

Acts 1:1

THE ARGUMENT

This book hath been held by all Christians to be canonical, and esteemed, though amongst the hardest, yet amongst the brightest jewels that shine in the word of God. It is a history concerning the church of Christ in its infancy, and shows God's wonderful care for it, and powerful providence over it. It begins where the Gospel ends, which the same author (St. Luke) had wrote; and is of great use to prevent and confute all feigned stories concerning the lives and doctrine of the holy apostles. St. Luke having accompanied St. Paul, and having been an eye witness, and an ear witness, was certainly the fittest to record what that great apostle did and said; and if most of this book be taken up concerning him, it is because (speaking of the rest of the apostles, 1Co 15:10) he *laboured more than they all*. In this book there is an account of many sermons, preached by the apostles and apostolical men, upon the most necessary parts of our holy religion, as the death, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed Saviour; of God's mercy through him, and of the life to come, &c.; and withal, how holy men lived answerably to their profession and hope. Who, when we read these things, seem to speak unto us, and tell us, (what they say was inscribed upon the statue of some deified hero), *Si feceritis sicut nos, eritis sicut nos*; If ye shall do as we have done, and suffer as we have suffered, then ye shall be (glorious and happy) as we are.

Chapter Summary

Ac 21:1-9 Christ, after his resurrection, having given instructions to his apostles, and commanded them to wait in Jerusalem the coming of the Holy Ghost, ascendeth into heaven in their sight.

Ac 21:10,11 Two angels warn them to depart, and to look for his second coming.

Ac 21:12-14 They return, and give themselves unto prayer.

Ac 21:15-26 Peter exhorting to fill up the place of the traitor Judas, Matthias is chosen by lot to be an apostle.

Ver. 1. *The former treatise have I made;* this refers unto the Gospel wrote

by this evangelist, St. Luke, who was undoubtedly the penman of this book, which bears testimony unto and confirms (if need were) that other.

Theophilus; esteemed the same name with Jedidiah, signifying beloved of God, or one that loved God. Who he was is not certain; some have taken the name appellatively. It is evident by the epithet given unto him, Lu 1:3, that he was one of great authority, having the same title which Tertullus gives unto Festus, Ac 24:3, and the chief captain unto Felix, Ac 23:26. Although *not many noble are called*, 1Co 1:26, yet God extends his grace unto some of all conditions.

Of all that Jesus began both to do and teach; this is the sum of the Gospel, viz. a history of the life, doctrine, and death of our blessed Saviour; although every particular word or deed of our Saviour's could not be expressed, Joh 21:25, yet the evangelist was faithful in withholding nothing which was necessary for the church to know, and leaving no room for unwritten traditions.

Acts 1:2

Ver. 2. *The day in which he was taken up*; that is, the day of his ascension. This is a translation from the former book (his Gospel) unto this, showing how far he had proceeded in setting down the doctrine of our salvation.

After that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen; which words may be referred, either to the commandments he gave, or the choice he made of the apostles; both being by the Holy Ghost. The apostles had their doctrine from God, and were appointed to publish it by God; especially to publish the gospel to the whole world, Mt 28:19; and to continue at Jerusalem till the coming of the Holy Ghost, Lu 24:49.

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Ver. 3. *To whom*, i.e. the apostles, *he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs*; eating, drinking, speaking, walking with them; nay, showing them his very wounds, and permitting them to be

touched; God suffering Thomas's infidelity to contribute to the strengthening of our faith.

Being seen of them forty days; not continually, but upon occasion as he pleased; it was so long from his resurrection to his ascension; and the same space in which God showed himself unto Moses in Mount Sinai. So long also he was pleased to stay with them, that he might more abundantly testify the truth of his humanity, and of his resurrection.

And speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; either his kingdom in heaven, the church triumphant or his kingdom on earth, the church militant; what future bliss and happiness he was going to prepare, and what means they ought to use towards the obtaining of it.

Acts 1:4

Ver. 4. *And being assembled together with them;* by his order, or conversing frequently with them, as those that table together.

Commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem: otherwise the apostles would have abhorred Jerusalem, as reeking afresh in the blood of our Lord. And there Christ chose to pour out his Spirit, that he might show forth his glory in the same place where he suffered ignominy: there Christ would have his apostles to abide, that they might be closer to Mount Olivet, from whence he was to ascend; as also that both his ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, might more publicly be manifest; and that that prophecy, Isa 2:3, might be fulfilled.

The promise of the Father; of my Father, Lu 24:49; that is, the Holy Spirit, promised by our Saviour in his Father's name, Joh 14:26; and may well be called *the promise*, without which all other promises would be of no value unto us.

Acts 1:5

Ver. 5. *For John truly baptized with water,* Mt 3:11; water being of a purifying nature, plentiful, and easy to come by.

But ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; his gifts and graces, which were (as water on baptized persons) largely bestowed upon them on the day of Pentecost:

1. That the apostles and all others might be assured of the doctrine of the Gospel.
2. That they might be enabled to fulfil their ministry, and obey our Saviour's commands left with them. Not many days hence; it was but ten days after his ascension; but our Saviour would not prefix a certain day, that they might watch every day.

Acts 1:6

Ver. 6. *When they therefore were come together; either the one hundred and twenty, mentioned Ac 1:15, or the five hundred, mentioned 1Co 15:6.*

That they might more readily obtain an answer, they join in the question, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* Which was taken away by the Romans, and by Herod, and they expected should be restored to them by the Messiah; understanding the prophecy, Da 7:27, to this purpose.

Acts 1:7

Ver. 7. Our Saviour blames their curiosity about such things as are not necessary to be known; and yet though our Saviour does not in his answer tell them what they desired to know, he tells them what is more expedient for them to know. The petition of wicked men, nay, of devils, (as when they crave to go into the swine), is sometimes granted according to their will. But the prayer of the disciples of Christ is answered to their best advantage, though it does not seem to agree to the matter of their desire.

It is not for you to know the times or the seasons; how long any mercy shall be deferred; when it shall be given.

The Father; who is fons et origo Deitatis; to whom Christ, especially as Mediator, and in our stead, refers all things.

Acts 1:8

Ver. 8. *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; not till then, not of their own strength, but of God's grace, as appeared by Peter's denying and the others leaving of our Saviour.*

And ye shall be witnesses unto me, that I am indeed the promised Messiah; and of my doctrine, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, which ye shall testify to all the world by your preaching and holy living, working miracles.

Both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria; places where your testimony shall be most opposed. These words are both a command, to tell the apostles what they ought to do, and a prediction of what they should be enabled to do.

Acts 1:9

Ver. 9. Mr 16:19 Lu 24:51. *As he did not actually give up his life till all was fulfilled, so he did not leave the world till all was revealed by him that was necessary for us.*

While they beheld; that they might be eye witnesses, and most unexceptionable.

He was taken up; not by an external help of angels, but by his own power, and the agility of his now glorious body.

And a cloud received him out of their sight: this, though a true cloud, yet was a more than ordinarily glorious one, suitable to the majesty of him that used it.

Acts 1:10

Ver. 10. Christ's ascent was the more leisurely, that he might delight their eyes and mind; but especially confirm their faith the more.

Behold, two men stood by them, angels in the shape of men, in white apparel; which angels ordinarily appeared in, to show they retained their native purity, as also to represent the joyfulness of the errand they were usually sent upon.

Acts 1:11

Ver. 11. *Which also said;* the two angels (in the form of men) before mentioned.

Ye men of Galilee; that is, the apostles, who were of that country.

Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? They are roused out of the ecstasy they were in at that glorious sight, to learn what was so much to their and our advantage. Shall so come:

1. Visibly.
2. In a cloud.
3. By his own power.
4. With the like majesty.
5. With the same soul and body.

Acts 1:12

Ver. 12. *From the mount called Olivet,* which Bethany was a part of, as situate towards the bottom of it, remoter from Jerusalem. Hence Lu 24:50, differs not from this place. From hence the rather our Lord ascended, that he might receive his glory nigh the place where he began his suffering, (in the garden where he endured his agony, and was betrayed), and in the view of Jerusalem, where he had been condemned and scorned.

A sabbath day's journey; about a mile or two, or such a space as, by

God's appointment, was between the ark and the people, Jos 3:4.

Acts 1:13

Ver. 13. *And when they were come in, to the city, and to the house, they went up into an upper room;* the same probably where they had kept the passover, and partook of the Lord's supper; howsoever, for its largeness capable to receive so many.

Peter, as elder, and first called to the apostleship, is generally first named; and here especially his name is put first, and their names are repeated, to show, that though they fell in forsaking of Christ, they did rise again in professing of him; and that, notwithstanding their apostasy, they were continued after their recovery in their former office and dignity.

Acts 1:14

Ver. 14. *These all continued with one accord,* with great resolution, notwithstanding all opposition and contradiction they met with, *in prayer and supplication,* for mercies they wanted, or preventing of the evils they feared.

The women; their wives, or such women especially as we read of Mt 27:55,56.

His brethren; that is, his relations and kinsmen, which frequently in Scripture are called brethren.

Acts 1:15

Ver. 15. *In those days,* between our Saviour's ascension and Pentecost.

Peter, as generally, spake for and amongst the apostles; but now especially, to express his zeal and faithfulness to our Saviour, whom he had so lately denied, he being also designed the minister of the circumcision, which place he began now to execute.

The number of the names, or persons, together were about an hundred and twenty; probably Christ had converted many men, but these might be either men of name or quality, or meant of such as, Ac 1:21, had accompanied with Christ and his apostles, and were designed for the ministry.

Acts 1:16

Ver. 16. *Men and brethren,* an ordinary compellation; speaker and auditors were Hebrews of the Hebrews.

This Scripture, viz. Ps 41:9, must need, have been fulfilled; yet God's foreknowledge and prediction excused not Judas's sin.

Which was guide to them that took Jesus; not only leading them in the way when they took our Saviour, but being director of their counsels against him. This the apostle premises to abate the offence that the horrible fall of Judas might have occasioned.

Acts 1:17

Ver. 17. *Numbered with us;* being one of the twelve apostles.

Had obtained, ελαχε; not as if Judas was made an apostle by lot, as Matthias afterwards; but by the providence of God, by which every lot and casual matter is governed: and to show that the dignity did not befall him, or any of the other apostles, because of their descent, (from Aaron), or from nature, or from any desert whatsoever, but merely from God's good will and pleasure.

Part of this ministry; then the apostles office is ministerial, and they were not lords over God's heritage.

Acts 1:18

Ver. 18. *Purchased a field;* which Judas might have agreed for at that price, and yet the chief priests bought, (as Mt 27:7), by a strange providence, leading of them to that purchase; howsoever, eventually he bought it, as throwing back to them their money which paid for it, Mt 27:5.

Falling headlong, he burst asunder; it is said he hanged himself, which implying only his death by suffocation, whether he died out of horror of his fact, or laying violent hands on himself in such circumstances as may agree with this relation, it is not material to determine.

Acts 1:19

Ver. 19. *Their proper tongue;* the Syriac language then in use after the Babylonish captivity.

The field of blood; as bought with the price of Christ's blood, and sprinkled with his own blood.

Acts 1:20

Ver. 20. *For it is written in the book of Psalms;* viz. Ps 69:25. What there is in general spoken by David concerning his enemies, is here applied particularly to Judas, who betrayed our Saviour; whose type David was, as Doeg was of Judas.

His bishopric; his charge or office, or prefecture, as of a shepherd over his flock.

Acts 1:21

Ver. 21. There were to be twelve apostles in the Christian church, to answer unto the twelve patriarchs and twelve tribes in the Jewish church.

Companied with us, in ordinary conversation, *Went in and out among us;* in discharge of his ministry, and gathering of disciples among us.

Acts 1:22

Ver. 22. *Beginning from the baptism of John;* when Christ was baptized by him, and by that consecration began the ministry, and publishing of the gospel (which the history of his immaculate conception did preface to).

A witness with us of his resurrection; all other things being consummated in that, it being the most difficult to be believed; and therefore God was pleased to attest it by so many eye witnesses.

Acts 1:23

Ver. 23. *Joseph,* or *Joses,* the same name called *Barsabas* in their common tongue, and *Justus* (probably for his integrity) amongst the Romans, who then ruled over them. *Matthias;* some think the same with Nathanael.

Acts 1:24

Ver. 24. The other apostles being chosen by God immediately, it was necessary that he who was to act in the same office, should be chosen after the same manner.

Knowest the heart, which is God's prerogative only; all others may be, and often are, mistaken by outward appearances.

Acts 1:25

Ver. 25. *Ministry and apostleship,* κληρον, or every one's station in the world, is ordered by the providence of God, and their part or portion is assigned to them; and so the apostleship was unto the apostles.

His own place; hell, or destruction, not intended by Judas, but righteously by God appointed for him: whilst he was in the world (especially after his betraying of our Saviour) he was a usurper in it; and as bad as the world

was, it was too good for him. That these words should be understood of Matthias's succeeding to the apostleship of Judas as into his own place, is the less probable, because as yet he was not chosen into it.

Acts 1:26

Ver. 26. *They gave forth their lots;* the manner is not so certain, nor necessary to be known; but the whole disposing of the lot being from the Lord, as Pr 16:33, they were thus as it were immediately chosen by God, and were consecrated by Christ himself; no apostle ordaining another, but all of them being called and ordained by Christ.

He was numbered with the eleven apostles; the rest of the apostles, and the whole church, agreeing with that Divine choice which was made.

Acts 2:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 2:1-13 The descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost: they speak divers languages, to the general amazement, but some deride them.

Ac 2:14-36 Peter shows that the inspiration spoken of by Joel was now fulfilled; that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was now risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, according to David's predictions, and had shed forth the promise of the Holy Spirit in full proof of his being the Messiah.

Ac 2:37-40 A great number are converted by Peter's preaching,

Ac 2:41-47 who, being baptized, converse devoutly and charitably

together, the apostles working many miracles, and God daily increasing the church.

Ver. 1. Pentecost; this feast was fifty days after the feast of unleavened bread, or passover, as Le 23:16, whence it had its name, and was called *the feast of weeks*, Ex 34:22, because it was to be observed seven weeks after the feast of unleavened bread, De 16:9. It was the feast of *the first fruit of wheat harvest*, Ex 34:22; and on this day (to answer the type) the Spirit was poured out in such a plentiful manner, as the first fruits of Christ's ascending into heaven: besides, the law was given on this day, Ex 19:1,11, and it was expedient that the gospel (Christ's law) should be published on the same day: and it being on the first day of the week, it did recommend and honour the Lord's day, as our Saviour had before by his resurrection on that day.

With one accord; as if they had but one mind, as sent in so many bodies.

In one place; probably that mentioned Ac 1:13.

Acts 2:2

Ver. 2. Suddenly, the apostles themselves not expecting it, *there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind;* to prepare them to attend the more unto what they should hear and see afterwards; also to signify the unexpected and powerful progress which the gospel should have: it may be, to cause the greater concourse to that place, it being a usual manner; and God would make this miracle more public.

It filled all the house; to show that the Spirit should be bestowed on them that were met there, and on all the church throughout the world.

Acts 2:3

Ver. 3. Cloven tongues; to signify the variety of languages which the apostles should be enabled to speak, to qualify them to preach the gospel unto all nations, and to remove the obstacle which the confusion of

tongues caused.

Like as of fire; which represented,

1. The light that the apostles should impart;
2. The fervent heat and zeal which they should be endowed with;
3. The gospel's spreading in the world, and carrying all before it, prevailing over all errors;
4. The purity and holiness which they and all that preach the gospel ought to appear withal.

And it sat upon each of them; remained, as far as was necessary for the founding of the Christian religion; and was not, as the gift of prophecy, bestowed only occasionally, as on Nathan, Samuel.

Acts 2:4

Ver. 4. *Filled with the Holy Ghost;* those gifts and graces which proceeded from him; the apostles having them all in a more excellent manner than formerly, and the gift of tongues superadded.

With other tongues, than what were vernacular or natural to them.

As the Spirit gave them utterance; ἀποφθεγγεσθαι, signifies more than barely to speak, implying they speak each language in its perfection, after an excellent, eloquent, and powerful manner, as from the Holy Ghost, whose works are perfect; *non vox hominem sonat.*

Acts 2:5

Ver. 5. Not only constant inhabitants, but such as had on occasion their lodgings there; partly out of a constant respect, which both Jews and proselytes had for that place, (for the temple and their worship sake; it being also a place for learning and education, as appears by the colleges

and synagogues mentioned, Ac 6:9), but especially now the concourse from all parts must needs have been very great, it being one of those times in which all the males were to appear before God: to which might be added, the great expectation they had of the Messiah made them to omit no occasion of inquiring concerning him, the prophecies concerning the time of his coming being fulfilled, and they could not be ignorant of the many and great things concerning the true Messiah.

Out of every nation under heaven; whither the Jews had been dispersed in the two or three greater or other lesser dispersions. Thus in part was fulfilled what was prophesied, Isa 43:5.

Acts 2:6

Ver. 6. *Noised abroad;* either the miraculous winds were heard, or the report of what had happened was spread abroad.

Were confounded; either out of shame that they had slain Christ, whom God thus extraordinarily glorified; or out of admiration at so extraordinary a matter.

Every man heard them speak in his own language; probably, not that the same words spoken by the apostles were diversified according to every one's understanding, for then the miracle had been wrought in their auditors, and not in the apostles; but that the apostles did speak to every one in their proper and most intelligible language: and this was the gift of tongues, which for some time after also was continued in the church.

Acts 2:7

Ver. 7. Without literature, or good education, they being worse thought of on that account than the ordinary sort of that nation were; besides, they thought no prophet was to be expected from Galilee, Joh 1:46.

Acts 2:8

Ver. 8. Διαλεκτος signifies commonly a different way of speaking, or pronouncing in the same language; as our southern, and northern men differ in some words and pronunciation, though speaking both the English tongue. God's works being most perfect, the apostles might speak, not only the same language which all understood, but in the same idiom and propriety of speech which agreed to every one best.

Acts 2:9

Ver. 9. *Elamites*; descended from Elam, Ge 10:22, thought to be the Persians.

Mesopotamia; between the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates.

Judea; the apostles being Galileans, spake a distinct dialect from the rest of the Jews, till now enabled to speak as they did.

Asia; some particular district, at that time especially so called, as 1Pe 1:1; otherwise the places before named are in Asia in a larger sense.

Acts 2:10

Ver. 10. *Strangers of Rome*, who came either to Jerusalem to worship, or for any other business. It is evident that many in or about the city of Rome had embraced the Jewish religion; and of them it may be understood.

Jews: the others, mentioned Ac 2:9, were such as then dwelt in Judea; these were such as lived elsewhere, only now came to worship or sojourn there.

Proselytes; these were of two sorts: the one, such as came over from paganism unto the Jewish religion, and were bound only to observe the precepts of Noah, and enjoyed a liberty to buy and sell, live and converse, amongst the Jews: hence they were called *proselytes of the gate*. The other were called *proselytes of righteousness*; for these were circumcised, and took upon them the observation of the whole law of Moses, and had all the privileges belonging to the people of God.

Acts 2:11

Ver. 11. *Cretes*; such as belonged to the island of Crete, now called Candia.

The wonderful works of God; those things which God had wonderfully wrought, especially the resurrection of our blessed Saviour from the dead, which was a most wonderful work, and the main argument whereby the world was converted, and unto which the apostles bare witness.

Acts 2:12

Ver. 12. *They were all amazed*; so Ac 2:7; ἐξίσταντο, they were as in an ecstasy, (the object was too strong for the faculty), they could not fathom the cause or reason of these wonderful things; and therefore they desire one of another to be resolved concerning them.

Acts 2:13

Ver. 13. *Others*; viz. the scribes and Pharisees, and also the inhabitants of Jewry and Jerusalem; who not understanding the languages of other nations, might think the apostles did but babble, and talk idly or rudely, when they spake with other tongues.

New wine, or sweet wine; which done, may inebriate; and might be had at that time, though the full vintage was not yet.

Acts 2:14

Ver. 14. *Peter standing up*; it speaks his extraordinary courage; after his stumbling and fall, he runs the faster, being recovered; and begins to verify his name which our Lord had given him, showing himself as firm and stedfast as a rock.

With the eleven; the other apostles, probably, spake too in divers languages; but by reason of the shortness of St. Luke's intended narrative, and it being to the same purpose, their sermons are omitted.

Men of Judea; such as came from other parts of the country.

Ye that dwell at Jerusalem; such as were constant inhabitants in that city.

Acts 2:15

Ver. 15. *For these;* this proves that the other apostles spake as well as Peter, and were vindicated by him.

Are not drunken; he mildly and solidly confutes their calumny.

The third hour of the day, which answers to our nine o'clock in the morning, and was the ordinary time for their morning sacrifice and prayer, before which time they did not eat or drink any thing; nay, it is thought on festival days it was usual with them not to eat or drink until the sixth hour, that is, noon time, that they might be more intent upon and fit for the service of the day. How little soever (to our shame) such an argument would be of proof now, it was in their more sober times very conclusive.

Acts 2:16

Ver. 16. God does ordinarily, before that he sends his judgments, and does his *strange work*, endeavour to reclaim them by mercies: not only Joel, but Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and others, prophesied before the destruction of that people and country by Nebuchadnezzar; but now, before the final and total ruin, God sent greater and more than these, and endued them with a greater measure of the Spirit, clearer and fuller light to forewarn them of and deliver them from wrath to come.

Acts 2:17

Ver. 17. *In the last days;* in the time of the Messiah, called the *last days*

frequently, 2Ti 3:1 Heb 1:2 2Pe 3:3; as also called *the last time*, 1Pe 1:5 1Jo 2:18 Jude 1:18; because we are now under the last and most perfect dispensation of the things of God, and no other is to be looked for until the consummation of all things.

I will pour out of my Spirit; before the Spirit was given in lesser measures, and comparatively but by drops, *here a little, and there a little*; now more largely, even to overflow.

Upon all flesh; all sorts of men, as well Gentiles as Jews, contrary unto their proud conceit, that God dwelt in none out of the land of Israel.

Daughters shall prophesy; fulfilled in Anna the prophetess, Lu 2:36, and in the four daughters of Philip, Lu 21:9.

Visions; these were formerly either representations more inward to their mind, as Isaiah's and Jeremiah's were; or more outward, to their bodily eye, as Belshazzar's was, Da 5:5, and such as Peter had, Ac 10:11.

Dreams; by dreams God sometimes manifested his will, as to Joseph; but this is by St. Peter accommodated to the gospel times. The prophets spake suitably to them unto whom they preached; and the apostle rightly understands by these expressions, the manifold and more clear revelation of the will of God in Christ.

Acts 2:18

Ver. 18. *On my servants and on my handmaidens*; to show what all ought to be, that hope to receive any benefit or comfort from the promises of God, either in the law or gospel, the Old or New Testament; viz. such as seek and serve God; but to the disobedient and unbelieving there is not a comfortable word in all the book of God. Some read without the pronoun, on servants and handmaids; to show that God doth not despise men of the lowest rank and condition in the world, but that the promise of the Spirit is made unto them also.

Acts 2:19

Ver. 19. As St Peter had declared the promises unto such as would be drawn by the cords of love; so here, on the other side, he useth threatenings, and declares the terrors of the Lord, if so that they will be persuaded. These *wonders* were such as did precede the destruction of Jerusalem, or shall forerun the destruction of the whole world.

Acts 2:20

Ver. 20. *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood;* this agrees with the other words in the forecited prophecy, Joe 2:31. How these amazing signs shall be fulfilled, whether literally, and by what means; or whether only that the consternation and dread upon men shall be so great, as expecting the change of the whole frame of nature, is not so material for us to know, as it is to be always prepared for it.

Great and notable day; επιφανη, manifest and illustrious day; and it may be taken in a comfortable sense, and will be a comfortable day indeed, to all that preparedly wait for it; for it is the *day of the Lord*, it is Christ's day, in which he will be magnified over his enemies, and in his friends, children, and servants.

Acts 2:21

Ver. 21. That he may prepare thus a people for the Lord, the apostle shows by what means they and we may escape. Pray in faith unto him. The name is that whereby any one is known; and the Lord's name is his attributes, goodness, power, wisdom, faithfulness, &c.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe, Pr 18:10.

Acts 2:22

Ver. 22. *Jesus of Nazareth;* for so Pilate had called our Saviour through

contempt, in his superscription on the cross: and that they might certainly know of whom he spake, and that he was not now (as formerly) ashamed to own him, he mentions our Saviour under that name here.

Approved; demonstrated, and beyond any contradiction proved, to be the Messiah: for this was that great truth St. Peter preached upon, that Christ, whom Pilate had condemned, and called Jesus of Nazareth, was indeed the Son of God, and the true Messiah.

Miracles and wonders and signs; the critical difference is not so material; it was ordinary to add many words to show the greatness of the matter spoken of; indeed all sorts of wonderful works Christ did, and so many, and so great, as no variety of words can express.

As ye yourselves also know; those that are not convinced are self-condemned.

Acts 2:23

Ver. 23. *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God:* that the apostle might take away the offence of the cross of Christ, he declares unto them that he did not suffer by chance, but by the wise and holy providence of God, who had ordered, and by his prophets foretold, what he should suffer before he did enter into glory, Lu 24:26. Yet this did no way excuse those who were instrumental in his death; for notwithstanding God's determinate counsel concerning it, he tells the Jews, *ye have taken, &c.* The determination of God, as it does not necessitate to, so it does not excuse any from sin.

Have crucified, by the Romans, who were truly ἀνομοί, without any law of God. What the Jews urged or occasioned the Romans to do, is charged justly upon them as their act.

Acts 2:24

Ver. 24. *Whom God hath raised up:* Christ rose by his own power as God: it being, perhaps, too strong meat to be given at first to such who were

under so great prejudices against our Saviour; but by consequence in the following discourse he sufficiently shows it.

Loosed; the same word חבל variously pointed, signifying either a cord or pain, the metaphor of loosing agrees with it.

The pains of death: though our Lord endured no more pain after he had said, It is finished, and had yielded up the ghost; yet whilst he was in the grave, being under the power of death, the pains of death are said to be loosed at his resurrection.

It was not possible that he should be holden of it long, much less for ever; being such a one as David spake of.

Acts 2:25

Ver. 25. *David speaketh concerning him,* Ps 16:8.

I foresaw the Lord always before my face: in the psalm it is, *I have set the Lord:* the apostle following the reading of the Seventy, then in use and known; and to the same sense; for by faith we both see God, and place our confidence in him; David, and especially our Saviour, doing and enduring all things as in the sight of God, whom he knew to be both careful of him, and ready to help him. Thus, in all troubles, there is no such approved comfort, as the seeing or acknowledging the will of God concerning them, his power to preserve us under them, and his promises to deliver us from them. Christ, and all that are Christ's, do conflict under the eye and in the sight of God, as soldiers whilst their general looks on.

On my right hand; the place of the advocate for one that is accused or endangered.

Acts 2:26

Ver. 26. *Therefore,* because of God's nearness to or presence with him, *did my heart rejoice;* Christ's and his people's joy is solid and true, real and inward, and may bear the test, *res severa est verum gaudium.*

My tongue; in Ps 16:9, it is *my glory*, as the tongue is frequently called; communicating our thoughts or apprehensions by speech, being the excellency of a reasonable creature.

My flesh; or my body.

Shall rest; or be in the grave, as in a tabernacle, ordinarily a movable, always no durable abiding place.

In hope; that is, of the resurrection, and going out of that tabernacle of the grave.

Acts 2:27

Ver. 27. *My soul;* that is, me: the soul is put for the person, as Ro 13:1, *Let every soul be subject;* and sometimes for a dead body, as Le 19:28 Nu 5:2, and in divers other places, נַפְשׁ that signifies a soul, is so used.

In hell; the word αἰδης is put either for the grave, or for the place of the damned. Being these words are alleged as a proof of Christ's resurrection, and that our Saviour's soul was certainly in paradise, where he promised to the penitent thief that he should be with him, it seems rather to be meant of the grave, which, according to this prophecy, could not hold our blessed Saviour's body so long as that it should corrupt in it. If David by his *soul* here did mean our Saviour, because he was as it were the soul of his soul, and life of his life, it shows how he did, and how we ought to value him.

Thine Holy One; as being anointed, sanctified, and sent by God.

Acts 2:28

Ver. 28. *Thou hast made known to me;* God is frequently said to make those mercies known to us which he bestows upon us.

The ways of life; of a true life, which is life indeed. David in these words celebrates God's delivering of him from his grievous afflictions and exile;

in which he was looked upon by others, and by himself, as a dead man, yet was brought again to see the temple, and enjoy the ordinances of God, without which his life was as no life unto him. So our Saviour, after his death and passion, arose, and ascended into heaven, and lives for ever to make intercession for us.

With thy countenance; that is, with thy presence, or manifestation of thy love and favour.

Acts 2:29

Ver. 29. *Men and brethren;* St. Peter bespeaks this attention and favour, intimating he was one of the same nation with themselves, than which nothing could more recommend him. David was had in great veneration, and his memory very precious amongst this people, as was Abraham's, Isaac's, and Jacob's; who were the chief of their fathers.

He is both dead and buried; as in 1Ki 2:10, and elsewhere, is recorded of him, which they firmly believed.

His sepulchre, or monument, *is with us;* either not wholly spoiled by the barbarous enemies, who had destroyed Jerusalem; or rather repaired after the captivity, to keep up the memory of so great and good a man. But by this it appeared, that David did not speak these things concerning himself, who must needs have seen corruption, (themselves being witnesses), for on that account they respected his tomb, as being the repository of his ashes.

Acts 2:30

Ver. 30. *Had sworn with an oath;* not barely had sworn, which had been sufficient; but to show the excellency of the matter, and the necessity of our believing of it, as also the solemnity of the words, Ps 132:11.

Of the fruit of his loins; such as should descend from him, as the virgin Mary did.

According to the flesh; as to his human nature, which our Saviour did

truly partake of, being in the form of a servant.

He would raise up Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of his virgin mother, as to his incarnation; and by the same power out of the grave, in his resurrection.

To sit on his throne; as Lu 1:32,33: not as a temporal king, for his kingdom is not of this world; but as David ruled over all the people of God, so does Christ, and shall do for ever.

Acts 2:31

Ver. 31. *He seeing this before*; by a prophetic eye, unto which any thing that was revealed was as certain and manifest, as aught could be to the eye of the body. By the same prophetic Spirit, and with the same certainty, which he spoke of the incarnation, he *spake also of the resurrection of Christ*. Of the rest, see Ac 2:27.

Acts 2:32

Ver. 32. *This Jesus*, whom ye crucified, and we preach, *Whereof we all are witnesses*: they had now received the power spoken of and promised Ac 1:6, and testify what they had heard, and seen, and felt, and all agree in; though they could get nothing by it, but hatred and persecution, nay, death.

Acts 2:33

Ver. 33. *By the right hand of God*, that is, by the power of God spoken after the manner of men, the right hand being that we commonly do any thing with. Some read *at the right hand of God*; and then the apostle preaches Christ's ascension too, and his being justified by God, though he had been condemned by men.

Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost: Ps 68:18 *Which ye now see*, in the fiery cloven tongues; *and hear*, in the divers

languages which are spoken.

Acts 2:34

Ver. 34. *For David is not ascended into the heavens;* hence St. Peter here proves, that these words, spoken by David, were not principally to be understood concerning himself, but concerning Christ the Messiah; for David, as to his body, was in the sepulchre, which on that account was kept amongst them.

The Lord said unto my Lord; the eternal Father unto his eternal Son, who was now made flesh—hence our Saviour proves his Divinity, Mt 22:45. The words here referred to are Ps 110:1.

Acts 2:35

Ver. 35. Christ is commissioned and empowered to reign over and govern all creatures, and all their actions, till the consummation of all things, so long as the world lasts, in which he, his people, and truths, will have enemies, Eph 1:20-22 1Co 15:27,28.

Acts 2:36

Ver. 36. This is the conclusion which the apostle infers from the premises, applying what he had said very close and home, or it would not in all likelihood have had so good an effect.

Ye have crucified; ye are the men.

Lord over all the creatures, beyond what the first Adam was; *and Christ*, King over all the people of God, to rule in them, and reign for them; for to this purpose he was the Christ, or the Anointed of God, declared by God to be so, and owned for such by all that believed in him.

Acts 2:37

Ver. 37. *They were pricked in their heart;* so great and true their grief, they were concerned as if they had been run through: (the pains the mind suffer are most acute): this was foretold, Zec 12:10.

Men and brethren; an ordinary compellation which the apostle had given them, Ac 2:29.

What shall we do? not, What shall we say, or believe? Conversion, if real, goes further than profession, and is in heart and deed, not in speech and word only: they desire to know if there be any hope, that such sinners as they might obtain forgiveness of their sins.

Acts 2:38

Ver. 38. *Repent,* which includes amendment of life, Mt 3:8 Lu 3:8. *In the name of Jesus Christ;* not excluding the name of the Father and the Holy Ghost, in whose name, as well as in the name of the Son, they were to baptize, Mt 28:19: but the name of Jesus is here mentioned, because they had not yet known (but persecuted and slain) him, whom henceforward they must profess; and that they look for pardon and salvation only through him. *For the remission of sins;* thus Saul, or Paul, is said to wash away his sins by baptism, Ac 22:16; and this apostle elsewhere says, that baptism saves us, 1Pe 3:21; which he explains to be, *not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience, &c. The gift of the Holy Ghost:*

1. His internal gifts, confirmation and strengthening in the faith.
2. External gifts, as that of speaking with tongues, which they heard. Both, or either of these, according to their conditions or stations, God would bestow upon them.

Acts 2:39

Ver. 39. *For the promise is unto you;* lest they should doubt of pardon and

grace, their sin having been so great. St. Peter gives them a ground of hope, they being the descendants from Abraham, unto whom especially this was promised, Jer 31:34.

And to all that are afar off; that is, to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, who were said to be a people near unto God, as the Gentiles were said to be afar off, Isa 57:19 Eph 2:13.

Even as many as the Lord our God shall call; vocation, whether external by the word only, or internal by the Spirit also, depends on the pleasure of God; but the same promises of pardon and acceptance upon repentance made unto the Jews, are as effectually to be trusted unto by any of the Gentiles, as by any formerly amongst the Jews.

Acts 2:40

Ver. 40. *Many other words:* the sermons of the apostles, or of our Saviour, are not all set down by the holy writers; but only so much as God saw necessary for his church to know and believe.

Testify and exhort; using God's name and authority, and calling him as it were to witness.

Save yourselves: no less than the salvation of our souls depends upon our forsaking wicked and profane persons in their ungodly courses.

From this untoward generation; the whole world lies in wickedness; but especially the scribes and Pharisees, and other such declared enemies of Christ Jesus.

Acts 2:41

Ver. 41. *They that gladly received his word;* some still remained in their unbelief and hardness of heart; though never men spake as the apostles now spake, with divers tongues, &c.

Unto them; to the church, or the hundred and twenty formerly mentioned,

Ac 1:15. This was the effect of Christ's prayer for his persecutors, Lu 23:34; and of the promise of the Spirit now fulfilled, whereby in the day of his power they were made willing.

Acts 2:42

Ver. 42. *They continued stedfastly*, speaks the reality of their conversion, and that they were not only for the present affected with what they had heard and seen. These three parts of worship were frequently, if not always, in those purer times used together: though some understand by *breaking of bread*, their civil fellowship and community, yet breaking being a holy rite used by our Saviour, at the institution of his supper, Mt 26:26, and breaking of bread being here put in conjunction with preaching and praying, the celebration of the eucharist, if not only meant, is chiefly to be understood in this place.

Prayers; all those kinds of prayers mentioned by St. Paul, 1Ti 2:1, as also their frequent praying, is implied. Thus, by a united force, they laboured to pull down mercies upon themselves and others, and to do violence unto the kingdom of heaven.

Acts 2:43

Ver. 43. *Upon every soul*; that is, upon every man; not only on them that were present, and persuaded to believe on Christ, whom the apostles preached; but on such also as were informed of those miraculous things which now happened; so that by this means the apostles were had in great esteem and respect by the people.

Acts 2:44

Ver. 44. *All that believed were together*; not that they lived together in one house or street, but that they met (and that frequently) together in the holy exercises of their religion; and that manner of some, which St. Paul speaks of, Heb 10:25, to forsake the assembling of themselves together, was a sin not yet known in the church.

And had all things common; this was only at that place, Jerusalem, and at that time, when the wants of some, and the charity of others, may well be presumed to be extraordinary; and there is no such thing as community of goods here required or practised. Christ's gospel does not destroy the law; and the eighth commandment is still in force, which it could not be, if there were no propriety, or *meum* and *tuum*, now; nay, after this, the possession which Ananias sold is adjudged by this apostle to have been Ananias's own, and so was the money too which he had received for it, Ac 5:4. And these *all things* which they had in common, must either be restrained to such things as every one freely laid aside for the poor; or that it speaks the extraordinary charitable disposition of those new converts, that they would rather have parted with any thing, nay, with their all, than that any of their poor brethren should have wanted.

Acts 2:45

Ver. 45. Those proportions of their estate they set apart to this charitable work; whether they did arise out of the sale of house or land, called *possessions*, or of any chattels or movable estate, called here *goods*: but that they did not divest themselves of all property, appears in that we find soon after this, Ac 12:12, Mary the mother of St. Mark to have a house; and Lydia, after she was baptized, did not renounce any propriety in her house, Ac 16:15, but entreated St. Paul, and those who were with him, to come into her house, &c.

Acts 2:46

Ver. 46. *In the temple;* in the court and porches of the temple, whither the people did use to resort at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice and prayers, that by means of the great concourse at such times they might have the better opportunity to preach the gospel amongst them; casting that net where they found most fish.

Breaking bread; not only celebrating the eucharist, but their love feasts which they usually had at that time, as 1Co 11:21,22.

From house to house; now here, now there, as they could conveniently; the richer also entertaining their poorer brethren at their tables.

Did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart: if the former words be understood of the Lord's supper, then these words speak the great spiritual strength, cheer, and comfort they got by it: if we understand them of the ordinary meats which they willingly bestowed one upon another, the rich were more than recompensed with inward peace and satisfaction, for what they gave unto their poor brethren.

Acts 2:47

Ver. 47. *Praising God;* acknowledging him who teacheth one to want, and another to abound.

Having favour with all the people; that is, generally to be understood, amongst them that continued yet without the pale of the church; the goodness, meekness, and patience of the apostles, and the rest of the believers, did wonderfully prevail to beget a good opinion of them.

The Lord added to the church; salvation is (to be sure) only from the Lord; not Peter's sermons, no, nor the miracles of fiery cloven tongues, and the rushing mighty wind, could have converted any, but $\Delta\epsilon\iota\ \tau\iota\ \epsilon\nu\delta\omicron\nu$, that which was signified there, viz. the powerful operation of the Spirit of God in their hearts.

Acts 3:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 3:1-11 The lame man healed by Peter and John.

Ac 3:12-26 Peter declares to the people that this cure was not

wrought by any power or holiness in himself or John,

but by the power of God through faith in the name of

Jesus, whom they had ignorantly

crucified, but whom
God had raised from the dead according
to the
Scripture; exhorts them by faith to
seek remission of
sins and salvation in Jesus, whose
coming had been
spoken of by Moses and all the
prophets.

Ver. 1. *Went up together into the temple;* not to communicate with the Jews in their worship, which was now antiquated, but that they might have a larger field to sow the seed of the gospel into; and therefore it was most probably upon some sabbath or festival day, and not unlikely in the evening of that great day of Pentecost (of which in the former chapter).

At the hour of prayer: that God must be worshipped, and daily prayed unto, the law of nature and positive law of God requires; but, says Maimonides, there is no obligation by virtue of any command of God, unto any number of prayers, nor to any certain prayers, nor to any definite time of prayer. Howsoever, they did usually pray thrice a day, and thought each of those three times recommended unto them by one of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Howsoever, the time of offering up the morning and evening sacrifice was recommended or commanded by God, as a time of prayer; a sacrifice being an actual prayer, as the other is real or verbal.

The ninth hour; about three o'clock in the afternoon, the time of the evening sacrifice.

Acts 3:2

Ver. 2. *Lame from his mother's womb,* and not by any casualty, that so the miracle might be the greater, and the power of the God of nature appear.

They laid daily; by which it was manifest, that it could not be by any correspondence between the apostles and the lame man upon this occasion.

At the gate of the temple; where there must needs be the greater notice taken of him; none going in or out but such as might see him.

Called Beautiful, for the excellency of the workmanship: it was at the entering into the second court, or the court of the Jews from that of the Gentiles. This man, out of pride, being unwilling to beg of the Gentiles, though proselyted, (whom they did contemn), or out of policy, hoping to receive more of the Jews, whom he is nearer related to, *asked alms of them that entered into the temple.* Poverty is no sign of God's disfavour (our blessed Redeemer is in an especial manner called *Caput pauperum*); but lameness in this man, divers miseries and calamities in others, bring them to the knowledge of Christ, and salvation through him.

Acts 3:3

Ver. 3. *Seeing,* though lame: every one hath something that is truly valuable, and matter of praise and thanks unto God.

Acts 3:4

Ver. 4. The eye affects the heart, and speaks the compassion he had of this poor man, whom he did not disdain thoroughly and seriously to behold: he excites the lame man's expectation, and requires his attention, that he might the more mind the manner and means of his cure, and be the better prepared to give God the glory of it.

Acts 3:5

Ver. 5. *Gave heed,* with his eyes and mind too, being intent upon the apostles; this he was commanded to do, and it succeeds beyond all hopes. Thus we receive of God daily more than we can ask or think.

Acts 3:6

Ver. 6. *Silver and gold have I none;* that is, at hand, or about me; neither

had he much elsewhere; the apostles abounded indeed, but in grace, not in riches.

Such as I have; a power from Christ to heal.

Give I thee; I apply it to thee, and will make it effectual for thee.

In the name, in the power, or at the command, *of Jesus Christ,* and trusting unto his promised assistance, who can speak to things that are not as if they were.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth; our Saviour was usually so called, and being known by that name, the apostle does not decline it, though it had been by many (without cause) given him by way of reproach.

Acts 3:7

Ver. 7. *He took him by the right hand;* not disdainng to take hold of a poor cripple or beggar; as also being fully persuaded of Christ's presence with him for his cure.

And immediately, that it might the more evidently appear that this was the work of God, who can without means, and on a sudden, bring aught to perfection, *his feet and ankle bones,* whence his lameness did proceed, *received strength:* thus God can say unto the weak, Be strong.

Acts 3:8

Ver. 8. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, Isa 35:6, *Then shall the lame man leap as an hart;* and thus the lame man manifested that he was perfectly cured, though in an instant, *walking, and leaping, and praising God,* to whom alone he attributed that sudden and perfect (and therefore miraculous) cure; nay, he attributes nothing unto the means; the apostle's words he knew did little or nothing, but God is all in all unto him: and he leaped, to evidence the truth of the miracle that was wrought upon him, and that his soul rejoiced in God his Saviour.

Acts 3:9

Ver. 9. This miracle was so publicly done, that none could deny the matter of fact; which the enemies of the gospel are forced to confess, Ac 4:16.

Acts 3:10

Ver. 10. *They knew that it was he;* the very same lame beggar, probably notoriously known to many.

They were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him; being so much contrary to what they had seen him but a little while before, when he had begged their alms; and, as he reasoned well, Joh 9:32, *Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind;* so it was never heard, that any strengthened thus the feet of him that was born lame.

Acts 3:11

Ver. 11. *Held Peter and John,* in an ecstasy of thankfulness unto them, they having been the instruments of so great a mercy from God towards him; as also out of fear, lest when they were gone he might relapse: he that found so great a change in himself could not but be as much surprised as they that saw the change upon him.

The porch that is called Solomon's; not that which was built by Solomon, for that was destroyed by the Babylonians, as the rest of the temple was, 2Ki 25:9; unless some part of this porch might not be consumed by the fire, when the other parts of the temple were burned, some morsel often escaping the jaws of that devouring element, fire; or it may be it was built in the re-edification of the temple, in the same place where Solomon's porch had stood, and thence called by the former name that was so much remembered. If any wonder that a porch should hold so many thousands of people, inasmuch as five thousand of them are said to be converted, Ac 4:4; this porch is thought not only to have been the court of the Gentiles, and that of the Jews, that is, the outward and inward court; but to have

contained a great part of the court of the Gentiles, if the whole court of the Gentiles might not be so called, as being indeed but a porch, or an entrance into the court of the Jews.

Acts 3:12

Ver. 12. *He answered,* for he said, an ordinary Hebraism, though no question was put unto him: thus the evangelist tells us that our Saviour *answered and said,* when there was no previous question spoken of, Mt 11:25. Nay, *Jesus answered and said unto* the fig tree, Mr 11:14; that is, he spake powerfully unto it.

Ye men of Israel; an ingratiating compellation, they ever valuing themselves and others on that account.

By our own power or holiness: holiness, were it never so real and great in men, cannot cause the least miracle, although it is itself, all things considered, a very great one.

Acts 3:13

Ver. 13. *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob;* he mentions them, because the promise of the Messiah was made to them, *Hath glorified his Son Jesus;* or his servant, for so also he is called, Isa 53:11; and that he might redeem us, he took upon him the form of a servant, and was obedient to the death of the cross, and did that great work of redemption which God sent him into the world to do.

Whom ye delivered up; the rulers, at whose command our blessed Saviour was apprehended, bound, and delivered unto Pilate, Mt 27:1,2.

And denied him; this is charged upon the common sort of people also, who were earnest in crying, Mt 27:25, *His blood be on us, and on our children.* Their sin is here ripped up, and their sore searched to the quick, that they might entertain the word of salvation with the greater attention and desire.

Acts 3:14

Ver. 14. *But ye denied the Holy One;* Christ the anointed, when they cried out as with one voice, *We have no king but Caesar,* Joh 19:15; disclaiming our Redeemer, and his being anointed over them.

And desired a murderer; to wit, Barabbas, crying out, *Not this man, but Barabbas,* Joh 18:40; which much aggravated their impiety; when the choice was given unto them of two, so vastly different, the just Jesus, and the murderous Barabbas, they chose the latter, to their destruction and confusion unto this present day. Where will blindness of mind and hardness of heart end!

Acts 3:15

Ver. 15. *The Prince of life;* as God, he is the Author of our temporal life too, in whom we live, and move, &c., and in whose hand is our breath; but Christ, as Mediator, is the guide and way to eternal life, Joh 14:6. These are said to have killed our Saviour, though neither Herod, nor Pilate, nor probably many (if any) of them that nailed him to the cross, were present; but it was done for their sakes, and at their desires, and therefore by their means; and it is here charged upon them, as done by them.

Acts 3:16

Ver. 16. *His name;* his power; for by it he is known, as men or things are by their several names; or the *name* of Christ is put for Christ himself, as the name of God is put for God commonly.

Through faith in his name; calling by faith on the name of Christ, being thoroughly persuaded that he could and would heal this cripple.

The faith which is by him; not only faith, as on Christ as its object, but by and from Christ as its author; faith being twice made mention of in this cure, there being required faith in Peter to heal, and in the lame man to be healed.

Acts 3:17

Ver. 17. Lest the corrosive in Ac 3:13-15 should pierce too far, to prevent despair in his auditors the apostle useth in this verse a lenitive, calling them yet *brethren*, though guilty of so great a mistake in their judgment, and fault in their practice.

Through ignorance ye did it; whatsoever they did against Christ, whom St. Peter preached, was out of a double error:

1. About the place of Christ's birth, supposing him to have been born at Nazareth.
2. They were ignorant of the nature of his kingdom.

As did also your rulers; whose fault was the greater, as having seduced others, &c.; yet St. Peter opens a door of hope by repentance, even for them also.

Acts 3:18

Ver. 18. The prophets did all speak the same things, as if they had spoken out of one *mouth*, as they did speak by one Spirit. God used the ignorance of some, and the malice of others, for his own holy ends: and that it was prophesied *that Christ should suffer*, is very plain, Isa 1:5-7.

Acts 3:19

Ver. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted;* this is the true end, use, and application, both of the preceding miracle and sermon, to persuade unto repentance and conversion.

That your sins may be blotted out; alluding to the manner of writing upon tables in those times, and not much disagreeing from what is in use amongst us, who write upon paper or parchment. There is a book of

remembrance, and a record of all our sins kept: *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, Jer 17:1*. When sin is pardoned, it is said to be *blotted out*, Isa 44:22; and not to be found any more, though it should be *sought for*, Jer 50:20.

Times of refreshing; or times of cooling; as afflictions are called a fiery trial, so deliverance from them is a season of refreshing or cooling. Such a time of refreshing shall come in this life, commonly from many troubles; but when this life ends, a deliverance comes from all afflictions to them that truly fear and serve God.

Shall come from the presence of the Lord; God's presence is the cause and ground from whence all the refreshment his people take do arise; heaven would not be heaven (a place of bliss and glory) without it: and as God is the object of our beatitude, so he is the giver of all comfort, and his Spirit is the only Comforter.

Acts 3:20

Ver. 20. To remove all evils and miseries from his people; when that Sun shines all clouds and mists are scattered. This refers especially to Christ's second coming, which is here promised, to encourage us to do good, and to deter us from doing evil; as also to move us to repentance, and to comfort us when penitent.

Acts 3:21

Ver. 21. *Whom the heaven must receive*; that is, contain after it hath received him, as a real place doth a true body; for such Christ's body was, which was received into heaven: and heaven is the palace and throne of this King of kings and Lord of lords, where he shall reign until he hath put all his enemies under his feet, 1Co 15:25.

Until the times of restitution of all things; or restoration of all things, when all things shall be restored to that condition from which sin put them: for the fall hath maimed and disordered the whole universe; and probably there is not that excellency in any of the creatures which there was at first,

before man (for whom they were made) by his sin brought death to himself, and as it were a dead colour over all them; this makes the whole creation groan and travail in pain until now, Ro 8:22. But the end of the world will be a time of *restitution of all things* unto man especially, who shall be then restored unto God, and to a blessed immortality: for unless this be granted, all their preaching and prophesying was in vain, 1Co 15:14.

Acts 3:22

Ver. 22. *For Moses truly said unto the fathers;* their ancestors in the wilderness, De 18:15, as also in the De 18:18. St. Peter names here but one of their prophets, but a most remarkable one.

Like unto me;

1. In wisdom.
2. In miracles.
3. In being a Mediator between God and his people.
4. In their being both and of their brethren, i.e. of the seed of Abraham.
5. In that they were both sent from God after an extraordinary manner.

Him shall ye hear in all things; if any prophet did come amongst them, and did foretell future things which came to pass, or did work a real miracle, they were bound to believe him, if he did not endeavour to draw them to worship a false god; and by consequence they were bound to have believed our Saviour, who taught them only to fear that true God, whom the law and all the prophets had spoken of.

Acts 3:23

Ver. 23. *Every soul;* that is every one.

Hear that prophet; that is believe and obey him.

Shall be destroyed from among the people; as those that disobeyed Moses were destroyed, many perishing by strange and sudden deaths: we read of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all that belonged to them, swallowed up for this sin, Nu 16:1-50. The apostle demands, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* Heb 2:3. For a greater than Moses is here, and God hath undertaken to require it of every one that will not hearken unto him, De 18:19.

Acts 3:24

Ver. 24. Though there were some prophets betwixt Moses and Samuel, yet they were but such as prophesied in some particular exigences and cases; and in Samuel's days *the word of the Lord was precious*, or rare, 1Sa 3:1; but then David, that lively type of Christ, appearing at the throne, the Messiah began to be more discovered in and by him: besides, Samuel was the first who wrote his prophecies, and erected the schools of the prophets, and therefore he is first mentioned; and the date of the prophets is here begun from him.

Acts 3:25

Ver. 25. *Children of the prophets;* the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are called *prophets*, Ps 105:15, and did prophesy, foretelling things to come, &c. The disciples of the prophets are also called their children, or sons, 2Ki 2:3; and so these pretended and desired to be accounted. *Children of the covenant* are sixth unto whom the covenant belongs, which God made with Abraham and his seed; hence they are called *the children of the promise*, Ro 9:8 Ga 4:28; and *the children of the kingdom*, Mt 8:12. And this covenant of God with Abraham was the cause, that notwithstanding all the sore and heavy calamities of that people. God did always preserve some, and there was a remnant saved.

Kindreds; families, or nations.

Be blessed: through Christ, who is this seed of Abraham, all mercies in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, are bestowed; grace and glory, and every good thing.

Acts 3:26

Ver. 26. *Unto you first;* the Jews and inhabitants of Jerusalem, who are the lost sheep of the house of Israel. St. Peter did not yet know, that the Gentiles should be called, until he was taught it by the vision, Ac 10:1-48; and though our Saviour had told the apostles that they should be his *witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth*, Ac 1:8, they understood it only of those of their own nation, scattered or dispersed abroad, 1Pe 1:1.

Raised up his son, Jesus; which word does not only refer to the resurrection of Christ, but to his being constituted and appointed to be a Prince and a Saviour; thus it is said, *a great prophet is risen up amongst us*, Lu 7:16; and, *God hath, raised up a horn of salvation*, Lu 1:69. Howsoever, it is by virtue of Christ's being raised from the dead, and carried into his kingdom, that we are blessed. In turning away everyone of you from his iniquities; this is the greatest blessing indeed; hence our Saviour hath his name imposed by God on him, Mt 1:21, and was called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins; and without this being saved from our sins, nothing can be a blessing to us, Isa 3:11; and, *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*, Isa 57:21. Add to this, that if any be turned from their iniquities, it is through the blessing of God in Christ.

Acts 4:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 4:1-4 The rulers of the Jews, offended with the teaching of

Peter and John, imprison them.

Ac 4:5-12 Being brought before the council, Peter boldly

avouches the late cure to have been wrought in the name

of Jesus, and that men can be saved by no other name.

Ac 4:13-22 The council, struck with the boldness of the two

apostles, after conferring together,

dismiss them with

a threatening charge to speak more in the name of Jesus.

Ac 4:23-30 The church betakes itself to prayer.

Ac 4:31 The presence of the Holy Ghost is signified by the house

shaking, and the apostles thereby emboldened to speak the word.

Ac 4:32-37 The unity and charity of the church, who have their

possessions in common.

Ver. 1. *The captain of the temple;* the commander over those soldiers who were appointed to guard the temple, and provide that no disorder might happen, by reason of the multitudes that came to worship there; and most probably was a Roman, and not of the Jewish nation, much less the chief of any of the courses of the priests, to whom this term cannot agree.

The Sadducees; these were most inveterate against the gospel, whose main article is the resurrection, which they denied: and thus each man, Jews and Gentiles, agree against Christ, as was foretold, Ps 2:1,2.

Acts 4:2

Ver. 2. *Being grieved;* or angry to such a degree that it was a great trouble to them. The doctrine of *the resurrection* alone could not but vex the Sadducees, who denied it; but it did more afflict them, that the apostles *preached it through Jesus;* asserting, not only the resurrection of our Saviour, which the Jews gave so much money unto the soldiers to hinder the report of, Mt 28:12,13, but also that Christ was the author of the resurrection, and the first fruits of them that sleep; and because they inferred from Christ's resurrection that his disciples should rise from the dead also.

Acts 4:3

Ver. 3. *Put them in hold;* some think this not to have been so strait a

custody as that of a prison, but that rather the apostles were delivered to some who promised that they should be forthcoming. The prediction of our Saviour began now to be fulfilled, Lu 21:12.

They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you. Howsoever, God was pleased to suffer persecution to come by degrees on his church; after the sun was down, (Christ was gone from them), it was not presently pitch darkness with them. God always remembers his people's condition, and his own promise, and lays no more upon them than they are able to bear.

Acts 4:4

Ver. 4. *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,* Ro 10:17. It being the ordinary means which God hath appointed; the apostles themselves make use of it towards the conviction of this people. The number of the hearers is not intended to be set here, or in any other place; but either these *five thousand* were such as were converted at this sermon, or rather the number converted by St. Peter's former sermon, Ac 2:14-40, were at this sermon made thus many; howsoever, the increase which God gave was very great.

Acts 4:5

Ver. 5. *Their rulers;* the sanhedrim, or great council.

Elders and scribes; the magistrates of the city, scribes, doctors, or teachers of the law, &c.; howsoever these might be distinguished, they are all as one against the doctrine of the gospel, and endeavour to put out the light as soon as it began to shine, as Herod would have killed Christ in the manger.

Acts 4:6

Ver. 6. *Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas;* both these are said to be high priests, Lu 3:2; whether they bare this office by turn each other year, as some think, or that the Roman power put in and out whom they pleased,

and in courtesy he that was laid aside still retained the title during his life, is not very material.

John, thought to be the son of Annas.

Alexander, a man of great repute amongst them, as Josephus says.

As many as were of the kindred of the high priest; their relation many times preferring them to a place in their great council, or sanhedrim.

Were gathered together at Jerusalem; or in Jerusalem; either such as were in the city, being called together on such an extraordinary occasion; or else they sent also unto men of greatest note, that lived nigh thereunto.

Acts 4:7

Ver. 7. *When they had set them in the midst;* the sanhedrim, or great council, did sit in a circular form; and the apostles being to answer for themselves, were placed so as they might better hear and be heard.

By what power; natural, or supernatural and Divine?

By what name? At whose command, or in whose authority? They inquire whether they did pretend to be prophets, or persons extraordinarily sent, &c. Though the miracle which they had wrought showed sufficiently by whose power it was done, yet of this they were willingly ignorant, and inquire only that they might find matter out of the apostles' own mouths, for which they might blame or punish them.

Acts 4:8

Ver. 8. *Filled with the Holy Ghost;* guiding and strengthening of him in what he did speak, by which so mightily Peter differed from himself, that though formerly he was afraid of a servant, and denied our Saviour, now he is not afraid before the rulers to confess him.

Rulers of the people, and elders of Israel: see Ac 4:5. These were

especially the great council, in imitation of the seventy, which Moses appointed by God's command to help him in the burden of his government, Nu 11:16,24.

Acts 4:9

Ver. 9. Examined; juridically called in question; it is a forensic word.

Of the good deed; though they disputed not the authority of the court, yet they assert their integrity; that it was no other than a good deed they had done, which rulers ought not to be a terror unto, Ro 8:3.

By what means, that is, in the words of the question which was propounded unto them, Ac 4:7, by what power, or by what name, *he is made whole*?

Acts 4:10

Ver. 10. Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel; the apostles are not dismayed, but make their boldness, spoken of Ac 4:13, to appear; they preach Christ to all of them, and wish they could make him known to all others.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth: see Ac 2:22.

Whom God raised; i.e. God the Father: our Surety was discharged by God himself, who had laid him in the prison of the grave for our debts.

This man stand here before you whole; the lame man that was made whole being present, and an ocular demonstration of the miracle wrought upon him.

Acts 4:11

Ver. 11. Alluding to Ps 118:22, in which there is a prophecy of what was now fulfilled: see Ac 2:23.

You builders; so by their office they were, and ought to have been so indeed, and are here so called, that they might be minded of their duty, viz. to increase, strengthen, and beautify the building, and not to demolish, weaken, or deface it.

The head of the corner; or the corner stone: Christ is frequently so called, Mt 21:42 Mr 12:10; and that,

1. Because he sustains and upholds the whole building.
2. He is a *rock* or *stone of offense*, Ro 9:33; as many run upon and are hurt by a corner stone.
3. He is most precious, 1Pe 2:6, as the corner stones are usually the largest, firmest, and best.
4. Christ is a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of the people of Israel; and both Gentile and Jew are united in him, and saved by him, as the corner stone is equally necessary for both sides, which are united in it, and borne up by it.

Acts 4:12

Ver. 12. *Neither is there salvation, for soul or body, in any other person or thing.*

For there is none other name; because in distress men did usually call upon their false gods by name, as, *O Baal, hear us*, 1Ki 18:26.

Under heaven; whether patriarch or prophet, priest or king; especially referring unto Moses, in whom they did trust; and therefore under the gospel especially we must lift up our hearts.

