



the  
book  
of **ACTS**

Study Guide Part 2

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## Chapter 15

### Part 1: Acts 15v1-21

**Note:** In this chapter the Apostle Paul (who had come to faith approximately 14 years before this – Galatians 2v1) went to Jerusalem over an issue of contention. There were those, from James' congregation in Jerusalem, who disagreed with the gospel that Paul was preaching. Many of the major commentators for the New Testament tell us that this section has to do with instructing Gentile believers on how they are to behave after coming to faith. This is not correct. This section, primarily, has to do with the proclamation of the authentic gospel in an accurate way. It should not be surprising to us that the gospel to the Jews and the gospel to the Gentiles is the same gospel - it has the same saving outcome, but also the same behavioural outcome, in our lives.

**Verse 1:** *“Certain ones, coming down from Judea, were teaching the (Gentile) brethren: ‘Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom of Moses, you are not able to be saved.’”*

*Certain ones:* These people had come from the congregation that James was leading in Jerusalem (Galatians 2v12 tells us that they were from James' congregation of believers – this does not mean, however, that James endorsed what they believed).

*Custom of Moses:* i.e. The law

*You are not able:* It is impossible

*To be saved:* The issue is not about how Gentile believers should live after coming to faith, but it is an issue having to do with an authentic gospel - what must be presented in order for one to believe or to come to salvation.

**Verse 2:** *“Therefore, there arose a stance and a mutual discussion, and it was not small, between Paul and Barnabas and them. They committed to go up, Paul and Barnabas, and appointed a time to go up with these certain other ones; from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem concerning this issue.”*

*Therefore:* As a result of that statement: i.e. one cannot be saved without being circumcised first.

**Note:** What they were saying in essence was this: A Gentile first had to go through circumcision (become a Jew), pledge obedience to the Torah (i.e. Take on the yoke of the Torah), and only then would they be ready to be evangelized and eligible for salvation.

*A stance:* This is usually a word of conflict - to take a stand against.

*Mutual discussion:* A debate, with a desire for a resolution based upon fact/Scriptural truth.

*It was not small:* It was a large contention and involved many people.

*Them:* The individuals (Judaizers) who came down from Judea.

*Concerning this issue:* They wanted to settle this issue with the Apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. Disputes need to be judged and settled in the house of G-d.

**Verse 3:** *“There were those who were sent previously by the congregation, and going through Phoenicia and Samaria they were narrating the repentance of the Gentiles. There was great joy made by all the brethren.”*

*Narrating:* Giving a detailed account

*Repentance:* The word used here means: ‘To turn upon’ (placing themselves upon the proper foundation; in English we translate it ‘turn to’, but to ‘turn upon’ is a more accurate way to translate it).

**Verse 4:** *“Arriving in Jerusalem they were received by the congregation, by the Apostles, and by the elders. They proclaimed what G-d had done with them.”*

*Proclaimed what G-d had done with them:* They gave testimony that the message of the gospel, and the methodology that they were using, was effective in bringing Gentiles to salvation.

**Verse 5:** *“And there arose certain ones from the sect of the Pharisees, having believed (the gospel), and they were saying that it was necessary to be circumcised and to proclaim, and also keep, the law of Moses.”*

*Necessary:* An absolute requirement – usually regarded as a mandate from heaven, i.e. something that G-d demands.

**Verse 6:** *“The Apostles and the elders were gathered together, and they saw concerning this matter.”*

*They saw:* They wanted to attend to this matter under advisement.

**Verse 7:** *“Coming about, there rose up much contention among them until Peter stood up and said to them, ‘Men, brethren you know that from the former days (earlier i.e. Acts 10) G-d among us He has chosen, through my mouth, for the Gentiles to hear the word of the gospel and believe.”*

*Much contention:* The same word used in 15v2 to speak about a mutual discussion. *Much* implies that there was great conflict during this debate.

*Know:* They knew very well, as they had studied it with great care.

**Verse 8:** *“G-d, knowing the heart, testified to them by giving to them the Holy Spirit just as also to us.”*

*The heart:* Relates to our thoughts – G-d knows whether someone is sincere or not.

*(G-d) testified to them:* When the Gentiles (who had not been circumcised etc) heard the same gospel message (death, burial and resurrection of Messiah) that had been proclaimed to the Jews they were saved, and as a testimony of their salvation they also received the Holy Spirit.

Same message, same result.

**Verse 9:** *“G-d did not make a distinction between us and them, for by faith He cleansed their hearts.”*

**Verse 10:** *“Therefore, why test G-d by placing a yoke upon the neck of the disciples - whom neither our fathers nor us were able to bear?”*

*Yoke:* Adding the law of Moses (circumcision etc) to the gospel message, as a means of salvation, destroys the gospel message – which reveals to us that it is by grace that we are saved.

**Verse 11:** *“But through the grace of the L-rd Yeshua the Messiah we believed to salvation, everyone in this manner also – us and also them.”*

*But:* Shows a contrast to what the Judaizers were speaking about (circumcision and the Law being necessary for salvation)

*Grace of the L-rd:* ‘L-rd’ shows Yeshua’s Authority - His authority to save by grace.

*Everyone in this manner also:* An awkward expression that simply means that everyone is saved by grace, just like they were.

**Note:** After being saved, salvation should manifest itself the same way in a Jewish person's life as it does in a Gentile. Believers are no longer seen as two people (Jew and Gentile) but one people under the authority of G-d. We do not lose the identity we have in our ethnicity – this is supported prophetically. G-d is going to call out for Himself a people from every tongue, every nation, every tribe, every people (Revelation 7v9).

**Verse 12:** *“All the crowd were silent, having heard Barnabas and Paul telling what G-d had done, how He had made signs and wonders among the Gentiles through them.”*

*Silent:* The testimony of the signs and wonders among the Gentiles (absent of circumcision and absent of the yoke of the Torah) brought silence to the people.

**Verse 13:** *“After their silence, James answered and said, ‘Men and brethren, listen to me.’”*

**Verse 14:** *“Simon has detailed how G-d at first has visited to discern and take from the nations a people upon His name.”*

*Visited:* He visited, but in a scrutinizing way.

*Discern:* G-d, who knows the heart, tested them.

**Verse 15:** *“The words of the prophets agree with this, for just as its been written: “*

**Verse 16:** *“After these times I will rise up and I will build up the tabernacle of David, the one who has fallen. The things that were destroyed, those ruins, He has built up and set upright.”*

**Note:** This verse is quoted from Amos 9v11

*Tabernacle of David:* The tabernacle of David has to do with worship. G-d will create for Himself a people that will worship Him.

*Fallen:* There was no worship going on, but it was the believers who reinstated proper faith that leads to the worship of G-d.

**Verse 17:** *“So that those that are the remnant of man, those that are seeking the L-rd from all the nations, who have called upon My name saying, ‘L-rd, you have done these things.’”*

**Note:** G-d, who knows the hearts of men, chooses (by means of the gospel) for Himself those individuals from the nations that call upon His name and desire to worship Him.

**Verse 18:** *“Knowing from the past that G-d is the One who works this all.”*

*The One who works:* This is His work, not ours.

**Verse 19:** *“Therefore I judge this matter that we should not burden (afflict or trouble) the ones from the Gentiles that are turning upon G-d.”*

**Verse 20:** *“But rather that we should write to them that they should abstain from the pollution of idols, from sexual immorality, from strangled (animals) and from blood.”*

*Should abstain:* This word is not a suggestion but speaks to something which is forbidden.

**Note:** James is speaking about the necessity for the Gentiles to stop idolatry, together with all of its practises (these included the forbidden things in this verse), in order to receive the gospel.

1. Yeshua is not an additional pagan deity. He cannot just be added to their list of gods.
2. There had to be an agreement that pagan worship had to stop in order for someone to be saved. Idolatrous practices and the proper worship of G-d are incompatible.

If the Gentiles are willing to leave idolatry, convinced that Yeshua is the Messiah and desiring to follow Him, then they are truly a candidate for the authentic gospel.

**Verse 21:** *“For Moses, from the old times (previous generations), in each city, he has those that proclaim him in these synagogues on every Sabbath being read.”*

**Note:** This verse deals with a different issue. It is not dealing with coming to salvation (like the first 20 verses did) but deals with how those who have come to faith are then to live.

*Every Sabbath being read:* The implication is that after being saved the Gentiles can go to the synagogue to hear the teaching of the Torah and they can, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, apply that Torah to their lives and live in a way that glorifies G-d.

## Chapter 15

### Part 2: Acts 15v22-41

**Verse 22:** *“Then it seemed to the Apostles, to the elders, with the whole congregation that they would choose men from them to send out into Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. These men were Judas (the one who was called Barsabbas) and Silas - men who were leaders among the brethren.”*

*Choose men...to send out into Antioch:* A decision was reached by the Jerusalem Council. This decision supported the presentation of the gospel that Paul and Barnabas (and others) were preaching. In order to confirm that what Paul and Barnabas were teaching was correct (to those places, as well as to those Judaizers who were confused believers in Yeshua) the Jerusalem council appointed additional people (*leaders* i.e. they sent out some of their best men) as witnesses to this truth.

*Judas and Silas:* They were the ones entrusted with a letter to give to the congregations.

**Verse 23:** *“Having written, through their hand: ‘The Apostles, the elders, and the brethren. To the ones in each (city) Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. To the brethren of the Gentiles. Peace!’”*

*Written, through their hand:* The Apostles and elders wrote an epistle (a letter carrying authority) to the Gentile believers in the above three areas.

*Peace:* A term of endearment and encouragement.

**Verse 24:** *“Since we have heard that certain ones from us went out and troubled you with words, wanting to undermine your souls – that you were to be circumcised and to keep the law-which we did not instruct them.”*

*Undermine your souls:* Wanting to harm them spiritually.

**Verse 25:** *“Therefore, we considered it proper, having been of one accord, to choose out men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul -”*

*Choose:* This ruling council of the congregation in Jerusalem commissioned Judas and Silas to go with Paul and Barnabas to confirm their ministry. They were to make sure that the harm that the Judaizers were doing was dealt with and put into proper order – according to the right doctrine.

**Verse 26:** *“men who have committed the souls of theirs on behalf of the name of our L-rd Messiah Yeshua.”*

*Committed the souls:* Barnabas and Paul were totally committed to the authority of Yeshua. The implication is that they have also got the right doctrine.

**Verse 27:** *“Therefore (we are) sending Judas and Silas; and these, through the word, proclaiming the same things.”*

*The word:* Meaning the words of this epistle/letter that was written.

*Proclaiming the same things:* They confirm what Paul and Barnabas have been saying.

**Verse 28:** *“For it seemed to the Holy Spirit and to us that no further burden should be placed upon you, only those things that are necessary.”*

*Placed upon you:* Salvation is by the grace of G-d, through faith, for the Jew and the Gentile alike. It is inappropriate to add anything to the gospel.

**Verse 29:** *“You should abstain from idolatry, blood, that which is strangled, and sexual immorality. From which, if you keep yourselves, well you have done. Peace.”*

*Abstain from idolatry:* A person cannot be saved if they want to continue to practice idolatry.

**Verse 30:** *“Therefore those who were released came into Antioch, and they gathered the multitude and gave the Epistle.”*

*Released:* Sent forth

**Verse 31:** *“Having read it they rejoiced upon (concerning) the encouragement.”*

*Encouragement:* It is encouraging to know that salvation is not dependent upon ourselves. We can come to Yeshua, the One True G-d and the Redeemer of the world, as we are.

**Verse 32:** *“Judas and Silas, being prophets, were encouraging the brethren through many words, and they were strengthening them.”*

*Strengthening them:* An example of this would be planting something so that it takes root. This root provides access to the provision needed in order for the plant to grow, mature and produce fruit. These men were strengthening these believers in order for them to be fruit producing believers.

**Verse 33:** *“Having spent time they departed with peace from the Brethren to the Apostles.”*

*Departed:* They went back to Jerusalem.

**Verse 34:** *“But it seemed to Silas that he should remain.”*

**Verse 35:** *“Paul and Barnabas spent time in Antioch where they were teaching and evangelising, with many others, the word of the L-rd.”*

*Teaching and evangelising:* This order (teaching and then evangelising) is important. A person has to have an elementary foundation for receiving the gospel.

**Verse 36:** *“After a certain number of days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us turn aside with haste and check thoroughly our brothers -according to each of the cities in which they are proclaiming the Word of the L-rd - and how they are doing.’”*

*Check thoroughly (inspect):* Do not accept things at face value, but verify or check them.

**Note:** When we have the privilege of leading others to Messiah we should take an interest in those people. We should be wise enough to be invested in their lives, and check in on them to see how they are progressing spiritually.

**Verse 37:** *“Barnabas had purposed in his mind to take with them John, who is called Mark.”*

*Purposed:* Planned

**Verse 38:** *“But Paul considered it proper (appropriate) not to take John Mark, because he was the one who departed from them from Pamphylia and would not go with them for the work.”*

*Departed:* Comes from the same root word that ‘apostasy’ comes from. This word is always within the context of individuals departing from that which is good in favour of that which is not. John Mark rejected labouring for this purpose. Paul wanted to take someone who was thoroughly committed to the work.

**Verse 39:** *“Therefore it came about a schism and they parted one from another. Barnabas took alongside of him Mark and they sailed to Cyprus.”*

*Schism:* A breaking of unity, a division.

**Verse 40:** *“Paul chose Silas and, being chosen, he went out having been confirmed with the grace of G-d by the disciples.”*

*Confirmed (commissioned) with the grace:* This grace has nothing to do with salvation. He was already saved. Instead, this grace was the grace to bring about a radical change in his life. It enabled him to continue in, and achieve, the purposes of G-d for his life.

There is a connection between the grace of G-d and the will of G-d. When we are operating in grace we are going to be fulfilling the will of G-d.

**Verse 41:** *“These, passing through Syria and Cilicia, strengthened the congregations.”*



*Strengthened:* Those who are strengthened in the Word of G-d have the potential to overcome the enemy. If we do not know the Word of G-d we will not have discernment of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit. Without that discernment we open ourselves up to other influences.

## **Chapter 16**

### **Part 1: Acts 16v1-15**

**Verse 1:** *“He went down into Derbe and Lystra and, behold, a certain disciple was there named Timothy, a son of a certain believing Jewish woman but father a Greek.”*

*He:* The Apostle Paul

*Behold:* This word informs us that what is going to follow in the text has great significance.

*Timothy:* He was a faithful servant to G-d. A strong, useful believer for the purposes of the Kingdom of G-d. His mother was Jewish, his father was a Greek man.

*Believing Jewish woman:* She was a Jewish believer.

*Father a Greek:* From a traditional Jewish standpoint this is a problem for a Jew to be married to a non-Jew. We are not told from the text whether Timothy’s father was a believer or not.

**Verse 2:** *“Whom being testified by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium.”*

*Being testified:* Timothy had a good testimony among the believers in this region.

**Verse 3:** *“Paul desired this one to go forth with him, and taking him aside Paul circumcised him on account of the Judeans being in those places. For all knew of his father being a Greek.”*

**Note:** The context of this verse is this: Paul had been in the council at Jerusalem and had received instructions about the gospel and how to present it. Now they were going back and checking on, or visiting, the various congregations that they had established earlier on (during those 14 years of faithful ministry done outside of Israel). Paul wanted to take Timothy with him to do this.

*This one:* Meaning Timothy

*Taking him aside:* Preparing Timothy for the journey.

*Paul circumcised him:* Paul speaks, many times, about circumcision not being necessary.

However, Paul did not circumcise Timothy as a means of salvation (Timothy already had a good reputation, a good testimony concerning his faith) but he circumcised him for ministry purposes.

*On account of the Judeans:* There were non-believing Jewish people (the Judeans) who ascribed to the traditions of the elders. They knew that Timothy was Jewish, that he was a believer, and if he were not circumcised they would think very negatively towards Paul's message of faith in Messiah. His lack of circumcision would be a stumbling block to these people.

**Verse 4:** *“They passed through the cities in order to deliver to them to keep (obey) the dogma that had been determined by the Apostles and by the elders in Jerusalem.”*

*To deliver:* Paul demonstrated submissiveness. Doctrine he received, from the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem, he delivered to those congregations outside of Jerusalem.

*To them:* Meaning to those believing congregations.

*The dogma:* Various doctrines

**Verse 5:** *“Therefore, the congregations were empowered in the faith and they increased in number each day.”*

*Empowered:* Rooted in the truth, and brought to a greater stability.

*They increased:* When we are submissive to truth, and act in obedience to those doctrines that were handed down, then there is consistent increase.

**Verse 6:** *“Passing through Phrygia and the region of Galatia they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the Word in Asia.”*

*Forbidden by the Holy Spirit:* When we share the gospel, we need to be sensitive to the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit about when and whom we share it with.

*Word:* Message of salvation.

**Verse 7:** *“After going down to Mysia they tried also to go to Bithynia and the Spirit did not allow them.”*

**Verse 8:** *“Passing through Mysia they went down to Troas.”*

**Verse 9:** *“A vision through the night appeared to Paul; a certain man was Macedonian and he was standing, and he was beseeching Paul and saying, ‘Come down into Macedonia and help us.’”*

**Note:** Paul's obedience to the Spirit's leadership enabled G-d to direct him.

**Verse 10:** *“And, as the vision he saw, immediately he was seeking to go out to Macedonia - concluding that the L-rd was calling us to evangelize them.”*

*Immediately:* Straight away Paul wanted to respond - to go to the place where G-d wanted them to go.

**Verse 11:** *“Sailing from Troas on a straight course into Samothrace, and on the next day to Neapolis.”*

*On a straight course:* They wanted to obey G-d with urgency and did not want to waste time.

**Verse 12:** *“And from there also into Philippi, which is a certain city -first of great prominence -in the region of Macedonia, a colony. And we were spending time in the city, a few days.”*

*First of great prominence:* One of the leading cities in Macedonia.

*A colony:* Probably a Roman colony.

*We were spending time in the city:* Waiting is usually accompanied by prayer. They did not just rush out and start sharing the gospel with everyone.

**Verse 13:** *“And on the Sabbath day we went out outside of the city along (by) a river which is a traditional place to pray. We sat speaking to the women who gathered.”*

*On the Sabbath day:* The Sabbath is emphasized more in the New Covenant than in the Old Covenant. There is significance to the Sabbath day. Paul and his companions were waiting for the Sabbath in order to find G-d’s direction. The Sabbath day is considered in Judaism (and can be seen as Biblically sound) as a day of revelation and guidance.

*Out outside:* Outside is double emphasised. They wanted to get out of the influence (idolatry) of that city.

*A traditional place to pray:* According to Jewish legality – based on a statute - the river was an appropriate place for Jewish people to pray when in a pagan city/kingdom (see Daniel 8v2, Daniel 10v4, Psalm 137v1, Ezekiel 1v1)

In the book of Revelation, the sound of water is synonymous with praise (Revelation 14v2-3).

*Women who gathered:* These were pious women of G-dly character, probably Jewish.

**Verse 14:** *“And a certain woman named Lydia was a seller of purple cloth and she was from the city of Thyatira. She was a worshipper of G-d. She listened and the L-rd opened up her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.”*

*A seller of purple cloth:* A very important cloth of great value.

*A worshipper of G-d:* The G-d of Israel. This word would never be used of someone who was engaged in idolatry.

**Note:** Because Lydia was a G-dly fearing woman and because she listened to what Paul was saying (the intention is that someone listens in order to obey) the L-rd opened her heart to respond to the gospel.

*The L-rd opened up her heart:* Some will say that it was only because G-d opened up her heart that she was able to receive the gospel and, therefore, unless G-d opens up a heart (which, they will say, He only does for His elect) everyone else is hopeless in this world.

In contrast to this: The first thing we see about Lydia was that she was a pious G-d-fearing woman, faithful to G-d – a worshipper of G-d. She was not made to become a believer.

No one comes to faith unless G-d enables them to (John 6v44, John 6v65) but there is a difference between G-d enabling and G-d making it to be. Irresistible grace is a false teaching. G-d gives grace but one is indeed able to resist it (Acts 7v51). G-d will not force anyone, against their free will, to accept Him.

*To respond:* This word is often translated ‘beware’, ‘take heed’, ‘watch out’. It is a word that requires someone to pay attention to what is going on (Strong's concordance Greek 4337).

**Note:** What we find here is that G-d did not compel her or ordain her in a certain way. What He did was that He gave her the ability to listen, to pay attention, to take heed to these things. He did not remove her free will in order to force her to respond. He gave her the insight and ability to do so.

**Verse 15:** *“When she and her house were baptized she beseeched saying, ‘If you have judged me faithful to the L-rd enter into my house and remain.’ And she implored us.”*

*Baptized:* Biblically, baptism speaks about a change, but it also shows commitment. It is preparation for service. The priests and the Levites, before serving in the holy places in the temple, had to immerse themselves. This showed a change from the common to the sanctified/holy.

Lydia’s baptism showed that she wanted to serve G-d. It showed that she had faith in, and commitment to, Messiah -the One who died, was buried, and then rose again.

*Her house:* Not only did Lydia receive the gospel but she was influential in sharing it with her household, so that they too were brought to faith.

*She beseeched:* She made a strong request of Paul and his companions.

*Enter into my house:* She wanted to play a role in their ministry by being hospitable to them.

*Remain:* The implication here is that they could remain for as long as they wanted to (Matthew 10v11-13).

## **Chapter 16**

### **Part 2: Acts 16v16-40**

**Verse 16:** *“It came about as we were going to prayer that there was a certain young lady (adolescent) and she had a spirit of divination. She met us. She made a great profit for her masters by this fortune-telling.”*

*Divination:* The root word here is related to a python – a snake (reminiscent of satan). This girl was able to tell the future, but not because of her own abilities.

*Us:* Luke is recounting this account in the first-person plural – it is from his own vantage point and those who are with him.

*Her masters:* She was enslaved. When we are under the influence of an unclean spirit it is going to lead us into bondage or oppression.

**Verse 17:** *“She followed after Paul and us and she cried out saying, ‘These men, servants of the Most High G-d they are, who are proclaiming to us the way of salvation.’”*

*Servants of the Most High G-d:* Just because this is a true statement it does not make what this girl is doing acceptable nor does it make her a prophet of the L-rd. This woman was not a servant of G-d, she was in bondage. She knew the truth; she spoke the truth, but she was not being used by G-d.

**Verse 18:** *“This she did upon many days. Paul, being made distressed, turning to the spirit said: ‘I command you in the name of Messiah Yeshua to go forth from her’. And he went forth that same hour.”*

*Being made distressed:* This young woman spoke the truth, but she was doing it in a way that was distressing, in a way that was not accomplishing the purposes of G-d.  
*He went forth:* She was healed.

**Verse 19:** *“Her masters, seeing that went out the hope of their profit, went out; they took Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace unto the rulers.”*

*Profit:* They were not interested in her spiritual condition; they were only interested in profiting from her.

**Verse 20:** *“Bringing them before the magistrates they said, ‘These men are troubling our city, being Jewish’.”*

*Troubling our city:* This is not true. They had simply spoken and set free a woman from demonic possession.

*Being Jewish:* Anti-Semitism is not new.

**Verse 21:** *“And they proclaim customs which are not lawful for us to receive, nor to do, being Romans.”*

*Proclaim customs which are not lawful:* This is again not true. When we reveal prophetic truth there are going to be many people against us (James 4v4)

**Verse 22:** *“The crowd (were) just waiting to rise up against them, and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded (them) to be beaten.”*

*Beaten:* To be clubbed.

**Verse 23:** *“They set **many** blows upon them and cast them into the prison. There was a jailer, and they commanded him to secure them in that prison.”*

**Verse 24:** *“Who, having received such a command, cast them into the inner prison and their feet he secured in wood.”*

*Wood:* Stocks; probably fastened in such a way that their legs were elevated, forcing them to lie on their beaten backs.

**Verse 25:** *“At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and praising G-d and the prisoners were listening to them.”*

*At midnight:* It implies that they could not sleep. Midnight also, so often in Scripture, speaks of redemption – setting free those who are in bondage.

