

Sermons in Acts

A 9 Lesson Textual Study of Preaching in the Early Church



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Sermons in Acts Lesson List

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Lesson 1 – Introduction

A. Course Purpose: Learn and imitate the teaching of the early Christian preachers, by evaluating the background and needs of the audience, and studying the structure and content of the inspired preachers.

B. Overview of the book of Acts.

1. Name the author and recipient of the book of Acts. (1:1 and see Luke 1:1-3)
2. What is the outline of the book implied in 1:8?
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3. How were those who were told to be Jesus' witnesses to be empowered? (1:8)
4. Fill in the major outline sections from the class discussion:
 - I. 1:1-1:11 –
 - II. 1:12-8:3 –
 - III. 8:4-11:18 –
 - IV. 11:19-21:16 –
 - V. 21:17-28:31 –
5. What key events marked the opening of each section?
 - 1:11 –
 - 2:2 –
 - 8:1 –
 - 11:18 –
6. What time span is covered by the book of Acts?

C. Studying the sermons in Acts

1. What reasons can you think of for studying the sermons in the book of Acts? Consider:
 - I Cor 1:18-21
 - John 17:17-20
 - Heb 2:1-4
2. What differences would you expect there to be in sermons preached to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jews in Jerusalem • Jews in other parts of the world • Religious (Proselyte) Gentiles • Pagan Gentiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians still learning some aspects of Truth • Elders of a church
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3. For each sermon we will try to determine:
 - The time and place
 - The speaker
 - The audience
 - The knowledge & religious background of the audience
 - The issue or circumstances of the sermon
 - The major points made (and how they relate to the circumstances)

D. Jesus Parting Commands.

1. What had Jesus been teaching the disciples between the resurrection and ascension? (see Luke 24:25-27; 24:44-46; Acts 1:3)
2. Fill out the chart below, based on the instructions given in the three accounts of the Great Commission.

What was to be Preached	The Result/ Response	The Continued Work
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: auto; padding: 10px;"> <p>(Mk 16:15)</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: auto; padding: 10px;"> <p>(Mk 16:16)</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: auto; padding: 10px;"> <p>(Mt 28:20)</p> </div>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: auto; padding: 10px;"> <p>(Luke 24:47)</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: auto; padding: 10px;"> <p>(Matt 28:19)</p> </div>	

E. Themes in the Sermons. We will look for these (and other) themes in the Sermons. Use the worksheet on page 5 to note the mention of the key themes in each sermon.

- Miracles & Signs of Jesus – With Witnesses
- Resurrection of Jesus – With Witnesses
- Prophecies of the Christ (Messiah) Fulfilled in Jesus
 - Suffering Messiah
 - Resurrection
 - Coronation (Throne of David)
- Christ’s Current Reign in Heaven
- Coming Judgment
- God’s Control in Events
- Human Guilt Before God
- Forgiveness by Response to the Gospel
 - Requirement to Repent
 - Baptism
- Exclusivity of Truth
- Universality of the Gospel
- Rejection by the Jews

Sermons in Acts Themes Worksheet

chapter	2	3	7	10	13	14/17	26
Miracles (witnessed)	22	16					
Rejection by Jews		4:11					
Resurrection	24	15					
Prophecies Fulfilled		24					
Suffering Messiah	27	18					
Resurrection	24,31	(24)					
Coronation	33,34	4:11					
Reign in Heaven	36	21					
Judgment	20,40	21					
God's Control	17-on	15,18...					
Human Guilt	36,40	26					
Forgiveness	38,40	19					
Repentance	38	19					
Baptism	38						
Exclusivity	40	4:12					
Universality	39	25,26					

Lesson 2 – Peter on Pentecost (Acts 2:14-40)

A. Objectives (the student will be able to):

- Describe the occasion that led to the sermon.
- List what the Jewish audience knew and understood before the sermon began
- List the three arguments Peter makes to prove that Jesus is the Messiah
- Give the Old Testament reference for the three prophecies that Peter uses.
- List four of the themes found in the sermon.