Acts 4:13

Ver. 13. *They were unlearned;* not wholly unlearned, but such as were

without any polite learning, or more than ordinary education, such as every one amongst them had.

Ignorant men; idiots, so the Greek word, from whence ours come, signifying such as were brought up at home, and never acted in a larger sphere than the walls of their own house; having never been magistrates, or teachers of the law, or any way public persons; and spake only their mother tongue.

They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus; which these rulers might easily take notice of, many of them frequenting his company too, Mt 21:23 Lu 18:18 Joh 12:42.

Acts 4:14

Ver. 14. *Standing;* whereas, before he was either carried, or was forced to lay down.

They could say nothing against it; they could not deny but that it was a good deed, and that it was miraculously done.

Acts 4:15

Ver. 15. *To go aside out of the council;* the place where the council met; for the apostles were not dismissed to go away at their liberty.

They conferred among themselves; it was their joint endeavour to stifle the gospel, and would now consult about the best expedient, but they would not let the apostles hear, lest they might discover the weakness of their proofs against them, and against the truth.

Acts 4:16

Ver. 16. *What shall we do?* At what a loss are these great men, about the manner of their proceeding with the apostles! They might seem to have the victory in their hands, and yet they are evidently overcome by three

witnesses; viz. by both the apostles and the lame man, and especially by the evidence of this fact itself: though they did not boggle at being unjust, yet they were loath to seem to be so, and therefore they take counsel to hide it, or palliate it before men; more valuing their credit, than the salvation of their own or other men's souls.

Acts 4:17

Ver. 17. *Straitly threaten them;* the pleonasm here used implies a very sore and heavy threatening, as of the most grievous punishment upon the most heinous fact.

That they speak henceforth to no man in this name; either,

1. By preaching; or:
2. By praying in it; or:
3. By doing miracles again by it.

Acts 4:18

Ver. 18. *Not to speak at all;* neither privately nor publicly.

Nor teach in the name of Jesus; as his apostles and ministers sent from him.

Acts 4:19

Ver. 19. *Peter and John answered;* both spake by one and the same Spirit, and agreed in one and the same answer; they are not solicitous what will best bring them off at present, but *said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God,* from whom nothing is hid, and who is the avenger of all wrong, *to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* The apostles seem to refer to a commonly received rule amongst their rabbins, which also they make use of, Ac 5:29, *We ought to obey God rather than men.* In the greatest matters of our most holy religion, God hath not left himself without a witness, or a thousand witnesses, in our own breasts and

consciences, Am 2:11.

Acts 4:20

Ver. 20. *We cannot but speak;* in a moral, not in a physical sense; they could not restrain speaking, because of the necessity which was laid upon them, and the woe which would have befallen them, if they had not preached the gospel, 1Co 9:16. If any man denies to bear testimony for man to a truth, he sins; how much more does he sin, who forbears to witness for God, and at the command or the sending of God!

Acts 4:21

Ver. 21. *They let them go* for the present; for amongst them no acquittal was so peremptory or asolute, but that they might be tried again for the same fact upon further evidence.

Because of the people; it was not the sense of the evil or sin, nor the apprehensions of God's displeasure and wrath, which deterred them; but the fear or favour of the people. The corruptions that are in the world are overruled for the good of God's children in it.

All men glorified God; not only such as believed, but others also, could not but confess that this was the hand of God which had made the lame to walk, and rejoice in it, and by consequence have a very great veneration for the apostles, who were the instruments of it.

Acts 4:22

Ver. 22. Therefore:

1. The harder to be cured.
2. The man was the more credible, who had so long known what it was to be without the use of his limbs, which now he enjoyed.

3. Whom they could not themselves but have often seen and heard begging.

But if he had laid so many years in the porch of the temple through which our Saviour frequently entered, how came it to pass that he was not cured before? We do not read that our Saviour denied any who came for cure. There need no other answer, but that all times and seasons are in God's hands, who justly forbore to send deliverance till this very time, and now mercifully sent it; especially reserving this miracle for the confirmation of the truth of the gospel, and of the apostles themselves in the preaching of it.

Acts 4:23

Ver. 23. *They went to their own company,* the rest of the apostles and believers, who have a special propriety and delight in one another; sheep with sheep, and goats with goats: though the separation will be made at the last day, the foundation of it is laid here.

And reported all; to forewarn them of what they might expect, and encourage them to hope for the like deliverance.

Chief priests; to what hath been said concerning them might be added, that these, it may be, were the first or chief in the courses, which David divided the priests into, which division was observed till our Saviour's time, Lu 1:5.

Acts 4:24

Ver. 24. *And when they,* their own company, believers, unto whom they went, *heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord;* either jointly, with one heart and spirit, agreeing in the same words, or saying Amen to the same thing.

And said, Lord; they begin prayer with such a reverend compellation, as suited best to the matter of their prayer and praises: whether by *Lord* they meant their Saviour, who was usually so called by them, or God the

Father, (because the word here is not Κυριε, but Δεσποτα), is not material; for when any person in the Trinity is invoked, the others are included; for we worship the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity.

Which made heaven and earth, &c.; the creation and government of the world, is a good consideration to confirm us under all things that befall us here.

Acts 4:25

Ver. 25. *Who by the mouth of thy servant David;* through the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David; so it is read in many ancient copies; and shows, that what David and other holy men spake, was from the Holy Ghost, and is to be attended unto and believed as spoken by him.

Servant, or son; David's relation to God is mentioned as a greater dignity than his being ruler over so great a people.

Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? It shows the unreasonable fury where which the enemies of God persecute his people, without cause, but what themselves imagine or make, and the event failing of their end; for *all things work for good to them that love God,* Ro 8:28; and the blood of martyrs have been found to be the seed of the church. These words are quoted out of Ps 2:1.

Acts 4:26

Ver. 26. These words do not vary in sense from what we read, Ps 2:2, but are the same for substance.

The kings; not only such who in a strict sense we call kings, but any chief governors, as Herod and Pilate were.

The rulers; the sanhedrim, or great council of the Jews.

Against the Lord; God looks upon it as done against him, whatsoever is done against them that fear him; thus the Israelites are said to be *gathered*

together against the Lord, Nu 16:11, who were gathered against Moses and Aaron.

*And against his Christ; our Saviour was at the right hand of his Father, but they who afflict his members afflict him; he cries from heaven to Saul, *Why persecutest thou me?* Ac 9:4; and had before told his disciples, *He that despiseth you despiseth me,* Lu 10:16.*

Acts 4:27

Ver. 27. *Thy holy child;* it speaks Christ's dearness to God as a child, and obeying of God as a servant.

Whom thou hast anointed, to be a King Priest, and Prophet to his church.

Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, &c.: a strange agreement against Christ, his truths, and people; Gentiles and Jews never combined so together before. Henceforth it is no dishonour to any, if they follow that which is good, to have great and many enemies, for so had our Saviour: nor is it any honour to any to persecute and despise such; so did Herod, Pilate, Judas, &c.

Acts 4:28

Ver. 28. The apostles mind not so much second causes in what my Saviour or themselves suffered, but see and acknowledge God in all; who makes a straight line with a crooked stick; and is holy, wise, and good in overruling and permitting the greatest evils; and does deserve to have praise for all things, Eph 5:20: see Ac 2:23.

Thy hand and thy counsel; thy power and right to dispose of all persons and things; alluding to Le 16:8: as the lot cast for the two goats (the disposing of which being from the Lord, Pr 16:33) did determine which of the goats should be sacrificed, and which should escape; so it was not without a Divine disposition, that Christ was made a sin offering for us; though this no way excuses the wicked instruments of his death and suffering.

Acts 4:29

Ver. 29. *Behold their threatenings;* they had acknowledged God the Maker of heaven, Ac 4:24, and accordingly here they desire that from heaven his dwelling place he would behold them and their sufferings; as all things are visible to such as sit above us.

With all boldness; freeness, or presence of mind, here translated *boldness*, which in a good cause (for Christ and his truth) is (as all good gifts) *from the Father of lights*, Jas 1:17; and our Saviour hath promised that it shall be given unto us in that hour what to say, Lu 12:11,12.

Acts 4:30

Ver. 30. *By stretching forth thine hand;* they desire nothing else to embolden them, but God's owning them and their work.

That signs and wonders may be done: miracles were then necessary, as being the seal of their commission from God; they desire to have this patent with them, to show as often as occasion served.

By the name of thy holy child Jesus; by the power and authority of Christ; for Christ alone they sought to advance and magnify, and not themselves, by all the wonders they wrought.

Acts 4:31

Ver. 31. *The place was shaken;* miraculously moved up and down, as on the waves of the sea, to evidence God's presence with them, and acceptance of them and their prayers in an extraordinary manner.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost; according to their conditions, whether apostles (for whom these prayers were especially made) or private believers.

They spake the word of God with boldness: this was the grace they asked, Ac 4:29. God gave it them, and with it all other graces necessary for them. In their difficulties and wants, the greatest and holiest in the church of God must go to God to be supplied, and prayer is the most successful means.

Acts 4:32

Ver. 32. *Were of one heart and of one soul;* as if one heart and one soul had moved that multitude; to be sure there was one Spirit in them all, that is, the Spirit of God, by whose grace they agreed in all truths, and in hearty affections towards one another; insomuch, that they were as willing that what they had might be enjoyed by their necessitous brethren as by themselves. The community of goods was not commanded, but left at liberty, and was chosen as most expedient at such a time in that place; that it was not even then commanded, we may see, Ac 5:4; neither was it practised any where but at Jerusalem; and it was the rather practised there, that believers might show what credit they gave to our Saviour's prediction concerning the destruction of that place, in which they did not care to have or retain any thing. There might be something too to command this practice of the church in that season: the whole church, upon the matter, being in Jerusalem, and consisting of such as lived afar off, and were by persecution to be driven suddenly farther, had not such a means been yielded to it must have perished, without a miracle.

Acts 4:33

Ver. 33. *With great power;* by sundry miracles which they wrought, as also by their boldness with which they spake; it being no small wonder to see and hear such illiterate men testifying the truths of the gospel amidst so many learned rabbins.

The resurrection was the greatest point in controversy, which being granted, all things concerning Christ and the gospel could not be denied; and therefore here it is especially mentioned.

Great grace; favour and acceptance; men could not but think well of their doctrine and ways, whom they saw so innocent and holy, meek and good;

especially God's grace was manifest in their words and actions.

Acts 4:34

Ver. 34. So far forth as might relieve the present necessities of believers; not that every one parted with all that he had, for that had taken away (at least) the use and force of the eighth commandment; for where there is no propriety there can be no theft. Now Christ came not to dissolve any law, but to fulfil it: the meaning then is, that these early Christians would not only part with their revenue, but, rather than their brethren should want, they would and did sell their fee simple. See Ac 2:44.

Acts 4:35

Ver. 35. *Laid them down at the apostles' feet;* submitted them to the apostles' disposal: this metaphor is used, 1Co 15:27,

He hath put all things under his feet. According as he had need; the poor man's want is the fittest measure for our relief.

Acts 4:36

Ver. 36. *Joses;* some read Joseph; the Hebrew names, when turned into Greek, meet with divers terminations or endings.

Surnamed Barnabas; full of consolation; not only in that he gave so liberally towards the relief of the poor, parting with his possessions for them; but that he excelled in propounding inward and spiritual comfort unto poor and rich, being of a mild disposition, and fitted to handle gently such wounds as the terrors of the law had made.

Though *a Levite* he might have land, either in right of his wife, or given to him and his ancestors; as we read was to Phinehas, Jos 24:33; otherwise the Lord was the Levites' portion in an especial manner.

The Jews being dispersed all over the known world, some dwelt in *Cyprus*,

as Joses's parents; Saul's parents dwelt at Tarsus; though at this time both Saul and Joses dwell in Jerusalem.

Acts 4:37

Ver. 37. This is an instance of what was said Ac 4:34,35; and Joses probably is instanced in it, either because he sold a greater quantity of land, as having large possessions, or as being one of the first that was remarkable in this kind of charity. *Laid it at the apostles' feet:* see Ac 4:35.

Acts 5:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 5:1-11 Ananias and Sapphira, profanely tempting the Holy

Ghost with a lie, at Peter's rebuke fall down dead,

Ac 5:12-16 The apostles work many miracles, to the great increase

of the faith.

Ac 5:17-28 They are all imprisoned, but released by an angel, and

sent to preach openly in the temple: being brought

before the council,

Ac 5:29-32 they support their witness with great freedom.

Ac 5:33-40 The council are restrained from killing them by the

advice of Gamaliel, but beat and dismiss them with a

charge not to speak in the name of Jesus.

Ac 5:41-42 They rejoice in their sufferings, and cease not to

preach Christ both in public and private.

Ver. 1. A dreadful instance of God's indignation against hypocrisy and sacrilege, which we have an infallible testimony of; which is the more remarkable, because such sins escape punishment from men, either as not known, or not disliked; yet the *damnation* of such as are guilty of them *slumbereth not*, 2Pe 2:3, it being the glory of God to search out matters further than men can, or list to do.

A possession; an estate, house, or farm.

Acts 5:2

Ver. 2. *Kept back part of the price,* when they had vowed the whole to God and his service, which made it a robbing of God, whatsoever pretence they might possibly have of detaining some part for their own necessities in old age, or time of sickness; arguing a great distrust in that God, whom, when they had made their vow, they pretended to give themselves and their substance unto.

His wife also being privy to it; her subjection to her husband not excusing her partaking in his sin and punishment.

Brought a certain part; their ambition carried them thus far, they would seem devout, charitable, &c., and their covetousness hindered them from going farther.

Laid it at the apostles' feet: see Ac 4:35.

Acts 5:3

Ver. 3. *But Peter said;* Peter knew this deceit by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; it being most probably not otherwise likely ever to be discovered.

Satan filled thine heart: as when the heart is filled with hot spirits it is daring and bold, so when Satan filled their heart these wretches venture upon desperate courses and provoking sins.

To lie to the Holy Ghost; this sin is said to be lying to the Holy Ghost:

1. Because against their own consciences, and the Spirit of God too witnessing with their spirits, Ro 9:1. As also:
2. Because they pretended to holiness, and the service of God, when they intended only to serve their own turns; now the Spirit is in a peculiar manner the Spirit of holiness, and the author of it in us, whom they pretended to have been moved by, but falsely.
3. And, lastly: Defrauding the poor members of Christ of their right, (for so by their vow it became), they lied to the Holy Ghost, who constitutes and establishes the church, and accepteth these gifts as given to God, and not to men.

Acts 5:4

Ver. 4. *Whiles it remained, was it not thine own?* A sufficient argument that there was no command (even then) to necessitate them to part with their estates, but only what the present and eminent necessity of the church did persuade them voluntarily unto. The doubling of this expostulation makes the conviction the more forcible.

In thine own power; as a steward under God, to do what thou wouldst with it according to his will; and none are, or can be, otherwise disposers of what they possess.

Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? It seems hence, that it was a deliberate and propensed iniquity.

Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God: in that lying unto God is so often charged, and no express mention is made of Ananias's vow, some excuse him of sacrilege, and charge him the more deeply with ambition, covetousness, lying, and hypocrisy, to the apostles, whom he intended to deceive.

Acts 5:5

Ver. 5. *Fell down and gave up the ghost;* expired and died. Some instances of God's extraordinary judgments upon sinners were in the beginning of the Jewish church; as upon the man that gathered sticks on the sabbath day, Nu 15:35, and upon Nadab and Abihu, Le 10:1,2; and so here in the beginning of the Christian church; to be as marks to teach us to shun such sins, and to teach us that the God with whom we have to do is greatly to be feared. And this miraculous way of punishing notorious sinners in the church, was accommodated to such a time, in which magistrates were so far from defending the church, that they themselves were the greatest enemies unto it.

And great fear came on all them that heard these things: let others also hear, and fear, and do so no more.

Acts 5:6

Ver. 6. *The young men;* such as were present at that time, and fittest for that employ.

Wound him up; according as they were wont to do to such as they intended to prepare the sepulture. Read what was done to the body of our Saviour, Mr 15:46.

Acts 5:7

Ver. 7. *About the space of three hours after;* in his circumstance is expressed to confirm the truth of this history.

Not knowing what was done; not suspecting any such thing, she was the less inquisitive; and such a consternation and dread was upon all that were there, that they durst not tell her, lest they should offend Peter; also, probably, lest they should with so sudden and sad news grieve her.

Came in; into the church, or place, where they were met together.

Acts 5:8

Ver. 8. *Peter answered;* an ordinary Hebraism, by which one that speaketh first is said an answer, if it be tending towards my discourse especially.

For so much; the certain price is not mentioned, as not being necessary to the intent of the Holy Ghost in this narrative; but be it more or less, it was the same which her husband had said the land was sold for.

She said, Yea; she had agreed with her husband what to say; and one sin draws on another, till it ends in perdition.

Acts 5:9

Ver. 9. *To tempt the Spirit of the Lord;* this expression, of tempting God, or the Spirit of God, is not used amongst profane writers; and this sin is not (at least to such a degree) committed amongst pagans and heathens, and is to be dreaded by all that profess the gospel. As often as men sin against their conscience, and their consciences condemn them in what they do, so often they dare, tempt, or try, whether God be omniscient, and knows of, or holy hand powerful, and will punish, their sins; which they find at last to their cost.

The feet of them which have buried thy husband, are at the door; this the apostle foretells ere it came to pass, the more to confirm his authority and the truth of the gospel.

Shall carry thee out, after thou art dead, to thy burial.

Acts 5:10

Ver. 10. The same sins meet with the same punishment; God is no respecter of persons, Jew or Gentile, male or female.

Acts 5:11

Ver. 11. Thus upon the smiting of so many men in and about Bethshemesh, 1Sa 6:20, they wisely demand, *Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?* And upon the slaying of Uzzah, 2Sa 6:9, *David was afraid of the Lord. Discite justitiam moniti. As many as heard these things*, out of the pale of the church: God's judgments do restrain in a great measure wicked men.

Acts 5:12

Ver. 12. *By the hands of the apostles;* by the apostles' ministry: though they were holy and excellent men, they were but instruments; the power they acted by was God's; which also they had prayed for and acknowledged, Ac 4:30.

Among the people; generally among the meaner sort, according to that question, *Have any of the rulers believed on him?* Joh 7:48.

Not many mighty, not many noble, are called, 1Co 1:26.

In Solomon's porch; a large and capacious place, where they might with greatest convenience hear and see what was done and said.

Acts 5:13

Ver. 13. *Of the rest;* such who were not of the common sort of people, and here seem to be distinguished from them: or, *of the rest* (more largely) who had not joined themselves to the church, being amazed at this judgment on these two hypocrites, durst not make a formal show of religion, unless they had a thorough persuasion in their mind concerning the truth of it, and a firm resolution in their conversation to live answerably unto it.

Acts 5:14

Ver. 14. This explains the former verse, and helps us against mistaking it,

for this wonderful judgment was so far from being a hinderance to the men of the gospel, that it is turned to the furtherance of it; for though great men, and such as were insincere, were terrified from owning Christ and his doctrine, others did more readily embrace them by reason of it.

Acts 5:15

Ver. 15. *Into the streets;* into every street generally taken, it being a common practice where they came, and not in one street only. These weak and unlikely means did more show the power to be of God, and was the greater confirmation to the truth of the gospel; and this was fulfilled what our Saviour had promised to the apostles, and such as should believe in him, Joh 14:12, that they should do greater works than he did.

Acts 5:16

Ver. 16. The variety and grievousness of these evils did but the more commend the power which was present with the apostles.

They were healed every one; an evidence that these cures were not wrought by second causes, for the best medicines do not always succeed; as also, in that they were perfectly and suddenly cured who were thus miraculously cured, the God of nature restoring nature beyond what means and art could do.

Acts 5:17

Ver. 17. *Then the high priest rose up;* moved at the report of these things, went out of the council to observe what was done.

And all they that were with him; there were both Pharisees and Sadducees in their sanhedrim or great council, as appears Ac 23:6; but the high priest and a great part were at this time Sadducees.

Indignation, or zeal, which is the best when kindled (as the fire on the altar) from heaven, regularly acting for God's truth and word; and the

worst when inflamed by carnal affections, and set upon wrong objects for self-ends. The pique these Sadducees had against the apostles and their doctrine, was, because they taught the resurrection, which the Sadducees denied.

Acts 5:18

Ver. 18. See Ac 4:3.

Acts 5:19

Ver. 19. God useth the ministry of angels, though he might otherwise do what pleaseth him. An angel rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre. Angels ministered to Christ, Mt 4:11; and are *all ministering spirits, sent forth to master for them who shall be heirs of salvation*, Heb 1:14; and encamp round about them that fear God, Ps 34:7.

Opened the prison doors; and shut them again, after that the apostles were gone out, as appears Ac 5:23.

Acts 5:20

Ver. 20. *Stand;* the word implies courage and stedfastness of mind, as well as such a posture of the body.

All the words; without preferring some acceptable truths before others more ungrateful, if necessary towards their salvation. Christ for a time did limit them; they might not tell any *that he was Jesus the Christ*, Mt 16:20, nor the vision which they had seen in his transfiguration, Mt 17:9. Now this prohibition is taken off. Thus the sun does not shine in his full glory all at once.

This life; some admit of an hypallage, and join the pronoun to the other substantive, reading in this place, *these words of life*; and the rather because by *this life* is ordinarily understood the present, temporary life, as in 1Co 15:19: but there needs not this translatitious sense; by *this life*, the

angel might very well understand eternal life and salvation, for that was it which the Sadducees denied, and for the preaching of which life the apostles were imprisoned.

Acts 5:21

Ver. 21. *When they heard that;* having received a command from God, they resolved to obey him rather than man.

Early in the morning; taking the first opportunity, though they could not but be sensible of the danger they ran into.

The council; the sanhedrim, or great council.

The senate; the judges of their inferior courts, or the chief amongst the priests or senators; either living in the city, or coming thither upon that festival occasion.

Acts 5:22

Ver. 22. These men, thus sent to hinder the spreading of the gospel, could not but be a means of confirming it, when they saw, and declared what they found; so easily can God make use of what is intended against his truth and people unto the advantage of either.

Acts 5:23

Ver. 23. All means imaginable were used to secure their prisoners; but when God will deliver, what can keep them? When God will work, who can hinder? Job 11:10. It is strange, that so great evidence of the innocence of the apostles, and truth of their doctrine, should be ineffectual; but prejudice is insuperable, unless to the mighty power of the grace of God; and this blindness cannot be cured, but by God's *Ephphatha*.

Acts 5:24

Ver. 24. *The captain of the temple;* the commander over the soldiers who were set to guard the temple, either to secure the treasure there, or to be in a readiness to suppress any tumult thereabouts; Pilate speaks of this, Mt 27:65.

The chief priests; the heads of the families, or chief of the courses of the priests.

They doubted of them; by what means these wonderful things were done; for they were loth to see and acknowledge God in them.

Acts 5:25

Ver. 25. So true is that in Isa 8:10, *Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought.* But, *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever,* Ps 33:11.

Acts 5:26

Ver. 26. *Brought them without violence;* they might, peradventure, think it needless or impossible to bind *them* against their wills, who had opened the prison, and so miraculously came out: however, another more certain reason is given of it;

they feared the people; they feared men more than God, who had done so great things amongst them.

Acts 5:27

Ver. 27. When they are about to do the greatest injuries, they pretend to right; and will not judge them, without giving them leave to answer for themselves.

Acts 5:28

Ver. 28. *Did not we straitly command you?* As indeed they had, Ac 4:18; hence they aggravated the apostles' crime, as done out of malice, and not out of ignorance.

This name, and this man's blood, are odious reflections, full of contumely against our blessed Saviour, as if he had not been worthy the naming by them.

To bring this man's blood upon us; they shunned not the sin of murder, but are afraid or ashamed of the imputation of it: as many scruple not to commit that wickedness which they would be loth to be thought guilty of, *Blood;* the punishment of his bloodshedding.

Acts 5:29

Ver. 29. This they all agree in, and it is the common sense of all considering men; as Socrates in his apology told the Athenians, I embrace and love you, O Athenians, and yet I will obey God rather than you. This the apostles had formerly asserted, Ac 4:19.

Acts 5:30

Ver. 30. *The God of our fathers;* this is the rather mentioned by the apostle, that they might not think our Saviour, or they his ministers, preached any other God unto them, but him whom they had worshipped from their forefathers.

Hanged on a tree; a tree, or wood, which is rather mentioned than a cross, that the allusion to De 21:23 might be more full, where he that is hanged on a tree is accursed; and in that Christ was *made a curse for us,* Ga 3:13.

Acts 5:31

Ver. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand:* see Ac 2:33. A Prince;

to conquer and subdue all his enemies, to defend and protect his subjects.

A Saviour; to save from sin, according to his name, *Jesus*, Mt 1:21; viz. from the condemnation that is due unto it, and the pollution that is acquired by it.

To give repentance; repentance is the gift of God; and nothing does more avail with us to repent, than the loss of Christ, (his bitter suffering and death), by whom the world is crucified unto us, Ga 6:14: and if repentance includes newness of life, (as it does), who would not walk in that way which our blessed Lord hath recommended, and in which only we can enjoy him; that doing as he did, we may come at last to be where he is?

And forgiveness of sins, which never fails to accompany true repentance, and is therefore also called *repentance unto life*, Ac 11:18.

Acts 5:32

Ver. 32. *We are his witnesses;* they refuse not to bear their testimony for Christ, who witnessed a good profession for us.

So is also the Holy Ghost; the Holy Ghost does witness,

1. By the apostles; through his grace and strength they bear their record.
2. By all the miracles that were wrought, for they were only done by his power.
3. By enabling any to believe these things; which belief is his work.
4. Not to say that the Holy Ghost was a witness of the things concerning Christ at his baptism, and the several attestations he gave, *saying, This is my beloved Son*, Mt 3:17.

Obey him; some read, believe in him, which is to the same purpose; for there is no true repentance where there is no faith; nor no saving faith where there is no repentance and amendment.

Acts 5:33

Ver. 33. *They were cut to the heart;* they grinned with their teeth, visibly showing the rage and fury that was within them, by which they were as sawn and divided asunder; malice and rage being a grievous torment to the cruel and malicious, ο γαρ μεγας πονος το μη ζην καλωσ.

Acts 5:34

Ver. 34. *A Pharisee;* this sect was accounted more mild than the Sadducees.

Named Gamaliel; it is thought that this man was the same at whose feet Paul sat, Ac 22:3: that he was the instructor to Barnabas and St. Stephen, with many other stories concerning him, are doubtful; howsoever, God made use of him, though as yet an enemy to his church and people, to plead for and protect them to his power. God can effect any thing without or against means, and suddenly to make such as were against him to be for him and his truth.

Commanded to put the apostles forth; that they might consult amongst themselves what to do with them: thus Ac 4:15.

Acts 5:35

Ver. 35. *A wise and good caution;* for he that injures another brings the worse mischief upon himself, both in the sense of having done evil, and in being exposed to the revenging hand of God, whose property vengeance is, Heb 10:30.

Acts 5:36

Ver. 36. *Before these days;* probably under the reign of Augustus, as he whom Josephus mentions was another under the reign of Claudius.

Theudas; some suppose it a contracted name of Theodorus, as Demas is thought to be of Demetrius; though others think it to be of a Hebrew original.

Acts 5:37

Ver. 37. *Judas of Galilee*; whether this was the same Judas who was called Gaulonite, from the place of his birth, a town in or near Galilee, and Galileus, from the province itself in which he was born, it is not so material to discuss, Josephus makes mention of two of this name.

The taxing; setting down all their names at the command of the Roman emperor, whereby,

1. They professed themselves to be his subjects.
2. They paid him a certain rate, in token of subjection, for every head, as poll money.
3. By this means he knew the number of his subjects, and the strength or weakness of every province. This was another tax than that mentioned Lu 2:2, which is there called the first.

Acts 5:38

Ver. 38. *And now I say unto you*; he undertakes to advise them what they should do in the present case.

Refrain from these men; have nothing to do with them, as Pilate's wife advised him concerning our Saviour, Mt 27:19. Gamaliel interposes, partly out of his moderate and mild disposition; partly out of fear, lest if they slew the apostles they might incense the Romans, who were very jealous of their authority, and had taken away the power of capital punishments from the Jews.

For if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; this argument, or dilemma, which Gamaliel uses for the sparing of the apostles,

is of force either way; as that question our Saviour propounds concerning the baptism of John, Mt 21:25. This first part is evident, for that building must needs fall which is built upon the sand, Mt 7:27.

Acts 5:39

Ver. 39. The other part of the dilemma.

The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand, Pr 19:21 Isa 46:10; and it must needs be so, for all power is his, in whom we live and move, Ac 17:28.

Fight against God; they who afflict and contend with his people unjustly, though they little think so, set themselves against God, who will overcome at the last, and triumph over his and his people's enemies.

Acts 5:40

Ver. 40. *To him they agreed;* they yielded to his reason and argument, being persuaded and convinced by it.

Beaten them; this was what our Saviour had foretold them, Mt 10:17; and thus the husbandmen took the householder's servants and beat them, Mt 21:35. They had power yet left them by the Romans to punish offenders in their synagogues, but not capitally nor publicly. In this they left the good advice of Gamaliel, who had warned them not to fight against God.

Acts 5:41

Ver. 41. *Rejoicing;* it argued full persuasion of the truth, and great resolution to abide by it, that they could account so foul a disgrace for Christ's sake to be an honour.

That they were counted worthy to suffer; it is a condescension and favour, when God uses any to give testimony unto his truth, although it be by their suffering: Php 1:29, *Unto you it is given, not only to believe, but to suffer;* as if to suffer for Christ were as great, if not a greater gift than to believe in

him.

Shame; scourging being a servile and disgraceful punishment.

For his name; Christ's name, or for Christ's sake, to assert his truth, &c.: some do not read the pronoun, but *the name*, put absolutely for God, as was usual amongst the Jews, out of reverence to God's name, lest they should profane it.

Acts 5:42

Ver. 42. This is the same with what we read Ac 20:20, *publicly, and from house to house*; that is, in the temple, and public places, they preached unto the Jews; and in more private places, (or houses), where they saw it needful; unto such they conversed with. They visited their flock, and instructed, exhorted, comforted them as their condition required. See the power of the grace of God; these were the men who forsook Christ when the soldiers came to apprehend him, they durst not be seen in his company; yet now they profess his name, and abide by their profession, though they are derided and beaten for it.

Acts 6:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 6:1-4 The apostles, that the poor might not be neglected,

recommend,

Ac 6:5,6 and with, the church's consent ordain, seven chosen

men, deacons.

Ac 6:7 The word of God prevaieth.

Ac 6:8-15 Stephen, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, confuting

those with whom he disputed, is brought before the

council, and by suborned evidence falsely accused of

blasphemy against the law and the

temple.

Ver. 1. Grecians; these were not such as are elsewhere called Greeks, either as being of that nation, or more generally taken for all Gentiles at large; but they were (as to their authority) Jews, and descended from such of them who, in several national calamities, were forced (or chose) to leave their country, and fly to Alexandria, and divers other places; yet kept themselves unmixed with other nations, retaining the knowledge of God, and coming to worship upon the solemn feasts; only, disusing the Hebrew language, they were more acquainted with the Greek tongue, (then commonly spoken every where), and used the Holy Scripture translated into that language, which made them the rather called Hellenists or Grecians.

Their widows were neglected in the daily ministration; they were not taken, as others, into the college, or number of widows, who in that time had some care of the poor; or rather, because they were not so largely allowed, or carefully looked after; for those that sold their goods, being Hebrews, they might not be so tender over the Hellenists, whose estates laying farther off, could not so readily be sold for the relief of themselves or others.

Acts 6:2

Ver. 2. The twelve; for such was their number now again, Matthias having supplied the place of Judas; this is that blessed number, or the root of it, which God hath so much magnified.

The word of God; preaching of the word, and other duties belonging to it.

Serve tables; either providing for the agapae and love feasts, or distributing to the necessities whereby they might be fed, and their tables provided.

Acts 6:3

Ver. 3. *Look ye out among you seven men;* as carefully and circumspectly as ye would in any cases of your own concerns.

Of honest report; a good direction, that obliges to this day, in all elections of any for the service of God and his church.

Full of the Holy Ghost; of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, which were not bestowed on the apostles only.

And wisdom; or prudence, and skill in the word of God, which only is able to make a man wise unto salvation, 2Ti 3:15.

Acts 6:4

Ver. 4. *We will give ourselves continually;* we will stick close, and with perseverance, to this work.

To prayer, and to the ministry of the word; the two great employs of a minister of Jesus Christ; to pray unto God for the people, and to speak unto the people from the Lord: these, though great businesses, they durst not delegate from themselves unto others to perform for them.

Acts 6:5

Ver. 5. All these being Greek names, it is likely they were all Hellenists, and descended from Hebrew parents, but born in foreign countries; or amongst the Jews they might have other names, which St. Luke, writing this history, translated into Greek.

A proselyte of Antioch: see Ac 2:10.

Acts 6:6

Ver. 6. *When they had prayed;* prayer is the salt which seasoneth and sanctifieth all things.

They laid their hands on them; a rite used in the church of old,

1. In their sacrifices, Ex 29:15;

2. In their blessings, Ge 48:14

3. In their designations unto a charge or office; thus Moses on Joshua, Nu 27:18:

and from thence it was more easily derived unto the gospel church; our Saviour blessing thus the children which were brought unto him, Mt 19:13; and this also were ministers ordained in the primitive times, 1Ti 5:22.

Acts 6:7

Ver. 7. *A great company of the priests;* none so violent opposers of the gospel as these were (their interest in all likelihood, heightening their opposition); yet great is truth, especially the Spirit of truth, and did prevail; and though in itself the number might not be so great as to be called a great multitude, yet, considering who they were that were converted, it was very wonderful, and the few might pass for many.

Were obedient to the faith; Christianity is not a bare speculation, but a practical religion; and we believe no more than we practise: *Fac quod dicis et fides est,* Aug.

Acts 6:8

Ver. 8. *Full of faith and power;* enabled to preach, dispute, do, and suffer all things through Christ.

Did great wonders and miracles among the people; of whom he cured many; or, *among the people,* in that he did these wonders publicly.

Acts 6:9

Ver. 9. *Certain of the synagogue;* synagogues were as colleges in our universities, being used for instruction and learning; and were distinguished according to the persons that frequented them.

Libertines; some think these were natives of a certain country in Africa, from whence they were so called; but more probably they were such as were manumitted or made free, (as the word is commonly used for such), and in a middle condition between such as were free born and such as were bond slaves, and might desire to frequent with those of their own rank.

Cyrenians, &c.; the Jews spake of no less than four hundred and eighty synagogues at Jerusalem; a vast number, and probably increased by them: though several places are called Cyrene, this (from whence they took their name) was in Africa in all likelihood, it being joined with that of the Alexandrians. So God pleased to sever the Hellenists, (or Jews by traduction), for the Gentiles were not yet called, that they might all hear the gospel in the language they understood best.

Acts 6:10

Ver. 10. *Not able to resist;* they did oppose it, but ineffectually.

The wisdom: The foolishness of God is wiser than men, 1Co 1:25. What then is his wisdom, through which this holy man spake?

The spirit; the Holy Ghost directing him, and putting a Divine power upon what he spake, according to the promise, Mt 10:20.

Acts 6:11

Ver. 11. What these *blasphemous words* were, we have, Ac 6:14; which show, that the veil was yet over their hearts, and that they could not endure to hear, that the shadows must flee away when the sun is risen, and the types be abolished when the substance of the things typified is exhibited; for this truth was all the blasphemy this holy martyr was guilty of.

Acts 6:12

Ver. 12. Being overcome by reason and arguments, they betake themselves to all the evil arts imaginable; they suborn witnesses against St. Stephen, as was done against Naboth, and (that we read of) never before; they make the people, and the number, (which is usually the worst), on their side; then they complain of him to the priests, &c.; and lest any, or all these, should fail, they lay violent hands on him themselves. Sin goes on as a current, and never stops, unless an Almighty word be spoken unto it to go no further.

Acts 6:13

Ver. 13. They mingled in their testimony false things with truths, as they who witnessed against our Saviour had done. St. Stephen might possibly have inculcated what our Saviour had foretold, Lu 19:43,44, and both have been very innocent; for neither of them spake with any abhorrence of, much less blasphemy against, the law or the temple; but in that the witnesses perverted and added to their words, they are deservedly branded as *false witnesses*. *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*, is a granted maxim in the case of witness bearing.

Acts 6:14

Ver. 14. This place; that is, the temple. Jeremiah had foretold this long ago, and did escape, though very narrowly, Jer 26:12-16; Daniel had prophesied of the destruction both of *the city and the sanctuary*, Da 9:26; and yet these were in great respect amongst them: and none could speak more plainly of the calling of the Gentiles than Malachi, Ac 1:11: and yet when the apostles came to apply these very things more home and close, they could not endure them.

Acts 6:15

Ver. 15. With an extraordinary lustre and radiancy, above what appears in men, whereby they might be distinguished, as Mt 28:2,3, affecting the

beholders with admiration; thus Moses's face did shine.

Acts 7:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 7:1-8 Stephen, called upon to answer the charge against him,

relateth how God called Abraham, and gave him and his

seed the land of Canaan by promise,

Ac 7:9-16 how Joseph was sold by his brethren, and Jacob with

his family went down into Egypt,

Ac 7:17-36 how, when they were oppressed by the Egyptians, Moses

was born, and sent to deliver Israel out of Egypt,

Ac 7:37-43 that this same Moses witnessed of Christ, received the

law, and experienced the disobedience and idolatry of

their forefathers,

Ac 7:44-50 who had the tabernacle of witness, till Solomon built

the temple,

Ac 7:51-53 He reproacheth his hearers with imitating their

fathers' rebellion against God, and persecution of his

prophets, by having themselves murdered Christ, and

transgressed the law they had received,

Ac 7:54-60 Stung with reproach, they stone him, looking up with

faith unto God, and calling upon Jesus to receive his

soul, and forgive his persecutors,

Ver. 1. *Then said the high priest;* who was resolved to condemn any, right or wrong, that should profess Christ, as appears Joh 9:22.

Are these things so? That he might seem just, he gives him a kind of liberty to answer for himself; not to defend his doctrine, but; to know out of his own mouth whether he preached it, or not.

Acts 7:2

Ver. 2. *Brethren;* to take away any prejudice they might have conceived against him, and to recommend, not his person as much as his doctrine to them, he calls them *brethren;*

1. As hoping in the same promises with them;
2. Observing the same law;
3. Worshipping the same God.

Fathers; a word of respect; especially the elder amongst them, or his judges: thus the Roman senators were called fathers; and magistrates ought to be revered as the fathers of their country.

The God of glory; who is also called, Ps 24:7, *the King of glory;* from whom all glory descends to angels or men. By this, and what follows, St. Stephen would show that he honoured the true God, and thought respectfully of the law, the temple, and the patriarchs, whom he was accused to contemn and disgrace. He names *Abraham*, because he was accounted the first father and patriarch of the Jews, and had the first clear promise that the Messiah should come of his seed.

Mesopotamia is sometimes taken strictly for that country which lies between the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, from whence it had its name; sometimes more largely, including Chaldea; and so it is taken here.

Charran; a city of the Parthians, in the borders of Mesopotamia, towards the land of Canaan.

Acts 7:3

Ver. 3. This command given unto Abraham we read of, Ge 12:1,5,6; and it is here the rather spoken of by St. Stephen, to prove that Abraham was in the favour of God, and did truly serve him, before he ever saw the land of Canaan, and before the ceremonial law was given by Moses, and, much more, before the temple was built; and therefore it could not be blasphemy in him to hold that God might be served without those ceremonies, and worshipped elsewhere than in Jerusalem.

The land which I shall show thee; this was the glory of Abraham's faith, that it submitted absolutely to God, and enabled Abraham to go he knew not whither, Heb 11:8, for God did not so much as name the place he would have him go unto.

Acts 7:4

Ver. 4. Abraham had as great a love to his kindred and native country as others have; but he had a greater faith, which made him yield to God's call and command, and follow from place to place the will of God, who is said here to have removed Abraham, and does choose the inheritance and habitation for his people, Ps 47:4.

Acts 7:5

Ver. 5. *He gave him none inheritance in it;* it is true that Abraham had a field, and the cave of Mach-pelah, Ge 23:9; but that was of no use to Abraham whilst alive, but to bury him in when dead; besides, it was not as an inheritance by God's gift, but it was purchased with his money.

Not so much as to set his foot on; whereby the least parcel of ground is meant: hence St. Stephen would prove, that Abraham's happiness, and theirs too, if they rightly understood it, did not depend upon the enjoyment of that place and country.

And to his seed after him; faith met with a double difficulty, not only Abraham must believe he should have all that country given him for an

inheritance, in which he had not a foot of land, but he must also believe that it should be his seed's after him, whenas he had no children; but thus faith is *the evidence of things not seen*, Heb 11:1.

Acts 7:6

Ver. 6. *Should sojourn in a strange land*, as men which dwell in houses that are not their own; which seem to contradict the promise mentioned in the foregoing verse; but it is only to make Abraham the more believe against hope in hope, as it is said, Ro 4:18; though there were never so many difficulties more, for what God hath promised faith would overcome them all. This very space of *four hundred years* is also mentioned, Ge 15:13; which is thus computed: from the birth of Isaac (the promised seed) to the birth of Jacob, sixty years; from Jacob's birth to his going into Egypt, one hundred and thirty years; from thence to their deliverance out of Egypt, two hundred and ten years; this period is accounted, Ex 12:40,41, to be four hundred and thirty years; which also St. Paul reckons by, Ga 3:17; but then thirty years is added unto the account, being the space of time between the first promise made unto Abraham of this seed, and the birth of Isaac, in whom the promise was to be fulfilled; St. Stephen here reckoning only from the birth of Isaac.

Acts 7:7

Ver. 7. *Will I judge*, or punish; and so the Egyptians were punished, not by human means, but by Divine power, and with God's own immediate hand, and that in the fulness of time, the very night in which God's promise was to take effect: and therefore it is *a night to be much observed*, Ex 12:42, as showing, that the sabbath of his people, and the destruction of his enemies, slumber not, 2Pe 2:3.

Serve me in this place; in Mount Horeb. The reason why God delivers his people is, that they may serve him, as Lu 1:74,75; and so long as God hath any work for them to do in this world, he will preserve and deliver them.

Acts 7:8

Ver. 8. *He gave him, Abraham, of whom he was speaking, the covenant of circumcision;* of which covenant, circumcision was the sign and seal by which, on the part of Abraham and his seed it was stipulated, that they should put off all carnal affections.

Begat Isaac, after the promise: so that the promises were not given for Isaac's sake, but Isaac was given for the promise' sake; which made these things more fit to represent gospel grace, of which St. Stephen was preaching.

The twelve patriarchs; the heads of the tribes, from whom they were denominated. Of this genealogy, see Mt 1:1,2, &c., and the history of it in Genesis.

Acts 7:9

Ver. 9. *Moved with envy;* enraged: the holy martyr accommodates his apology so, as that they may yet have occasion to reflect on themselves; for as they had sold our Saviour unto strangers, so had their fathers *sold Joseph. But God was with him,* to favour and bless him; for God's presence brings all good along with it: with this he comforts himself and others, that it was not without example or precedent that God should be with such whom their persecutors could not endure.

Acts 7:10

Ver. 10. *And delivered him out of all his afflictions;* the effect of God's presence with him, which to his people is always in an especial manner, not only as he is with all other creatures, but as the soul is with the body, most effectually, so is God with them.

And gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh: thus God brought Daniel into favour, Da 1:9, and hath all hearts in his hands.

Acts 7:11

Ver. 11. *A dearth*; this is mentioned, Ge 41:54, &c.

And great affliction; as seldom any mischief comes alone, rapine and many diseases follow famine.

Found no sustenance; any coarse diet, grass or herbs.

Acts 7:12

Ver. 12. The history is known, Ge 42:1-38. *Our fathers*; our progenitors, Jacob's sons, from whom we are descended.

Acts 7:13

Ver. 13. Upon their second coming into Egypt, Ge 45:3,4,16, Joseph made himself known unto them.

Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh; for the continuance of their sustenance, and fulfilling of what was foretold.

Acts 7:14

Ver. 14. *All his kindred*; his affinity, and not consanguinity only, which may be the reason why, though in Ge 46:26 it is said, that all *the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt were threescore and six*, (it being then added, they were all such as *came out of his loins*), yet it is said they were seventy persons, Ge 46:27, Jacob, Joseph, and Joseph's two sons (who were also of the promised seed) being added unto the number. In this account of St. Stephen, his sons' wives might be added, which make up seventy-five. There are other accounts of this difference; but it is not of any consequence as to faith and holy living, which are only necessary unto salvation: the wonderful increase to so many hundred thousands of men, besides children, spoken of, Ex 12:37, notwithstanding the barbarous cruelty of the Egyptians, is to be admired.

Souls; the nobler and better part, by which they are numbered, and according unto which they are esteemed by God.

Acts 7:15

Ver. 15. Which St. Stephen puts them in mind of the rather, that he might insinuate, no country, nor place, nor temple, were so necessary, but that (notwithstanding they had none of them) their forefathers did live and die in the fear and favour of God, although in Egypt, out of the Promised Land, &c.

Acts 7:16

Ver. 16. That they carried Joseph to bury him in Canaan, according to the oath he made them take, Ge 1:25, is certain; and that this was desired to be done for him out of faith, Heb 11:22; but is not so certain (unless this place be so understood) that the rest of the patriarchs were so translated after their death: yet it is very likely; for, first: They had as much reason to desire it as Joseph had; they believed the same promises, and had an interest in that land as well as he. Secondly: Their posterity bore the same respect unto them that Joseph's family did to him. Thirdly: It seems alike reasonable, that none of those twelve heirs to the land of Canaan should be left in the land of bondage. This place is acknowledged to be most difficult, and the difficulties are better not to be mentioned than ill solved, which the nature of these notes (not to mention other reasons) might occasion: whosoever will consider the intended shortness of the story, with the usual idioms of the Hebrew language, from which it was deduced, may take this as a paraphrase upon the whole verse: And Jacob and our fathers died, and were removed to Sychem, and were laid in sepulchres, in that which Abraham bought for money, and in that which was bought of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem. *Dr. Lightfoot, in locum.*

Acts 7:17

Ver. 17. *Of the promise*; of the fulfilling of the promise, either of the

increase of his seed, or of their deliverance out of bondage, for both were promised, Ge 22:17; though at that very time there were the greatest endeavours to hinder either when God accomplished both.

Acts 7:18

Ver. 18. These words are taken from the Septuagint, Ex 1:8.

Acts 7:19

Ver. 19. Pharaoh resolves to *deal* (as he thought) *wisely*, Ex 1:10, and it is acknowledged that the Egyptians dealt subtilly with them, Ps 105:25. For they do not at once destroy them, which might have been hazardous, the Israelites being so numerous; neither could Egypt well spare at once so many inhabitants; (too great and sudden evacuations cause swoonings); but they endeavour their ruin by degrees:

1. Wasting them by hard labours.
2. Commanding the midwives privately to kill their males.
3. Casting out, or exposing, any whom they found spared.

Yet this people, attempted upon by so many secret and open means to bring them to destruction, God did preserve; and so he will his church, (which they did typify), maugre all the endeavours the most potent malice can use against it.

Acts 7:20

Ver. 20. *Exceeding fair*, or, *fiar* to God; which though some understand of the inward beauty of the mind, (which is indeed the most admirable), yet in this place there is no more to be understood by it, than the wonderful beauty of his body, which God bestowed in an extraordinary measure upon him, that it might be a means to attract the care and pity of Pharaoh's daughter, as it afterwards came to pass: besides, that which is eminent in

any kind, is, by a Hebraism, said to be of God: upon this account Nineveh is called a city of God, Jon 3:3; and we read of Rachel's great wrestlings, or wrestlings of God, Ge 30:8. Josephus says, that Moses was so beautiful, that all who passed by left the business they were about to gaze at him, Antiq. ii. 5.

Acts 7:21

Ver. 21. *Was cast out;* exposed and left, Ex 2:2, &c.; now was the time for God to take him up, as in Ps 27:10.

Pharaoh's daughter, an enemy to God's Israel; yet God did make use of her to bring tip and educate Moses, who was their deliverer, adopting him for her son, Ex 2:10, and giving him education accordingly.

Acts 7:22

Ver. 22. *Learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians;* the Egyptians were anciently famous for learning, especially in astronomy, and some other parts of philosophy.

Mighty in words; he was eloquent.

And in deeds; his deeds were equal to his words; he could do, as well as say, what became him.

Acts 7:23

Ver. 23. *Forty years old;* this age of Moses is not set down in his history, but they might have it by tradition, which is here confirmed unto us by the holy penman: these forty years Moses spent in Pharaoh's court.

It came into his heart; it speaks these thoughts and resolutions to have been from God, that such a great courtier should so far debase himself; therefore this is deservedly attributed unto his faith, Heb 11:24, which is *the gift of God*, Eph 2:8.

Acts 7:24

Ver. 24. This fact of Moses some defend by the law of nature, which allows us to protect the innocent; but many things we know were done by an extraordinary warrant, which we are not to imitate; nor by our own authority to avenge ourselves or others.

Acts 7:25

Ver. 25. This they might have inferred,

1. From his extraordinary deliverance out of the Egyptians' hands, and out of the river, when young.
2. From his readiness to defend them: it was wonderful, that such a one as he was, and might have been, should mind them.
3. From the drawing near of the time of their deliverance, which they could not, without negligence, be wholly ignorant of.

By his hand; by his means and ministry.

But they understood not: stupidity is frequently charged upon this people: they then did not receive Moses, as these now would not receive Christ.

Acts 7:26

Ver. 26. *He showed himself;* as one appointed by God to deliver them, which he had evidenced before.

Would have set them at one again; with great earnestness, and as far as words could do, he compelled them.

Saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; these words are not mentioned, Ex 2:13, but something otherwise than here; but the sense is here and there the same.

Brethren, not so much being all descended from Abraham and the patriarchs; but in that they all worshipped one and the same God, which is the greatest obligation to concord and agreement that can be; and if any offence to be given, or trespass committed, it obliges us as much to pass it by and pardon it: *Forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father, Ge 1:17*.

Acts 7:27

Ver. 27. The injurious are most averse from peace, and one sin makes way for another. This was a causeless cavil, especially from such a one as had known what Moses had done, as an essay of his being the deliverer of God's Israel.

Acts 7:28

Ver. 28. He charges this great crime upon Moses, to hinder him from further reprovng of him: though recrimination do not make him, or any other, more innocent; yet men ordinarily use it, as if it were some satisfaction to them that they are not wicked alone, but that others are as bad or worse: this better befits an Egyptian than an Israelite.

Acts 7:29

Ver. 29. *Then fled Moses;* knowing that what he had done to the Egyptian would be discovered to Pharaoh, and his life in danger.

The land of Madian; inhabitant by the posterity of Midian, Abraham's son by Keturah, Ge 25:1,2. Moses was forty years in Egypt, forty years in Midian, with Jethro or Jether, who was called also Reuel, Ex 2:18, and Hobab, Nu 10:29, and the other forty years in the wilderness, which make up the hundred and twenty years of his life, De 34:7. This makes to St. Stephen's purpose, to prove that God is always with them that fear him, in what country or place soever; as he was with Abraham in Mesopotamia, and with his people in Egypt, so with Moses in Midian.

Acts 7:30

Ver. 30. *Forty years;* so long it pleased God to try Moses's faith, and his people's patience.

Mount Sinai, in the desert of Arabia, where the law was afterwards delivered, Ex 18:5 19:3.

An angel; not a created, but the uncreated Angel; the Angel of the new covenant, as may be seen Ac 7:32, and by Moses putting off his shoes because the place was holy, Ex 3:2,5; he is also in Ex 3:4 called the Lord. God still appeared in such a manner as was most instructive to them he appeared to, and to us; as here in *a flame of fire in a bush* to show that he was with his people in all their sufferings, and would so provide, that they should not be consumed by them; they might be purified, but should not be destroyed.

Acts 7:31

Ver. 31. *He wondered at the sight;* seeing the bush on a flame, and not consumed, contrary to the nature of devouring flames; that he might be convinced of God's presence, and made the more attentive to what God should say, and prepared to yield obedience unto it.

Acts 7:32

Ver. 32. *I am the God of thy fathers;* that he might know from whom he had his commission, and by whom he was to be sent.

The God of Abraham, &c.; mention is made of these, because God had made unto them the promise of delivering their posterity, which he was now about to do, the time being fully come.

Moses trembled: all great admiration hath some fear joined with it: God's appearing, though in mercy, was ever full of terror and amazement; what

will his appearing be, when he shall come in judgment to render vengeance! Who then shall be able to abide?

Acts 7:33

Ver. 33. *Put off thy shoes;* either out of reverence to the Divine presence, as Jos 5:15, or that thereby he might show that he resigned himself wholly to God's will and disposal; as in Ru 4:7, the kinsman, by pulling off his shoe and giving it to Boaz, did resign all his right he might have had to Ruth and the inheritance.

Holy ground, whilst God manifested his presence there.

Acts 7:34

Ver. 34. *I have seen, I have seen;* seeing I have seen, I have attentively seen and considered; it is doubled to show the certainty of it: if earthly parents, especially, look after their children when weak, much more our heavenly Father.

I have heard their groaning; though but sighs, and scarce framed into words.

Am come down; spoken after the manner of *inch*, according unto which God is said to come down unto any when he delivers them from their troubles, and to go from them when he leaves them in them: see Ex 3:7,8, from which place, according to the reading of the Septuagint, these words are taken.

Acts 7:35

Ver. 35. *A deliverer;* or, a redeemer; but only as a type of Christ, *in whom alone we have redemption through his blood,* Eph 1:7; as Moses by the blood of the paschal lamb brought forth and saved the people of Israel.

The hands of the angel; the power of the angel; it was not Moses, but

God, that wrought so great salvation.

Acts 7:36

Ver. 36. *After that he had showed wonders and signs:* God could with the least word or motion of his will save his people; but he chooseth so to do his wonderful works, that they may be had in remembrance.

In the Red sea; it is not agreed why it is so called; but this name of that sea is mentioned in profane authors. This whole verse, as divers others, refer to the history of it in Exodus, from Ex 1:1-14:31.

Acts 7:37

Ver. 37. St. Stephen would show, that he was so far from speaking against Moses, as they falsely imagined, that he recommended none but him, whom Moses had so long before spoken of.

A prophet; Christ the Messiah, and Head of the prophets: see Ac 3:22.

Him shall ye hear; or obey.

Acts 7:38

Ver. 38. *In the church in the wilderness;* or congregation; with the rest of the people in all their difficult journey.

The angel; see Ac 7:30.

The lively oracles; God's law and word is so called, as the only rule to walk by unto life, De 32:47: it is there said to be our life; and it is the only ordinary means of a spiritual and holy life, which it begets and preserves.

Acts 7:39

Ver. 39. Their glory being in their fathers, St. Stephen reminds them that many of them rebelled against God and his servant Moses; as they (their posterity) now were rebellions against Christ, who came to save them, as Moses before had done; but from a greater bondage, and by more valuable means.

In their hearts turned back again into Egypt; not so much towards that country, or food they had there, (garlick and onions), as towards their idolatry and superstition; as in the following verse appears.

Acts 7:40

Ver. 40. *Make us gods;* according to the Egyptians, who held that there were many gods, and divers degrees of gods; they therefore speak in the plural number.

This Moses: though they confess the great deliverance wrought by Moses's means, yet how contemptibly do they speak of him!

We wot not what is become of him: they could not but know that Moses was gone up into the mount unto God, at his command, and had not forgotten them, but had left Aaron and Hur to govern them; yet they soon forgot both God and Moses, notwithstanding the large and late experience they had of his wonders: this is left upon record against them, Ps 106:13,21.

Acts 7:41

Ver. 41. *They made a calf;* in imitation of the Egyptians, who worshipped their god Apis in that, or the like form of an ox.

The idol; the calf which they had made, which they could not be so sottish as to terminate their worship in, knowing that they themselves had made it, and it had not made them; yet they are for this charged to have committed idolatry, 1Co 10:6,7.

Rejoiced; which joy they express by feasting, singing, and dancing, Ex

32:6.

The works of their own hands; so this idol, and idols generally, are called, Ps 115:4 135:15 which is enough to speak their emptiness and vanity; vain man can make but vain gods.

Acts 7:42

Ver. 42. *Then God turned,* from being as a Father to them, to be a Judge over them, to punish them; whereas formerly he had blessed them.

And gave them up; this was indeed to deliver them to Satan; God withholding his grace which they had abused, Ro 1:21,25, and giving them up, (to fall from one sin unto another), though not positively, yet permissively.

The host of heaven; the angels are so called, Lu 2:13; but it is rather here to be understood of the sun, moon, and stars, which are called so, De 17:3 Isa 40:26.

In the book of the prophets: the words here referred to are in Am 5:25. It is said to be *in the book*, in the singular number, because the twelve small prophets are by the Jews mentioned but as one book.

Have ye offered to me slain beasts, &c.: this positive question does vehemently deny that they had offered any sacrifices unto God whilst they were in the wilderness; but at the same time they had offered sacrifices unto idols; for when they had corrupted God's worship, their sacrifices were as no sacrifices unto him, Isa 1:11 Isa 43:23.

Acts 7:43

Ver. 43. *Took up the tabernacle,* on their shoulders, as they did the ark.

Of Moloch; the idol of the children of Ammon, which the Israelites were especially forbidden to worship, Le 18:21 20:2 yet they did ordinarily worship him, 2Ch 28:3 Jer 7:31 and there was a high place built by

Solomon for him, 1Ki 11:7.

The tabernacle of Moloch was either a chest or press in which that idol was put, or the chapels into which the worshippers of Moloch were admitted, according to the quality of the offering which they brought. Which of the planets they intended to honour hereby, whether the sun, or Mars, or Saturn, it matters not so much; any of these, or any other of their gods, might be called Moloch, taking the word appellatively.

Remphan, in the place here cited, is called by the prophet, *Chiun*; which is one and the same idol in both places, the prophet calling it by its name then in use; and St. Stephen, like unto the name the Septuagint had called it by: whether Saturn was intended by this, as some think, or Hercules, as others, it is not our present business to inquire.

Figures; images and representatives of the hosts of heaven, or of the planets.

Beyond Babylon; the prophet Amos saith, *beyond Damascus*, Am 5:27: here St. Stephen does not contradict the prophet, for they who were carried away beyond Babylon must needs be carried away beyond Damascus, as the ten captive tribes were, unto whom this was threatened.

Acts 7:44

Ver. 44. *The tabernacle of witness*; called also *the tabernacle of the congregation*, Ex 33:7, because about it on all solemn occasions the people assembled. Here it is called *the tabernacle of witness*, because God here testified or witnessed his glorious presence; and especially because in it the ark of the covenant, the law, and the testimony were kept.

According to the fashion that he had seen, Ex 25:40 Heb 8:5. Moses was charged not to vary from the prescript; God being jealous of his own appointments. Now this is the rather spoken of by St. Stephen, that he might prove that the place where God was worshipped in had varied, and therefore might also now be changed.

Acts 7:45

Ver. 45. *Jesus*, or Joshua, it being the same name, as appears also, Heb 4:8, only Jesus is more according to the Greek use: Joshua was a type of Jesus, and agreed with him in his name, and in the reason of his name; he having also saved the people, and brought them into the promised rest; yet the difference is as great between them as betwixt the heavenly Canaan and the earthly.

Before the face of our fathers; they were not able to look upon an Israelite, whilst God was for them.

Acts 7:46

Ver. 46. *Found favour before God;* as Lu 1:30.

Desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob; it was David's earnest request, that he might any ways glorify God, especially in his worship, and that he might know where the ark should rest, and where the temple was to be built, its Ps 132:1-18 declares throughout.

Acts 7:47

Ver. 47. 1Ki 6:9 2Ch 3:1,2. *An house;* a fixed and stable structure, not movable, as the tabernacle was.