*Listening:* This kind of listening implies that they listened with great care and precision. They heard two men who had received a harsh beating not complaining but praising G-d and praying to Him.

**Verse 26:** *“Suddenly there came about a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and were opened up also, immediately, all the doors and all the chains of all of them were loose.”*

*All of them:* Meaning all of the prisoners were now free.

**Verse 27:** *“And it came about that the jailer was woken up and he beheld that the doors of the prison were open. He took out his sword intending himself to kill considering (reasoning) that all the prisoners had fled.”*

*Fled:* This would have been the normal thing for the prisoners to have done. What is happening here is not normal though. This is a Kingdom happening and justice was maintained.

**Verse 28:** *“Paul spoke in a loud voice saying, ‘Do not do to yourself evil. We are all here!’.”*

*Paul:* Took leadership of the situation.

*Evil:* Suicide is not G-d’s will for our lives.

**Verse 29:** *“And requesting a light he went inside and came about fear. He fell before Paul and Silas.”*

*Requesting a light:* Asking for illumination

*Fear:* The jailer was filled with a great fear (fell under conviction) when he went inside the prison, because he saw such an unusual sight - none of the prisoners were gone.

**Verse 30:** *“He brought them outside and said, ‘Sirs what must I do in order to be saved?’”*

*Brought them outside:* He knew that these men did not belong in prison.

*Saved:* This word is in the passive. We cannot save others. Salvation has to be done for us.

**Verse 31:** *“These said, ‘Believe upon the L-rd Messiah Yeshua and you will be saved, also your household.’”*

*These:* Paul and Silas

*Saved, also your household:* The promise of salvation is for us and for our households (Deuteronomy 6v7)

**Verse 32:** *“Speaking to him the words of the L-rd, and to all in his house.”*

**Note:** The jailer and his household heard the words of the L-rd.

**Verse 33:** *“Taking them on that same hour of the night he washed their wounds; immediately after that he was baptised, he and all those to him.”*

*Taking them:* He took them to his home.

**Verse 34:** *“Bringing them into his house he set the table. They rejoiced, all of his household, having believed in G-d.”*

*Set the table:* He placed food before them. In a Biblical context eating food is synonymous with praising G-d (Deuteronomy 8v10).

*Believed in G-d:* Paul and Silas’ testimony in the midst of suffering caused an impression to be made on the other inmates, the jailer, and his family.

**Verse 35:** *“When it came about the (next) day the magistrates sent those officials with the clubs saying, ‘Release these men.’”*

**Verse 36:** *“The jailer proclaimed these words to Paul that the magistrates had sent an order to set them free. ‘Therefore, now depart, and go in peace.’”*

**Verse 37:** *“But Paul said to them, ‘These officials with the club they beat us publicly, un-condemned Roman men being, they cast us into prison and now secretly they want to set us free. For no! Let them come to us and bring us out.’”*

*Un-condemned:* The beatings violated Roman law – there were no witnesses, cross examinations, or trial.

*Roman men being:* Paul and Silas were Roman citizens.

*For no!* Paul refused to leave prison in that way.

**Verse 38:** *“The officials with those clubs sent to the magistrates these words. When they heard that they had beaten Roman citizens they feared because they were Romans.”*

**Verse 39:** *“Coming and encouraging them, also bringing them out, beseeching that they would depart from the city.”*

*Depart:* They wanted Paul and Silas to leave the prison as well as the city. They wanted this matter to be over and done with.

**Verse 40:** *“Going out from the prison they entered into Lydia’s (house). Seeing the fellow believers (Brethren) they encouraged them. Then they departed.”*

*Encouraged them:* Their intent was to go to the various congregations to encourage and instruct the believers there, and then to move on to the next congregation.

*Departed:* G-d had greater things for them to do than to just remain in one city.

## **Chapter 17**

### **Part 1: Acts 17v1-15**

**Verse 1:** *“Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia they came into Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.”*

*Thessalonica:* In Greece.

*Synagogue:* A gathering place, community centres for Jews and Gentiles alike – they were not exclusively for Jewish people back then.

*Of the Jews:* This place was a house of worship, but it was under the auspices of the Judeans - which means those who followed the traditions of the elders.

**Verse 2:** *“According to his custom, Paul entered to them. And upon the third Sabbath he spoke thoroughly to them (The Judeans) from the Writings.”*

*His custom:* Paul had a kind of habit, or tradition, that he would do if he went into a town. The first place he would go to would be a synagogue in the Jewish community (Romans 1v16).

*To them:* It does not say that Paul entered with them, but he entered to them. This shows that there was a bit of a distinction between Paul and these Judeans and what was being taught at this synagogue.

*Third Sabbath:* This could be a reference to the third Sabbath of Paul being in Thessalonica or it could refer to the third Sabbath of the month.

*Spoke:* Paul spoke to them about Messiah (See 17v3). If the focus is supposed to be the Kingdom then we should know about the King of that Kingdom.

*Writings:* The Apostles turned the people to the Word of G-d.

**Verse 3:** *“He thoroughly opened to them the Scriptures and set before them that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and that: ‘This Yeshua is the Messiah whom I am proclaiming to you.’”*

*Scriptures:* Paul did not utilise the New Testament to teach these people – he used the Old Testament only. He would have had to look very carefully and thoroughly for words that spoke of a suffering Messiah in the Psalms and in the prophets.

*Necessary:* It has to be, it is an absolute must as there is no other way.

*Rise:* Resurrection. This speaks of a transition from this age into the Kingdom of G-d.

*Yeshua:* It is not enough to know that there is a Messiah. We need to know the name (identity) of Messiah. One of the truths of the Scripture is that we receive Him by faith and we, believing in our hearts, confess His name (Romans 10v9-10).

*Proclaiming:* Announcing in a formal and in an authoritative way. This proclamation was related to the promises of G-d – only through Yeshua can anyone have access to the promises of G-d (Kingdom hope).



**Verse 4:** *“And certain ones, some from them, were persuaded and they associated with Paul and Silas, also the devoted ones of the Greeks a large multitude, and of the prominent women not a few.”*

*Them:* The Judeans

*Were persuaded:* They heard, and they believed

*Associated with:* They had a desire to learn more, a desire to be disciples.

*Devoted:* Pious ones, G-dly individuals who were serious about worshipping G-d.

*Prominent:* This word in its context does not mean prominent in the sense of fine, cultural, “upper class” women. The word means “first” – implying that these women were those who arrived first, early, at the synagogue as they were excited and devoted as well to the worship of G-d.

**Verse 5:** *“The unbelieving, those who were not persuaded among the Judeans, were jealous. They took to themselves certain ones of the marketplace who were of bad character, evil men, and they made a crowd and they also made an uproar in the city. They stood up against the house of Jason seeking them (The Apostles) to bring them to the people.”*

*Not persuaded:* Their hearts were not open to the truth of Scripture.

*Jealous:* The implication is that they were jealous of Paul and Silas, and the fact that some were persuaded in that doctrine (Christianity) supported by the writings in Scripture.

*They stood up:* Probably an idiom for assaulted, or they stood up to go somewhere to oppose something.

*The people:* They wanted to bring them publicly before the people (probably for judgement).

**Verse 6:** *“They did not find them, so they dragged Jason, and certain other ones of the brethren, unto the magistrate crying out: ‘These ones have caused the world to stand upside down. These have arrived here,’”*

*Magistrate:* The city leaders.

*These have arrived here:* The Apostles, who have arrived in the city, have turned the world upside down.

**Verse 7:** *“whom Jason received. These are the ones who are practicing things which are against the dogma of Caesar. They speak that there is another king – Yeshua.”*

*Dogma:* Rules, statutes.

*Against the dogma of Caesar:* This was a common accusation levelled against the believers -any perceived threat against the administration of the Roman Empire brought harsh punishment.

*Another king – Yeshua:* This is true. The believers were proclaiming Yeshua as the King of a coming Kingdom. However, this evil mob used this truth as a means to claim that the believers were attacking the Roman Empire and Roman leadership.

**Note:** Here Yeshua, the Messiah, is being presented as King. There is a close relationship between the word Messiah and the term King.

Messiah is the Ruler. The implication is not only that He is going to rule over a Kingdom, but He should also be ruling over our lives. We do not wait until the Kingdom is established to begin living Kingdom life.

**Verse 8:** *“They trouble the crowd,’ The magistrates were listening to all these things.”*

*They trouble the crowd:* Part of their accusation.

**Verse 9:** *“Taking a security from Jason, and from the others, they were let go.”*

*Security:* A form of bail payment. Securities were taken in order that these men would not have to go to prison until after a trial.

**Verse 10:** *“But the brethren, immediately by the night, sent Paul and also Silas into Berea. Who, when arriving, into the synagogue of the Judeans they went.”*

*But:* In contrast to what was going on – the opposition and turmoil in Thessalonica.

*Brethren:* The believers in Thessalonica.

*Immediately:* Shows an urgency

*The synagogue of the Judeans:* Paul’s methodology/custom/tradition remains the same (see 17v2). The first thing he did, when arriving in the city, was to go to the community of the Jewish people.

**Verse 11:** *“These had good genetics, they were more so of this character than the ones being in Thessalonica. They received the Word with all readiness - each day judging up the writings to see if these things were thus.”*

*Good genetics:* This has to do with those things inside of them, good characteristic traits that were pleasing to G-d.

*Judging up:* Scrutinizing

*If these things were thus:* A wise individual will listen to what is being said but will also follow along in the Scripture - prayerfully asking the Holy Spirit to teach, confirm, warn, show errors on what is being said etc. This is what the Bereans did.

**Verse 12:** *“Therefore, many from them believed, and also the Greek women of nobility and men, not a few.”*

*Nobility:* Noble women, women having a good, G-dly, reputation

**Verse 13:** *“But the Judeans that were from Thessalonica, when they knew that also in Berea the Word of G-d was being proclaimed by Paul, they came also there to stir up a crowd.”*

*But:* In contrast to these things that were going well at Berea.

*Stir up a crowd:* They used the same methodology as seen in 17v5. It was effective, so they did not change it.

**Verse 14:** *“Then immediately the brethren sent Paul to go upon the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there.”*

*Go upon the sea:* To sail to another place.

**Verse 15:** *“Those who were escorting Paul brought him unto Athens and they (those escorting Paul) received a command for Silas and Timothy in order that quickly they should come to him. And they departed”*

*Escorting:* Traveling with him

*Athens:* A city in Greece

*Escorting Paul.... they departed:* When we hear or sense G-d's direction in our lives we need to respond at once. We need be submissive to the Word of G-d and to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in our lives – no matter what the cost is financially or personally to us.

## **Chapter 17**

### **Part 2: Acts 17v16-34**

**Verse 16:** *“As Paul was in Athens, waiting for them, his spirit was provoked perceiving the idolatry being in the city.”*

*Them:* Silas and Timothy

*Provoked:* This word can mean ‘irritated’.

*The idolatry being in the city:* The city was given over to idols. Everywhere one looked, or went, there were idols. There was no truth there. All of this idolatry came out of a pursuit of humanistic reasoning.

**Verse 17:** *“Therefore he spoke thoroughly in the synagogue to Jews and the G-d fearers, and in the marketplace each day to those who happened to be there.”*

*G-d fearers:* Devout Gentiles who worshipped the G-d of Israel.

*Marketplace:* Paul did not sit idly waiting for the synagogue to reopen, he took the opportunity to even speak to the people he chanced to meet in the marketplace every day.

**Verse 18:** *“Certain ones of the Epicureans and also the Stoics philosophers encountered him and certain ones of them were saying, ‘What does this babbler want to say? They were saying, ‘Strange gods he is proclaiming,’ because Yeshua and the resurrection he was proclaiming to them.”*

*Epicureans...Stoics:* These were two types of philosophers. The Epicureans pursued the pleasure of governing themselves and also pursued the simple things in life.

Both groups did not really believe in the supernatural. They saw a correlation between knowledge and being satisfied – believing that if they knew enough then they could achieve what they needed for satisfaction.

*Babbler:* A babbler says things that are difficult to understand or they say things that one disagrees with.

*Yeshua:* Means ‘salvation’. They heard this, but did not understand the significance of Yeshua and thought He was a foreign god.

*Resurrection:* Alludes to victory and Kingdom.

**Verse 19:** *“Taking him and bringing him to Mars Hill they asked, ‘Are we able to know this new teaching that is spoken by you?’”*

*Mars Hill:* Areopagus; the headquarters for all the illustrious philosophers and wannabes.

*New teaching:* Their curiosity had been aroused by the fact that this was all new to them. Paul spoke from the truth of Scripture. The intent of this verse is to show us how far away these people were from the truth of Scripture. The basics of the Word of G-d were foreign to them.

**Note:** Truth is very important to us, and, as such, a very important doctrine for us should be the doctrine of inerrancy. This means that the original scripture, written down by Moses, the prophets, David, and the individuals that G-d inspired (by the Holy Spirit) to write down Scripture, contains no errors whatsoever.

**Verse 20:** *“For we find here that strange things you bring into our ears, and we want, therefore, to know what these things are that you are speaking.”*

**Verse 21:** *“(the Athenians, all of them, and the foreigners that dwell, in nothing else they occupy themselves but speaking and hearing a new thing.)”*

*Nothing else:* They engaged in doing nothing else except speaking or hearing new ideas.

**Note:** This verse is in parentheses. This is an explanation in the text to help the reader, who might be from a different culture or background, to understand the context. Many believe this was inserted into the text and was not written by Luke, but this is not the way we view it here. Luke wanted to inform the reader, not from this culture, about the cultural context so he himself placed this verse in parentheses.

**Verse 22:** *“Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and he was speaking these things, ‘Men of Athens, according to all which I perceive I saw that you were giving glory to idols.’”*

*Was speaking:* This is written in the imperfect tense. This means that he was doing it in the present, but it was going to come to an end. There is going to be a change. What he is doing at that present time he was not going to continue doing.

This either means:

1. That Paul will never have an opportunity to share with these people again or
2. That Paul will not use this methodology again when he addresses others.
  - 1.

**Note:** Paul's presentation to these intellectual individuals is not a typical/classical Paul response. Although Paul proclaimed some of the main points, vital in proclaiming the gospel, he arrived at them very differently to his usual way.

**Verse 23:** *"For as I was passing through I was perceiving very intently the things of your worship, and in doing so I also found an altar in which it is inscribed 'To the unknown G-d'. Therefore, whom you worship not knowing, this One I proclaim to you."*

*Perceiving:* Examining something thoroughly.

*Altar:* They had something in common - and that was the concept of sacrifice.

*To the unknown G-d:* These people did not want to miss out on any god, as they did not want any god to be angry with them for missing him out.

**Note:** We must never present the accepting of Yeshua as 'to be on the safe side', 'just in case He is the only way'. We do not accept the truth of Messiah as a 'cover all my bases theology'. The way that we should present the gospel is that it is the **only** truth from the **only** G-d.

*This One I proclaim:* Paul's methodology here was to begin with something they were familiar with in order to move them to truth.

**Verse 24:** *"The G-d, the One who made the world and all the things that are in it, this One, being the L-rd of heaven and earth. He does not dwell in sanctuaries made by human hands."*

*The G-d:* This definite article is very important. Paul, very emphatically, told them that there is only one G-d.

*G-d...L-rd:* Paul began with G-d but moved very quickly to the word L-rd. This lays an important foundation for us in helping us to reveal Yeshua to others. Yeshua is the foundational truth of the gospel and Paul never wanted to move away from that truth. It is through Yeshua that we have victory, both for resurrection life as well as for entering the Kingdom of G-d and being able to experience the One, True G-d.

**Verse 25:** *"Nor by the hands of man is He served, as though something needs to be presented to Him. Rather, He gives to all life and breath and all things."*

*All things:* The One, True G-d is the source of life, breath and of everything else. G-d has no limitations. This is in stark contrast to the philosophy of idolatry where the idols have very limited powers (This one for healing sickness, that one for blessing etc)

**Verse 26:** *"He made from one blood all the nations of man that dwell upon all the face of the earth. He set limitations for us, about the appointed times but also the boundaries of where we dwell."*

*One blood:* Blood is synonymous with life. From one blood (Adam) He made all life. We exist because of our blood. Just as there is only one source of blood, there is only one source of life.  
*Appointed times:* This oftentimes can be an appointed time for judgment.  
*Dwell:* Their dwelling places. We have limitations set by G-d, and these cause us to seek Him.

**Verse 27:** *“To seek the L-rd, and if perhaps that we should sense Him, that we might find - because He is not far from each one of us.”*

*He is not far:* He is L-rd over everything. He is intrinsically involved in every aspect of His creation, and that includes you and me.

**Verse 28:** *“For in Him we live, and we move, and we have our very being. As also certain ones of your poets have said, ‘For we are the offspring’.”*

*Live... move.... have our very being:* We are all dependent upon G-d.

**Verse 29:** *“Therefore being offspring of G-d we ought not to consider (think of) gold, silver or stone, which is engraved by the craftsman and through the imaginations of men, being somewhat divine.”*

*Offspring:* What this means Biblically is that we are G-d’s creation.

*Through the imaginations:* We do not find G-d through the imaginations of men. We find G-d through revelation, and that is what Paul is rightly emphasizing here.

*Divine:* There is no relationship between the materialistic things and divinity.

**Verse 30:** *“Therefore in the times of ignorance G-d looked beyond this, but now He proclaims to men in all places that they should repent of these things.”*

*Times of ignorance:* The times of unknowing -when Messiah had not yet been revealed.

*Looked beyond:* G-d (kind of) ignored it in the previous times.

*Men in all places:* Not just to Israel, but to all humanity.

*Repent:* Turn away from the things of this world.

*These things:* These philosophies, idolatrous practices etc

**Verse 31:** *“For He has stood a day in which He is about to judge all the world in righteousness. He has appointed One who is faithful in all His ways and He has committed Him to all. He (G-d) raised Him from the dead”*

*Stood a day:* Appointed a day

*Judge:* Judgement is coming

*Righteousness:* We also need to teach people about righteousness -as defined by G-d. If we are rightly teaching righteousness we also have to point out that which is unrighteous, and in doing so we are going to speak conviction to people. This may not be what people want to hear, but it is what they **need** to hear.

*Appointed:* It is the same word for seeing something or cutting out a pattern.

*One who is faithful:* Yeshua

*He has committed Him to all:* Yeshua is necessary for every individual, for all humanity.

*Raised Him from the dead:* Resurrection is the knowledge that we need. Messiah died for our sin. G-d raised Yeshua from the dead – showing His acceptance of His offering.

**Verse 32:** *“After hearing of the resurrection of the dead there were those that mocked, and there were some that said, ‘We will hear you again concerning this’.”*

*Mocked:* The leaders believed in humanistic philosophies and understood their own limitations, therefore, they did not like hearing about the supernatural.

*Hear you again:* Listen to you again. They pushed Paul aside here, the implication being that they were not really wanting to hear him again.

**Verse 33:** *“Thus Paul went out from the midst of them.”*

**Verse 34:** *“But there were certain ones that clung to him, they believed. And among these was a man Dionysius, a leader of the Areopagus, and also a woman by the name of Damaris - she believed, and others also with them.”*

*But:* In contrast to the reaction of the people in 17v32.

*Believed:* They believed everything in its entirety.

*Dionysius...Damaris:* Testimony gives evidence of what was said and what happened on Mars Hill.

**Note:** There was a response, but not the great response that normally would accompany such an evangelistic presentation by Paul. In sharing the gospel to others we need to ask ourselves if sharing the gospel in the way that Paul did, at Mars Hill, is a way that is good for us to mimic (picking up where people are at -the altar, their poets etc, as was the case in this account- and using that as the starting place for sharing the gospel) or

In contrast to this way: Is it not better to begin afresh from the Scriptures, focusing on the revelation of G-d as the basis/foundation for the proclaiming of the gospel?

## **Chapter 18**

### **Part 1: Acts 18v1-17**

**Verse 1:** *“After these things, Paul separated from Athens. He departed into Corinth.”*

*After these things:* This phrase draws our attention back to Paul speaking at the Areopagus in chapter 17. We cannot understand this chapter, in its fullness, if we do not link it to the event at the Areopagus.

This phrase (*after these things*) also shows a contrast. What happened in the Areopagus is in contrast to what we are going to read about here.

*Separated*: This word is used in a unique way. Paul had been waiting in Athens for Silas and Timothy but there is no mention of their arrival. Paul also, very frequently throughout the book of Acts, would remain in a place for several weeks when there was a response to the gospel and people came to faith. The question we need to ask ourselves is this: why was there a need for this verse to emphasise that Paul separated himself from Athens?

**Verse 2:** *“He found a certain Jew by the name of Aquila, born in the place of Pontus. Recently he went out (departed) from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded that all the Jews be separated from Rome. He came to them.”*

*Claudius*: The Emperor of Rome

*Separated*: The same word as the one used in 18v1. Paul separated himself from Athens, and now we see that the Jewish people, in general, were commanded by the Emperor Claudius to separate themselves from Rome. So, Aquila and Priscilla also underwent a separation from one location to another.

*He*: Paul.

**Verse 3:** *“And because the same occupation being, he remained with them and worked. For they were by occupation (by trade) tentmakers.”*

*The same occupation being*: Paul, Aquila and Priscilla had the same occupation in common too – tent making.

*Tentmakers*: They did not make tents that people lived in, but this word is an idiom, a colloquial term, for the prayer shawl [In the synagogue, every day, men wrap this prayer shawl (a tent like covering) around themselves. It relates to worship and intimacy with G-d. The prayer shawl was a reminder of the commandments (Numbers 15v37-41) and an encouragement, to the people, to obey the Word of G-d.]

**Verse 4:** *“And speaking thoroughly in the synagogue, each and every Sabbath, he was persuading Jews and Greeks.”*

*Speaking thoroughly*: Looking at an issue from all angles, without avoiding anything.

**Verse 5:** *“Coming down from Macedonia, Silas and also Timothy came. Paul was occupied in the Spirit and he testified thoroughly to the Jews - Yeshua the Messiah.”*

*Paul was occupied (engaging) in the Spirit*: It seems to mean that when Silas and Timothy came to Corinth they added to Paul, in the sense that Paul was able to concentrate more on preaching.

*Yeshua the Messiah*: The emphasis is not just on the fact that Yeshua is the Messiah, but Paul was sharing about Yeshua and defining how Yeshua meets the qualifications of the Messiah.

**Verse 6:** *“And they opposed, and they blasphemed. And Paul the garments he shook, and said to them, ‘Your blood upon your head. I am clean. From now on to the nations I go.’”*



*They:* The Judeans in the synagogue

*Opposed:* In Athens they had mocked and escorted Paul out of the Areopagus, and, in a non-committal way, they had told him that they would like to hear him at another time on the matter. Paul did not take them wanting to hear him speak again as them being serious about it, because he immediately left, he separated himself from them.

Here, in Corinth, Paul has used a different approach in sharing the gospel – testifying thoroughly about Yeshua. However, the opposition from the Judeans is a lot greater than what he faced in Athens.

*Blasphemed:* The implication is that they spoke in a derogatory and blasphemous way about Yeshua.

*The garments he shook:* See Nehemiah 5v13 and Mark 6v11. Paul shook his garments as a sign to the Judeans that he was removing himself from any connection with them.

*Your blood upon your head:* The consequences that they would suffer as a result of their rejection of Messiah was now their own responsibility.

*From now on to the nations (Gentiles) I go:* We are going to see that although that was Paul's intent it was not G-d's will.

**Verse 7:** *“Going down from there he went into the house of a certain one named Justus, a worshipper of G-d. His house was adjacent to the synagogue.”*

*Going...from there:* From the synagogue.

*Justus:* A Gentile who believes in the G-d of Israel and applies the Word of G-d to his life, but he has not gone through a full conversion - meaning has not been circumcised.

**Verse 8:** *“Now Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with his whole house; many of the Corinthians, upon hearing, they believed and were baptized.”*

*The ruler of the synagogue:* Paul is trying to get away from the synagogue and, possibly, Justus (who lives right next door to the synagogue, and would have known the leader of it) takes him right back to the leader of a synagogue.