B. Background.

1. What was the time and place of this Sermon (Acts 1:1-5; 2:1)?
Was this time & place planned? (see 1:7)
Why was this time and place important to the evidence given and the spread of the gospel?
2. Who was the speaker? (see Acts 1:26; 2:14)
What special qualifications and empowerment did they have? (1:8; 2:4)
Was this consistent with the plan & promises of Jesus? (John 14:26; 16:12-14)
3. Describe the composition of the audience.
Were they religious?
Did they believe the (Old Testament) scripture?
Were they already aware of Jesus and his works?
Did they already believe in the resurrection of Jesus? His kingship?
4. What brought the group together?
What immediate questions did they have (2:12)
What preliminary conclusions were they drawing?

C. Outline of the Sermon. Write a brief title for each section of the sermon.

- 14-21
- 22-24
- 25-36
- 38-40

D. Analysis of the Sermon *Verses 14-21.*

1. How does Peter address the audience?
2. What argument does he make that the twelve Apostles were not drunken?
3. How does he explain the sound, fire, and tongues (see 2:3,4)?

Acts 2:14-40

¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

¹⁵ For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸ And on My manservants and on my maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and notable day of the Lord.

²¹ And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

²² "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—²³ Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴ whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

²⁵ "For David says concerning Him:

I foresaw the Lord always before my face,

For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken;

²⁶ Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh will also rest in hope,

²⁷ Because You will not leave my soul in Hades,

Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life;

You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'

²⁹ "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Therefore, being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, ³¹ he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. ³³ Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" ³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" ³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." ⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

4. Where is the prophecy quoted in verses 7-21) found in the Old Testament?
5. What is the context of Joel's prophecy of outpouring of the Spirit (see Joel chaps 1 &2)?
6. What are some saved from (Acts 2:19,20)?
7. Who calls whom in this rescue (v 21, and see Joel 2:32b; compare to Acts 2:39)?

Verses 22-24

1. By what description is Jesus introduced? Did the audience know Him?
2. What connection is there between the preceding explanation of the pouring out of the Spirit and Jesus (see vs 33)?
3. Were they aware of Jesus' "mighty works", etc.?
4. Were they aware of how He died?
5. Who did Peter say was responsible for His death? (Complete List.)
6. What news does verse 24 introduce?

Verses 25-36

1. To what "prophet" (see v 30) does Peter now turn?
Where is the quote in v. 25-28 taken from?
2. Describe the context of this passage (read the entire Psalm).
3. What problem is created by the presence of David's tomb in Jerusalem?
4. What reference does Peter probably have in mind in the statement in vs 30?
5. Who must David have been speaking of who "would not see corruption" (v 31)?
6. How were those present to believe in Jesus' resurrection (v 32)?
7. Compare 2:32 with Jesus' instructions in Luke 24:48.
8. What other event, after the resurrection, does Peter reveal (v 33)?
What two pieces of evidence does He give for this coronation?
9. What is the context of the Old Testament quote in vs 34? (read the entire Psalm)
10. Who else mentioned this passage in discussions with the Jews? (see Matt 23:44)
11. Does this new status of Jesus give added weight to the charge that they had crucified Him?

Verses 38-40

1. What question (vs37) is Peter answering in v 38?
What problem were they seeking to find an solution for?
2. Did these people believed in the deity and resurrection of Jesus at this point?
3. What were they told to do, and what was the result going to be?
4. What further exhortation did Peter give (v 40)?

