eliminate the emotion that the reader adds to the biblical text.

**20:28.** “The blood of his own” refers to the blood of his own son, Jesus. See *One God and One Lord*.

**20:32.** “have been sanctified.” The Greek is *hagiazo* (#37 ἁγιάζω), “to be sanctified,” but it is a perfect tense participle in the passive voice. The Christian is sanctified the moment he becomes born again, by the presence of the holy spirit. Most commentators do not understand it, and have “are” sanctified, but this verse refers to the one time event in the life of the believer when he or she gets saved. Interestingly, Lenski realizes this is referring to a one time event in the past, so he has it refer to the dead Christian being in heaven.

**20:35.** “the words of our Lord Jesus.” This quotation, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” is not recorded in the gospels. It is what is known as an *agrapha* (*a*—not, *graphie*—writing). It is clear that the Lord spoke much more than what is recorded in the gospels; for the totality of Jesus’ speech can be read aloud in just several hours. John was clear that not everything about Jesus’ life is recorded in scripture (John 21:25). People would have remembered other things that he taught and preserved them as well.

The actual quotation itself is the figure of speech *chreia*, a quotation that gives the author’s name (cp. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*).

**21:19.** “related.” See note on “related” in Luke 24:35.

**21:28.** “Place.” The word “place” was a designation of the Temple, see note on *topos* at Matt. 24:15.

**21:39.** “no insignificant city.” Paul could have said that Tarsus was a “great” city, or an “important” city, but perhaps the Roman officer would have argued with him (national prejudices can run deep). This is the figure of speech, *tapeinosis*, or demeaning. It is the deliberate demeaning, or lessening of something in order to elevate or increase it. It often comes in the form of an understatement. We are aware that sometimes the most powerful way to emphasize something is to understate it. By understating the fact, and saying that Tarsus was “no insignificant city,” the Roman could hardly argue the point, and still got the message that Paul was therefore traveled and educated.

**22:12.** “deeply religious.” The Greek is *eulabes* (#2126 εὐλαβής); see note on “godly man” in Acts 10:2.

**22:17.** “state of suspended consciousness.” See note on Acts 10:10.

**22:22.** “for he should not have even been allowed to live this long.” A Greek idiom for an obligation that has existed from the past and is still unfulfilled at the present. Cp. Robertson, *Word Pictures*; Lenski. The Jews are so offended that they are saying that he should have already been executed for his beliefs and actions.

**23:5.** Quoted from Exod. 22:28.

**23:12.** “bound themselves under a curse.” The curse was that they would not eat or drink until they killed Paul. They had an out, of course. The Rabbis could dissolve the curse, and we can be sure that none of these men starved to death.

**23:31.** “Antipatris.” A city about 40 miles northwest of Jerusalem, and about 25 miles from Caesarea. This is the only place this city is mentioned in the New Testament. It was built, or built up, by Herod the Great in 9 BC., and named after his father, Antipater. It had been the OT site of Aphek (Josh. 12:1; 1 Sam. 4:1; 29:1; 1 Kings 20:26ff; 2 Kings 13:17; etc.).

**24:4.** “clemency.” Greek is *epieikeia*, (#1932), “consideration springing from a recognition of the danger that ever lurks upon the assertion of legal rights lest they be pushed to immoral limits. The virtue that rectifies and redresses the severity of a sentence” (Zodhiates, *Word Study Dictionary*). See note on “reasonable,” 1 Tim. 3:3. “Clemency” is a disposition to be merciful, and especially to moderate the harshness of judgement. It falls within the semantic range of *epieikeia*, and given the governmental context, is a good translation.

**24:6b-8a.** Most modern versions leave this out, recognizing from the textual evidence that is almost certainly a later addition (see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*; Lenski; Kistemaker). If left in, this addition changes “from whom” Felix would learn, it makes Felix learn about Paul by examining the Jews who accused him.

**24:15.** Although the resurrection of the Just and Unjust is separated by 1,000 years (Cp. Revelation 20:4-13), this verse mentions them both without paying attention to the time separation.

**26:23.** “first.” There is some controversy as to whether the word “first” goes with rising from the dead (REV, ESV, NIV, etc) or proclaiming the light (NASB). The natural word order in the Greek tends to make first go with resurrection from the dead, which is certainly the case: Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead. The verse becomes somewhat more ambiguous if “first” goes with “proclaim.” Being raised is not a prerequisite for proclaiming truth, and there were others before him who proclaimed truth.

“the people.” A term the Jews used of themselves. In the Jewish mindset, there were “the people” (the Jews) and everyone else, “the Gentiles.”

**27:1.** “we.” This verse starts the third and last “we” section of Acts, when Luke joins Paul on his travels. The three “we” sections are: Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; and 27:2-28:16. See note on Acts 16:10.

**27:14.** “northeaster.” The Greek is *eurakulon* (Εὐρακύλων), which is a hybrid sailor’s word from the Greek *euros*, east wind, and the Latin *aquilo*, north wind. Gales from the NE are not uncommon in the Mediterranean.

**28:4.** “Justice *herself*.” Cp. NET translation, “Justice herself has not allowed him to live!” Justice comes from the Greek *dike* (#1349 δίκη), which BDAG defines in this verse as “*Justice* personified as a deity.” The pagans conceived of Justice as a female deity who ensured that proper punishment was given to criminals: “A goddess who personifies justice in seeking out and punishing the guilty—‘the goddess Justice.’ ... Although a number of modern English translations have rendered δίκη (*dike*) “justice,” preferring to use an abstraction, in the original setting it is almost certainly a reference to a pagan deity” (NET Translation Note, Acts 28:4). Thus we have added “herself” in italics to make clear that a personified deity was intended.

**28:26, 27.** Quoted from Isaiah 6:9, 10.

**28:27.** “grown dull.” The Greek is *pachuno* (#3975 παχύνω), and means “to make thick, to make fat, to fatten, and it is used metaphorically for making someone stupid or dull.