*His whole house:* It speaks about a holistic happening to his household - his household was made whole with G-d.

**Note:** Focusing upon the Jew first is going to pay great dividends within the Gentile community.

**Verse 9:** *“But the L-rd said, through a vision in the night to Paul, ‘Do not fear but speak all and do not be silent.’”*

*A vision:* G-d is giving revelation to Paul. Except for the Damascus road vision, the visions that Paul received usually came after his acts of obedience or faithfulness. Receiving a vision at this point in the account puts almost a divine stamp of approval on this methodology - to the Jew first and then also to the Gentile.

*Do not fear:* This is foreshadowing a worse opposition to come.

**Verse 10:** *“I am with you and nothing will be set upon you to harm you. I have many people in this city.”*

*Harm:* This is literally the word for evil. G-d is telling Paul that He will use whatever Paul encounters for the fulfilment of His purpose and will. This does not mean that Paul is not going to suffer, but any suffering that he goes through will have a G-dly outcome to it.

*I have many people:* One interpretation of this is that there are already many other believers in Corinth, but another interpretation is that it is foreshadowing a great harvest in this city of people who are going to come to the L-rd.

**Verse 11:** *“And he sat accordingly there (dwelt there) one year and six months, teaching them the Word of G-d.”*

*He sat:* The word used here is the normal word for just sitting down, like sitting in a chair. It is a Hebrew idiom meaning: to dwell or to live in a place.

*One year:* Paul spent over a Torah cycle amount of time (reading of the law) there.

*The Word of G-d:* The Tanakh, the Hebrew Scriptures - at the forefront of which is the law and the prophets.

**Verse 12:** *“And Gallio, being the consul of Achaia, the Judeans rose up against Paul and they brought him to the judgement seat.”*

**Note:** As the Word of G-d is being proclaimed there is opposition.

*The consul of Achaia:* Governor of that location/area

*Rose up against:* The very literal interpretation of these words is: “to stand, upon, against”. This means that this opposition was done very purposefully, giving great attention to Paul and to what he was saying.

*Judgement seat:* The word Bema is used here in the Greek.

**Verse 13:** *“(They were) Saying, ‘This one persuades men to worship G-d contrary to the Torah (Law).’”*

**Note:** There was, and is, an unscriptural belief in Judaism that the Torah is not for the Gentiles but is reserved exclusively for the Jewish people.

G-d entrusted His Word - all of his Words, including all of the commandments - to the Jew first (Romans 3v1-2), but He did this in order for them to be a light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 49v6).

*Persuades men (Gentiles) to worship G-d:* It may have been that these people were upset because Paul was teaching and discipling the Gentiles about the law and how Gentiles can walk in obedience to G-d.

*Worship:* This word for worship is generally used in the book of Acts in regard to G-d fearers – Gentiles.

*Contrary:* Alongside, with

There are two possible ways to interpret this verse:

1. Paul is being accused of teaching against the Torah.

2. Paul is being accused of teaching Gentiles to worship G-d according to the Torah, which they believed was, in and of itself, a violation of the Torah.

**Verse 14:** *“Paul was about to open up his mouth when Gallio spoke to the Jews, ‘If, therefore, this was some unjust matter or some evil crime that took place, O Jews, logic would dictate that I would have to put up with you (suffer you).’”*

*About to open up his mouth:* He wanted to respond to this accusation.

*The Jews:* To the Jews who were bringing accusation against Paul.

*I would have to put up with you:* An anti-Semitic statement

**Verse 15:** *“But since it is a word or a name or some matter of your law you see to it, for I do not desire to be a judge of these things.”*

*Do not desire to be a judge:* He does not want to get involved in religious issues.

**Verse 16:** *“He cast them out (banished them) from the Judgment Hall.”*

**Verse 17:** *“The Greeks took this as an opportunity to seize a man by the name of Sosthenes, the ruler of a synagogue, and they beat him before the Bema seat; and none of these things did Gallio care about.”*

*None of these things did Gallio care about:* Gallio was not about justice or doing the right thing. He stood idly by and did nothing to help the Jewish man being beaten by the crowd of Greeks.

This shows how far removed the Roman Empire was from the Word of G-d.

Paul and the other believers had a purpose -to serve G-d, sharing the good news of the Kingdom, in order to bring a kingdom character into a person's life, his home, his community and ultimately to bring a change this world.

## **Chapter 18**

### **Part 2: Acts 18v18-28**

**Verse 18:** *“Paul remained many days with the brothers. Thereafter, he set sail for Syria and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. He shaved his head in a place called Cenchræe for he had a vow.”*

*Remained many days:* Paul remained in Corinth for a long time.

*Syria:* Lebanon of today was a part of Syria then.

*Cenchræe:* A port of Corinth.

*A vow:* Paul, in a very literal way, applied the commandments to his life. Seemingly, here, he was probably under the Nazarite vow that we read about in Numbers 6v1-21.

People made this vow in relation to their prayers - with the hope that it would give more fervency, more power, to their prayer. It demonstrated a commitment, denying oneself in order to draw closer to G-d. When the vow came to an end, the person's hair was shaved off and offerings would be given to G-d.

**Verse 19:** *"He arrived at Ephesus and he left them; He entered into the synagogue and was teaching diligently the Jews."*

*Them:* Priscilla and Aquila

*Entered into the synagogue:* In 18v6 Paul, in frustration, had said that in the future he would be going to the nations, yet here we see him in a new city and back in the synagogue, as had always been his custom (see 17v2). No matter where he went Paul had a priority - he went to the Jew first.

**Verse 20:** *"They asked him upon more time to remain, but he did not agree."*

*Upon more time to remain:* They wanted him to extend his time in this location, so that they might hear more of what he was sharing. This is an unusual response, as he normally encounters opposition in the synagogues.

*He did not agree:* This was also a surprising response from Paul. What kept Paul from staying in this city?

**Verse 21:** *"He left them, and he said, 'It is necessary for me by all means the coming festival to do in Jerusalem. But again, I will come to you, if G-d is willing.' And he sailed from Ephesus."*

*Festival:* This is a reference to one of the Biblical festivals – one of the L-rd's appointed days. They were festivals entrusted to Israel, but with the hope that others would learn the truth that these holidays revealed. These festivals are festivals of revelation, messages regarding the future – Colossians 2v17. When we understand the Biblical festivals better we are going to understand Messiah better (At Yeshua's first coming significant things happened on festival days – on Passover He laid down his life, on the festival of first fruits He was resurrected, the Holy Spirit was given on Shavuot or Pentecost – these things happened, on these days, by divine appointment and not by chance).

*Festival to do:* In the Greek it does not say to 'keep' the festival but to 'do' the festival. There is no temple today so the festivals cannot be kept as they were meant to be, according to the Torah. Today we can study the Biblical revelation of the festivals and apply their truth to our lives as they reveal Messiah to us. The temple still stood in Paul's time so he could do the festival in its entirety.

*If G-d is willing:* The decisions that we make should be part of G-d's will. Everything is up to Him and is not dependent on us.

**Verse 22:** *"He came down into Caesarea and he went up and greeted the congregation. Thereafter he went down into Antioch."*

*He went up:* Most scholars understand this as: after landing at Caesarea he went up to Jerusalem to visit the congregation there and to celebrate the festival.

**Verse 23:** *“He spent some time there and he departed. He passed through orderly in the region of Galatia and Phrygia. He was strengthening all the disciples.”*

*Orderly:* Paul visited the churches according to design or purpose, in an ordered manner.  
*Strengthening:* Helping others to take root, to be established. Paul’s desire was to be influential in helping other believers to mature so that they could serve G-d effectively.

**Verse 24:** *“A certain Jew by the name of Apollos, from Alexandria in Egypt, a man of words, arrived in Ephesus, being mighty in the Scriptures.”*

*Man of words:* Probably an idiom meaning he was very eloquent in his speech.

**Verse 25:** *“He was trained in the way of the L-rd and fervent in spirit. He was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning the L-rd. He was standing upon only the baptism of John.”*

*In the way of the L-rd:* This phrase is unclear as to whether Apollos was a believer, or a very committed Jew.

*Fervent in spirit:* An idiom that can mean someone who had great commitment.

*The things concerning the L-rd:* Again, it is unclear if this is the L-rd Yeshua, or the L-rd G-d Almighty, the G-d of Israel (Yahweh).

*Only the baptism of John:* (See chapter 19v1-5 - Paul met disciples, but they were not disciples of Yeshua. They did not know who Yeshua or the Holy Spirit was. They were only aware of John’s baptism) This was a baptism of repentance, turning from sin and believing upon the one who was to come – John did not detail who this was. He prepared the way and then he stepped aside and Yeshua, Himself, began to proclaim the truth of Himself being the Son of man. The Apostles took this even further, proving that He was the Son of G-d.

In light of the verses we read in chapter 19, we can conclude that Apollos is sharing only about Jehovah G-d, the G-d of Israel. He does not know who the Messiah is and has not received Yeshua.

**Verse 26:** *“And this one began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But Aquila and Priscilla after hearing him they took him aside and more accurately to him they set forth the way of G-d.”*

*More accurately:* They took him aside and they improved what he was sharing, they added to what he lacked. He was not teaching anything wrong; it just was not complete (He only knew the baptism of John and he did not know who the Messiah was). It was only after being disciplined by Aquila and Priscilla that Apollos was able to understand properly.

**Verse 27:** *“He (Apollos) wanted to pass through to Achaia and the brethren wrote to encourage the disciples (in Achaia) to receive him. When he arrived, he helped much the ones believing through the grace.”*

*Believing through the grace:* Previously Apollos taught about the way of the L-rd in a general sense, but having been discipled by Aquila and Priscilla in the more excellent way, focusing upon Yeshua, he now is teaching about grace. He was now able to disciple and assist greatly those who had believed by means of G-d's grace.

**Verse 28:** *“For with power to the Jews he was refuting publicly and making known through the Scriptures that Yeshua He to be the Messiah.”*

*Refuting:* The only way we can refute properly is when we do so based upon the Scripture.

**Note:** What we are seeing here is an emphasis on discipleship. Evangelism is foundational, but people, having believed through the grace of G-d, need to be discipled.

## **Chapter 19**

### **Part 1: Acts 19v1-12**

**Note:** When we believe we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and He begins to dwell in us. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is **not** a separate occurrence from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, having the Holy Spirit dwelling in us does not mean that He is going to function mightily in our lives. If we are not humbly and faithfully relying on the leadership of the Holy Spirit, in our lives, we will not experience His power - which is a necessity for the purpose of ministering to others.

**Verse 1:** *“It came about while Apollos was in Corinth that Paul was passing through the upper regions and he came to Ephesus. And he found certain disciples.”*

*Corinth...Ephesus:* Paul and Apollos were ministering in different locations.

*He found certain disciples:* There were many kinds of disciples (John the Baptist had his own disciples; see Matthew 11v2, 7), so it would be incorrect to assume that these were disciples of the L-rd Yeshua, or that they were believers in Him.

**Verse 2:** *“He asked them if the Holy Spirit they received after believing, but they said to him, ‘And not if there is a Holy Spirit we have heard’.*

*If the Holy Spirit they received **after** believing:* Receiving the Holy Spirit, after believing in Yeshua, is a truth that is true and normal for all believers.

*But:* We had a normative statement, but now it is being followed by something that is in contrast to what should be normal.

*And not if there is a Holy Spirit we have heard:* They had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit. They knew nothing about Him.

**Verse 3:** *“And he said to them, ‘Into whom therefore were you baptized?’ And they said. ‘Into the baptism of John.’”*

*Baptized:* This is talking about water baptism, which this sentence implies they had gone through. Water baptisms were not something new in the New Testament. They had happened in Jewish history long before Messiah’s birth, long before the ministry of John the Baptist. People were baptized for the reason of wanting to serve G-d, wanting to turn away from sin, wanting to be cleansed of any impurity in their lives.

**Verse 4:** *“Paul said, ‘John baptized a baptism of repentance, To the people saying (that) on the One who was coming after him they should believe – that is upon Messiah Yeshua.’”*

*A baptism of repentance:* People had heard of John the Baptist's ministry - a baptism of repentance, turning away from sin and getting ready for the Kingdom of G-d. They also believed upon the one who was coming after John – the Messiah – and these individuals responded to that. But the problem was that they did not know who the Messiah was who was coming after John and nor did they know what Messiah had done for the world – dying on the cross to take away sins.

*After him:* After John's ministry.

*Yeshua:* Paul reveals to them who Messiah is.

**Verse 5:** *“Having heard, they were baptized in the name of the L-rd Yeshua.”*

*L-rd:* Paul's teaching reveals two things: Messiah is Yeshua, and Yeshua is L-rd. Yeshua is Messiah, but He also needs to be the L-rd of their lives.

**Verse 6:** *“Paul, set upon them the hands, and the Holy Spirit came upon them. They were speaking in tongues and also were prophesying.”*

*The hands:* Signifies authority. The apostolic authority of Paul, John and the other apostles is emphasised throughout Acts.

*Speaking in tongues...prophesying:* A miraculous expression of the Holy Spirit’s power.

Speaking in tongues is a miraculous gift, showing the power and anointing of G-d.

Prophesying is speaking the truth of G-d. More often than not, prophecy is not so much about telling what will happen, but it reveals what is appropriate for a right change so that we can be where we need to be for both the near and distant future. Prophecy is always related to the Word of G-d.

Miracles, oftentimes, serve as confirmations of the Word of G-d or they lead people to hear and listen to the Word of G-d.

**Verse 7:** *“All the men were as 12.”*

*12:* The number 12 has to do with the people of G-d. These disciples were not revealed as the people of G-d until after they were committed to Yeshua. This gives us a description of Israel – Israel can be seen as in a similar position to these disciples. They believe in repentance, the Kingdom of G-d etc but they do not know yet know the truth about Messiah – who He is or what He had done – or how they should respond to Him (recognising Him, personally, as L-rd Almighty).

**Verse 8:** *“Entering into the synagogue he spoke boldly for three months, speaking thoroughly and convincingly (about) the things concerning the Kingdom of G-d.”*

*Entering into the synagogue:* These new believers wanted to know more (see 19v9), so Paul spoke to and disciplined them in the synagogue for three months.

*Three:* Three is a number that speaks of revealing something/revelation. Paul wanted to reveal truth to those in the synagogue.

*Things concerning the Kingdom of G-d:* Paul’s emphasis, when speaking or discipling, was the Kingdom of G-d.

**Verse 9:** *“But certain ones were hardening themselves and they were not believing and were speaking evil of the Way before the multitude. Paul departed from them in order that he might be separate with the disciples, each day teaching them in the school of Tyrannus.”*

*Hardening themselves:* The hearts, of certain ones in the synagogue, were hardened as Paul shared these things concerning the Kingdom of G-d. They rejected what Paul was saying. People are either Kingdom minded or earthly minded.

*Not believing:* When we harden ourselves to the things of G-d it is going to have an adverse effect – we are not going to believe; we experience spiritual loss.

*The Way:* The disciples of Yeshua were referred to as those who were of “The Way”. A careful reading of Exodus 33v12-13 reveals to us that Moses was asking for Messiah, who is also called “The Way” (see John 14v6). It is through receiving “The Way”, Messiah, that we are going to find G-d, He will be made known to us.

*Departed:* This word is rooted in the same word for apostasy. Paul departed from them in order that he might be with true disciples.

**Verse 10:** *“This he continued upon two years, so that all the ones dwelling in Asia heard the Word of the L-rd Yeshua, both Jews and also Greeks.”*

*All the ones dwelling in Asia heard:* In Acts 16v6 the Holy Spirit had kept Paul from ministering in Asia. The time had not been right then, according to the will of G-d, but it was right now.

*Jews and also Greeks:* This is the plan that G-d has: to the Jew first and then to the Gentiles.



**Verse 11:** *“And miracles, not the regular, G-d was doing through the hands of Paul.”*

**Note:** After the word has been spoken, miracles follow as a source of confirmation (Mark 16v20, Hebrews 2v3-4).

*Not the regular:* These miracles were unusual ones

**Verse 12:** *“with the result also upon those who were sick or weak, they were brought from the surface of Paul's body the garment or apron, that would go forth from them disease and evil spirits would go forth from them.”.*

*The garment:* This is probably talking about either a part of the prayer shawl (detaching one of the fringes, tzitzit, from the prayer shawl so that a sick person could hold onto it in the hope of being healed) or the shawl itself (even to this day, in rabbinical communities, some of the more famous rabbis would pray once in the shawl and then take it off to give to someone else).

*Apron:* Things that were attached to Paul

**Note:** This reveals to us the anointing that was on Paul.

*Evil spirits:* Demons, unclean spirits, and satan are real and we need to realize that we are called to wage war against them. Believers today need to be equipped for spiritual warfare.

## **Chapter 19**

### **Part 2: Acts 19v13-41**

**Verse 13:** *“There were certain ones, itinerant Jewish exorcists, who put their hand upon and were invoking upon those that had evil spirits the name of the L-rd Yeshua saying, ‘We exorcise you by the name of Yeshua whom Paul proclaims.’”*

*Put their hand upon:* A Greek idiom which means that they were engaging in/doing something.

*Itinerant Jewish exorcists:* From the writings of the sages 2000years ago we see that there was a battle going on between the forces of darkness and the forces of light. These individuals were engaging in that. A change happened with them, however, as they began to hear and see that there was power in the name of Messiah.

*Whom Paul proclaims:* They did not know Yeshua personally, but they began to utilize and invoke His name.

**Verse 14:** *“These certain ones were the sons of Sceva, who was a Jewish high priest, and there was seven of these who were doing this.”*

*Jewish high priest:* These sons of Sceva came from a priestly background.

**Verse 15:** *“The unclean spirit answered and said, ‘Yeshua I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?’”*

*Who are you:* They were speaking the right name, but they were trying to do it by their own selves. The name of Yeshua is a powerful name, but only within one who knows His name, one who has that new covenant relationship, one who is filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Note:** The emphasis is not just on knowing a Messiah or who the Messiah is, but, in order to be participants in His power, it is also necessary to receive Him and have His Spirit dwelling within us.

*Know... recognize:* Two different words show us that there is a major difference between these two Individuals (Yeshua and Paul).

**Verse 16:** *“And the man, in whom the evil spirit was, leaped upon them and he ruled over them with the fact that they departed naked, and having been wounded they fled from the house.”*

*Ruled over them:* He prevailed over them.

*Naked:* Speaks about shame

*Wounded:* They had been wounded by that unclean spirit. This word is written in the perfect which reveals to us that this wounding happened in the past, it continues on into the present and it will continue on into the future to cause suffering for them. The enemy does not just work for a season, but he wants to continue working into the future. Victims of the enemy experience long-term effects of suffering.

*They fled:* Instead of having victory they left wounded, shamed and in utter defeat.

**Verse 17:** *“This became known among all the Jews and also the Greeks, those who were dwelling in Ephesus. Fear fell upon all of them and magnified was the name of the L-rd Yeshua.”*

*Ephesus:* Ephesus was a pagan city with a lot of false worship and idolatry going on there. This was a place of improper worship. Improper worship is an invitation to demonic influence in our lives and in it we encounter unclean spirits. Unlike the Holy Spirit (who brings order into our lives, so that we might be where G-d wants us to be and provided with what we need to do the things He has called us to do) unclean spirits lead us where we ought not be, doing the things we ought not do and in the end we are going to suffer loss. Instead of success and provision we are going to find failure and emptiness.

**Note:** In life there are only two expectations that we can have:

1. That we walk in obedience and therefore see the will of G-d being manifested in our lives. We will be recipients of what G-d provides, in order that we can carry out His will. We will rejoice in His victory in our lives.
2. When we do not walk in obedience or faithfulness to G-d we are going to fail and end up empty inside. There will not be joy or contentment in our lives, but a feeling of despair, emptiness, and shame. This type of behaviour injures us.

*L-rd Yeshua:* Again, the L-rdship of Yeshua is mentioned. These sons of Sceva only knew Yeshua by name, and they did not understand this call for Him to rule in their lives. When we reject or ignore the L-rdship of Messiah we are going to be ill-equipped, powerless, for spiritual warfare.

**Verse 18:** *“Many of the ones, having believed, began to confess and also proclaim (announce) these actions of them.”*

*Confess and also proclaim:* We can understand this phrase in two ways:

1. They began to confess and magnify the name of Messiah. Those who believed were not quiet about these miracles and signs that are going on around them, but they began to speak about them. (Confessing true faith)
2. They began to confess and proclaim their own sins as an act of repentance – a turning away from their previous behaviours.

**Verse 19:** *“Many of the ones that were practicing magical crafts, when they heard these things, they brought their books out and they burned them before all. It was accounted (reckoned) that their value was found to be five myriads of silver.”*

*Magical crafts:* Things related to the occult (supernatural, but not of G-d)

*Their books:* Books of falsehood or magical enchantments.

*Burned them:* Fire, in the Scripture, usually relates to judgement. These books became the recipients of fire/judgement. Those who follow the message of these books are going to meet with that same type of judgment.

*Value:* From an earthly standpoint these books were valuable/expensive. When these people saw true power, holiness, and the effects of true faith in the Lordship of Messiah they brought out all of these books (prized, expensive – it would have taken them many hours of work and labour to be have been able to purchase them) and in one moment they burned them all up.

*Myriads:* Technically ten thousand – it can also refer to an indefinitely large number of things.

**Verse 20:** *“Thus, according to the power, the Word of the L-rd grew and became strong (prevailed).”*

**Note:** Chapter 19 opened up with a group of people who heard testimony, but they had not accepted it, they were not believers. They were left with no power, shame, defeat, and wounds. When those who were testifying of the mighty deeds that Messiah performed, through the Apostles, individuals were transformed. That which was of great value previously was burned up. They did not sell their books to get some of their money back, but they recognized that those things were evil, contained falsehood and were dangerous spiritually.

**Verse 21:** *“When these things were fulfilled Paul set in his spirit to pass through Macedonia and Acacia to come into Jerusalem. He said, ‘After I have been there it is necessary for me also Rome to see.’”*

*Things were fulfilled:* They came to an end.

*Set:* This is a word of commitment or of decision.

*Jerusalem:* A place of worship. When we see the things of the enemy being done away with, destroyed, or consumed it prepares us to move into a place of worship.

*It is necessary:* A requirement to be met in order that the will of G-d be experienced or accomplished.

*Rome:* Rome was also a pagan city, and what had happened in Ephesus was preparation for Rome. Worship prepares us for ministry.

**Verse 22:** *“He sent into Macedonia two of the ones ministering with him, Timothy and Erastus, but Paul spent some time in Asia.”*

**Verse 23:** *“It came about at that time there was an uprising, and not a little one, concerning The Way,”*

*At that time:* When those books were destroyed, and the enemy had a setback.

*The Way:* Has to do with the way of truth, and with Messiah Himself.

**Verse 24:** *“By a certain one by the name of Demetrius; he was a silversmith, and he was making silver shrines of Artemis. She (Artemis) would bring to these craftsmen not a small amount of business.”*

*Artemis:* The Greek name of a goddess, In Latin she is called Diana.

*Not a small amount of business:* Making idols to be worshipped was a very lucrative business. Demetrius did not like it when people were turning away from falsehood and embracing a G-d who is invisible.

*Not a little one (v23) ... Not a small amount:* This phrase, repeating itself, is for the purpose of teaching us something - the real complaint against The Way had nothing to do with a spiritual objective but rather a financial one.

**Verse 25:** *“He brought together those fellow artisans and he said, ‘Men, you understand that from this business there is our wealth.’”*

*He:* Demetrius

*Our wealth:* He wanted them to understand this financially, not spiritually. This teaches us what idolatry is about: serving ourselves.

**Verse 26:** *“And you perceive, and you understand, that not only among the Ephesians, but almost all of Asia, this Paul is persuading and changing a great crowd; saying that these are not gods that are made by hands.”*

**Note:** The terminology here shows a setting up of a conflict.

*Made by hands:* What is made by hands is first conceived by human thought. Idolatry is nothing more than human thought, the desires of ourselves, in order to accomplish the things that we want to accomplish.