E. Conclusions and Applications

1. Think about how Peter's sermon move from the immediate event (the speaking in tongues) to the gospel? How can our teaching of others imitate this approach?
2. Which of the themes do you see in this sermon? List the references where you find them:
 - Miracles of Jesus – With Witnesses
 - Resurrection – With Witnesses
 - Prophecies of the Christ
 - Suffering Messiah
 - Resurrection
 - Coronation
 - Christ's Current Reign in Heaven
 - Coming Judgment
 - God's Control in Events
 - Human Guilt Before God
 - Forgiveness by Response to the Gospel
 - Requirement to Repent
 - Baptism
 - Exclusivity of Truth
 - Universality of the Gospel

Lesson 3 – Peter at Solomon’s Porch (Acts 3:11- 4:12)

A. Objectives (the student will be able to):

- Describe the occasion that led to the sermon.
- List the two Old Testament references Peter uses to prove that Jesus is the Christ.
- List four similarities and 2 differences between this sermon and the one on Pentecost.
- List three ways Jesus is like Moses.
- List four of the themes found in this sermon.

B. Background.

1. What was the time of day & occasion (Acts 3:1, 2)? Who was present?
2. Had other miracles been performed by the Apostles before this one? (see 2:43)
3. What did Peter “have none” of (3:6)? Reconcile this statement with Acts 2:45 & 3:34, 35.
4. What & who attracted the crowd? (3:8-11)?
5. Describe the background of the people that gathered for this sermon?

C. Outline of the Sermon. Write a brief title for each section of the sermon.

- 3:12-16
- 3:17-21
- 3:22-24
- 3:25-26

D. Analysis of the Sermon

Verses 3:11-12.

1. How does Peter address the audience? (& see 2:22)
2. What wrong conclusion does he deny (v 12)? How is this beginning similar to Pentecost?

Verses 3:13-16.

1. In what verse does Peter finally explain by what power the man had been healed? Why does he take so long to get to the answer?
2. How is God described? What has He done? Is he pictured as having acted decisively? How is Jesus described in v 13-15?
3. List three things that Peter accuses the Jews of.
4. Whose faith had “made the man strong”? Was it the man’s? The crowd’s?
5. What was the significance of the healing power of faith in Jesus for these (guilty) Jews?

Acts 3:11-26

¹¹ Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon’s, greatly amazed. ¹² So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?”

¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.

¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

¹⁷ Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. ²² For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. ²³ And it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ ²⁴ Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who followed, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.

²⁵ You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ ²⁶ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”

Acts 4:8-12

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: ⁹ If we this day are judged for a good deed done to the helpless man, by what means he has been made well, ¹⁰ let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. ¹¹ This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ ¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Verses 3:17-21.

1. Peter says they were ignorant of what they were doing. Who else said that (Lk 23:34)?
Did their ignorance excuse them (see vs 19)
2. Who was actually in control of events at the crucifixion (v 18)?
3. What does Peter assert was prophesied about the Christ (v 18)?
4. What title does that lead Peter to apply to Jesus (v 20, & see 2:37,38)?
5. What does Peter call on the Jews to do, so that their sins could be “blotted out”?
What blessing would follow?
6. Where does he imply that Jesus (the Christ) is now? How long will He be there?
7. What is the “restoration of all things”?
8. How many of the prophets had spoken (for God) of Jesus (v 21, & see 24)?

Verses 3:22-24.

1. What is the Old Testament reference for the prophecy of Moses?
2. In what ways is Jesus like Moses?
3. What reference from Samuel might be referred to in verse 24?

Verses 3:25-26.

1. How are these Jews connected with (all these) prophets?
2. What is the Old Testament reference quoted in verse 25?
What meaning is now attached to the “seed” that would bless “all families”?
3. What is foreshadowed in the reference to “all families” and “to you *first*” (v 25,26)?
4. What requirement for “blessing” is given in verse 26?

Verses 4:8-12.

1. How is this audience different from the one on the previous day?
2. How is this audience addressed? (see also vs. 11)
3. What question is Peter answering (see v 7)?
Is that really any different than the topic of the previous day?
4. By what power does Peter answer (v 8)?
5. Note how many points Peter packs into this three sentence answer. Find these:
 - Their Guilt
 - Messiah-ship of Jesus
 - Signs, with witnesses (see v 16)
 - Resurrection
 - God’s control of events
 - Fulfillment of Prophecy
 - Current Reign of Jesus
 - Salvation through Jesus
 - Exclusivity of Truth
6. Where in the Old Testament is the prophecy in v 11 found?
Read this Psalm, and consider the context.
7. Note the similar points made by Peter a short time later in 5:30-32.