Acts 7:48

Ver. 48. This is also St. Paul's doctrine, Ac 17:21, which divers amongst the wiser heathens were persuaded of; for God cannot be comprehended in any place, no, not where he is worshipped; and therefore they did foolishly conceive that the worship of God was so tied to the temple, as if he himself had been included in it.

In temples; the primitive Christians abstained from calling the places of their assembling by the name of temples; and were charged by their pagan

enemies for having no altars, or temples, or images.

Acts 7:49

Ver. 49. The place referred unto, is Isa 66:1. *What house will ye build me, that shall be big enough for one so great as God is?* 1Ki 8:27.

Acts 7:50

Ver. 50. As appears in the history of the creation, Ge 1:1. It is spoken unto our capacity after the manner of men, and implies that God is too great to stand in need of temples or offerings; and that what worship he requires, is not for his own sake, for our righteousness cannot profit him; but for man's sake, that he might be exercised in the duties of religion and devotion.

Acts 7:51

Ver. 51. *Stiff necked;* a metaphor taken from heifers that are unaccustomed to the yoke.

Uncircumcised in heart; such as had still depraved affections, which they ought to have put away rather than the foreskin of their flesh; for they were commanded to circumcise their hearts, De 10:16, which also God promised to do for his people, De 30:6. And St. Paul was not the first who spake of a twofold circumcision, Ro 2:28,29 but God looked always to the inward and spiritual part of his own ordinances, and men's observance of them.

And ears; such as were not so much as willing to hear and know their duty.

Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, speaking by his prophets and ministers, and exhorting to true and serious piety: by this St. Stephen would abate their glorying in circumcision, which they so much boasted of, *As your fathers did, so do ye:* thus the prophet Ezekiel, Eze 16:44, unto

which may be here alluded, *As is the mother, so is her daughter.*

Acts 7:52

Ver. 52. *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?* This is the rather said to stain all their glory from succession, and their ancestors, Mt 5:12 23:31,37.

The Just One; our Saviour deservedly, and by way of eminence, is so called; as not only being himself just, and fulfilling all righteousness, but being *The Lord our Righteousness*, Jer 23:6, and is *of God made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, 1Co 1:30. This word is used in a forensic sense, and is the same with innocent, and opposite to guilty; whereby St. Stephen vindicates our Saviour, notwithstanding the unjust sentence passed here upon him.

The betrayers, in hiring Judas, *and murderers,* in that they excited Pilate to condemn him, and abetted the soldiers and others in executing of him.

Acts 7:53

Ver. 53. *The disposition of angels:* or ministry of angels; the commandments were published from them ministerially; or the Son of God, (called an Angel, Ac 7:35), accompanied with the militia of heaven, (for it is a military metaphor), did in the midst of that glorious retinue give the law, De 33:2 Ps 68:8 Ga 3:13,19.

And have not kept it; they transgressed the law, though so gloriously delivered by angels; and therefore it was no wonder if they despised the gospel, that was published by so mean and contemptible ministers.

Acts 7:54

Ver. 54. See Ac 5:33.

They were cut to the heart; they were angry to madness.

They gnashed on him with their teeth: gnashing of teeth is the curse of the damned, Mt 8:12, which men by their sins do prepare for. This corrosive was applied by a skilful hand, would they have endured the cure.

Acts 7:55

Ver. 55. *Full of the Holy Ghost;* filled with grace suitable to his present trial and suffering.

The glory of God; the glorious God, or so much of the throne and glory of God as mortal eyes are capable for to see.

Jesus standing on the right hand of God; being justified by God, though condemned by Pilate; and *standing* ready to assist and comfort all that should suffer for his sake.

Acts 7:56

Ver. 56. *I see the heavens opened;* God not suffering any distance to hinder this refreshing sight.

The Son of man; so Christ is frequently called; and St. Stephen would by this inform them, how vain they were in striving against Christ or his truth.

Standing on the right hand of God, as an Advocate, Soldier, or Captain for Stephen; or as one showing the prize unto him, which he was now running for, and had need to be encouraged with the sight of. But it seems strange that St. Stephen should tell the Jews of this heavenly vision, being they did not see it, although in the same place with him; but this he might do.

1. Out of his ardent love to Christ, desiring to magnify him.
2. To invite his enemies to repentance, now heaven was opened, and Christ's arms were stretched out to receive them.
3. To hinder any from being afraid to own Christ and his truths.

4. To terrify the most obdurate amongst them, by showing them their Judge, and minding them of his avenger.
5. That he might assert himself to be an eye witness of Christ's being risen again from the dead, which they made such difficulty to believe.

Acts 7:57

Ver. 57. *They cried out;* the rabble, or multitude.

Stopped their ears; that they might show their great detestation of what was said, and might not contract any guilt from it.

And ran upon him with one accord: this violence and fury was both against the law of God and the law of the land; and the number of zealots (there were some amongst that people eminently so called) provoked the Romans to destroy both city and temple.

Acts 7:58

Ver. 58. *Cast him out of the city;* that the city might not be polluted with his blasphemy.

Stoned him; this punishment was appointed for such as seduced them to the worship of false gods, De 13:6,10; and though all power of capital punishment was taken from them, as they themselves confess, Joh 18:31, yet what will not popular rage attempt?

The witnesses; who were by the law to cast the first stones, De 17:7, whereby the witnesses, if they had not testified true, did take upon themselves the guilt of the blood that was spilt, and freed the people, who only followed them in the execution.

Laid down their clothes; their upper garments, that they might carry and cast down the heavier stones.

Acts 7:59

Ver. 59. Stephen called upon him whom he saw standing, and that was our Saviour.

My spirit; or, my soul: thus our Saviour commended his spirit into his Father's hands, Lu 23:46 and this disciple imitates his Master, and comforts himself with this, that to be sure his soul should be safe, whatever became of his body.

Acts 7:60

Ver. 60. *He kneeled down;* a posture used in most earnest prayers; and if so, he prayed at least as earnestly for his enemies as for himself, he praying for them kneeling, and for himself standing.

Lay not this sin to their charge; do not weigh it, reckon or impute it, that it may not remain against them, to hinder their conversion. This our Saviour commanded, Mt 5:44, this he practised, Lu 23:34 and whosoever can thus pray for his enemies, and do good for evil, hath a great evidence that the Spirit of Christ is in him.

He fell asleep; he died; his death being thus expressed, in that,

1. He died quietly, as one fallen into a sleep.
2. Because of his certain hope of the resurrection.
3. As easily to be raised again by Christ, as one that sleeps is to be awaked by us.
4. It is an ordinary Hebraism to express death by sleep; which made St. Luke use it amongst them, with whom it was frequently thus expressed.

Acts 8:1

Chapter Summary

- Ac 8:1-8 The disciples being dispersed by reason of a great persecution at Jerusalem, a church is planted by Philip in Samaria.
- Ac 8:9-13 Simon the sorcerer is baptized, with many others.
- Ac 8:14-17 Peter and John are sent thither, who by prayer and imposition of hands give the Holy Ghost.
- Ac 8:18-25 Simon offereth money for the like power, is sharply reproved by Peter for his wickedness and hypocrisy, and admonished to repent: the apostles return to Jerusalem, having preached the word.
- Ac 8:26-40 Philip is sent by an angel to convert and baptize an Ethiopian eunuch.

Ver. 1. *Consenting unto his death;* well pleased with it, (as the word implies), and did approve it in thought, word, and deed, Ac 22:4,20; which is here noted in the beginning of the narrative concerning this great apostle, that we might consider οἶος ἐξ οἴου, what a great change the grace of God did make; which was by him, and is by us the more to be acknowledged and magnified.

A great persecution against the church; not, as heretofore, against the apostles only; but now it was against the whole church.

All scattered abroad; the multitude of believers, at least as many as could flee; which was allowed, or rather commanded, Mt 10:23, when they were persecuted in one city, to flee unto another; especially such as were teachers amongst them (besides the apostles) were forced to remove from Jerusalem, and by this means did publish the gospel in all places whither they came; so that what was intended for the hinderance, God did overrule towards the furtherance, of the gospel; as he did afterwards, Php 1:12, and

still does, and ever will do.

Except the apostles; who were commanded to stay at Jerusalem, Ac 1:4; there they were to make their beginning, Lu 24:47, and from thence to proceed unto other parts, Isa 2:3; and whilst God had any work for them to do at Jerusalem, they knew that God could and would defend and maintain them in the midst of their enemies, as he had done the bush in the fire, Ex 3:3.

Acts 8:2

Ver. 2. It was an argument that they were *devout* (religious) indeed, that they durst, amongst such a multitude of persecutors and furious zealots, own their esteem for St. Stephen. It was piacular amongst the Jews, to touch the dead corpse of such a one as was put to death for blasphemy; and these perform such funeral rites for him, as were used for such only as were of note and eminency.

Made great lamentation over him; as the Jews were wont to do at the funeral especially of eminent persons: thus it was done at Jacob's interment, Ge 50:10; and thus had been done more lately at Lazarus's funeral, Joh 11:1-44, even by our Saviour himself, Ac 8:35: which lamentation was the greater, because of the church's loss at such a time.

Acts 8:3

Ver. 3. *He made havoc of the church;* Saul was a degree beyond the ordinary sort of persecutors, and was, as he does acknowledge himself, eminently *injurious*, 1Ti 1:13.

Entering into every house; house after house, sparing none.

Haling men and women; as by the hair of their heads.

Committed them to prison; this to be sure the Jews had yet retained power from the Romans to do. All this is but as a foil, to illustrate more the riches of God's mercy towards Saul.

Acts 8:4

Ver. 4. Now the partition wall was about to be broken down, and the Gentiles to be taken into the pale of the church, God provides this strange means towards it. The disciples are forced to flee for their lives out of Jerusalem, and have an opportunity to preach Christ and the gospel wheresoever they came: thus God can make light to come out of darkness, and makes Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem, Ge 9:27.

Acts 8:5

Ver. 5. *Philip*; not the apostle, but the deacon of that name; for the apostles remained at Jerusalem, as Ac 8:1.

Samaria is a name both of a city and a country, so called from the chief city, 1Ki 16:24: here it is taken for that city, or at least a city in that country.

Preached Christ; the doctrine of Christ, his miraculous birth, holy life and death, and glorious resurrection and ascension, together with remission of sins only by faith in his name, &c.

Acts 8:6

Ver. 6. *Gave heed*; a good preparation towards their conversion, seeing *faith cometh by hearing*, Ro 10:17.

Hearing and seeing the miracles which he did; these miracles were as so many evidences of the truth he spake, by which he showed God's authority for what he said.

Acts 8:7

Ver. 7. *Unclean spirits, crying with loud voice*; this is frequently

mentioned, as Mt 8:29 Mr 1:26 3:11 5:8 Lu 4:41, to show how doth these evil spirits are to be forbid and kept from tormenting and destroying of us; and they are called *unclean spirits*, because they delight in sin, and instigate men unto it, which is spiritual uncleanness, and defile the soul.

Taken with palsies, and other diseases and infirmities: this was promised, Mr 16:17,18, that they which believe should cure in Christ's name, or by his power.

Acts 8:8

Ver. 8. *Great joy*; not only for the cures wrought upon their bodies, but much more for the word of reconciliation and salvation preached unto their souls: *joy in the Holy Ghost*, is one of the effects of the kingdom of God, Ro 14:17.

In that city; the despised Samaria rejoices, and the formerly beloved city of Jerusalem repines, at the gospel; such strange alterations does the free grace of God make.

Acts 8:9

Ver. 9. *Used sorcery*; magical enchantments, as a wizard.

Bewitched the people; caused them, as men in an ecstasy, to be amazed at and afraid of him.

Some great one; as if he had been God, or at least had some great favour with him, and had received some extraordinary power from him. Ecclesiastical histories speak much of him, and tell us that he had a statue set up in Rome for him, inscribed, To Simon the holy God.

Acts 8:10

Ver. 10. *From the least to the greatest*; showing how general their mispersuasion was; and no condition is exempt from the grossest mistakes,

if not prevented by the grace of God.

This man is the great power of God; it is said of this Simon, that he gave out himself to be that god, which any nation held to be the chiefest; and that he was the Messiah of the Jews, and the God of the Gentiles.

Acts 8:11

Ver. 11. *They had regard;* they acquiesced in what he said, and yielded obedience unto it; not only attending to his words with their ears, but with their hearts: so true is that which our Saviour says, Joh 5:43, *If any man come in his own name, him will ye receive.* These Samaritans shall rise up in judgment against most men, who do not thus regard what was said by Christ, and such as he hath sent.

Bewitched them; made them as out of their wits; they were not themselves, and could not act their reason.

With sorceries; such wonders as by the permission of God, and Satan's power, he did.

Acts 8:12

Ver. 12. *When they believed;* before they were baptized, being adult and strangers from the covenant, they must first evidence their right unto it, and profess their faith in Christ, and testify their conversation.

Concerning the kingdom of God; the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of his glory, which is one and the same, being begun here, but consummated in heaven hereafter.

Both men and women; women under the gospel are as capable of this seal of the covenant as men.

Acts 8:13

Ver. 13. *Simon himself believed;* Simon believed with an historical faith, that it was indeed true, that our Saviour had done miracles, and did rise from the dead, but his faith, to be sure, was dead all the while; neither did he believe with his heart, or purpose to live according to the law of Christ, which is the life of faith.

He continued with Philip; kept him constantly company, and was amongst the forwardest of the professors of Christ's faith.

And wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done; thus the magicians of Egypt were brought to acknowledge the finger of God, Ex 8:19, although their hearts were hardened.

Acts 8:14

Ver. 14. These were sent that they might further confirm the doctrine which Philip had preached amongst the Samaritans, and by apostolical authority constitute a church in Samaria.

Acts 8:15

Ver. 15. *They;* Peter and John.

Prayed for them; in this particular they did not pray for all that believed, amongst whom there were several women, Ac 8:12.

That they might receive the Holy Ghost; those extraordinary gifts of tongues, of prophesying of working miracles, &c. See Ac 10:45.

Acts 8:16

Ver. 16. *For as yet he was fallen upon none of them;* by which it is plain that the Holy Ghost as the author of saving grace, is not here meant, for so he was fallen upon all them that did believe, for faith is the gift of God; but he was not yet bestowed upon them as the author of those extraordinary gifts mentioned Ac 2:4.

They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus:

1. They were baptized by his authority and commission, Mt 28:19.
2. By baptism they now belong unto and are united with him; they are *baptized into Jesus Christ*, Ro 6:3.

Acts 8:17

Ver. 17. That this laying on of the hands of the apostles was not intended here as any rite whereby the apostles did confirm some, or ordain others, seems evident from the context.

They received the Holy Ghost; the power of speaking with tongues, and working of miracles; which throughout this book is so often spoken of in this acceptance.

Acts 8:18

Ver. 18. *The Holy Ghost;* those extraordinary gifts before mentioned; for this appeared visibly and audibly, and by this indeed was signified the great change God's Spirit makes where he comes.

He offered them money; this notorious hypocrite values these outward gifts; how much more valuable are the inward and spiritual gifts of God!

Acts 8:19

Ver. 19. Such an extraordinary power of working miracles he did not desire that he might glorify God, or confirm the truths of the gospel (now professed by him); but out of an insatiable desire of gain, and ambition to keep up his reputation, seeing how the apostles had done beyond what he was able to do.

Acts 8:20

Ver. 20. *Thy money perish with thee;* a formal execration or curse, not only on his money, but also upon Simon himself; but always to be conditional, viz. unless he repented.

Thou hast thought: our hearts are to be watched over; our thoughts may be exceeding sinful, as here, which made his words or desires to be so ill taken.

Acts 8:21

Ver. 21. *Neither part nor lot in this matter;* no inheritance or share in such a thing as this, to wit, either in the receiving or conferring the Holy Ghost; or in that eternal life which we preach; thou hast no part in it, neither art thou fit to be a minister of it.

Thy heart is not right in the sight of God: the apostle had the gift of *discerning of spirits*, which is mentioned 1Co 12:10; which might cause the execration in the foregoing verse, and in divers other places of Scripture, 2Ti 4:14.

Acts 8:22

Ver. 22. The only remedy and help in his (otherwise) desperate case. This is not spoken as if it were doubtful whether true repentance should obtain pardon, but whether Simon Magus's repentance were true. Repentance is a condition under which God proposeth our pardon and forgiveness, but it is far from being the cause of it.

Acts 8:23

Ver. 23. *The gall of bitterness;* the same with *gall and wormwood*, De 29:18; or gall and bitterness; signifying a very bad constitution and disposition of soul or mind, such as may be compared unto that meat which the gall of any creature hath corrupted. And for Simon Magus to be

in the gall of bitterness, is yet worse than to have the gall of bitterness in him; as to *be born in sin*, which the Pharisees upbraided the blind man with, Joh 11:34, denotes more intended thereby than that he had sin from his birth in him: thus David bewails that he was *shapen in iniquity*, Ps 51:5 and thus may those expressions of St. Paul be understood, of being *in the flesh*, and being *in the Spirit*, Ro 8:9. This also shows (if any sensible or outward thing could show it) what a bitter and poison my thing sin is, no gall so bitter, no poison so deadly.

The bond of iniquity; either the judgment St. Peter had threatened to deter him from sin was this bond, or his sin itself might be rather so called: the we read of *the bands of wickedness*, Isa 58:6. One sin is twisted with another, hard to be severed or broken, and draws on judgment powerfully.

Acts 8:24

Ver. 24. Simon Magus was convinced that he was indeed such as the apostles had spoken him to be; and knowing them to be powerful with God, he desires this of them. He feigns himself to be a true penitent, being terrified with the threatening of St. Peter, Ac 8:20, and probably fearing the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira might befall him, which it is likely he had heard of.

Acts 8:25

Ver. 25. Not only in the chief city, but in the smallest villages, these great apostles spend their pains; for so it was promised unto them that they should receive power to do, Ac 1:8.

Acts 8:26

Ver. 26. Some speak of two Gazas, one distinguished from the other by this epithet of *desert*; but rather there were two ways unto one and the same Gaza, and that it was not the city but the way unto it, which is called desert; by which difference, here mentioned, the angel admonishes Philip not to go the ordinary road, but the more unusual road over the mountians,

which was rarely travelled over, but was now necessary to be gone in to meet with the eunuch. God telleth our wanderings, and ordereth our steps.

Acts 8:27

Ver. 27. *A man of Ethiopia:* the Ethiopians were the most despicable unto the Jews; and Homer calls them, εσχατοι ανωρων; but God would now show that there is no difference of nations with him; but in every nation, he that worketh righteousness shall be accepted, Ac 10:35.

An eunuch; in great esteem in courts, especially to attend on queens, to avoid all suspicion: here that prophecy was fulfilled, Isa 56:4,5: though both in the Hebrew and (anciently) in the Greek tongue a eunuch signified more largely, viz. any attendant in the chamber.

Candace; a name common to the queens of that country; as all the kings of Egypt were called Pharaohs, and the emperors of Germany are called Caesars.

Come to Jerusalem for to worship; being a proselyte, he had been to worship God in that solemn festival of the passover.

Acts 8:28

Ver. 28. He had some knowledge of the true God, whom he came to worship, and he endeavours after more: and to him that thus hath, shall be given; and they that thus seek, shall find. God will rather work a miracle, than that any that sincerely desire and faithfully endeavour to know him, or his will, should be disappointed.

Acts 8:29

Ver. 29. *The Spirit said,* either by the ministry of an angel, as Ac 8:26, or by inspiration immediately by himself.

Go near; so near that you may speak with him that sits in it.

Join thyself to this chariot; stick close unto it, and leave it not.

Acts 8:30

Ver. 30. *Philip ran thither to him;* hastening to obey the Divine command, and coveting to gain a soul.

Heard him read the prophet Esaias, with a loud voice, it is like, to instruct some of his attendants.

Understandest thou what thou readest? Without understanding our reading is but as the tinkling of a cymbal.

Acts 8:31

Ver. 31. A wonderful modesty and humility in so great a man: he takes well Philip's interposing, and questioning with him; he acknowledges his ignorance, and desires further instruction, and condescends to be taught by one so much his inferior.

Acts 8:32

Ver. 32. God's providence is remarkable, that the eunuch should be reading this very scripture, which contains such fundamental truths, and which he had most need for to be informed of. The words referred unto are in Isa 53:7. Whether read in the Hebrew tongue, which the eunuch might have learned of many Jews living in Ethiopia; or whether they were read out of the translation of the Seventy, which was then in common use, is not so necessary an inquiry; both being to the same intent and purpose. Christ was indeed *as a sheep* for his patience, not opening his mouth to defend his own case; but especially he was as a sheep in being a sacrifice for us, the true paschal Lamb that causeth the destroyer to pass from us; and yet he is our Shepherd too, to supply and preserve us, Ps 23:1.

Acts 8:33

Ver. 33. *In his humiliation;* when our blessed Saviour was in his lowest condition, and the utmost degree of his exinanition; his soul being made a sacrifice for us, and suffering that desertion for a time we had merited for ever, and his body laid in the grave as in a prison; then *his judgment,* the punishment which was inflicted upon him in our stead, *was taken away;* for he brake the bonds of death, and opened the prison door: this was foretold, although in somewhat differing expressions, by the prophet Isaiah, Isa 53:7,8.

Who shall declare his generation? Those that shall be brought forth by this travail of his soul are innumerable, or his own eternal generation (who could do such great things as overcame death itself for us) is inexpressible: but by *generation* others (more to the scope of this place) understand Christ's duration, or abiding, notwithstanding that he died; γενεα, does often signify duration; and thus it is an ordinary expression with the prophet, Isa 34:10,17, *from generation to generation:* now none can comprehend that eternal duration of Christ, who dies no more, Ro 6:9, and of whose kingdom there is no end, Lu 1:33.

For his life is taken from the earth; Christ acquired his glory by his suffering; his very exceeding great weight of glory was indeed wrought for him by his afflictions, (as for us, 2Co 4:17), his becoming obedient unto the death was the cause why he was so highly exalted, Php 2:8,9.

Acts 8:34

Ver. 34. *Of whom speaketh the prophet this?* The modestly inquisitive man does get understanding; this question (God so ordering it) brings in the discourse concerning our Saviour.

Of himself, or of some other man? This the eunuch might well make a question, because Isaiah himself suffered much under Manasseh.

Acts 8:35

Ver. 35. *Opened his mouth;* so they were said to do when they began to speak of some weighty matter.

Began at the same Scripture; showing that the prophet, in that most signal prophecy, Isa 53:7,8 could not mean such things of himself, nor of Jeremiah, or of any other.

Preached unto him Jesus; things in that prophecy are applicable unto our blessed Saviour, but to none else.

Acts 8:36

Ver. 36. *A certain water;* this water is supposed to be a fountain in a town called Bethsora, or a river called Eleutherus, which in that road must needs be passed over; it being otherwise very dry, and water very scarce there.

What doth hinder me to be baptized? Although it was not expressly mentioned, Philip had informed this eunuch concerning baptism, its nature and use, which made him express such desire after it; which else he had not done.

Acts 8:37

Ver. 37. *With all thine heart:* a verbal profession is not a sufficient believing, Ro 10:10 though we can discern no other, yet God can, and will not be mocked: Philip, in God's name, requires a faith with all the heart, and not such as Simon Magus had, who is said to believe, and be baptized, Ac 8:13.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; this was the only thing necessary, either then or now, if rightly understood. The eunuch was instructed concerning God out of the law, and was one of them that waited for his salvation; which here he acknowledgeth to be only found in Christ, whom he owns to be the Messiah, who made *his soul an offering for sin*, Isa 53:10, and did bear our griefs, and carried our sorrows, Isa 53:4, and was wounded for our transgressions, Isa 53:5; for all these things Philip had told him were meant of our Saviour, which he did believe were so to

be understood.

Acts 8:38

Ver. 38. In hot countries this was usual, to baptize by dipping the body in the water; and to this the apostle alludes, when he tells the Corinthians, 1Co 6:1), that they are washed: but God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; sprinkling being as effectual as washing, and as significative also, representing the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb, of which we read, Ex 12:3, which presignified the sprinkling the blood of Jesus, that Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world; and our hearts must by it be *sprinkled from an evil conscience*, Heb 10:22. It is not the more or the less of the outward element which makes the sacraments effectual; but they are effectual only as they are God's appointments, and attended upon according to his will.

Acts 8:39

Ver. 39. Philip was suddenly and extraordinarily taken away from the eunuch's sight and company, that thereby the eunuch might be the more assured of the truth of those things which had been taught by him. The *rejoicing* was the effect of his faith; being now justified, he had *peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*, Ro 5:1.

Acts 8:40

Ver. 40. Philip was set down by the Spirit at Ashdod of the Philistines, which is called by the Septuagint *Azotus*: names of persons and places do in tract of time vary. This place had been famous for the idol Dagon, 1Sa 5:3, and for being a chief place of the Philistines, those enemies to God's church; but Christ, when he comes, can cast Satan out of his strongest holds. This Azotus is accounted thirty-four miles from Gaza.

Acts 9:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 9:1-9 Saul, going towards Damascus, is encompassed with a

light from heaven, falleth to the earth, is called by

Christ, and led blind to Damascus.

Ac 9:10-22 Ananias is sent to him, by whom he is restored to sight,

and baptized: he straightway preacheth Christ boldly.

Ac 9:23-25 The Jews of Damascus seek to kill him.

Ac 9:26-30 He goeth to Jerusalem, and is brought to the apostles

by Barnabas: preaching boldly against the Grecians, he

is again in danger of his life, and is sent to Tarsus.

Ac 9:31 The church hath rest, and is multiplied,

Ac 9:32-35 Peter cureth Eueas of the palsy at Lydda,

Ac 9:36-43 and raiseth Tabitha to life at Joppa.

Ver. 1. St. Luke intending a narrative of the wonderful conversion of St. Paul, lets us know what manner of person he was before his conversion, that none might despond of the grace of God, who earnestly and heartily seek it.

Breathing out threatenings and slaughter; so full of rage within, that the stream was outwardly apparent, which that inward fire had sent forth: nothing less than destruction of the church is aimed at by its enemies; whilst Saul was one of them he hunted after their precious life too.

The high priest; who did usually preside in their great council, in which they took cognizance of such matters; The blood of Stephen did not quench their thirst, but increased it; they would spill more still.

Acts 9:2

Ver. 2. *To the synagogues;* this council, though it sat at Jerusalem, had a

power (whether commanding or recommending) over all the synagogues within or without Judea.

Of this way; this was eminently so called, being the way of God, and the way of life, and the only right and true way: any profession, persuasion, or manner of life, is called a way frequently in Scripture, 1Ki 15:26 Ps 91:2.

Men or women; it speaks their extraordinary rage, that would not spare the weaker sex, who are generally spared on that account.

Bring them bound; which shows that he carried many with him, to the further aggravation of his sin.

Unto Jerusalem; where they had power to judge of such things, and out of which it was impossible that a prophet should perish, Lu 13:33.

Acts 9:3

Ver. 3. He was near to Damascus before this wonderful vision, that, being struck blind, he might be the sooner led thither; as also, that the miracle might be more easily and publicly known, Damascus being the chief city of Syria; and, though about six days' journey from Jerusalem, inhabited by many Jews. This was done at noon day, the rather, that the light which Paul saw might appear to be beyond that which the sun gives; and this light was a symbol of that inward light, wherewith his mind was now to be enlightened; as also of the purity of the doctrine he was to preach, and holiness of his life which he was to lead; and most probably it was caused by the glorified body of Christ, which appeared unto him.

Acts 9:4

Ver. 4. *Saul fell to the earth,* struck with the amazing light and terrible voice of Christ; as also with the sense of the presence of God, which he knew was thus revered by Daniel, Da 8:17 10:9.

Saul, Saul; the name Saul is the rather mentioned, to mind him and us of his persecuting of Christ in his members, as his name sake had persecuted

David, who was a type of Christ; and it is ingeminated, or doubled, not only to rouse and awaken Saul, but to testify his love to him, and commiseration of him.

Why persecutest thou me? Christ was in heaven, beyond Saul's rage; but Christ and his church make but one body. Thus Christ says, I was hungry and thirsty, Mt 25:35. And in all their afflictions he is afflicted, Isa 63:9. But *me* is here emphatically spoken, as if our Saviour had minded him of his great love and mercy to him, in dying and suffering for him; and why then should he persecute him?

Acts 9:5

Ver. 5. *Who art thou, Lord?* Saul was in a great consternation and doubling, whether it was God, or an angel.

Jesus whom thou persecutest: though he did not intend this persecution against Christ, yet our Saviour looks upon the good or evil done unto his members as done unto himself.

It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks: this kicking against the pricks is a proverbial speech, taken either from oxen or slaves, whom they used with goads to prick on to their work, which when they kicked against, or opposed themselves to, they did not hurt the goads or pricks, but themselves; so shall all persecutors find that their mischiefs recoil upon themselves; Christ and his members shall be made here glorious by it: this metaphor is common in Scripture, De 32:15 1Sa 2:29. The pricks Saul had kicked against, were the sermons and miracles of St. Stephen and others.

Acts 9:6

Ver. 6. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Saul, being thoroughly humbled, and brought to resign himself wholly to God, makes this question, giving up himself as a white paper, for Christ to write what he would upon: he had thought he had done God good service, (as it is said many persecutors should think so too, Joh 16:2), but he is now powerfully brought off from his obstinacy in that persuasion.

Go into the city; Damascus, which was near at hand. Whether Christ revealed his gospel now unto him, or in the three days in which he remained blind in Damascus, Ac 9:9, is not so certain; but it is certain that he was Ἐριστο διδακτος, taught immediately by Christ himself, as he testifies. Ga 1:12, and in that, without any further instruction, he was baptized, Ac 9:17,18: yet many things might be left for Ananias to confirm him in; and God, by this sending of him to Ananias, would honour his own ordinance, and recommend the ministry and use of means, which are *the power of God unto salvation*, Ro 1:16: and thus, though God could have instructed Cornelius by the angel which appeared unto him, Ac 10:3, yet he is commanded to send for Peter, and to hear from him what he ought to do, Ac 9:5,6.

Acts 9:7

Ver. 7. Stood speechless: in Ac 26:14, these men are said to be fallen to the earth as well as Saul, which they might at first be, and now rose up; or rather, by standing still here is only meant, they, being sorely amazed, remained in the place in which they were, without going forward: thus the angel forbade Lot and his family to stay or stand in the plain, Ge 19:17, meaning that they should hasten forward.

Hearing a voice; the greater difficulty is, to reconcile these words with Ac 22:9, where it is expressly said, that these men did not hear the voice; but it is there added, *of him that spake* unto Saul; so that they might hear the voice of Saul, as it is said in this place, and wonder whom he spake unto, or what he spake about, they not hearing the voice or him that spake unto him, as in Ac 22:9 it is said: and it seems very likely that they should not hear the voice of Christ, for we read not that any of them were converted; and being left in their infidelity, they were in some respects the more undeniable witnesses of a great part of that miracle. But if it be understood of the voice of Christ in both places, then they might hear it, as it is said here, inarticulately, or the noise which that voice made; but not hear it articulately, or so as to understand it, as in a parallel case, Joh 12:29, the people are said to hear the voice that spake unto Christ from heaven, yet they heard so confusedly, as that they thought it had only, been thunder. To be sure, they who are converted, and they who are not converted, by

the word of God, may hear the word; but after a very different manner; they that are converted by it only hearing it inwardly, spiritually, effectually.

But seeing no man; these fellow travellers with St. Paul are said to see no man, but the expression here imports their doing their utmost for to see him that spake: thus God made a difference, Da 10:7, in the vision we read of there.

Acts 9:8

Ver. 8. *When his eyes were opened;* when he opened his eyes as at other times, when he did rise to see, the glorious light had so dazzled him, that he could see nothing: thus Saul as, and all men are, before their conversion; he had the shape of a man, and of one learned in the law, when notwithstanding he is blind, and sees or knows nothing as he ought to know.

Acts 9:9

Ver. 9. Some have thought that in these three days Paul had that rapture into the third heavens, which he speaks of, 2Co 12:2; but that seems rather to have been afterwards; God would, however, by this humble and try him, and excite his dependence wholly upon him, and that he might value his restored sight the more.

Neither did eat nor drink; that by fasting he might be more intent in prayer; for fasting does prepare for prayer, and therefore fasting and prayer are so often put together, Mt 17:21 Ac 13:3. In those places they could fast longer without prejudice to their health, than amongst us, and, as I might add, were more willing to fast for any spiritual advantage than we are.

Acts 9:10

Ver. 10. *Ananias;* he was of good repute for zeal and holiness. as appears, Ac 22:12, but whether he was one of the seventy disciples which our

Saviour sent out, Lu 10:1, as some will have, is not certain.

He said, Behold, I am here, Lord; thereby showing his willingness to be sent on God's message, and to do as God should bid him, as Samuel to Eli, 1Sa 3:5.

Acts 9:11

Ver. 11. *Inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul:* God telleth our wanderings, and knoweth our abode, and mindeth his, especially in their sorrows, which was Saul's case.

For, behold, he prayeth; he spent those three days, spoken of Ac 9:9, in acts of great humiliation, in which he would also not taste any food; this is revealed to Ananias, that he might not fear to go unto him. A great change! Is Saul also amongst them that pray? A greater wonder than that the other Saul was formerly amongst the prophets.

Acts 9:12

Ver. 12. If this verse be the words of St. Luke, continuing the history, then they must be included in a parenthesis, the sense being entire without them; but they seem to be the words of the Lord continued to Ananias, telling him how he had provided for his welcome to Saul, contrary to his expectation.

Acts 9:13

Ver. 13. *I have heard by many of this man;* his design and commission could not but be noised abroad.

Thy saints: the disciples of Christ are called saints, because:

1. They are dedicated unto the Lord in their baptism.
2. They are called unto holiness.

3. They did then live holily and exemplarily.
4. And so must all that hope for any benefit by their being disciples of Christ, &c.

Acts 9:14

Ver. 14. Here Ananias shows the strength of his excuse; for flesh and blood cried in him, as in Moses, Ex 4:13, *Send by him whom thou wilt send.*

Acts 9:15

Ver. 15. *He is a chosen vessel:* the whole world is God's fabric, and the church especially is his house: not only in the whole world, but in the visible church, there are all sorts of utensils, some for higher, others for meaner uses; Saul was to be a vessel unto honour, Ro 9:21, into which the treasures of God's word were to be put, 2Co 4:7, though he was but an earthen vessel: Such was indeed chosen by God to preach the gospel, Ga 1:15,16, to suffer for Christ's name's sake, 1Th 3:3.

To bear my name before the Gentiles: this mystery of the calling of the Gentiles began now to spread abroad, and to be made more known, which was hid in those promises, Isa 49:6 Jer 1:10.

Acts 9:16

Ver. 16. He shall suffer as great things as he ever did cause or inflict; the hatred of his own countrymen the Jews, and the fury of the Gentiles: see the catalogue of them, 2Co 11:23-27. And were there ever so many sufferings heaped upon one man? And yet, though all these were foretold unto him, and certainly foreknown by him, he would preach the gospel for all that: much was forgiven him, and he loved much.

Acts 9:17

Ver. 17. *Entered into the house;* the house of Judas, with whom Saul lodged, as Ac 9:11.

Putting his hands on him; concerning this, see Ac 6:6, besides on what may be said of this imposition of hands elsewhere: the curing of St. Paul's blindness was one reason of putting his hands on him here, for so it was ordinarily done towards the sick or infirm; they laid their hands upon them to heal them, as it was promised that they should do, Mr 16:18.

Brother Saul; Saul was become Ananias's brother, as professing the same faith, and heir of the same promise with him.

Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way; Ananias mentions what had happened to Paul in the way, that Saul might be assured that he was sent from God, for none else could have told him what had happened.

Acts 9:18

Ver. 18. *Scales,* as scales of fish: it was no ordinary blindness, nor from any ordinary cause, and could not have been cured by common means.

Acts 9:19

Ver. 19. St. Paul could not but be much weakened with his journey, fear, grief, fasting, and constant praying; and now he takes a prudent care of his health, that he might be further enabled for the service of God, to what place soever he should be appointed.

With the disciples: Saul is no sooner changed, but he changeth his company and acquaintance; he resorts to none of the rabbies of the Jews, but to the disciples of Christ; he would love any, learn of any, that had Christ for their Master.

Acts 9:20

Ver. 20. *He preached Christ in the synagogues;* the apostles spake unto the Jews first, either that they might convert them, or at least take away all excuse from them.

That he is the Son of God; which doubtless he spake largely unto, though it be not here expressed; but he had an abundance in his heart, having tasted the power of the grace of God in Christ, and out of his heart his mouth spake.

Acts 9:21

Ver. 21. This great change is a most unaccountable thing, and might truly cause amazement; but *ex quovis ligno fit Mercurius, cum digitus Dei sit statuarius.* Nothing is too hard for that God in whose hand Saul's heart was.

Acts 9:22

Ver. 22. *Increased the more in strength;* true grace thrives by exercise and opposition: the word here used many take to be a metaphor from builders, who, in erecting their fabrics, fit one piece or part to another, and then bring them and join them together; thus St. Paul did, in bringing forth or quoting the promises in the Old Testament, and showing their exactly being fulfilled in the New Testament, or in the gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ; and he spake with such an evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, that he did, as it were, constrain men to be of his opinion.

Proving that this is very Christ; which was the sum of the gospel.

Acts 9:23

Ver. 23. *Many days;* God would not presently expose him to conflicts, but inure him to suffer by degrees; as also it pleased God to spare him so long nigh unto that place where he had wrought so great a miracle for him, the

sense of which might the more be upon himself and others also; for he continued here three years, excepting only a journey into Arabia, as may be seen, Ga 1:17,18.

Acts 9:24

Ver. 24. *Their laying await;* the Jews, who stirred up Aretas the king of Damascus against Paul, 2Co 11:32,33: now began those things to be fulfilled, foretold Ac 9:16.

Acts 9:25

Ver. 25. As Rahab did the spies, Jos 2:15, and Michal did David, 1Sa 19:12.

Acts 9:26

Ver. 26. *To join himself to,* to be admitted to intimate fellowship and communion with, *the disciples. They were all afraid of him;* Paul was sufficiently known by name and face at Jerusalem, and many had felt his rage.

And believed not that he was a disciple; but how could the disciples be ignorant of his conversion so long, if it was three years after, as it seems by Ga 1:18? To answer which may be considered:

1. The great distance between Jerusalem and Damascus, six days' journey.
2. The little correspondence between the kings of those places, Herod and Aretas.
3. The persecution which was at Jerusalem might hinder the converts of Damascus them going thither.
4. Paul might have spent a great part of the three years in his journey amongst the Arabians, of which before.

Acts 9:27

Ver. 27. Of *Barnabas* mention is made, Ac 4:36, who is thought to have been Paul's fellow disciple under Gamaliel.

Brought him to the apostles; these apostles, to whom Barnabas brought Paul, were Peter and James, as Ga 1:18,19, who being the apostles of the circumcision, or having Judea under their charge, were abiding at Jerusalem, whilst the other apostles probably were absent, being founding of churches elsewhere.

He had seen the Lord, &c. :some take these things to have been related by Paul, others by Barnabas, who testified these things concerning Paul.

Acts 9:28

Ver. 28. Living amongst them, and freely conversing with them; that is, with Peter, and James, and the rest of the believers, who had now no suspicion of him.

Acts 9:29

Ver. 29. *Disputed against the Grecians;* Hellenists, of which Ac 6:1, such as were born in foreign parts, but of Jewish parents; these Paul chose rather to dispute with, because these had raised the persecution against Stephen, and Paul had furthered them in it; and he was very desirous to unweave that web, and give them an antidote unto whom he had formerly given poison; being especially concerned for their souls, whom he had helped to destroy.

Acts 9:30

Ver. 30. *Caesarea;* there were two towns of this name, one a coast town, spoken of, Ac 8:40; the other was called Caesarea Philippi, nigh Mount

Lebanon.

Tarsus, St. Paul's birth place, where amongst his relations and acquaintance they might hope he would be safe.

Acts 9:31

Ver. 31. *Then had the churches rest;* when Paul was sent away, against whom they had the greater spite, as having been as zealous a persecutor as any amongst them.

And were edified: the church is frequently compared to a building, and every believer to the temple of God, 1Co 3:16, and 1Co 6:19, which God dwells in; from whence this metaphor is taken.

Walking in the fear of the Lord: walking is a progressive notion, and so is building and adding to a structure till it come to perfection; which signifies that these believers increased daily in the knowledge of God, in true piety and charity, &c.

In the comfort of the Holy Ghost; the word also signifies the exhortation of the Holy Ghost; such exhortations as were given from God by the apostles: to be sure, the comforts of the Spirit are not without our obedience to the commandments of God; and it seems to be given here as the reason why the churches were edified, and did thus increase, because believers walked in the fear of the Lord; and nothing persuades more effectually to the embracing of religion, than the holy living of such as make profession of it.

Acts 9:32

Ver. 32. *Throughout all quarters,* where the disciples that were dispersed had planted churches.

Saints: see Ac 9:13.

Lydda; a little town about the west bank of the Jordan, not far from the

Mediterranean Sea.

Acts 9:33

Ver. 33. It is supposed this *Aeneas* was a Jew, though now living at Lydda; and that St. Luke here names him by the name the Grecians called him by, he being amongst his own countrymen called Hillel.

Kept his bed eight years; to show the difficulty of the cure, and greatness of the miracle.

Acts 9:34

Ver. 34. *Jesus Christ maketh thee whole:* these words are not a prayer, (though they were not spoken without Peter's lifting up his heart to Christ in prayer), but a promise to this sick man of health and recovery, declaring from whom he should receive it, that he might know whom to acknowledge and thank for it.

Arise, and make thy bed: our Saviour bids the sick of the palsy to arise, and take up his bed, Mr 2:11; and so he commands the impotent man, Joh 5:8. Here St. Peter bids this paralytic to make his bed; which seems more strange, being he was commanded to arise, so that now he should have no need of having his bed made; but it is easily answered, that being it was only intended to show how fully he was cured, the making of his bed did as much prove, both to himself and others, that he was recovered, as any thing else could do.

Acts 9:35

Ver. 35. *Lydda:* see Ac 9:32. *Saron* is the name of a city, 1Ch 5:16, but here it is rather the name of a country, (which the masculine article usually shows), lying between Mount Tabor and the lake of Tiberias, a very fruitful plain, 1Ch 27:29 So 2:1.

Turned to the Lord; to the owning of his truth. Error (if in fundamentals)

keeps us from God.

Acts 9:36

Ver. 36. *Joppa*, a post town: see Ac 10:5. These circumstances of places and persons are set down to evidence the certainty of the history.

Tabitha, according to the Syriac dialect, then in use amongst the Jews, and *Dorcas*, as she was called amongst the Greeks; it being common for the same person to have two names, one Hebrew and the other Greek, as Thomas, who was called Didymus, and Cephas, who was called Peter.

Full of good works; she was rich in good works, which are the best riches, last longest, and go farthest.

Acts 9:37

Ver. 37. They washed the dead, and anointed them, to fit them for their burying, and especially to show their hope of the resurrection; which some think St. Paul alludes unto, 1Co 15:29.

Acts 9:38

Ver. 38. They sent for Peter, that he might come to comfort those that were concerned in the great loss of so good a woman, and, it may be, not without some hopes of her recovery by a miracle from St. Peter; which is the likelier, because they so much hasten his coming to them, she being already dead, and they preparing for her burial.

Acts 9:39

Ver. 39. It was strange that Peter should be sent for, or that he should go on such an account, viz. to raise one that was dead; but God, who had ordered this miracle for the manifestation of his truth and glory, so wrought in their hearts, that they did this out of faith; though if others

should think to imitate it, it would be but presumption.

Weeping; here needed no mourning women to be hired; the death of this good woman was a common loss: these coats were made by Dorcas in her lifetime, to clothe the poor and naked with.

Acts 9:40

Ver. 40. *Peter put them all forth;* Peter put them out, that he might pray the more earnestly, without distraction or interruption; thus Elisha shut the door to him when he prayed for the Shunammite's son, 2Ki 4:33.

Kneeled down; this his kneeling is mentioned, to recommend reverence in our praying unto God.

And prayed: Peter, by his betaking himself unto prayer, would show, that he could do nothing by his own power, but it must come from above; and he had every mercy as much precariously, and by prayer, as any others.

Acts 9:41

Ver. 41. *The saints and widows;* such who had sent for him, and now were gathered together to see what effects his prayers might have.

Presented her alive, and in perfect health, as all were that were miraculously cured; for the Lord's works are perfect, De 32:4.

Acts 9:42

Ver. 42. This cure was wrought, and all the other miracles were done, to be a means to make the gospel to be believed, which he published, and was an undeniable proof that this doctrine was from heaven; for none could do such things unless God were with him, or rather, unless God did them by him; so that this miracle wrought by St. Peter did more good to the souls of many, than to the body of this relieved woman.

Acts 9:43

Ver. 43. The miracle had only prepared them to receive his doctrine, which Peter tarried some time with them to instruct them in: the miracle had prepared the ground, and now he takes this season to sow the seed of the word into it.

Acts 10:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 10:1-8 Cornelius, a devout centurion, being commanded by an angel, sendeth for Peter,

Ac 10:9-16 who in the mean time is prepared by a heavenly vision,

Ac 10:17-24 and, receiving a command from the Spirit, goeth with the messengers to Caesarea.

Ac 10:25-33 Cornelius receiveth him with great respect, and showeth the occasion of his sending for him.

Ac 10:34-43 Peter preacheth Christ to him and his company.

Ac 10:44-48 The Holy Ghost falleth on them, whereupon they are baptized.

Ver. 1. *In Caesarea;* in Caesarea Palestine, as it was called in contra distinction to Caesarea Philippi.

Cornelius; a Roman by his name; which name was ordinarily to be found amongst the families of the Scipios and Syllas.

A *band* answers either to a regiment amongst us, or to a legion amongst the Romans (this latter was far greater than the former).

It was *called the Italian band,* as being composed of Italian soldiers, and might be used as a guard of the proconsul, who dwelt at Caesarea, who was that Felix we read of, Ac 23:24.

Acts 10:2

Ver. 2. *A devout man;* this Cornelius was a proselyte of the gate, or such as observed the seven precepts of Noah, and lived without giving any offence to the Jews.

With all his house; it was a very good sign that he feared God, in that he engaged all his house to do the like, at least outwardly, which was as much as he could do: this was spoken by God in Abraham's commendation, Ge 18:19.

Prayed to God always; he did not neglect the seasons of prayer, especially the time of offering the morning and evening sacrifice, which by prayer they desired to partake the benefit of by which Christ our sacrifice, and his merits, were figured unto them. Cornelius indeed prayed always, or at all times, taking time in a moral sense, for the seasons and opportunities for such a duty; (as we are commanded to give thanks always, Eph 5:20); but he could not pray always, or at all times, taking time in a natural sense, for then he must have neglected all other duties; however, his endeavour was to keep his heart always in a praying disposition.

Acts 10:3

Ver. 3. *In a vision;* not in a dream or rapture, but sensibly and plainly.

About the ninth hour; their ninth hour was with us about three o'clock in the afternoon; being the ordinary time for the evening sacrifice; and, by consequence, their time of prayer, Ac 3:1. And this devout man doth not seek God's face in vain; Cornelius had been faithful in a little, and God would give him much; rather than he should want further instruction, who had improved what he had already, God here sends an angel, and soon after an apostle unto him.

Acts 10:4

Ver. 4. *He was afraid;* the angel appeared in so great splendour: all admiration hath some fear with it.

And said, "What is it, Lord?" This is equivalent to, "What wilt thou have me to do?" and shows that Cornelius was prepared to hear the message.

Thy prayers and thine alms; prayer and alms are joined together in our Saviour's discourse concerning them, Mt 6:1-7 and in the apostle's order about them, 1Co 16:1: alms are our sacrifices now under the gospel, Php 4:18 Heb 13:16.

Are come up for a memorial before God; an allusion to the offering up of incense under the law; the smoke of the incense did ascend, and so David desires that his prayers might ascend toward God, Ps 141:2: thus, under the gospel, prayers are resembled to incense, Re 8:3. That prayers are said to come up for a memorial, is but the pursuance of the same metaphor; for, Le 2:2, the frankincense, &c. was the memorial there commanded to be burned; and all this only to represent unto us how well pleasing the prayers of his people are unto God through Christ, and that God keeps in remembrance all those things they thus desire of him, and in his time and measure (which are the best circumstances) bestows all upon them: but let not prayers and alms, which God here hath put together, be put asunder, and in due time we shall reap.

Acts 10:5

Ver. 5. *Joppa*, a town that was memorable for Jonah's taking ship there, when he would flee from God, and decline his message, Jo 1:3. The angel could have declared the gospel, and instructed Cornelius; but he sends him to Peter, God being willing to honour the means of his own institution.

Acts 10:6

Ver. 6. These particulars, when found true by Cornelius, did very much advantage him towards his believing what Peter in the name of the Lord did tell him.

Acts 10:7

Ver. 7. *Two of his household servants;* these servants doubtless Cornelius had instructed, as appears Ac 10:2, and God blesses him with faithful and successful service from them.

A devout soldier; no condition, or temptation, too hard for the grace of God to overcome; both centurion and soldier are willing to hazard all they had, rather than not to obey God, and come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Waited on him continually; this soldier, for his religion's sake, and his holy life, was taken into nearer attendance on Cornelius; it is no small matter to have one near us that hath power with God.

Acts 10:8

Ver. 8. Thus on Cornelius's side all things are disposed towards his receiving of the gospel; and the same providence, at the same time, disposes all things on Peter's part towards his coming to publish it: for, (see Ac 10:9).

Acts 10:9

Ver. 9. These houses were flat on the tops, and therefore they were commanded to make battlements for them, De 22:8.

Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, that he might from thence view the temple, which was a type of Christ, through whom only we and our prayers can be acceptable unto God; hence, 1Ki 8:30, &c., there is so often mention made of praying towards the city, and towards the place which God should choose; this Daniel practised, though upon the hazard of his life, when both city and temple were ruined, Da 6:10.

The sixth hour with them is high noon, or midday, and is accounted one of the three times of prayer, (see Ac 3:1), and was, as the Jews say, recommended to them by Isaac; howsoever, it was the time when they

might begin to prepare the evening sacrifice: none of these causes need to be assigned, for doubtless this blessed apostle did *watch unto prayer*, 1Pe 4:7, and desirously laid hold upon all opportunities to pour out his soul unto God.

Acts 10:10

Ver. 10. *He became very hungry;* he might be more than ordinarily hungry, to fit or suit the vision, which is hereafter mentioned.

He fell into a trance: the most excellent way of God's manifesting himself unto man, is by a trance; (and they reckon seven ways, in which God makes himself known unto man); but what this trance was is diversly expressed: it is certain. that in it the soul was, as it were. absent from the body, drawn off from the perception of earthly and sensible things, and enabled unto the perception of heavenly mysteries: in such an ecstasy was St. Paul, 2Co 12:2, and St. John, Re 1:10, who is therefore said to be *in the Spirit*.

Acts 10:11

Ver. 11. *And saw heaven;* either visibly to his corporal eyes, as to St. Stephen's; or rather mentally, more suitably to the rapture mentioned in the former verse.

Opened; which might signify, that heaven, that was shut to the children of men by the first Adam, was now by Christ, the Second Adam, opened to all believers.

Vessel; this word is taken for any utensil commonly used about the house; and, with the *sheet* here spoken of, bears an analogy to a table and table cloth amongst us.

Knit at the four corners; so gathered up or knit, that the viands, Ac 10:12, might not fall down. And this Peter saw to come from heaven, to show that the liberty of taking Cornelius and other Gentiles into the church, did come from thence only.

Acts 10:12

Ver. 12. As well unclean beasts, such as were forbidden by the law, as clean, such as by the law might be eaten.

Acts 10:13

Ver. 13. Of that thou seest, without any exception, whether they be clean, or (formerly) unclean creatures. The moral of which command is, that he might now converse with Jews and Gentiles indifferently, and preach unto these also the word of life.

Acts 10:14

Ver. 14. These words may signify one and the same thing, and the latter explain the former; showing that those things are said to be common, which the law, by forbidding them, had made unclean. Others make some difference; and by things common, understand all sorts of creatures, which were forbidden to the Jews, but were commonly fed upon by all nations round about them; and by things unclean, they understand such as by accident became so, as when any of the creatures permitted for use was strangled.

Acts 10:15

Ver. 15. Do not make in thy esteem, or practice, as *common*, that is, polluted. The Jews did imagine, that by unclean creatures were meant the Gentiles, as by clean creatures they would have themselves to be understood; howsoever, they opposed common unto holy; indeed a holy man is (as they called him) a singular man: it was God that cleansed Cornelius, turning him from idolatry to the worship of the true God, from darkness unto light.

Acts 10:16

Ver. 16. Whereby this great mystery of the conversion of the Gentiles, and taking them into the church, might be the more confirmed, and fixed in St. Peter's mind.

Acts 10:17

Ver. 17. *Doubted in himself;* recollecting himself; for the vision had so affected him, that it had put him into a kind of ecstasy, out of which when he came to himself, *behold, the men;* the two servants and the soldier which Cornelius had sent.

Acts 10:18

Ver. 18. Being strangers, they address themselves to such of the house as came to the door.

Acts 10:19

Ver. 19. *Thought on the vision;* set himself to meditate upon that he had seen and heard.

The Spirit said unto him; the Holy Spirit informs him further. Thus whosoever meditates carefully upon what he hears from God's word, God will never leave him without sufficient instruction.

Acts 10:20

Ver. 20. *Arise therefore;* immediately put thyself upon the journey.

Doubting nothing; spend no time in disputing within thyself, because that they, unto whom thou art sent, are not Jews.

Acts 10:21

Ver. 21. Peter being in no small consternation, and not perfectly knowing whither all this tended, makes the more exact inquiry.

Acts 10:22

Ver. 22. That they might speed in their message, they labour to prevent all prejudice Peter might have against Cornelius, who was a Gentile by title; telling him:

1. That he was *a just man*, as is said of Joseph, Mt 1:19.
2. That he worshipped the true God the same with the Jews, and not the false gods of the Gentiles.
3. That he was reputed a pious and good man, and so it would be no disparagement to the apostles to go unto him.

Was warned from God: this argument St. Peter could not deny. When God's command is evident, his people are determined and resolved.

Acts 10:23

Ver. 23. *And on the morrow Peter went away with them;* he delays not to obey the heavenly vision; but as Abraham took his journey the very next morning after that he had received the command, Ge 22:3, so did Peter here, and *bis dat qui cito dat*, he doubles his obedience that obeys speedily and cheerfully.

And certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him; these brethren were six in number, as Ac 11:12; who might undertake this journey,

1. Out of respect to Peter, to accompany him.
2. Being moved at the extraordinary visions that were spoken of. But especially:

3. Disposed by the providence of God to accompany St. Peter, that they might testify the grace of God that was come unto the Gentiles, when it might be afterwards questioned.

Acts 10:24

Ver. 24. Joppa was about fifteen leagues from Caesarea, so that the next day after they set out they might easily come from Joppa thither.

His kinsmen; his relations.

And near friends; and such as he had the greatest love and kindness for; he thought that he could not express it better, than by giving them an opportunity to hear the word of life, and to gain instruction for their souls: and probably those here spoken of were reckoned as friends, and near friends, by Cornelius, because they were such as with him had forsaken all pagan idolatry, and were worshippers of the true and living God.

Acts 10:25

Ver. 25. *As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him;* into Cornelius's house, for he hastened to meet with him.

Worshipped him; Cornelius worshipped with the most humble civil worship; but he could not think him to be God, and therefore he did give him no Divine worship, he having forsaken the idolatry of the Gentiles; but might perhaps think him to have been an angel, and intended to worship him accordingly, for which he is blamed in the following verse.

Acts 10:26

Ver. 26. It is certain that Peter did think this worship Cornelius gave him to have exceeded; and here he blames him for it, telling him, he was but a man like unto him; and he needed not give any further reason of his reproof, for man must adore, but by no means may be adored; no, nor take

too much honour unto himself.

Acts 10:27

Ver. 27. *As he talked with him;* they went talking together into the house, probably of the goodness of God, that they should be directed so happily unto one another; for they could not but see and acknowledge God in it.

Acts 10:28

Ver. 28. God himself did erect a partition wall betwixt his people and other nations, Jews and Gentiles; hence by God's own command the Jews might not have any familiar converse with the Gentiles, especially they might not marry with them. The Jews themselves had made this partition wall much larger, and they held it unlawful to eat with any of the Gentiles, or to go so much as into their houses; hence that objection made upon this occasion against St. Peter, Ac 11:3.

Unclean; no man is now unclean by any ceremonial uncleanness, because he is not circumcised, or because he is not sprinkled with the blood of bulls, Heb 9:13; yet sin hath defiled the whole mass of mankind, and they are equally by nature morally unclean.

Acts 10:29

Ver. 29. *Gainsaying,* or delay.

I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? Peter did in a great measure know the business he came about, partly by the vision and its interpretation, partly by what he might have heard from them that Cornelius sent for him, unto whom Cornelius had declared the whole matter, as we find, Ac 10:8; yet Peter's question is but necessary, for to give Cornelius an opportunity to acquaint his friends, who were met there, with all that had passed.

Acts 10:30

Ver. 30. *Four days ago I was fasting until this hour;* Cornelius does not intend to declare by this how long he had fasted; but he tells him when he, being fasting, saw the vision, which was four days before, at the same time of the day.

The ninth hour, which was a time of prayer, it being the time of offering the evening sacrifice: see Ac 3:1.

A man, in appearance, but an angel indeed, as in Ac 10:3.

In bright clothing; why angels appeared in bright or white raiment, see Ac 1:10.

Acts 10:31

Ver. 31. *Alms;* of which see in Ac 10:4.

In the sight of God; unto which, not only the outward gift, but the inward affection, is visible; and this is peculiarly in the sight of God, the other may be seen also by men.

Acts 10:32

Ver. 32. The substance of this verse is in Ac 10:5,6 which we read before. Cornelius might say this to excuse his sending for Peter, being a stranger to him; as also to encourage Peter to speak in such a matter as God had appeared in.

Acts 10:33

Ver. 33. *Immediately therefore I sent to thee;* as a hungry soul delays not to send for food, as soon as he knows where to have it.

Thou hast well done that thou art come; which does not only approve of

St. Peter's coming, but thank him for it.

Present before God; we will set ourselves to attend to thy words, as if we saw God looking upon us, whom we call to witness that we are ready to do whatsoever he shall require of us. Thus it becomes every one that would profit by the word of God, to attend upon it. Men do not behave themselves as before God, and therefore they enjoy nothing less than God in an ordinance, and are as if God had taken no notice of them.

Acts 10:34

Ver. 34. *Opened his mouth;* an expression used (as formerly) in matters of great moment, as Mt 5:2.

God is no respecter of persons; God does not accept of one because he is a Jew, and respect another because he is a Gentile; though St. Paul, being prejudiced by his education, had been carried along with that error of the Jews; against which, notwithstanding, God had declared himself even unto them, De 10:17, which is also confirmed unto us in the New Testament, Ro 2:11 1Pe 1:17: so that our being of any nation or any condition, rich or poor, honoured or despised, on the one side recommends us not unto God, and on the other side it will not hinder us from being accepted with the Lord.

Acts 10:35

Ver. 35. *In every nation;* even though Romans or Italians, of which nation Cornelius was, and might probably be worse thought of by the Jews, because they supposed themselves to have been hardly used by them.

Fearth him, and worketh righteousness; these two particulars include the observation of both tables of the law: the fearing of God comprehends piety, that is, the true worship of the true God; and working righteousness, includes all the duties to our neighbour; and both describe a truly good and holy man, such as Cornelius was; unto whose case this is to be applied.