**Verse 27:** *“Not only will this endanger our portion, but it will bring contempt for us but also for Artemis, this great god. This temple is going to be thought of as nothing, and also it will destroy the greatness of her – which all of Asia and the ones in the world worship.”*

*Bring contempt:* Ephesus was the centre of this type of worship and, in that day, it was very influential in that region for idolatry. It was a place of learning; not learning truth, but learning about the occult. All of this brought people (wealthy tourists etc) into Ephesus resulting in financial gain (not financial blessing).

**Note:** Whenever we make spiritual decisions based upon physical profit we are going to be manipulated by the enemy.

**Verse 28:** *“After hearing this they were full of wrath and they cried out, ‘Artemis is great of the Ephesians!’”*

*Ephesians:* The Ephesians wanted to benefit from her. We need to be careful that our relationship with the Living G-d is not based upon what He does for us but rather what changes He makes in our lives so that we can be more pleasing to Him and glorify Him.

**Verse 29:** *“The whole city was full of confusion, and they rushed in one accord into the theatre. They dragged into the theatre two individuals – one was Gaius and the other one Aristarchus- they were Macedonians, traveling partners with Paul.”*

*Confusion:* What idolatry ultimately brings about in our lives.

*Traveling partners:* The supposition is that they would share the same message as Paul did – revealing that same truth about the one G-d.

**Verse 30:** *“Paul desired to enter into the theatre, but the disciples would not allow him.”*

*Paul:* They saw him as closely related to Yeshua, as he was the primary herald of this message.

*Would not allow him:* They were afraid for his well-being.

**Verse 31:** *“Certain ones of the officials, being friends with him, sent to him encouragement that he should not set himself into the theatre.”*

*Encouragement:* They agreed with the disciples that Paul should not enter into the theatre.

*The theatre:* The term used to define what is going on in the theatre is ‘confusion’ (v29).

**Verse 32:** *“Some of them were crying this and others were crying out that, for the assembly was confused. The majority did not know why they had assembled there.”*

*Assembly:* The word used here is the same word where we get ‘church’ – ‘called out ones’. These individuals, in the theatre, heard Demetrius’ message and based upon that message, they came out to do something about it. In contrast to the message of truth, which brings about restoration, the message of falsehood brings about confusion.

*Majority did not know why:* They were just following the masses. They were very remote from having a meaningful purpose in their lives. They simply followed after what others were doing.

**Verse 33:** *“The crowd dragged out one by the name of Alexander and they put (cast) him forward because he was a Jew. Alexander motioned with his hand and he wanted to make a defence before the public.”*

*A Jew:* There is a conflict here between the ways of the world (polytheism) and the revelation that G-d gave the Jewish people (monotheism). Alexander represented monotheism and he wanted to give a defence of it before the crowd..

**Verse 34:** *“But once recognizing that he was a Jew it came about one voice, from all of them, for about two hours they were crying out that: ‘Artemis is great of the Ephesians.’”*

*He was a Jew:* They knew he was going to speak about **one** G-d and they did not want to hear it.  
*Of the Ephesians:* They wanted to tie this pagan deity to themselves, so that they could reap the financial rewards.

*Two hours:* The number two speaks of two different opinions/thoughts/revelations. One was true revelation from G-d, and the second one a false revelation from the pit of hell.

**Verse 35:** *“The recorder of the town quieted down the crowd and he spoke, ‘Men of Ephesus, for is there a man who does not know of Ephesus, the city of the Ephesians, that being a temple keeper for this great god – Artemis - and of that fallen down from the sky?’”*

*The recorder (scribe) of the town:* Most scholars believe that he would serve at the bequest of the Roman Empire and was probably salaried by them. He would have been concerned about two main things – that everyone paid their taxes and that there would be no uprisings. He would have been concerned about a potential uprising coming out from the theatre.

*That fallen down:* The reason why Ephesus was unique, and the centre of this pagan worship, was because something apparently fell from the heavens (possibly a meteorite). Being blinded by their own pride they began to think this was a message from the gods. They used this thing that fell from the heavens as proof of this place being holy and unique.

**Verse 36:** *“This is undeniable; therefore, it is necessary for you to stop this commotion and do not do anything rashly.”*

*Stop this commotion:* This man is thinking of his position, but G-d (who can use anything) used this man, and the rationale of the Roman Empire, that desired everything to be done in an orderly manner.

**Verse 37:** *“For this one, who has been brought, has not committed a sacrilege against the temple, nor is he a blasphemer of your god.”*

**Verse 38:** *“If therefore Demetrius and those who are within (these artisans) have a word the courthouse is open and there are also proconsuls. Let them accuse one another in such a place.”*

*A word:* Meaning if they have an accusation.

*Open:* Functioning

**Verse 39:** *“But if there is some other thing that they are seeking let it be done in a lawful assembly house that the problem might be solved. ”*

**Verse 40:** *“For we are in danger of an accusation of insurrection today being levelled against us, and we will not have any existing claim, any denial, concerning this. We will not be able to answer this charge of this commotion.”*

*An accusation of insurrection:* If they carried on like that things would have gotten out of hand and they were going to be seen as rebellious against the Roman Empire and would suffer for it.

**Verse 41:** *“This he said, and it caused the crowd to go away. He quieted down the assembly house.”*

*Caused the crowd to go away:* G-d can use a multiplicity of means in order to defend His servants.

## **Chapter 20**

### **Part 1: Acts 20v1-16**

**Verse 1:** *“After the commotion (uprising) was settled down Paul called to the disciples and he embraced them, bid them goodbye and went out to go into Macedonia.”*

*Disciples:* It is only as we submit to the things that G-d has taught and revealed to us, (behaving like a disciple) that we will be given further revelation, insight, wisdom, ability to make G-dly decisions etc.

**Verse 2:** *“As he was passing through those regions he encouraged them, those people that he met along the way, with much word; and he came into Greece.”*

*Much word:* The Apostles doctrine - the insight that he received from the Holy Spirit – came from looking at the Hebrew Scriptures and understanding them in a perfect way, that is to say, according to what the prophets wanted to reveal. For much of Israel's history they did not grasp things. Looking at it from a perspective of faith, having decided to serve Messiah and becoming His disciples, they were able to understand the Scripture in a more excellent way.

**Verse 3:** *“He spent three months there. It was made known to him a plot by certain of the Judeans. He had intended to sail into Syria but when it became known to him he sailed through Macedonia.”*

*Three months:* Three relates to revelation. Paul, who had been in Greece before, wanted to reveal greater insight to, and deepen the understanding of, the believers there.

*Plot:* A scheme or an intent. Paul frequently had death threats.

**Verse 4:** *“There were those who accompanied him all the way to Asia. There was Sopater, he was a Berean. Of the Thessalonians: Aristarchus and Secundus. Gaius from Derbe. Also, Timothy. Those of Asia: Tychicus and Trophimus. These are the ones who were serving with him.”*

**Verse 5:** *“And they went before, and did remain (wait) for us in Troas.”*

*They went before:* It seems like they went on first and then Paul was going to meet up with them later – perhaps this was to throw off those of the Judeans that wanted to put him to death.

**Verse 6:** *“We were sailing, after the days of Unleavened Bread, from Philippi and we came to them in Troas after five days, where we stayed for seven days.”*

*Days of Unleavened Bread:* There are hints throughout Acts about the Biblical festivals, the appointed times of the Lord.

**Verse 7:** *“On the first (day) of Shabbat the disciples had gathered in order to break bread. Paul thoroughly spoke to them. He intended to depart on the next day, so he extended the word until midnight.”*

*Shabbat:* (The Sabbath, a day of intimacy between God and us) begins on Friday evening and it ends/departs on Saturday evening. In traditional Judaism the Shabbat is embraced early (on the Friday) and then is kind of held on to as it departs (Saturday evening) – much like a visit from good friends; excited to receive them early and reluctant to see them depart.

**Note:** The word Shabbat has a couple of different meanings.

1. The name of the seventh day
2. The name attached to a festival day
3. The name of a year – the Sabbath year (e.g. Shmita – where no planting or harvesting is done in the lands)
4. In one sense the Jubilee year is also a type of Sabbath.

We can also use the word Shabbat to reference a day of the week. E.g. the first day of Shabbat would be from Saturday evening (when the sun goes down) to Sunday evening, the fourth day of Shabbat would be referring to: from Tuesday evening to Wednesday evening etc.

*The disciples had gathered:* This seemed to be a normal behaviour for the disciples -they would come together, to learn and to fellowship, after the Sabbath – on a Saturday night.



(In this way they would not have some of the restrictions of the Sabbath) Sunday was, traditionally, a workday (like it still is in Israel today) and they could not just meet on the Sunday.

*Break bread:* Fellowshiping together

**Verse 8:** *“There were many lamps there in the upper room where we were gathered.”*

*Many lamps:* At the end of the Shabbat, Havdalah candles are lit. These are candles which are braided together and have many wicks instead of just one so that there is abundant light. The tradition was that people would bring their own candles to light and then the traditional blessings would be said. The Hasidim (religious Jewish people) see this as the light of the world resurrecting - meaning a time to expect Messiah (the One who gives new life, the One who has the power over death and life, and He is also the resurrection of life)

**Verse 9:** *“And a certain young one, his name was Eutychus, was sitting upon the window (sill). As Paul was speaking he was overcome. He fell into a deep sleep as Paul was continuing to lengthen his words upon more. He fell from the third floor downward and was taken up dead.”*

*Overcome:* This literally means ‘to be brought under’, in the sense of submissiveness.

*Lengthen his words upon more:* It is emphasised three times that Paul spoke for a long time, but it does not tell us what he spoke about. What we do know, however, is that traditionally during the prayer of the Havdalah as the lamp/candle is lifted up thoughts and words are focussed on the resurrection of Messiah.

**Note:** Havdalah means to make a distinction or separation. This is what the resurrection of Messiah did. Through the resurrection victory there is a separation between those who have hope of eternal life and those that do not.

Another clue to help us to know that Paul was possibly talking about the resurrection is the fact that Eutychus died and then rose again.

**Verse 10:** *“Paul, coming down, fell upon him. And he said, ‘Do not fear for his soul is in him.’”*

*Fell upon him:* It is a word that means to measure out your body on top of another body (2 Kings 4v32-35)

*His soul is in him:* Death happens when the soul departs from the body.

**Verse 11:** *“He went up, broke bread and tasted food. Paul, upon much, lengthened his words until dawn. And thus, he went out.”*

*Upon much:* Paul had already laid out his discussions and he spoke even more about that.

*Until dawn:* Until the sun rose (the resurrection of a new day). This all lays a foundation for remembering the resurrection of Messiah.

*Went out:* He left

**Verse 12:** *“They brought up the young man alive, and they were much encouraged and not a little.”*

*Young man:* An exceedingly young man, can also even be thought of as a child.

*They were much encouraged:* All of this gives us a context of resurrection. The outcome of having a belief in the resurrection is encouragement – we do not have to succeed here on earth. We know that there is another life - eternal life - and it is then that we will experience righteousness, holiness, and the promises of G-d.

**Verse 13:** *“And we went before to the boat and sailed into Assos, from there intending to take Paul up, for thus he had already planned out to go by foot.”*

*We went before:* They were traveling on ahead of Paul.

*To go by foot:* Paul oftentimes would travel from village to village, sharing G-d's Word with more and more individuals.

**Verse 14:** *“When he met us at Assos we took him on board and went to Mitylene.”*

**Verse 15:** *“And sailing from there we came the following day in front of a place called Chios. On the next day we arrived in a place called Samos and we remained in a place called Trogyllium; and on the next day we came to another place called Miletus.”*

**Verse 16:** *“But Paul judged to sail from Ephesus because he did not want to remain to spend any time in Asia. For he made haste, if possible for him, that the day of Pentecost he would be in Jerusalem.”*

*Did not want to remain:* Paul had another destination in mind.

*Day of Pentecost:* He had not been in Jerusalem for the Feast of unleavened bread, so he wanted to get there in time for Pentecost.

Paul had a great appreciation for the significance of the festivals of Israel. He understood the connection between Jerusalem as a place of worship and that these festivals give us a framework, a vantage point, for worshipping G-d and understanding G-d's plan for establishing His truth in this world.

From an Old Testament standpoint, looking from the tradition of Judaism, Pentecost was associated with the giving of the Word and commandments of G-d. From a New Testament perspective, it was the day when the Holy Spirit was given. There is a connection between the Word and power – a resurrection experience – we can live lives that experience victory, are changed and made new.

## Chapter 20

### Part 2: Acts 20v17-38

**Verse 17:** *“From Miletus, Paul sent into Ephesus and called the elders of the congregation.”*

*Ephesus:* It was a place of idolatry. Idolatry is accompanied by the glorification of self – selfishness -rather than a surrendering to the truth of G-d. When one walks in selfishness it is an invitation for demonic influence. This congregation in Ephesus were in a difficult place and were encountering much difficulty.

*Elders:* One of the characteristics of an elder, something that they are known for Biblically, is prayer (We are going to see that Paul has called them to give them a farewell address)

*Congregation:* An assembly of those who are called out (Like Abraham, these are called out of their culture, location, family etc in order to sacrificially follow the Word of G-d.)

**Verse 18:** *“When they had arrived to him he said to them: ‘For you know from the first day upon which I stepped into Asia how with you, at all times, I was serving the L-rd.”*

*I was serving the L-rd:* Paul is no longer going to have an opportunity to influence the Ephesian church anymore and he wants to leave them with an important testimony about his commitment to G-d.

**Verse 19:** *“With all humility, at all times, I was serving the L-rd. With many tears and troubles, all that which was befalling on me in the midst of the plots of the Judeans.”*

*Humility:* 1 Peter 5v5-6

*Serving the L-rd:* Paul was demonstrating that Yeshua was the L-rd of his life. In demonstrating that he showed humility and commitment.

*Many tears:* Weeping frequently because of all the troubles.

*In the midst of the plots:* They were constantly against him -setting traps to ambush him (because of his faithfulness and the impact he was having).

**Verse 20:** *“At no time, nothing did I withhold that was profitable to you. I did not fail to proclaim to you and to teach you publicly and in every house.”*

*Profitable:* Had a positive influence in the lives of the disciples.

*Publicly and in every house:* Public gatherings could have been large and home gatherings small, but no matter how small the number, Paul took every opportunity to share.

**Verse 21:** *“I was testifying, first to the Jews and also to the Greeks in G-d, repentance and faith in our L-rd Messiah Yeshua.”*

*In G-d:* He was saying that this testimony was established in G-d. The truth that Paul was sharing was all rooted and founded in G-d Himself.

*Repentance:* A desire to turn away from sin. Repentance comes before faith. True faith begins with the desire to turn away from sin. If this is not the objective of someone then they are not ready for the gospel.

**Note:** If we are going to proclaim a gospel that is effective then we need to prepare people for that Gospel – and that begins by helping them to understand what sin is, and that they are violators of the will of G-d. Without conviction of sin there is no repentance from sin. It is only after falling under conviction of sin, before G-d, that a person is ready for the message of grace.

**Verse 22:** *“Now, behold, having been bound by the Spirit to go into Jerusalem, the things in her that wait for me, that I’m going to encounter, I do not know.”*

*Been bound:* Paul is saying two things here: he is being led, compelled by the Spirit of G-d, to go to Jerusalem. Secondly, it foreshadows the fact that in Jerusalem he is going to be bound, arrested, put in prison, and charged with a crime in which he is going to have to defend himself publicly. The enemy wants to restrict and hold us back from the things that G-d wants us to do.

*Her:* Jerusalem (cities are written in the feminine)

*The things in her I do not know:* Paul does not know what he will encounter in Jerusalem, but he has a sense that something is going to happen.

**Verse 23:** *“Except however that the Holy Spirit (warns), according to each city that I testify the Word, that there are bonds (chains) and affliction waiting for me.”*

*Holy Spirit (warns):* Paul is spiritually sensitive.

*Affliction (tribulation):* More often than not the source of this type of tribulation is the enemy. It is not G-d disciplining, but rather it is the enemy attacking.

**Verse 24:** *“But not making an accounting, nor having my life as a valuable thing to myself, I want to complete the course and finish it with all joy. The ministry which I received from the L-rd Yeshua having testified (thoroughly) the gospel of the grace of G-d.”*

*Accounting:* The word for logic. It is the blueprint, the reckoning, the plan.

*Not making an accounting:* Paul is saying that he is not going to give an account of the suffering, tribulation, his chains, in regard to his life.

*Nor having my life as... valuable:* He is not giving care or thought about what is going to happen to him or to his life. He wants to be where G-d wants him to be, and do what G-d wants him to do.

*Complete the course:* Paul is saying that what is important to him is not what is going to happen to him or take place in his life, but rather that his life is faithful to the course and that he finishes it with all joy.

*Finish:* To complete fully and perfectly.

*All joy:* By finishing G-d's purpose for his life it is going to produce joy. That joy is not rooted in what is going on around him. The source of joy is obedience.

*The gospel of the grace:* Grace does not only save us, but it also enables us to become recipients of the Kingdom blessings - eternally.

**Verse 25:** *“Behold I know that no longer will you see my face, you all in whom I have went completely proclaiming the Kingdom of G-d.”*

*Went completely:* Paul travelled thoroughly in their midst, proclaiming the Kingdom of G-d.

**Note:** There is a relationship between the gospel of grace and the Kingdom of G-d. The gospel is a Kingdom message.

**Verse 26:** *“Therefore I testify to you in this very day that I am clean from the blood of all.”*

**Verse 27:** *“For I did not shrink back from proclaiming to you all the counsel of G-d.”*

**Verse 28:** *“Therefore now take heed of yourselves and concerning all the flock that the Holy Spirit has appointed you (set you) to be overseers in order to feed the congregation of G-d, whom He purchased (acquired) through His own blood.”*

*Take heed:* Watch out! Beware! This is a call for diligence (1 Peter 5v8).

*Appointed:* Paul is speaking about the responsibility to the call that the Holy Spirit has given to them.

*Feed:* This is a word that is related to a shepherd who feeds his flock. The elders are to feed them the truth of G-d (Prepare for them Scripture that they might take hold of it, that they might understand it, that they might learn the revelation of G-d).

**Verse 29:** *“For I do know this: burdensome wolves will enter in, after my departure. They will not show any compassion (mercy, care) for the flock.”*

*Wolves:* Wolves devour the flock. These ‘wolves’ are individuals, who come from outside the congregation, who will place burdens upon the people and will want to devour them or harm them.

**Note:** This passage is all about tribulation, hardship, the attack of the enemy.

**Verse 30:** *“Also men from among you will rise up, speaking perversely, that will try to pull disciples after them.”*

*Pull (draw) disciples after them:* They want to build up their own following, instead of building up the congregation of G-d.

**Verse 31:** *“Therefore watch! Remembering that for three years of night and day without ceasing and with tears I admonished each one.”*

*Three years of night and day:* Speaks of consistency.

*With tears:* He was weeping because he knew that so many people were not going to take his words seriously.

**Verse 32:** *“Now I commend you brethren to G-d and to the word of His grace, which is able to edify (build you up), in order to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”*

*Sanctified:* Those who are set apart for a Kingdom purpose. The gospel prepares us to be Kingdom minded workers and to be people who reflect Kingdom character.

**Verse 33:** *“Silver or gold or garments - nothing have I coveted.”*

**Note:** Paul was not about money. He was about service.

**Verse 34:** *“This you know: that my needs, and the ones that were with me, I laboured with these very hands.”*

*I laboured:* When Paul was not teaching or edifying people in the truth of G-d he was working for his needs, as well as for the needs of his companions.

**Verse 35:** *“In order that I would show all of you that thus to toil it is necessary to support the weak ones. Remembering, also, the word of the Lord Yeshua that said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*

*More blessed to give than to receive:* When we are in this body it is a time to give. When we have that new body, in the Kingdom of G-d, it is a time to receive. This is the mindset that we should have.

**Verse 36:** *“After saying these things he knelt down with all of them and he prayed.”*

**Verse 37:** *“It came about that many of them, with much weeping and falling upon his neck, kissed him.”*

*Falling upon his neck:* A term of great affection. Paul was greatly loved by them.

**Verse 38:** *“With sorrow, especially in regard to the word which he spoke to them that they were no longer to see his face again, they accompanied him to the boat.”*

*The boat:* His means of departure.

## Chapter 21

### Part 1: Acts 21v1-20

**Verse 1:** *“As it came about that we sailed, and we separated from them. We made a straight course to Kos, on the next day into Rhodes and from there to Patara.”*

*Made a straight course:* They travelled with a purpose. We should be people who move around with purpose.

*Kos:* A Greek island not far from the Turkish border.

**Verse 2:** *“And finding a boat, passing into Phoenicia, we embarked and set sail.”*

*Finding a boat:* The boat that they had been on came to its journey’s end at Patara.

*Embarked:* Boarded the next boat

**Verse 3:** *“Finding Cyprus and leaving it from the left side we travelled on into Syria and landed at a place called Tyre, where our boat unloaded its cargo.”*

*Leaving it from the left side:* Historically, Cyprus was calmer on that side and better for sailing purposes. This is a historically accurate statement.

*Syria:* Syria was a big geographical area – Lebanon of today was part of Syria then.

**Verse 4:** *“Seeking disciples we remained there for seven days. Many who were with Paul were saying through the Spirit not to go up into Jerusalem.”*

*The Spirit:* The Holy Spirit was warning Paul that he was going to suffer in Jerusalem. The purpose was not for Paul to flee from this but rather to be spiritually prepared for it (Just like believers are going to need to be spiritually prepared in the last days for intense persecution)

*Up into Jerusalem:* This is a very Jewish way of speaking – it is spoken of as either going **up** to Jerusalem or down from Jerusalem (Jerusalem is always elevated).

**Verse 5:** *“When it came about that we completed the days there we went forth and we journeyed, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. We set our knees upon the shore and prayed.”*

*Set our knees:* An idiom meaning that they knelt down.

**Verse 6:** *“Having said Shalom to one another, we embarked into the boat and they returned to their own (home).”*

*Having said Shalom:* A farewell greeting

*They:* The believers that Paul, and those travelling with him, had lodged with for a period of time.

**Verse 7:** *“When we had completed the journey from Tyre we went down into a place called Ptolemais. We greeted the brethren and remained with them for a day.”*

*Ptolemais:* This is called Akko (Acre) today.

**Verse 8:** *“On the next day we departed, those who were accompanying Paul, and we came into Caesarea and entered into the house of Philip the Evangelist, being out of the seven. And we remained with him”*

*Out of the seven:* See Acts 6v3-6. Philip was one of the seven men (deacons) who were appointed to serve/minister to the needs of others within the congregation, so that the Apostles were able to focus on prayer and on the Word of G-d.

**Verse 9:** *“To this one there were four virgin daughters, and these were prophets.”*

*Four:* The number four relates to the world.

*Prophets:* The world was in opposition to what Paul was all about. More than likely what these four daughters were also confirming was the prophetic revelation that was being given to Paul by Agabus (see 21v11)

**Verse 10:** *“We remained many days and a certain one came down from Judea and he was a prophet by the name of Agabus.”*

**Verse 11:** *“Coming to us he lifted up the belt of Paul and he bound his hands and his feet, and he said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit: You are going to have your hands and your feet bound. This is what the Holy Spirit is saying - that the man whose is this belt thus the Judeans in Jerusalem they are going to bind and deliver you into the hands of the Gentiles.”*

*Lifted up:* This term oftentimes speaks of being lifted up for the purpose of crucifixion. This could be a reference to Paul being put to death, but it can also simply mean that Paul is going to be lifted up in order for him to testify, to speak truth.

*Judeans:* Not the Jewish people, by and large, but it is a term which speaks to the leadership of Israel.

*Bind:* Yeshua was not bound when He was arrested but when He was turned over to Pontius Pilate (the Roman authority) he was bound (Mark 15v1).

*Deliver you into the hands of the Gentiles:* Very similar to what happened to Yeshua.