E. Conclusions.

1. What did the priests, captain, and Sadducees think the sermon was about (see 4:2)?
2. Find at least two examples of the theme of healing in this sermon.
3. List the similarities between this sermon and the one on Pentecost.
4. List at least two differences between the two sermons.

Lesson 4 – Stephen’s Defense (Acts 7:2-56)

A. Objectives (the student will be able to):

- Describe the occasion that led to the sermon.
- List the 2 charges made against Stephen.
- List the Old Testament leaders that Stephen mentions
- List the underlying theme of the sermon.
- List 4 of the common themes found in this sermon.

B. Background (Acts 6:8-15).

1. What triggered the opposition of the Jews (6:8)?
2. Who rose up to dispute with Stephen (6:9)?
Who was probably included in this group (see 22:3)?
3. How successful was this opposition?
To what tactics did they resort (6:11-13)?
4. List the charges made against Stephen (6:11-15).
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5. Are these familiar charges (v 14, Mt. 26:61; 27:40)?
What may have been the origin (see Jn. 2:19)?
6. Describe Stephen’s character & abilities (6:3-5, 8).
How did he appear to council members (6:15)?

C. Outline of the Sermon. Write a title for each section.

- 7:2-8
- 7:9-16
- 7:17-36
- 7:37-43
- 7:44-50
- 7:51-53

D. Analysis of the Sermon

Verses 2-8.

1. How does Stephen address his audience?
2. How does he refer to God?
3. What do the events listed in vs 2-8 explain?
How do they related to either of the charges made?
4. Was the land inheritance promised to Abraham or his descendants (v 6)? How was this to happen (v 7)?
5. Who clearly controlled these events (in every verse)?

Verses 9-16.

1. These verses describe what migration?
2. What is the relevance of Joseph’s rejection by his brothers to the current controversy (see v 52a)?
Who delivered Joseph from this rejection (v 9, 10)?
3. To what position was Joseph exalted by God (v 10)?
Did he become their savior & leader?

Acts 7:2-29

And he said, "Men and brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, ³ and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' ⁴ Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. ⁵ And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. ⁶ But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would sojourn in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress them four hundred years. ⁷ 'And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.' ⁸ Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs.

⁹ And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him ¹⁰ and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. ¹¹ Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. ¹² But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. ¹³ And the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh. ¹⁴ Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, seventy-five people. ¹⁵ So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers, ¹⁶ And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem.

¹⁷ But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt ¹⁸ till another king arose who did not know Joseph. ¹⁹ This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies, so that they might not live. ²⁰ At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. ²¹ But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. ²² And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. ²³ But when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. ²⁴ And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed. ²⁵ For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. ²⁶ And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?' ²⁷ But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?' ²⁸ Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹ Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.

Verses 17-36.

1. Whose life story is told in this section? How is this history relevant to the charges against Stephen?
2. Describe the suffering of the Israelites in Egypt.
3. How is Moses' character described (v 20, 22)?
4. How did he intend to use his power (v 23, 25)? What reception did he expect (v 25)?
5. When he tried to save an Israelite, what was the man's reaction? Where did Moses then go?
6. Who prompted his return to Egypt (v 34)?
7. What is the relevance of the story of Moses as the rejected, but successful leader of Israel (see v 37)?

Verses 37-43.

1. What historical event is described in this section? How is this relevant to the charges against Stephen?
2. What is the relevance of Moses' prophecy in v 37? What other sermon included this prophecy (3:22)?
3. Did Israel obey the Law Moses delivered (v 39, 53)?
4. What prophet describes their sin & consequence? What is this prophet's message (e.g. Amos 2:4,5)?
5. What consequences in Israel's history resulted from their idolatry (v 43)? Who caused this to happen?
6. What is the real & only reason that the Jew's "place" had been (& would be) taken away (v 42,43)?