Acts 10:36

Ver. 36. *The word*; the word of reconciliation between God and man, not only between God and the Jews, but between him and the Gentiles also, he had *sent unto Israel* by his prophets formerly. God is said to create *peace to him that is afar off*, the Gentile, as well as *to him that is near*, the Jew, Isa 57:19; and that salvation was not limited to the Jews only, Ps 72:7,8 Isa 49:6, might be known unto them by the examples of Melchizedck, Job, and Naaman, who did no ways belong unto them; but this was now more manifest: God preaching this peace between himself and all nations indifferently:

1. By Christ in his own person preaching this, Mt 8:11, and telling them that by his death he would draw all men unto him, Joh 12:32.
2. This peace is preached to be had by Christ, or only through Christ, by the angels themselves, Lu 2:14. And:
3. By all the apostles and ministers of the gospel. Speaking to the Gentiles, St. Paul says, *Ye who were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ*, Eph 2:13; and it was their constant doctrine, that there was no name under heaven by which men could be saved, but the name of Christ, Ac 4:12; and that it was all one whether they were Greeks or Jews, &c., *but Christ is all, and in all*, Col 3:11: so that in this doctrine there is an exact harmony between the Old and New Testaments, the prophets and the apostles.

He is Lord of all; Christ is Lord, not of the Jews, or one people, only; but of the Gentiles, all nations, also, as Mt 28:19,20 Ro 3:29.

Acts 10:37

Ver. 37. They had heard of the doctrine of the gospel by common fame and report, which could not but spread abroad; all might know that Christ and his apostles did preach, though these might be ignorant of the particular doctrines which they taught, and which Peter was now sent to instruct them in: or by *the word* (in a usual Hebraism) the matter of the gospel may be meant, as the life, death, and resurrection of our blessed

Saviour, which they could not but have heard several reports of.

After the baptism which John preached; who, as the Elijah who was promised, Mal 4:5, was the forerunner of the Lord.

Acts 10:38

Ver. 38. *God anointed Jesus:* it was usual to anoint their kings, priests, and prophets, unto all which offices Christ was anointed by his Father; hence called Christ, as in the Old Testament the Messiah.

Of Nazareth: the apostle is not ashamed of this name, though given to our Saviour by way of contempt; he gloried in the cross of Christ.

With the Holy Ghost and with power; Christ was endued with the Almighty Spirit of God, and with the power of it.

Who went about doing good: all the miracles our blessed Saviour wrought, were works of mercy, for the benefit and relief of those upon whom he wrought them: he could have wrought miracles to destroy and ruin such as would not believe in him, which he was often provoked unto; nay, his apostles would have had him but to permit them by fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans, Lu 9:54, and he would not.

Healing all that were oppressed of the devil: the deliverances our Saviour so often wrought upon such as were possessed of devils, was to show unto them that he was come to destroy the works of the devil, aim to cast him out of the souls of men who were spiritually possessed by him; which also our Saviour did, so that it was a happy calamity for them, which brought them to Christ.

For God was with him; God was with our Saviour,

1. By his might and power doing such miracles.
2. In his extraordinary love to him, Mt 3:17, and always hearing of him, Joh 11:42. And also,

3. God was with Christ ουσιωδως , in the fulness of the Godhead, Col 2:9.

Acts 10:39

Ver. 39. *We are witnesses;* the apostles, whom Christ had chosen to go in and out with him, and to be eye and ear witnesses of all that was done by him, or against him.

Whom they slew: their killing of our Saviour is the rather here spoken of, to show how rightfully the Jews were now to be forsaken, and that they had no cause to complain of the calling in of the Gentiles, being themselves had in such a manner rejected Christ; but especially, that they who were here met, and we, all might consider, how much it cost our blessed Saviour to deliver us from sin and hell. He was *made a curse for us*, Gal 3:13, as De 21:23 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us, Ga 3:14.

Acts 10:40

Ver. 40. Lest these Gentiles be deterred from believing in Christ, and take offence at his cross, St. Peter preached unto them the resurrection, which suddenly and powerfully followed. And this he tells them was unquestionable, as appeared by all the ways that any thing can be proved by; Christ was seen, and heard, and felt after his resurrection, as the beloved disciple tells us, 1Jo 1:1, and manifested his victory over death for us.

Acts 10:41

Ver. 41. *Not to all the people:* Christ after his resurrection appeared not to the wicked Jews, for being to suffer no more, his enemies were not vouchsafed a sight of him; and thus he did not manifest himself unto the world, Jo 14:22.

But unto witnesses; these witnesses were the apostles, who were chosen by God himself immediately; and the vacancy supplied by lot, which was

at God's direction, Ac 1:24,26. The metaphor here used is taken from the ordinary way then in use of choosing men into offices, which is here alluded to.

Eat and drink with him: though in the gospel history we do not read that our Saviour drank after he rose again; yet it is sufficiently implied, being he did eat, and make a meal with his disciples, Lu 24:30,42,43 Joh 21:12; and eating is put in Scripture for the whole refection, Mt 15:2, compared with Lu 7:36.

Acts 10:42

Ver. 42. Our Saviour gave this charge to his apostles before his ascension, Mt 28:19 Mr 16:15 Lu 24:47; and foretold that they should execute this his charge, Ac 1:8.

Ordained of God to be the Judge: that God hath ordained to judge the world by Jesus Christ, Scripture abundantly testifies, Joh 5:26,27 2Ti 4:1 1Pe 4:5. And this is here spoken of the apostle, and was given in charge by our Saviour to be principally preached of by them all, because the resurrection of Christ, and the glory of his kingdom in this world, is clouded by the blindness and hardness of men; as also, because it is of the greatest concernment unto all, that at any time hear the word of God, to be persuaded of this, that Christ, whose gospel and word they hear, will judge them according unto it.

Quick; such as shall be alive at the coming of our Lord to judgment, 1Th 4:15.

Acts 10:43

Ver. 43. This our Saviour had told his apostles, which St. Peter here preaches to his auditors. It was included in the very first promise recorded by Moses, Ge 3:15, The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head; and so continued through all ages of the church, to be manifest in such degrees as it pleased the wisdom of God to make it known: it is certain that all the ceremonial law concerning sacrifices did testify this very thing; for

by it, it did appear, that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin, as Heb 9:22; and it is manifest by the light of nature, that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins, as Heb 10:4.

But *through Christ's name*, for his sake, and by virtue of his merit, who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, Ro 4:25, we *shall receive remission of sins*, Heb 9:13,14.

Acts 10:44

Ver. 44. *While Peter yet spake these words*, that God might miraculously show his approbation of what Peter had said, and to assure Peter of the real conversion of these Gentiles, which all the Jews did make such a difficulty to believe, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word*; such fiery tongues in a visible shape as had appeared unto the apostles, Ac 2:3, whereby the inward powerful effects of the Spirit upon their hearts was signified. What wonderful effects had this short sermon! And doubtless, were practisers but as sincere, and hearers as intent, these days, as then, we should find that the hand of the Lord is not shortened.

Acts 10:45

Ver. 45. *They of the circumcision*; such as were not only themselves circumcised, but born of circumcised parents, who are thus called, Ga 2:12. These, not minding, or understanding, the many predictions of the calling of the Gentiles, thought that Christ was only promised unto the Jews; and were amazed to see now such an argument as might convince them to the contrary.

Poured out, speaks the abundant measure in which the Holy Ghost was given unto them.

Acts 10:46

Ver. 46. *With tongues*; with variety of languages, or strange tongues, as in the day of Pentecost, Ac 2:6.

Answered; an ordinary Hebraism for speaking, though the first part of any discourse. And Peter, knowing that these miraculous fiery tongues did show that these men did partake of the same Spirit from whom the apostles had received them, he makes an inference from thence.

Acts 10:47

Ver. 47. This question, as Ac 8:36, is without question, and denies that any can forbid water, that is, in order to baptize such as these. As if the apostle had argued thus: They that have the grace signified or promised, have a right unto the seal of the promise: but these Gentiles have the grace signified or promised in baptism; they had the inward part, and therefore the outward part could not be denied unto them. He that hath the inheritance, may claim the writings, wax, and parchment that belong unto it.

Acts 10:48

Ver. 48. *In the name of the Lord;* that is, in the name of our Saviour. But this does not imply, but that they were baptized according to our Saviour's prescription, Mt 28:19: but the Jews by their baptism were become the Lord's, and had given up their names to Jesus Christ; under which title, *the Lord*, not only our Saviour, but the Father who anointed him, and the Spirit by whom he was anointed, is to be understood.

Then prayed they; Cornelius and the rest of his friends, which he caused to be present. At their entreaty, Peter, and others that came with him, (as Ac 11:12), tarried there, that they might further instruct, confirm, and comfort them; (as the best have ever need to learn, and to grow in grace and knowledge); and by this Peter showed that he looked upon himself and others as not bound to observe those precepts, (of the wise men, as they called them), forbidding them all familiarity with the uncircumcised.

Acts 11:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 11:1-18 Peter, being accused for conversing with the Gentiles, maketh his defence; the church issatisfied, and glorifieth God.

Ac 11:19-21 The gospel having spread as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch.

Ac 11:22-26 Barnabas is sent thither, who fetcheth Saul from Tarsus: many people are taught at Antioch, where the disciples are first called Christians.

Ac 11:27-30 Agabus prophesieth a dearth: the disciples send relief from Antioch to the brethren in Judea by Barnabas and Saul.

Ver. 1. *And brethren;* the rest of the believers, who had not only one God to their Father, but one church to their mother, and were born of the same Spirit, and were fed by the same milk of the word of God.

The Gentiles had also received the word of God; this was a most incredible thing unto them who were of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and were not acquainted with that mystery that Abraham should have a seed of his faith, upon whom all the promises were entailed. These looked upon the Gentiles as most execrable persons, such as the apostle describes, Eph 2:12, that had no hope, and were without God; and therefore no less than a miracle, and that well attested, as this was, could make them change their opinion.

Acts 11:2

Ver. 2. *They that were of the circumcision;* they were such Jews as conversed with them of the church, and argued against them for taking in the Gentiles into any fellowship with them. But it may be that the believing Jews might for a time be very weak, and offended at it, until they were further satisfied by the following relation of St. Peter: till then they disputed, and brought what arguments they could against it.

Acts 11:3

Ver. 3. This is the objection they make against Peter, that, contrary to the tradition of their elders, and precept of their wise men, its had familiarly conversed with the Gentiles: see Ac 10:28. This they look upon as piacular, although no conversation in order to the gaining of the Gentiles unto God was ever forbidden, but only such as might withdraw the Jews from God.

Acts 11:4

Ver. 4. This great apostle condescends to the least and weakest amongst them, and gives an account of what he had done and the reasons that moved him unto it, if by any means he might gain some, and confirm others.

Acts 11:5

Ver. 5. See this whole narration spoken to in the foregoing chapter.

It came even to me; to show that he was especially concerned in this vision, it being for his instruction and regulation.

Acts 11:6

Ver. 6. *Fastened mine eyes;* it speaketh his great intention of mind upon it; God so ordering of it, that it might leave the greater impression upon him.

Acts 11:7

Ver. 7. He might now use them without any distinction indifferently.

Acts 11:8

Ver. 8. St. Peter here avoucheth that he had lived in this ceremonial righteousness, though he thought himself far from being instilled thereby.

Hath at any time entered into mouth; he abstained from all the appearances of that evil.

Acts 11:9

Ver. 9. This is twice spoken to St. Peter, that it might be the more unquestionable with him and others, it seeming otherwise very strange; and, it may be, therefore twice by St. Luke recorded.

Acts 11:10

Ver. 10. *This was done three times;* for the same reason but now mentioned, that God might more abundantly manifest this mystery of the calling in of the Gentiles, which had been so long hid.

All were drawn up again into heaven; all this was from heaven; unto which also it tended, namely, to bring the Gentiles thither.

Acts 11:11

Ver. 11. So many sent, and such a journey willingly undertaken, for to gain instruction in the way of life.

Acts 11:12

Ver. 12. *These six brethren accompanied me;* whom they might hear testify the same thing, that in the mouths of so many it might be established.

We entered into the man's house: the man meant is Cornelius, concerning

the entry into whose house, and converse with him, the doubt or controversy was that he was now speaking to.

Acts 11:13

Ver. 13. *An angel*, who, by reason of his appearing a man, is, in Ac 10:30, called *a man*.

Acts 11:14

Ver. 14. God promises that upon his obedience to this oracle, in sending for Peter, he should tell him those things that were necessary to be known by him and his whole family unto their salvation. Whatsoever was formerly the case of such as obeyed the precepts of Noah, (as they were called), after Christ is come, and preached unto the world, there is no other way unto salvation but through him.

Acts 11:15

Ver. 15. *As I began to speak;* whilst Peter was speaketh, as Ac 1:1.

The Holy Ghost fell on them, as in the day of Pentecost, Ac 2:4, he had fallen on the apostles; either visibly, by fiery cloven tongues; or rather by extraordinarily enduing them with the gift of tongues; enabling the most illiterate amongst them to speak in any language needful for any to understand towards their salvation.

Acts 11:16

Ver. 16. *Of the Lord;* of Christ, who is every where so called.

He said; but these words seem rather spoken by St. John himself. Mt 3:11 Mr 1:8; which makes no difference; for, first, Whatsoever a disciple of Christ says in his name, it is as if it were spoken by himself:

He that heareth not, heareth me. But, secondly, Though this was spoken by the Baptist, it was spoken by our Saviour also, Ac 1:5.

John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; by which the great difference is implied between outward baptism (administered by whomsoever, though the Baptist himself) and the inward baptism of the Holy Ghost, which, as fire, separates powerfully the scum and dross of sin from us.

With the Holy Ghost; the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.

Acts 11:17

Ver. 17. The apostle's argument is cogent: They who have the grace signified by baptism, ought to have the seal of that grace; but the Gentiles had the grace signified by baptism. Or, they who have the inward baptism, may not be denied the outward. As he that hath a right to an inheritance, cannot without injustice be denied the writings and seals thereunto belonging. To deny baptism unto any unto whom it doth belong, is to *withstand God*, and to keep back the token of God's love from such unto whom it is sent.

Acts 11:18

Ver. 18. *They held their peace;* they were fully satisfied with the reason St. Peter had given them of his admitting the Gentiles unto baptism, and fellowship with him; wisely inferring from what Peter had said, that what he had done was of God, who was to be acknowledged in it.

Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance: repentance is the gift of God, as well as faith, or any other grace, 2Ti 2:25; nor can the greatest guilt affect the heart with true godly sorrow, until God hath quickened it. It is called *repentance unto life*, because God hath appointed that it should precede our entrance into life.

Acts 11:19

Ver. 19. So true hath it been from the beginning of the gospel, that *sanguis martyrum est semen ecclesiae*. St. Stephen's death, and the persecution upon it, was a great means of disseminating the gospel. Thus all things work for good.

Phenice; the country about Tyre.

Cyprus; an island in the Mediterranean Sea.

Antioch; the metropolis of Syria. This explains what was briefly said, Ac 8:4, and showed what places the disciples were scattered into, and preached in.

They preached to *the Jews only*, because they were not yet persuaded of the calling of the Gentiles; God suffering them to be enlightened by degrees.

Acts 11:20

Ver. 20. *Men of Cyprus and Cyrene*; they were such as were born in Cyprus and Cyrene, but had their habitation in Jerusalem, and now upon the persecution there fled unto Antioch; which by this means in time became the Jerusalem of the Gentile Christians, whither their greatest resort was.

Spake unto the Grecians: here they of the dispersion taught not only such Hellenists as are spoken of, Ac 6:1, who were born of Hebrew parents, though living out of the country of Judea; but such also amongst the Gentiles, (who are generally called Greeks since Alexander's time, who conquered all those nations round about, and brought in his own language amongst them), who, forsaking idolatry, and worshipping the true God, were called *σεβομενοι*, devout or religious persons, such as Cornelius is said to be, Ac 10:2. And thus God by degrees brought in the knowledge of himself, and his Son Jesus Christ.

Preaching the Lord Jesus; which knowledge only is that which is

necessary unto salvation, and that only which Saul determined to know, 1Co 2:2.

Acts 11:21

Ver. 21. *The hand of the Lord;* the power, assistance, and working of God, expressed by the hand, which is the organ or instrument men use in working. This hand or work of God was manifest, first, In the miracles which they wrought. Secondly, In the conversion of any by these miracles. For these alone cannot soften a heart; as appeared in Pharaoh, whose heart was hardened by them.

A great number believed, and turned unto the Lord; faith and conversion are wrought by the hand of the Lord, and are his work. But in vain is faith pretended unto, when there is no change in heart and life. What God hath put together, none may put asunder.

Acts 11:22

Ver. 22. *Came unto the ears of the church;* this pleonasm seems emphatical, to show with what readiness and delight the church heard the news of the conversion of so many to Christ.

Of *Barnabas* we read, Ac 4:36, who had given such an earnest of love to God, and true faith in Christ, for whose sake he sold what he had.

Acts 11:23

Ver. 23. *The grace of God;* which appeared in their conversion, being made manifest by their professions, and answered by their pious lives and conversations; for all which they might cry, Grace, grace.

By the grace of God, is also to be understood the increasing of the church, and adding to it such as should be saved.

Was glad; this is matter of joy in heaven, Lu 15:7, and of all such as are

learning their lesson, and preparing for that blissful place.

With purpose of heart; firm and fixed resolution, that come what can come, tribulation or distress, life or death, they would keep close to the profession of the truth of Christ. This *purpose of heart* is the same with the whole heart elsewhere; which must *cleave unto the Lord;* be joined, or stick close, to God's truth and ways.

Acts 11:24

Ver. 24. Barnabas is here described to be beyond what the Jews called a righteous man, who would say to his neighbour, That which is yours is yours, and that which is mine is mine; meaning such as would do no wrong. But Barnabas, as the good man in their esteem, (such a one as the apostle speaks of, Ro 5:7, for whom one would dare to die), had actually made, and not called only, that which was his his poor neighbours', selling what he had to bestow upon them, as Ac 4:37.

Much people was added unto the Lord; his good works, accompanying his good preaching, might be a great means of the conversion of so many.

Acts 11:25

Ver. 25. *Saul*, or Paul, being Barnabas's friend and acquaintance, whom Barnabas had brought to the knowledge of the apostles, Ac 9:27; he goes now to seek him, that they might advise and strengthen one another in the work of the Lord.

Acts 11:26

Ver. 26. *A whole year they assembled themselves:* frequency of meeting to partake of the ordinances of God, is the great reason why the gospel was so prevalent in this place.

The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch; which will be renowned so long as the world lasts, because here the banner of Christ was

first publicly set up, and men listed under him: and this by Divine authority, for the word imports no less. And that it was not a name they gave themselves, much less was it a name the enemies of Christianity gave unto the professors of it, for they called them Nazarenes, or Galileans, out of contempt. But God would have Christ's disciples to be called Christians: not only as scholars were amongst the Greeks called from their masters, (viz. Platonists, Pythagoreans, &c.), to teach us whom we profess to learn of, and to be instructed by; but to mind us of our unction; for Christians are anointed ones, 1Jo 2:27, and are made by Christ (in a spiritual sense) *kings and priests unto God and his Father*, Re 1:6.

Acts 11:27

Ver. 27. These here meant were enabled to foretell things to come; a gift which God (did furnish some of his church with on such an extraordinary occasion, Eph 4:11, whereby they did beforehand signify future things for the good for the church, as here.

Acts 11:28

Ver. 28. *By the Spirit;* by a resolution from the Spirit, as one of his gifts, and not by judicial astrology, or any other means real or pretended; for it is a prerogative of God only to foretell things to come, as Isa 41:22,23.

Which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar: this famine Suetonius and other heathen writers make mention of, though some place it in one year, and some in another year, of Claudius's reign. It may be there were divers famines, or one might continue divers years; but thus God, who provided for the patriarchs by means of Joseph's foreseeing of the scarcity in Egypt and elsewhere, provides for his church now also by a like prediction. God's omniscience is exerted for his church's preservation.

Acts 11:29

Ver. 29. *Every man according to his ability;* which is the measure whereby we must mete out unto others: we are to give alms of such things

as we have, or according as we are able, Lu 11:41.

These *brethren*, or believers, *in Judea*, were very poor, by reason of the extraordinary malice and persecution of the Jews against them, and therefore recommended by St. Paul unto them of Achaia, (especially to the Corinthians), and to the believers in Macedonia.

Acts 11:30

Ver. 30. *To the elders*; to the apostles; or if they (as it is probable) were gone out of Jerusalem, to the governors or chief of the churches; for the famine being to come over all Judea, it is most probable that the other churches, besides that in Jerusalem, did partake of this bounty.

Acts 12:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 12:1-19 King Herod persecutes the Christians, kills James, and imprisons Peter, who, upon the prayers of the church, is delivered by an angel.

Ac 12:20-23 Herod, in his pride assuming the glory due to God, is smitten by an angel, and dieth miserably.

Ac 12:24 After his death the word of God prospers.

Ac 12:25 Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch.

Ver. 1. There were several Herods mentioned in Scripture, being all of the family of Herod the Great, (by whose name they were called), as Herod that killed the children in Bethlehem, called Hecolonita; another that beheaded St. John, and derided our Saviour, this Herod was surnamed Antipas: the Herod here spoken of was called Agrippa; the son, or, as others think, the nephew, of Aristobulus, and was the father of that Agrippa we read of, Ac 25:26, being viceroy, or king, under the Roman emperor. This Herod did not only kill some, but punished others with banishment and blows; and especially the governors of the church, knowing how much all suffer in them.

Acts 12:2

Ver. 2. Who had especially the care of the church at Jerusalem: one eminent amongst the apostles, and one of the sons of thunder, (or Boanerges), for his zealous and earnest preaching, and therefore the more hated by Herod: so that which our Saviour had foretold him came now to pass, Mt 20:23, that he drank of the cup our Saviour did drink of. There was another James, who wrote the Epistle known by his name, and was called James the Less; because, as some think, he was brought to the knowledge of Christ after the other, of whom we read, Mr 15:40.

Acts 12:3

Ver. 3. All the posterity of Herod the Great, by his example, studied chiefly to please the Roman emperors, and to gratify the Jews, whether by right or wrong.

The days of unleavened bread; or the passover, which festival solemnity lasted eight days; and God overruled the hypocrisy of Herod (for he did not out of piety observe this time) for the preservation of Peter; and Herod might fear some tumult of the people, in so great a concourse, upon Peter's death, for which he did defer it: however, the perverseness of the Jews is very remarkable, who were mad with rage against Christ and his apostles, at such times in which they pretended to serve the God of love and peace.

Acts 12:4

Ver. 4. *Four quaternions of soldiers:* there were sixteen soldiers appointed to keep Peter; the Romans using four soldiers at a time to keep sentry, and the Jews dividing their nights into four watches, there were enough to relieve the other, and to set a new watch as often as was required for every night; of which four at a time, two were with the prisoner, and perhaps, for the greater security, bound with the same chain, and two did always stand at the door or gate; and this they might the rather do, out of great caution, having heard what miracles Peter did, and that he had been delivered by an angel out of prison, Ac 5:19.

After Easter; that day in which the paschal lamb was ate, on which the Jews would put none to death, that they might not eclipse the joy of that day.

Bring him forth to the people; to do with him what they would, leaving him to their mercy, or rather cruelty.

Acts 12:5

Ver. 5. *Peter therefore was kept in prison,* till a fit time to offer him up as a sacrifice unto the people: so basely do wicked men stoop for their ends.

But prayer was made: the only help or hope poor Christians had, was from prayer (*preces et lachrymae*); there are no quaternions of soldiers can keep the passage shut that is towards heaven.

Without ceasing; continued, long prayers, without intermission; but also fervent and earnest prayers, *ολοψυχως*, with all the might of their souls; remembering the apostle now in bonds, as bound with him, Heb 13:3.

Acts 12:6

Ver. 6. *Brought him forth,* to be put to death.

The same night: this is a night to be remembered, as that in which God delivered his Israel out of Egypt: when both were come to the utmost extremity, and at the pit's brink, then so God does his marvellous work of deliverance, that it ought to be had in remembrance, Ps 105:5.

Peter was sleeping: innocency hath this advantage, and a good conscience acquiesces in the providence of God; it hath God to its friend; and if he be for us, who can be against us?

Bound with two chains: see Ac 12:4: to which may be added, that with one chain St. Peter's right hand was bound to the soldier's left; with the other chain his left hand to the other soldier's right; for so was their manner for

their greater security, that they might not let the prisoner escape: thus persecutors are skilful to destroy; but no device can avail against any whom God will save.

Acts 12:7

Ver. 7. *The angel of the Lord*, whose office it is to minister for the heirs of salvation, Heb 1:14, and who willingly fulfil this will of the Lord.

Came upon him, as Lu 2:9, suddenly and unexpectedly.

A light shined in the prison; whether this light was from the bright body the angel assumed, or from some other cause, we are not told, and therefore it is not necessary for us to know; but it was a light only to Peter, but darkness to his keepers; as the pillar of fire enlightened only the Israelites; which made them both the more strange and miraculous.

The angel *smote Peter* (as one jogs, or gently strikes another) to awaken him; thus God was waking, though Peter slept; and by his providence watches over all his people for their preservation.

His chains fell off from his hands; chains could not hold any whom God will have free; every thing loses its force when God suspends or withdraws his concurrence.

Acts 12:8

Ver. 8. *Gird thyself*; the custom being to wear long garments, they were not so fit to go about any business until they had girt their garments to them; hence Jeremiah is commanded to get a girdle about him, Jer 13:1, when he was to be sent on God's errand. The *sandals* were little other than sole leathers, bound or fastened with thongs.

Thy garment; the uppermost vest, answerable to a cloak amongst us. God furnishes his people thus with necessaries, and he will have them use them, so far as they are able to serve them, even then when he is working of miracles for their deliverances.

Acts 12:9

Ver. 9. The greatness and suddenness of the deliverance was such, as it amazed him, it seemed incredible unto him: not that he questioned God's power or godliness; but knowing that he was to suffer for Christ's name's sake, he might the rather not look for such a deliverance, and when it came, be as one that dreams, as Ps 126:1: God therefore bringing his people to such extremities, that his salvation might be the more astonishing.

Acts 12:10

Ver. 10. *The first and the second ward;* guard or sentinels.

The iron gate that leadeth unto the city; the outermost gate that led out of the prison into the city, not that the prison itself was out of the city.

Which opened to them of his own accord: God worketh a series of miracles in their fit place and time; he could have done them all together, and have opened his iron gate beforehand, when he conducted Peter through the first, then through the second watch; but it is good for Peter, and us, to be convinced that we stand every moment in need of God's conduct and deliverance.

Acts 12:11

Ver. 11. *When Peter was come to himself,* out of that amazement which so many wonderful things had wrought in him, that he could compose himself to effect upon what he had heard and seen, he knew his deliverance was real and effectual.

Delivered me; from Herod, who had resolved to have killed him, as he had done James, Ac 12:2; and from the people's expectation, who had heard the report of Herod's resolution, and longed for the fulfilling of it.

Acts 12:12

Ver. 12. Peter, being delivered, meditates upon the greatness of the danger that he had been in, and the goodness of God that had delivered him, and this whilst walking in the street, and going along: no place can exclude good thoughts and holy meditations.

The mother of John; the mother is here described by the son, as the more known person; here the parent gains reputation, and to be remembered in this Scripture, for her son's sake. Thus a wise son made a glad mother, as Pr 10:1.

Mark; some think this was he that wrote the Gospel called by his name.

Many were gathered together: in this time of persecution the Christians met secretly, and in small numbers, as they could; these here mentioned are thought to be private Christians, because it appears by the Ac 12:17, that James, &c. were not there.

Acts 12:13

Ver. 13. *The door of the gate;* this was the outermost door to the porch, or court before the house.

A damsel came to hearken; being in great fear of a surprisal, they ordered one to observe, and give an answer unto any that should come to the house; which was the more heedfully done, because it was at an unseasonable time of the night; yet these holy men broke their rest, and exposed themselves to many fears and dangers, rather than not to assemble to serve God, when they could not serve him otherwise.

Acts 12:14

Ver. 14. *She opened not the gate for gladness;* as one from herself, not knowing what to do for gladness. Great and sudden passions have caused strange ecstasies, and death itself sometimes; the spirits in grief flowing

too fast unto the heart to fortify it, and in joy leaving the heart as fast, to meet the object that causeth it.

Acts 12:15

Ver. 15. *Thou art mad;* thou speakest thou knowest not what; thinking her, out of fear, to have been discomposed in her mind.

It is his angel: some have thought, that by Peter's angel no other was meant than some messenger from Peter, which they might expect from him in such a case as he was in; now though *αγγελος* (the word here) signifies a messenger or an angel, indifferently, yet how could Rhoda then know it to have been Peter's voice? A messenger's voice being no more like his that sent him than another man's. They did, probably mean some angel that had assumed Peter's shape, and imitated his voice: and the Jews having had a constant opinion, that at least every good man hath a guardian angel which God appoints to him for a means of his preservation, might be apt to imagine that this was that angel whose charge St. Peter was, Mt 18:10. Though that angel spoken of, Ge 48:16, most probably was the angel of the new covenant, and not a created angel, being Jacob blesseth in his name; yet the opinion of tutelar angels, though not certain or needful, is to this day thought probable.

Acts 12:16

Ver. 16. *Peter continued knocking;* Peter might be unwilling to have his entrance into the house deferred,

1. Out of fear of being taken again, and his life concerned upon it.
2. Out of an earnest desire to see the brethren, whom he might hope to meet with there.
3. Out of zeal to declare the mercy of God towards him; this fire was kindled in him, and he sought vent for it.

Acts 12:17

Ver. 17. Beckoning; it was usual by the motion of the hand both to desire silence and to crave audience.

How the Lord had brought him out; Peter gives God the glory, though an angel had been the means of his delivery.

James; this James was the son of Alphaeus, Mt 10:3 Mr 3:18, and succeeded the other James, (the brother of John, of whom, Ac 12:2), in governing the church at Jerusalem.

Went into another place; Peter could not but know he should be sought after, and therefore durst not abide in one place, lest he should ruin himself, and endanger his friends that should harbour him. Thus the great apostle, as David formerly, was hunted, *as one hunteth a partridge in the mountains*, 1Sa 26:20.

Acts 12:18

Ver. 18. The soldiers, who were bound with Peter in the same chains, could not but miss him as soon as they did awake, and with admiration find the chains still holding them, thought loosened from Peter. What strange imaginations they might have, is not to be expressed, though some guess at it.

Acts 12:19

Ver. 19. He examined the keepers; that is, judicially; proceeding against them for the escape of St. Peter.

Commanded that they should be put to death; they were sentenced to be led away, and it is most probably thought, unto the place of execution. The instruments in persecution God many times meets with in this world, and sometimes by the persecutors themselves.

Acts 12:20

Ver. 20. *Tyre and Sidon*; these were two coast towns in Phoenicia, famous, especially the former, for their great trading; and being rich, might be insolent, or possibly might tempt Herod to a war against them, whose conquest would pay the charge of it.

The king's chamberlain, or chief of his bed chamber.

Desired peace, or begged pardon; there being no war yet begun.

Their country was nourished by the king's country; these cities lying upon the sea, had little land belonging to them, and of old were forced to have their provision from other places, especially from Judea; thus Solomon gave Hiram, king of Tyre, twenty thousand measures of wheat for his household, and twenty measures of pure oil yearly, 1Ki 5:9,11; and long after that, they of Judah and Israel are said to have traded with their wheat in Tyre, Eze 27:17.

Acts 12:21

Ver. 21. *Upon a set day*; this was (says Josephus, cap. 19. lib. 7) the second day of the sports or games, which Herod had instituted in honour of the emperor Claudius; or, it may be, such a day as Herod had appointed to determine the difference between him and the Tyrians.

Royal apparel; such, saith Josephus, as were made of silver, woven with extraordinary art, and did reflect strangely the beams of the sun shining upon it.

Sat upon his throne; an elevated place, from whence he might the better be seen and heard.

Acts 12:22

Ver. 22. These impious flatterers destroy whom they exalt; for God will pull down his rivals.

Acts 12:23

Ver. 23. An angel had delivered Peter, and here an angel destroys Herod: all that heavenly host fulfil God's will for the deliverance of his church, and the destruction of his enemies.

He gave not God the glory; priding himself in the acclamation the people had made, and not attributing his eloquence and glory to God, as the giver of them; or rather, not repressing or punishing their blasphemy; whereas Peter durst not accept of undue honour from Cornelius, Ac 10:26, nor the angel from St. John, Re 19:10 22:9.

He was eaten of worms; either breeding in his bowels, or in his flesh, after a more unusual manner; as it is recorded of Herod the Great, that he was eaten up of lice. No creature so little or contemptible, but it can execute God's judgments on whom he please.

Acts 12:24

Ver. 24. *Grew;* the word of God is compared here to seed, as in our Saviour's parable, Mt 13:19.

Multiplied; the number of believers multiplied through the word, which was sown, as seed is scattered abroad. So true it is, that persecutors, by their pulling down of the church, do but build it up.

Acts 12:25

Ver. 25. *From Jerusalem;* they returned unto Antioch, from whence they were sent, Ac 11:26,30, to carry the benevolence of the church of Antioch to that of Judea.

Their ministry; this was the ministry or service they were appointed to do.

John; of whom before, Ac 12:12.

Acts 13:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 13:1-5 Barnabas and Saul, being set apart with fasting and prayer, are sent forth by the Holy Ghost to the work of their calling.

Ac 13:6-12 At Paphos, Elymas the sorcerer, opposing the Gospel, is smitten with blindness, and the deputy Sergius Paulus converted to the faith.

Ac 13:13-41 Paul and his company come to Antioch in Pisidia: Paul preacheth Christ, and the necessity of faith in him unto justification.

Ac 13:42,43 The Gentiles desire to hear the word again: many are converted.

Ac 13:44-49 The envious Jews gainsay and blaspheme: the apostles profess to turn to the Gentiles, of whom many believe.

Ac 13:50-52 The Jews raise a persecution, and expel Paul and Barnabas, who go to Iconium.

Ver. 1. *The church that was at Antioch;* the true church, which hath a being, and whose Builder and Maker is God. Other churches (as that of the circumcision) are no churches or congregations of the faithful.

Prophets and teachers; these two offices might be in the same person, as he that had the gift of prophecy, and could foretell things to come, might be a teacher to instruct the people; but yet they were frequently appertaining to several persons, one excelling in one gift, another in another.

Simeon that was called Niger; this Simeon is thus distinguished from Simon Peter, and from Simon the Canaanite, this name of *Niger* being given him by the Romans.

Lucius; this hath been thought the name of Luke, it being more after the Latin termination; and that it might be he that wrote the Gospel called by his name, and this book of the Acts. However, we meet with this name, Ro

16:21; and St. Paul sends salutation unto him that was so called.

Of Cyrene; born at a place so called, or brought up in the synagogue of the Cyrenians; of which, Ac 6:9.

Either this *Manaen* was Herod's foster brother, or had the same tutors and instructors with him, their education being together.

This *Herod* was Herod Antipas, who set at nought our Saviour, and killed the Baptist.

And yet *Manaen*, as another Moses, kept his integrity in that Pharaoh's court; and, as Moses, he choose rather *to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*, Heb 11:25. Thus there was an Obadiah in Ahab's house, 1Ki 18:3, and divers believe in Nero's family, Php 4:22.

Acts 13:2

Ver. 2. Ministered; the word importeth the exercise of any public office, sacred or civil. But in the former verse mentions being made of prophets and teachers, these words are in sense too conjoined with them; and inform us, that they were preaching to and instructing of the people, (for there is no ministry or service which God likes better than to convert and save souls), and, that all might be more effectual, as being done with greater earnestness and intention of mind, whilst they fasted.

The Holy Ghost said; by some inward instinct in those prophets before spoken of, who had warrant to declare it as from him.

Separate me Barnabas and Saul; these two were to be separated: as the first born under the law, Ex 13:12, and after them, or in their stead, the Levites, Nu 3:12; so were Paul and Barnabas in especial manner separated for the calling in of the Gentiles, that great ministry or service which God had for them to do.

Acts 13:3

Ver. 3. *When they had fasted and prayed;* a good preparation to enter into any business with, whereby they acknowledged that all success must come from God. Our blessed Saviour himself would not enter upon his ministry till he had fasted forty days, Mt 4:2, compared with Mt 4:17.

Laid their hands on them; Barnabas and Saul being called to be apostles already, this laying on of their hands upon them signifies,

1. Their being set apart to this particular employment they were now to be sent about.
2. The approbation of the church to that heavenly call they had.
3. Their praying for God's blessing upon them, and success upon the work they went for.

Acts 13:4

Ver. 4. *Seleucia;* a sea town of Cilicia, nigh unto Antioch, and over against Cyprus, built by Seleucus, and was a town of some note, but mentioned here only as in their passage to Cyprus.

Acts 13:5

Ver. 5. *Salamis;* the chief city of Cyprus, now called Famagusta, situate on the east side of the island, over against Syria.

They preached, here and elsewhere, *in the synagogues,* either because they found no other such convenient places to preach in; (these being large structures, and many resorting to them); or rather, because though they were sent unto the Gentiles, yet it was not till afar the Jews should have refused the gospel, as may be seen throughout all this book, and in the conclusion of it, Ac 28:28.

They had also John to their minister: as Ac 12:25.

Acts 13:6

Ver. 6. *Unto Paphos*; this city was on the west end of Cyprus, so that going from Salamis they went through the island: this place was famous for the worshipping of Venus.

A certain sorcerer; there were many magicians about this time amongst the Jews, who by their false miracles endeavoured to bring the real miracles of our Saviour into contempt. As the magicians and sorcerers of Egypt, by their enchantments, for a while did seem to do such wonders as Moses had wrought by the finger of God, Ex 7:11.

Acts 13:7

Ver. 7. *The deputy of the country*; whether he was pro-consul or proprietor, it is in effect the same; for he it was that governed the island.

Desired to hear the word of God; this desire was extraordinary, and wrought by God, in order to the fitting him for the further mercy of his conversion and salvation. Where such a desire is, it shall be granted: *Ask, and it shall be given you*, Lu 11:9.

Acts 13:8

Ver. 8. *Elymas*; this is another name of him that was called Bar-jesus, which was not unusual, as *Simon Bar-jona*, Mt 16:17. This *Elymas* may be taken appellatively, and signifies the magician or *sorcerer*; but being it was a proper name unto others we read of, it may be so here.

Acts 13:9

Ver. 9. It is observable, that St. Luke never before called this great apostle by the name of Paul, and henceforth never calls him by the name of Saul. Though there be no great difference in these names, *Saul* might be more

acceptable to the Jews, amongst whom hitherto he had conversed; and *Paul* a more pleasing name unto the Gentiles, unto whom he was now sent, and with whom for the future he should most converse. He was called *Saul* as he was a Jew born, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; and *Paul*, as he was a denizen of Rome; the Romans having that name in good account in several of their chief families.

Filled with the Holy Ghost; zeal for God's glory, and faith and power to work the ensuing miracle.

Acts 13:10

Ver. 10. *Mischief;* *ραδιουργια* signifies a facility or readiness in doing mischief, and that such who are given to sorcery are easily drawn to commit any kind of sin whatsoever.

Thou child of the devil; because he did his work who is the destroyer, in hindering what he could the salvation of Sergius Paulus and his family.

To pervert the right ways of the Lord; to make the way of God crooked, which is straight; and rugged, when indeed it is smooth: that is, to lay what rubs he could to keep any from coming unto, or continuing in, the ways of God.

Acts 13:11

Ver. 11. *The hand of the Lord* is put for any powerful action of God, whether in mercy or judgment: here it is put for the Divine power wherewith God strikes his enemies. God did in judgment remember mercy, inflicting this blindness only *for a season*, that it might be rather a medicine than a punishment.

Acts 13:12

Ver. 12. The gospel which Paul preached; finding in it (though a wise man) depths beyond his fathoming; and all accompanied with such a

power in doing of miracles, and changing of hearts and lives, as might well amaze so prudent and considering a man.

Acts 13:13

Ver. 13. *Perga*, a city in *Pamphylia*: not that there were any other cities of that name; but because this region was more commonly known, it being a country in the Lesser Asia, bordering on Cilicia. The departure of John (of whom before, Ac 13:5, and Ac 12:25) was blameworthy, as Ac 15:38. Some think he shunned that labour and suffering which he saw attended the gospel; others suppose that he returned to Jerusalem out of too fond an affection for his mother, who lived there; and it may be that he, retaining a great aversion from the Gentiles, might abhor to go amongst them: however, *let him that standeth take heed lest he fall*.

Acts 13:14

Ver. 14. *Antioch in Pisidia*; so called to distinguish it from the other Antioch, mentioned in Ac 13:1, which was a city in Syria, as this in Pisidia, next to, or part of, Pamphylia.

Went into the synagogue on the sabbath day; either to join with the Jews in their worship, which was not then unlawful; or to get an opportunity more publicly to preach the gospel unto them: they were no sooner come thither, but they mind that great business they went about.

Acts 13:15

Ver. 15. *The reading of the law* was commanded by Moses; and they say that Ezra commanded the reading of *the prophets* also in their synagogues, which was used, as we may see in Ac 13:27; and so divided into several sections, that once a year they might be all read over.

The rulers of the synagogue; they were such as had the oversight of this service of God in their synagogues, that it might be performed according to the prescription.

Men and brethren; a usual compellation which the Jews gave one another, owning them to serve the same God, and professing a suitable respect for them.

If ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on; after the reading before spoken of, there followed a sermon, or exhortation; which the apostles are desired to make, the rulers of the synagogue, as it is supposed, having had some previous knowledge of them.

Acts 13:16

Ver. 16. *Beckoning with his hand,* to procure silence and attention, as Ac 12:17.

And ye that fear God; besides the native Jews, the proselytes, and such out of all nations who left the idolatry of the Gentiles, and served the only true God, met together in the worship of God; these were the *σεβομενοι*, spoken of Ac 17:4. It shows also what they are to do that would hear the word of the Lord with profit; viz. to attend unto it in the fear of his name.

Acts 13:17

Ver. 17. *The God of this people of Israel;* God was the God of Israel after a peculiar manner.

Chose our fathers; having chosen them before all nations, to make him known unto them, to be served and worshipped by them.

And exalted the people; and God exalted them in the time of Joseph, and whilst the memory of that great preservation wrought by his means did continue, till another king arose that knew not Joseph.

An high arm; the many miracles done by the power of God towards the Israelites' deliverance out of Egypt. By which the apostle would have them remember, that they owed all which they challenged from their progenitors to the grace and blessing of God only, and that God may do with his own

as he please.

Acts 13:18

Ver. 18. This is recorded, Ps 95:10, and remembered by the apostle, Heb 3:8,9, and to be admired through all ages, that God should be so patient, or a people could be so perverse. Some instead of ετροποφορησεν, read ετροφοφορησεν, there being but one letter difference, (and such as are usually changed into one another), and then it speaks God's providing for this people all that while, and carrying them as in his bosom, as a nurse bears the sucking child, Nu 11:12 De 1:31; or as an eagle beareth her young ones on her wings, De 32:11,12. But it seems God did not bear with their fathers, but destroyed them in the wilderness, 1Co 10:5. First, God bare long with those that perished. Secondly, The succeeding generation took not that warning which did become them, but followed their fathers' steps; and whilst one generation was wearing away, and another coming, this space of forty years was spent, through the abundant compassion of God towards them, who did not consume them, as they tempted him to do, in a moment.

Acts 13:19

Ver. 19. These *seven nations* are mentioned, Jos 3:10.

He divided their land to them by lot; the lot being disposed only as God would, Pr 16:33. And it was but reasonable that God, having miraculously got this land, (for the Israelites did rather go to take possession of it than to fight for it), and assumed a special right unto it, that he should divide it to whom he pleased, and in what proportions he thought good.

Acts 13:20

Ver. 20. These *judges* were persons deputed by God to govern and deliver that people; their commission was attested usually by some extraordinary thing done by them, and their power (as being mediately from God) was absolute. The computation of years here mentioned hath been very much

controverted. That which hath the greatest probability with it, is, either, first, to have recourse to Ac 13:17, and begin this era there, with God's choosing of their fathers; and ending it at the time of the decision of the land by lot, as Ac 13:19; for from the birth of Isaac, to this distribution of the land, are reckoned four hundred and forty-seven years; which may well be said here, *about four hundred and fifty years*: but then the sense is, *after that* such things mentioned in Ac 13:17-19 were done; which were in the compass of four hundred and fifty years, God then gave them judges. Or, as others do refer these words to what follows, and begin the era or computation from the going of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and ending it at the expulsion of the Jebusites out of Jerusalem, which may make up this account. But then this passage of St. Paul is not intended to show how long the judges ruled, but when it was, or about what time that they ruled; as also to show what a long time it took up to gain that people a quiet possession of that promised inheritance, their sins still keeping good things from them.

Acts 13:21

Ver. 21. Their great sin in desiring a king was, because by that desire they rejected God, who had at that very time a prophet (Samuel) by whom he governed them, 1Sa 8:7 10:19. They had been under a theocracy ever since they came out of Egypt, their laws and their governors being appointed by God; had their condition been as that of other nations, their desire had not been a provocation. These words, *by the space of forty years*, are to be joined with the foregoing verse, and the other foregoing words in the verse read with a parenthesis: and thus they show how long Samuel the prophet (as he is here called) exercised his prophetic office, which was the space here mentioned, partly before Saul was anointed king, and in part afterward; in which, as another Moses, he cared for, and went in and out before, the people of God, the like space of forty years. This computation of St. Paul might also agree more with the Septuagint, and be according to the then current account, which (not being of more consequence) St. Paul would not controvert at this time, having greater matters to speak of unto them.

Acts 13:22

Ver. 22. *He had removed him;* God had taken Saul away by death; for he would not suffer David to hasten it.

After mine own heart; favoured or beloved by me, and obedient to me; *my servant,* as God speaks of him, Ps 89:20.

Which shall fulfil all my will; and here, that he should fulfil all God's will, to wit, in governing his people; for he hath a testimonial upon record in God's word, Ps 78:72. He that is according to God's heart, fulfils all the will of God, and does nothing by partiality; but if it be God's will either for him to do or to suffer any thing, he is ready to set his fiat to it; as he daily prays (understandingly) that the will of the Lord may be done.

Acts 13:23

Ver. 23. Christ was the Son of David, and so frequently called, Mt 1:1 Lu 18:38,39, with reference unto the promise made, Isa 11:1, spoken of, Ac 2:30 Ro 1:3.

Raised unto Israel a Saviour; because he lived amongst the Jews, and salvation was first offered unto them by him, as Ac 13:46.

Jesus; our Saviour's name is added to show that he truly was according to his name, and what he was said to be, as Mt 1:21.

Acts 13:24

Ver. 24. John the Baptist did not speak of Christ's coming, as the other apostles had done, as of a thing a great way off, or at a distance of time; but he spake of it as of a present matter, before his and their faces, and in their view;

Behold the Lamb of God! Joh 1:29,36.

The baptism of repentance; so it is called, Mt 3:2,8 Mr 1:4 Lu 3:3;

repentance being a due qualification for such as hope to receive the mercies of God in Christ unto life eternal.

Acts 13:25

Ver. 25. *Fulfilled his course;* the course of his ministry, or of his life: in respect of either, he ran as one in a race.

I am not he; that is, the Messiah, which they were in such expectation of, and so inquisitive about.

There cometh one after me; Christ began his life (as to the flesh) after John and he began his ministry after him, and in that respect may be said to come after him.

Whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose; a proverbial expression, whereby the meanest office is implied, which the disciples or servants could do for their masters, Mt 3:11. The sense of these words we have, Joh 1:20,27.

Acts 13:26

Ver. 26. *Men and brethren;* he speaks to the Jews according as the manner was amongst them; to the Jews he became as a Jew.

Whosoever among you feareth God; some think the devout Pisidians, or men of that country, are here meant; but rather it may insinuate the apostle's hope concerning these Jews, that they were such as feared God, which hope they ought the rather to have carefully answered.

The word of this salvation:

1. Christ, who is the incarnate Word, or the Word made flesh, Joh 1:14; or the Gospel, which is glad tidings of salvation; as if the apostle had minded them, that it was not any business which belonged unto others alone, which he was speaking about: but of such things as pertained unto their salvation; and such a salvation (*this salvation*) as never

greater was or ever will be published, this is certain, that we are concerned in it for ourselves, if we accept or neglect this salvation, it is for ourselves. Oh that in this respect self-interest were more prevalent with us!

Acts 13:27

Ver. 27. *They;* the common people, and *their rulers;* great council, both had a hand in our Saviour's death. But if so great a fault was capable of any alleviation, the apostle gladly mentions it. that it was done out of ignorance; they knew neither Christ the Word, nor the word (of the Gospel) concerning Christ, though, that they may be made sensible that this their ignorance was not invincible, he minds them that it was their sin, having had means whereby they might have come unto the knowledge of Christ.

Fulfilled them: see Ac 4:28 Lu 24:25,26.

Acts 13:28

Ver. 28. *Though they found no cause of death in him;* he was a Lamb without blemish; neither had he offended the rabble that was so slanderous against him, unless by such vast goodness and kindness towards them he branded them for ingratitude.

Yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain, Mt 27:22. The Jews did condemn him, but they could not put him to death, the Romans, under whom they were subject, having reserved the power of life and death wholly unto themselves; and therefore they desired Pilate to confirm their sentence, and to cause it to be executed.

Acts 13:29

Ver. 29. *All that was written of him;* as the giving him vinegar to drink, piercing his side, &c, Ps 69:21 Joh 19:28-30.

From the tree: see Ac 5:30.

They laid him in a sepulchre; Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, Mt 27:60 Joh 19:39.

Acts 13:30

Ver. 30. Lest they should be offended at our Saviour's dying so shameful and cursed a death, and to take away the scandal of the cross, he shows, that his resurrection was as glorious as his death could be ignominious, being by it *declared to be the Son of God with power*, Ro 1:4.

Acts 13:31

Ver. 31. *Seen many days;* forty days between his resurrection and ascension, Ac 1:3. Christ was seen, not only by the apostles, but of the Galilean women which came up with him unto Jerusalem, Mt 28:1, and by above five hundred at once, 1Co 15:6; so plentifully would God have this great article of our faith and object of our hope to be confirmed unto us.

Acts 13:32

Ver. 32. *Glad tidings;* or the gospel, which is nothing else but the glad tidings of our salvation from sin and hell.

The promise which was made unto the fathers; this promise was frequently made and renewed to their ancestors, and typified by many deliverances, especially from Egypt and Babylon.

Acts 13:33

Ver. 33. *Raised up Jesus again;* some refer these words to the incarnation, others to the resurrection, of our Saviour: our translators lay the stress upon the preposition, with which the verb is compounded, and by adding *again*, intend it to be understood of the resurrection; and there is ground

for it in the context; for the resurrection of Christ is that which in Ac 13:30 is propounded by St. Paul as his theme or argument to preach upon.

Thou art my Son; these words quoted, though they do not seem to be a proof of Christ's resurrection at the first view, yet if we weigh them well, they answer St. Paul's purpose:

Thou art my Son, Ps 2:7, is ushered in with, I have made thee king, Ac 13:6, and followed with, *I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance;* which was in an especial manner to be fulfilled after the resurrection, as our Saviour manifests, Mt 28:18,19.

This day have I begotten thee; not as if Christ at his resurrection began to be the Son of God; but then he was manifested to be so, Ro 1:4; which before, whilst he was in a suffering condition was not so apparent. Some of the ancients have understood these words, of the eternal generation of the Son of God; eternity being an everlasting point, and one and the same day for ever.

Acts 13:34

Ver. 34. The former verse was not intended so much by St. Paul for a proof of the resurrection, as it was to show how faithful God was in fulfilling that promise there spoken of; here the apostle's design is, to evince Christ's resurrection, and that it was agreeable to the prophesies which were concerning him.

I will give you the sure mercies of David; these words are found, Isa 60:3, and *the sure mercies of David* there and here spoken of, are such mercies as were promised to David (David being to be taken positively). Now the mercies which were promised to David are all included or surmounted in this, that by this Son of David (our Lord and Saviour, frequently and truly so called) God would erect and establish an everlasting kingdom; which could not be done, unless Christ rose again, and obtained the victory over death and the grave. All the promises God hath made unto his church in any age concerning Christ, are sure and faithful, holy and just; the words have been variously rendered and changed; but no words can sufficiently express their stability and excellency.

Acts 13:35

Ver. 35. These words are quoted out of Ps 16:10,11: see Ac 2:27.

Acts 13:36

Ver. 36. Some point these words otherwise, reading them thus; *David, after he had served his generation, by the will of God fell asleep*: which contains indeed a truth, viz. that God hath appointed every one's time in the world, and that the issue of life and death are his; but thus they would prove little to David's praise, for who dies otherwise but according to the determinate counsel of God? But this is remembered to David's glory, that, according to the will of God, he was a public good, and he lived and governed by the rule and square of God's word; notwithstanding which he fell asleep, and saw death, but such as did not deserve so terrible a name.

Laid unto his fathers; buried amongst his ancestors; *and saw corruption*; and his body corrupted as theirs. Now this verse explains the former, and draws the argument home, in that it proves, that the words before mentioned could not be meant of David, but of one that he typified and represented.

Acts 13:37

Ver. 37. *God raised again*; that is, on the third day, according to the gospel.

Saw no corruption; was not under the power of death so long as to be preyed upon so far by it.

Acts 13:38

Men and brethren; the usual compellation given in these cases.

This man; having spoken concerning Christ's resurrection, which only can be meant of him in his human nature, here, according unto that nature, the apostle calls him *man*.

The forgiveness of sins; as in Ac 10:43. This *forgiveness of sins* is that which the apostle so much would recommend to all to seek after, and magnify Christ for, it being only through him; and he could not be overcome by death, who could deliver us from sin.

Acts 13:39

Ver. 39. *Are justified*; it is a forensic word, opposed to condemned; all that believe in Christ with the heart, by his merit and mediation shall be absolved, and shall not come into condemnation: and thus this agrees with the former words, and shows us whence remission of sins is to be had. If any will take this word as signifying also to be purged from sin; yet it is evident, that the law can bring neither of these benefits unto us. The law declares what is sin, and what the curse is that is due unto sin, but not how to be delivered from them; it shows the spot, but not how to wash it off; and the sore, but not how to heal it; but, on the other side, we are bidden to *glory in the Lord, (Jesus), who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1Co 1:30,31.*

From all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses; to which may be added, that there were some sins which by the ceremonial law there was no sacrifice appointed for; and for such sins which a sacrifice was appointed for, it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take them away, Heb 10:4; which may make us more to admire the grace of the gospel, by which *we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, Heb 10:10.*

Acts 13:40

Ver. 40. Hab 1:5. He cautions these Jews, lest the same thing threatened by the prophet to their fathers come also upon them; for sin is as odious unto God as ever, and God is as jealous of his honour, which sin robs him of, as ever he was.

Acts 13:41

Ver. 41. These words are cited from that place in Habakkuk, according to the reading of the Septuagint, St. Paul not being willing to alter the words, the Jews that were dispersed being so, used to that translation, especially the sense being the same with the original Hebrew. This quotation of the apostle might also be taken from Isa 28:14,16.

Ye despisers; for which cause, in that place of Habakkuk they are commanded to consider the heathen, and are sent to school unto them they contemned so much, who had had God for their teacher, had they not despised his word.

And wonder; grow pale for shame and fear.

And perish; ye shall be destroyed by the Romans your enemies, as your ancestors were by their enemies.

A work in your days; this work was a work of God's just revenge on them then, by the Chaldeans; but threatened to come on these (without repentance) by the Romans.

Which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you; which destruction should be so great, that it was incredible to them now, though it should have been told them.

Acts 13:42

Ver. 42. *When the Jews were gone out of the synagogue;* or, as some read, the apostles, Paul and Barnabas, were gone out of the synagogue of the Jews.

The Gentiles; proselytes, or such devout persons formerly spoken of, who had relinquished paganism, and came to be instructed in the knowledge of the true God by the Jews.

The next sabbath; or in some day betwixt the sabbaths: the apostles took all advantages, if there were a festival, which was also called a sabbath, Le 16:31, and in Le 23:1-44, frequently; they would preach in season and out of season: howsoever, because we find the apostles did meet again with them on that day seven-night after, it is most probable that their desire was so to be understood. See Ac 13:44.

Acts 13:43

Ver. 43. *The congregation was broken up;* the congregation was dissolved, by the offence the Jews generally had taken at the doctrine of the apostles.

Religious proselytes; these proselytes were so called, from their coming over from paganism to own the true God: see Ac 2:10.

In the grace of God; this grace of God the apostles so earnestly exhorted them to continue in, was,

1. Their present state of being firmly resolved to serve God, whatsoever opposition or temptation they should meet with to the contrary, which was wrought in them by the grace of God.
2. The doctrine of justification by the grace of God, which St. Paul had preached unto them, Ac 13:39. Or:
3. The whole gospel, and doctrine therein contained, which is called *the grace of God*, Heb 12:15, and *the true grace wherein we stand*, 1Pe 5:12.

Acts 13:44

Ver. 44. The citizens generally resorted thither.

To hear the word of God; some out of curiosity, some to cavil at it, though some also out of love to it; here was doubtless a mixed congregation.

Acts 13:45

Ver. 45. The Jews could not endure that the Gentiles should be equalled to them, being as much concerned against the Gentiles being exalted, as against their own being depressed.

Envy, as a vicious humour, made them disrelish the wholesomest and most saving truths.

Contradicting and blaspheming; contradicting the doctrine of the gospel, and blaspheming the preaching of it; or going from one degree of opposition unto another, until they came to the highest enmity against both.

Acts 13:46

Ver. 46. *Waxed bold*; being nothing afrighted with the reproaches and blasphemies they met with, which but increased their zeal, as a little water does the fire in the smith's forge.

It was necessary; there was a necessity that the Word of God should be first preached to the Jews:

1. Because Christ was promised to the children and heirs of their ancestors.
2. Because Christ did command it to be thus preached, Mt 10:5,6 Lu 24:47 Ac 1:8.
3. Christ himself thus preached it, declaring that he was *not sent* (comparatively) *but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, Mt 15:24.

And judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life; by this their contradicting and blaspheming, they show as evidently that they are thus unworthy of everlasting life, as if a judge had determined so, or passed such a sentence upon his tribunal, or judgment seat.

Acts 13:47

Ver. 47. Because that prophecy must be fulfilled which we find, Isa 49:6, the apostle infers aright, that they were *commanded* to publish Christ unto the Gentiles; for *how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?* Ro 10:14.

I have set thee to be a light; all knowledge is ignorance, and all light is darkness, without Christ.

Acts 13:48

Ver. 48. *When the Gentiles heard this they were glad;* there can be no true rest or peace in any to whom Christ is not manifested; the apostle telling us, that *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*, Ro 5:1; and the kingdom of God is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Glorified the word of the Lord; they magnified the goodness of God, which appeared in the gospel unto them.

As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed; God, who ordered the end, ordereth the means, and gives them opportunities to hear the word, and by it graciously worketh faith in them whom he hath appointed to eternal life; without which faith, purging the heart, there is no hope of life eternal.

Acts 13:49

Ver. 49. *The word of the Lord,* concerning salvation to be found only by Christ, and the Gentiles to be admitted to partake of that salvation.

Was published throughout all the region; like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened, Mt 13:33.

Acts 13:50

Ver. 50. *The devout;* σεβομενοι, as was said of the men, such as had relinquished the idolatry of their country and ancestors, and acknowledged the true God, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Honourable women; of great repute and esteem; women being accounted more earnest in what way soever they take; and to be sure Eve was first seduced, and in the transgression.

The chief men of the city; in some cities there were but five, in some ten, in others twenty, in whose hands the government of the city was ordinarily put; and these the persecutors (knowing what an influence their authority must needs have) by all means labour to seduce.