**Verse 12:** *“And as we heard these things we, and all the ones in the place, encouraged that he should not go into Jerusalem.”*

*Encouraged:* Exhorted, Beseached



**Verse 13:** *“But Paul answered, ‘What are you doing crying and breaking my heart? For I am not only willing to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem. I have preparation by the name of the L-rd Yeshua.’”*

**Note:** Paul had discernment and understood that anything could happen to him among the nations. G-d had told him (Acts 9v15-16) that he was going to be proclaiming truth to the nations, to kings and leaders. Paul understood that this was going to be an opportunity for him to bear witness. Paul understood that he had been called to suffer.

*But:* In contrast to what everyone else was saying

*What are you doing crying and breaking my heart?:* Paul saw their love and concern. He understood that they were trying to encourage him to not go into Jerusalem. Paul also understood, though, that Agabus had come to prepare him for what he knew he needed to encounter. Paul did not see this as a message to flee but as a message to prepare himself for what G-d had called him to do.

*I have preparation:* Paul is saying that he has been prepared for this encounter. He is willing to suffer.

*The L-rd:* Paul understands that Messiah is the master and that he (Paul) is the servant.

**Verse 14:** *“But not convincing him we ceased and said, ‘The will of the L-rd may it be.’”*

*The will of the L-rd may it be:* This should have been their prayer for Paul and their response from the beginning. G-d's will is perfect and in the end what G-d has determined will be, but there are many things that happen in the world that G-d has no part of whatsoever (G-d did not want it, G-d did not cause it - but because of His sovereignty He allows it)

**Verse 15:** *“After these days we packed up and went up into Jerusalem.”*

*We packed up and went up:* They knew that there was going to be difficulty, however they did not withdraw but kept on travelling with Paul.

**Verse 16:** *“And came with us the disciples from Caesarea and they brought us to a certain one from Cyprus who we would be lodging with. His name was Mnason and he was a seasoned disciple.”*

*Seasoned disciple:* He had been a disciple for a long time.

**Verse 17:** *“Having arrived in Jerusalem the brethren received us with great joy.”*

**Verse 18:** *“On the next day Paul entered in with us to James, all the elders being present.”*

**Verse 19:** *“Greeting them he began to specify, according to each event, what G-d had done among the nations (Gentiles) and through his ministry.”*

*Began to specify:* Spoke in detail

**Verse 20:** *“And the ones having heard glorified the L-rd and they said also to him, ‘See brother how many mildreds there are of Jewish individuals having believed, **all** of them being zealous for the law.’”*

*The ones hearing:* All those elders who were with James.

*The L-rd:* It is emphasizing that when we are obedient, submissiveness, to His rule in our life we are going to have things to praise Him for.

*Brother:* They saw Paul as a fellow brother, a joint believer and joint worker in the call.

*Mildreds:* Ten thousands

*Believed:* They have believed the gospel message.

**All:** This is a normative response – which should be the case for all believers

*Zealous:* Passionate

*The law:* The foundation of the law (Torah) is love. Both the commandments in the Old and New Testament have the same purpose – to teach us what is right and what is wrong. They show us how to **behave** righteously – they do not show us how to become righteous, as that is by grace (the righteousness of Messiah is imputed to us by faith).

## **Chapter 21**

### **Part 2: Acts 21v21-40**

**Verse 21:** *“They have been informed concerning you that you teach apostasy, a departure from Moses, among all the Jews among the Gentiles saying, ‘Do not circumcise the children and nor should the Jews walk according to the custom.’”*

*They:* Those in Jerusalem

*Informed:* There is slander against Paul.

*Apostasy:* Heresy. A departure from that which is good to something that is false (see 2 Thessalonians 2v3 where this same word is used).

**Verse 22:** *“Therefore what it is concerning this, because all the multitude are going to come together for they heard that you have come.”*

*What it is:* The leaders have a solution to combat these false reports.

**Verse 23:** *“Therefore you do this that is what to you we say. For we have here four men having a vow upon themselves.”*

*What to you we say:* The leadership in Jerusalem is calling Paul to be submissive. They have revelation from G-d and they know what the situation is like in Jerusalem.

*We have:* Fellow believers

*Vow:* Probably a Nazarite vow (see chapter 18v18).

**Verse 24:** *“These take, and purify yourself with them and pay on behalf of them, in order that they might shave their heads and that all should know that what they have been informed concerning you that there is nothing to it, but that you conduct yourself keeping the law.”*

*Pay on behalf of them:* Sacrifices cost money. The leadership was telling Paul to refute these spurious claims in a very visible way.

**Verse 25:** *“And concerning the ones who believe among the nations (Gentiles) we have written, and we have judged none such things that they should keep except that they keep themselves from idolatry, from blood, from meat choked, and from fornication.”*

*We have judged none such things that they should keep:* It is not necessary for the Gentiles who are coming to faith to do these things – what we do does not make us more pleasing to G-d. It is only through the work of Messiah that we can be pleasing to G-d.

*Idolatry:* The pursuit of self, trying to justify that which is pleasing to self.

*Meat choked:* Animals that have been strangled.

*Fornication:* A general word for anything that is sexually immoral.

**Verse 26:** *“Then Paul took these men on the next day and with them he was purified, and he entered into the temple proclaiming the end of the days of purification until which an offering would be offered up on behalf of each of them.”*

*Offering:* This offering had nothing to do with sin. It was an offering offered up as a gift to G-d as way of blessing His name and blessing others. A portion of this offering would go towards supplying food for the workers in the temple and some would also be given to the poor.

**Verse 27:** *“When it was about seven days that they had come to an end the ones from the Asian Jews saw him in the temple and they stirred up all the crowd and they cast hands upon him.”*

**Verse 28:** *“Crying out, ‘Men and Israel, help! For this is the man against the people and the law and this place. Furthermore, everyone and every place he teaches that also still even the Greeks to bring into the temple in order to defile this holy place.’”*

**Note:** Paul loves his fellow Jews. He understands his call to go to the nations. Paul is someone who suffered for both Jew and Gentile. They are making a statement that Paul’s objective is to bring defilement. Paul's desire, however, is to bring truth that justifies.

**Verse 29:** *“For they had seen previously a man, Trophimus the Ephesian, who was in the city with Paul, whom they thought that he (Paul) had brought into the temple.”*

**Verse 30:** *“The whole city was stirred up and it came about that the people ran together and they grabbed Paul. They dragged him outside the temple and immediately the doors were closed.”*

*Note:* What they are doing is in violation of the protocol of the Sanhedrin. Under the Sanhedrin law Paul should have been judged correctly before hands were laid on him. They seized him based on an assumption.

**Verse 31:** *“They were seeking to kill him, but a report went up to the captain of the guard that the whole city of Jerusalem was stirred up.”*

**Verse 32:** *“Who (the captain) immediately took soldiers and centurions and he ran unto them. They, seeing the commander and the soldiers, stopped beating Paul.”*

The captain: This commander was very important as he even had centurions under his command.

*Beating:* These was not light disciplines, but they were giving him heavy blows with the intention to kill him.

**Verse 33:** *“The commander, entering in, seized him (Paul) and he commanded that he be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done.”*

*He inquired who he was and what he had done:* He wanted to get to the truth. G-d had supplied a man (put it upon his heart) that was interested in the truth and made decisions based upon that.

**Verse 34:** *“But others of the crowd proclaimed one thing and others another thing so that not being able to know the truth on account of this uproar. And He (the captain) commanded to bring him into the Citadel.”*

**Verse 35:** *“When he (Paul) became upon the stairs he was born by the soldiers on account of the violence of the crowd.”*

*Born:* Carried

*The violence of the crowd:* These people were meant to be submissive to the authority of G-d's Word, but they were not behaving in that way.

**Verse 36:** *“The multitude of the people followed after and they were crying out, ‘Lift him up.’”*

*Crying out:* A word of great emotion. The enemy likes emotion, the Holy Spirit likes truth. We need to make very sure that we are not led by our emotions but that our emotions are subjected to the truth of G-d.

*Lift him up:* A term of crucifixion. It was forbidden for a Jewish individual, or one that knew the truth of Scripture (being a non-Jew), to desire a punishment to be placed on another that would be torturous to that individual. There is no rejoicing or finding pleasure in the suffering of anyone. The fact that they were calling for crucifixion shows that these individuals were very unlearned in regard to the ways of Scripture and the protocol of the Sanhedrin.

**Verse 37:** *“They were about to bring him (Paul) into the Citadel, and he said to the captain, ‘Is it permissible for me to speak? I have something I want to say to you.’ The commander said, ‘Do you speak Greek?’”*

**Verse 38:** *“You are an Egyptian and a few days before this you caused an insurrection and you went out into the wilderness taking four thousand men, bandits?”*

*You are an Egyptian:* The captain thought Paul was a terrorist, the leader of an insurrection.

**Verse 39:** *“But Paul said, ‘I am a Jewish man, a citizen of Tarsus of Cilicia, which is not an insignificant city. I am seeking from you the permission to speak to the people.’”*

*Not an insignificant city:* It was a city under Roman jurisdiction.

**Verse 40:** *“Paul was given permission by him, and he stood once again upon those stairs and he gestured with his hand to the people and it came about much silence. He spoke before (them) in the Hebrew dialect.”*

*Much silence:* The silence enabled Paul to testify to this crowd.

*Spoke before:* He addressed the crowd

*The Hebrew dialect:* The fact that Paul could speak Hebrew showed that he was a learned Jewish man and he demonstrated his knowledge of the Word of G-d.

## **Chapter 22**

### **Part 1: Acts 22v1-16**

**Verse 1:** *“Men, brethren, and fathers listen to my defence before you now.”*

*Men:* Paul is speaking to the Roman Council

*Brethren:* He is addressing his fellow Jews.

*Fathers:* The term father is very significant as it speaks about faith and promise. Paul wants to reveal that he has faith in the promises of G-d.

*My defence:* Paul is making a defence against false accusations.

**Verse 2:** *“After hearing that in the Hebrew dialect he spoke to them all the more they became quiet and he spoke:”*

*Hebrew dialect:* Most people did not know Hebrew in a way that they could convey it to others. Greek and Aramaic were the colloquial languages. This revealed to the people that Paul was well trained in the faith of his fathers. He knew the language of Scripture.

**Verse 3:** *“I am a Jewish man and, having been born in Tarsus of Cilicia, I was raised up in this city at the feet of Gamliel and was taught according to the accuracy (exactness) in regard to the law of the fathers. Being zealous of G-d, just like all of you today.”*

*Tarsus of Cilicia:* This is in modern day Turkey, just above Cyprus and not far from the Mediterranean.

*At the feet:* Gamliel was Paul’s teacher. Many believe that this is a colloquium for the Hebrew term ‘yeshiva’ which is a Rabbinical College or Study Centre in Judaism.

*Gamliel:* All the people would have known this rabbinical leader. He was greatly respected by all who knew him.

*The law of the fathers:* This is not only a reference to the patriarchs but also through the spiritual fathers/leaders of Judaism through the generations. A lot of what would have been taught to Paul was not Biblical truth but tradition.

*Zealous of G-d:* Paul was passionate for G-d. He was committed to the G-d of Israel.

**Verse 4:** *“Whom this Way I persecuted even unto death. Binding and also delivering into the prison both men and also women,”*

*Persecuted:* Paul understands why they are persecuting him, as he had felt the same way (as they do now) before he had met Yeshua. Paul is going to show why he has changed and what brought about that transformation in his life.

*This Way:* This concept, Biblically speaking, goes back to Moses (Exodus 33v12-16). We see that this ‘Way’ has a connection to Messiah. The early believers were characterised by this name – they were called the people of the Way.

*Unto death:* Paul is confessing how zealous and committed to the law of the fathers he had been before he met Yeshua.

**Verse 5:** *“as also the high priest he testifies of me and all the council of elders. From which also, letters having been received in regard to the brethren, to Damascus I went to bring them into Jerusalem in order that they should be punished.”*

*He testifies of me:* Paul and the high priest, as well as the elders in the Sanhedrin, all knew each other.

*Letters having been received:* Paul asked for letters of permission, from the leadership of Jerusalem, to go to Damascus to arrest believers who had fled there due to persecution.

*Brethren:* believers

*Punished:* Paul wanted the believers to receive severe punishment. He gave his approval to the stoning and death of Stephen (Acts 7v60).

**Verse 6:** *“It came about when I was on the journey and coming near to Damascus, about noon. Suddenly out of the heavens a great light was shining around me.”*

*Suddenly:* Means without expectation.

*Noon:* When the sun is the brightest.

*Great light:* This was a unique light; not an earthly, normal light.

**Verse 7:** *“I fell to the ground and I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why Me you persecute?’”*

*Me:* Yeshua speaking

**Verse 8:** *“And I answered, ‘Who are you L-rd?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Yeshua of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.’”*

*L-rd:* A term of respect.

*Nazareth:* The root of this word means to guard, keep or watch. It is a word that speaks about obedience, but is also a word that speaks about a change. It can also be used in regard to a twig coming out of a stump. One that was lifeless for a long time, and was assumed dead, but then it shoots/branches out and springs to life. The work of Messiah is being manifested here, because life, out of death, is springing forth and He is the source of that life.

**Verse 9:** *“The ones with me being, the light they perceived (saw) and they became afraid. But the voice they did not hear speaking to me.”*

*The voice they did not hear speaking:* This was personal revelation. There was a testimony of this bright light, but they did not have the perception of what was being said.

**Verse 10:** *“And I said, ‘What do you want that I should do L-rd?’ And the L-rd said to me, ‘Rise up and go into Damascus. There, to you, it will be spoken concerning all which is appointed for you to do.’”*

*L-rd:* Now this time Paul, knowing who he is speaking to, addresses Yeshua as L-rd. It is very important to understand that Yeshua’s role in our lives is one of L-rd, Master, King.

L-rd is again repeated in this verse to show that the emphasis is on Yeshua being L-rd.

*Go into Damascus:* Paul was going to Damascus but now his purpose (and perspective) for going there has changed. When we have G-d’s perspective our purpose is going to change drastically.

*Appointed for you to do:* In Acts 9v15-16 the L-rd revealed to Ananias what His purpose for Paul was. Like us, he too was a chosen vessel with a specific calling. G-d is able to use us to impact others, that they might be brought into a Kingdom reality.

**Verse 11:** *“I could not see, because of the glory of that light, and I was taken by the hand, by those who were with me, into Damascus.”*

**Verse 12:** *“Ananias, a G-dly and pious man according to the law, being testified by all the Jews who dwelt there.”*

*Ananias:* He discipled Paul (See also Acts 9v10-19)

*Pious man according to the law:* Ananias was a man who took the commandments of G-d seriously, applying Biblical truth to his life.

*Being testified:* He had a good testimony, according to the Torah, before others.

**Verse 13:** *“He came to me and he stood, and he said to me, ‘Brother Saul, regain your sight. And I, that same hour, saw him.’”*

*Regain:* The word used here means ‘to look’. It is a play on words and what it is saying is that Paul needed to see things correctly, to look upward or to have a heavenly perspective/vision. If we have been saved by G-d's grace, and the blood of Messiah has redeemed us from all sin, we are going to see things differently – have a new perspective. We will be filled with joy, no matter the circumstances, as we walk out the purposes of G-d in our lives.

**Verse 14:** *“And he said, ‘The G-d of our fathers he has chosen you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and hear the voice from His mouth.’”*

*The G-d of our fathers:* Speaking about the patriarchs. With this new vision Paul could see the covenantal promises of G-d that now gave him direction in his life.

*Chosen you to know His will:* It is only when we have a desire for the promises of G-d and we begin to pursue those promises then G-d will make known to us His will (what He desires of us). Pursuing the promises of G-d gives our lives direction, and also an understanding of G-d's will.

*See the Righteous One:* When we know G-d's will we can behold/have a right perspective to see and know the Righteous One – Messiah. We want to grow in a greater understanding of His identity and get to know Him in fullness.

**Verse 15:** *“You will be a witness of Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.”*

*All men:* Not just to one cultural group but to all men.

**Verse 16:** *“Now why do you delay? Rise up! Be baptised, washing your sin away - having called upon the name of the L-rd.”*

*Why do you delay?:* Messiah is using Ananias to encourage Paul to act.

*Rise up!:* This is in the past tense. It is almost as though Paul has already risen up but is delaying doing something.

*Be baptised:* This is also written in the past tense. This means that it can speak of past time or it can speak of that which is in its entirety. Baptism testifies of the death, burial, and resurrection of Messiah.

*Washing your sin away:* Baptism is a picture of our sins being washed away, however, in reality, it is not the act of immersion that cleanses us.

**Note:** In Luke 12v50 Yeshua said He had a baptism to undergo. He was not talking about His baptism in the Jordan river (which happened in His past) but He was speaking about something yet future for Him to do. The idea here is that Paul's baptism testifies of what he has already believed in.



It is a testimony of Paul's faith - his previous faith- in the death, burial, and resurrection of Messiah. That is why it speaks about his sin being washed away in the past tense. The moment Paul believed his sins were washed away. Baptism testifies of ones faith in Messiahs ministry and also testifies of the outcome of that faith – i.e. sins being washed away.

*Having called:* Having been written in the past tense this can relate to something that is over and done with but can also relate to that which is in its entirety, wholeness, completion. Paul had already called on the name of the L-rd and it is because he had already done that he was baptised (As a testimony that he had called on the name of the L-rd).

## **Chapter 22**

### **Part 2: Acts 22v17-30**

**Verse 17:** *“It came about when I turned into Jerusalem and I was praying in the temple that I was in a trance.”*

*Trance:* The Greek word sounds like ‘ecstasy’. What Paul is speaking about is the joy experienced from being in G-d's presence.

**Verse 18:** *“I saw Him speaking to me and He said, ‘Make haste and go forth quickly from Jerusalem, because they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.’”*

*Me:* Yeshua

**Verse 19:** *“I said, ‘L-rd, they understand that I was imprisoning and beating in each synagogue the ones who were believing in You.’”*

*Understand:* Perceiving or knowing something. It is a word that means literally to stand upon. There is a foundation for what is being said – they know that what Paul is saying is true because there is something that establishes this point.

**Verse 20:** *“And when the blood of Stephen your servant was poured out and was standing and giving approval with the ones who were killing him, and I kept the garments of the ones who killed him.”*

*Poured out:* Stephen offered up his life as a sacrifice – not for sin, but in a similar way to a thanksgiving offering being offered up.

*Giving approval:* Paul agreed with the punishment that Stephen was receiving.

**Verse 21:** *“He said to me, ‘Go; because I, for faraway nations, will send you.’”*

*Faraway nations:* The word order places emphasis on the faraway nations. The leaders of the Jewish community did not like Paul's message to be spoken to the Jewish community, let alone

to the Gentile community! The leaders, then, would have said that a Gentile would have to convert and become a Jew first if he was going to be able to have access to the promises, the blessings, the purposes, the benefits of a covenant relationship with G-d. Paul was teaching that the promises of G-d were not only for the Jewish people but were for All flesh.

**Verse 22:** *“They heard him up until this word and when they heard this word they lifted up their voices saying, ‘Lift from the ground this one, for he is not fit to live.’”*

*Heard:* They were listening to him.

*Lift from the ground:* This is a reference to crucifixion.

**Verse 23:** *“Crying out and ripping their garments, they cast up dust into the air.”*

**Note:** This shows how out of control this mob is.

**Verse 24:** *“The captain commanded that he should be brought into the Citadel saying that he should be interrogated by flogging, in order that he might know on account of the reason that thus they were lifting up their voices concerning him.”*

*Captain:* The word here means a ruler of a thousand. This man had authority of at least a thousand soldiers.

*Brought into the Citadel:* There was chaos taking place outside, so the captain wanted Paul to be taken away from the masses into a place where things could be done properly according to the Roman way of doing things.

*Flogging:* For floggings, a stick with leather straps is used. In those leather straps are pieces of metal, glass, bone etc. in order to beat someone’s flesh and rip it open.

*Interrogated:* This word, more often than not, implies getting information out of someone in a torturous way.

**Verse 25:** *“When they had bound him with straps Paul said to the Centurion standing, ‘If a Roman man, and that one being uncondemned, is it lawful for you to flog?’”*

*Bound him:* The implication is he has been bound in order to be flogged.

*The Centurion:* (Like we see with Yeshua in Luke 23v47) He was there in order to oversee this flogging.

*Roman man:* Paul had Roman citizenship.

**Verse 26:** *“When the Centurion heard this he went and he proclaimed to that captain saying, ‘Watch out what you are doing. For this man is a Roman citizen.’”*

*Roman citizen:* As a Roman citizen Paul was allowed passage through places and also the privileges of a Roman citizen -i.e. one of these privileges being that there is no condemnation until one has had a fair trial and has been proven guilty.

**Verse 27:** *“The commander went before Paul and said to him, ‘Tell me, are you a Roman?’ He (Paul) answered ‘Yes.’”*

**Verse 28:** *“And the captain answered, ‘With a great sum (of money) I acquired this citizenship. But Paul said, ‘I was born.’”*

**Note:** The captain paid for his citizenship and he knows the value and benefits of being a citizen. It is not something that he takes for granted.

**Born:** In contrast to the captain (who had to purchase citizenship) Paul was born a citizen. G-d had positioned Paul in a place of preference so that Paul was able to do what G-d wanted him to do.

**Verse 29:** *“Therefore immediately they went away from him, the ones who were about to flog him. The commander became afraid as he knew that he (Paul) was a Roman and had also been bound.”*

**Went away from him:** It was against Roman law to flog someone who had not yet been condemned in the proper way.

**Bound:** Being bound like that was a humiliation and the captain was greatly afraid because before he had done anything he should have known who he was dealing with and not acted on assumption.

**Verse 30:** *“On the next day, wanting to know absolutely why the Judeans had accused him, he freed him from these bonds, and he commanded that the high priests and the entire Sanhedrin come. And he brought Paul and stood him before them.”*

**Brought Paul and stood him before them:** Paul is given another opportunity to testify about Messiah Yeshua - exactly what Ananias had said, that he was going to speak and reveal truth before kings and leaders in many nations. This is all being fulfilled.

G-d takes His truth and gives it to people, presenting it to them so as to make them aware of it (Matthew 24v14). This speaks of G-d's faithfulness.

## **Chapter 23**

### **Part 1: Acts 23v1-15**

**Verse 1:** *“Paul looking at the Sanhedrin said, ‘Men, brothers, I in all good conscience was a citizen before G-d, and this is the case until this day.’”*

**Looking:** Gazing – the implication of that word is to look with great intent.

**Sanhedrin:** Paul was testifying in front of the Jewish leaders as well as the Roman authorities.

**Men:** A term of respect -we might translate it ‘gentlemen’.

**Brothers:** A term of endearment.

*Good conscience:* Paul believes with all of his heart that he is not guilty of what he is being accused of.

*Citizen before G-d:* Paul understood the commonwealth of the Kingdom of G-d. Being a citizen of the commonwealth of Israel, the people of G-d, Paul was declaring that he had been, before G-d, a faithful citizen. Before Paul's Damascus road experience, he believed (wrongly) that he was committed to G-d but he had a fervency for the things of G-d. That fervency for G-d remained a reality in Paul's life after his conversion.

**Verse 2:** *"But the high priest Ananias commanded the one standing near Paul to strike his mouth."*

*But:* A word that shows a contrast.

*Strike his mouth:* Ananias did not accept what Paul was saying.

**Verse 3:** *"Then Paul said to him, 'G-d is about to strike you, you whitewashed wall. You sit judging according to the law but you, transgressing the law, command for me to be smacked.'"*

*Paul said:* Paul did not know that Ananias was the high priest, he simply thought he was a member of the Sanhedrin. Paul was well acquainted with the protocol of the Sanhedrin - what they could and could not do. This is another important element in showing the corruption of the Sanhedrin.

*Whitewashed wall:* A whitewashed wall may look good on the outside, but the plaster used for whitewashing covered up the real condition of the wall. Neither the structure nor the internal condition of the wall changes. Paul was saying that this man may have looked spiritual on the outside, in his fine garments and because of his position in the Sanhedrin, but inwardly he was corrupt.