Verses 44-50.

1. What last item does Stephen discuss in this section? How is this history relevant to the charges?
2. Were either the tabernacle or Solomon's temple still in existence? Who had built the current temple?
3. Read the prophecy quoted here (Is 66:1-4) in its context. What two kinds of hearts are contrasted? What kind of spirit does God look on (Is 66:2).
4. Why was reverencing the temple misguided? Who really "disrespected" God (Is 66:3, 4)?

Verses 51-53 (56, 59, 60).

1. As a conclusion, Stephen suggests that the Jews are just like their fathers—in what way (v 51, 52)?
2. How does he connect that behavior to Jesus (v 53)? What title (and connection) does he give to Jesus?
3. In murdering Jesus, how were the Jews guilty of the very thing of which Stephen was accused (v 53)?
4. What additional implication about Jesus (the "Son of Man" – see Dan 7:13,14) is found in v 56 and 59?

- E. **Conclusions:** Which themes do you see in this sermon? Are there new themes that should be added to our list?

Acts 7:30-56

"And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. ³¹When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, ³²saying, 'I am the God of your fathers -- the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and dared not look. ³³Then the Lord said to him, 'Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. ³⁴I have certainly seen the oppression of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.'" ³⁵This Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

³⁷This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.' ³⁸This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, ³⁹whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, ⁴⁰saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'

⁴¹And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. ⁴²Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets:

'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?

⁴³Yes, you took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.'

⁴⁴Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, ⁴⁵which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, ⁴⁶who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷But Solomon built Him a house. ⁴⁸However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:

⁴⁹Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, Or what is the place of My rest?

⁵⁰Has My hand not made all these things?

⁵¹You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.

⁵²Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murders, ⁵³who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."

⁵⁴When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. ⁵⁵But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ⁵⁶and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

... ⁵⁹And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Lesson 5 – Peter at Cornelius’ House (Acts 10:34-48)

A. Objectives (the student will be able to):

- Describe the circumstances and preparation God made to bring Peter to Cornelius’ house.
- Explain the significance of the Holy Spirit falling on Cornelius and his household.
- List at least four of our themes found in the sermon.

B. Background (Acts 10:1-33).

1. What kind of a man was Cornelius (v 1, 2)?
Was he saved? (see v 43, and 11:14)
2. What led Cornelius to send for Peter (v 3-8).
What did the angel tell him was the purpose of the words that Peter would speak (see 11:14)?
3. What did Cornelius know about Jesus? (see v 37-38)
4. Describe the events that led Peter to be receptive to the three men sent by Cornelius (v 9-20).
How did Peter interpret the vision (see 11:12)?
Why was this preparation necessary (see v 28)?
5. What was Cornelius’ reaction upon seeing Peter?
Why do you think he reacted this way?
6. As the two men exchanged stories in v 27-33, what was clear about the meeting (who was controlling things?)
7. What preparation had Cornelius made for the meeting?

C. Outline of the Sermon. Write a title for each section.

- 10:34,35
- 10:36-38
- 10:39-41
- 10:42,43
- 10:47

D. Analysis of the Sermon

Verses 34, 35.

1. What “perception” had Peter (apparently recently) gained?
Does this match Jesus’ command (Matt 28:19)?
2. Is Peter stating the conditions of salvation in v 35?
Explain.

Verses 36-38.

1. How does Peter summarize the “Word which God sent” in v 36?
2. To whom was this word sent (first)?
3. Did Cornelius already know of this “word”?
4. List some of the events of Jesus’ life that Peter reviews.

Acts 10:34-48

³⁴Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. ³⁵But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. ³⁶The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—³⁷that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. ³⁹And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. ⁴⁰Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, ⁴¹not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. ⁴²And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Verses 39-41.