Acts 13:51

Ver. 51. This was according to our Saviour's command, Mt 10:14 Mr 6:11 Lu 9:5, so often is it mentioned, and so considerable a matter it is for us to know, and dread the punishment appointed for such as refuse the gospel, and condemn the salvation offered by it. What this was symbolical of is not expressed. The Hebrew proverb says, The dust of an ethnic city or country doth pollute a man; and they might by this represent, that the inhabitants of such a city or place, who did not entertain the gospel, and the ministers thereof, they would repute as the vilest sinners, and they should by God be dealt with accordingly.

Iconium: see Ac 14:1.

Acts 13:52

Ver. 52. *The disciples;* either Paul and Barnabas in a more especial manner, or, also such as at Perga had believed the gospel, and came with them to Antioch, *were filled with joy*, so as no place was left for meaner contentments:

1. By reason of the pardon of their sins.

2. The promise made to them of everlasting life.
3. The gifts of the Holy Ghost which they had, at that time, as an earnest and pledge to assure the other unto them.

Acts 14:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 14:1-7 Paul and Barnabas are persecuted from Iconium by the malice of the unbelieving Jews.

Ac 14:8-18 At Lidstra they heal an impotent man, and refusedivine honours with abhorrence.

Ac 14:19,20 Paul is stoned at the instigation of the Jews, but escapeth alive with Barnabas to Derbe.

Ac 14:21-28 Having passed through divers places, and confirmedthe churches in faith and patience, they return toAntioch, and give an account of their ministry.

Ver. 1. *Iconium*, a city in Lycaonia.

They went both together; Paul and Barnabas, as they were wont to do, showing as great constancy in performing of their duty, as their enemies did obstinacy in persecuting them for it.

So spake; with such evidence and *demonstration of the Spirit and of power.* *The Greeks:* See Ac 13:43.

Acts 14:2

Ver. 2. *The unbelieving,* or disobedient, *Jews,* who did not believe the truths or obey the precepts of the gospel, *stirred up the Gentiles;* urging, persuading, and pressing of them, who of themselves (though as yet ignorant of Christ, and his word) would not have been so cruel.

The brethren; the apostles themselves, and others that were converted by them, whose common father God through Christ was, and were accordingly endeared one to another.

Acts 14:3

Ver. 3. *Long time therefore abode they,* to strengthen the new converts against the opposition they met with in the way of Christ, willingly partaking with them in their afflictions for Christ's sake.

Speaking boldly; with great courage, and humble confidence, as knowing in whom they had believed.

In the Lord;

1. In the Lord's cause, a business which he had sent them about. Secondly, And in the Lord's strength, who enabled them in it. *The word of his grace;* the gospel: first, Wherein the grace of God is manifested.
2. Whereby it is offered.
3. Wherewith, to such as receive, it is conveyed.
4. And out of grace disputed and allowed to some, hidden and withdrawn from others.

Granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands; God, by his miraculous confirming the doctrine of the apostles, showed that it was from him.

Acts 14:4

Ver. 4. *Was divided;* as it was about our Saviour and his doctrine, Joh 7:43.

The apostles; Paul and Barnabas, who were called to be apostles, 1Co 9:5,6.

Acts 14:5

Ver. 5. *Rulers*, such as were called *the chief men of the city*, Ac 13:50.

To use them despitefully; thus they that were called to the marriage of the king's son, Mt 22:6, entreated the servants despitefully.

And to stone them; they would have used them as such who were not worthy to live, and then have taken away their lives from them, as they did by our Saviour; first they spat upon him, and then crucified him.

Acts 14:6

Ver. 6. *And fled*; the apostles did not flee so much to save their lives, as to husband their time best for the glory of God in other places; and this they were commanded to do, Mt 10:23,

When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another. Lystra and Derbe; these were cities further in the country of Lycaonia than Iconium was.

Lycaonia; a part of the Lesser Asia, nigh unto the mountain Taurus.

Acts 14:7

Ver. 7. Thus was verified what St. Paul observed, Php 1:12, that all those things fell out *unto the furtherance of the gospel*, which spread the further for the scattering of the apostles and preachers of it; and thousands had not heard of Christ, if persecution had not driven the ministers of the gospel unto them: God working good out of evil, and causing the sun, when it leaves one part, to shine upon another.

Acts 14:8

Ver. 8. Such defects as are from nature, are incurable by art, and only to be helped immediately by the God of nature.

Who never had walked; this is observed and enlarged upon, to make the miracle the more appear to be the only work of God: Ac 3:2.

Acts 14:9

Ver. 9. This Paul might know by a prophetic Spirit; and that extraordinary gift of discerning of spirits might be in this case bestowed upon him. But withal, it is not unlikely but this lame man's attention to the word, eyes, gesture, and countenance, might speak as much.

Acts 14:10

Ver. 10. As Ac 3:6,8, to shew that he was perfectly recovered of this lameness; as all miraculous cures (being the work of God) were perfect.

Acts 14:11

Ver. 11. *In the speech of Lycaonia;* which was a dialect of the Greek tongue, that language being in the Lesser Asia ordinarily spoken.

The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men; the heathens (especially their poets) did frequently believe such kind of apparitions; probably at first from the appearing of angels unto the patriarchs and others, which by tradition they might have heard of.

Acts 14:12

Ver. 12. *Jupiter;* whom the heathens took for their chief God. *Mercury* was feigned to be the messenger of their gods, and therefore represented with wings; as also the interpreter of the gods, which caused their applying of his name to Paul.

Acts 14:13

Ver. 13. *Before their city;* the temple of Jupiter, whom they took for the patron of their city, was in the suburbs.

Garlands; these were usually in the form of crowns put upon the oxen which they intended to sacrifice; and, by this sign, showed that they were dedicated to Jupiter, whom the heathen blasphemously called, The king of kings, and placed him sitting in his chair, or throne, with a crown on his head.

Unto the gates; the gates or doors of the house where the apostles lodged.

Acts 14:14

Ver. 14. *They rent their clothes;* which was a sign of their greatest detestation of, and sorrow for, such abominations.

And ran in among the people, crying out; expressing their greatest zeal for the glory of God, and earnestness to hinder the idolatry of this people.

Acts 14:15

Ver. 15. *We also are men of like passions with you;* we stand in need of food and raiment, are liable to diseases and death, as well as you.

Vanities; so idols are frequently called, 1Ki 16:13,26 Jer 14:22, because they disappoint the hopes that are placed in them, and are empty of any good which is expected from them, and have nothing but what vain men (their makers) bestow upon them.

The living God; the true God is called *the living God*, De 5:26 Jos 3:10, in opposition to those false gods, who usually were only dead men, which out of love or fear were deified; as also in that he lives from himself, and gives life to every living creature.

Which made heaven, &c.: by this also the true God is distinguished from false gods, as Jer 10:11,12; and is a good argument against all idol worship; for Divine worship is a tribute we owe and pay to him that made us, Ps 100:3,4. It should be considered with what a respective compellation the apostles speak unto this heathen rabble, calling them, *Sirs*, or masters; a term surely then not unlawful to be given to our equals or betters.

Acts 14:16

Ver. 16. There were two main objections which these heathen idolaters might make against the gospel, and the worship of the true God: and they are, first, from the antiquity, secondly, from the universality, of that false worship; both which the apostle here gives a critical answer unto, telling them, that the reason why so many, and for so long a time had followed idols, was from the just judgment of God upon them, as Ps 81:12 Ro 1:24,28.

Their own ways; ways of our choosing, and not of God's commanding, are false ways.

Acts 14:17

Ver. 17. These words are to prevent that cavil, Why does God yet complain? and inform them, that though God had not given them, nor their ancestors, his laws written in tables of stone, as he had given to the Jews; yet they had the law written in their hearts, which they had not obeyed, though God's manifold mercies, his works of creation and providence, had testified unto them, that he only was to be feared and worshipped. How many witnesses hath God against sinful man, when every creature and providence speaks his power, wisdom, goodness, &c., and call upon us to love and obey him? Every creature tells us that God made it, &c.

Acts 14:18

Ver. 18. So hard a matter it is to persuade any to leave off these sins they are accustomed unto, or to rectify such errors in religion which men are

brought up in.

Acts 14:19

Ver. 19. *Certain Jews;* such as mention was made of, Ac 13:50.

Persuaded the people; a strange and incredible fickleness; but that we know how the same multitude who cried *Hosanna*, did more suddenly alter their note, and cry against our Saviour, *Crucify him, crucify him;* so uncertain a thing is worldly honour.

Stoned Paul; the malice of Satan is every way great; if he cannot destroy the souls of these blessed apostles, by making of them to accept of Divine worship, he will do his utmost to kill their bodies.

Acts 14:20

Ver. 20. *Stood round about him;* either in order to bury him, thinking him to be dead, as well as his persecutors did; or else to defend him, as much as possibly they could, from the rage of his enemies in that popular fury. Their spite was most against Paul, because he spake most, and preached unto them the way of life.

He rose up; being by the power of God suddenly restored to his strength again.

Derbe; a city near to Lycaonia, some say in it.

Acts 14:21

Ver. 21. *Had taught many;* had made many disciples by teaching, and also by baptizing of them, Mt 28:19. For as by circumcision they were made Moses's disciples, so by baptism they are made Christ's disciples.

Acts 14:22

Ver. 22. It is not enough to sow the seed of the word, but it must be watered also, frequent endeavours must be used that it may be fruitful. Thus the apostles return to visit such as they had preached unto; the persecution they had endured, increasing their resolution for God, and their strength from him. Lest they should be offended at what they saw St. Paul had endured, or themselves might be called to endure, they preach unto them the doctrine of the cross, not hiding from them the miseries which in this world the profession of Christ and his truths might bring upon them. God hath indeed dealt all along thus with his people. The troubles which the Israelites met with in the wilderness, in their journey towards an earthly Canaan, did typify the calamities which God's people will meet with in this world, as they journey towards the heavenly Canaan, or Jerusalem which is above.

Acts 14:23

Ver. 23. *Ordained;* the word properly signifies a stretching out of the hand, such as was used when they gave their suffrages in the election of their magistrates, whereby was showed for whom they gave their voice; and afterwards it was commonly used for to constitute or appoint, or, as here, to ordain to any office or place; which might the rather be done by stretching out or laying on of the hands of the apostles, because by that means the Holy Ghost (or a power of working miracles) was frequently bestowed, Ac 8:17,18, which in those times was necessary to authorize their doctrine to the infidel world.

Elders; such as might instruct and govern the church.

They commended them; they commended the disciples as their jewels and chiefest treasure; as all sufferers are to commit their very souls to God, 1Pe 4:19.

To the Lord; to Christ, the best and faithful Keeper, that he should keep and further them in grace and goodness; to whose providence they wholly had committed themselves.

Acts 14:24

Ver. 24. Going the same way back which they had come, as appear by Ac 13:13,14.

Acts 14:25

Ver. 25. *The word;* the gospel, the word of the Lord; or Christ, who is the word, and who is the sum of what the ministers of the gospel preach about.

Perga: mentioned Ac 8:13; a city, or as some, a country, in Pamphylia, by the sea side. But the bounds of provinces were often altered by the Romans, and some made larger, and others lesser.

Acts 14:26

Ver. 26. *Antioch;* that Antioch which was in Syria, as appears Ac 13:1-3, to which this relates; and is a sufficient proof that they had not sought God in vain, and that there is no better preparation or provision towards any business, than faithful prayer unto God concerning it; doing our duty, and leaving the event unto his disposing.

Acts 14:27

Ver. 27. *All that God had done with them;* God being with them, and they being labourers with God, 1Co 3:9 2Co 6:1. They showed how much God had honoured them in making them his instruments in the conversion of so many souls.

He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles; he had given the Gentiles an opportunity of knowing and believing the gospel. The fleece alone had been wet before, and all the ground round about it dry; and now all the ground is wet, and that fleece was dry; to allude to Jud 6:37-40, by which this mystery was presignified, and can only be resolved by that of our Saviour, Mt 11:25,26: *Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy*

sight.

Acts 14:28

Ver. 28. To confirm them, as Ac 14:22; and also, as our Saviour withdrew himself from the multitudes, they chose there to refresh themselves a while, out of the heat of contention and persecution.

Acts 15:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 15:1-4 Great dissensions arise about circumcising the Gentiles: Paul and Barnabas are sent to consult the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

Ac 15:5,6 The matter is debated in a council there,

Ac 15:7-11 Peter declareth his opinion.

Ac 15:12 Paul and Barnabas report the miracles they had wrought among the Gentiles.

Ac 15:13-21 James pronounceth sentence in favour of the Gentiles, requiring of them abstinence only in a few particulars.

Ac 15:22-35 Letters are sent with the determination by messenger to the churches, which are received with joy.

Ac 15:36-41 Paul and Barnabas propose to visit together the churches they had planted, but disagree, and travel different ways.

Ver. 1. *Certain men*; these were such as did pretend to believe, but were false brethren; some think Cerinthus to have been of them.

The brethren; the Gentiles who were converted unto the faith of Christ, or Proselytes of the gate (as they were called) who were not circumcised, and now professing the true faith. These the pharisaical professors would have excluded from any hopes of salvation, although circumcision was not commanded but unto the posterity of Abraham, Ge 17:10-13, and Abraham himself was justified before he was circumcised, Ro 4:10.

After the manner of Moses; according unto the law of Moses: for God by him did renew and establish that ordinance unto that people, although it was long before his time both commanded and practised, Joh 7:22.

Acts 15:2

Ver. 2. *Paul*, that meek apostle, who was willing to become all things unto all men, yet he enters into a holy war with them that would introduce circumcision into the Christian church; because,

1. He would have no works of the law to be an ingredient into our salvation; but the free grace of God in Christ to be all in all.
2. That our freedom from all the ceremonial law, acquired by the death of Christ, might not be diminished.
3. That the spreading of the gospel might not be hindered, but that Christ might be accepted and honoured amongst all. Now if circumcision had been retained, it would have kept possession for all the other ceremonies to have continued, or re-entered, there being the same reason for the one as for the other, and the circumcised person was obliged by his circumcision to observe them all, Ga 5:3,4.

They determined; the church at Antioch, where this controversy was moved.

Unto the apostles; James, Peter, and John who are thought to have been then at Jerusalem, the rest being probably gone to preach Christ in other parts.

Acts 15:3

Ver. 3. *Brought on their way by the church;* the brethren or believers of Antioch, out of respect, went part of the way with them; as also thereby showing, that Paul and Barnabas did not go upon their own business or mind only, and that there was no dissension betwixt them and the church there.

The conversion of the Gentiles; it is a conversion or turning indeed from error to truth, from impurity to holiness; that is, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto the ever living God, Ac 26:18.

They caused great joy unto all the brethren; nothing more rejoices a good man, than the bringing of souls unto God, and the enlarging of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Acts 15:4

Ver. 4. *They were received of the church; they were owned with respect and thankfulness, for their great work and labour in the Lord's vineyard.*

All things that God had done with them: see Ac 14:27.

Acts 15:5

Ver. 5. If these words be taken for St. Luke's, the penman of this book, then they declare, that in the church of Jerusalem there were some that did abet the opinion of the necessity of circumcision; but if, (as most probably we may), we take them for the words of St. Paul, they then are part of his narrative to the church there, of what had happened at Antioch.

The sect of the Pharisees; these Pharisees were a sect amongst the Jews, (so called from פָּרָשִׁי separavit, and may be Englished, separatists), separating from converse with others, by reason of an opinion they had of their own holiness, Lu 18:11.

Acts 15:6

Ver. 6. *The apostles and elders, unto whom Paul and Barnabas were sent about the decision of this question, Ac 15:2, came together for to consider of this matter; they had been informed of it, and now they met to deliberate about it.*

Acts 15:7

Ver. 7. *Much disputing*; they argued on both sides, and considered what might be said for either opinion: some of them that met here seem at first to have been for the retaining of circumcision; for we *know but in part*, and from the collision of adverse parties such sparks fly out, that many a man hath lighted his candle at them.

A good while ago; from the beginning of our having received our commission to preach, as Mt 28:19; or more particularly, from the time of Cornelius's conversion, Ac 10:22 11:12, which is thought to have been about fourteen or fifteen years before, that Peter preached Christ, by the command of God, unto the Gentiles.

Acts 15:8

Ver. 8. *Which knoweth the hearts*; God knew the desires of the Gentiles, that they did sincerely desire to please God, and to see this salvation. This great attribute David improved, 1Ch 29:17, and highly recommended his son Solomon to consider of, 1Ch 28:9; which, if believed, would make us also to serve God *with a perfect heart and a willing mind*. *Giving them the Holy Ghost*; God himself was a witness for these Gentiles beyond all exception, when he gave them the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; by which he testified, that they belonged to Christ, whose Spirit this was. Thus *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*, Re 19:10; and the Spirit, according to our Saviour's promise, Joh 15:26, doth testify of him.

Acts 15:9

Ver. 9. God had now broken down the middle wall of partition betwixt Jew and Gentile, Eph 2:14, and distributed his graces to these also, which was signified by the rending of the veil from the top to the bottom, Mt 27:51, whereby such as were formerly without, might see and enjoy the benefit of those great things which had been hidden under those shadows and types.

Purifying their hearts, from idolatry, and other impieties in which they had lived; which is the inward circumcision of the heart; and, whosoever is thus cleansed, ought not to be reputed amongst the unclean.

By faith; faith is the instrument, God is the efficient cause, of our justification and renovation.

Acts 15:10

Ver. 10. *Why tempt ye God? Why would you make a doubt of, and put it to a trial, whether God did in good earnest admit the Gentiles to his favour, and whether he remains firm and constant in such his kindness towards them? They did tempt God also, by disliking the calling of the Gentiles, and would have brought God's will, were it possible, unto theirs; not submitting their wills, as they ought, unto God's: for he that sins in any kind, does tempt God; that is, he tries God's patience, power, and righteousness.*

A yoke; so the law of ceremonies is called. Ga 5:1, and was a yoke indeed, if we consider:

1. Their variety;
2. Their difficulty;
3. Their chargeableness;
4. Their inefficacy, being only shadows of good things to come, Col 2:17.

Acts 15:11

Ver. 11. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ;* all saving grace may be well so called, it being purchased only by Christ, and bestowed upon us from the Father through Christ.

Even as they; the Jews their fathers; these were saved through the grace of the Messiah which was to come; and the apostle urges this (against the imposing of the law) to the Jews, because neither their ancestors nor

themselves could be justified by the law, but only by grace.

Acts 15:12

Ver. 12. *All the multitude;* the apostles and elders themselves gave attention to what Barnabas and Paul declared, and by their silence did tacitly approve of what they had said.

Miracles and wonders; the conversion of the Gentiles in itself, and not only the signs which did attend it, is truly wonderful: the saving of any one soul is a miraculous work.

Acts 15:13

Ver. 13. *After they had held their peace;* Barnabas and Paul had finished their narrative.

James, who was surnamed the Just, and was the son of Alpheus, and a kinsman to our Saviour, now being president of this council.

Answered; that is, began to speak.

Acts 15:14

Ver. 14. *Simeon,* or Simon, the name of Peter; but St. Luke, being himself a Hebrew, writes it according as they pronounced it, and not so contracted as the Greeks wrote it.

A people; there were some at all times probably amongst the Gentiles who did fear God, as Job and his three friends; but they did not make a people, or such a number as is here spoken of.

For his name: God takes out of the world *a people for his name,* that is,

1. For himself; as, Pr 18:10, *the name of the Lord is put for the Lord himself.*

2. For to call upon his name, as also for to be called by his name.

3. For his glory and honour, and to magnify his name.

Acts 15:15

Ver. 15. *The prophets;* in the plural number, though only one cited: it is an ordinary enallage; but it also shows the harmony amongst the prophets, they all speaking by one Spirit; what one said is as if all had said it.

Acts 15:16

Ver. 16. *After this;* in the days of the Messiah.

I will return: the word may be taken in both voices. If actively, it signifies God's returning unto the Gentiles, from whom he had departed. If passively, it foreshows their returning unto God, whom they had forsaken.

The tabernacle; the house, expressed by a tabernacle, (as frequently in Scripture), because that anciently they dwelt only in tabernacles; and here for the throne of David, who was a type of Christ, whose kingdom is over all. God does promise less than he does perform, for he did not only restore the tabernacle of David, in Christ, but raised it to a far greater splendour and glory in its spiritual state. And though St. James here does not exactly keep unto the words of the prophet, he speaks their sense and meaning.

Acts 15:17

Ver. 17. In the prophet it is *the remnant of Edom*, Am 9:12, which is here called *the residue of men;* for as Jacob, or Israel, shadowed out the church, so Edom, or Esau, (the other son of Isaac), represented those who were rejected, Ro 9:13. The prophet also adds, by way of explication, *all the heathen;* as the apostle does here, *all the Gentiles. Upon whom my name is called;* who shall be mine, or appropriated unto me; also called by

his name, they being called Christians from Christ, whom they believed in.

Saith the Lord, who doeth all these things; the calling of the Gentiles was God's work, and therefore so far from being excepted against, that it ought to be marvellous in our eyes.

Acts 15:18

Ver. 18. This the apostle adds, that they might not be offended with the seeming novelty and surprise of the calling of the Gentiles, and abrogation of the ceremonies; for it was no other than what God had before determined to do, and therefore they ought to rest satisfied in the wise and holy appointments of God.

Acts 15:19

Ver. 19. St. James here gives his opinion, confirming and approving what Peter had done in conversing with and baptizing of the Gentiles; whom he would not have afflicted or disturbed with such things as were not necessary, lest that it should hinder the conversion of the Gentiles, and the church should lose the substance for a shadow.

Acts 15:20

Ver. 20. *That they abstain from pollutions of idols; eating of meat that was offered to idols,* (as Ac 15:29), in a case of scandal, and for the present state of the church, was forbid, though afterwards in other cases indulged, 1Co 10:27.

Fornication is here mentioned amongst indiferent things; not that it ever was so, but because it was amongst the Gentiles reputed to be so, even by them who punished adultery severely. By these two, some think all sins against both the tables of the law to be forbidden, because by one sin against each table all the sins against any command may synecdochically be understood.

From things strangled; such creatures as had not their blood let out, and therefore were not to be fed upon, by the law of God, Ge 9:4, given as soon as the use of flesh was allowed for food.

And from blood; they were also much more to abstain from blood, when shed out of the body of any slain creature, Le 3:17 De 12:23. That blood was forbidden might be to teach them meekness, and to abstain from revenge. It is certain, that such nations as feed on blood are most barbarous and cruel. It is also probable, that these being included in the precepts which they called, The precepts of Adam, or Noah, and to which all the proselytes of the gate were obliged to yield obedience, the apostle would have the observance of them to be continued upon them that came from amongst them over unto Christianity. For though all these ceremonies were dead, (with Christ), yet they were not then deadly, and did wait a time for their more decent burial. If any wonder that the council did not treat of and write about greater matters; as of worshipping God the Father, through the Son; of denying of ourselves, and taking up the cross; he ought to consider, that the question they met upon was about other matters, and that those great things were never in question amongst such as feared God.

Acts 15:21

Ver. 21. The reason why St. James would not have the ceremonies buried as soon as they were dead, was because the Jews had been so long confirmed in them, and bare such a love unto them; and he would purchase concord between them and the Gentile converts; though the Gentiles should bear with some inconvenience into the bargain, as not presently using all the liberty which through Christ they had a right unto.

Acts 15:22

Ver. 22. *The apostles and elders, with the whole church;* a happy concord, all agreeing as one man, by one Spirit.

To send chosen men of their own company; that Paul and Barnabas might be the better credited, and that by such as had been of a contrary judgment: so hard it is to remove suspicions, and to root out preconceived opinions.

Judas surnamed Barsabas; the brother of that Joseph mentioned Ac 1:23.

Silas, called Silvanus also.

Chief men among the brethren; noted for their holy living, or great knowledge, or office in the church.

Acts 15:23

Ver. 23. *The apostles and elders and brethren;* the letter was wrote in the name of them all, that it might have the greater force, and better acceptance; that so strong a cord might not be broken by the false apostles.

Of the Gentiles; such as out of Gentilism, or paganism, were converted unto Christ; to whom the determination of this case was of the greatest concern; their right of belonging unto Christ, and having any hopes of salvation, being questioned, unless they would be circumcised.

Acts 15:24

Ver. 24. *Certain which went out from us;* for these false apostles were such as came from Judea, Ac 15:1, that is, from the church there. It is Satan's great policy to divide, that he may rule; he will have at least one share where there is more than one. No such sad divisions as church divisions, when that some of ourselves preach perverse things, as Ac 20:30. *Have troubled you with words;* as if in the professing of Christianity there would be no salvation unless Judaism be embraced, and circumcision admitted. No greater trouble to a considerate mind, than about the concern of salvation, when they say, Where is thy God? *Saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law;* these they did well put together; for by circumcision they engaged to the observance of the whole law of Moses; and by the decreeing the omission, that whole law of ceremonies is declared void, and of no effect. What truth and unity build up, discord and error pull down.

Acts 15:25

Ver. 25. *With one accord;* with one mind, as if they had all but one soul, (they had but one Spirit, the Spirit of truth), as Ac 2:1 Ac 5:12; their unanimity adding great strength to the decree they sent.

Acts 15:26

Ver. 26. Because that the false apostles at Antioch had vilified Paul and Barnabas, and opposed their doctrine and practice in admitting of the Gentiles by baptism into the church, the council here at Jerusalem take occasion to vindicate and to commend them, especially for their suffering so much for Christ, of which we read, Ac 13:50 14:19: it being most reasonable to believe, that they had not done or said any thing for their own sakes, who had done and suffered so much for Christ and his truth's sake.

For the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; for Christ's honour, and the truth of his gospel.

Acts 15:27

Ver. 27. They shall inform you of the truth of what is contained in this epistle, that you may be more assured it is not forged or counterfeited. Of these men, see Ac 15:22.

Acts 15:28

Ver. 28. *To the Holy Ghost, and to us;* that is, unto us, assisted by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is deservedly first mentioned, that the apostles might testify that they desired to say, write, or do nothing in which they had not the Spirit of God directing of them: and they mention the Spirit, that the Antiochians, unto whom they wrote, might be assured they were not human inventions which they recommended, but that they had the authority of God for them. Unto us; as ministers, or God's stewards, who acquainted them with these things, in discharge of their

duty, and that they might appear themselves to be faithful.

Burden; the yoke spoken of, [Ac 15:10](#).

Necessary things: to be sure, several of the things here spoken of are not absolutely necessary unto salvation, or simply, and in their own nature, necessary, as to abstain from blood, &c.; but though they are not necessary always and at all times, yet in this place, and at this time, they were necessary for the peace of the church, and to avoid giving of offence to the converted Jews, and to nourish brotherly love between them and the Gentiles.

Acts 15:29

Ver. 29. Of these see more largely, [Ac 15:20](#).

From meats offered to idols; they were wont to carry home and feast upon part of the sacrifices they had offered unto their false gods; nay, they did not, without reproach, eat of any greater beasts, (as oxen and sheep), but they always first offered some of them unto their idols. And it was accounted no small impiety to eat $\alpha\theta\upsilon\tau\alpha$ $\iota\epsilon\rho\alpha$, part of any beasts which they had not first offered up to some or other of their gods.

From blood; for this reason they might not eat of any thing that died of itself, as [De 14:21](#), because the blood was not gone out of it.

From fornication; mentioned here, because so commonly practised amongst the Gentiles, and yet not esteemed a sin. Hence also, [1Th 4:3](#), the apostle lays a very great charge against it.

Fare ye well; the ordinary appreciation wherewith their letters were concluded, in which they wished health and strength to the party they wrote unto: instead of which word, some ancient copies read, $\phi\epsilon\rho\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota$ $\epsilon\nu$ $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\iota$ Αγίω ; which is rendered, Walk in the Holy Ghost; or, the Holy Ghost carrying, or enabling of you: a wish or prayer becoming these holy men that made it. They who have found the necessity of the Spirit's assistance, desire it above all things for such as they wish well unto.

Acts 15:30

Ver. 30. *When they were dismissed;* Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas; which two last, were sent with the former.

Gathered the multitude together; from whom they were sent, Ac 15:1,2, and that this determination of the council might be more publicly known, as all things concerning our common salvation ought to be.

Acts 15:31

Ver. 31. It could not but much rejoice the Gentile believers, that they were exempted from circumcision, and the ceremonial law. And it gladdened the believing Jews also, that the controversy was determined, and concord established amongst them. But much more might they all rejoice to understand the grace of the gospel; and that we are not justified by the deeds of the law, but by faith in Christ, Ro 5:1.

Consolation; this word also signifies exhortation, and it was matter of joy to be put upon such excellent duties as our most holy religion recommends, and to be deterred from such erroneous evils as it forbids. All that God requires of us being only to *eschew evil, and do good*, Isa 1:16,17 1Pe 3:11.

Acts 15:32

Ver. 32. *Prophets;* not properly so called, from any gift of foretelling things to come, but as doctors and teachers in the church, Eph 4:11, expounding Moses and the prophets, and showing how and what they speak concerning Christ; proving out of them, that he was the Messiah, as Philip had done, Ac 8:35.

Confirmed them: see Ac 14:22 18:23.

Acts 15:33

Ver. 33. *A space*; a competent time; some make this space to be a year.

They were let go in peace; they were dismissed with earnest prayers for them; for by *peace* is meant all kind of good, which they desired for them, as Mt 10:13.

Unto the apostles; such of them as were at Jerusalem, who also had sent them.

Acts 15:34

Ver. 34. Though, having performed his message, he was discharged, and might have returned; yet, for the further benefit of that church, he continued at Antioch.

Acts 15:35

Ver. 35. Judas only returned to Jerusalem, to acquaint the apostles with the reception their letter had met with, and what obedience was readily given to their decrees; so that when these went away the church at Antioch was not left destitute of faithful pastors. When God gives the word, great is the multitude of preachers, Ps 68:11.

Acts 15:36

Ver. 36. It is not enough that they had sown good seed, but they must take care lest it be plucked up, and tares sown in the stead of it, by the wicked one, Mt 13:19. A husbandman's work is never at an end, neither is the labourer's in God's vineyard.

See how they do; not so much looking after their bodily welfare, as how their souls fared, whether they continued in the faith, and integrity of life.

Acts 15:37

Ver. 37. This John, or *Mark*, was *sister's son to Barnabas*, as Col 4:10.

Acts 15:38

Ver. 38. This deserting of Paul and Barnabas by John, is mentioned Ac 13:13.

To the work; the work unto which the Spirit had called them, Ac 13:2, which was to offer life and salvation unto the Gentiles, and to gather them into the fold of Jesus Christ. This objection was very considerable, and ought to have weighed more than this John's propinquity, or nearness in blood, unto Barnabas.

Acts 15:39

Ver. 39. *They departed asunder;* as Abraham and Lot parted, Ge 13:9, yet keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; loving of and praying for one another, as we may judge, being both good men. But they verified here what they had said at Lystra, Ac 14:15, *We are men of like passions with you;* yet God overruled these very divisions between Paul and Barnabas for his own glory, and the enlargement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, several places being by this means blessed with the gospel. And this reflection upon this John Mark, is thought, to have made him for the future more diligent and valiant in the cause of the gospel, which occasioned that kind salutation from St. Paul unto him, Col 4:10.

Cyprus; an island in the Mediterranean Sea.

Acts 15:40

Ver. 40. The favour of God, as Ac 14:26, which the wisest and holiest men stand in need of in all their undertakings; as also his gracious conduct and assistance.

Acts 15:41

Ver. 41. Syria and Cilicia; where there were several brethren by reason of the dispersion that was upon Stephen's death, Ac 11:19; and unto whom also the before recited letter was written, Ac 15:23.

Confirming the churches; putting them in mind of the gospel of Christ, which they had heard and believed; and encouraging of them to persevere in the profession of it, and being ready to answer any objection that could be brought against it.

Acts 16:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 16:1-8 Paul having circumcised Timothy, and taken him for his companion, passeth through divers countries, Ac 16:9-13 and is directed by a vision to go into Macedonia.

Ac 16:14,15 He converteth Lydia,

Ac 16:16-18 and casteth out a spirit of divination.

Ac 16:19-24 He and Silas are whipped and imprisoned.

Ac 16:25-34 The prison doors are thrown open by an earthquake at midnight: the jailer, prevented by Paul from killing himself, is converted.

Ac 16:35-40 They are released by the magistrates.

Ver. 1. Derbe and Lystra; of these cities see Ac 14:6. *Timotheus;* who was known unto Paul from his childhood, 2Ti 1:5, and accompanied him in many journeys, 2Ti 3:10,11, and is called by him, his *work-fellow*, Ro 16:21.

A certain woman, called Eunice; being one of them that had believed in Christ in Judea, and had a holy woman to her mother, named Lois.

His father was a Greek: although it was not lawful for a Jew to marry a woman of another nation, yet some think that a Jewess might marry to a stranger, as Esther married to Ahasuerus.

A Greek; of Gentile extraction, and therefore not circumcised; yet he is accounted to have been a proselyte.

Acts 16:2

Ver. 2. Though Timothy was well known unto Paul, yet he would not ordain him without the testimony of others concerning him, of his holy life, and knowledge in the Scripture, 2Ti 3:15, which he did excel in.

Acts 16:3

Ver. 3. *Circumcised him because of the Jews,* who could not yet be persuaded that the law of circumcision was abrogated. Paul, who became all things to all men, that he might save some, circumcised Timothy that he might not offend the Jewish converts, 1Co 9:22, but would not circumcise Titus, Ga 2:3, lest that he should harden them, and offend the Gentiles. These indifferent things require a single eye, to the edifying of the church, and the salvation of souls. Timothy was uncircumcised, although his mother was a Jewess; for according to their Talmudists, the mother could not cause her child to be circumcised against the mind of the father.

Acts 16:4

Ver. 4. *The decrees;* the determination of the council, mentioned Ac 15:20,29. *Ordained of the apostles and elders;* by common consent, and not of one only, whosoever he were.

Acts 16:5

Ver. 5. *Established in the faith;* being rightly persuaded in the nature and use of things indifferent; and, in general, of things necessary to be believed.

And increased in number daily; so that this visitation of the churches had

a double benefit. First, it strengthened them that were already converted. Secondly, it added more unto their number.

Acts 16:6

Ver. 6. *Phrygia* and *Galatia* were parts of Asia Minor. They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost by some revelation, though the manner is not known, to preach the word in Asia, for that time; though afterwards Paul preached there about two years together, Ac 19:10. Thus God (the great Householder) orders the candle to be removed from one room unto another; sends, or takes away, the light of the gospel, to whom, and as often, as he pleaseth. Our calling, as well as our election, is free; and we may say with our Saviour, Mt 11:26, *Even so, Father*; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Acts 16:7

Ver. 7. *Mysia*; a little country near Troas.

Bithynia; another province nigh unto the same place, over against Thracia, bordering upon the Black Sea.

The Spirit; the Spirit of Jesus, or of God, as some copies read.

Suffered them not; the journeyings of them that preached the gospel, as well as their words, were directed by God; they might not say, Do, or Go, but according to the will of God.

Acts 16:8

Ver. 8. Either the relics of the famous city of Troy, or the country thereabouts, in which the city of Antigonía was built.

Acts 16:9

Ver. 9. *A man;* an angel in the appearance and likeness (in habit and demeanour) of one of that country.

Macedonia; a Grecian province in Europe, extending to the Archipelago.

Help us; as to our souls, with the saving light of the gospel: God sends the ministers of the gospel to help such as would otherwise perish: with the gospel, salvation comes.

Acts 16:10

Ver. 10. *Immediately;* as soon as God's will was manifested, they make no delay, not objecting against the journey.

We endeavoured to go; St. Luke, the penman of this book was one of them that went, (the others were Paul, Silas, and Timotheus), and therefore speaks in the plural number.

Acts 16:11

Ver. 11. *Samothracia;* an island so called, because the inhabitants came partly out of Thrace, and partly from Samos. This *Neapolis* was a city in the confines of Thrace and Macedonia.

Acts 16:12

Ver. 12. *Philippi;* a city so called from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, who repaired a ruined town, and caused it to be called by his name. The chief city of that part of Macedonia; or the first city in the passage from Samothracia unto Macedonia.

A colony; where many Roman citizens went to inhabit, and whose inhabitants had the freedom of the city of Rome. To the church in this city Paul wrote an Epistle.

Acts 16:13

Ver. 13. In those places where there were not enough to build a synagogue, or could not obtain leave to do it, the Jews in those countries chose more private places to meet in, which usually were near rivers, or by the seaside, removed from the noise and observance of the multitude; and these places were called προσευχαι, from the prayers which were usually made there; and to one of these Paul and the rest went, taking that occasion to meet with them whom they might preach the word of life unto. The *women* are here named, as being more numerous in those oratories, or such as most willingly heard and attended unto what was spoken.

Acts 16:14

Ver. 14. *Lydia*; so called from the country of that name, she being born at *Thyatira*, a city therein, and now lived with her family at Philippi.

Worshipped God; being a proselyte, and one of them who had left the heathenish idolatry, and owned the one only and true God; but as yet unacquainted with the gospel of his Son our Saviour.

Heart, in Scripture sense, signifies both the understanding and the will: thus, *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness*, Ro 10:10. Her understanding was enlightened, her heart changed; she now loved what she before hated, and hated what before she loved.

The Lord opened; this was the Lord's work; according unto what our Saviour himself had said, Joh 6:44, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him*. And yet we may in a sense open our hearts, by using such means as God hath promised to succeed for that purpose, Re 3:20; and especially when, in a sense of our inability and necessity, we implore the free grace of God, and engage him to work in us according unto all his good pleasure. Otherwise creating a clean heart within us, as it is called, Ps 51:10, is beyond the power of nature.

She attended: hearing is an instructive sense, and faith cometh by it, Ro 10:17, but it must then be accompanied with attention.

Acts 16:15

Ver. 15. *And her household;* when Lydia had right to baptism, by reason of her faith in Jesus Christ, all her family, whom she could undertake to bring up in the knowledge of Christ, were admitted to that ordinance also; as all the servants, and such others as were born in his house, or bought with his money, were circumcised with Abraham, Ge 17:12,13. Now the gospel does not contract in any respect, but enlarges, the privileges of believers in all things. And if they might under the law have their children and servants admitted into a covenant with God, (which could not but rejoice religious parents and masters, who value the relation they and theirs have to God, above all earthly things), surely under the gospel none of our families are excluded, unless they wilfully exclude themselves.

She constrained us; as the two disciples that were going to Emmaus constrained our Saviour, Lu 24:29, with all earnest entreaties and loving violence.

Acts 16:16

Ver. 16. *Went to prayer;* went towards the place where their public prayers were usually made. *Of divination;* or, of Python, the name of Apollo, from the place where he was worshipped, (which was afterwards called Delphi), and from whom all evil spirits, that pretended to divination, were called Pythons; as that the woman made use of to delude Saul by, 1Sa 28:7.

Acts 16:17

Ver. 17. The devil might be forced by God to confess this; or, he might do it voluntarily by God's permission: First, To draw men on to believe him in other things, being he commended the servants of God, and spake the truth in this. Secondly, That, by flattering St. Paul, he might puff him up, and occasion him to sin. But an evil spirit, (or an evil man), when he dissembles as if he were good, is then worst of all.

Acts 16:18

Ver. 18. St. Paul was *grieved*, either for the maid's sake, who suffered so much by her being possessed with this spirit, or, for their sakes who were seduced by him. St. Paul (as our Saviour had done, Mr 1:25) refuseth the testimony of the devil; for he being the father of lies, Joh 8:44, makes every thing he says to be suspected; as it is a usual punishment of liars, that they are not believed when they speak the truth; and the devil never speaks any truth but with an intention to deceive.

In the name of Jesus Christ; by the authority and power of Christ.

Acts 16:19

Ver. 19. *Her masters;* for she was a servant, or slave; and being very advantageous, might have many that had a share in her.

Their gains; the profit could not but be considerable, for they were to come with *the rewards of divination in their hands*, as they did to Balaam, Nu 22:7.

Rulers: See Poole on "Mt 16:20".

Acts 16:20

Ver. 20. *Magistrates*, the same who are called *rulers*; and the word here shows, that they were under the power of the sword, and ruled by the Romans; though the rulers spoken of in the former verse might be the civil magistrates of the city, and the magistrates here mentioned might be the commanders of the forces therein. They carried them, as they did our Saviour, from one to the other, the more to disgrace them, and to obtain the greater punishment for them. They mention their *being Jews*, because it was a most odious name unto all men, by reason of their different opinions in religion, and diversity of manners in conversation from all.

Acts 16:21

Ver. 21. There was at Philippi, as appears Ac 16:12, a colony of the Romans, and they were governed by their laws, by which they might make no innovation in religion without the consent of the senate, and afterwards of their emperors; which here these persecutors allege.

Acts 16:22

Ver. 22. *The multitude;* generality and unanimity alone cannot authorize opinions or practices.

Rent off their clothes; Paul's and Silas's clothes, to disgrace them the more, or in order unto their being scourged; though some think that the magistrates rent their own clothes, in detestation of the pretended blasphemy which was laid to Paul's charge, as the high priest did, Mr 14:63.

Acts 16:23

Ver. 23. *Laid many stripes upon them;* partly by the lictors or executioners, and partly by the furious rabble.

The jailer; this jailer's name (of whose conversion we read hereafter) was Stephanas, as may appear if you compare 1Co 1:16 with what follows by St. Luke in this story. Of him also we read, 1Co 16:15,17.

Acts 16:24

Ver. 24. Thus they dealt with Joseph, Ge 39:20, compared with Ps 105:18, and with Jeremiah, and with John Baptist.

Sanctorum sors est, et non moleste ferenda.

Acts 16:25

Ver. 25. No time or place where prayer is not acceptable unto God, and prevalent with him; nay, it sounds the sweeter when on the waters of affliction a good man pours it forth unto God.

Sang praises unto God, that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ: and being all things are overruled for the good, and conduce to the advantage, of them that love God, Ro 8:28, they owe unto God thanks for all things through Jesus Christ, which is also required of them, Eph 5:20.

Acts 16:26

Ver. 26. *Suddenly;* how soon is prayer answered, when the fulness of time is come! So nigh is God unto all that call upon him, Ps 34:17 145:18.

There was a great earthquake; an earthquake did usually precede some wonderful matter, as Mt 28:2. And although God could have delivered these his servants without an earthquake, yet, to show the more that their deliverance was his work, and it was no artifice or force of their own, he manifested his power after this manner.

Every one's bands were loosed; either by the earthquake, or some secret power of an angel, or by God himself immediately, that the apostles and others might know that the souls of men should be loosed and set free by them, whose bodies for that purpose were now freed by God.

Acts 16:27

Ver. 27. *Awaking out of his sleep,* by the earthquake, which being upon an extraordinary occasion, could not fail to do all that God intended by it.

Would have killed himself, for fear of suffering a more cruel death; for all jailers, who let any prisoner escape, were to suffer the same punishment that the prisoners were thought to have deserved; and self-murder was very ordinary amongst both the Romans and Grecians. But whatsoever their philosophers have said of it, it must needs have been a very great

provocation against God, to show so great an aversion from God's will, disposing of them and their concerns in this world, and challenging or daring of him to do worse by them in the world to come. Men must have sad comforts, and take desperate resolutions, that come to this at once.

Acts 16:28

Ver. 28. The other prisoners were smitten with amazement; neither did they mind (or it might have been kept from them) that the doors were opened, and their chains loosed: but as for the apostles, the same God who wrought this deliverance for them, might inform them of the intent of it; that by this means the conversion of the jailer and his family was intended; and that their doctrine might be magnified, which had been so much vilified.

Acts 16:29

Ver. 29. *He called for a light,* or lights, which prisons are not usually without.

Came trembling: what a sudden and great change can God make! he comes trembling to those feet which he had put into the stocks so lately.

Fell down before Paul and Silas; by which he would give a civil respect unto them, it being an ordinary rite amongst the Eastern nations (as endless examples in Scripture witness) to pay their respects; and from them it spread itself into Greece: which respect Paul and Silas do not refuse, because it was barely civil, and did show the humility and brokenness of the jailer's heart. Yet Peter would not accept of the like from Cornelius, Ac 10:25,26, because it was more than a bare civil respect which Cornelius would have given him.

Acts 16:30

Ver. 30. *Brought them out,* into his own apartment in the prison, or to some more open and free place.

Sirs; a term of respect given by the Romans and Grecians to such whom they honoured, as now the jailer did these seemingly most contemptible men.

What must I do to be saved? He might have some knowledge of a future state, which he here inquires after:

1. By the very light of nature.
2. By tradition.
3. By the doctrine of the philosophers.
4. By his frequenting with Jews and proselytes.

Men under fears, and in dangers, as to the things of this world, are brought to look after another world (as every one prays in a storm): but this is only when God is pleased to sanctify such fears and disasters; otherwise all the plagues of Egypt do but harden them the more, Ex 7:3.

Acts 16:31

Ver. 31. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*; this is the sum of the gospel. Christ, apprehended by faith, serves for wisdom, *righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, as 1Co 1:30. But then this precious faith must be such as works by love, as purifies the heart, Ac 15:9, as *overcometh the world*, 1Jo 5:4, as *quenches the fiery darts of the devil*, Eph 6:16, and is deservedly called, a *most holy faith*, Jude 1:20.

Thou shalt be saved, and thy house; thou shalt by this means come to obtain that life thou dost so much desire after; and not only thyself, but (God gives more than we ask) thy children and family shall be saved; inasmuch as the covenant, where it is entered into, is not only with them, but with their children.

Acts 16:32

Ver. 32. Expounding more at large that which they had briefly propounded in the foregoing verse, as concerning the natures and offices of Christ;

especially his suffering for our sins, and rising again for our justification.

To all that were in his house; their fellow prisoners not exempted, unto whom it was a joyful confinement, being by this means made God's freemen.

Acts 16:33

Ver. 33 *The same hour of the night;* he did not delay to show forth the fruits of his faith, and real conversion.

And washed their stripes; which his stripes had made, using such means as might assuage their pain, and heal their wounds.

He and all his: See Poole on "Ac 16:15", See Poole on "Ac 16:32". Of baptism administered without any delay, upon their profession of faith in Christ, we have had examples, Ac 8:38, 10:47, and in Ac 16:15.

Acts 16:34

Ver. 34. *Into his house;* which was close unto, or a separate part of, the prison, into which they did ascend, being before in a low dungeon.

He set meat before them; Paul and Silas had been long fasting, and in any season of the night it was a mercy to them to have a table spread for them.

Rejoiced; finding the effects of his faith, peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost; which was not a little augmented, in that he had his family admitted into the covenant of God's grace, they also believing, and being baptized.

Acts 16:35

Ver. 35. *The serjeants;* their messengers, or officers, which did carry a mace, or a rod, from whence they had their name.

Saying, Let those men go; probably being terrified with the earthquake, which if it had not been general, they could not yet have heard of. Their consciences might also accuse them for having unjustly punished them for a good deed which they had done, only to gratify the rage of the multitude; as also because they had acted against the custom of the Romans, (though they did not yet know that they had the privilege of Roman citizens), and had beaten strangers without any legal trial, or form of law.

Acts 16:36

Ver. 36. *Told this saying to Paul;* being glad that he might release them. Neither does he bid them go, as desirous to be rid of them; but, not requiring any fees, he lets them go to preach the gospel, and fulfill their ministry, with his prayers and good wishes.

Acts 16:37

Ver. 37. *Paul said unto them,* the officers who were sent to the prison with the message about their liberty.

They have beaten us; the magistrates, who commanded them to be beaten, are justly charged with the beating of them, as if they had themselves done it.

Openly; it was no small aggravation of their injustice, and these holy men's sufferings, that they had, for the greater spite unto them, openly scourged them.

Uncondemned; for they were not tried, or permitted to speak for themselves.

Being Romans; having the privilege of Roman citizens, which was sometimes given to whole communities. Now such by their laws might not be bound, much less beaten, (and least of all uncondemned), without the consent of the Romans.

Let them come themselves and fetch us out; this the apostle stands upon,

not so much for his own, as for the gospel's sake, that it might not be noised abroad, that the preachers of it were wicked and vile men, and did deserve such ignominious punishment. Though they were as innocent as doves, it became them also to be as wise as serpents.

Acts 16:38

Ver. 38. For the Romans (under whom these magistrates were) made it by their laws to be treason thus to abuse any of their citizens. God overruled their fear of man for the deliverance of his servants.

Acts 16:39

Ver. 39. Two things the magistrates had to desire of them:

1. That they would excuse the wrong done unto them, which they feared lest the Romans might revenge.
2. That, to avoid further mischiefs, (as they thought), they would leave the city. But the words here used do signify, also, that they comforted them, as well as besought, or exhorted them: both by word and deed they sought to make amends for the injury they had offered unto them; and desired them to depart for their own safety, lest the people should express their rage and madness against them.

Acts 16:40

Ver. 40. *Entered into the house of Lydia;* of whom, Ac 16:14. They do not shun dangers, so as to neglect their duty. They comforted them, in respect of the tribulation they had endured, and were still to endure; or exhorted them to prepare for suffering, and to submit unto God in it, and to make a holy use of it.

Acts 17:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 17:1-4 Paul preaching in the synagogue at Thessalonica, some believe, both Jews and Greeks.

Ac 17:5-11 The unbelieving Jews raise an uproar.

Ac 17:10-12 Paul and Silas are sent to Berea: the Berean Jews are commended for searching the Scriptures.

Ac 17:13-15 The Jews of Thessalonica follow and drive Paul from Berea.

Ac 17:16-21 At Athens Paul disputing is carried before the court of Areopagus.

Ac 17:22-31 He preacheth the living God, to the Athenians unknown: his general call to repentance; the resurrection of Christ; and his coming to judgment.

Ac 17:32-34 Some mock, others believe.

Ver. 1. *Araphipolis*, a city near to Philippi; so called, because the sea came up to it on both sides.

Apollonia, a city near to Thessalonica.

This *Thessalonica* was one of the chiefest cities of Macedonia: unto the church in this place St. Paul wrote two of his Epistles. This city was built by Philip, in memory of a victory he obtained over the Thessali.

Where was a synagogue of the Jews: it seems that there was no synagogue in either of the other places, but that the Jews of the other cities resorted unto the synagogue in this, all these three cities being in Macedonia. The sending away of Paul and Silas, Ac 16:39, to gratify the mad multitude, was a means to bring the word of salvation to those places.

Acts 17:2

Ver. 2. *As his manner was;* who was faithful unto him that had called him, and took all occasions to do his Master's work.

Out of the Scriptures; the law and the prophets, which they owned to be of Divine authority; and from the Holy Scriptures alone, all knowledge in the things of God and of our salvation must be fetched. If any speak of these

matters not according to them, *it is because they have no light in them*, Isa 8:20. What scriptures St. Paul alleged are not set down; but they were such as our Saviour had made use of, Lu 24:27, for the same purpose. This was customary with Paul, to preach these things unto the Jews first, as Ac 13:46, till they had put the word of God from them by their incredulity.

Acts 17:3

Ver. 3. *Opening* the scriptures which he had quoted. The very entrance into God's word giveth light, Ps 119:130.

And alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered; making the truth concerning our Saviour, which he preached, so plain to the eye of their understanding, as any thing which is exposed to the view of our bodily eyes. Comparing the words of the prophets concerning Christ, with those things which were done and suffered by him, Ps 22:6 Isa 53:1-12 Mt 16:21 Lu 24:26,46.

That this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ; that Jesus whom Paul preached was the true and only Messiah, and that what was written of the Messiah was fulfilled in him.

Acts 17:4

Ver. 4. *Consorted with Paul and Silas;* were so affected towards them, as that they were willing to take the same part or lot with them. The word imports the nearest and most intimate friendship and union; even such as is conjugal.

Devout Greeks; such of that nation as were become proselytes, who had renounced the idolatry and wicked conversation of the heathen, amongst whom they lived; and had joined themselves to the Jews; at least so far as to hear the law and the prophets read and expounded in their synagogues; and did worship but one God, and did injury unto none. Of these we frequently read in this book; as Ac 17:17 13:42,43.

Of the chief women not a few; a considerable number of these believed;

yet, Ac 13:50, such had stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 17:5

Ver. 5. *Believed not;* or were not convinced, or persuaded by St. Paul's sermons and arguments.

Moved with envy, or zeal; which, as fire in the chimney, its due place, is useful and necessary; but when scattered abroad, and out of its place, is most dangerous and destructive.

Lewd fellows; such as stand in markets and public places, gazing, and having nothing to do.

Of the baser sort: to what meat and base acts do not blind zeal and the rage of persecutors descend!

Jason; some think this to be the Greek name which the Hellenists did use for Joshua, or Jesus. This man was one of the dispersion, who came from Judea into Syria, and from thence into Macedonia; and is famous, so far as the word of God is preached, for being the host to Paul and Silas; and is mentioned, Ro 16:21.

To bring them out to the people, for to slay them. Nothing but their blood could quench the thirst of their persecutors; but having no just cause for the spilling of it, they are willing to have others to bear the odium of it.

Acts 17:6

Ver. 6. Being withdrawn, to avoid the popular rage against them, they charge innovation upon them, as knowing how jealous rulers are of any alteration. Thus whatsoever mischief befell the state, or whatsoever was odious and abominable, was in the primitive times still charged upon the Christians. The enemies of God's church clothe his servants in beasts' skins, (painting and representing them in what forms they please), that every one may hunt and worry them.

Acts 17:7

Ver. 7. *Hath received;* privily, and with design.

Contrary to the decrees of Caesar: the Romans, before they were brought under their emperors, (and after that), did not suffer any to be called king without their allowance and approbation; which was also much valued by such unto whom that honour was bestowed by them.

Another king, besides Caesar, who was called the lord of the world. This is like to the charge laid against our Saviour; but most maliciously both then and now, and wholly against their own consciences; for they themselves expected the Messiah to be a king, and refused and rejected him because his kingdom was a spiritual kingdom, and not of this world, Joh 18:36,37.

Acts 17:8

Ver. 8. *They troubled the people;* hearing something to have been done against the Roman state, under whom they were, and not knowing what it might come to, or how it might be construed.

And the rulers; for fear of an insurrection and tumult.

Acts 17:9

Ver. 9. *Had taken security;* either being satisfied with their answer, or having bail for their appearance, if need were; the word only hinting their being satisfied, or contented, as Mr 15:15.

Acts 17:10

Ver. 10. *Berea;* a city of Macedonia, not far from Pella and Thessalonica.

Went into the synagogue of the Jews; they went still first unto the lost

sheep of the house of Israel; in which Paul's invincible love, which he speaks of, Ro 9:2,3, does manifestly appear. The Jews had every where endeavoured his destruction; he still requites them (what he may) in promoting their salvation.

Acts 17:11

Ver. 11. The Jews of Berea did excel those of Thessalonica, not so much in birth as in disposition: they were not so prejudiced and obstinate; they patiently heard Paul; they seriously thought upon what he had said, and compared it with the Scriptures. And thus God gave them the preparation of the heart; and they brought their empty vessels. No wonder then that the oil of grace ran into them, and filled them. The Jews call their learned men, the sons of nobles; and according to that expression, these Bereans, that had acted so ingenuously and wisely, were said to be *more noble*.

Searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so: truth dares abide the test; only false wares need a dark shop to put them off in. The Scriptures only are our infallible rule; for they come from God, 2Ti 3:16, who cannot lie, Tit 1:2.

Acts 17:12

Ver. 12. God blessing his own gifts, and giving still unto them that had, and made use of them. And would we also *lay aside all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls, Jas 1:21*, we should find the hand of the Lord not to be shortened, but his word as powerful, as piercing, as converting as ever.

Acts 17:13

Ver. 13. As the waves are stirred with the wind; a fit metaphor to represent the fickle multitude by, that, as the sea, now rolls one way, then another; or as tottering buildings, that shake with every wind.

Acts 17:14

Ver. 14. *To go as it were to the sea;* that they might give over the pursuit of him; or, at least, be disappointed if they did pursue him, being he went on foot to Athens.

But Silas and Timotheus abode there still; the fury of the persecutors not being so hot against them as against Paul, who was more known or maligned than Silas or Timotheus: or these might abide there longer, having their relations in Macedonia.

Acts 17:15

Ver. 15. *They that conducted Paul;* who accompanied, and had undertaken to secure him.

Athens; the Greece of Greece, or the eye of Greece; as Greece was accounted the eye of the world; and yet, with all its learning, did not attain to saving knowledge, until Paul came and preached it. Satan's malice still causes the gospel to spread.

Acts 17:16

Ver. 16. *His spirit was stirred in him;* moved, and sharpened, being highly affected with divers passions:

1. With grief, for so learned, and yet blind and miserable a place.
2. With zeal, and a holy desire to instruct and inform it.
3. With anger and indignation against the idolatry and sin that abounded in it.

Wholly given to idolatry; or, as the marginal reading hath, full of idols. For we read, that there were more idols in Athens than in all Greece besides; and that it was easier to find a god there (that is, an idol) than a

man; their images being as numerous as their inhabitants.

Acts 17:17

Ver. 17. *Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews;* as Ac 17:2, still giving the Jews, if there were any, the priority; or, having by that means an opportunity to speak unto the proselytes of the Gentiles, who are the *devout persons* here meant: see Ac 13:43.

In the market, because of the concourse thither; throwing the net of the Gospel where there were most fish; and he himself preaching, as he exhorted others to do, in season and out of season, 2Ti 4:2.

Acts 17:18

Ver. 18. Both these sects of philosophers were the most opposite to Christianity of all others:

1. The *Epicureans* (so called from one Epicurus) did generally deny, that the world was made, or that it is governed, by God; as also, that there were any rewards or punishments for men after death, holding nothing to be good but what was so to their senses: and if so, were indeed swine rather than men.
2. The *Stoics* were so called from the place where they met at first; and held as bad opinions as the other did; and denied that their wise men were inferior to their gods, and in some respect preferred them before their gods; which their Seneca was not free from, Epist. 73. And no wonder if such men oppose the gospel what they may.

What will this babbler say? They make Paul so contemptible, comparing him to such as live by the off falls of corn, which was used to be gathered up as they fell down in measuring, and left to be fed upon by the meanest and poorest of the people.

A setter forth of strange gods; they might amongst the Athenians bring in by public authority as many gods as they would, but none out of their

private opinions; which was the fault charged upon Socrates.

And the resurrection; so ignorantly, or maliciously, did they pervert St. Paul's words, that they accuse him for making the resurrection a god too. Probably they heard him often naming the word, and magnifying of the resurrection, as without which we were without hope.

Acts 17:19

Ver. 19. The city of Athens was divided into five wards, or parts; one of which was called *Areopagus*, from the temple of Mars, which stood upon a hill in it: nigh unto which temple, or in some part of it, was their chiefest court kept; and here they judged of all religious affairs: here they condemned Diagoras, Protagoras, and Socrates; and hither they bring Paul, though rather to inquire of him (there being the resort of learned men) concerning his doctrine, than to condemn him for it.

Acts 17:20

Ver. 20. The greatest objection which these men had against the gospel was, that it was strange and new. That it is not new was apparent, it having been in the Old Testament (as the ripe fruit is in the blossom) so long ago; and their own superstitions were but so many apish imitations of God's worship. And if these things were strange unto them, they might thank themselves, who had not made due inquiring after them; and had, by their not improving the light of nature, provoked God to withhold further manifestations unto them, Ro 1:24,28.

Acts 17:21

Ver. 21. *Strangers which were there;* which must needs have be a considerable number, Athens being then a famous haven town and university; and these strangers might easily take this itch after news from the natives, who are noted for it by Theophrastus, Demosthenes, &c.

Acts 17:22

Ver. 22. Mars' hill: See Poole on "Ac 17:19".

Too superstitious; sometimes this word is taken in a good sense; many then, as now, taking superstition to be religion. But it is often taken in a bad sense: thus Theophrastus says, that a truly pious man is a friend of God; οδε δεισιδαιμων κολαξ θεου, but the superstitious man is a flatterer of God. Now this word being then of a kind of middle signification, the apostle would seem not to bear too hard upon the Athenians, who were devout and religious, according to the measure of their knowledge, and whom he desired to win by love and gentleness.