*Judging according to the law:* Those in the Sanhedrin were meant to judge others based upon the law of G-d as revealed in the Torah.

**Verse 4:** *"The ones standing said, 'The high priest of G-d you insult.'"*

**Verse 5:** *"Paul said, 'I did not know brethren that he is the high priest, for it is written: A ruler of your people you shall not speak of evil concerning him.'"*

*I did not know:* Paul did not know that Ananias was the high priest. Secondly he could also be saying how far removed this man was from giving the appearance of being the high priest. Paul spoke against the high priest without intent, without knowledge.

*A ruler of your people you shall not speak evil concerning him:* Quoted from Exodus 22v28

**Note:** Paul showed, by quoting this verse, that he did not desire to violate Scripture. This lays a foundation for understanding that what he has been accused of (doing things against the purpose, will, and truth of G-d) is in contradiction to what he believes. Therefore, revealing that he is being falsely accused.

**Verse 6:** *“But Paul knowing that one part (of the Sanhedrin) is the Sadducees, and the other part is the Pharisees he cried out in the midst of them, ‘Men, brothers; I am a Pharisee, a son of a Pharisee. Concerning hope and concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged.’”*

*But:* Paul is keenly aware of the circumstance he finds himself in before the Sanhedrin. He understands, having spoken unkindly to the high priest, that things are going against him. Paul, therefore, wants to move things in a different direction.

*Son of a Pharisee:* Speaking here about his heritage.

**Note:** Paul is going to drive a wedge between these two groups - the Pharisees and the Sadducees. He has confessed he is a Pharisee, so he aligns himself with this group within the political makeup of the Sanhedrin. Although the Pharisees were the minority they tended to be the most vocal, the most emotional, the ones who were full of fire, enthusiasm, and passion about their position.

*Hope:* Hope is related to the future promises of G-d. Paul is testifying of his faith in a future Kingdom.

**Note:** The Sadducees did not believe in an active G-d. They believed that G-d created things, gave us a rulebook, and then stepped away. They did not believe in the afterlife and nor did they believe in the spirituality of this world. They saw it as very secular. They acknowledged that there was a G-d but they did not see Him playing a role in the day-to-day events.

**Verse 7:** *“After saying this it came about a large dissension among the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the multitude was divided.”*

**Verse 8:** *“For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, there are no angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees confess both these things.”*

*No resurrection:* No afterlife

*No angels:* Meaning G-d's not involved in this world.

*Nor spirits:* Meaning there is nothing within us - we were created and when we die we die.

*Both these things:* The Pharisees believed in everlasting life, as well as that G-d has activity and influence in the world.

**Verse 9:** *“And it came about a large cry. Standing up one of the scribes from the Pharisees contended saying, ‘We find nothing evil in this man. What if, really, a spirit has spoken to him or an angel? We do not want to be contending against G-d.’”*

**Note:** The Pharisee was saying that what Paul had shared about his Damascus Road experience had maybe come from an angel and maybe was indeed revelation from G-d, in which case they needed to accept it.

**Verse 10:** *“And there came about much contention. The captain was afraid that Paul was going to be torn into pieces by them, therefore he commanded the soldiers to go down and to snatch him away from the midst of them and bring him into the citadel.”*

*Snatch him away:* This word comes from the same origin as the Greek word for rapture - being gathered up very quickly and intensely.

**Verse 11:** *“That coming night the L-rd stood over him and said, ‘Take courage! For thoroughly you have testified concerning me in Jerusalem. Thus, it is absolutely necessary for you also into Rome to testify.’”*

*Coming night:* The same day, but in the night.

*Take courage:* Very reminiscent of what G-d told Joshua in Joshua 1v6-9

*Into Rome to testify:* Paul had been sovereignly chosen by G-d in order to begin to influence the Roman Empire – in other words to change the world.

**Verse 12:** *“When it came about day there were certain ones from the Judeans that conspired, and they took an oath upon themselves saying not to eat nor to drink until they should kill Paul.”*

*They took an oath:* Implying that if this oath were not fulfilled by them they would be under a curse.

*Not to eat nor to drink:* Paul is speaking truth and the enemy hates truth. When we walk in obedience and are an instrument of the Word of G-d the enemy hates that and therefore he will move against us.

**Verse 13:** *“There were more than forty of these that made this conspiracy (plot)”*

*Forty:* Forty is a number of change, transition. There is now going to be a transition away from Jerusalem and a moving into the nations. This is all part of G-d's sovereign plan - that the gospel began in Jerusalem, spread into Judea and Samaria and now was moving into the nations and into the outermost parts of the earth.

**Note:** This is another protocol of the Sanhedrin not being followed. Whenever rules are not followed, whenever there is a corruption in the recognized process, it is because people are not faithful people and they do not trust G-d.

**Verse 14:** *“So they came to the high priests and to the elders and they said, ‘We have taken an oath upon ourselves nothing to taste until we should kill Paul.’”*

*Came to the high priests:* They had access to the priests so, even if they were not all part of the Sanhedrin, they were men of influence.

*High priests and to the elders:* This plot is going to be known and supported by the high priests and the elders demonstrating the corruption of the leadership of Israel. This has happened because they have moved away from the commandments. For decades prior to this they had embraced the traditions of the elders and moved away from the Word of G-d (Matthew 15v6).

*Kill Paul:* The Sanhedrin, under the Roman Empire, had the ability to put a Jew to death -they could not put a Roman citizen to death though.

These people were not functioning according to Sanhedrin protocol – they did not finish the trial in order to judge fairly (based on the law) and had decided to take matters into their own hands.

**Verse 15:** *“Therefore now, you manifest to the captain and to the Sanhedrin thus tomorrow that when you bring him down to you as intending to investigate more thoroughly the things concerning him. But we will be before where he comes near, and we will be ready to kill him.”*

*Manifest:* Make known to the captain (the commander over 1000 men)

*Investigate:* Interrogate. They wanted the Sanhedrin to get permission from the Roman official to take Paul once again before the Sanhedrin on the pretence of reinvestigating him.

*Ready to kill:* See Psalm 59v3-5

**Note:** When we take things into our own hands and violate Biblical principles, rather than waiting for the righteous judgement of G-d to be demonstrated, we show a total and absolute lack of faith. That is what these men were demonstrating.

## **Chapter 23**

### **Part 2: Acts 23v16-35**

**Verse 16:** *“The son of Paul's sister when he heard of this ambush he went and entered into the Citadel and proclaimed it to Paul.”*

**Verse 17:** *“Paul, calling over one of the centurions, said, ‘This young man bring to the commander for he has something to proclaim to him.’”*

*Young man:* Probably in his early teens.

**Note:** It would be normal to assume that the centurion would not take an order from his prisoner, but again we see G-d’s providence in providing a man who was willing to listen to Paul and respond (submit) appropriately.

**Verse 18:** *“Therefore he took him and brought him to the commander and said, ‘The prisoner, Paul, has called me to ask this young man to be brought to you having something to say to you.’”*

*Prisoner:* The one who is in bondage.

**Verse 19:** *“And taking him by the hand the commander removed him by himself in order to examine: ‘What it is that you have to proclaim to me?’”*

*Taking him by the hand:* Showing how young the boy was.

**Verse 20:** *“He said, ‘The Judeans have agreed in order to ask you that tomorrow into the Sanhedrin that you would bring down Paul intending to inquire more thoroughly concerning him.’”*

**Verse 21:** *“Therefore do not be persuaded by them for they are lying in wait for him and from them there is more than forty individuals who have taken a vow upon themselves that they should not eat nor drink until which they had put him to death. Now they are prepared, and they are waiting from you a promise.”*

**Note:** To move Paul to a meeting room for the Sanhedrin would not have required many guards to guard him.

**Vow:** They had a very committed desire to put Paul to death.

**Promise:** Meaning an agreement

**Verse 22:** *“Therefore the commander dismissed the young man and he commanded, ‘Say nothing concerning these things that you reported to me.’”*

**Verse 23:** *“Calling two certain centurions he said, ‘Prepare two hundred soldiers so that they are able to go unto Caesarea, and also seventy horses and also two hundred soldiers that have a spear, beginning at the third hour of the night.’”*

**Two:** The number two shows two opposing opinions. This number instructs us that this captain is not going to agree with those who had this plot of ambush. They had their intent, but the commander had a different intent.

**Seventy:** The number seventy has to do with purpose - being set apart for a reason.

**Third hour of the night:** Nine o'clock in the evening.

**Verse 24:** *“Prepare a mount for Paul that he might be set upon it and that he would go to safety to Felix the governor.”*

**Safely:** The commander wants Paul to be thoroughly safe. He is sending approximately 500 men to move Paul from Jerusalem to Caesarea (out of a Jewish city and into a Roman one). Paul would be more secure, for instead of being tried by the Sanhedrin he would be tried by a Roman Court.

**Verse 25:** *“He wrote an epistle containing this matter.”*

**Epistle:** Greek word for letter

**Verse 26:** *“Claudius Lysias, To the most excellent Governor Felix: Grace.”*

**Claudius Lysias:** This is a term speaking of a Roman tribunal in Jerusalem. The captain is writing as the head of it, as it represents his command.

**Grace:** A term that meant “greetings”.



**Verse 27:** *“This man having been seized by the Judeans and intending to be killed by them I was observing this with the soldiers, and I saved him learning that he is Roman.”*

*Judeans:* Certain leaders of the Jewish people.

*Observing:* Standing over this matter

*Roman:* Roman laws are extended to those who are citizens. Romans had additional rights that afforded them more privilege.

**Verse 28:** *“Wanting to know the charges by which they condemned (accused) him I brought him to the Sanhedrin.”*

*Sanhedrin:* The Jewish council who dealt with the Jewish people as their own law determined. Often the Romans would not interfere/get involved with this process of Jewish law as long as it did not involve their own Roman citizens.

**Verse 29:** *“Whom I found the charges (accusations) concerning questions of their law, nothing worthy of death or bonds -having no such charges.”*

*Questions:* These were doubtful issues. They were not clearly defined.

*Their law:* Paul was not being accused of anything against the Roman law.

*Nothing worthy of death or bonds:* Meaning there was no reason, from a Roman standpoint, that this man should be in prison and certainly no reason to be put to death.

**Verse 30:** *“But having been disclosed to me a plot against this man at once I sent (him) to you. Also commanding the ones who have these charges that they would also speak those things against him before you. Farewell.”*

**Note:** The commander took this matter away from Jerusalem and presented it to Felix the governor. He sent Paul safely there, with an enormous amount of security. This shows how serious the threat really was.

*The ones who have these charges:* The ones who had these charges against Paul were free to go and present them before Governor Felix.

**Verse 31:** *“The soldiers, according to them being commanded, took Paul and brought him through the night unto a place called Antipatris.”*

*Antipatris:* This is also a Roman stronghold. Caesarea was approximately 90kilometres (50miles) from Jerusalem and could not be reached within a day.

**Verse 32:** *“On the next day he allowed the horsemen to go with him, but the rest returned into the Citadel.”*

*Horsemen:* The seventy horseman

**Verse 33:** *“These, entering into Caesarea, gave the epistle to the governor and they also presented Paul to him.”*

**Verse 34:** *“The governor read (the letter) and he asked from which Province he was. It was revealed to him that it was from Cilicia”*

**Verse 35:** *“He said, ‘I will thoroughly listen to you whenever also the ones, who have made charges against you, arrive. He commanded him to be kept in Herod’s judgement hall.”*

*Thoroughly listen:* Governor Felix was going to give Paul a fair trial.

*Judgement hall:* Paul was kept under arrest, in Herod's judgement Hall in Caesarea, while he waited for his accusers to arrive in Caesarea.

## **Chapter 24**

### **Part 1: Acts 24v1-16**

**Verse 1:** *“After five day the high priest Ananias went down with the elders of the people, also an orator (named)Tertullus. For he reported to the governor against Paul.”*

*The high priest Ananias:* He went to influence the proceedings.

*The elders:* These were the elders of Jerusalem - the most influential men in leadership positions within Jerusalem, Israel.

*Orator:* He is someone who is gifted in speech. They wanted someone eloquent in order to represent their case so that they might have the best chance of accomplishing what they wanted to accomplish in these proceedings – to see Paul put to death.

*Reported to the governor against Paul:* The orator’s purpose was to speak against Paul - not representing the facts.

**Verse 2:** *“And when he (Tertullus) was called he began to accuse saying, ‘Much peace being obtained through you and coming about by means of reforms to this nation on account of your foreknowledge.”*

*Accuse:* In order to bring condemnation upon.

**Note:** Tertullus is flattering this judge (Felix)

*Foreknowledge:* Foreknowledge is a word usually associated with G-d. Tertullus is playing into the Roman culture as the Romans believed that great men were like gods. Instead of speaking truth, concerning the Word of G-d and emphasizing that G-d alone is to be worshipped, praised and honoured, he speaks these words of flattery in order to manipulate these proceedings.

**Verse 3:** “All (people) and everywhere we have received, most Excellent Felix, with all thanksgiving.”

*Thanksgiving:* This is another word that is used primarily in regard to G-d.

**Note:** Tertullus continues trying to flatter and endear himself to Felix.

*Excellent:* This is a word that speaks of power, usually associated with the supremacy or sovereignty of G-d.

**Verse 4:** “But in order not upon much of a hindrance (interruption) I beseech you to hear us briefly in regard to this uprightness.”

*Hear us briefly:* Tertullus is telling Felix that it is not necessary for this case to take up a lot of Felix’s time.

*Uprightnes:* Tertullus and the religious leaders think that their cause against Paul is upright.

**Verse 5:** “For we found this man a nuisance and a mover of a rebellion against the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect.”

*This man:* Referring to Paul

*Nuisance:* Paul emphasized the purposes of G-d and these individuals were not interested in the purposes of G-d.

*Mover:* Kinesis/Kinetic (energy) – the movement of things

*Rebellion:* This was a red-flag word among the Romans. Even the thought of a threat of rebellion would cause the Romans to respond harshly. Tertullus is trying to stir up negativity in Felix toward Paul.

*Nazarene sect:* Believers who believe in Yeshua from Nazareth. Nazareth comes from a Hebrew term which means *to keep* (the things of G-d). It can be translated as an idiom, which speaks to saying ‘no’ to the temptations of the enemy. It was a sect within Judaism.

**Verse 6:** “Who also tried to pollute the temple and whom also we seized him. According to our law we wanted to judge him.”

**Verse 7:** “But Lysias the leader of the battalion, with much violence, from our hands he took him away.”

*But:* In contrast to what they wanted to do (In the past the Sanhedrin had taken people who they had claimed were rebellious, law breakers, a threat to Rome and they had tried them and dealt with them accordingly. They considered themselves to be helping Rome)

*Lysias:* This is the name of a Roman battalion, although some interpret this to be the name of the leader.

*Much violence:* Tertullus is telling Felix that the Roman military in Jerusalem came against them causing them to suffer unnecessarily. The implication was that they were just trying to put down an insurrection, in order to be of help to Rome, and they had been prevented from doing this.

**Verse 8:** *“Therefore he (the commander) commanded the ones accusing him (Paul) to come unto you for which you are able yourself to judge concerning all these things you know being, that we are accusing him.”*

**Note:** Tertullus is trying to set things up in order that Paul would be condemned and ultimately put to death.

**Verse 9:** *“And also the Jews they have agreed, and they certify these things thus to be.”*

*The Jews:* The Judeans (the leaders). They were in good standing with the Roman empire and the Empire kept them in power. They were allowed to rule and control the Jewish populace.

**Verse 10:** *“But Paul answered, after giving a sign to him by the governor to speak, ‘For many years you being judge of this nation and with understanding. I stand with great joy concerning these things myself to make a defence.’”*

**Note:** Paul does not have an expensive lawyer or the counsel of the elders, but Paul has the most wonderful counsellor of all – the Holy Spirit.

*Understanding:* This word literally means ‘to stand upon something’, in this case Felix stands upon the facts and this gives him understanding.

*Judge of this nation:* One of the positive things about the Roman Empire was their court/system of justice.

*Stand with great joy:* Paul rejoices and is comforted with the fact that he is allowed to defend himself.

**Verse 11:** *“You will be able to know that not more than twelve days ago I was in the temple when I came up to pray in Jerusalem.”*

*Will be able to know:* He was not talking about something that happened a long time before.

**Verse 12:** *“Not in the temple did they find me in a dialogue or disputing with anyone or making an uprising. Nor in the synagogues, nor against any city.”*

**Verse 13:** *“And they are not able to prove concerning which now they accuse me of.”*

*Not able to prove:* Paul understands Roman law and that evidence needs to be produced.

**Verse 14:** *“But I confess this to you that according to the Way, which they call a sect, thus I worship the Father G-d, believing all things according to the Torah and the prophets which has been written.”*

*The Way:* See Acts 19v9

*They call a sect:* They call it a heresy and inappropriate. They do not call it a different religion, they recognise that it is part of Judaism but in a cultish way. They did not realise that it was the fulfilment of prophetic Judaism.

*Worship the Father G-d:* It is only when we are walking with The Way (Messiah) that we can experience Father G-d.

**Verse 15:** *“Having hope in G-d, which these same ones (meaning the Judeans) also have. Waiting to receive the resurrection which will be of the dead, both of the righteous and the unrighteous.”*

*Resurrection:* Paul has a Kingdom hope. The resurrection is the transition between this life and the coming Kingdom.

*The righteous and the unrighteous:* Daniel 12v2 Paul was a man of the Word of G-d and understood the truth of Scripture. He always put things in light of G-d’s Word.

**Verse 16:** *“And this I strive for: wanting to have a clean conscience before G-d and before men through all.”*

*Clean conscience:* If we truly believe in the resurrection, our faith, in a coming Kingdom, is going to produce a desire and a striving to live before G-d and before others in a holy, righteous, and pleasing way.

*Through all:* In regard to everything.

## **Chapter 24**

### **Part 2: Acts 24v17-27**

**Verse 17:** *“Throughout many years I have come making donations on behalf of my people and also offerings.”*

*Throughout many years:* Paul is not speaking of going into Jerusalem as a one-time occurrence after an absence of many years. Paul’s manner of conduct was to go year in and year out to Jerusalem.

*Making donations:* Paul would go to Jerusalem in order to donate money (presumably from himself, but he would also take money from others- 1 Corinthians 16v1-4) for the work (to the poor, the orphans and the widows) that was done by the Levites there, as well as to pay for the daily *offerings* and the holiday sacrifices that were offered up on behalf of the people each day. (Deuteronomy 16v16-17)

*On behalf of my people:* Paul was faithful, and he demonstrated this by being concerned for his people (the Jewish people). He was not against the Jewish people and nor was he uninterested in proper worship. The behaviour he demonstrated was within the boundaries of G-d’s will.

**Verse 18:** *“In whom certain Jews from Asia found me - having been purified in the temple. Without any crowd, as they say, and not in some uproar.”*

*Having been purified:* Paul is an individual that cares about ceremonial purity. This was an important part of being able to worship G-d. If Paul had had Gentiles in that location with him that would have brought impurity.

**Verse 19:** *“Whom it is necessary before you for them to be, and make their accusations - if they have- against me.”*

*Whom:* Speaking about these Jews from Asia who had gone up for the festival as well. They were the ones who had made the charges against Paul and caused him to be arrested, and so they should have been the ones giving their testimony as eyewitnesses of what had happened.

**Verse 20:** *“These same ones let them say if they have found anything unrighteous in me. These who have stood me before the Sanhedrin.”*

*Unrighteous:* Paul is wanting to know if his accusers find anything spiritually wrong with what he has said or done.

*Sanhedrin:* Paul recognized the corruption in the purposes of the Sanhedrin. Now they wanted him back in order that they might put him to death - not as a consequence, however, of being convicted through a trial (under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin)

**Verse 21:** *“I proclaimed standing among them concerning the resurrection of the dead therefore I am being judged today before you.”*

*Concerning the resurrection of the dead:* Paul is telling Felix that it was because of this statement that he was on trial before him on that day. This says a great deal about the spiritual condition of Israel at this time. The leadership of the Sanhedrin (mainly comprised of Sadducees) did not like what Paul was revealing about the Messiah (His purpose, work, and Kingdom) as they rejected a Kingdom reality. Paul angered the Sadducees when he spoke about his belief in the resurrection (See Acts 23v6-10).

**Verse 22:** *“Felix heard these things and he deferred them because he knew very well concerning The Way. He spoke and he said, ‘Whenever Lysias, the commander, comes down he will thoroughly make known what the things against you are.’”*

*He deferred them:* He was not interested in this religious debate

*He knew very well:* Felix was a political leader and needed to know what went on in his jurisdiction. He knew about the believers and he understood the tension that came about between these believers and the standard Jewish community (Neither the Pharisees nor the Sadducees liked them).

*Lysias, the commander:* The captain in Jerusalem who has protected Paul and who is concerned about justice.

**Verse 23:** *“And he (Felix) commanded the centurion to keep Paul but also to have it lighter and not to forbid those of his own that they should minister to and visit him.”*

*Have it lighter:* To have a bit more liberty. He is going to still be held in prison, but he is not going to be afflicted.

*Those of his own:* Meaning his friends or fellow believers.

**Verse 24:** *“After a certain number of days Felix arrived with Drusilla his wife, she being Jewish. And having sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith **in** Messiah.”*

*In Messiah:* Paul did not speak about faith relating to Messiah or about Messiah, but he spoke about faith **IN** Messiah. Being in Messiah is a term that relates to a covenant. We can only be in a right relationship with G-d by means of a covenant. In verse 21 Paul spoke about the fact that **everyone** who has died is going to be resurrected. Everyone needs to know that when they die it is not the end.

**Verse 25:** *“Paul spoke thoroughly concerning righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment that is to be. Felix became afraid and he answered, ‘Enough for now. Go! At a more opportune time I will call you.’”*

*Righteousness:* Faith in Messiah produces obedience in our lives.

*Self-control:* If we are going to live righteously we have to learn how to control ourselves.

**Note:** For those who are in Messiah we have a hope in the Kingdom to come BUT being in Messiah also has a present-day reality. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives helps us to demonstrate self-control and live righteously.

*Coming judgment that is to be:* Paul is speaking dogmatically, boldly, and confidently that there is indeed a Judgment Day coming. G-d does judge, and we are going to have to give an account for our lives after we die. The only way that we can come through this judgement is if we are **IN** Messiah. He will defend us saying that the punishment for our sins has already been paid for by His death on the cross. When we believed in Him He imputed to us (placed on us) His righteousness and these sins will never again be remembered by G-d.

**Verse 26:** *“Many times he did call Paul and would speak to him, hoping that money would be given to him by Paul in order that he should release him.”*

*Release him:* Set him free

**Note:** Felix did not care about justice or that there was a person in prison who was innocent. What he was interested in was money. Paul was not going to participate in a wicked system and pay a bribe.

**Verse 27:** *“When two years had been fulfilled Felix received his successor – Porcius Festus. Wanting to do a favour to the Judeans Felix left Paul having been bound.”*

*Successor:* The person who was going to take over this role after him.

*Felix left Paul:* The last thing that Felix did was to give the order that Paul be left in prison - but this time having been bound/chained.

*Having been bound:* Prior to this, Paul had had a lighter sentence with people allowed to visit and minister to him. It seems like this privilege came to an end when Festus took over.

## **Chapter 25**

### **Part 1: Acts 25v1-12**

**Verse 1:** *“Therefore Festus came into the province and after three days he went up into Jerusalem from Caesarea.”*

*Three:* The number three is for the purpose of revealing something.

**Verse 2:** *“The high priest and the chief ones of the Judeans manifested these charges against him (Paul) and they were seeking him.”*

*Seeking him:* They were wanting Festus to agree to turn Paul over to them.

**Verse 3:** *“Asking a favour against him (Paul) so that he (Festus) should send him (Paul) into Jerusalem in order that they might make an ambush to kill him **on the way.**”*

*Asking a favour:* This implies that the merit/legitimacy of their case was not proper.

*Into Jerusalem:* They wanted Paul to be sent back to them so that they could do what they desired to do and that is to kill him.

*Ambush:* Implies something that does not have integrity. They know they cannot win in a trial before the Sanhedrin and also not before the Roman Authority, so they want to take matters into their own hands.

**On the way:** They wanted to kill Paul because he was walking in the Way, in Messiah.

**Verse 4:** *“Festus answered to keep Paul in Caesarea, but he himself was about quickly going to go.”*

*Quickly going to go:* Festus went into Jerusalem, but he did not intend to stay long and wanted to go quickly back to Caesarea.

**Verse 5:** (Festus speaking): *“Therefore the ones who are able, who are among you, let them go down with me and if there is something wrong with this man let them accuse him (at Caesarea).”*

(At Caesarea): Festus is saying that there is going to be a Roman trial, and this bodes well for Paul.



**Verse 6:** *“Spending some time with them, more than ten days, and then he went down into Caesarea. On the next day he sat upon the Bema and he commanded that Paul be brought forward.”*

*More than ten days:* As per the Masoretic text. The purpose is that maybe they might have done something in order to cause Festus to do something differently. Festus had said he wanted to go back to Caesarea quickly (v4) so we need to ask ourselves why he delayed for a further ten days in Jerusalem.

*The Bema:* The Judgement seat

**Verse 7:** *“And when he (Paul) arrived the Judeans who had come down from Jerusalem (to Caesarea) many and weighty accusations were brought against Paul, but they were not able to prove.”*

*Weighty accusations:* Either serious accusations or they were very specific in their detail. Just like they did with Yeshua they tried to give the appearance that Paul was dangerous and that he had committed horrible crimes. They wanted a serious punishment placed upon him.

*They were not able to prove:* They could not show any evidence of their charges/indictments against Paul.

**Verse 8:** *“And he (Paul) answering that not against the law of the Judeans, not against the temple and not against Caesar had he committed a violation.”*

*Not against the (traditional) law of the Judeans:* It does not say against the law of Moses. The Judeans, who followed the traditions of the elders (the oral law), were not bringing charges against a Torah violation. What Paul is saying here is that he has not even broken the laws of the elders.

*Not against the temple:* One of their accusations was that Paul had taken Gentiles (those who would not have followed the religious requirements for making themselves pure) into the temple area. Paul, however, had taken in some Jewish men from the Diaspora and he had prepared them properly – according to the temple law (see Acts 21v23-24, v26-29)

*Not against Caesar:* Paul is not guilty of breaking any Roman laws either.

**Verse 9:** *“But Festus, desiring to do the Judeans a favour, answered Paul and said, ‘Do you want to go up to Jerusalem in order that there concerning these things that you be judged by me?’”*

*Do you want to go up to Jerusalem:* Why would Paul want to do this trial in Jerusalem? Paul could discern the situation and he understood that the Judeans had a wealth of influence over those Roman officials.

**Note:** Festus wants some benefit. Many scholars feel that he is seeking a bribe and is willing to do favours.

*Be judged by me:* Verse 6 told us that Festus was sitting in the Judgement seat when Paul was brought to him. He was sitting there in order to render judgement.

There was no evidence against Paul so he should have been released then and there. In contrast (*'But'*) to what should have been done Festus did not release him and deferred to make a judgement there in Caesarea requesting of Paul instead to go back to Jerusalem for yet another trial.

*Go up to Jerusalem:* Festus is subtly threatening Paul to send him back to Jerusalem – the implication being that Paul might die on the way there.

**Verse 10:** *"But Paul said, 'Upon the judgment seat of Caesar I stand where it is necessary for me to be judged. And to the Jews none of this unrighteousness that they claim, also you know very well.'"*

*But:* In contrast to what Festus was planning.

*Necessary:* It is absolutely a must

*Where it is necessary for me to be judged:* He says this because it is his right as a Roman citizen to be judged in a Roman Court.

*None of this:* The Judeans brought false accusations.

*You know very well:* Festus knows (absolutely, based on something he has been told or otherwise), along with everyone else, that they are false charges. Paul is pointing out the corruption and the deceit of Festus.

**Verse 11:** *"If I were guilty, and worthy of death had practised something, I would not refuse to die. But these things being, there is nothing that they can accuse me. No man is able to deliver me to them. I call upon Caesar."*

*Guilty:* Being unrighteous

*I would not refuse to die:* Paul wants a righteous judgment and is willing to suffer the consequences of wrong actions.

*No man is able:* Festus does not have the authority to deliver Paul to the Judeans or to send him back to Jerusalem because of his Roman citizenship.

**Note:** Paul does not only know Torah law very well, but he also knows Roman law. We need to be broad in our understanding of things. We need to know not only how G-d works but also how the enemy works in order to be able to discern his unrighteous ways.

*I call upon Caesar:* This was a legal action. Paul was requesting to go before Caesar himself for judgement.

**Verse 12:** *"Then Festus, speaking together among those in the council, answered, 'To Caesar it has been appealed, unto Caesar you shall go.'"*

*Speaking together:* He took counsel with others.

*Unto Caesar you shall go:* Ananias had prophesied in Acts 9v15-16 that Paul would testify before the kings/rulers of the Gentiles. Paul is now going to have his case go before Rome - the most influential place in secular thinking in his day. G-d used these false accusations for a fulfilment of His will and call for the life of Paul.

**Note:** We do not need to fear those who are against us. Almighty G-d is able to use even attacks and false accusations made against us in order to fulfil His purpose for each of our lives.

## **Chapter 25**

### **Part 2: Acts 25v13-27**

**Verse 13:** *“When a certain number of days had passed Agrippa the king and Bernice came down into Caesarea and they greeted Festus”*

*Agrippa the king and Bernice:* We have a new leader that G-d is seemingly bringing before Paul in order for him to influence. History tells us that Bernice was Agrippa’s sister.

**Verse 14:** *“For many days they dwelt there, and Festus brought up to the king the things against Paul saying, ‘A certain man is left here by Felix, a prisoner.’”*

**Verse 15:** *“Concerning whom, when I was in Jerusalem, the high priests and the elders of the Judeans made a presentation and there were charges against him, and they were asking for his judgement.”*

*They were asking for his judgement (condemnation):* They were not asking for justice or a trial, but they were asking for a verdict - and they wanted that verdict to be death.

**Verse 16:** *“To whom I answered that it is not the custom of the Romans to deliver a certain man for destruction before that the one, who was being accused, according to the face he has the charges, and also would be able to defend himself against those charges.”*

*Destruction:* They felt that if they destroyed Paul it would go a long way in regard to destroying what they saw as the problem of the believing community.

*According to the face:* The one against whom accusation had been levelled could confront his accusers to their faces.

**Verse 17:** *“Therefore they had gathered and there was not made any delay for on the next day I sat upon the Bema (the judgment seat) and I commanded that the man be brought.”*

**Verse 18:** *“Concerning whom the ones making these charges I did not expect that there should be accusations brought (of that kind).”*

*Did not expect:* Festus told King Agrippa that the Judeans came forth with indictments but not of the sort that he was expecting.

**Verse 19:** *“There was a disagreement of their own superstition against him, also concerning a certain one named Yeshua who had been killed but whom Paul testified was alive.”*

*Superstition:* Can also be loosely translated as relating to a religious argument about dogma.

*Testified:* Certified. Paul made this statement as an official/legal/binding testimony before the Roman Empire. Lying about anything before the Roman Empire, in that type of court, could bring upon a person death. This says a lot about Paul's belief. He testified about this knowing that it could cost him his life.

*Alive:* The resurrection is foundational for our faith as believers. Paul tells us in Romans 10v9 that we need to believe that G-d has raised Yeshua from the dead. If we do not believe in a resurrected Messiah we do not have a Biblical faith.

**Verse 20:** *“I was perplexed concerning this disagreement and I said, ‘If you want you can go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these things.’”*

*Can go to Jerusalem and there be judged:* Festus understood this was a religious matter and it would make sense to go to Jerusalem to have it judged there.

**Verse 21:** *“But Paul appealed to Caesar that he would be kept for the Emperor to make a decision concerning him. Therefore I (Festus) commanded that he would be kept until which I should send him to Caesar.”*

*Send him to Caesar:* To send someone to Caesar had to have a specific relevancy/importance and here we have a religious debate. Therefore, we find that Festus was reluctant to send Paul to Caesar on these grounds. It would reflect poorly on Festus if he were unable to handle what Caesar would probably consider a ‘minor’ case.

**Verse 22:** *“But Agrippa said to Festus, ‘I would like to hear the man myself’. Festus said, ‘Tomorrow you will hear him’. “*

*But Agrippa:* Agrippa wanted to get involved in this so-called superstition/religious dogma debate.

**Verse 23:** *“Therefore the next day Agrippa came and also Bernice with much pomp and circumstance. Also entered into the hallway with them many chief captains of the military and also men of prominence being in the city. Festus commanded that Paul be brought.”*

*Chief captains:* These captains would preside over a battalion of over a thousand men. They were not just typical soldiers/centurions.

*Men of prominence:* Men of influence, prestige, and position.

*Paul be brought:* Usually the most important person enters into a place last. Everyone had assembled and then they were waiting for Paul. This is an unusual order, because usually the prisoner would be waiting, and everything would be readied to receive the people of prominence.

**Note:** The reason here is not to honour Paul as a rabbi, but to show how G-d honours His servants. G-d Himself is being honoured because Paul is an ambassador for the L-rd Messiah Yeshua. Paul is receiving the same honour that Yeshua deserves - that things would be set up for Him.

**Verse 24:** *“Festus spoke, ‘O King Agrippa, and all those who are present with us, you see this man. Concerning whom all the multitudes of the Judeans they sought from me, the ones in Jerusalem and also here, crying out: ‘It is not necessary any longer for him to live.’”*

*See this man:* Everything was pointing to Paul. He was given the centre stage.

*Sought from me:* Requested from me

*Necessary:* They were saying that if there was going to be a good outcome then it was necessary to put Paul to death. They are consumed/obsessed with Paul’s death.

**Verse 25:** *“But I understood nothing worthy of death he has practiced; and he, having appealed to the Emperor, I judge to send him.”*

**Note:** There is a conflict between Paul and the Judeans because G-d wants to bring a holy and righteous change (sanctification) into His land. Unfortunately, the leaders did not want that and therefore Paul, representing and advocating for this change, was hated by them.

**Verse 26:** *“Concerning him (Paul) I wanted something sure in order that I would have to write. Therefore, bringing him before you all, and especially you O King Agrippa, so that an examination could be made.”*

*I would have to write:* Festus wanted something more specific, something weightier, something that would legitimize Paul going to Caesar

**Verse 27:** *“For it seems to me not to be reasonable to send to him a prisoner if there was not also the accusations specified against him.”*

**Note:** Festus needed to specify or outline the charges of the accusations made against Paul before he could send him to Rome. If the charges were not specified it was not reasonable or logical to send him.

They wanted revelation and information in order that they might behave in their situation in a more reasonable manner. There is wisdom in that for us - we need revelation from G-d, Scriptural truth, that we might apply it to our situations so that we can behave in an appropriate manner under G-d.

## Chapter 26

### Part 1: Acts 26v1-18

**Verse 1:** *“Agrippa to Paul spoke, ‘It is permissible for you on behalf of yourself to speak.’ Then Paul made his defence and he stretched forth his hand.”*

**Note:** Paul is going to defend himself, but he is going to do so by saying what G-d is doing in his life and by revealing a very important promise (covenant) that is relevant for all of humanity.

**Verse 2:** *“Concerning all which I have been charged by the Judeans O king Agrippa I consider myself blessed that I can make my defence before you this day.”*

*Blessed* (fortunate): This is the same word used in Matthew 5v3-11.

**Verse 3:** *“Especially because knowing that you are an expert in all these customs of the Judeans, and these debates (arguments). I am beseeching you that with patience you hear me.”*

*An expert:* Agrippa understands these matters. Paul is polite but he is saying, in very diplomatic language, that he has something to say, that there is something that Agrippa needs to hear, and Agrippa has the foundation for understanding what Paul is going to say.

**Verse 4:** *“Therefore my manner of life from a youth - my beginning among the nation and in Jerusalem - all the Judeans know this very well.”*

*Manner of life:* Paul applied Biblical truth to his life and lived very consistently, from the time that he was a youth to this time.

*Know this very well:* Paul had a reputation among the Judeans.

**Note:** Paul certified (Acts 25v19) that Yeshua is alive. That is the heart of the matter, if Yeshua is alive then all that He said was true. If he is not alive then all of this is nothing more than a lie, deceit, or falsehood. Paul testifies and gives evidence based upon the reality that Messiah is alive - and part of this evidence is going to be seen in the change in his own behaviour.

**Verse 5:** *“Recognizing me from the beginning, and if they desire, they could testify that according to the strictest of the sects of our religion I lived a Pharisee.”*

*Sects:* Judaism was a fractured religion. There were many sects and many different leaders (who had their own bent on the Word of G-d) within Judaism.

**Verse 6:** *“And now upon the hope of the fathers promised - for this I stand being judged.”*

*Hope:* Hope is a Kingdom promise from G-d that He has extended to all people. It does not originate in our desires or wants but, for us, it is rooted in the resurrection. Do we really believe that there is a Kingdom, and do we live like there is one?

*Fathers:* The Patriarchs should remind us of faith. We have to have faith in this hope.  
*For this I stand being judged:* If we live according to the laws of the Kingdom then we are going to be hated by this world because part of our lives will testify against the evil in this world, which is against the things of G-d.

**Verse 7:** *“To which our twelve tribes earnestly day and night served (worshipped) hoping that they might obtain. Concerning this hope, I am being accused by the Judeans.”*

*Earnestly:* This speaks about their behaviour – living lives of worship and prayer. They lived with Kingdom expectation.

*Hope:* Paul is saying that the patriarchs taught and revealed this hope which was passed down to the future generations. Israel believed in this hope and that is a reason why the people had consistently prayed for it, day and night, hoping that they would obtain what they were praying and waiting for.

*Concerning this hope, I am being accused:* Paul is being accused of having this hope -something that should be foundational in Judaism.

**Verse 8:** *“Why should it be judged faithless by you if **the** G-d the dead should raise?”*

**Note:** Paul is emphasizing the resurrection of the dead. He puts the word ‘dead’ before ‘resurrection’ as he wants to emphasize that this applies to truly dead individuals. This is the heart of the problem. The majority of the Sanhedrin (Sadducees) do not believe in a resurrection and the Pharisees reject any possibility that Yeshua, the firstborn from the dead, is the one who will resurrect them.

The resurrection is a foundational truth which is related to a Kingdom reality.

**Verse 9:** *“I therefore thought of myself to be against the name of Yeshua of Nazareth, that it was necessary in many ways to practice hostility to this One.”*

**Note:** We need to see the importance of testimony – including our own testimonies of what G-d is doing in our lives. Sharing our testimonies faithfully and honestly (even if it does not seem remarkable in our own eyes) carries an anointing that will touch people. There is power in testimony, and sometimes we lose sight of this.

**Verse 10:** *“Those things I have done in Jerusalem and many other places. Locking up the saints (believers) in prison and doing so from the high priest. His authority I had received. Even casting a vote that they would be put to death.”*

*Doing so from the high priest:* Paul agreed with them, but something happened to change his life and way of thinking. Inward transformation manifests itself outwardly. Paul is a different person.

**Verse 11:** *“According to all the synagogues frequently punishing them and forcing them to blaspheme. Exceedingly angry at them I persecuted them even also to the cities outside.”*

*All the synagogues:* Paul went from synagogue to synagogue  
*Forcing them:* Persecuting them  
*Outside:* Outside of the land of Israel

**Verse 12:** *“In which also traveling into Damascus with the authority and with letters from the high priest,”*

*Damascus:* This experience is being repeated now for the third time in this book of Acts. This was a pivotal moment in the life of Paul.

*The authority and with letters:* He was going there in order to arrest individuals to be put to death. There is nothing under the Torah that would allow this. However, they were not following the Torah - they were following the teachings of the elders, rooted in the logic (the rational mind) of man.

**Verse 13:** *“At the middle of the day along the way I saw, O King, from heaven a light shined around me and those who were with me traveling.”*

*The middle of the day:* It is hard to see light that shines in the midst of light (the sun is brightest in the middle of the day). Paul, however, is referring to an unusual light, a Kingdom light.

*Light:* One of the unique characteristics of the Kingdom of G-d is light. The first thing God created in Genesis was light (Genesis 1v3) – but it was not a natural light. He did not create natural light until the fourth day (Genesis 1v14-16).

*Around me and those who were with:* The light was there for all to see. The light came within the context of revelation.

**Verse 14:** *“All of us fell upon the ground and I heard a voice speaking to me in the Hebrew dialect saying, ‘Saul, Saul, why me do you persecute? It is hard for you against the goads to kick.’”*

*Hebrew dialect:* The L-rd spoke in Hebrew. This is NOT the word for ‘Aramaic’. This ties Messiah back to those Old Covenant promises.

*Goad:* Can also be translated ‘briar’. It causes pain and wounds in the feet if the goads are kicked against. Yeshua is telling Paul here that he is going the wrong way and fighting the wrong battle.

**Verse 15:** *“And I said, ‘Who are you lord?’ He said, ‘I am Yeshua whom you are persecuting.’”*

*Who are you lord?:* The first time Paul called Yeshua lord he did it out of a term of great respect as he did not know who it was who was speaking to him.

*Persecuting:* This is the second time that Messiah told Paul that he was persecuting Yeshua. Yeshua took what Paul was doing against believers very personally. When a believer is persecuted for their faith Messiah takes it personally and there will be a day of retribution.



**Verse 16:** *“But rise up and stand upon your feet. For this I have appeared to you to appoint you as servant and witness of which you also have seen and also what I am going to reveal to you.”*

*But:* This is not the normal word used to show a contrast, but it is a word which speaks about a transition/change.

*For this (purpose):* Yeshua did not call Paul simply for the purpose of salvation (although that was a part of it) but He called him for service. Messiah offers us salvation and part of that offering is this: that we are being given the opportunity to serve with Him, to do His ministry, to participate in the will of G-d.

*I am going to reveal to you:* Messiah is promising to give Paul additional experiences/revelation in his service to G-d.

**Verse 17:** *“And delivering you from your people and also the nations to which now I am sending (you).”*

*Delivering you from your people:* Yeshua told Paul he would be persecuted by his own people – Israel, but that he was going to be rescued from them.

*The nations to which now I am sending:* We can understand this in two ways:

1. Being sent to Gentiles/non-Jews
2. To those outside of Israel – those in other countries. Paul had a consistency whenever he went to other places - he would always go into the synagogue and first speak to the Jewish people. His ministry was mainly outside of Israel - but to the Jew first and then also to the Gentile.

**Note:** In many ways what Paul is being called to do you and I have that same calling – to testify. It is a generic calling for the people of G-d.

**Verse 18:** *“To open up their eyes and to turn from darkness into light and from the authority of satan unto G-d. For them to receive the forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are being sanctified - and all of this is by faith in Me.”*

*Open up their eyes:* The context is of those who are not yet believers. Until a person comes to faith in Messiah Yeshua they are blinded, they are in *darkness* and they are *under the authority of satan*. This is why we should be forgiving, compassionate and understanding, as these people are a victim of the world that they belong to.

*Sanctified:* The process of being made holy, our lives, by the power of the Holy Spirit are transformed into doing the purposes of G-d.

## Chapter 26

### Part 2: Acts 26v19-32

**Verse 19:** *“So that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.”*

*Heavenly vision:* Paul wants King Agrippa to understand that this is revelation from G-d that he is responding to.

**Verse 20:** *“But to first Damascus and after Jerusalem and into all the regions of Judea and then to the nations I preached repentance and also turning upon the G-d and practising works worthy of repentance.”*

*Repentance:* Repentance is foundational to the gospel. Yeshua proclaimed it (Matthew 4v17), as did John the Baptist (Matthew 3v1-12) and here Paul also emphasises repentance.

*Turning upon G-d:* Upon is a word of foundation, to stand upon. Paul’s life is based upon a new foundation, he stands in a different location – upon **the** (only) G-d.

*Practising:* To do something or to make something. It implies an ongoing behaviour, a lifestyle.

**Verse 21:** *“On account of these things me the Judeans seized in the temple and wanted to place their hands upon (me) thoroughly. “*

*Place their hands upon (me) thoroughly:* Their intent was probably to see him dead.

**Verse 22:** *“Therefore help I received from G-d until this day. I stand testifying to both the small and the great. Nothing other being said then what also the prophets have spoken in regard to what will be, and Moses.”*

*Help I received from G-d:* Time and time again G-d delivered Paul out of the hands of others in order to bear testimony to others.

*The prophets have spoken:* Paul was an expert Pharisee and was very well acquainted with the Word of G-d and what it said. Nothing Paul said was contrary to what the prophets or Moses had said. The way this sentence has been constructed places a strong emphasis on the prophets. Prophecy is very important. It is through prophecy that we get a proper perspective of the person and work of Messiah Yeshua.

**Verse 23:** *“The Messiah suffered and was the first one from the rising (the resurrection) of the dead, that light was about to be proclaimed to the people (Israel) and to the nations.”*

**Note:** The order is always to the Jew first and then to the Gentiles.

**Verse 24:** *“(With)These things he was making a defence. Festus spoke in a loud voice and he said, ‘Crazy is Paul! The many writings of yours have caused you to turn to insanity.’”*

*Crazy:* Can mean insane.

*Many writings:* All the studying that Paul has done.

**Verse 25:** *“The one he said, ‘I am not crazy, O excellent Festus, but the truth and the sobriety of the words I proclaim.’”*

*The one:* Referring to Paul but not mentioning him by name – The literary device being used here (by not referring to Paul by name) teaches us that this is true for every believer.

*Sobriety:* That which is sound, that which is founded upon truth.

*The words:* Referring to Scripture.

**Verse 26:** *“For you understand concerning these things, O king, to which also I speak boldly. For that which is hidden, of these certain things, I am not persuaded that none of these things were put in a corner.”*

**Note:** These truths that Paul is sharing about have not been hidden in a corner so that they cannot be found. All of these things that Paul is sharing about are things which are familiar and not foreign to those who have studied or know some Scripture.

**Verse 27:** *“O King Agrippa, you believe the prophets. I know that you believe.”*

*Prophets:* Paul emphasized the prophets because they testified boldly, and clearly, about G-d’s prophetic programme and how to understand Messiah – Yeshua.

*Believe:* A word related to faith

**Verse 28:** *“But Agrippa said to Paul, ‘In a short time me you persuade a Christian to be.’”*

*But:* In contrast to what Paul is saying.

*Short:* Brief

**Verse 29:** *“But Paul said, ‘I desire (wish) to G-d, whether in a little bit or in much, not only you but also all the ones hearing me this day that they would become of the same type as I am - except without these bonds.’”*

*Not only you:* Speaking about the king

*Same type:* Having the same perspective, commitment, and faith,

**Verse 30:** *“After he (probably Paul) said these things, the king stood up and the governor and Bernice and all the ones who were sitting with them.”*

**Verse 31:** *“They withdrew, and they spoke one to another saying, ‘Nothing worthy of death or bonds this man is practicing.’”*

*Bonds:* Meaning those chains

**Verse 32:** *“Agrippa said to Festus, ‘It would have been possible to set this man free except that he has appealed to Caesar.’”*

*Appealed:* This word is constructed in the pluperfect. One of the nuances of the pluperfect has to do with remoteness, which can be seen in a lack of understanding. These men (Agrippa and Festus) were far from understanding or being able to grasp the “behind the scenes” of what was happening in Paul’s life. They saw it as unfortunate incident, that Paul had made a mistake, when he had appealed to Caesar. They did not realise that that appeal was being used as an instrument for G-d to take Paul to where He wanted Him to be – having an audience with the Caesar in Rome.

## **Chapter 27**

### **Part 1: Acts 27v1-20**

**Verse 1:** *“When it was determined (judged to be the right time) to send us to Italy Paul, and certain other ones who were prisoners, were delivered to a centurion named Julius from the battalion of Sebastian.”*

*The right time:* Many scholars believe that it was the right time according to G-d's perfect timing.