Acts 17:23

Ver. 23. Devotions; any thing unto which Divine worship and honour is given.

To the unknown God: it is storied, that in a plague time, when the Athenians had wearied themselves with their supplications unto all the gods of their country, they were advised by Epaminondas (a devout man amongst them) to erect an altar unto that god who had the power over that disease, whosoever he was; which because they did not know, and would be sure not to omit in their devotions, they erected an altar unto him under the name of *The unknown God*. Some say, there was a more general inscription, To the gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa, to the unknown and strange gods; though the inscription the apostle mentions in the singular number, might be usual too: for the Athenians, who entertained all manner of gods, fearing lest there should be any which they had not heard of, for their greater security, as they imagined, would have an altar for such also. Now this *unknown God*, St. Paul says, which was worshipped by them, was the true God: for,

1. They had an apprehension that Christ was the true God, whilst that wonderful eclipse at his death was effectually considered amongst them. Hence it is said, that Dionysius cried out, *Deus ignotus in carne patitur*. Now the unknown God suffers in the flesh.

2. The God of the Jews, whose name the Jews took to be so ineffable that they would not undertake to speak it, and who was not wholly unknown to Plato and Pythagoras, and who is truly invisible and incomprehensible, might upon that account be thus styled amongst them.

Acts 17:24

Ver. 24. *God that made the world;* this seems to be directed against the Epicureans, who held, that the world was without beginning. *Dwelleth not in temples made with hands;* as if he could be tied to them, or circumcised by them: yet God did in some respect dwell in his temple, where he did manifest himself more clearly than in other places; but that was a type of heaven, the throne of God.

Acts 17:25

Ver. 25. *As though he needed any thing;* God is not worshipped or served by holy men, because he wants their service, or any thing that can be offered unto him by them; but because it is their duty and advantage to be employed in his service and worship, Ps 50:10,11. *Life, and breath; the breath of life,* Ge 2:7. And in this respect God is called *the God of the spirits of all flesh,* Nu 16:22; as the cause of life and breath in all creatures, but especially in man; which made that charge so great against Belshazzar, Da 5:23, that his breath was in God's hand, and yet he had not glorified him.

Acts 17:26

Ver. 26. *Hath made of one blood:*

1. To teach all charity and compassion towards one another, being so nearly allied to one another.
2. As also to admire God more in that variety that appears in men's shapes

and voices, but especially in the dispositions of their minds; whenas they all come from one stock and stem.

Hath determined the times. &c.: the apostle asserts the providence of God against these Athenian philosophers, that nothing comes by chance, or a fatuitous concourse of atoms; but that God is in every thing, though men know it not, or rather will not consider it, Job 7:1 14:5,14. This doctrine was preached by Moses, who tells the people, that God is their life, and the length of their days, that they might love him, and obey his voice, and cleave unto him, De 30:20.

Acts 17:27

Ver. 27. *That they should seek the Lord:* the apostle tells these philosophers, to whom he spake, the true use of their philosophy, to improve their knowledge of natural things, to beget in them by it an admiration of the God of nature; for as from him, so for him are all things, Ro 11:36.

If haply they might feel after him, and find him; and although God himself is incorporeal, yet the things which he made are palpable; and did they seek as they ought, they might find out a great deal of God by the creatures, in which his wisdom, power, and goodness are manifested, Ro 1:20.

Though he be not far from every one of us; God filleth all things, especially he is near in the effects of his wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness, by which he orders and disposes of all things, to the falling out of a hair from our heads.

Acts 17:28

Ver. 28. *In him we live, &c.;* he is the God that made us, that preserves us, and not we ourselves; he keeps us as in the hollow of his hand, and compasseth our paths. Our breath is in our nostrils, and when we send it forth we have none to take in again, unless God furnish us with it, as out of his own hand.

As certain also of your own poets; Aratus, a Greek poet: not that St. Paul thought to derive any authority from these poets unto what he had said, but that he might shame them the more by the testimony of their allowed authors. Such quotations as these are (as the bringing in of a Greek into the temple) very rare; yet, besides this, we meet with the like, 1Co 15:33 Tit 1:12.

Acts 17:29

Ver. 29. *We are the offspring of God;* this is spoken by the apostle in a poetical expression, according unto what he had cited. We are indeed the children, and in our souls bear the image of God. But as many as have the Spirit of adoption, they partake of God's holiness, and imitate his goodness, and are more like unto him, by whom they are *begotten again unto a lively hope*, 1Pe 1:3; and at the resurrection they will appear unto all to be his children, when they shall be acknowledged his heirs, and coheirs with Jesus Christ, Ro 8:17.

We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver: taking man in his natural principles, consisting of soul and body, he is not made of gold and silver; much less can God be made of them. Our soul in which we bear the image of God, cannot be expressed by any graving or painting; much less God, whose image it is. There are two things to be considered in every image: its matter, and its form or shape. The matter of an image, let it be never so precious, is much inferior to man; for it lies in the earth, (be it gold or silver), for man to trample upon, until he dig it up, and take it out. As for the form of the image, it is that which men please to give it, and man is a kind of creator of it; howsoever, it is his workmanship, and the work is more ignoble than the workman, at least not to be adored by him.

By art and man's device; according to man's will and pleasure, for the image cannot determine itself to be made as it would.

Acts 17:30

Ver. 30. *The times of this ignorance God winked at;* to prevent an

objection, lest any should think that they might continue in their unbelief, and fare as well as their progenitors, God is said to have overlooked them; as if he had counted them unworthy of his care and providence, and therefore he did not correct or instruct them. When any are left to go on in their sin, without God's instruction or correction, it is a sad sign that God scorns to look upon them, or to use any means to recover them.

But now commandeth all men every where to repent: under the gospel we are so far from having liberty to do what we list, that we are more nearly concerned to repent and become holy, Ro 13:11 Tit 2:11,12 1Pe 1:14,15; and all men, every where, without exception of time or place, are under this command of repentance; and cursed indeed will he be that does not observe it.

Acts 17:31

Ver. 31. *He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world:* that God will judge the world his enemies have with trembling acknowledged, but when God will judge the world he hath concealed from his friends; yet the time is already set, Ps 96:13 2Co 5:10, and we ought to be daily prepared for it.

In righteousness: shall not the Judge of all the world do right?

By that man whom he hath ordained; our blessed Saviour, called here *man*, suitably to his death and resurrection, which St. Paul preached of; as also as man he is thus highly exalted for his debasing of himself for our sakes, Php 2:9-11.

Whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead; an undeniable proof or argument, it being so difficult a matter to believe a world to come, when we see all things remain as they did in this world; and especially to believe, that in the general judgment Christ, whom they had judged, condemned, and executed, should be Judge: God therefore did glorify him, by raising him from the dead, that they and we might not be faithless, but believe, Ro 1:4.

Acts 17:32

Ver. 32. *Some mocked;* the Epicureans, whom Paul had spoken against in his doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, and judgment to come.

Others said, We will hear thee again of this matter; it is thought the Stoics, who did not think the resurrection to be impossible, but did acknowledge rewards and punishments in the world to come; yet, though this seem most likely, the grace of God is free and powerful, and can subdue any unto itself. We are sure that there are different soils into which the seed of the word is cast, Mt 13:1.

Acts 17:33

Ver. 33. Leaving what he had said to God's blessing and their consideration.

Acts 17:34

Ver. 34. *Clave unto him,* in more than ordinary friendship; they were as glued to him; great was their love to the apostle, by whom their eyes were opened, nay, by whose ministry they were raised from the dead.

Dionysius the Areopagite; one of that great council mentioned Ac 17:19, whose conversion might have a great influence on many.

Damaris; who is thought to have been an honourable woman; such are mentioned Ac 17:12; or she might have been specially eminent for some grace or goodness she excelled in, and therefore hath a name upon record in the word of God.

Acts 18:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 18:1-8 Paul worketh for his subsistence, and preacheth Christat Corinth, first to the Jews, and,

upon their opposing and blaspheming, to the Gentiles with more success.

Ac 18:9-11 He is encouraged by the Lord in a vision, and abideth there a long time.

Ac 18:12-17 The Jews accuse him before Gallio the deputy, who will have nothing to do with them.

Ac 18:18-23 Paul passeth from city to city, confirming the disciples.

Ac 18:24-28 Apollos, instructed more perfectly in the Christian doctrine by Aquila and Priscilla, preacheth it at Ephesus, and afterward in Achaia, with great efficacy.

Ver. 1. The metropolis of Achaia, being a rich sea town, and situate in the very isthmus which joins Peloponnesus unto Achaia; made a Roman colony, and now flourishing with learned men. Here St. Paul gathered a famous church, unto which he wrote two of his Epistles.

Acts 18:2

Ver. 2. *Pontus*; a country between Cappadocia and the Black Sea, Ac 2:9, whither the progenitors of Aquila, in one of the dispersions, might flee from Judea to inhabit there.

Claudius; the Roman emperor, who, at the beginning of his reign, gave liberty to the Jews freely to exercise their religion, but about eight years after took away that privilege from them; which Suetonius makes mention of, though very much mistaking the reason. With the Jews, it is thought that the Christians were banished too; for the pagan Romans did not care to distinguish between them, they both worshipping but one God, and agreeing in opposing their idolatry.

Acts 18:3

Ver. 3. *Of the same craft*; the most learned amongst the Jews did always learn some handicraft, and it was one of those things which they held a father was bound to do for his child, viz. to teach him some trade. And one of their rabbi's sayings is, That whosoever does not teach his child a trade,

does as bad as if he did teach him to play the thief.

And wrought; St. Paul wrought with his hands, not so much because as yet there was no church there that could maintain him, but:

1. Because he would not be burdensome unto them, they being probably most mean persons that believed there, as appears, 1Co 1:26. Or:
2. That he might show how that he did not covet theirs, but them, and to gain nothing but souls amongst them. Yet he asserted his right, and the right of ministers, by Divine appointment, to live of the gospel, 1Co 9:6,11,12.

Tent-makers; tents were used by soldiers, and in those hot countries by others also, being usually made of skins sewn together to keep off the violence of the weather.

Acts 18:4

Ver. 4. He reasoned in the synagogue; or argued and disputed, giving his reasons out of Scripture, and answering their objections.

And persuaded the Jews; not only using cogent arguments, but, as some understand the verb, such as did prevail upon them.

And the Greeks; not such as were of the Jewish race, and after the dispersion used the Scripture in the Greek tongue; but such as were Gentile Greeks, Greeks by descent.

Acts 18:5

Ver. 5. Were come from Macedonia; according as was ordered by him, Ac 17:14,15.

Pressed in the spirit; more than ordinarily affected, the Spirit of God influencing his spirit, so that he felt an anguish or pain at the heart, as 2Co 2:4; such was his grief for the contumacy of the Jews, so great was his

desire that they might be saved.

Jesus was Christ:

1. The Christ, or anointed, that excelled all other Christs or anointed ones, being anointed with oil above measure.
2. The Christ that was promised by the prophets.

Acts 18:6

Ver. 6. *Blasphemed;* they blasphemed Paul, miscalling of him, but especially Christ, whose dishonour grieved Paul most.

He shook his raiment; his upper garment, as the manner was, Mt 26:65, that none of the dust of that place where such blasphemy was spoken might stick unto him. See Ac 13:51.

Your blood be upon your own heads; or, You are guilty of your own deaths and damnation, 2Sa 1:16 Mt 27:25;

Felo de se. This expression is borrowed from the witnesses laying their hands on the head of the guilty person; or the sacrificer's laying his hand on the head of the beast which was to be slain; Ex 29:10 Le 1:4.

I am clean; free from their blood, or the loss of their souls, having warned them, and shown the way of life unto them. Eze 33:4; he had blown the trumpet, and warned the people.

Acts 18:7

Ver. 7. *Justus;* some read Titus, some both Titus and Justus, making Justus a surname, as Ac 1:23 Col 4:11; after the manner of the Romans.

One that worshipped God; had forsaken the polytheism of the heathen.

Acts 18:8

Ver. 8. *The chief ruler:* there were several rulers in a synagogue, which we find frequent mention of, as Mt 9:18 Mr 5:22. Their office and place was, to advise and give order about the affairs of the synagogue, that all things might be performed according to their prescribed rules.

Many of the Corinthians believed; amongst whom are reckoned Gaius, Sosthenes, 1Co 1:1, and Epenetus, Ro 16:5.

Acts 18:9

Ver. 9. *In the night by a vision;* as Ac 16:9; it may be, by an angel.

Speak, and hold not thy peace; it is doubled again and again, as of greatest consequence:

1. To the Corinthians, whose salvation by this means might be procured.
2. To Paul himself, whose soul, howsoever, should be delivered, he having discharged his duty, Ac 20:26,27.

The fierceness of the enemies of God and his truth, should kindle a greater fervour in his servants for his glory. Should Satan have better servants than God? Should they dare for their master beyond what the servants of God are willing to do or suffer for him? Isa 62:1 Jer 1:17,18.

Acts 18:10

Ver. 10. Christ, in this vision, useth two arguments to persuade Paul to continue preaching the gospel at Corinth:

1. Because he would be with him, to supply, support, and deliver him; as it is promised to Jeremiah, Jer 1:19, and to all the faithful ministers of Christ, Mt 28:20. This promise was fulfilled to Paul, and to other of God's servants; whatsoever troubles they met with, even when they were killed, they were not hurt, Ro 8:36-39.

2. The other reason why Paul was commanded to tarry was, because there were many that God would have called by his ministry; and thus those who were not his people God calleth his people, as Ho 1:10 2:23.

Acts 18:11

Ver. 11. He sat there as his fixed place; which implies his continuance and constancy in the work of the ministry.

Acts 18:12

Ver. 12. This *Gallio* was brother to that deservedly famous Seneca, (who was tutor to Nero), and hath great commendations given him, as being a man of excellent disposition, beloved by all men, an enemy to all vice, and especially a hater of flattery.

Deputy of Achaia; this man was proconsul, governing Achaia and all Greece absolutely, or with the power of a consul.

With one accord; wicked men in their evil deeds are unanimous, for Satan knows that his kingdom would not stand if it were once divided.

Acts 18:13

Ver. 13. *Contrary to the law,* of the Romans, who, to avoid tumults and confusions, did forbid any to set up any new worship without leave; and the Jews in these parts having here no power to punish St. Paul as they had at Jerusalem, maliciously incite the governor against him. Or by the law here may be meant the law of Moses, which they accuse Paul to have broken, and so not to be comprehended in that licence which they had to exercise their religion.

Acts 18:14

Ver. 14. *To open his mouth;* to make his apology, and to speak in his own defence.

A matter of wrong; as murder, theft, or any such injury, which judges do usually determine of.

Reason would that I should bear with you; I would endure any trouble to hear and understand it, I should think it my duty to suffer you to say as much as you would in your case.

Acts 18:15

Ver. 15. *A question of words;* which have been spoken about the controversies of religion.

And names; as, whether Jesus was to be called Christ or the Messiah; and whether his disciples might be called Christians.

And of your law; concerning circumcision, as whether none may be saved without it.

I will be no judge of such matters; he acknowledges his unfitness and unwillingness to determine such things as did not belong unto him, or he did not understand.

Acts 18:16

Ver. 16. He commanded them to be gone, having dismissed their case; and, if need were, added threatening and force.

Acts 18:17

Ver. 17. *All the Greeks;* not the converted Greeks, though St. Austin thought they beat Sosthenes, as an enemy to Paul, (yet surely they had not so learned Christ), but the unbelieving or Gentile Greeks, who cared for neither Paul nor Jews, but favoured Gallio, who would have them driven

away.

Sosthenes; some think him to have been the same with Crispus, Ac 18:8; others, to have succeeded him in that office; and some think that he was chief ruler of another synagogue (for in great cities there might be more than one); and others, that there might be several called chief rulers over one and the same synagogue.

Gallio cared for none of those things; either slighting the Jews and all their controversies, or prudently declined intermeddling with them.

Acts 18:18

Ver. 18. *A good while*; a year and a half in all, as some think, which is mentioned Ac 18:11, by a prolepsis; or, besides that year and a half there spoken of.

Took his leave of the brethren; ordering every thing as if he were to have taken his last farewell of them, as it fell out accordingly: howsoever, holy men live in a constant expectation of their dissolution.

Priscilla and Aquila: that the wife's name is here put before the husband's, have caused various conjectures; and it is observed, that in St. Paul's Epistles, whereas there are three times only mention of them both together, viz. Ro 16:3 1Co 16:19 2Ti 4:19, the wife's name is twice placed first, to show, that in Christ Jesus *there is neither male nor female*, Ga 3:28.

Cenchrea; which was a town at the entering into the haven belonging to Corinth, Ro 16:1.

For he had a vow; to wit, St. Paul had; and therefore had shaven his head, according unto the law, Nu 6:18. To the Jews he became as a Jew.

Acts 18:19

Ver. 19. *Ephesus*; the metropolis of the Lesser Asia, where afterwards that famous church was, unto which St. Paul wrote an Epistle, as also St. John

wrote another, Re 2:1.

Left them there; that is, Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, to confirm the believing Ephesians; whilst Paul *entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews;* out of an extraordinary love for his nation, although he had suffered all those indignities from them, yet he would give them precept upon precept, and line upon line.

Acts 18:20

Ver. 20. *They desired;* that is, Aquila and Priscilla, whom Paul would not yield unto.

He consented not; by God's wonderful providence, which overrules all our inclinations; Paul having greater things to do and suffer for the glory of God elsewhere.

Acts 18:21

Ver. 21. *This feast;* the feast of the passover; which is meant where feast is put absolutely, unless some after expression qualifies it: not that this holy man did out of conscience to the feast intend to observe it, for *Christ is the end of the law* to them that believe, Ro 10:4; but because of the vast concourse from all places to Jerusalem at that time, which would give him an opportunity of making Christ known to such multitudes, and to gain their souls unto him.

If God will; though he was an apostle, and had the Spirit of prophecy, and might know whether he should return or no, yet he does not absolutely promise them to return to them, but conditionally, if the Lord will; to teach us what caution we should use in all our promises and resolutions, as Jas 4:15, being we know not what a day may bring forth. Besides, in our owning of God's will and pleasure, we acknowledge a providence of God in all things, especially in our concerns, which we desire to refer all unto.

Acts 18:22

Ver. 22. *Caesarea*; not that Caesarea that was in Syria, but that which was in Palestine, called Caesarea Stratonis; and which was the safest way to Jerusalem; for the way by Joppa, though shorter, was accounted more dangerous. The church; either the church of Caesarea in his journey, or that at Jerusalem at his journey's end, which for its populousness might be called eminently, *the church*.

Antioch; that Antioch that was in Syria.

Acts 18:23

Ver. 23. *Had spent some time there*; this work might take up the constant care and indefatigable pains of the apostle.

Galatia; where he had converted many.

Phrygia; see Ac 16:6.

Strengthening all the disciples; though the seed be duly sown, yet it must be seasonably watered; and *redit labor actus in orbem*.

Acts 18:24

Ver. 24. *Apollos*; who is thought also to be called Apelles, Ro 16:10.

Born at Alexandria; his parents having lived there.

An eloquent man; a rational, prudent, and learned man. Though the kingdom of God is not in any *excellency of speech*, 1Co 2:1,4, yet this Egyptian jewel may be used to adorn the tabernacle.

Mighty in the Scriptures; in quoting, explaining, and urging of them.

Acts 18:25

Ver. 25. Instructed; catechised, or taught, *viva voce*. *In the way of the Lord;* Christ, who hath by his precepts and example taught us the way to happiness.

Fervent in the spirit; very zealous to promote God's glory, and men's salvation, as Ro 12:11.

Knowing only the baptism of John; who baptized with water, but could not baptize with the Holy Ghost, Mt 3:11; that is, they had not those extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost which followed upon baptism after that Christ was ascended, and the Spirit poured out, Ac 2:4. But John was a preacher of repentance, and of faith in Christ, pointing at the Lamb of God; and he baptized his disciples into this doctrine; which is the same with the baptism and belief of the apostles afterwards; only now they knew many things more fully than were revealed in the Baptist's time.

Acts 18:26

Ver. 26. If we allow Priscilla to have contributed towards the instruction of Apollos, as doubtless we may, it is certain it was only in private discourse; which being joined with a meek and humble behaviour, might be very effectual for the conversion of souls, 1Pe 3:1,2. Thus Timothy was indebted for his knowledge in the things of God to his mother and grandmother, 2Ti 1:5. But otherwise it is not lawful for a woman to teach, 1Ti 2:11,12.

Acts 18:27

Ver. 27. To pass into Achaia; to Corinth, which was in Achaia.

The brethren wrote; who were at Ephesus.

Helped them much which had believed through grace; Apollos helped them much by his eloquence, zeal, and constancy, which all are the gifts of God; but, especially, that they believed was through grace; for *faith is the*

gift of God, Eph 2:8, and it was given unto them to believe, Php 1:29.

Acts 18:28

Ver. 28. *Mightily*; with great constancy, perseverance, and enduring of opposition.

Showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ; as Ac 17:3. Some think that Christ ought to be the subject, and Jesus the predicate; and then the sense is, that Christ is our Jesus, or Saviour. The Messiah, that was sent from God, is the Saviour of the world.

Acts 19:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 19:1-7 The Holy Ghost is conferred by Paul on twelve of John's disciples.

Ac 19:8-12 He preacheth at Ephesus, first in the synagogue, and afterwards in a private school for two years; God confirming the word by special miracles.

Ac 19:13-20 Certain Jewish exorcists, attempting to cast out a devil in the name of Jesus, are sent off naked and wounded: the gospel gains credit, and magical books are burned.

Ac 19:21-41 Paul proposing to depart soon, Demetrius and the silversmiths raise an uproar against him, which is with some difficulty appeased.

Ver. 1. *The upper coasts*; the north parts, in which were Pontus, Bithynia, Phrygia, and Galatia, Ac 18:23.

Acts 19:2

Ver. 2. *Have ye received the Holy Ghost?* The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, as prophesying, speaking with tongues, healing of the sick, &c., as appears by Ac 18:6, and Joh 7:39; for it could not be, that they,

who were instructed and baptized by John, should be ignorant of the essence or person of the Holy Ghost; for the Baptist had seen him descending upon our Saviour; as is remembered by all the evangelists which speak of his baptism, Mt 3:16 Mr 1:10 Lu 3:22; besides other scriptures which testified of him; and St. John had spoken of him unto all he baptized, that our Saviour would baptize them *with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, Joh 1:32,33. *We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*: this answer must be understood, according to the question, of those gifts now mentioned; and which by the imposition of the hands of the apostles were given, especially at the ordination of such as were sent to preach the gospel, it being necessary for the planting of the church, those miraculous gifts assuring those unto whom they preached, that their doctrine was from heaven; as also to assure the apostles themselves of the success of their ministry, and the conversion of such they preached unto, as Ac 10:44,47. And this acceptance of these words is paralleled, 1Sa 3:7, where it is said, that

Samuel did not yet know the Lord; the meaning is, that he knew not that God was wont so to speak unto any; otherwise, that holy man, as young as he was, both knew God, and served him.

Acts 19:3

Ver. 3. *Unto what then were ye baptized?* What doctrine did you make profession of? And what religion did you seal unto at your baptism?

Unto John's baptism; the doctrine that John taught, and the religion that he professed and preached. Thus the Jews are said to be *baptized unto Moses*, 1Co 10:2, being engaged to believe the doctrine and observe the law delivered by Moses. Now the Baptist, as Ac 18:25, preached indeed Christ; but many things concerning him he could not preach, unless as of things to come; as his death, and resurrection: the Baptist being beheaded before our Saviour's death, and the Holy Ghost was not poured out in that extraordinary manner until after our Saviour's resurrection and ascension; which pouring out of the Spirit, these disciples at Ephesus, having been baptized by John in Judea, and afterwards returning home, might not have heard of.

Acts 19:4

Ver. 4. *The baptism of repentance;* at which the Baptist did exhort them to repentance, and they by it were obliged to repent; by which is manifest, that the baptism of John and of Christ (which he commanded) are one and the same. John's baptism did respect Christ, and oblige the baptized to believe in him, as also to repent; and more, it was a seal unto them of the remission of their sins, as is expressly observed, Mr 1:4: so that the baptism of John, and the baptism of the apostles afterward, had the same sign and the same thing signified in them both (the inward and outward part, the heavenly and earthly part, were the same in both); as also they had both the same end; and therefore they were both the same. Add to this, that unless the Baptist's and the apostles' baptism were the same, Christ and his members (the church) are not baptized with the same baptism. It must be acknowledged that there are some circumstances in which they differ; John's baptism respected Christ to come; that is, in the exercise of his ministry (which was not so fully exercised till after John's death); but especially, those great things (his death, resurrection, and ascension, &c.) were to come after John's time, which now are accomplished.

On Christ Jesus; including the Father and the Holy Ghost, and mentioning Christ, to difference his baptisms from the several baptizings and washings then in use.

Acts 19:5

Ver. 5. The disciples, or those that John preached to, (for these Ephesians were not amongst those few that Paul baptized, 1Co 1:14), who when they heard what the Baptist said in the foregoing verse, they were baptized; as in the same terms it is said, Ac 2:37, *when they heard* what St. Peter had said, *they were pricked in their heart*, &c., and were baptized. As for Paul's imposing his hands upon them that are said here to be baptized, it might very well be, that the twelve disciples, Ac 19:7, might have been baptized by John, and now receive the Holy Ghost in those extraordinary gifts by the laying on of the hands of St. Paul: for to what end should these disciples, who were baptized with St. John's baptism, be again baptized by Paul? It is true, they had further manifestations of the mystery of the

gospel brought unto them; but if men should be baptized for every degree of knowledge or grace which they do acquire, how many baptisms had they need to have, who ought daily to grow in grace and in knowledge! It is evident, that the apostles themselves were only baptized with the baptism of John, for there were none else to baptize them. And baptism being an ordinance for our regeneration and new birth, as we can be born but once in the flesh, we can be but once also born in the Spirit; and no more may Christians be baptized twice, than the Jews could be twice circumcised.

Acts 19:6

Ver. 6. *Laid his hands upon them;* thereby ordaining and authorizing of them to preach the gospel.

The Holy Ghost came on them; in those extraordinary gifts of tongues, &c., whereby they were fitted to preach the gospel unto any nation or people unto whom they should be sent.

Prophesied; they prophesied, either in its proper sense, being enabled to foretell things that were to come; or in a larger and more improper sense, praising and magnifying of God, and declaring the hidden mysteries of the gospel; expounding the Scriptures, especially the prophecies concerning Christ, as 1Co 14:1.

Acts 19:7

Ver. 7. Or exactly twelve; answering to the apostles, and that blessed number so often mentioned in Scripture.

Acts 19:8

Ver. 8. *The synagogue* of the Jews at Ephesus. For in the greater cities the Jews had their synagogues, in which they had their prayers, read, and expounded the law; as also a school for teaching of their theology, in which they treated of hard questions, and more difficult matters; which

might occasion the apostle's frequenting that place.

The kingdom of God; the gospel; which is so called, Ro 14:17, because the kingdom of grace is by it set up in us here, and we are fitted by it for the kingdom of glory hereafter. But it might be also so called, because the Jews had dreamed of a political kingdom of the Messiah, and the Christians would own that Christ was indeed a King, but that his kingdom was a spiritual kingdom.

Acts 19:9

Ver. 9. *Divers were hardened;* the sun hardeneth what it doth not soften, and causeth a stench from dunghills, as well as a sweet smell from the mountains of spices; and Christ is for the falling, as well as for the rising of many.

That way; so the doctrine of the gospel is called, by reason of its excellency above other ways. By *way* the Hebrews understand any course or means to an end. Hence we read of *the way of peace, the way of salvation, the way of the Lord.*

He departed from them; not frequenting any more the synagogue of the Jews, where they met only with contradiction of their doctrine, and blasphemy against their Saviour.

Tyrannus; some have taken this word appellatively, as denoting some great man, or ruler, who maintained a school, or place for instruction; but it is rather a proper name of some private teacher amongst them: for the Jews had not only public schools, where their consisteries did meet, but private schools, where their law was taught.

Acts 19:10

Ver. 10. *All they;* many of all sorts.

Asia; Asia the Lesser, or Asia strictly so called, lying about Ephesus: the heathens came thither to worship their Diana; the Jews came thither about

their affairs, either in their trades, or law suits.

The word of the Lord Jesus; the gospel, which is the word concerning the Lord Jesus; or, the word which he appointed to be preached and published.

Acts 19:11

Ver. 11. *Special miracles;* not common or ordinary things, or such as might happen by chance.

By the hands of Paul; as Ac 5:12; by his means and ministry.

Acts 19:12

Ver. 12. *Handkerchiefs or aprons;* our habit and attire being so different from what was used so long since, it cannot but occasion some variety in rendering these words; which some think to signify two things; and some, but one and the same part of their clothes or dress: the words are both originally, Latin; the former so called from its use to wipe away sweat; the other, from its being usually tied about such as wore it.

The diseases departed from them; God by such small and unlikely means wrought these miracles:

1. That the power of Christ (whom Paul preached) might the more clearly appear. And:
2. That such as were absent might have a high value for Christ and the gospel, though they had never seen Paul, or heard him preach. Such extraordinary works were also wrought by God to magnify the words preached by Peter, Ac 5:15, as our Saviour had foretold and promised, Joh 14:12.

Acts 19:13

Ver. 13. *Vagabond Jews;* who wandered up and down, making it their

trade and livelihood; as jugglers amongst us.

Exorcists; so called from their obtesting the evil spirits in the name of God. Of these Josephus tells strange stories, Antiq. lib. 8, and thinks that the way of their exorcising was derived unto them from Solomon, and that they used the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; as also of Zebaoth, and Adonai, as Origen tells us. Some think, that though there is certainly no power in the words and syllables which they pronounced, yet that the true God, being rather willing to be known and owned by those names, than that any should call on the names of the false gods, did sometimes put forth his power in casting out of devils at such times, as Mt 12:27. Howsoever, there being no warrant in the word of God for any such practice, and no promise to act faith in prayer upon, were the words never so serious, and the name of God and his attributes never so much (seemingly) manifested, it is a most abominable impiety.

The name of the Lord Jesus; instead of, or together with, those other names formerly mentioned.

Acts 19:14

Ver. 14. One of the chief of the twenty-four courses into which the priests were divided, 1Ch 24:4, or such as (according to the corruption of those times) had been high priests, and were laid aside, or were of the high priest's family, and hoped to succeed him.

Acts 19:15

Ver. 15. I acknowledge that Jesus hath power to command me to go hence; and I know that Paul, as his minister, hath authority over me; but what pretensions have ye to command me now? Though the devil is a liar, and the father of lies, yet none lie to their own disadvantage, but rather to their advantage, as they take it; and Satan may therefore be believed in what he here says, because it is to his disgrace, that, will he, nill he, he is under the command of God, though but signified to him by the least of his ministers or servants.

Acts 19:16

Ver. 16. *Leaped on them, &c.;* by the power of the evil spirit, which by the permission of God did act in him, Mt 8:28 Mr 5:4 Lu 8:29. Satan retains still his natural power, though he hath wholly lost his moral or spiritual power unto any good: and that his violence proceeded no further, is to be ascribed only to the bounds which God had set him, which he, being in chains, could not exceed or go beyond; not for his want of malice, but power.

Acts 19:17

Ver. 17. *Fear fell on them all;* they feared (after this example of God's not holding them guiltless that had taken his name in vain) to profane the name of Christ, and much more to blaspheme or speak against it.

The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified; his authority, which the unclean spirit could not resist; and his doctrine and ministers, whose defence God had undertaken.

Acts 19:18

Ver. 18. *Many that believed came;* that believed the power which God alone had over Satan, and were convinced of their sin and danger in being led captive by him.

And confessed, and showed their deeds; openly declared their evil deeds. They durst keep the devil's counsel no longer, but expose and manifest it, that their sores being laid open, the balm of the gospel might more effectually be put into them. Thus *with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,* Ro 10:10.

Acts 19:19

Ver. 19. Thus their good works justified their faith, without which it had

been dead, Jas 2:24,26.

Curious arts; or rather idle and vain arts, as judicial astrology, calculating nativities, and all magical arts, which the Ephesians, of all others, were most addicted to and famous for; and may be here called *curious arts*, because they were so called by the Ephesians, who practised them; as also because these arts are about curiosities, not necessary for us to know. Otherwise they are diabolical arts, or rather devilish cheats.

Brought their books together, and burned them: these books were not sold, and the price of them brought unto the apostles, because it was looked upon as the price of a whore, which was an abomination, and might not be offered unto God, De 23:18.

Fifty thousand pieces of silver: what this sum amounts to is not so certain, because it is not agreed what these pieces were. Some make them Roman or Grecian coin; and others understand by them shekels, which are the Jewish money, and would make this sum so much the greater. Take them for so many pence, a piece of money commonly so called, which weighed the eighth part of an ounce of silver, as Mt 18:28, they make six thousand two hundred and fifty ounces of silver, or so many crowns, and so much more as silver is worth more per ounce. Such indignation have rue converts against the sins they have been guilty of, that they will not retain any thing that might occasion their return unto them; were it a right eye, they would pull it out.

Acts 19:20

Ver. 20. The increase which the seed of the word had made was very remarkable; or it is a great instance of the power of God's word, when it makes men willing to part with their beloved and accustomed sins, and not to stand upon saving or gaining; as Isa 55:11.

Acts 19:21

Ver. 21. *Paul purposed in the spirit;* resolved with himself, or purposed in his heart, as Da 1:8. Yet in this his determination he had the influence and

guidance of the Holy Ghost, and that in a more than ordinary manner; as we may see by the continued series of this history, how he came to all these places here mentioned. Paul travelled through these countries, and went to these cities, because he hoped for a greater harvest, where he might scatter the seed so far abroad.

Acts 19:22

Ver. 22. *Ministered unto him;* this great apostle had not any to minister unto him out of state, but out of necessity, being he could not himself attend to all the offices of the church. These were employed by Paul, not so much to procure any accommodation for himself by the way, as to further a collection for the poor brethren at Jerusalem, 2Co 9:3,4.

Erastus: there seems to have been two of this name mentioned in Scripture: the one, Ro 16:23, and the other, 2Ti 4:20: the latter is here spoken of.

In Asia; in Ephesus, which was in Asia, where Paul now was.

Acts 19:23

Ver. 23. *And the same time;* when all things seemed to have been quiet: so uncertain are the servants of Christ to have any quiet here.

That way; the doctrine of the gospel, as Ac 18:25.

Acts 19:24

Ver. 24. These shrines were only, either;

1. Portraits of the temple of Diana, in which was graven, or by any other art represented, that famous structure, which was afterwards burnt by Erostratus: or:
2. they were medals in which their idol Diana was expressed according to

her image, spoken of, Ac 19:35. And they are called here, temples, or *shrines*, because they did resemble and represent that shrine or temple.

And these the superstitious people carried home to their houses and friends; not only to evidence what a pilgrimage they had performed, but to incite the more their devotions towards this idol.

Acts 19:25

Ver. 25. Gain, getting or keeping a livelihood, are great temptations, and, a little pretext of piety with them, keep up the superstition and false worship that abound in the world.

Acts 19:26

Ver. 26. He tells them indeed what was St. Paul's doctrine; but he conceals the reasons of his doctrine; for there can be nothing more evident to any considering man, than that there is but one God who made all things; as Ps 115:3,4 Jer 10:10.

Acts 19:27

Ver. 27. *Not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought;* not only that we shall have no more to do, and be without work; but that it will be a reproach unto us to have had such an employment.

But also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised; this is made an aggravation to the loss of their all, that religion should suffer too. How much more ought it to concern those who have a sure foundation for what they do profess!

All Asia; this temple is said to have been burnt down the same day that Alexander was born, and that it was two hundred and twenty years in rebuilding, at the charge of all Asia.

The world worshippeth; though the Romans might worship any god (of

those multitudes) which they allowed, yet they might leave their estates only to a very few amongst them; but Diana of the Ephesians was one of those few; as also one of those twelve whom they accounted *dii* or *deae majorum gentium*, gods and goddesses of the highest quality, or first rank.

Acts 19:28

Ver. 28. The argument from their profit wrought very much upon them, especially meeting with their prejudicate opinions, having pretended antiquity and universality to confirm them.

Saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians; to show their abhorrence of what Paul had taught; and desiring her glory might be perpetual, whom Paul thought not worthy to be honoured at all.

Acts 19:29

Ver. 29. *Filled with confusion;* tumults and noise; all conditions of men, high and low, promiscuously being met in such uproars.

Gaius; one born at Derbe, but living at Thessalonica, as Ac 20:4.

Aristarchus; of whom we read, Ac 27:2 Col 4:10.

The theatre; a place or structure built for public uses; whence;

1. Their sports or plays in any public solemnity were beheld.
2. Their speeches or orations in their common assemblies were heard.
3. Where they punished also their malefactors; it being accommodated with several steps or seats higher than one another, and of vast extent for these purposes.

Hither, according to their custom, they resort, to hear if any one would speak upon this occasion to them; or rather, to get these Christians condemned and executed for their supposed sacrilege and blasphemy.

Acts 19:30

Ver. 30. *Paul would have entered in unto the people;* being desirous either to appease the tumult; or, if the worst came of it, to die for Christ's sake.

The disciples suffered him not, by their entreaties; to whom this good apostle's life, from whom they had received the faith, was more dear than their own.

Acts 19:31

Ver. 31. *Certain of the chief of Asia;* such as had the oversight of the plays and shows in honour of their idol gods, and were usually their priests; and were of four countries; from whence they had their names of Asiarchs, Bithynarchs, Syriarchs, and Cappadociarchs. Whosoever these were, the providence of God is to be adored, who could out of his greatest enemies raise up deliverers for his servants.

Acts 19:32

Ver. 32. An excellent description of a popular tumult. Whether this *assembly* was afterwards made legal by the magistrates resorting thither, (though it was not called by their authority), and is therefore called here, *ἐκκλησία*, is not so useful to inquire.

Acts 19:33

Ver. 33. *They drew Alexander out of the multitude,* where he could not be seen and heard, unto some more convenient place, from whence he might make a vindication or defence for them; and that most likely in behalf of the Jews, who were equally obnoxious to the rage of the people for being against their idolatry, as the Christians were. This *Alexander* is thought to have been that Alexander of whom we read, 1Ti 1:20 2Ti 4:14: though some think that this was another of that name.

Beckoned with the hand, to procure silence; as Ac 12:17.

Acts 19:34

Ver. 34. *A Jew*, and by consequence an enemy to their idolatry; and, as they might imagine at least, a friend to St. Paul.

All with one voice; unanimity makes not the cause to be good, if it were bad at first.

Acts 19:35

Ver. 35. *Town clerk*, or secretary, who registered their acts, and intervened in all their meetings.

Is a worshipper; each country and city had their peculiar gods, which they worshipped, and took for their patrons, as Ephesus did this goddess Diana. But the word here signifies a sacrist, or one that looks to the temple to keep it clean; especially that hath the charge of more solemn shows or sports in honour of any supposed deity: and these Ephesians took it to be their no small glory, that they were employed in such as belonged to Diana.

The image which fell down from Jupiter; though the maker's name (Canetias) is upon record, yet it having lasted whilst the temple was six or seven times repaired, at least, if not renewed, and none ever remembering when it first was brought in amongst them, the crafty priests persuaded the credulous people that it was fallen from heaven, thereby getting more honour unto it, and profit to themselves.

Acts 19:36

Ver. 36. He did there cunningly than honestly endeavour to evade their clamour, and still their rage, by telling them (how fallaciously soever), that neither Paul, nor any other Christian or Jew, had any quarrel with their

goddess or worship. For they indeed were against all images that were made with hands; but theirs was not such a one, it being fallen down from heaven. We must consider he was but a pagan; and his design was only to still the people; and *populus vult decipi*.

Acts 19:37

Ver. 37. *Neither robbers of churches;* for they had not entered into their temple.

Nor yet blasphemers of your goddess; Paul had barely preached this truth amongst them, not upbraiding them for their idolatry; as Michael, the archangel, brought no railing accusation against the devil, when he contended with him, Jude 1:9.

Acts 19:38

Ver. 38. *The law is open;* which is fittest to determine all questions and controversies; for men would be partial to their own cause, and every one challenge to be in the right.

Deputies; who, under the Roman emperors or consuls, had power to hear and determine of all matters.

Let them implead one another; that so both parties may be heard.

Acts 19:39

Ver. 39. *Other matters;* relating to the good government of the city, or maintaining the established religion, which ought not in such a confused manner to be treated of, but in an assembly called by lawful authority, which the Romans did usually call, at least, three times every month.

Acts 19:40

Ver. 40. He wisely minds them of their danger; for being under the power of the Romans, it was no less than the loss of their liberties to abet any faction or sedition; and to make a concourse or meeting tumultuously together, was capital, unless it were upon the sudden invasion of an enemy, or to but out some raging fire.

Acts 19:41

Ver. 41. The people were persuaded quietly to depart to their homes. Thus God one way or other, sometimes by friends, and sometimes by foes, kept his church and people from being ruined; and his hand is not shortened.

Acts 20:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 20:1-6 Paul goeth to Macedonia, and having passed over divers countries cometh to Troas.

Ac 20:7-12 Where, as he preached long, Eutychus falleth out of a window, and is taken up dead: Paul restoreth him to life.

Ac 20:13-16 He continueth his travels.

Ac 20:17-35 At Miletus he calleth to him the elders of the church of Ephesus, and taketh a solemn and affectionate leave of them, exhorting them to look well to their charge, and commending them to God's grace.

Ac 20:36-38 He prayeth with them and departeth.

Ver. 1. *Embraced them;* took his farewell of them, and, as the manner of those countries was in meeting and parting with friends, he kissed them: as Lu 7:45, and far more anciently, Ge 31:55. And this was the true ground of that kiss of peace, or the holy kiss, recommended Ro 16:16 1Co 16:20 2Co 13:12, and elsewhere, which was only a civility then in use.

Departed for to go into Macedonia; yielding to the present fury of Demetrius; not so much for his own safety, as for the good of the church, that it might not be further persecuted for his sake; and that elsewhere it might by his ministry be enlarged and built up.

Acts 20:2

Ver. 2. *Much exhortation;* which after so great a stir and opposition against them, the disciples could not but stand in great need of, that they might not be offended at the cross of Christ: and also mingling consolations with his exhortations, as the word indifferently signifies, as the case would well bear, there being a special blessing promised unto such as are *persecuted for righteousness' sake*, Mt 5:10 1Pe 3:14.

Came into Greece; Attica, in which province Athens was: otherwise Macedonia was in Greece largely taken.

Acts 20:3

Ver. 3. *The Jews laid wait for him;* some have thought that their laying in wait might be to rob him of the collections which he carried with him for the saints at Jerusalem; but most likely it was rather to take away his life, whom they hated for his zeal and diligence in the gospel.

He purposed to return; slunning their treachery and plotting against him. He would not tempt God by running into dangers, though his cause were never so good.

Through Macedonia; being the same way that he had come to Corinth.

Acts 20:4

Ver. 4. *There accompanied him into Asia;* their names are set down, as being men called and known at that time in the churches, and that what they did for this holy apostle might be remembered in all ages.

Sopater; who is called also *Sosipater*, Ro 16:21. It is added in some copies, that he was the son of Pyrrhus; which in Greek is the same with Rufus in Latin.

Berea; a city of Macedonia, Ac 17:10.

Aristarchus; of whom, Ac 19:29, as also of the others, mention hath been formerly made.

Of Asia; of Ephesus, a city in Asia.

Tychicus; of whom, Eph 6:21 Col 4:7 2Ti 4:12; and of *Trophimus* we read, Ac 21:29 2Ti 4:20. These seem to have been the apostles or messengers of the churches, spoken of 2Co 8:23; in the number of whom St. Luke is to be reckoned, but being the penman of this book, he declines mentioning of himself by name; but his praise will be for ever in the gospel, 2Co 8:18,19.

Acts 20:5

Ver. 5. *Us*; whereby it appears, that St. Luke was one of them that accompanied St. Paul, though neither here nor elsewhere doth he express his own name.

Troas; either the city of Troy, or the country thereabout so called.

Acts 20:6

Ver. 6. *From Philippi*; where they embarked, and sailed on the river first, then on the sea.

After the days of unleavened bread; though St. Paul would not have the Gentile converts to be burdened with the ceremonial law, yet, that he might not offend the Jews, for a while he complied with their rites, Ac 18:21, they being indeed dead, but not yet deadly; and therefore he stays his journey all the time of the passover solemnity, instructing them in the mean while of the nature and use of such things.

Acts 20:7

Ver. 7. *The first day of the week;* this was the day which the Lord had made, it being called from his resurrection, which was on this day, *the Lord's day*, Re 1:10. On this day the disciples met, and Christ honoured them with his presence, Joh 20:19,26. And when he was ascended, this day was appointed for the Christians to meet in, 1Co 16:2; which must necessarily infer the abrogation of the Saturday, or Jewish sabbath: for it being part of the command, *Six days shalt thou labour*, they could not in ordinary have rested the last day of the week and the first day too, without sinning against the law of God.

To break bread; to take a meal in common together, which they called *agapae*, or the love feast, so great a harmony and natural love was manifested in it; which was concluded with celebrating the Lord's supper; and this is chiefly, if not only, intended in this place. The love feasts being abused, were soon laid aside; but the other must continue until the Lord come, 1Co 11:26.

Continued his speech until midnight; a long sermon indeed, at least it would be now thought so; and yet we must have the same spirit, or we are not members of that catholic church.

Acts 20:8

Ver. 8. *There were many lights;* there being many present; and it being in the night, because of the persecution that the Christians met with. Lest they should be reproached for doing any thing indecently, they by this means exposed themselves, and all that was done amongst them, to the common view and notice of all.

In the upper chamber; where it is supposed they did ordinarily meet; as Ac 1:13.

Acts 20:9

Ver. 9. *Preaching;* discoursing and arguing; for it does not seem to have been a continued speech, by the word here used.

Fell down from the third loft; this fall is thought by some to have been caused by Satan, (through God's permission), that he might the more disturb Paul, and hinder, or put an end to, his sermon; which by the ensuing miracle God turned to a quite contrary effect.

Acts 20:10

Ver. 10. *Fell on him;* as Elijah on the widow of Zarephath's dead son, 1Ki 17:21, and Elisha on the Shunammite's son, 2Ki 4:34.

His life is in him; not but that he had been really dead, as Ac 19:9, but that upon the apostle's prayer (which is to be understood, though it is not here expressed) God had restored the young man to life; or howsoever, because St. Paul knew infallibly he should presently be restored to life, even whilst he spake.

Acts 20:11

Ver. 11. *Had broken bread;* either in the eucharist, as in Ac 20:7, or in taking his ordinary refecton and breakfast.

Talked a long while, even till break of day; this was of long continuance, and speaks the patience and zeal of Christians in those times, and will rise up in judgment against a careless and negligent generation.

He departed; going that part of his journey on foot, as the rest of his company did go by sea, as Ac 20:13.

Acts 20:12

Ver. 12. They rejoiced not only that the young man was restored to life, but that by this means the gospel was attested to, and many confirmed in the belief of it.

Acts 20:13

Ver. 13. *Assos*; a city in Mysia, called also Apollonia, not far from Troas either by water or land.

Minding himself to go afoot; Paul's going on foot might be the rather, that so he might have the better opportunity to scatter the seed of the gospel as he went, going through towns and villages, and conversing still with some or other, more than in sea journeys can be expected. So greedy of winning souls to Christ was this holy man, that he ordered every step, as near as he could, towards it. But St. Paul might desire to go alone thus on foot, that he might enjoy more free and full communion with God, having only God and his own soul to converse with.

Acts 20:14

Ver. 14. An island, as also a city in it so called, in the Aegean Sea. Some think the island is called Lesbos, in which this Mitylene is.

Acts 20:15

Ver. 15. *Chios*; a noted island betwixt Lesbos and Samos in the Aegean Sea.

Samos; in Ionia; for there are several other islands of this name.

Trogyllium; a promontory not far from Samos.

Miletus; a sea town upon the continent or firm land of Ionia.

Acts 20:16

Ver. 16. *Ephesus* was not so far from Miletus; but lest he should hinder his journey, he would not go thither.

If it were possible for him; or, as Ac 18:21, if the Lord would; for his

endeavour should not be wanting.

To be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost; not that he placed any religion in the observing this feast, which was abrogated and done away by being fulfilled, Ac 2:1-47; but because of the vast concourse of people at all those solemn feasts, when his opportunities to magnify Christ and his truths might be the greater.

Acts 20:17

Ver. 17. The governors and pastors of it; *elders* being here a title not respecting their age, but their place; and they might be the twelve spoken of in Ac 19:7.

Acts 20:18

Ver. 18. *Asia;* strictly and properly so called; or that part of the Lesser Asia whose metropolis was Ephesus.

After what manner I have been with you at all seasons; a singular form for a good man to use, if he must of necessity leave his charge or flock, when his conscience does not accuse him. St. Paul spake not this as boasting of what he had done, or how he had been amongst them; but setting his example before them and others, to be imitated, and calling them for to witness the truth of it.

Acts 20:19

Ver. 19. *Serving the Lord;* in his apostleship or public ministry; of which, if any ever could, he might have gloried; yet in this office he clothes himself *with humility*, as the most becoming garment for a minister of Jesus Christ: though so high, yet so low. We need not cry, (as one did, though ironically), Fie, St. Paul! but fie upon all such as pretend to succeed in his dignity, and do not at all imitate him in his humility.

With many tears; he shed tears of compassion over the ignorant and blind,

hard and perverse. It grieved him to see how large a dominion the god of this world had, and what a little part was left for his dear Lord and Master, Christ Jesus.

Temptations; afflictions and troubles, which befell him for Christ and the gospel's sake; which are so called, Jas 1:2 1Pe 1:6.

Acts 20:20

Ver. 20. *I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you;* useful in order to eternal life to be known or hoped for, or to be done; shunning no labour or danger; concealing nothing out of fear or hope of advantage.

Taught you publicly; in the public synagogues and schools.

And from house to house; privately, as Ac 2:46; not only speaking publicly and in general, but secretly and particularly, as everyone's condition did require, exhorting some, reproving others. And indeed a good shepherd will labour to understand the state of his flock, and to supply them with what is necessary and suitable for them. Jacob says, Ge 31:39, that he bare the loss, and was fain to answer for all the sheep unto Laban. And of how much more value are the souls of men, to be sure, in God's sight, who will require an account of them!

Acts 20:21

Ver. 21. *Testifying to all sorts and conditions of men,* for there is no difference with God, that repentance would be accepted from them by God, and that he was ready to give repentance unto them, as Ac 11:18; and that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was the true saving faith, there being no other name given whereby we may be saved. Upon these two depends the whole gospel, and our salvation by it.

Acts 20:22

Ver. 22. *Bound in the spirit;* as powerfully persuaded by a Divine instinct,

to undertake this journey, as if I were led or drawn to it by forcible means; being bound to obey God in all things, whom I take to be my God and Guide, my Sun and Shield: and I do not desire so much to act, as to be acted by him. This St. Paul says, not as if he was drawn unto this journey against his will, but lest any should attempt to dissuade him from it, or that he should seem to have slighted the predictions of the prophets, mentioned in Ac 21:11,12. Nay, he might say this, as being as certain of his bonds as if he felt them already. Such things as are foretold to such as know the veracity of God, they are as present. Howsoever, he was content to be bound, to suffer, nay, to die for Christ. And as he is poor in spirit who crucifies the world, and is willing to want, if God sees good; so he is bound in spirit, who is thus willing to be bound for the name of Christ. Howsoever, these words speak his firm resolution to take this journey upon him.

Not knowing the things that shall befall me there; what the event shall be, in what measure he should be bound, and how long; he left it unto God's good will and pleasure.

Acts 20:23

Ver. 23.

1. Those that were endued with the Spirit of prophecy, in every city, foretold his sufferings; as Ac 21:4,11.
2. He did suffer more or less in every city or place he came to; so great was the malice of the Jews against him.

Acts 20:24

Ver. 24. *None of these things move me;* they cannot deter me from my duty.

Neither count I my life before dear unto myself; I am so far from fearing bonds, that I would not fear death itself. He is said to account his life precious, or dear, that spares it; as 2Ki 1:13,14.

My course; his general course of Christianity, or the special course of his ministry; in either of which there is a race to be run, and a prize to be got, 2Ti 4:7. It implies the great and constant labour that all Christians must take in their general calling, and especially ministers in their particular calling, 1Co 9:24.

With joy; which ariseth from the testimony of a good conscience, which only is true joy; the other is madness, Ec 2:2.

The ministry; his apostleship, so called, Ac 1:25 6:4.

The gospel of the grace of God; so the gospel is called, because bestowed upon any nation or people by God's mere grace only. And also it declares the grace of God in Christ Jesus to repenting and believing sinners.

Acts 20:25

Ver. 25. This is thought to have been spoken by St. Paul, as his present purpose and resolution only, as Ro 15:24.

The kingdom of God; the gospel, by which his kingdom is set up in the minds and hearts of men.

Acts 20:26

Ver. 26. *I take you to record;* I testify and affirm unto you; and I dare appeal unto yourselves concerning it.

I am pure from the blood of all men; from the guilt of destroying their souls; none of them have perished through my fault, having faithfully showed unto them the way of life, and earnestly persuaded them to walk in it. Thus, according as the Lord told Ezekiel, Eze 3:19, the prophet that hath warned the wicked man, hath delivered his own soul.

Acts 20:27

Ver. 27. God's decree, to save all that believe in Christ; or the whole doctrine of Christianity, as it directs to a holy life; whatsoever God requires of any one in order to a blessed eternity. This is that which the Pharisees rejected, Lu 7:30; and so do all wicked and ungodly men, who refuse to take God's counsel, or to obey his command.

Acts 20:28

Ver. 28. *Take heed therefore unto yourselves;* be mindful of your own salvation: for he that neglects his own, will not be careful of the salvation of another.

The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers;

1. By his choosing and nominating of them, which was then by a special instinct, or immediate warrant from the Spirit, Ac 1:24 13:2. Or:
2. Because they were constituted by the apostles, who were filled with the Spirit, enabling them to the choice of such persons, Ac 14:23. But also:
3. Whosoever is set apart to this office, according to the will of God, is made an overseer by the Holy Ghost; God owning his institutions, and concurring with them.

Overseers; the same who (Ac 20:17) are called *elders*; they were certainly such as had the government and care of the church committed unto them.

To feed; as a shepherd does, (for the apostle continues here the metaphor), Jer 23:4 Joh 21:16,17.

The church of God; our Saviour is so called; for *the Word was God*, Joh 1:1.

Which he hath purchased; Christ by his bloody death hath redeemed his church, and obtained power to gather it, to rule over it, to protect and

preserve it, Isa 53:10 Php 2:8-10.

With his own blood; the blood of Christ, called truly the blood of God, there being in Christ two natures in one person, and a communion of the properties of each nature. If Christ had not been man, he could have had no blood to shed: had he not been God, the blood which he shed could not have been a sufficient price of redemption. Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, who found out such a ransom; and the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, who paid this ransom for us! Ro 11:33 Eph 3:18,19.

Acts 20:29

Ver. 29. *My departing;* either out of this country, or out of this life.

Grievous wolves; so false teachers and persecutors are called, the one destroying the body, the other the soul. In this the metaphor is persisted in; the disciples of Christ being as sheep or lambs, their enemies are by our Saviour himself called wolves. Mt 7:15.

Acts 20:30

Ver. 30. *Of your own selves shall men arise;* whilst Paul yet lived, and was only departed from that place. Several seducers may be reckoned up, as Nicolas the deacon, (from whom it is thought the sect of the Nicolaitanes came, Re 2:6), Hymenaeus, Alexander, Phygellus, and Hermogenes, 1Ti 1:20 2Ti 1:15.

Speaking perverse things; perverting Scripture; establishing their false doctrines by Scripture, which they wrest to their purpose.

To draw away disciples; as members are forcibly plucked from their body; which speak the cruelty and violence of these heretics, and the tenderness of the church towards her members, being loth to part from them.

After them; thus false teachers gain indeed disciples to themselves, but not

unto the Lord.

Acts 20:31

Ver. 31. *Watch;* take heed yourselves, and warn others to take heed.

By the space of three years; from St. Paul's first coming to Ephesus it was three years current, and now almost complete, Ac 19:8,10 20:3.

With tears; a great, and no feigned παθος; as Christ wept over Jerusalem, Lu 19:41, so St. Paul over the unbelieving Jews; it went to his heart to think that they could not be saved. See how St. Paul loved souls, and pitied souls.

Acts 20:32

Ver. 32. *I commend you to God;* it being so hard a matter to escape so many snares and dangers, the apostle prays to God for them, who is able to keep them by his power, *through faith, unto salvation,* 1Pe 1:5; and it is in vain to look after any meaner defence.

The word of his grace; the gospel, which leads us to the rock upon which we must build, if we would not be moved when the storm comes.

Build you up; increasing the number of believers, and augmenting their graces. God is said to build, and so is his word, both concurring: the gospel builds, as a means appointed by God; and God builds, who blesses that means. Hence he is called *the God of all grace,* 1Pe 5:10.

An inheritance; heaven is called an inheritance, because we have it only by adoption, and it is given only unto children, Ro 8:17; as also, because it is a firm and lasting possession, not for a term of years, or a certain time, but for ever and ever.

Which are sanctified; for without holiness none shall see God, Heb 12:14.

Acts 20:33

Ver. 33. Having spoken of the heavenly inheritance, he tells them how willing he was to have his reward hereafter, and to waive receiving his wages here. In this, St. Paul imitates Moses, Nu 16:15, and Samuel, 1Sa 12:3,5.

Acts 20:34

Ver. 34. St. Paul working hard (as they all knew) for a livelihood, Ac 18:3 1Co 4:12 1Th 2:9; which he gives an account of, 2Th 3:8, to have been done only that in such a juncture, they being poor, and the false teachers watching all advantages against him, he might not then be chargeable to them.

Acts 20:35

Ver. 35. *I have showed you all things;* as in Ac 20:27.

So labouring; with more than ordinary pains and constancy.

To support; that they do not fall; or, being fallen, that they may rise again. The word imports the stretching out of the hand to retain any that are going away, or to hold up any that are falling.

The weak; in knowledge, faith, or any other grace.

The words of the Lord Jesus; Paul might have these words by the relation of others who heard them spoken by our Saviour; for all things that he said or did could not be written, Joh 20:30.

It is more blessed to give than to receive; not so much in that giving speaks abundance and affluence, but as it shows our charity and goodness, in which we resemble and imitate God. The substance of these words which are attributed to our Saviour, though not the terms, may be found in divers places, as Lu 6:38 16:9.

Acts 20:36

Ver. 36. *He kneeled down;* a posture of great humility, becoming prayer, and frequently used on such occasions, especially in a time of great trouble and distress. Although bodily exercise alone do not profit, 1Ti 4:8, yet we may, and must on occasion, in prayer bow the knee, lift up the hand and eye;

1. Because it is a reasonable thing to give our bodies in his service to God that made them.
2. By this we may show that we are not ashamed to serve and own God before men. And:
3. These outward signs do sometimes stir up our own and others' devotion.

Acts 20:37

Ver. 37. As they used to do their friends when they took their leave of them: see Ge 45:14,15.

Acts 20:38

Ver. 38. The loss of a faithful and painful minister is a public loss, and many are concerned in it; besides, they had found great benefit by his ministry, and could not but be sensible of their missing of it. Add to this, Paul's gracious and humble conversation, and the sense of many good offices done by him, could not but have endeared him unto them.

They accompanied him unto the ship; enjoying him as long and as far as they could, and expressing their last and utmost kindness unto him.

Acts 21:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 21:1-9 Paul, journeying to Jerusalem, calleth at the house of Philip the evangelist, whose four daughters prophesied.