*Sebastian:* Sebastian is a Greek name that means reverence or honour. When is it translated into Latin the name is Augustus.

**Verse 2:** *“And embarking into a boat of Adramyttium which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia. Being with us was Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica.”*

*Adramyttium:* This boat was from this place, which was a city in Turkey.

*Sail to the ports along the coast:* These accounts of their journeys are all factual and can be logically followed on a map – telling us that these events literally happened.

*Asia:* Asia Minor

**Note:** We are going to see that the enemy is going to try to attack Paul to keep him away from where G-d wants him to be. If we are of the mindset that if we are doing G-d’s will all things will go smoothly for us then we are sadly mistaken. Paul is going to encounter many obstacles, but G-d will deliver him from all of them because G-d is faithful to His purposes and He will move and act in order that His will for our lives is fulfilled - if we stay trusting and relying upon Him.

**Verse 3:** *“On the next day we set out expecting to come to Sidon. Having come there Julius treated Paul with kindness and he allowed the friends of Paul to come and attend to him.”*

*Sidon:* They have left Israel and are traveling up near Lebanon (Sidon is in Lebanon). At one time Sidon had a lot of Jewish people living there.

*Julius:* The centurion who is the head of that prestigious Sebastian battalion.

**Verse 4:** *“From there we set out sailing under Cyprus on account of the contrary wind.”*

*Contrary wind:* The wind was against them. This is historically true, but it also has a spiritual message attached to it for us - there is a spirit contrary to what G-d's up to and to what Paul is submitting to. There is opposition to what G-d said would come about. Because of this wind it was too dangerous to travel along the coastline as it was too difficult to steer away from rocks etc. They therefore had to go into the open/deep seas.

**Verse 5:** *“To the deep sea, along Cilicia and Pamphylia, we sailed through and came into Myra in Lycia.”*

**Verse 6:** *“From there the centurion found an Alexandrian boat from Egypt sailing to Italy and he caused us to embark into it.”*

*The centurion:* He was the one determining what they would do.

**Verse 7:** *“After many days of sailing slowly we arrived with difficulty at Cnidus. As the wind did not allow us to go further we sailed to Crete along Salmone.”*

*Sailing slowly:* With limited supplies it is not advisable to be at sea for long periods of time as when things change unexpectedly no one is adequately prepared and the situation can quickly become dire.

*The wind did not allow us:* The wind is still opposing them. Things are not going well for Paul.

**Verse 8:** *“With much difficulty we sailed and finally came to a certain place called ‘Good Harbour’. It was near the city of Lasea.”*

*Good Harbour:* They came to a good place where it was safe for them to dock their ship.

**Verse 9:** *“Much time had passed, and now being already dangerous for a journey on account also that the fasts had already passed Paul warned them.”*

*Dangerous:* They had travelled so slowly that they have now entered into the season of the year when it is not so good to travel in the Mediterranean Sea. In the fall and in the wintertime there is a lot more turbulence and strong winds on the sea.

*The fasts:* Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement. From a Jewish cultural standpoint once these fall fasts have concluded it is wintertime and the people start to pray and ask G-d for the wind to rise up and blow so that the storms are brought in and the land is blessed with rain.

**Verse 10:** *“Saying to them, ‘Men, I perceive danger for us and much damage and great loss, not only to the cargo of the ship but also to our lives.’”*

*Perceive:* Paul felt in his spirit that this voyage was not going to end well.

*Danger:* Catastrophe. If we do not heed the Word of G-d our lives will be filled with great loss and it may even cost us our lives.

**Verse 11:** *“But the centurion paid more attention to the captain, and the owner of the ship he believed, more than the words that by Paul were spoken.”*

*The centurion paid more attention to the captain:* This is an example of not giving enough respect for the ones who know the Word of G-d and who are listening to the Spirit of G-d.

**Verse 12:** *“And being not appropriate this port to spend the winter the majority made a decision to set sail from there and if somehow possible to arrive into Phoenix and spend the winter there - because the port of Crete lies to the southwest and the northwest.”*

*Phoenix:* This place was on the other side of Crete, but it had a more fitting harbour for them to spend the winter in.

**Verse 13:** *“There was a light south wind and therefore they perceived that they were able to achieve their proposal. So, they took up their anchor that they might sail along to Crete.”*

*South wind:* Winds from the south are light and not very strong

*Achieve their proposal:* They felt that they could do, and achieve, what they had purposed to do.

**Verse 14:** *“But with not much (time) there was cast a tempestuous wind and this one was called the Northeast.”*

*Not much (time):* The implication is that not much time had passed.

*Northeast:* One of the worst kinds of winds.

**Note:** Everything seemed right, but it changed in an instant (like temptation).

**Verse 15:** *“Dragging the boat we were not able to have a straight face, we gave way to the wind and were driven along.”*

*Straight face:* They were not able to go in the direction that they wanted to because of the wind.

**Verse 16:** *“Running under a certain island, which is called Cauda, we had difficulty seizing the lifeboat.”*

*Lifeboat:* They had a large boat, and they had a smaller one. They would find it difficult, in this weather, to harbour the large boat so they would have to anchor it at sea and then go ashore with the little boat. The little boat got loose, and they had great difficulty trying to hold on to it.

**Verse 17:** *“Which they were lifting up and they were able to utilise support. With help they were able to undergird the boat, for they feared that they would be taken into the sandbars. They threw out some of the vessel and thus were driven along.”*

*They were lifting up:* The little boat could do great damage knocking against the large boat in this wind, so they hoisted it onto the large boat in order to secure it.

*Threw out some of the vessel:* To make the ship lighter and therefore able to move more quickly.

**Verse 18:** *“Since we were violently storm-tossed, on the next day they began to jettison the cargo.”*

**Note:** Paul had warned of loss and his warning is being proved true.

**Verse 19:** *“On the third day, by their hands, they took the vessels of the ship and they cast them overboard.”*

*The vessels of the ship:* All the various instruments/vessels that are needed for the boat to run smoothly (Its tackle)

**Verse 20:** *“We did not see the Sun and the stars being manifested for many days and a great (large) storm laid against us. All hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.”*

*Did not see the Sun and the stars being manifested for many days:* This is not normal, and we can be sure that none of these people had ever experienced this before.

**Note:** Paul is onboard this ship and G-d has a purpose for him, so these people are going to experience G-d’s favour in this situation. If we attach ourselves to someone who is walking with G-d that is a wise thing to do. We can learn from them and, even more wisely, we can apply it to our own lives.

## Chapter 27

### Part 2: Acts 27v21-44

**Verse 21:** *“(After) Much abstaining of food Paul stood up in the midst of them and he said, ‘It was necessary that you O men should have obeyed me and not sailed from Crete. Because you did not there was acquired this great catastrophe and loss.’”*

*Abstaining:* They could have been abstaining because the sea was too rough to eat, alternatively they could have abstained as they were concerned that they might be pushed out to sea and were going to need that nourishment and therefore they did not want to waste it.

**Verse 22:** *“And now these things I want to exhort and to encourage you; there is not going to be a loss of life from you, only the ship.”*

*A loss of life:* In Acts 27v10 Paul had said that there would possibly be a loss of life, but now G-d has revealed to him that no lives will be lost – only the ship.

*Only the ship:* The captain and the owner of the ship had been concerned about the wellbeing of two things – the ship and the cargo.

**Verse 23:** *“For stood to me this night an angel of G-d - whom I am, and whom also I serve.”*

*An angel of G-d:* When we see the angel of G-d (angel of the L-rd) there is normally a good message, one of deliverance.

*Whom I am:* Paul is testifying, and wants them to know in the midst of all of this adversity, that he belongs to G-d.

**Verse 24:** *“Saying, ‘Do not fear Paul. Caesar you it is necessary to stand before. Behold, G-d has granted to you all of those in this boat who are sailing with you.’”*

*Necessary:* It is absolutely necessary that Paul stands before Caesar in order for the will of G-d to be achieved.

*Granted:* This word has the word ‘grace’ in it. A primary purpose of grace is that the will of G-d is fulfilled in someone's life.

**Verse 25:** *“Be encouraged men, for I believe G-d that thus it will be just as the manner he has spoken to me.”*

**Note:** Believing in what G-d has said, and taking courage from His Words, is the basis for bringing about inward transformation in our lives.

**Verse 26:** *“For a certain island it is necessary for us to fall.”*



**Verse 27:** *“As the fourteenth night came about we were passing through in the midst of the Adriatic Sea and towards midnight the sailors discerned that they were coming near to a piece of land.”*

*Adriatic Sea:* Part of the Mediterranean Sea, near Greece and the Greek islands.

**Verse 28:** *“So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. Traveling on a little further they did another sounding and found it to be fifteen fathoms.”*

*A sounding:* A methodology where something was lowered into the water in order to figure out how deep it was.

*Twenty fathoms...fifteen fathoms:* The water is getting shallower, meaning that they are getting closer to land.

**Verse 29:** *“Being fearful that they were going to run up upon a rocky terrain, from the stern they cast four anchors and were praying for day.”*

**Verse 30:** *“The sailors were seeking to flee from the boat, and they let down the skiff into the sea – they were doing so under the pretext that from the bow they were tending to the anchors.”*

*Seeking to flee:* They knew that they needed to get off the boat as it was dangerous to stay on it, so they tried to escape.

*Skiff:* The smaller boat, lifeboat

**Verse 31:** *“Paul said to the Centurion and to the soldiers saying, ‘Unless these remain on the boat you will not be able to be saved.’”*

**Note:** Paul is again prophesying. Paul has been accurate every step of the way, so the centurion and the soldiers are beginning to believe what he is saying and are willing to submit to it.

**Verse 32:** *“Then the soldiers cut the ropes of the boat intending it to fall.”*

*Cut the ropes:* No one was going to be able to leave the ship in the lifeboat. They could not save themselves.

**Verse 33:** *“As it was coming about dawn Paul encouraged all of them to receive food saying, ‘It is the fourteenth day that we have been watching and observing this abstaining. There is an intent to continue but you need to receive.’”*

**Verse 34:** *“Therefore I encourage you to receive food, for this is for your salvation. For not a hair of your heads is going to fall.”*

*Salvation:* This can be referring to either spiritual or physical salvation (or both). In this case the men needed to be strong physically in order to cope with what they were about to go through. Paul also knows, however, that they are coming to the end of this voyage and are going to make it to land. If everyone would listen to him and hear what he has been speaking about it can also be for their spiritual salvation as well.

**Verse 35:** *“After saying these things he took bread and he blessed G-d before all, and he broke it and began to eat.”*

*Eat:* It is after eating and being satisfied that people are able to praise G-d (Deuteronomy 8v10).

**Verse 36:** *“All of them were encouraged, also these to receive food.”*

*Encouraged:* Encouraged to eat, but also encouraged by Paul’s words.

**Verse 37:** *“We in the boat, all souls, were 276.”*

*All souls:* Everyone in the boat numbered 276 people.

**Verse 38:** *“When we were satisfied from the food they lightened the boat by casting out the wheat into the sea.”*

*Satisfied from the food:* See above, verse 35

**Verse 39:** *“When it came about day they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach. They planned, if possible, to run the ship ashore.”*

**Verse 40:** *“They lifted the anchors and left them in the sea. At about that same time they let go of the ropes of the rudder and they lifted up the mast to the wind against it and into the shore.”*

*Lifted the anchors:* This probably means that they cut them from the ship.

**Note:** They had let go of everything and all they could do was put up the mast and let the wind drive them to the shore. In many ways this symbolises what Spirit-led believers are called to do -to let go of everything else and allow, and trust, the Holy Spirit to direct us.

**Verse 41:** *“Falling into a place among the two seas they wanted to run the ship upon the ground, but the bow was greatly shaken, and the stern was loosed by the power of the waves.”*

*A place among the two seas:* The place where the waves going in are meeting the waves going out.

**Verse 42:** *“An intention came about of the soldiers in order that the prisoners they would kill lest they swim and flee away.”*

**Verse 43:** *“But the centurion, his intention was to save Paul, hindered their plan and he commanded that all the ones who were able to swim that they cast themselves into the water and go forth to the land.”*

*Save Paul:* From death

**Verse 44:** *“The remaining ones these (were given) upon boards and upon other things of the ship (to hold on to) that thus all of them happened to be saved upon the land.”*

*The remaining ones:* The ones who could not swim.

*All of them happened to be saved:* Paul's words were proved true. The ship and its cargo had all been lost, but every person had been saved - all 276 of them.

## **Chapter 28**

### **Part 1: Acts 28v1-16**

**Verse 1:** *Having been saved we then recognized (learned) that the island was called Malta.”*

*Having been saved:* This group of people did not save themselves, but they were saved. They were the recipients of that which brought them through something and delivered them.

**Verse 2:** *“But the barbarians showed a kindness that was not normal to us. For after kindling a fire they received each of us because also being cold and rainy.”*

*Barbarians:* If we go back to the original purpose of this word it simply means one that is foreign or different. Most often it had to do with individuals that were from a different culture and spoke a different language.

*Showed a kindness that was not normal to us:* Their hospitality went beyond what was normally done by most people.

*Received:* Welcomed

*Being cold:* They recognized the needs of these individuals.

**Verse 3:** *“But Paul, having gathered a multitude of sticks and placing them upon the fire, a serpent came out of the heat and attacked his hand.”*

**Verse 4:** *“When they saw the serpent hanging out from his hand they spoke to one another and they said: ‘There is no doubt that this man is a murderer, him who has been brought through the sea, by justice he was not permitted (allowed) to live.’”*

*They:* The barbarians/strangers

*Brought through the sea: Saved through the shipwreck*

**Note:** Their thoughts are in line with a wrong theology which states that bad things happen to bad people and good things happen to good people. Time and chance (Ecclesiastes 9v11-12 – things happen and sometimes it is a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time) caused this snake to bite Paul, however G-d can use time and chance (that happening) to fulfil His purposes and turn it into a message.

**Verse 5:** *“Therefore he (Paul) shook the serpent into the fire, and he suffered nothing of harm.”*

**Verse 6:** *“They were expecting for him to certainly swell up and he would fall suddenly dead. Upon much time they were expecting, however they perceived that nothing of the sort happened to him. And they changed their opinion and they said, ‘He is a god.’”*

*Fall suddenly dead:* That is their experience of people who have been bitten by this serpent in the past.

*Changed their opinion:* They had a different perspective.

*He is a god:* This testimony of G-d’s sovereignty (turning a bad situation to good) opened up an opportunity for Paul to explain about G-d.

**Verse 7:** *“In that region existed a leader of the island and he was named Publius. This one invited us for three days and provided hospitality for us.”*

*A leader:* The one who was first in that region, the chief, someone with the greatest priority in that place.

*Us:* Paul and the group that was with him

*Three:* The number three has the purpose for revealing/manifesting/declaring something. G-d brought them to a great location.

**Verse 8:** *“It came about that the father of Publius had a fever and dysentery and he was laid up being oppressed. Paul entered into this one and he prayed, and he set his hands upon him and he healed him.”*

*The father of Publius had a fever and dysentery:* G-d’s sovereignty brought them to this island where they received much kindness and were provided for, even getting to meet the leader of the island. This is a fulfilment of the prophecy Ananias received about Paul in Acts 9v15 – to speak before kings and leaders of the nations.

**Verse 9:** *“Therefore, because this was done, also the remaining ones they came before and also they were healed.”*

*The remaining ones:* Meaning the other ones on the island who had sicknesses and diseases.

*Healed:* The testimony of Messiah Yeshua and His healing power (not just from diseases, but also spiritual healing through the forgiveness of sins) could be proclaimed.

**Verse 10:** *“These (individuals) bestowed much honour upon us, and we departed - they having placed to us the things of our need.”*

*Placed (set) to us the things of our need:* These individuals were healed to serve. They were healed to meet the needs of others (loving their ‘neighbour’ as they loved themselves). We see the hand of G-d in all of these circumstances.

**Verse 11:** *“After three months we sailed in a boat – having wintered in the island. The boat was a boat from Alexandria and was marked by two (twin) deities. “*

*Three:* Repeated again.

*Wintered in the island:* It was not safe to travel by boat/ship on the Mediterranean in the wintertime - especially not great distances.

*Deities:* Sailing was dangerous, so often times a patron god (false gods) of the sailors marked the boats that they sailed in. These “good luck” charms and symbols have no effect or power over us, and we do not need to fear them.

**Verse 12:** *“We set sail to Syracuse and remained there for three days.”*

*Three:* Again emphasised. G-d is communicating to us through these journeys and stops. We will miss out on the revelation if we see these accounts as simply travel logs.

**Verse 13:** *“From there we went around and arrived at a place called Rhegium. After one day a small southern wind came up and we came to a place called Puteoli.”*

*Southern wind:* This is a wind which is good for sailing.

**Verse 14:** *“There we found brothers who invited us to remain with them for seven days. And thus into Rome we came.”*

*Brothers:* This means fellow believers.

*Seven:* The number seven has to do with purpose. Seven has to do with holiness – and holiness is found in the purposes of G-d. This reveals to us that the purpose of G-d is going to be met.

*Rome:* The region of Rome (they have not entered into the city of Rome yet) i.e. They arrived in Italy.

**Verse 15:** *“From there the Brethren heard the things concerning us and they went out to meet us until a place called Appius Forum and Three Taverns. Whom Paul seeing gave thanks to G-d and received encouragement.”*

*Appius Forum:* A place of commerce, a marketplace.

*Tavern:* This was a place of refreshment. A place to get provision and sustenance.

*Three:* Again repeated.

*Gave thanks to G-d and received encouragement:* Paul saw that G-d was providing, even here, for his physical needs and he was encouraged by that.

**Verse 16:** *“But when we came into Rome the centurion gave the prisoners to the soldiers. But Paul he permitted to remain on his own with a soldier guarding him.”*

*Rome:* This is now referring to the city of Rome.

*Soldiers:* Probably means that he handed them over to the Roman soldiers serving in Rome.

*But:* In contrast to the other prisoners

*Remain on his own:* Paul was probably provided some type of residence (maybe like an apartment of today).

## **Chapter 28**

### **Part 2: Acts 28v17-31**

**Verse 17:** *“But it came about after **three** days that Paul called the ones being of the leadership of the Judeans and they gathered, and he said unto them, ‘Men, brethren nothing against the people or the traditions of my fathers have I done. A prisoner from Jerusalem, I have been delivered into the hands of the Romans.”*

*The traditions of my fathers:* Speaking of the patriarchs. Paul had done nothing against Torah truth.

**Verse 18:** *“Whom after being judged they desired me to be released on account that nothing (deserving) of death was in me.”*

*Whom:* The context is the Romans

*Being judged:* Thoroughly examined and vindicated as he had done nothing wrong.

*Nothing:* No cause or reason

*In me:* In Paul’s behaviour.

**Verse 19:** *“But these Judeans, speaking against, they compelled me to appeal to Caesar, but not as my nation having something against.”*

*They compelled me:* The natural interpretation of this is that the Judeans put such pressure upon the representatives of the Roman government in Israel that Paul thought they were going to give in, so he appealed to Caesar. The spiritual explanation is that G-d wanted Paul to go to Rome in order to testify in that city - and to testify even before Caesar so he was compelled (by them or by the Holy Spirit) to appeal to Caesar.

*Not as my nation having something against:* Paul had not had a problem with the Jewish nation as a whole but only with a small segment of leaders within it.”

**Verse 20:** *“On account therefore that there was this reason I called to you to see you and to speak before (you). For on account of the hope of Israel these chains have been laid around me.”*

*The hope of Israel:* There is a connection, Biblically, between the concept of hope and the promise of G-d. This is related to the Kingdom, but it can also be related to the King of that Kingdom – which is Messiah. Messiah provides the way into the Kingdom, and that is why He is also known as the Redeemer. The hope of Israel was for the establishment of the Kingdom through Messiah.

**Verse 21:** *“They said to him, ‘We neither letter concerning you have received from Judah and nor has a certain one arrived of the brethren that he might proclaim something concerning you evil.’”*

*Brethren:* Meaning from fellow Jewish individuals

**Note:** Despite the fact that the Judeans from Israel knew that Paul was going to Rome they did not write a letter or send anyone to Rome to warn the Jewish leaders there against Paul.

**Verse 22:** *“But worthy concerning you to hear what you think concerning this sect. For it is known to us that in every place it is spoken against.”*

*Worthy:* They desired to listen to Paul and by using the word ‘worthy’ it reveals to us that they felt that listening to him would have some positive outcome in their lives and that it would be a good use of their time to hear him.

*Concerning this sect:* This shows that, like today, there were still many sects within Judaism.

**Note:** The faith of Messiah Yeshua and the teachings of the Apostles were not outside of Judaism. For a long period of time they were considered to be a sect within Judaism. The reason for this was because it was rooted in Torah truth.

*In every place it is spoken against:* There were a lot of different religions but none of them were spoken against in every location. This opposition to Christianity is kind of like the stamp of G-d's approval certifying that it is truth. Today we see an increase again of greater hostility towards Biblical truth.

**Verse 23:** *“When it was appointed for him a day to speak they came to him at his lodging, many (of them). He expanded, testifying concerning the Kingdom of G-d. They were persuaded concerning the things of Yeshua from the law of Moses and the prophets. He spoke from the morning until evening.”*

*Expanded:* Meaning he spoke a great deal.

*Kingdom of G-d:* This should not surprise us as the first message of both John the Baptist as well as Jesus was: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”

*Persuaded:* A word related to ‘Believe’.

*The law of Moses and the prophets:* It is vital for us to know what the Torah as well as the prophets reveal (Revelation 19v10)

*Morning until evening:* This implies that they were listening and were hungry to know more.

**Verse 24:** *“On one hand there were those who were persuaded to what he was saying, but on the other hand there were those who refused to believe.”*

*Refused to believe:* It was not that they did not understand or that they felt that Paul was Biblically incorrect. It was simply that they were against believing.

**Verse 25:** *“They were divided in opinion and disagreed with each other and they left after Paul said this: ‘The Holy Spirit has spoken through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers saying’”*

**Note:** The emphasis of the text now is that Paul is speaking to those who were against believing.

**Verse 26:** *“Go to this people and say, ‘Listen, and be hearing and not understanding. Be seeing, and you will see but you will not perceive.’”*

**Note:** The people will be given the opportunity to listen and to see but they will not understand

**Verse 27:** *“For the heart of this people are hard and the ears are dull from hearing and their eyes are closed, lest they see with their eyes and they hear with their ears and with their hearts they understand and they would turn and be healed.”*

*Hard:* Heavy or dull

*Heart...ears...eyes...:* They are all heavy and dull because the people have rejected truth. When we reject Biblical truth, even though we are convicted by it, this rejection touches our heart, it penetrates our minds. G-d does not cause them to reject His truth but, because of free will, G-d allows them to have the freedom to reject it.

*Turn and be healed:* This is what G-d wants to do, but their rebellious attitude toward the revelation of G-d causes them not to perceive, not to turn, and not to be healed.

**Verse 28:** *“Therefore be it known to you that to the nations He sent the salvation of G-d so that these also hear.”*

*To the nations He sent the salvation of G-d:* From the foundations of the world G-d wanted to bless humankind.

**Verse 29:** *“After saying these things the Jews, among one another, had much division among themselves.”*

**Verse 30:** *“But Paul remained two complete years in his own rented place and he welcomed all the ones coming to him.”*

*Two:* Speaks to two divergent opinions. Whenever the gospel is proclaimed people are going to either agree or disagree.



**Verse 31:** *“Proclaiming the kingdom of G-d and teaching the things concerning the L-rd Messiah Yeshua he did so with all boldness, without hinderance.”*

*Proclaiming:* Announcing with assurance.

**Note:** (As seen in Verse 23) Pauls first message (evangelism) to the people in Rome was about the Kingdom of G-d and Yeshua as Messiah. Now Paul has been with them for some time and he is still teaching (discipling) about the Kingdom of G-d, but the emphasis is now upon Yeshua as L-rd.

Once we understand the things of the Kingdom it is going to be natural for us to have a strong desire to submit to the L-rdship of Yeshua.

*Boldness:* Confidence