Ac 21:10-16 Agabus foretelling what should befall him at Jerusalem, he will not be dissuaded from going thither.

Ac 21:17-26 Arriving at Jerusalem, he is persuaded to purify himself in the temple

Ac 21:27-36 where he is set upon by the Jews of Asia, and indanger of losing his life in an uproar, but is rescued by the chief captain, and carried to the castle in chains.

Ac 21:37-40 He requesteth, and is permitted, to speak to the people.

Ver. 1. *Were gotten from them;* had parted with them, as dearest friends and relations do one from the other, with much difficulty and reluctance.

Coos; an island in the Mediterranean Sea, nigh unto Crete, where Hippocrates and Apelles are said to have been born.

Rhodes; another island in the same sea, of great fame for the Colossus, or vast image of brass, which was there, accounted one of the wonders of the world.

Patara; a haven town of Lycia, and its metropolis.

Acts 21:2

Ver. 2. *Sailing over unto Phenicia;* whose master and mariners intended such a voyage.

Phenicia; a country in Syria, situate nigh the sea, and bordering upon Palestine, whose chief city was Tyre.

Acts 21:3

Ver. 3. *Cyprus*; another island in the Mediterranean.

Unlade her burden; of goods and merchandise which she had taken in at Ephesus.

Acts 21:4

Ver. 4. *Seven days*; they tarried the rather so long, that they might worship and serve the Lord on his day together.

Through the Spirit; by the Spirit of prophecy they foretold his sufferings at Jerusalem, which afterward accordingly befell unto him; and they, being ignorant of his undertaking that journey at God's command, out of commiseration and pity dissuade St. Paul from going to such a place, where they foresaw that he should suffer so much: and this, it is said, they did *through the Spirit*, because they had that foreknowledge of all his sufferings from the Spirit; and knowing but in part, being ignorant of that special command Paul had had to go to Jerusalem, they did, according to what they knew, dissuade Paul from that journey. But, they knowing that their prophecy about St. Paul's sufferings must be fulfilled, and the Spirit by which they spake could not err or be mistaken, how came they to dissuade St. Paul from going to Jerusalem? It may be answered, that they might think this prediction of his sufferings to be only conditional, in case he went to Jerusalem; as David was told, that the men of Keilah would deliver him to Saul, 1Sa 23:11,12; that is, in case he had trusted himself amongst them.

Acts 21:5

Ver. 5. *They all brought us on our way*; to show their greater respect unto him, being loth to part with him so long as it was possible for them to enjoy him; so that they did not despise his temptation that was in the flesh, Ga 4:14 but it is truly strange what follows, that he was received by them *as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus*. *Kneeled down on the shore*; this the Jews on extraordinary occasions were wont to do, whilst the

temple itself were standing, viz. make every place a place of prayer in such a case, Ac 20:36.

Acts 21:6

Ver. 6. *Had taken our leave one of another;* as Ac 20:1, embracing one another at their parting.

Acts 21:7

Ver. 7. *We came to Ptolemais;* so far forth as to Ptolemais, a city in Phenicia, so called from one of the Ptolemies, king of Egypt; and is thought to be the same with Accho, mentioned Jud 1:31, which ancient name is yet retained in the Syriac translation.

Acts 21:8

Ver. 8. *Caesarea;* that which was called Caesarea Stratonis, to distinguish it from Caesarea Philippi, at the foot of Mount Libanus, as also from another city of that name in Cappadocia; they having been all so called in honour of Caesar, to flatter and perpetuate that family. The Caesarea here spoken of was in Palestine, and is mentioned Ac 10:1 18:22.

The evangelist; whose office and charge it was to publish the gospel, which Timothy is exhorted to do, 2Ti 4:5. This office is placed between that of an apostle and of a pastor and teacher, Eph 4:11, and was not so confined to a certain place or people as the latter of these were.

One of the seven; of the seven deacons; of which see Ac 6:5. Which office of a deacon Philip having well discharged, did purchase to himself this good degree, as 1Ti 3:13.

Acts 21:9

Ver. 9. *Virgins;* by their father's and their own voluntary determination,

as 1Co 7:37; neither is it said whether they continued in that state, but they were so.

Which did prophesy; not by expounding the prophecies or word of God, for no woman is suffered to teach publicly, 1Co 14:34 1Ti 2:12; but rather foretelling things to come, which gift God did not debar that sex from; especially it having been promised, Joe 2:28, and in part fulfilled before, in Ac 2:17; by which God would show the enlargement of his mercies, and plenty of his Spirit, reserved for the times of the gospel.

Acts 21:10

Ver. 10. Of whom mention is made, Ac 11:28; of whose prophecy they could not be ignorant, by reason of the great collection which, on that account, was made for the poor at Jerusalem.

Acts 21:11

Ver. 11. *Took Paul's girdle;* it was ordinary amongst the prophets to confirm, or at least to exemplify, their prophecies by outward signs and symbols, as Isa 20:2 Jer 13:1 Eze 12:5. But that of Jer 27:2, is a parallel unto this; where the prophet is commanded to make bonds and yokes, and to put them upon his neck, to foreshow the subjection of all those nations unto Nebuchadnezzar.

Thus saith the Holy Ghost; none of all the sufferings foreshown concerning St. Paul, or others of God's children and servants, but are ordered by God, who knows them altogether; and they came not out of the dust, or by casualty, or chance, so as not to have been the matter of God's foreknowledge and counsel, Eph 1:11.

The Gentiles; the Roman powers at Jerusalem, and afterwards at Rome.

Acts 21:12

Ver. 12. *They of that place;* the converts or believers that were in

Caesarea, pitying him, and having a tender affection for him: See Poole on "Ac 21:4".

Besought him with tears, so earnest were they, as in the following verse (see Ac 21:13).

Acts 21:13

Ver. 13. *What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart?* a strange strife, who should overcome by loving most, as in that betwixt David and Jonathan, 1Sa 20:41,42. This undaunted champion, who did not seem to feel any of his own afflictions and miseries, yet grieves for the grief and sympathy of others, and bears a double weight in his burdens; one directly and immediately from them, as lying upon himself; the other mediately, as recoiling from others (who suffered with him) unto him again.

But also to die; as Christ's love for us was stronger than death, So 8:6, so must our love be to him again, or it is not of the same nature with his, nor begotten by it.

For the name of the Lord Jesus; his truth, and glory.

Acts 21:14

Ver. 14. *We ceased;* as having done their utmost, and what became them.

Saying, The will of the Lord be done; they commit the event unto God: thus we pray daily, that God's will may be done, Mt 6:10 Lu 11:2; and thus our Saviour, not only by his precept, but by his example, hath taught us, Mt 26:42 Lu 22:42; and when God's will is done, our will is done also, if the mind and spirit be in us that was in Christ, Php 2:5, and otherwise we are none of his, Re 8:9.

Acts 21:15

Ver. 15. As they do pack up that are to remove to another house or place,

not intending to come thither any more again; this also did show their readiness of mind to endure and suffer all things, as loss of relations and friends, and all accommodations, for Christ.

Acts 21:16

Ver. 16. Either this Mnason was in their company, or rather they were brought by the disciples of Caesarea to the house of this Mnason, who was one of them that was converted when Paul and Barnabas were at Cyprus, Ac 13:4; and lodgings being scarce at Jerusalem, (when all the males were to appear there in those three annual solemnities), it was no small kindness to be provided for by him.

Acts 21:17

Ver. 17. It is thought, that by *brethren* in this place, and Ac 21:7, they are meant, who, being believers, were formed into a church with its several officers, and that they are called *disciples* only, Ac 21:4, who, living dispersed, and in smaller numbers, could not constitute such a church; but surely whatsoever there is of privilege and happiness in this spiritual fraternity, that truly catholic charity that was in the apostles and other holy men, would not so confine it, as to exclude any from enjoying of it, who did not exclude themselves by greater crimes than their paucity in number, or the consequences of that, could amount unto.

Acts 21:18

Ver. 18. *James*, one of the apostles, though some think that he was a kinsman of our Saviour's, and at this time bishop of Jerusalem.

Elders; as in Ac 15:6,23, not so called for their age, but dignity or place in the church.

Acts 21:19

Ver. 19. God had so done those marvellous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance; and this was said by the apostle, that God might not lose the glory, nor the church the benefit, of any of those great things which God had wrought: otherwise, St. Paul acknowledges that he was *the least of the apostles*, and *not meet to be called an apostle*, 1Co 15:9; and all his power was ministerial, he was only an instrument in God's hand, to be acted by him, as Ac 20:24.

Acts 21:20

Ver. 20. *Glorified the Lord*; acknowledging all in that great work of the conversion of the Gentiles to have been from God; and that Paul that had planted, and Apollos that had watered, were nothing, 1Co 3:6,7.

Thousands of Jews; tens of thousands, as the word does usually signify; a definite for an indefinite number, signifying very many: and considering out of what small beginnings, and by what despicable means, and all within the space of about five and twenty years, this grain of mustard seed had spread itself; and add to this, that they were Jews, that obstinate and prejudiced generation, who are here spoken of, and they were then so many, so wonderfully many, who believed.

All zealous of the law, of ceremonies, and concerning forbidden meats, &c. For the decree of the apostles, Ac 15:29, concerning these things, did only respect such as were converted from paganism to the faith of Christ; and the Jews that were converted before the dispersion by Adrian, the Roman emperor, many years after this time, did not thoroughly understand their freedom from that law, but were under the burden of it, as appears by several ecclesiastical writers.

Acts 21:21

Ver. 21. *Informed of thee*; instructed or catechised concerning thee; the zealots had made it their business to instil such aspersions and odious reflections against Paul, as if their accusations had been the fundamental truths of their religion.

Moses; the ceremonial law, given by his ministry.

To walk, to live, to act in their course of life, *after the customs* of their fathers, or the rituals of Moses.

Acts 21:22

Ver. 22. *What is it therefore?* It cannot be otherwise; or, what else remains to be done?

The multitude must needs come together; all the faithful must meet; for the magistrates then being pagan, and enemies both to the church and the gospel; in matters of great moment, especially when there was any fear of a schism, the whole multitude of believers were gathered together to consult about it.

Acts 21:23

Ver. 23. Vows were either, first, such as men did make in gratitude for any deliverance they had received, as from sickness, storms, or any imminent dangers: or, secondly, to enable them the better to serve God on any occasion; and then they were bound to keep themselves from all those things which were forbidden to the Nazarite, as wine and strong drink, and to nourish their hair, as the Nazarites were bound to do. This vow they made for a certain time, and not perpetual: the law concerning it you may see, in Nu 6:2-5.

Acts 21:24

Ver. 24. *Purify thyself*; they advise Paul to perform all those rites required of a Nazarite, the observation of which did legally purify him.

Be at charges with them; these charges were about the threefold sacrifice which were to be offered, two turtles or young pigeons, a lamb, unleavened bread, and cakes of fine flour, as Nu 6:10-12,15; and the other four, spoken of Ac 21:23, being poor, they require Paul here to bear their

charges also, that so he might appear to be the chief amongst them, and the more zealous in their law, to take away the scandal that was taken up by the Jews against him; these ceremonies being as yet not deadly, or evil, though they were dead and indifferent.

Shave their heads; which was done at the end of their separation, and was the accomplishment of all; and they burned the hair which they shaved off under their sacrifices, to show, that all their legal performances were only acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ, who was sacrificed for us, 1Co 5:7 Heb 10:12.

Walkest orderly, and keepest the law; livest according to the law of Moses, contrary unto what they reported of thee.

Acts 21:25

Ver. 25. These ceremonies (after their accomplishment in Christ) not being at all necessary, they were not imposed upon any that received the faith of Christ from amongst the Gentiles, or other nations; only suffered for a while unto the Jews that turned to Christ, for the hardness of their hearts, and inveterate zeal for them.

Things offered to idols, &c.: of these things, See Poole on "Mt 15:29".

Acts 21:26

Ver. 26. Paul agrees to their advice, and follows it; and having set such a time for his vow as might end with the other four men's, he, with the four mentioned, signify to the priest (who was concerned to know it, because of the sacrifices that were to be offered for them), that the time of their separation was fulfilled, which is here called *the days of purification*, for the reason intimated, in Ac 21:24.

Until that an offering should be offered for every one of them: intending to abide in the temple until all those rites were performed which were required of them.

Acts 21:27

Ver. 27. *The seven days;* either,

1. After his coming to Jerusalem; or rather,
2. Of his vow; for it is thought that his vow of separation was but for seven days; or:
3. The seven days of that feast of Pentecost which he came unto.

The Jews which were of Asia; who were implacably set against him wheresoever he went, as Ac 14:19 17:5. These Jews dwelt at Ephesus and elsewhere, but were come to observe the feast at Jerusalem.

Laid hands on him; by violence, and against law.

Acts 21:28

Ver. 28. *Men of Israel;* minding them by this compellation, of their being a peculiar people unto God, and that none might be admitted with them in his worship. A charge is laid against St. Paul consisting of divers articles, but all false; for he was a most zealous lover of that people, and taught them nothing but the true use and meaning of the law: but thus they had done to our Saviour, Mt 26:61, and to St. Stephen, Ac 6:13.

Into the temple; that is, into the court of the Jews, which is so far unlawful, that they might have killed a Roman if he had come in there; and everyone was warned by an inscription upon the pillars, Μη δειν αλλοφυλον εντος του αγιου παριεναι, That no stranger or foreigner might come into that holy place.

Acts 21:29

Ver. 29. *For they had seen;* the Jews of Asia, who could not but know Trophimus; and he following of Paul in this journey, either ignorantly or

maliciously they accuse the apostle for taking him into the temple with him; which was only their surmise, and the issue of their enraged jealousy.

Acts 21:30

Ver. 30. *And all the city was moved;* there was a general concourse from all parts.

Tantum religio poterat, no such heats as such are which are moved about religion; whilst *the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable,* Jas 3:17.

Drew him out of the temple; lest by their uproar they should occasion any of the Gentiles to come in there to quell them; or, intending to kill Paul, they drew him thence, that he might not pollute that holy place with his blood: thus they strain at a gnat, being unwilling to pollute the temple; but they would swallow a camel, not sticking to shed the blood of the innocent.

The doors were shut; either by the keeper of the doors, or by the soldiers of the temple.

Acts 21:31

Ver. 31. *The chief captain;* the commander-in-chief over all the soldiers there; or one that had the command over a thousand. At the three great feasts there was usually a considerable number of soldiers at Jerusalem; the confluence from all parts being then so great, and the Jews so impatient of any yoke or government, the Romans durst not trust such multitudes without some check upon them. Thus at the passover, when they took and crucified our Saviour, these soldiers were made use of, Joh 18:12.

Acts 21:32

Ver. 32. A wonderful providence of God for Paul's preservation, that the chief captain should be so near, as to be able to hinder the massacring of

Paul; and especially that he should be defended and preserved by one that was a stranger to him, and an enemy to his religion!

They left beating of Paul, lest they should have been set upon by the soldiers, for breaking the peace, &c. The fear of man caused them to forbear what the fear of God could not.

Acts 21:33

Ver. 33. *Bound with two chains;* whether as Peter was, See Poole on "Ac 12:6", or that he was bound with one upon his feet, and with the other upon his hands, it was exactly fulfilled what Agabus had prophesied concerning him, Ac 21:11. So does God provide, that not one word of his servants, which they speak from him, shall fail; and that St. Paul should be heard before he was condemned.

Acts 21:34

Ver. 34. *Some cried one thing, some another;* as is usual in popular commotions, they agreed in doing mischief, but not in the reason of it.

Into the castle called Antonia, because it was built in honour of Mark Antony, on the north side of the temple.

Acts 21:35

Ver. 35. *When he came upon the stairs,* in the ascent to the castle, *he was borne of the soldiers;* either because the press was so great, he being in the midst of them; or being taken up by them, to secure him from the fury of the enraged multitude.

Acts 21:36

Ver. 36. That is, Kill him; for that was indeed to take him out of their way. The same speech they used against our Saviour, Lu 23:18 Joh 19:15, when

they desired his death.

Acts 21:37

Ver. 37. *May I speak unto thee?* A common expression in that language, whereby he craves leave, and bespeaks attention.

Canst thou speak Greek? After the Grecian empire, their language became and continued to be very common in Asia and Egypt, and very well known amongst all the Romans of any education or quality.

Acts 21:38

Ver. 38. *That Egyptian;* a famous ringleader of a rebellious crew, as some think, in the reign of Tiberius; but as others, in the thirteenth year of the emperor Claudius, and continued till under Nero's reign, and came, from these four thousand mentioned here at his first setting up, to have thirty thousand followers; pretending himself to be a prophet; of whom Josephus, Antiq. lib. 20. cap. 11.

Murderers, or assassins, that did wear daggers or stilettos.

Acts 21:39

Ver. 39. *No mean city;* it being the metropolis, or chief city, in Cilicia, built by Perseus, as some think; howsoever, having the privilege of the Roman freedom; as Ac 22:28.

I beseech thee: St. Paul begs leave to speak unto the people, that he might not seem to affect popularity, or to be guilty of any insurrection or tumult. Thus he had leave also of Agrippa, before that he made that famous apology, Ac 26:1.

Acts 21:40

Ver. 40. *Paul stood on the stairs;* as he was now about to be carried into the castle Antonia, before mentioned.

And beckoned with the hand; signifying that he craved their audience; as Ac 12:17 13:16.

He spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue; the Hebrew tongue being understood by all of them, and most grateful unto them. Yet this was not the pure and ancient Hebrew, which had been corrupted ever since their captivity; but the Syriac tongue, which they there learned, was called Hebrew, it having at first been derived from the Hebrew, and being then in use by those who were, Hebrews.

Acts 22:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 22:1-21 Paul declareth at large the manner of his conversion and call to the apostleship.

Ac 22:22-24 At the very mentioning of the Gentiles the people exclaim furiously against him: whereupon the chief captain ordereth to examine him by scourging, Ac 22:25-29 which he avoideth by pleading the privilege of a Roman citizen.

Ac 22:30 He is brought before the Jewish council.

Ver. 1. Although they were wicked men, and cruel persecutors, St. Paul giveth them their titles of respect, which by the places God had put them in, are due unto them: See Poole on "Ac 7:2".

Acts 22:2

Ver. 2. *The Hebrew tongue;* the ordinary Hebrew; that which was taken for Hebrew, and spoken by the Hebrews after their return from the captivity, though mixed with the Syriac; as Ac 21:40.

They kept the more silence; it being more grateful unto them to hear Paul

speak in their mother tongue, especially they having so great a prejudice against all other nations and languages.

Acts 22:3

Ver. 3. *At the feet;* the apostle alludes unto the posture that the disciples of any rabbi, or teacher, in those times did use; the master sitting in some high or elevated place, did teach his scholars, who sat at his feet on the ground; and as they grew in knowledge, were advanced to sit nearer to their master: De 33:3. Abraham is thus said to be called to God's foot, Isa 41:2; and Mary sat at our Saviour's feet, Lu 10:39.

Of Gamaliel; the same Gamaliel who made that moderating speech in the apostle's behalf, Ac 5:34.

The perfect manner of the law; this perfect manner of the law is Pharisaism, in which the apostle was brought up, and before his conversion made a profession of, Php 3:5. Not that the apostle reckoned upon any perfection in this profession; but because, as Ac 26:5, it was the most strait sect of their religion, observing a great deal of punctuality and accurateness, making what they called a hedge about the law.

Of the fathers; not observing only the law, which was given by God to their fathers by the hand of Moses; but the traditions of their fathers he was exceeding zealous in; as Ga 1:14.

Zealous toward God; or, as some copies read, zealous toward the law; both in the same sense. His zeal for the law was sincere, not out of by-ends, but out of his love to God, though it was not according to knowledge, Ro 10:2. It was truly according unto what he knew or believed, but it was *not according to true knowledge*.

Acts 22:4

Ver. 4. *This way;* the doctrine and practice of Christianity.

Unto the death; as much as in him lies, being one of the most furious

persecutors, that hunted for the precious life, *breathing out threatenings and slaughters* with every breath, Ac 9:1.

Acts 22:5

Ver. 5. *The estate of the elders;* their sanhedrim or great council.

Letters; commission or orders.

The brethren; the Jews of Damascus are called brethren, because they descended from the patriarchs as well as he. And still, as Ac 22:1, he would overcome that stubborn people with civility, heaping up coals of fire on their heads, Ro 12:20, that they might be melted, and then formed after a more excellent manner.

Acts 22:6

Ver. 6. As lightning it suddenly encompassed him. But see Ac 9:3, and read on; where this history is set down by St. Luke. And here little more can be taken notice of, than some small variety in the expressions.

Acts 22:7

Ver. 7. *Saul, Saul;* as men that call another earnestly repeat his name; as when the angel of the Lord called *Abraham, Abraham*, Ge 22:11.

Acts 22:8

Ver. 8. *I am Jesus of Nazareth;* that contemned (though not contemptible) name is owned by Christ from heaven, that they might not be ashamed when they were reproached by it on earth. Of the rest, See Poole on "Ac 9:5".

Acts 22:9

Ver. 9. Of this; See Poole on "Ac 9:7". This may be added to what was formerly said, that the men who travelled with Paul may be said not to have heard the voice of him that spake, because they did not understand it, or obey it; they were not converted, as Paul was, by it; the Hebrew language putting hearing for obeying, as in many scriptures; and both St. Paul, who here spake, and Luke, who penned this history, understood exactly the proprieties of that tongue.

Acts 22:10

Ver. 10. See Poole on "Ac 9:6". Such things as Ananias told him from Christ, were as if Christ himself had told him them; and by Ananias our Saviour satisfied St. Paul's question, *What shall I do, Lord?*

Acts 22:11

Ver. 11. *I could not see for the glory of that light;* the excellency of the object overpowering his sight. It was a strange work of God that enabled St. Stephen to see Christ, who is now so glorious, Ac 7:55. And it will be according to God's wonderful power, when at the resurrection we shall be enabled to look upon Christ in his greatest glory. Behold the goodness and severity of God upon Paul: severity upon him in striking of him with blindness in his body; but goodness indeed to him, in enlightening, converting, and saving of his soul.

Acts 22:12

Ver. 12. *According to the law;* this is added to distinguish him from a proselyte, and to let them know that he had received the gospel, not from a convert out of Gentilism, (who though they admitted, yet they had a greater jealousy over, and less kindness for), but from one like unto themselves in all things.

Acts 22:13

Ver. 13. *Stood;* that in this posture he might more conveniently put his hands upon Paul; which we read that he now did, Ac 9:17, and was ordinarily done upon the miraculous curing of any.

The same hour; or, as Ac 9:18, *immediately.* The suddenness of the cures spake the power from whence they came: none but God saves and delivers after this manner.

Acts 22:14

Ver. 14. *The God of our fathers;* nothing could please the people better than to hear God so styled; for this they gloried in, above all things, that they and theirs had God to their Father, Joh 8:41. And nothing could better suit St. Paul's purpose, who would not lie under that scandal of endeavouring an apostacy from the Jewish religion, (for the gospel which he preached was but the substance and perfection of the law), or that he served or worshipped any other God than the God of Abraham.

Hath chosen thee; he hath taken thee, as by the hand, and by his wonderful providence brought thee into that condition in which thou art.

See that Just One; Christ is the Holy One, spotless and without blemish; God's *righteous servant*, Isa 53:11. But this is here the rather spoken, that he might convince them of their sin in putting our Lord to death: for though he sweetened his speech to them in what he might, he would not flatter them to their destruction; like a skilful surgeon, he would not heal too fast. Now Paul saw Christ with the eye of his mind, it being enlightened to believe in him; and he saw him in his journey also with the eyes of his body. Some read, $\tau\omicron$, not $\tau\omicron\nu$ $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\nu$. And then Ananias tells St. Paul, that he was sent to show him that which was just and right in God's sight; which he, being blinded by his zeal for the law, could not perceive.

Acts 22:15

Ver. 15. *His witness;* the apostles were in a more special manner Christ's witnesses; as Lu 24:48 Joh 1:7 Ac 1:8; God giving them extraordinary gifts, not for their own sakes chiefly, but to profit others withal; as the tree bears not fruit, nor the field yields its increase, for itself.

Of what thou hast seen and heard; not that St. Paul's commission extended only to the publishing this wonder at his conversion: for he was intrusted with the gospel, and had that treasure in his earthen vessel: but this miracle is expressly mentioned, because it was unto him and others a great confirmation of the truths which he believed himself, and recommended to the faith of others. And therefore in the course of his ministry he mentions this frequently; as here in this place, and before king Agrippa, Ac 26:16 1Co 9:1; as also 1Co 15:8.

Acts 22:16

Ver. 16. *Wash away thy sins;* as washing causeth the spots to disappear, and to be as if they had not been, Isa 1:18; so does pardoning mercy, or remission of sins, which accompanieth baptism, as in the due receiver, Mt 3:11 1Pe 3:21,22. Where true faith is, together with the profession of it by baptism, there is salvation promised, Mr 16:16. In the mean while it is not the water, (for that only signifies), but it is the blood of Christ, which is thereby signified, that cleanseth us from our sins, as 1Jo 1:7. Yet sacraments are not empty and deceitful signs; but God accompanieth his own ordinances with his power from on high, and makes them effectual for those great things for which he instituted and appointed them.

Calling on the name of the Lord; Christ, to whom by baptism he was to be dedicated.

Acts 22:17

Ver. 17. This was probably about three years after his conversion, as Ga 1:18, and was one of the *visions and revelations* he makes mention of, 2Co 12:1.

A trance; a rapture and ecstasy, as Ac 10:10.

Acts 22:18

Ver. 18. *Get thee quickly out of Jerusalem;* this St. Paul takes notice of, that it might appear unto the Jews that he did not out of choice, or because he bare a grudge against them, decline them, and preach to the Gentiles.

For they will not receive thy testimony concerning me; as if Christ had said, They who were appointed unto life, and were curable, are already cured; but the rest who are hardened, nothing remains for them but utter destruction.

Acts 22:19

Ver. 19. This was Paul's objection which he made against the will of God concerning his leaving Jerusalem, and the Jews in it; and shows how apt carnal reason is in the very best men to set up itself against the wisdom of God, and to argue for what we fancy best to be done, or left undone. The sum of his reasoning is this, That he was most likely to do more good amongst the Jews than amongst the Gentiles, whither God was sending of him, because the Jews knew how zealous he had been not only to observe the law himself, but to procure its observation by all others; and that it was no less than a miracle which changed his mind about it. He shows also by this his great love unto the Jews, whom he would have staid with, had it been at his choice, and did only remove from by God's command.

Acts 22:20

Ver. 20. *Martyr* is a Greek word, that signifies a witness; and is here, and since by the ecclesiastical writers, appropriated unto such as suffer death for the testimony they give to the truths of God, or doctrine of the gospel.

Consenting unto his death; as Ac 8:1.

Of them that slew him; that is, of the witnesses against Stephen, as Ac 7:58. For the witnesses did slay him not only by the testimony which they

gave against him, but they were to be the first who stoned him.

Slew him; or murdered him.

Acts 22:21

Ver. 21. God repeats his command, and by that answers all Paul's reasonings; whatsoever the event be, whether the Gentiles will hear, or whether they will forbear, he must go unto them. When the will of God is manifest we must do it, whatsoever success we are like to have.

I will send thee far hence; this was verified; God sent Paul, and he went very far, as appears, Ac 9:15 Ro 15:19 Ga 1:17 2:8.

Acts 22:22

Ver. 22. *They gave him audience unto this word;* they had heard all the rest of St. Paul's discourse without any gainsaying, either thinking it did not much concern them whether it were true or false, or else, being convinced of the truth of it, they were silent; but when the mercy of God unto any but themselves is mentioned, they are not able to bear with it. Though they themselves refused the offers of God's mercy, yet they could not endure that it should be tendered unto others; especially that others should be preferred before them in the tendering of it.

Away with such a fellow from the earth; that is: Kill him; encouraging one another to so barbarous a murder, or exciting their rulers unto it.

Acts 22:23

Ver. 23. *Cast off their clothes;* they that stoned the blasphemer cast off their upper garments, that they might be the readier to do that execution, and carry the heavier stones; as Ac 7:58. They might also cast or rend them off, in sign of grief and detestation of Paul's (supposed) blasphemy.

Threw dust into the air; out of raging madness, having no stones at

present in that place to throw at him; or stamping on the ground first with their feet, and taking thence the loosened earth, threw it up, to show that Paul had sinned against heaven, and provoked the God who dwells there; and that he was not worthy to tread on the earth, which, as well as they could, they took from him.

Acts 22:24

Ver. 24. *The chief captain;* of whom, Ac 21:31.

The castle, or fort, called Antonia, as in Ac 21:34.

By scourging; or torturing, (being put to the question, as the French expression is, agreeable to the Greek word here used), which went no further than by scourging; which was for this purpose used upon the blessed body of our Saviour, Mt 27:26. The chief captain took it for granted that he was some notorious malefactor whom all cried out against injuriously, accounting *vox populi* to be *vox Dei*; and because in that confusion he could not know the certainty from his accusers, he would wrest a confession out of St. Paul, whom they accused.

Acts 22:25

Ver. 25. *They bound him with thongs;* they who were to be scourged were bound to a post or column (amongst the Jews) of a cubit and a half high, inclining downwards upon it; and these thongs were such wherewith they bound Paul to this column or pillar; and with such also they intended to scourge him.

Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? that is, it is not lawful to scourge a Roman; much less, uncondemned: See Poole on "Ac 16:37". This latter, the laws of no nation that was civilized did ever allow.

Acts 22:26

Ver. 26. There were several centurions under one chief captain, or chiliarch, as there are several captains under one colonel; and this centurion might be deputed to examine Paul. The reason why they presently desisted from binding Paul, and informed the commander-in-chief of what he had alleged, might be, because as it was very penal to challenge this privilege falsely, so it was treason for any to deny it to such to whom it was due.

Acts 22:27

Ver. 27. It is very reasonable that a good man should make use of such lawful privileges as the place in which he lives doth afford, and in his condition may be allowed. And it is part of that wisdom our Saviour does recommend, if it does not destroy the innocence of the dove, Mt 10:16.

Acts 22:28

Ver. 28. The historian relates, that the emperor Claudius sold this privilege to such foreigners as had not by any notable service merited to have it conferred upon them. At first it cost them very much to obtain it, as it did this chief captain; but afterwards it was more cheap and contemptible.

I was free born; though Paul was born of Hebrew parents, yet he was born at Tarsus, to the natives of which town Augustus had given this privilege, for the assistance that the citizens afforded him in his wars with Brutus and Cassius; or, as some will have it, for favouring of Julius Caesar, this privilege was granted unto that place by him: and they, on the other side, to continue the sense of his favour, caused their town to be called Juliopolis, or the city of Julius.

Acts 22:29

Ver. 29. *They departed from him,* who had bound him, and would have scourged him.

The chief captain also was afraid; the crime of breaking the privileges of

the Roman citizens being accounted no less than treason, and a sin, as they called it, against the majesty of that people; as afterwards it was as great an offence against their emperors.

Acts 22:30

Ver. 30. *He loosed him from his bands;* that he might not continue, after knowledge, in that (accounted) crime of binding a Roman citizen; as also that Paul might speak with the greater liberty and freedom in his own defence.

The chief priests; the chief of the four and twenty courses amongst the priests, according to their families, or such as in place and dignity did excel in the sanhedrim.

Acts 23:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 23:1-5 Paul, pleading his integrity, is smitten at the command of the high priest, whom he reproveth of injustice.

Ac 23:6-9 By declaring himself a Pharisee, and questioned for the hope of the resurrection, he causeth a division in the council.

Ac 23:10,11 He is carried back to the castle, and encouraged by the Lord in a vision.

Ac 23:12-22 A conspiracy against him is discovered to the chief captain,

Ac 23:23-35 who sendeth him under a guard with a letter to Felix the governor at Caesarea.

Ver. 1. *Said, Men and brethren;* acknowledging himself to have descended from the patriarchs as well as they; and bespeaks, as much as he could, their favour and attention.

I have lived in all good conscience; not that he thought himself to have been without sin or fault, for he acknowledges and bewails his captivity to

the law of sin, Ro 7:23,24; but that he was not conscious to himself of any notorious impiety (as sacrilege, which they accused him of); nay, he had not suffered willingly any sin to be, much less to reign, in him. And as for his persecuting of the Christians, he did it not to flatter any with it, or upon any sinister design whatsoever, but thinking to serve God by it, 1Ti 1:13.

Before God; in the sense of God's seeing of him, and whom St. Paul acknowledges to be the searcher and knower of the heart and conscience.

Acts 23:2

Ver. 2. *Them that stood by him;* the officers, probably.

To smite him on the mouth; thus Micaiah was smote by Zedekiah the false prophet, 1Ki 22:24, and Jeremiah by Pashur, Jer 20:2; and our blessed Lord escaped not this suffering and indignity, Joh 18:22. Now this was the rather inflicted on Paul, because of his protesting of his innocency, which did reflect upon the council, as being injurious; but it was indeed no more than what was necessary in his own just defence, and for the glory of the gospel.

Acts 23:3

Ver. 3. *Thou whited wall;* an excellent similitude to represent wicked men, especially hypocrites, by, who counterfeit Gdd's glory and worship, whilst they intend only their own profit or grandeur. Thus our Saviour compared the scribes and Pharisees unto whited sepulchres, Mt 23:27. Whited sepulchres and walls, though they seem fair and comely, have within nothing but rottenness and useless rubbish. Now these words are not to be looked upon as a curse or imprecation upon the high priest, which does not consist with the temper of the gospel; but they are rather to be taken as a prophecy or prediction, St. Paul having on occasion had the gift of prophecy amongst the other gifts of the Holy Ghost. And accordingly it is observed, that this high priest either died, or was put out of his place, soon after. And thus Paul's imprecation upon Alexander the coppersmith, mentioned 2Ti 4:14, is to be understood; as also several other curses (seemingly wished) by holy men, especially in the Psalms, as Ps

109:6,7, &c., and many other places, which are by no means for our imitation; neither were they spoken so much as the wishes or prayers of such as uttered them, as their prophecies or prections; which we know came to pass; as that now mentioned was fulfilled in the person of Judas.

Contrary to the law; it was contrary to all law, Divine and human, that any should be punished before that he was heard; and especially to their own judicial law, which in matters of this nature they were yet governed by under the Romans. Now the Jews were first to hear and inquire diligently, whether the matter any were accused of were true, before they might give sentence, or inflict any punishment upon them, De 17:4.

Acts 23:4

Ver. 4. These partial parasites take no notice of the real injury done unto Paul by the high priest, and readily catch at the seeming calumny spoke by Paul against him.

Acts 23:5

Ver. 5. *I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest;* Paul does not here ironically say this, because the high priest had, contrary to his place and office, caused him to be smitten; but either:

1. Because he knew now no high priest on earth, but only Christ in heaven to be our High Priest, Heb 8:1. Or rather:
2. Because the high priests being so often changed, (insomuch as in one year sometimes they have had three), and they being in a confusion at this time, and not meeting or sitting in their due place and order, Paul might very well be ignorant who that was, who in such a multitude had commanded that they should smite him.

Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people; the scripture here cited by St. Paul, is Ex 22:28.

Acts 23:6

Ver. 6. *I am a Pharisee;* in his former profession, opinion, and conversation; and now also in the points that were controverted betwixt them: and St. Paul, with his dove like innocency, does in this but make use of the serpentine subtlety, to preserve himself, and to gain credit unto the truths of the gospel.

The son of a Pharisee; the son of Pharisees, in the plural; either for several descents his ancestors had been of that sect; or that both his father and his mother were of it.

Of the hope and resurrection; or, for the hope of the resurrection; an hendyadis: although he did not agree with the Pharisees in all their opinions, yet in this he did; and the resurrection was the common subject he preached upon: and the gospel does give us the best proof and evidence of it; insomuch that Paul was taxed for preaching *Jesus and the resurrection*, Ac 17:18; and unless there be a resurrection, his preaching was vain, and his faith vain, 1Co 15:13,14.

Acts 23:7

Ver. 7. Not only of the common people, or standers-by, but of the senators and judges; God by this means dividing and infatuating of them, that they could not bring about Paul's intended destruction.

Acts 23:8

Ver. 8. *The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection;* against this our Saviour argued, Mt 22:23, &c.

Neither angel; it seems strange that they should deny that there were angels, whereas they owned the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, in which mention is made frequently of angels: but it seems that they understood those places allegorically, either for good instincts, or apparitions caused by God to manifest his mind by them unto men, wresting those places to their own destruction.

Nor spirit; they denied the existence of the soul of man, as different from the crasis and temperament of his body; and therefore believed that the soul perished with the body. Nay, they were so far from believing there was any spirit, that they held, blasphemously, that God himself was corporeal.

But the Pharisees confess both; the three things here mentioned, which the Sadducees denied, may be well spoken of as but two, viz. the resurrection and the existence of spirits. When men sin with much obstinacy against supernatural light, God justly withdraws from them even natural light, and they are, punished (as the Egyptians were) with such *darkness which may be felt*, Ex 10:21.

Acts 23:9

Ver. 9. Scribe is a name denoting an office or place; and *the scribes* were men skilled in the law.

A spirit or an angel; some take the latter to be exegetical of the former, and that by a spirit is only meant an angel; by such messengers God many times sending his messages to the children of men. Yet others by *spirit* understand prophetic revelation, and the Spirit of prophecy, which was expected to be shed abroad in large measures about that time; as appears, Joh 7:39.

Let us not fight against God: See Poole on "Ac 5:39".

Acts 23:10

Ver. 10. *A great dissension:* feuds about pretended religion are usually among all men very sharp, because their opinions, being the issues of their own brains, are more beloved than their children, the fruit of their bodies.

Commanded the soldiers to go down; from the fort or castle, unto which there was an ascent or stair, to go up and down by.

Acts 23:11

Ver. 11. *The Lord stood by him;* in a revelation appearing inwardly to his mind; which is the rather thought to have been so, because it is here said to have been in the night; but whether by vision or revelation, it is all one as to this purpose, and neither were unfrequent unto Paul, 2Co 12:1.

Be of good cheer: so true it is what our Saviour had promised and foretold, Joh 16:33, *In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace.*

Acts 23:12

Ver. 12. If they did not kill Paul before they did eat or drink any more, they wished that they might become a *cherem*, or anathema; as Jericho and the inhabitants thereof were, being devoted to utter ruin and destruction. Or, if they did not execute this their wicked design, they would yield themselves to be anathematized, or excommunicated, as those that had broken their pact or agreement.

Acts 23:13

Ver. 13. They made themselves sure (they thought) of killing Paul; there were above forty to one. The church's enemies are unanimous and resolute. As David formerly, so might now Paul say, *They that are mad against me are sworn against me*, Ps 102:8.

Acts 23:14

Ver. 14. *They came to the chief priests and elders,* whose place and office it was to have dissuaded such an abominable murder: *For the priest's lips should keep knowledge*, Mal 2:7. And they could not but have been guilty of the blood of St. Paul, had it been shed, who by encouraging the design became accessory unto it. But they had drank blood very largely before now; viz. the blood of St. Stephen, and the blood of our Saviour; and it is

no wonder that they thirst for more: such wild beasts, (rather than men), when they have once tasted of blood, are never satisfied with it. But at what a low ebb was religion, when the chief priests themselves combine with assassins!

Acts 23:15

Ver. 15. *Ye with the council;* the chief priests are to join with the council in this desire to the chief captain; for they had no authority to command him.

As though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: the plot against Paul's life was laid very deep, and not easily to be discovered; it being usual to send for prisoners to re-examine them, especially when religion and the public peace are concerned, as they pretended that here they were.

Or ever he come near: the space between the castle and the place where the council met, being considerable, it gave the greater advantage to the conspirators.

Acts 23:16

Ver. 16. *Paul's sister's son,* who is thought to have been one of Paul's company: but the hatred against Paul by the Jews being so general, because of his (supposed) profaning of the temple, they were not so curious who they spake to of this confederacy and design. Or rather, there is no counsel against God: the very *birds of the air,* if need were, *shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter,* Ec 10:20. *For he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision,* Ps 2:4.

Acts 23:17

Ver. 17. The chief captain having the command of a thousand soldiers, there were ten captains under him: one of these Paul intrusts with his

message to the chief captain, not making any particular request unto the chief captain, supposing him to have so much of the Roman justice in him, that when he understood his case, he would provide for his safety; which he was not mistaken in.

Acts 23:18

Ver. 18. The centurion took Paul's kinsman, and went with him, as he was desired, unto the chief captain, that there might be no mistake, but that he might hear all out of the young man's own mouth, and be the more affected with it.

The prisoner, or, the chained; for it was customary to chain their prisoners for their greater security. And God is now remembering of Paul in his bonds.

Acts 23:19

Ver. 19. He *took him by the hand,* as a token of courtesy; these commanders showing an excellent example of humanity and pity towards their inferiors and supposed criminals. There are several reasons given of this great civility here used, as the chief captain's naturally meek temper; or his policy to satisfy for the injury he had done to Paul, in binding him, being a Roman; nay, some think that he, as well as Felix the governor, hoped for money to be given unto him, Ac 24:26: but all these are but guesses. It is sure, whatever any of these causes were or were not, God is to be seen and acknowledged in it, who hath the hearts of all men in his bands, and turneth them as it pleaseth him, Pr 21:1.

Acts 23:20

Ver. 20. *The Jews;* both the council, and those forty and upwards spoken of, in Ac 23:12,13.

Acts 23:21

Ver. 21. *Do not thou yield unto them;* this the young man desires out of his care for his uncle's (Paul's) preservation, as also touched with the horror of the fact if it should have been executed; and howsoever, by this means he delivers his own soul, having done his utmost to hinder it.

Now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee; the match is laid, the hand is as it were lifted up, nothing is wanting to Paul's destruction but the chief captain's consent, which the Jews assuredly expected, it being but a small courtesy to grant them, to examine a prisoner, especially such a one as upon their complaint was committed in a case cognizable by them: but, *Deus e machina, Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us, Isa 8:10.*

Acts 23:22

Ver. 22. The chief captain shows by this his care, both for St. Paul, and for the young man too; for had it been known that he had discovered their conspiracy, they would have sought his life, and might divers ways have taken it away; and as for Paul, being disappointed in this, they would have made other attempts against him.

Acts 23:23

Ver. 23. *Make ready two hundred soldiers;* two hundred were the usual proportion or number of men which were under the two centurions; so that they were commanded to have their companies in readiness.

And horsemen threescore and ten; horsemen being usually added for defence of their foot soldiers.

Spearmen, as they are called here, were such as handled, or threw, their javelins or darts with their right hand. Some think them to have been such as our serjeants, who take men into custody; others, that they were soldiers raised out of foreign nations, and lightly armed.

At the third hour of the night; partly because in those hot countries it is very troublesome to travel by day, and partly for the greater security of Paul and such as went with him.

Acts 23:24

Ver. 24. What a strong guard and retinue does God by his providence get together for the safe guarding of Paul! None of all these intended the least good unto him; but God can make use of them as effectually as if they had had the greatest good will for him.

Acts 23:25

Ver. 25. It is not certain whether the following words were the letter itself, or only the sum or contents of the letter.

Acts 23:26

Ver. 26. *Most excellent;* a title given to persons of great eminency, as, Lu 1:3, it is given to Theophilus, unto whom also this book of the Acts is inscribed, Ac 1:1.

This *Felix* was brother to one Pallas, who together with Narcissus (the other of the emperor Claudius's favourites) managed all public affairs, and are by the historians branded for all the mischiefs of that calamitous time. This Felix and his brother Pallas were born slaves, and manumitted by Claudius, and were such as are exalted; as often Providence will show the power it hath in pulling down and setting up whom it pleaseth.

Acts 23:27

Ver. 27. He represents Paul's case fairly and indifferently, God overruling his heart and pen; but withal, he conceals his binding of him, and instead thereof magnifies his care of him, being a Roman; and probably being touched with a sense of his fault, he represents Paul's case the better.

Acts 23:28

Ver. 28. The council understanding those questions (as he thought) best, and having yet retained some power from the Romans concerning them.

Acts 23:29

Ver. 29. According to the Roman laws, or imperial constitutions. That he undervalued the great things in question concerning our blessed Saviour's death and resurrection, and the whole gospel, it is not to be wondered at; he spake and wrote as a pagan; and God overruled his very slighting of these controversies for Paul's advantage, he being by that means preserved from the rage of his enemies.

Acts 23:30

Ver. 30. *The Jews laid wait for the man;* this reflects upon the Jews, as being seditious, and ready to attempt against the government; as also gives the governor an account why he troubled him with this prisoner, and why he sent so great a guard with him.

Farewell; the usual prayer wherewith they ended their letters, as in Ac 15:29.

Acts 23:31

Ver. 31. Not that they came to Antipatris by night; but they began that journey by night, as Ac 23:23, and went as much of it as they could by night, for fear of being discovered, and attempted upon by the Jews.

This *Antipatris* was built by Herod the Great, and so called in memory of his father Antipater; it was about seventeen leagues from Jerusalem, pleasantly situated upon the Mediterranean Sea, between Joppa and Caesarea.

Acts 23:32

Ver. 32. The footmen returned to the castle or fort of Antonia in Jerusalem, from whence they did set out, there being no fear of any such design upon Paul at that distance from Jerusalem, which the horsemen might not easily avoid.

Acts 23:33

Ver. 33. *Caesarea;* Caesarea Stratonis, as it was called, to difference it from the other.

They *presented Paul*, as being their charge, whom they had safely kept, and now delivered according to appointment.

Acts 23:34

Ver. 34. *He asked of what province he was;* Palestine and the countries thereabouts being divided into several heptarchies or jurisdictions, the governors were very loth to infringe the limits of one another.

Of Cilicia; a country in Asia Minor, in which was Tarsus where Paul was born, and from his birth place he is reckoned to belong to that province.

Acts 23:35

Ver. 35. *I will hear thee* thoroughly, the whole matter, as the preposition $\delta\iota\alpha$, here used, does import; and as it is commanded unto all judges, De 1:16.

When thine accusers are also come; for this the dictate of nature did teach the very heathen, that both parties ought to be heard before anything were determined: *Qui aliquid statuerit parte inaudita altera:* That whosoever pronounced any sentence before both sides were fully heard, were the

sentence never so just, yet the judge was unjust.

Herod's judgment-hall; a palace where the governors were lodged, built by Herod the Great, when, in honour, or flattery, of Augustus, after he had fortified the city, he caused it to be called Cesarea.

Acts 24:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 24:1-9 Paul is accused before Felix by Tertullus in the name of the Jews.

Ac 24:10-21 He answereth in defence of his life and doctrine.

Ac 24:22,23 The hearing is deferred.

Ac 24:24,25 Paul preaching freely before the governor and his wife; Felix trembleth.

Ac 24:26,27 Felix hopeth for a bribe to release Paul, but in vain; and going out of his office leaveth him bound.

Ver. 1. *After five days,* from the time that Paul was come to Caesarea: the malice and fury of the persecutors was very great, they stick not at any travail and pains to do mischief; and surely we ought to be as earnest in doing good, or their zeal will condemn us.

A certain orator; a lawyer to form the indictment against Paul, or to aggravate his fault, and to desire judgment upon him. Such advocates usually were the chiefest orators, as Demosthenes in Greece, and Cicero at Rome; and Tertullus seems to have been a crafts master, whom the Jews hired to draw up an accusation against Paul.

Acts 24:2

Ver. 2. *When he was called forth;* when Paul was sent for to appear, being under the custody of the soldiers who brought him to Caesarea.

Seeing that by thee, &c.: it being one of the rules of art, which an orator seldom forgets, to endeavour to obtain the judge's favour, Tertullus commends Felix, who indeed had delivered that country from some robbers (like banditti, or moss troopers) that did infest it; but is commended for little else amongst the historians, who brand him for extraordinary covetousness and cruelty.

Acts 24:3

Ver. 3. *We accept it;* we commend and admire it. It is most certain, that inferiors enjoy many benefits by the means of their governors, who bear the burden for the people, watching and caring for them; and that a bad government is better than none; and therefore not only Tertullus, (who may well be thought to speak out of flattery), but St. Paul himself, Ac 24:10, speaks with great respect unto Felix.

Acts 24:4

Ver. 4. *Be not further tedious unto thee;* hinder thee, or take thee away from other occasions: this is another artifice of an orator, to promise brevity, especially when he speaks to men of employment or business.

Acts 24:5

Ver. 5. *A pestilent fellow;* a pest, or plague, the abstract being put for the concrete, as implying, that no word he could use could properly signify the mischievousness of that man, whom he falsely charges with *sedition* (not that the Jews would have disliked him for that, had it been true, but) to make St. Paul the more odious, and in danger of his life.

The sect, or heresy, which in common use was then taken more favourably, for any doctrine.

Of the Nazarenes; of the Christians; for they who out of Judea were called Christians, in Judea were called Nazarenes. The Jews did call our Saviour and his followers thus, it being accounted an ignominious term; and they

who were born at Nazareth disgraced by it, as appears by Nathanael's question, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Joh 1:46. Yet this name is most glorious, as imposed upon our Saviour by God himself, Mt 2:23.

Acts 24:6

Ver. 6. *Hath gone about to profane the temple;* by bringing into the temple (as they falsely suggested) uncircumcised persons: but Tertullus does not mention this, or show in what Paul had profaned the temple; for Felix himself being uncircumcised, it would have reflected upon him too much, to be accounted, by the Jews, amongst such profane ones, as were enough to defile their temple and worship.

Would have judged according to our law; they had a law, it seems, whereby it was death to bring strangers into the temple; and some think, that by the Romans they had yet power allowed them to put it in execution: See Poole on "Ac 21:28". And this was their aim all along, viz. to take away his life.

Acts 24:7

Ver. 7. So they call the bringing of soldiers, to hinder them from acting violently; and as far as they dare, they accuse Lysias, whom they thought not to favour them.

Acts 24:8

Ver. 8. *By examining of whom;* not that the Jews would have any witnesses produced, and fairly examined; but the pronoun being singular, it refers to Paul, whom Tertullus would have examined, and put to the question, or racked, that he might confess what they would have had him guilty of: or it is as if he had said, (so impudent is impiety), that Paul himself could not deny (if he were asked) the accusation which was brought against him.

Acts 24:9

Ver. 9. The high priest, and the rest of the senate that came with him, acknowledged (as the manner was) that Tertullus had spoken their sense, and what they had to say; and some think that this their assent went further, and that they offered themselves as witnesses to the truth of what he had said.

Acts 24:10

Ver. 10. *Beckoned unto him*, by some sign with his hand. Though St. Paul would not flatter Felix with notorious untruths, as Tertullus had done, yet he speaks very respectfully, and mentions his continuance in the government; the rather, because, if he had been so seditious a person as Tertullus would have represented him to have been, Felix could not but have heard of him, and of any mischief that had been done by him.

Acts 24:11

Ver. 11. *That thou mayest understand*, either by what thou hast heard already, or by what the witnesses, when examined, will declare.

There are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem; there were but twelve days since Paul's coming to Jerusalem; seven of them he had spent there, until the time of his purification was accomplished; and the other five days he had been in custody, and at Caesarea: by which St. Paul proves how unlikely it was, that in so short a time he, being a stranger in those parts, should raise any tumults.

For to worship; he being so far from designing any mischief, that he only intended to worship God.

Acts 24:12

Ver. 12. *Disputing*, or discoursing. Although it seems not to have been

unlawful, after the sacrifices were offered, to discourse about the meaning of any place in the law or the prophets; for thus our Saviour is said to have heard and asked questions of the doctors in the temple, Lu 2:46; yet St. Paul would hereby show how far he was from doing aught that was unlawful, in that he had forborne to go to the utmost of what might have been lawful.

Acts 24:13

Ver. 13. They could not prove either of those crimes they charged him with, viz.

1. Raising of sedition; or,
2. Profaning of the temple, which they had accused him of.

Acts 24:14

Ver. 14. *But this I confess;* he makes here a good confession, and is indeed a follower of Christ, who *before Pontius Pilate* is said to have *witnessed a good confession*, 1Ti 6:13.

Heresy: this word is of a middle signification, being sometimes taken in a good sense, as Ac 26:5, and thus the Greeks did use it sometimes when they spake of their philosophers; though the Jews called the doctrine of Christ so in the worst acceptation of the word; which doctrine this blessed apostle is not ashamed to own. Yet he does withal truly assert, that he worshipped no other God than the God of his fathers, but worshipped him whom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (whom they so much gloried in) had worshipped; and that he had no other religion than what was taught in the law and the prophets, from whom they themselves had received theirs.

Acts 24:15

Ver. 15. *Which they themselves also allow;* the wiser sort amongst them, the Pharisees, (though bad was the best), and yet they were not for this

opinion persecuted by the Sadducees.

A resurrection of the dead; the resurrection of the dead is again owned as the chief matter Paul preached upon, and in which all his other doctrines and opinions did centre, it being indeed the foundation of that faith and manners, 1Co 15:13, of that belief and holy life, which St. Paul preached upon.

Both of the first and unjust; that both sorts, even that all such, rise again at the last day, we have assurance given, Mt 25:32,33 Joh 5:28,29; which was also foretold expressly unto the Jews, Da 12:2, though it hath found so many since amongst them that have denied it.

Acts 24:16

Ver. 16. *And herein;* or at this time, and in this business; or for this reason, to wit, because I believe the resurrection.

I exercise myself; I am altogether taken up with it; this is my one thing necessary, Lu 10:42.

To have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men; that I may not offend God or man in any thing; but that I may be without blame at the judgment seat of God or man. They only are blessed and happy, whose belief concerning another world makes them endeavour after holiness in this world.

Acts 24:17

Ver. 17. *After many years;* it is thought fourteen years, which we find mentioned, Ga 2:1; and therefore the more unlike to have any seditious practices there, where he had so little acquaintance.

I came to bring alms to my nation; and he was so far from designing mischief to his nation, that his charity to them put him upon this journey.

And offerings; which in his condescension to the Jews, and hoping to gain

their good will, he brought according to the law; as Ac 21:26. For whilst Jerusalem and the temple stood, those offerings were in a sort permitted; but God, in that general destruction of both city and temple, put an end to them all.

Acts 24:18

Ver. 18. *Whereupon;* upon my bringing up those alms now mentioned; whilst I was employed for the good of my countrymen who now accuse me.

Purified in the temple; performing all things which the law did require of Nazarites, or those who had made a vow, and in which their legal purification did consist.

Neither with multitude, nor with tumult; the multitude was of their own gathering together; and the tumult, if any, was made by themselves. It is no new thing that Christians should be charged with those mischiefs which their enemies themselves did to make them odious.

Acts 24:19

Ver. 19. *Who ought to have been here;* the Jews of Asia, who had caused all this stir, having seen Trophimus with Paul in the streets of Jerusalem, and maliciously presuming that he had brought him into the temple with him. Now these were the only proper witnesses, who might therefore be now absent, because they could testify nothing to the purpose, and when they thought seriously upon it, their consciences might accuse them for the clamour they had made against the apostle, Ac 21:28. As for the other Jews, they could only testify, by hearsay, which is not sufficient.

Acts 24:20

Ver. 20. St. Paul is willing to allow the present Jews' testimony about such things as they could know, having themselves heard and seen them; which was what passed in the council when Paul was brought before it, Ac

23:1,9. The sense of a Deity was more quick upon men; and they might then be trusted under the security of an oath.

Acts 24:21

Ver. 21. As if he had said, Let them object, if they can, any other fault: but if this be a fault, to hold the resurrection of the dead, I do acknowledge it, and there need no other proof concerning it: not that he held any evil to be in this opinion; but he speaks ironically, knowing that they durst not renew their quarrel about it.

Acts 24:22

Ver. 22. Some understand by *that way*:

1. The custom or manner of the priests to calumniate Paul; or:
2. The religion of Moses, and how and in what it differed from the religion of Christ: either of which Felix might know, and by either of them conclude Paul to be innocent. But:
3. By *that way*, as frequently in this book, Ac 9:2, and Ac 22:4, is meant the Christian religion itself, which Felix, not only from Paul's apology, and Lysias's account of the whole matter, but by divers other means, (it having made so great a noise in the world), could not be ignorant of.

Some read, he deferred them till he could have a more perfect knowledge of that way, and till Lysias, the chief captain, should come down. For there being two things laid to Paul's charge;

1. His evil opinions in matters of religion; and:
2. His causing a sedition: as to the first, Felix would not determine it till he had had better information about those things which St. Paul was accused for to hold. As to the latter, it being matter of fact, which Lysias was present at, he would hear his testimony or evidence, looking upon him as one indifferent and unconcerned between them.

Acts 24:23

Ver. 23. *To let him have liberty;* not so confined as to be kept in a dungeon, or more inward prison; but to have the liberty of the prison, yet so as with a chain about him; as appears, Ac 26:29 Ac 28:20.

Acquaintance; relations or disciples; for there was a church at Caesarea, Ac 10:48 21:8. When it is expedient for us, God can add the comforts of these outward enjoyments, relations and friends, unto us; and that his and our enemies shall contribute towards it.

Acts 24:24

Ver. 24. *Felix came with his wife;* having been out of town to meet and conduct his wife.

Drusilla; who was daughter of Herod the Great, and sister of that Agrippa of whom mention is made in the two following chapters; a most libidinous woman, who had left her husband Aziz, and, whilst he yet lived, was married to this Felix, who was taken with her beauty. Yet Paul preached *the faith in Christ*, the gospel, unto such, not knowing what persons, or in what hour, God might call.

Acts 24:25

Ver. 25. These two, *righteousness* and *temperance*, the Christian religion do indispensably require; and all true worship without these, will not make up our most holy religion, or give to any the title of a religious or a holy man. But Paul chose rather to discourse of those than any other virtues, because Felix was most defective in them. He would lay his plaster where there was a sore, though it pained the patient, and he should get little thanks for his labour. Had great men but such faithful preachers, it might contribute very much to hinder them in their career of sin, and by that means help to mend the world.

Temperance; or continence; the want of which is charged upon both these great persons, being taxed by historians for adultery; so that Paul preaches here as John Baptist did once to Herod, very suitably, though not gratefully. Yet in the discharge of his duty he meets with no trouble, not so much as a reproach, which probably the sense of the judgment to come might contribute to.

Judgment to come; whatsoever is present, this is certainly to come: and the secret reflections that wicked men have upon it in the midst of their fullest enjoyments, mingle fears and terrors with them. Hence their *surda vulnera*, misgivings and inward guilt; as its contrary, *the peace of God, passeth all understanding.*

Go thy why for this time; Felix, not liking such discourse, the subject being too quick and searching for him, put it off longer. And so men put off the consideration of their duties, and of the judgment that will pass upon every one according unto what he hath done in the flesh, till the Judge be, as it were, set, and their case called.

Acts 24:26

Ver. 26. This speaks the charge to be true that the historians give of Felix concerning his covetousness; for taking hold of that part of Paul's accusation, Ac 24:5, that he was the ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, he supposed that, there being so many thousands of them, they would give large sums for the life and liberty of this their supposed captain. This did speak Felix (according to his birth) to be of a servile and base spirit, that for money could transgress the laws of God, and the Roman laws too.

Acts 24:27

Ver. 27. *After two years,* either from Paul's being in bonds, which history St. Luke is here setting down; or, as others, after Felix had been governor two years over Judea; for that St. Paul speaks, Ac 24:10, is not thought to have been true as to this place, though he had governed the neighbouring parts some years before.

The Jews had accused Felix unto the emperor for his barbarous cruelty and exactions, insomuch that had it not been for his brother Pallas (a great favourite) he had lost his life: yet he did not wholly escape punishment, but was sent bound by Festus, his successor, unto Nero. *Sic transit gloria mundi*; and, *Man being in honour continueth not*.

Acts 25:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 25:1-7 The Jews accuse Paul to Festus, first at Jerusalem, and afterwards at Caesarea.

Ac 25:8-12 He answereth for himself, and appealeth to Caesar; his appeal is admitted.

Ac 25:13-22 Festus being visited by king Agrippa openeth the matter to him, who desireth to hear Paul.

Ac 25:23-27 Paul is brought forth; Festus declareth he found nothing in him worthy of death.

Ver. 1. Province; so the Romans called any country which they had conquered with their arms, and unto which they sent a governor, which at this time was Festus, being now set over Judea in Felix's room.

Caesarea had been the place of residence for the Roman governors, by reason of its strength and situation, in Ac 23:23.

Acts 25:2

Ver. 2. The chief of the Jews; the same who are called the elders, in Ac 24:1.

Informed him against Paul; continued their accusation and prosecution of Paul. So restless is the rage and enmity, the adversaries of truth have against the professors of it.

Acts 25:3

Ver. 3. *Desired favour;* though it seems to have been but justice, that they might be allowed to try Paul for such crimes as were within their cognizance; yet that they might the more easily obtain their desire, they beg it as a favour.

Laying wait in the way to kill him; which did worse become magistrates and priests than any men, to act thus against the law of nature, and to be sure also against the law of the land, to hire ruffians to assassinate Paul.

Acts 25:4

Ver. 4. It is most probable that Festus had been informed by Felix of the Jews' malice against Paul; for Felix having been accused by the Jews unto the emperor, might be supposed to have recriminated wheresoever he had any opportunity; and in all the time of his government they were not guilty of a worse fact than their design against Paul, it being sedition, and intended murder of one who had the privilege of a Roman citizen.

He himself would depart shortly thither; the governors kept their courts wheresoever they came.

Acts 25:5

Ver. 5. *Which among you are able;* fit to prosecute Paul in your behalf; as Tertullus was, whom the Jews had carried with them formerly, Ac 24:1.

Go down with me; because Jerusalem was in a mountainous part of the country, and much of it built upon a hill.

Wickedness; the word properly signifies a foolish thing; but it is also taken for a wicked thing; all sin being folly, and grace wisdom; as they are frequently called in Scripture, though the world hath another opinion of them, many abhorring to be accounted fools, and yet are not though they appear most wicked.

Acts 25:6

Ver. 6. *More than ten days;* the margin gives an account of a diverse reading, unto which might be added another, viz. eight or ten days; which reading many follow, and is according unto the usual expression of such a short space of time, which need not to be exactly set down. Thus though God hath provided so, as there is little or no variety in setting down those truths or doctrines in Scripture which concern faith and manners, or our believing and holy living; yet in circumstances which (though they pertain to complete the history or genealogies in Scripture) are not necessary to be so exactly known, God left them not so, designed to exercise us in this state, wherein *we know* but *in part*, \ 1Co 13:9. Fundamental truths are not of such a depth but a lamb may wade or walk in them; but there are less material things of such a profundity, that an elephant may swim in them, and men of the highest understanding and deepest reach must cry out, ω Βαθος.

Acts 25:7

Ver. 7. *When he was come;* the judge sat, and the prisoner brought.

The Jews which came down from Jerusalem; his accusers, which were many, and came with a full cry against him, *stood round about* him, or about the judgment seat.

Many and grievous complaints; what these accusations were, appears in the next verse by Paul's answer; but they could not demonstrate them, or make them evident; and if it were sufficient to accuse, no man could be innocent.

Acts 25:8

Ver. 8. Paul answers unto the three crimes which he was charged with:

1. He had not offended against the law, having been always a religious observer of it: nor:

2. Against the temple, which he went into devoutly, and upon a religious account: nor:
3. Against Caesar; having never taught any rebellion, nor said or done any thing against his government.

Acts 25:9

Ver. 9. *Willing to do the Jews a pleasure;* as his predecessor, Felix, before him, Ac 24:27, to gain popular applause, and the good will of that nation; especially Felix having been displaced upon the complaint of the Jews against him.

Answered, or spake to *Paul;* as Ac 3:12.

Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, &c.: Festus apparently inclines to favour the Jews, though he does not command, but ask this of Paul; he being privileged as a Roman, could not against his will be forced to acknowledge the Jews for competent judges.

Acts 25:10

Ver. 10. Paul might justly suspect his judges, and the place where they would have him judged, and also his journey thither, knowing with what difficulty, and not without a great guard, he came from thence.

I stand at Caesar's judgment seat; he was now before Caesar's tribunal, whose vicegerent Festus was; and he only ought to judge a Roman citizen.

As thou very well knowest; Festus might know that Paul had done the Jews no wrong, from the relation Felix had made unto him, as also from such as were with Felix when Paul's case was heard.

Acts 25:11

Ver. 11. *If I be an offender;* if I have injured the Jews, and my fault be *worthy of death*, such as by law deserves death, I beg no favour.

No man may deliver me unto them; according to law, (which the Romans did punctually observe), before sentence was passed.

I appeal unto Caesar: it was lawful for any that had that privilege of the Roman citizens, to appeal; neither might they be tried against their wills in any province out of Rome. Now Paul might appeal unto Caesar:

1. To make Caesar more favourable unto himself, and to other Christians.
2. Because he thought it more safe for himself and for the church.
3. He was in part admonished to do it by Christ himself, who had told him that he must bear witness of him at Rome, Ac 23:11.

Acts 25:12

Ver. 12. *Conferred with the council;* either of the Jews, and those of the sanhedrim, that he might inform them of the law or custom of the Romans, and how that he could not but admit of St. Paul's appeal; or with his own council; it being usual with the Roman presidents to do nothing of moment without the advice of their council, or assistants.

Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? Or without an interrogation: Thou hast appealed unto Caesar; which Festus was glad of, that without danger on the one hand, or ill will on the other, he might get rid of that difficult business.

Acts 25:13

Ver. 13. This *Agrippa* is called by Josephus, the younger, and was the son of Herod Agrippa, or Agrippa the Great, who in this book of the Acts is called Herod, whose death is mentioned, Ac 12:23. But this Agrippa was brother to Drusilla and Bernice, here spoken of, and lived in incest with her, whom Juvenal in his satire speaks of:

Barbarus incestae dedit hunc Agrippa sorori.

Acts 25:14

Ver. 14. *Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king;* either amongst common discourse, or matter of novelty, and for the strangeness of it, or for his advice about it. Howsoever, by this means the wickedness of the Jews was published, and the safety of St. Paul provided for, and God's design of publishing the gospel at Rome itself furthered.

Acts 25:15

Ver. 15. To wit, judgment of death upon Paul, that he might be sentenced according to the crimes they had laid against him; $\delta\iota\kappa\eta$ being put for $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\delta\iota\kappa\eta$. Neither do they at all mind that St. Paul's case was not yet heard; they would rather have had him condemned unheard, as they had gotten our Saviour to be condemned, though the judge declared that he found no fault in him, Lu 23:4; which their unjust desire appears by Festus's answer.

Acts 25:16

Ver. 16. To condemn any man *indicta causa*, without sufficient cause alleged and proved, is not only against the laws of the Romans, but of the Jews, De 17:4; nay, against the law of nature and of all nations. Yet malice had so far blinded the enemies of St. Paul, that they go about such things as a heathen reproves, and the very light of nature condemns.

Acts 25:17

Ver. 17. Festus had gratified the Jews in what lawfully he might, not detaining them at charges from their habitations: and that not only commends Festus's own justice, but Paul's innocence; for if Paul had not appeared guiltless, he would have left him to the rage of the Jews, whom he desired to gratify what he could.

Acts 25:18

Ver. 18. For Festus, knowing how Paul had been prosecuted by the Jews before Felix, and what charge they had been at, and what journeys they had made about him, could not think less than that he was a capital offender.

Acts 25:19

Ver. 19. *Superstition;* so this heathen governor profanely calls the religion and worship of God's own institution, and that in the presence of Agrippa and Bernice, who were both Jews, or, at least, brought up amongst them.

To be alive; to have been raised again from the dead; acknowledging, with them, that he had been indeed dead.

Acts 25:20

Ver. 20. Festus pretends, that he knew not by what rule those cases were to be decided, nor before what judges; whether before himself or the Jewish sanhedrim. But this is only his pretension: the true cause why he would not acquit Paul, though he knew him to be innocent, we read, Ac 25:9, viz. that he might *do the Jews a pleasure*. He asked Paul this question, *Whether he would go to Jerusalem?* But with a resolution to have sent him whether he would or not, had he not appealed; but then he durst not: for in certain cases none could hinder appeals, from any judge, to the people in the former times, or to their emperor in the latter times.

Acts 25:21

Ver. 21. *Augustus*: the emperor who now reigned, and to whom Paul appealed, was Nero, who was called Augustus; this title being at first appropriated to Octavius, who succeeded Julius Caesar; but out of honour unto him, or because of its signification, it became an appellative, and was given unto all the emperors successively: nay, the emperor of Germany to this day is called *Semper Augustus*.

Caesar; as from Octavius the emperors of Rome had the name of Augustus, so from the first emperor, Julius, they have the name of Caesars. This word Caesar, which was the proper name of the first emperor, is, in acknowledgment of him, made an appellative to all his successors.

Acts 25:22

Ver. 22. Agrippa being well acquainted with the Jewish religion, if not a Jew, could not but have heard of our Saviour, his doctrine, death, and resurrection; and yet makes this desire but out of curiosity; as Herod desired to hear John Baptist, Mr 6:20, and to see our Saviour, Lu 23:8.

Acts 25:23

Ver. 23. *With great pomp*; the state, attire, and retinue used in this solemnity is much undervalued by the term the Holy Ghost here gives it ($\varphi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\sigma\iota\alpha$); intimating, that all worldly glory is but in opinion and appearance merely, and that as a show it passeth away.

Paul was brought forth; here is a great difference indeed between these great persons thus adorned and accompanied on the one side, and Paul, the prisoner, ($\delta\epsilon\sigma\mu\iota\omicron\varsigma$, the chained, as he is called, Ac 23:18), on the other side; yet holy Paul, with great reason, prefers his condition before theirs. He does not desire to partake with them in their ease and splendour, but with Christ in his disgrace and sufferings, Php 3:10.

Acts 25:24

Ver. 24. Well might Paul be aghast, to be friendless in so great a multitude, and to be shown and pointed at as a monster, being *made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men*, as 1Co 4:9. But he found surely the benefit and efficacy of that promise, Mt 28:20, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Acts 25:25

Ver. 25. The calumny of the Jews adds to the reputation of St. Paul: so many enemies, and so long in finding or making a fault that might reach his life, and yet to be disappointed! Paul and his religion are vindicated by the testimony of Lysias, the chief captain, Ac 23:29, and of Felix, the governor, Ac 24:25, and here by Festus, as afterwards by Agrippa too, Ac 26:32. So mighty is truth and innocence, that they do prevail sooner or later.

Acts 25:26

Ver. 26. *My lord;* Nero, the present emperor, whose deputy Festus was in this province; though some of the former emperors refused this name, as savouring of too much arbitratiness, the latter did accept of it.

Specially before thee; Agrippa, being brought up in the knowledge of the Jewish law, though it was not his business to judge Paul's case, yet he might instruct and inform the judge about it.

Acts 25:27

Ver. 27. So great a clamour, so hot a pursuit, and yet after all this the judge (who would willingly have condemned Paul, and gratified the Jews) knows not wherefore all this stir had been: but the more must he have been self-condemned, that durst not absolve or free a prisoner who was detained only by the power and multitude of his adversaries.

Acts 26:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 26:1-23 Paul, in the presence of Agrippa, declareth his life from his childhood, his wonderful conversion, and call to the apostleship, and his preaching of Christ according to the scripture doctrine.

Ac 26:24-29 Festus chargeth him with madness: his modest reply, and address to Agrippa, who confesseth himself almost a Christian.

Ac 26:30-32 The whole company pronounce him innocent.

Ver. 1. This stretching forth of his hand was:

1. To obtain silence of others whilst he spake; or:
2. To show his innocence, whilst he uses this modest confidence; or:
3. As other orators, when they begin to speak, move their hands. The providence of God wonderfully procures Paul a liberty to publish the gospel, and to make his case and religion known.

Acts 26:2

Ver. 2. *I think myself happy;* Paul thought it to be his advantage to speak before Agrippa, who could not be unacquainted with the law or the prophets, by which St. Paul would have his case determined.

Before thee; though Agrippa was not as judge in this place, yet his opinion and judgment could not but prevail much with Festus.

Acts 26:3

Ver. 3. This is not flattery, but a plain confession of what was true; for Agrippa, by reason of his birth and breeding, could not be wholly ignorant

of those things in question;

1. About the Messiah;
2. About the resurrection;
3. About the giving of the Holy Ghost.

I beseech thee to hear me patiently; it being a matter that concerned religion, and the life and liberty of a man, nothing but ignorance or impiety could take him off from attending unto it.

Acts 26:4

Ver. 4. Paul appeals to his enemies, the Jews themselves, whether they could tax him with any enormity whilst he was of their persuasion; whereby he vindicates his holy religion from being the sink and offscouring of other religions, as some would make it; as also to intimate, that it was his religion which made him so hateful unto them, and not any ill practices done by him.

Acts 26:5

Ver. 5. This heresy, sect, opinion, or way of the Pharisees, St. Paul rightly commends, if we consider it comparatively with the other sects of the Sadducees and Essenes: he had called this before, Ac 22:3, the most exact *manner of the law of the fathers*; for it is certain it was more learned and strict, and came nigher to the truth in many things, than the other did.

Acts 26:6

Ver. 6. *I stand*; the posture of such as are held for guilty.

The hope of the promise; St. Paul brings in the discourse of the resurrection, which, as hath been observed, is the foundation of all religion, 1Co 15:14 Ac 23:6 24:15; and now it is called *the hope of the*

promise, because God's promise did raise them up to this hope: for God having promised to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, gave them rather less than others in this world; neither had they any propriety in all the Promised Land, but only to a burying place; whence they might certainly infer, that there was another life to be expected, in which God would make this his word good. Paul was also *judged for the hope of the promise*, taking this hope for the salvation which Christ did purchase, and Paul preach, which was also promised unto the fathers, though mostly under types and obscure representations. The sum is, Paul was judged for one of those two articles of our faith, viz. the resurrection of the body, or a life everlasting.

Acts 26:7

Ver. 7. *Twelve tribes*; so St. Paul still reckons them, notwithstanding that ten tribes had been led captive, without returning again to this day. Yet,

1. There were many left by the king of Assyria in their own land; and though for a while they joined themselves unto the Samaritans rather than to the Jews, yet a century or two before our Saviour's time they returned to the Jewish religion and worship, at least very many of them.
2. Though the ten tribes never returned (as tribes) entirely back again, yet many of them doubtless had that love for their religion and country, as they took all opportunities of coming back.
3. At their first defection in Jeroboam's time, God touched the hearts of a great many, who rather changed their habitation than their religion.

So that St. James might well dedicate his Epistle to the twelve tribes, for there were some who at the dispersion were scattered out of every tribe.

Instantly serving God day and night; now these, with great intention and earnestness of desire, (as when any stretcheth himself to his utmost length to take hold of aught), endeavoured to obtain that very salvation which God had promised, and the gospel revealed.

Acts 26:8

Ver. 8. This St. Paul seems to have spoken in regard of Festus, and many others there present, who were heathens; or to any of the Sadducees, if any such were amongst them: as for Agrippa, He believed the prophets, Ac 26:27, and had out of them learned and observed this promise, Ac 26:7. However, God did not leave himself without a witness to testify so much unto all, as should make the doctrine of the resurrection credible, whensoever it should be revealed unto them. The works of creation evidence it; for he that can give life unto that which had it not, can restore it unto that which had it: and the works of providence attest it; in every spring there is a resurrection of such plants or trees as seemed dead; nay, the bread which we daily feed on, was made of that grain, which was not quickened except it died, 1Co 15:36.

Acts 26:9

Ver. 9. *The name of Jesus;* the religion which teacheth Christ is to be worshipped, and his name to be magnified.

Jesus of Nazareth; so they called our Saviour, of which see Ac 22:8.

Acts 26:10

Ver. 10. *The saints;* the professors of the religion of the holy Jesus, who are called to be saints, Ro 1:7, and have him for the great example of holiness, who fulfilled all righteousness; and from him they have the Spirit of holiness; being sanctified in him, 1Co 1:2; and whosoever hath not his Spirit, *he is none of his*, Ro 8:9.

I gave my voice against them: Paul was not one of the council, nor, that we read of, in any office or place to judge any person; besides, the Jews are thought to have had no power of life and death; and that St. Stephen was slain rather in a popular tumult, than legally: but Paul may be said to do this, by carrying the suffrages or sentence to the Roman man president, or any others, to get it executed (for so the words will bear); and howsoever, by his approving, rejoicing at, and delighting in their condemnation,

(which was indeed giving his voice, as much as he could, against them), this was verified.

Acts 26:11

Ver. 11. Paul confesses that he *compelled them to blaspheme*, either:

1. By the torments he made them to be put unto; or:
2. By his own example; for he confessed that he had been a blasphemer himself, 1Ti 1:13.

This blasphemy was either:

1. Denying of Christ to be the Messiah; or:
2. Cursing or execrating of Christ, and acknowledging that he was justly condemned.

I persecuted them even unto strange cities; drove them out of Jerusalem and Judea; and, according to what Paul then believed, he drove them from the worship of the true God, and said in effect, as David's adversaries when they expelled him from Jerusalem, *Go, and serve other gods*, 1Sa 26:19.

Acts 26:12

Ver. 12. With procuratory letters recommending him to the Jews abroad, and deputing him as their agent.

Acts 26:13

Ver. 13. *At mid-day;* this appeared at noon-day, that it might not be suspected to be a dream or fancy.

Above the brightness of the sun; our Saviour's face in the transfiguration

did shine as the sun, Mt 27:2, and he was yet on earth in his mortal body; how much more resplendent must it have been now, when he appeared from heaven with his glorious body! And if the righteous shall shine as the sun, Da 12:3 Mt 13:43; how much more does their Prince and Saviour! See concerning this history, Ac 9:3, &c., and Ac 22:6, &c.

Acts 26:14

Ver. 14. *In the Hebrew tongue;* whereby it appears, that Paul spake not now before Agrippa in the Hebrew tongue, as he did before the Jews at Jerusalem, Ac 21:40.

It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks: this is a proverb borrowed from the Greeks, as some think, but used in many languages, denoting any who endeavour such things as will ruin or detriment themselves: and so do all persecutors; for they cannot harden themselves against God, his truth, or servants, and prosper, Job 9:4. Not to speak of other pricks, there is never an attribute in God, nor ever a faculty in their own souls, but they kick against, and will be themselves at last pricked by.

Acts 26:15

Ver. 15. The foot is trod upon on earth, and the Head cries out out from heaven, as Ac 9:5.

Acts 26:16

Ver. 16. *Stand upon thy feet;* as Daniel was bidden by the angel, Da 10:11, to mitigate his consternation and fear.

Of those things in the which I will appear unto thee: St. Paul accordingly had many visions and revelations, Ac 28:9 23:11 2Co 12:2; as he was more abundant in his sufferings for Christ, so in consolations from Christ, 2Co 1:5.

Acts 26:17

Ver. 17. *From the people;* from this people of the Jews, so in some copies it is expressed; howsoever, by the antithesis, *and from the Gentiles,* it is plainly to be understood: and God undertakes no less hereby, than to deliver Paul, and all his faithful servants, from all evils and enemies. But how is this performed? And where is the promise? St. Paul was sorely persecuted by the Jews, and at last put to death by the Gentiles. But so long as it would be a mercy, and a true deliverance to Paul, God wrought many such for him; and that, rather than fail, miraculously too; no chains, no iron gates could detain him. When he had finished his course, and done the work he was sent for, it would not have been a deliverance, to have been kept longer from his reward, and the prize he had ran for.

Acts 26:18

Ver. 18. *To open their eyes;* the eyes of their minds, that they might know God, and their duty towards him. Our Saviour assures Paul, that he should do that for the souls of men which he should find effected in his own body, being made to see. Now though this be only the work of God, yet, to honour the ministry, he is pleased to attribute it unto his ministers, as being the instruments he ordinarily worketh it by; and who are hence called co-workers with God, 2Co 6:1.

To turn them from darkness to light; this was signified by the glorious light which came from the body of our glorified Redeemer, which appeared unto him.

The power of Satan; so are all sins, for by them Satan rules in the children of disobedience, Eph 2:2.

That they may receive forgiveness of sins; thereby intimating, that their former sins (how grievous soever) should not hinder their salvation, who received the gospel in the love and power of it.

By faith that is in me; by faith which purifieth the heart; but this may be referred, either to our being sanctified, or to our receiving of the inheritance, for both are by faith; and as without faith we are no better, and

do no better, so we shall receive no better, than other men.

Acts 26:19

Ver. 19. I was not incredulous, I believed God, and yielded to his call, as Isa 1:5, which cannot be counted a fault in me; and yet this is all that can be charged upon me.

Acts 26:20

Ver. 20. *Showed first unto them of Damascus;* nigh unto which place he was first converted, taking the first opportunity to preach Christ: out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaking.

And turn to God: as sin is a turning from God, so repentance is a turning (or rather returning) unto God.

Do works meet for repentance; such as became a true penitent; for as we must show our faith by our works, Jas 2:18, so we must show our repentance by our works also: for to say we are grieved for sin, and we hate sin, and yet to live in it, is but to deceive ourselves, and (what in us lay) to mock God.

Acts 26:21

Ver. 21. By violent hands and indirect means, as we see, Ac 21:31, and as they had done unto our Saviour, Ac 5:30, where the same word is used.

Acts 26:22

Ver. 22. *I continue unto this day:* that Paul, continued till then alive, notwithstanding all the fraud and force of his enemies, is acknowledged by him to be from God; from whence he infers towards his justification, that what he had done was but in a becoming gratitude towards that God who had maintained him in life unto that very day.

Witnessing both to small and great; witnessing to all sorts, princes or people; implying, that the truths of the gospel, and the things of God, concerned Agrippa as well as the meanest of his auditors; and indeed with God there is no respect of persons, and that *we are all one in Christ Jesus*, Ga 3:28.

The prophets and Moses; Moses was himself also a prophet, but he is here made especial mention of, because of his excellency above the other prophets, (unto whom God spoke face to face), as also because he was the lawgiver to the Jews, and to whom, upon all occasions, they pretended to yield obedience.

Acts 26:23

Ver. 23. The sufferings of Christ were taught by Moses in all the commands about sacrifices, and more plainly by Isaiah in all the 53rd chapter (Isa 53:1-12); insomuch, that this was acknowledged by Tryphon, disputing with Justin Martyr, although the generality of Jews, both then and now, do stiffly deny it. The carnal Jews do not like to hear of a spiritual kingdom.

The first that should rise from the dead; Christ was the first that did rise to an immortal life; others that were restored to life, died again: besides, Christ is deservedly called the first, by reason of his dignity and eminency, and in that he rose as a head and fountain of life to others, even to all that live and believe in him.

Show light; all the word of God is light; but especially the gospel, which discovers a plain and open way unto salvation.

Unto the people, and to the Gentiles; to both Jews and Gentiles, as Ac 26:17.

Acts 26:24

Ver. 24. *Thou art beside thyself;* this was the opinion of Festus concerning

Paul, and such is the opinion of carnal and worldly men concerning such as are truly godly; as the prophet who came to Jehu was counted a *mad fellow*, 2Ki 9:11, and the friends of our Saviour thought him to be *beside himself*, Mr 3:21. And it cannot be otherwise; for good men and bad men have quite different apprehensions concerning most things; and what one calls good, the other accounts evil; and what is wisdom to the one, is madness to the other.

Much learning doth make thee mad; much study many times increasing melancholy, which a sedentary and thoughtful life is most exposed unto. Paul is reckoned to have been skilful in the Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, and Latin tongues; to have been well read in the poets; and certainly he was an excellent orator, as appears all along in his defence he made for his doctrine, and his life: but there was yet somewhat more than all this; Festus might feel a more than ordinary effect from Paul's words, and not knowing of the Spirit by which he spake did attribute it to his learning, or madness, or to any thing but the true cause of it.

Acts 26:25

Ver. 25. St. Paul with all meekness makes his reply to the governer, and not taking notice of his sharp censuring of him, returns an answer in most respectful terms unto him; as his blessed Master, *who, when he was reviled, reviled not again*, 1Pe 2:23.

Soberness, in contradiction to madness; modestly waiving the reflection, and denying the charge Festus had laid upon him.

Acts 26:26

Ver. 26. Agrippa, being educated in Judea, could not but hear of the life and doctrine, death and resurrection, of our Saviour; as also of the miracles done by him, and by his disciples; for, as our Saviour says, he ever taught openly, Joh 18:20.

Acts 26:27

Ver. 27. A rhetorical insinuation, that could not but much affect the king, and leave a sensible impression on his heart. St. Paul answers the question which he had propounded, and that in favour of Agrippa; or rather blames himself for making that a question; but his cryptical inference would then be, If you believe the prophets, why do you not believe Christ of whom they prophesied?

Acts 26:28

Ver. 28. Some think that these words were spoken ironically, or scoffingly; as if Agrippa had said: Thou wouldst have me in so short a space (for so ἐν ὀλίγῳ may be translated) to be brought to profess Christ: some think it unlikely that such a one as Agrippa would speak so plainly as we translate it, in such a place, before such an auditory: but the danger seems not to have been so great from these words; and if it had been greater, who knows the power of that conviction under which Agrippa at that time was? And Paul's rejoinder do suppose the words to be spoken in the sense we read them.

Acts 26:29

Ver. 29. Paul, knowing how little it would avail any to be almost a Christian, wisheth their perfection in that profession, that they might not, with the Laodiceans, be neither hot nor cold, Re 3:16; nor, with the Israelites, halt between God and Baal, 1Ki 18:21.

Except these bonds: some think that by *bonds* St. Paul means only his guard wherewith he was surrounded; but it is certain that St. Paul was bound, in the most literal sense, with chains, as Ac 24:27; and he wishes his auditors all the good that was in him, and to be freed from all the evils that were upon him.

Acts 26:30

Ver. 30. Agrippa, Festus, and the queen, together with the governor's council, although they had heard this excellent discourse from, the most learned apostle, like the blackamoor or leopard, they cannot change their spots, or skin, Jer 13:23: having sinned against former manifestations of God's will, this, for aught we read, became ineffectual unto them.

Acts 26:31

Ver. 31. *Gone aside;* either to their houses, or to some apartment nigh to the tribunal. They acquit Paul; for as yet Nero had not made those bloody laws, whereby the profession of Christianity was made capital.

Acts 26:32

Ver. 32. These judges and great men do, by their opinion concerning Paul, condemn the Jews, whom they declare to have no cause for the prosecuting of him; and so those caitiffs returned to Jerusalem, not only with their labour for their pains, but being branded by the sentence of so many eminent personages, not to say tormented with the guilt of so foul a fact in their own conscience. Such honour have all persecutors! But, withal, these great men seem to be self-condemned, in that they own Paul's innocence, and yet dare not set him free for fear of the Jews; for as for this excuse from his appealing to Caesar, it bound up them indeed from condemning Paul till Caesar had heard him; but they could not be bound by it from acquitting or freeing of him; for Paul might have withdrawn his appeal, and enjoyed his liberty, if they had pleased, at any time: but what popularity, or self-ends, put them upon, they are willing to varnish over with pretence of lawfulness and necessity.

Acts 27:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 27:1-8 Paul is conducted in a ship toward Rome.

Ac 27:9-11 He foretells the danger of the voyage, but is not credited.

Ac 27:12-20 The ship setting sail against his advice is

tossed with a tempest.

Ac 27:21-44 Paul comforteth his fellow travellers with assurance of having their lives saved, but foretelleth a shipwreck; all which is verified by the event.

Ver. 1. *It was determined;* upon the solemn hearing of Paul's case, it was resolved by Festus and Agrippa, with the rest that were taken by Festus to advise concerning it.

Julius; thought to have been a freed-man of the family of Julius, who thence took his name.

A centurion of Augustus' band; as Cornelius was a centurion of the Italian band: see Ac 10:1. This band, or regiment, was called Augustus's (or the emperor's) because (as some will) it was part of his guard.

Acts 27:2

Ver. 2. *Adramyttium;* a city in Mysia, a province in the Lesser Asia, almost over against Mitylene, of a pestilent air.

Meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; the ship did belong to Adramyttium, and designed a trading voyage along the coasts of Asia.

Aristarchus; this Aristarchus seems to have been a man of some note, who accompanied St. Paul (together with Luke, the holy penman of this book, and of the Gospel so called) throughout his journey, and none else that we read of. This Aristarchus was one of them that was laid hold on in the uproar at Ephesus, Ac 19:29; and having partook of Paul's afflictions in all his travels, was at last his fellow prisoner at Rome, Col 4:10.

Thessalonica; of this city mention is made, Ac 17:1.

Acts 27:3

Ver. 3. *Sidon;* a city in Phenicia, bordering upon Palestine, mentioned Mt 11:21, and Ac 12:20.

Julius courteously entreated Paul; as Felix had commanded that centurion to whom he committed him, Ac 24:23.

And gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself; though Paul went with a soldier to guard him, as their manner was, yet it was a great favour that he might converse with his friends, and receive from them such refreshments towards his journey as he stood in need of. Now Paul indeed experienced the truth of God's word, Ac 18:10, that he was with him: and it is wonderful to consider the presence of God with Paul all along: which things are our examples, that we also may put our trust in God, who hath said he will not leave us nor forsake us, Heb 13:5,6.

Acts 27:4

Ver. 4. *Launched;* or put to sea.

Cyprus; a noted island in the Mediterranean Sea, of which we read, Ac 11:19 13:4. Their nearest way from Sidon to Myra had been to have left Cyprus on the right hand, but by reason of the winds they were forced to go almost round about the island, leaving it on the left hand.

Acts 27:5

Ver. 5. *The sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia;* that part of the Mediterranean that borders on those provinces.

Cilicia; of which see Ac 6:9 15:23,41.

Pamphylia; mention is made of this province, Ac 2:10 13:13.

Lycia; another province in the lesser Asia, bordering on Pamphylia.

Acts 27:6

Ver. 6. *Alexandria;* a famous port town in Egypt, formerly called No, of

which we read, Jer 46:25: unto this place the ship did belong, which was now in the road or haven of Myra, intending for Italy, whither they carried corn, and Persian and Indian commodities, from thence.

Acts 27:7

Ver. 7. *Had sailed slowly many days*; the wind being contrary, or at least very bare, and, it may be, their ship much laden.

Cnidus; a city or promontory over against *Crete*, which is now called Candia, a known island in the Mediterranean.

Salmones; a sea town in Candia, or the easterly promontory there, so called.

Acts 27:8

Ver. 8. *The fair havens*; or, the fair or good shore, that being accounted the best which is safest for ships to ride in or enter into. A place of this name remains to this day (as some tell us) in the island of Candia.

Lasea; called Lasos, and more inland; yet some think that this town is not certainly known, not having been mentioned by any ancient geographer.

Acts 27:9

Ver. 9. This *fast* was not any necessitated abstinence, but a religious fast, as the word here used does most commonly signify; and the article being put to it, it may well denote some eminent and known fast. We read, that amongst the Jews several fasts were observed; as the fast of the fourth month, of the fifth month, of the seventh, and of the tenth month, Zec 8:19. But that of the seventh month did far exceed them all, it being the day in which the priest was to make an atonement for the people; and they were strictly commanded to afflict their souls in it, Le 16:29 23:27. (Thus when we look up to him whom by our sins we have pierced, we must mourn, Zec 12:10.) Now this fast was to be observed on the tenth day of Tisri, or

their seventh month (which is made up of part of September and part of October); and then this day, which might well be called *the fast*, fell about the beginning of October; after which time, until March, they did not usually venture on the seas, especially their ships not being so able to bear a storm as ours are, and the art of navigation being not yet in any reasonable degree found out amongst them.

Acts 27:10

Ver. 10. Paul did not say this so much by reason of the time of the year, and the tempests which do usually attend it, as by a prophetic spirit: God intending to provide for Paul in this tedious and difficult journey, endues him with the gift of prophecy; which (especially when they saw it verified) could not but beget a great respect toward him, and might be a means of salvation to many that were with him.

But also of our lives; so it had been, their lives had been lost as well as the ship and goods, had not God given the lives of all in the ship unto Paul, and saved them for his sake; as Ac 27:24.

Acts 27:11

Ver. 11. The centurion believed those whom he thought best skilled in those things (as every one in his own art); and if he had not heard of Paul's condition and extraordinary qualification, he was doubtless the more to be excused.

Acts 27:12

Ver. 12. This *Phenice* was a port town in Candia, and not the country in Syria.

Lieth toward the south-west and northwest; being on the south part of that island, having a bay or road like unto a half-moon or crescent, one horn or part of it (admitting entrance into it) toward the south-west, and the other toward the north-west.

Acts 27:13

Ver. 13. The south wind being ordinarily most mild, and at that time not high, they sailed along the shore of Candia, not being afraid to be driven upon it.

Acts 27:14

Ver. 14. *There arose against it;* Crete or Candia; so that they were in the greater danger, having a sea-shore.

Called Euroclydon; this some will have to have been a whirlwind; but the word signifies only, the tempestuous east, or the north-east, which is a contrary wind unto any that would go from Crete to Italy.

Acts 27:15

Ver. 15. *The ship was caught;* being forced from Crete, and no longer at the command of the mariners, but in the sole power of the winds.

And could not bear up into the wind; the ship could not keep her course, the winds being contrary, so that her prow or head (part whereof was called the eye of the ship, and on which its name was formerly, as now at the stern, inscribed) could not bear up according as their course did require; whence that expression, *αντοφθαλμειν τω ανεμω*, which is here used.

Sic quo non voluit, sed quo rapit impetus undae.

Acts 27:16

Ver. 16. *Clauda;* called also Claudos, and by some Gaudos, and now Gozo, an island near unto Crete.

We had much work to come by the boat; in this stress of weather they would take up the boat, lest it should have been staved or beat in pieces against the ship.

Acts 27:17

Ver. 17. *They used helps;* not only using all instruments fit for their purpose, but all hands were employed too.

Undergirding the ship, with cables, to keep the sides of the ship the closer and faster together.

The quicksands: there were two quicksands especially famous in Africa, the one the greater, the other the lesser, called Syrtes, because these mountabes of sand under water did seem, as it were, to draw and suck up ships, they were so soon swallowed up by them.

Strake sail; by the word here used, sails and their tackle, or the top-mast, may be understood decks.

Acts 27:18

Ver. 18. Casting out the merchandise or lading which was in it, that the ship, being so much lighter, might not so readily strike upon a rock, or be swallowed up of the quicksands, it drawing so much the less water.

Acts 27:19

Ver. 19. All the ship's furniture which it had either for ornament or defence, and not their ballast or lumber only: so willingly do men part with all things for their lives; which yet are but short, and, at best, mixed with care and sorrow, Job 14:1,2.

Acts 27:20

Ver. 20. *Neither sun nor stars in many days appeared;* which shows the greatness of their misery, which had not the ordinary refreshments from the sight of the sun to relieve it. For what the sun does cheer, is one reason why our Saviour is called *the Sun of righteousness*, Mal 4:2.

All hope that we should be saved was then taken away; there remained no hope in the eye of reason, or reckoning upon second causes, or natural events.

Acts 27:21

Ver. 21. *After long abstinence:* these did not abstain from their meals for any want; for they had sufficient provision, as appears, Ac 27:38; nor because the storm or tempest tossing the ship, and them in it, took away their stomach, for the sea men, at least, were not so long troubled with that sea sickness: but:

1. Their continually being employed, working for their lives. Or:
2. Their fear of perishing, and sense of a future state, might take up their thoughts so effectually, that they minded nothing else.

Hence it hath been said, that whosoever cannot pray should go to sea, and there he would learn it; for *in their affliction they will seek me early*, saith the Lord, Ho 5:15.

Ye should have hearkened unto me; being Paul had foretold this that now befell them, as Ac 27:10, they were bound to have believed him; which they not doing, are now deservedly punished.

Have gained this harm and loss; harm and loss, misery and calamity, is all that disobedience unto God gets at last, whatsoever it may promise us to tempt us with.

Acts 27:22

Ver. 22. Provided they would do as he required of them: see Ac 27:31. In

God's promises there is a tacit condition, which from the nature of the thing is to be understood; as in that which was made to Eli, mentioned 1Sa 2:30. Paul did foretell this so particularly, that when it was come to pass, he might gain the more reputation to the truth of the gospel which he preached, and more glory to that God whom he worshipped.

Acts 27:23

Ver. 23. A good introduction to recommend the true God, and the gospel of his Son. Paul, who knew the certainty of what he had predicted, owns himself to be now in the service of God, that not unto him, but unto God, may be given the glory.

Acts 27:24

Ver. 24. The message which God's angels bring from God unto his people, is, *Fear not*. Thus unto Daniel, Da 10:12,19; and thus unto the holy women that attended at our Lord's sepulchre, Mt 28:5. There are *all ministering spirits*, Heb 1:14.

Thou must be brought before; it is a forensic word, showing that Paul must be heard and tried by Caesar.

God hath given thee all them that sail with thee; graciously bestowed all thy follow travellers upon thee at thy request: for it is implied, that Paul had prayed for them, and begged their lives of God; as Esther had the lives of her people at the hands of King Ahasuerus, Es 7:3. There is a remarkable difference between Paul and Jonah in a storm, though Jonah professes as much as Paul does in the preceding verse, Jon 1:9; but it was little more than a profession in Jonah, but Paul was actually in the fear and service of God; and doubtless there was as great a difference in their breasts during the storm. The true fear and service of God brings with it great peace and inward satisfaction, which, when any leave, they must, at least so long, be strangers unto, for *there is no peace unto the wicked*, Isa 48:22.

Acts 27:25

Ver. 25. Paul, having had experience of the power and faithfulness of God, and known his name, professeth to trust in him; and recommends God's veracity unto them, as worthy to be relied upon. What a great deal of good does one holy man do in a place. These hundreds of men fare the better both in soul and body for holy Paul.

Acts 27:26

Ver. 26. This was given by Paul as a sign unto them of the truth of what he had said, which, when it came to pass, might induce them to believe the rest; which probably it did, and saved Paul from being killed by the soldiers, Ac 27:42. Thus God preserves his people, and delivers Paul, and brings all his safely off at the last, but it is by tempests and storms. It may be they must suffer shipwreck of all they have in this world first. *Augusta per angusta*. Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God, as St. Paul had taught others, Ac 14:22, the experienced to be true himself. There was no truth more experimented than this.

Acts 27:27

Ver. 27. *In Adria;* not in the Adriatic Bay, or Gulf of Venice, which divides Italy and Dalmatia, though that be also so called; but this name is sometimes extended to those parts of the Mediterranean Sea which border on Sicily, and Ionia in Greece, and must be passed over by such as go from Crete, or Candia, to Melita, or Malta.

Acts 27:28

Ver. 28. *Found it twenty fathoms:* a fathom is the distance betwixt the end of the middle finger on the one hand, from the end of the middle finger on the other hand, when the arms are stretched out; which is ordinarily accounted about six feet in measure.

Found it fifteen fathoms; coming into more shallow places they might

reasonably conclude that they were near unto the land.

Acts 27:29

Ver. 29. *Fallen upon rocks;* of which there are very many in these seas, especially about the islands.

Cast four anchors; which show how great the tempest was, that they needed so many anchors.

Wished for the day; that they might the better discover whereabouts they were.

Acts 27:30

Ver. 30. *Had let down the boat;* that they might betake themselves into it, after they had left the ship: for, Ac 27:17, they had taken up the boat, and secured that against this or the like occasion.

As though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship; dissembling the true reason of their going into the boat to make their escape.

Acts 27:31

Ver. 31. Notwithstanding the promise mentioned, Ac 27:24, that they should all be saved, they must use means, so far as means can be used, although the efficaciousness and truth of the promise do no ways depend upon the virtue of the means; but the means are made effectual by virtue of the promise. Yet whosoever neglects means upon any pretext of a promise, he does tempt God, but does not rightly believe in him.

These; as it were pointing unto the mariners, and such as were useful in such a case.

Acts 27:32

Ver. 32. The centurion and soldiers, agreeing to what Paul had said, did this to take away all thoughts of escaping from the mariners, and leaving all upon what Paul had promised to them in the name of his God.

Acts 27:33

Ver. 33. *While the day was coming on;* all the night after the mariners were disappointed in their project to escape. So hard a matter it was to abate their fear of being presently destroyed; and so great influence hath the apprehension of present death, and judgment which follows it, upon the minds of men.

The fourteenth day; not as if they had wholly eaten nothing all that while, (for it is commonly held, that none can fast above half so long without danger of death), but because in all that space they had held no set meal, as they were wont to do; and what they did eat was very little, and only in extreme necessity, without any desire or taste; so great was their anguish.

Acts 27:34

Ver. 34. *This is for your health;* that they might be stronger to endure that pain and perform that labour which was necessary towards their escape; for God would have them to use all means for their deliverance.

For there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you; a proverbial speech used by the Jews, as 1Ki 1:52, signifying that they should not suffer the least detriment in their bodies, much less the loss of their lives. Thus God numbereth our hairs, and his providence extendeth over every one of them, as Mt 10:30 Lu 21:18.

Acts 27:35

Ver. 35. Paul thanks God for their preservation hitherto: and there is no such encouragement to hope for future deliverances, as when God doth

give us hearts to thank him for deliverances already enjoyed. But he thanked God also for giving them in their necessity such food to nourish and strengthen them, Mt 14:19 15:36 Mr 8:6,19, and one season more to enjoy it. The acknowledging of God in all things we enjoy, doth sanctify them to us: otherwise they do defile us; for we usurp them; we holding them by no other tenor but in *franc almoine*, from God: neither can they be serviceable unto us, if God withhold his blessing. Hence the Jews would not eat until Samuel had thus blessed their food, 1Sa 9:13. And our Saviour himself, to give us an example, gives thanks before he would have the miraculous loaves and fishes distributed, Joh 6:11.

Acts 27:36

Ver. 36. Believing Paul's words, promising in the name of that God whom he served, that they should all be preserved; believing, they did rejoice. Now Paul, a prisoner, a neglected and contemned person, comes to be valued and credited. Whilst they sailed with a prosperous gale, neither God, nor his poor prisoner and chained apostle, is thought upon; but in a storm or tempest they are glad to believe and follow his direction. God's stars shine in the night, and are seen in affliction.

Acts 27:37

Ver. 37. That is, so many persons; as Ac 2:41 7:14 Ro 13:1; the soul being the noblest part, and the body following its condition, whatsoever it be: if the soul be holy, the body shall be glorious. But it is not so on the other side: the soul is not hereafter as the body is here; for Dives's body fared well, was fed and arrayed sumptuously, and yet his soul was miserably tormented, Lu 16:19,24.

Acts 27:38

Ver. 38. *Cast out the wheat*, the provision they had for their sustenance. This is the third time that they lightened the ship, being willing that all their goods should perish for them, rather than with them. Or these heathens were so far persuaded by St. Paul, that they ventured their lives

upon the credit of what he had foretold them; and parted with their food, and all they had to live upon, only upon his word, that they should want them in the ship no more.

Acts 27:39

Ver. 39. *They knew not the land;* in so long and violent a tempest, thinking every moment to be swallowed up, they could keep no reckoning of the ship's running or way; neither were charts or maps so usual (if they had any at all) in those times.

A certain creek; a bay, or bosom of the sea, having land on each side, where they judged it most likely for them to get on shore; using still all means for their safety.

Acts 27:40

Ver. 40. *Loosed the rudder bands;* rudders is in the plural number put for the singular: or rather, in those times they having two rudders, (as by several passages amongst the ancients do appear), they were both loosed, that now they might use them to direct the ship to the best advantage in making the shore, they having been tied whilst they were adrift, or at anchor.

Hoised up the mainsail, which they had let down, or struck, Ac 27:17, and now, that they might make some use of the winds, to get nigher to the shore, they hoisted up. As God doth instruct the ploughman, Isa 28:26, so he teacheth the mariner, and every one in their calling.

Acts 27:41

Ver. 41. *A place where two seas met;* a shoal, sand or isthmus, where the sea was on both sides of it. They were now in the greatest extremity; and God suffers them to fall into it before he sends them deliverance, that he might have the more glory by it.

Acts 27:42

Ver. 42. This speaks their great ingratitude, that they would take away Paul's life, who had preserved theirs. But Christ's apostles and ministers must not look for their reward in this life; though men cannot, or do not, recompense them, they shall *be recompensed at the resurrection of the just*, Lu 14:14.

Acts 27:43

Ver. 43. *The centurion, willing to save Paul;* because Paul was a Roman citizen, whose death he durst not be accessory unto. It may be also, that this centurion, (if there were no more), as the Samaritan that was cleansed, did this in thankfulness unto Paul.

Should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land; that they might be helpful to others in getting on shore.

Acts 27:44

Ver. 44. *Some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship;* still using means, though it was of God only that they had them, and that they were effectual to them. In this history is lively verified that of the psalmist, Ps 107:18-20, *Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.* And what follows but, Ac 27:21, *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* God hath a tribute of praise which is due unto him from the readers of this story, that they would acknowledge that there is none else who can deliver after this manner, Da 3:29; and then to be sure they will desire that this God might be their God for ever and ever, Ps 48:14.

Acts 28:1

Chapter Summary

Ac 28:1,2 Paul and his company, after their shipwreck, are kindly entertained by the barbarians of Melita.

Ac 28:3-6 A viper fastening on his hand without hurting him, the people, who at first thought ill of him, believed him a god.

Ac 28:7-10 He healeth the father of Publius, and other sick persons by the island.

Ac 28:11-16 Paul and his company depart, and arrive at Rome; where Paul is left with a guard in a house of his own.

Ac 28:17-22 He calleth the Jews together, and showeth the occasion of his coming.

Ac 28:23-29 He preacheth Christ to them, of whom some believe, others believe not.

Ac 28:30,31 He continueth for two whole years to preach the gospel without interruption.

Ver. 1. *The island;* this was foretold by Paul, Ac 27:26; and therefore though the mariners knew not the land, Ac 27:39, and were not able to direct the ship, as Ac 27:15, yet God so ordered it, that not a word spoken by Paul did fall to the ground, but the wind and sea obey him.

Melita; now called Malta, a little island between Sicily and Africa. There is another obscure island in Illyricum that was called by this name, which some have mistook for this place of Paul's shipwreck, by reason that this tempest was in the Adriatic Sea: but not only the Gulf of Venice, but the sea about Sicily, and this coast, was so called, as Strabo witnesseth. See Ac 27:27.

Acts 28:2

Ver. 2. *The barbarous people;* so the Grecians and Romans called all other nations that did not receive their customs, nor speak their language, 1Co 14:11; and to this day the African coast over against this island is

called Barbary.

For they kindled a fire, &c.: how far is this humanity of heathens beyond that inhumanity which some that are called Christians use towards those that are shipwrecked, and their goods that come on shore!

Acts 28:3

Ver. 3. *A viper;* a creature so venomous, that not only its biting, but (some say) its breath, is deadly: this, upon the warmth of the fire, being benumbed with the cold, and now refreshed, began to stir itself.

Fastened on his hand; as it used to do when it biteth. God by this miracle prepares this people not only to be civil and courteous unto Paul, but to believe the gospel which he preached, wheresoever he went. And this wonderful work of God was (as God's seal to his ministry) to show his authority to be from him.

Acts 28:4

Ver. 4. *Venomous;* so the viper is called by that appellative word, from whence also comes *theriaca*, or treacle, which is made out of flesh, or trochusses, of vipers. And if men can make an antidote out of poison, much more can God bring good out of evil.

This man is a murderer; it is a strange sense that men by the light of nature had of Divine vengeance, especially of God's revenging of murder. Hence they called one of their furies Tisiphone, as one that punished and revenged murder. Yet they were to blame in this case:

1. Because they confine the punishment of wicked men wholly unto this life.
2. In that they did not expect the event; they judged before they knew what would be the end of Paul afterwards.
3. They erred, in that they measured the goodness or badness of a man's

state or cause by his prosperity or adversity.

Acts 28:5

Ver. 5. As Daniel in the lion's den. God is the God of nature, and the most natural properties are restrained when he pleases, and cannot be exerted without his concurrence. Thus the promises our blessed Saviour made, in Mr 16:18 Lu 10:19, were fulfilled according to the letter.

Acts 28:6

Ver. 6. *Should have swollen;* the word signifies primarily to be burnt, and then by burning or scalding to swell, which is accounted the ordinary symptom of the biting of a viper; to swell or blister, as if the part was burnt with fire.

Or fallen down dead suddenly; in those places where there is much more heat, there is more venom in these vipers. And though some are said to live several days after they are bit by them, yet others die very suddenly upon their biting; as the known story of Cleopatra testifies; and condemned persons were sometimes put to death by vipers set unto their breasts.

And said that he was a god; a strange extreme; so uncertain and unequal are men's minds.

Acts 28:7

Ver. 7. This Publius is thought to have been governor for the Romans in this island. Howsoever, he was a man of great account and estate, that could provide for so many as were in the ship, and receive them into his own house.

Acts 28:8

Ver. 8. *A bloody flux;* a painful and dangerous disease; the torment in the

bowels frequently causing a fever.

And prayed; Paul could do nothing of himself, and therefore begs of God the recovery of Publius's father. It is God only that kills and makes alive, 1Sa 2:6.

Laid his hands on him; this imposition of hands was commonly used in miraculous cures, as Mt 9:18 Mk 6:5; and is joined with prayer, Mt 19:13, which it might be a symbol of. Thus Publius was well paid for what he did for Paul and his company. Relieving of the poor and distressed is frequently rewarded in this world, and not only in the world to come. And God now recommends the gospel and the ministry of Paul by this miracle also: for none could do such things as these, unless God were with him.

Acts 28:9

Ver. 9. The fame of this cure, wrought so suddenly, perfectly, and only with the laying on of Paul's hands, could not but spread far and near; especially being done upon the governor: and men are usually very careful about their bodily health and welfare. So that their diseases were blessed occasions to bring them to the knowledge of God in Christ, whom Paul preached; and they might have perished eternally if they had not perished (or been thus near unto perishing) temporally.

Acts 28:10

Ver. 10. They who were cured, rewarded or presented the apostle and his company very liberally. And this was the effect of that inward respect and real esteem they had for them; and was a fruit of their faith.

Acts 28:11

Ver. 11. These *three months* that St. Paul staid at Malta, he spent like a true labourer in the Lord's vineyard, planting a church that was famous for its stedfastness in the truth.

Had wintered in the isle; it was their wont to lay up their ships all the winter season; as we may see, Ac 27:12. And to this day the galleys seldom go out on those seas in winter.

Castor and Pollux; feigned to be the sons of Jupiter, and to have the ordering of tempests, and the care of mariners, and were chosen for the patrons of that ship, by the pagan owners of it.

Acts 28:12

Ver. 12. *Syracuse;* the chief city of Sicily, famous for Archimedes.

We tarried there three days; probably to sell some of their wares, the ship making a trading voyage.

Acts 28:13

Ver. 13. *Rhegium;* a city in the kingdom of Naples, over against Messina in Sicily; so called because that Sicily was believed to be thereabouts rent and plucked from the main land, unto which they held it to have been formerly joined, until by a tempest it became an island.

Puteoli is a sea town not far from Naples.

Acts 28:14

Ver. 14. *Where we found brethren;* Christians, as some think, for so they mutually called one another. But it is not so probable that any should profess Christianity so near unto Rome, and that it should be no more known or believed in Rome. Others therefore think that the apostle means Jews, whom he calls *brethren* (being, as himself, descended from Abraham); for so he calls the Jews he found at Rome, Ac 28:17; who yet called the Christians a sect, adding, that it was every where spoken against, Ac 28:22.

Rome is known to be the chief city in Italy, and to have been the empress

of the world, and famous for the church to whom St. Paul wrote his Epistle, known by its inscription unto them.

Acts 28:15

Ver. 15. *Appii forum*; a place about one and fifty miles, or seventeen leagues, from Rome; so called from Appius Claudius, who made a way from Rome thither, called from his name: The Appian Way; and had his statue there set up; which is the reason why it is called thus: for the Romans did call those places *fora*, where such statues were placed. (The concourse to see those statues might bring them to become markets).

The three taverns; as that was a place of resort for the buying and selling of other commodities, so this for the affording of necessary provision; a little town, hence so called, about three and thirty miles, or eleven leagues, from Rome. So that some came a greater, some a lesser way to meet with Paul, and show their respect unto him. These brethren are thought to have been converted by such as at the day of Pentecost were present when those miracles were wrought, Ac 2:10, it being expressly said, that there were strangers from Rome.

Took courage; God moving so many not to be ashamed of his bonds.

Acts 28:16

Ver. 16. *The captain of the guard*; the *praefectus praetorio*, being commander-in-chief over the soldiers, and unto whom the prisoners of state were usually committed.

Paul was suffered to dwell by himself; God by this means giving Paul an opportunity to go abroad at his pleasure; though chained, as Ac 28:20, yet he might preach the gospel, and that was not bound, 2Ti 2:9. And now God is with Paul, as he was with Joseph, in prison, Ge 39:21, and procures him favour.

Acts 28:17

Ver. 17. *Paul called the chief of the Jews together;* Paul does this not only out of an extraordinary love which he had for that people, but also because the apostles were commanded *to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,* Mt 10:5,6. The whole economy of the gospel is a doing good for evil. So did our Saviour, who is the author and subject of it; and so must his messengers or ministers do, or they are not like to do any good at all; for the world will hate them, 1Jo 3:13.

Acts 28:18

Ver. 18. *Examined me;* as Festus did in the presence of king Agrippa, Ac 25:26, who, they were both unbelievers, yet justified Paul, acknowledging that he had not committed any thing worthy of bonds, much less of death. Thus our Saviour was declared innocent by Pilate, Lu 23:4,14.

Acts 28:19

Ver. 19. *The Jews spake against it;* the Jews used all their oratory and interest against Paul, both before Felix and Festus. And had it been in Festus's power, (which after Paul's appeal it was not), he would have sacrificed Paul to the malice of the Jews; and by that means got their favour, whom he had so incensed against them.

Not that I had aught to accuse my nation of; Paul did not so much want matter, as mind, to accuse the Jews; and he declares, that whatsoever he had suffered, his intentions were not to calumniate them, but to vindicate himself.

Acts 28:19

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Acts 28:20

Ver. 20. *For the hope of Israel:* see Ac 23:6 24:21. This *hope* is either,

1. Of the resurrection, as in the forementioned places; and Ac 26:6,7; or:
2. The Messiah; Christ is the hope of Israel, so they pretended for many ages, and him now Paul preached.

I am bound with this chain; for though he had his liberty to go abroad, yet he was chained with his right hand to the soldier's left hand who went with him, and could not possibly be loosened unwittingly from him.

Acts 28:21

Ver. 21. The high priest, and the rest of them that had persecuted Paul, did either despond of their cause, when it should come to be impartially heard; or were supine and negligent in a matter which they pretended so highly to concern their religion; but self-ends, their present ease and reputation, were the main matters they contended for.

Acts 28:22

Ver. 22. *Sect,* or heresy, for so they called the Christian religion, Ac 24:5,14.

Every where it is spoken against; of all conditions of men, governors and people, and in all places; as, Lu 2:34, Christ is said to be *a sign that shall be spoken against*.

Acts 28:23

Ver. 23. *His lodging;* the house which he had hired, as Ac 28:16, and Ac 28:30.

He expounded and testified the kingdom of God; Paul expounded the Scriptures, and by them proved our Saviour to be the Messiah; and that the kingdom of the Messiah, which God had promised, and Moses and the prophets had foretold, was now come.

Persuading them concerning Jesus; using such proofs and arguments as were cogent enough to prove what he asserted; and which also did thoroughly persuade or prevail with several of them.

From morning till evening; thus Paul *laboured more abundantly*, 1Co 15:10.

Acts 28:24

Ver. 24. Thus there are different soils into which the word is cast, as appears in the parable of the sower, Mt 13:19,20, &c. Thus Paul found by experience what he says, 2Th 3:2, that *all men have not faith*; and *the word preached doth not profit*, unless it be *mixed with faith in them that hear it*, Heb 4:2.

Acts 28:25

Ver. 25. *They agreed not among themselves;* thus Christ came *to send fire on the earth*, Lu 12:49: not that the gospel does this in itself; for it is *the gospel of peace*, Eph 6:15, not only betwixt God and man, but betwixt man and man; and if its precepts were observed, love, meekness, and goodness would banish all hatred, pride, and contention out of the hearts and lives of men; but this arises out of the corruption that is in man, and from the evil one that sows his tares amongst us.

After that Paul had spoken one word; Paul spake this eminent and remarkable word, or sentence, that they might (if possible) be pricked in their hearts at the hearing of God's judgments denounced against them.

Acts 28:26

Ver. 26. As their fathers did hear the many prophecies concerning the miseries and calamities which for their sins were to come upon them, as also concerning the Messiah which was to come, but did not believe them or entertain them as they ought; so these their children (through the righteous judgment of God) inherited their fathers' sins, and should be heirs also of their punishments. Thus we see, that *Scriptura prophetica saepius impletur*; and what was spoken and fulfilled in that generation so long before, was also in this so many hundred years after.

Acts 28:27

Ver. 27. Though God did forsake this people, (being first forsaken of them), and withdraw his gratuitous assistance from them, yet it is all justly charged upon them, they having by their sins said unto God, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, Job 21:14.

Their eyes have they closed; they winked, as those that were loth to see, though they could not but see, the truths Paul preached concerning the Messiah; prejudicate opinions and self-conceit hindering them from coming unto the acknowledgment of them.

I should heal them, or pardon them; for by guilt the soul is wounded.

Acts 28:28

Ver. 28. *The salvation of God*; so the gospel is called; because:

1. The finding of it out.
2. The preparing of it by sending his Son.
3. The revealing of it, and;

4. Its efficacy, is only of God.

Is sent unto the Gentiles; as by our Saviour's commission, Mt 28:19, and Lu 24:47, does appear. And Paul had by experience found the effects of it, as may be seen in all this book of his travels, where we may find many of the Gentiles were obedient unto the word, which the Jews gainsaid and blasphemed.

Acts 28:29

Ver. 29. Some accusing of Paul, others vindicating of him; some believing, as Ac 28:24, others not believing; our Saviour, and his gospel too, being for the rising and falling of many.

Acts 28:30

Ver. 30. Of what nation or quality soever they were, Paul preached salvation to them upon the gospel condition of faith and holiness; and in that imitated God and our Saviour, who refuse none that thus come unto him. And though Paul might have had greater security from trouble by the Jews if he would have desisted, yet a necessity was laid upon him, and a woe unto him if he did not preach the gospel, as 1Co 9:16, which may abundantly excuse and justify him.

Acts 28:31

Ver. 31. *The kingdom of God;* the gospel is so called; as also Paul preached that kingdom of God which is to come at the end of the world, which falls in with the subject he was so often upon, concerning the resurrection; which if men did but believe effectually, all the other ends of preaching would be easily obtained.

Those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ; Christ's precepts and miracles, his death and resurrection.

No man forbidding him: God, who puts bounds to the raging sea, had

stopped the Jews' malice, and bidden it go no further; and he who delivered Daniel from the lions, had delivered Paul from Nero, and would have delivered him, had not his death been more for the glory of God, and the good of Paul himself, than his life; which at last he offered in confirmation of the truths which he had preached; which he foresaw, 2Ti 4:6, and, as Eusebius says, it came to pass accordingly.

This book may be called, not only *πραξεις*, but *τερατα*; not only the Acts, but the wonders, of the Apostles: though the holy penman and the apostles meekly contented themselves with that name by which at present it is called, yet what wonders are contained in it! Not only such as were wrought *by* the apostles, but *for* them, to deliver, preserve, and encourage them; insomuch as the attempt to silence them, and to hinder the progress of the gospel preached by them, proved as vain as if men had endeavoured to hinder the sun from shining, or the wind from blowing.

Now unto him, who is able to work so as none can hinder, be all honour and glory, dominion and power, for ever and ever. Amen.