1. How was Cornelius supposed to believe in the miracles and Jesus other good works?
2. Who does Peter blame for the crucifixion?
3. What phrase does Peter used to describe the method of murder (v 39)?
Has Peter used this phrase before (see Acts 5:30)?
Is there some connection with prophecy in this phrase? (see Gal 3:13,14 and Dt. 21:22,23)
(Note the connection to redemption and the salvation of the Gentiles.)
4. How was Cornelius to believe in the resurrection?
Who chose the witnesses?

Verses 42, 43.

1. What coming event were these chosen witnesses commanded to testify about?
2. What additional role will Jesus play in the Judgment of the living and the dead?
3. Who else witnessed about Jesus (v 43)? What was their testimony?
4. Is v 43 a complete statement what to do to be saved?

Verse 47.

1. What event occurred while Peter was speaking?
For whose benefit was this?
2. How did Peter describe this event later? (see 11:15-18)
What words of John the Baptist came to his mind?
What conclusion did he draw from this event, and the words of John?
3. What did Peter tell Cornelius' and his household to do (v 47, 48)?

E. Conclusions and Applications

1. In what sense was Peter's visit to Cornelius' house unlawful (v 28, and see also 11:2, 3 and John 18:28)?
Had God made a change in what was lawful? Had He changed what was "clean"?
2. Peter says that he was preaching "Peace through Jesus Christ" (v 36). What kind of peace does he mean? -- Between men (Jew & Gentile)? Between man and God?
Justify your answer.
3. Is the point of Peter's sermon that all races should get along with each other?
Explain.
4. John the Baptist is found not only in Peter's words (v 37), but in his thoughts (11:16).
Find references to these different baptisms, and list the purpose that is implied for each.
 - Baptism of John
 - In water in the name of Jesus
 - In the Holy Spirit
5. Find these themes in the recorded sermon (including Peter's account in chapter 11).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miracles of Jesus – With Witnesses • Resurrection – With Witnesses • Prophecies of the Christ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suffering Messiah ▪ Resurrection ▪ Coronation • Christ's Current Reign in Heaven • Coming Judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's Control in Events • Human Guilt Before God • Forgiveness by Response to the Gospel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requirement to Repent ▪ Baptism • Exclusivity of Truth • Universality of the Gospel
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Lesson 6 – Paul at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:16-42)

A. Objectives (the student will be able to):

- Describe the setting and audience for this sermon.
- List the events in Israel’s history that Paul mentions.
- List at least three OT references made in the sermon.
- Explain how the sermon is suited for Jews & Gentiles.

B. Background (Acts 13:1-4; 14,15).

1. What circumstances led Paul to Antioch of Pisidia?
2. Where had he been before coming to Antioch?
Does this appear to be the first sermon in Asia Minor?
3. What was the circumstance of the gathering?
What kind of Jews were present (see vs 43)?
Were Gentiles present (v 16b, 26, 44)? What kind?
What background would these Gentiles have?
4. At what point in the service was Paul invited to speak?
(And see vs 27.)

C. Outline of the Sermon. Write a title for each section.

- 13:16-22
- 13:23-25
- 13:26-31
- 13:32-37
- 13:38-41

D. Analysis of the Sermon

Verses 16-22.

1. How does Paul address his audience?
What period of Israel’s history does he cover?
2. Who was controlling events in this period of history?
List the verbs that describe God’s actions toward Israel.
Had God “saved” Israel in the past? When?
Had Israel deserved these blessings?
3. Notice that God “gave” them leaders until David.
How is David described? What does this imply
about how God judges men (see I Sam 13:14; 16:7)?
Why would he give this special description of David?

Verses 23-25.

1. Who came through the seed of David?
To whom did He come?
What title does Paul use for Jesus here?
2. Who preached before His coming?
What was the purpose of John’s baptism?
3. What was John’s testimony about Himself?
What did he testify about Jesus?

Acts 13:16-48

¹⁶Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, “Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: ¹⁷The God of his people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. ¹⁸Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. ¹⁹And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. ²⁰After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the Prophet. ²¹And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²²And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, *‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’* ²³From this man’s seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus—²⁴after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵And as John was finishing his course, he said, *‘Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.’*

²⁶Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. ²⁷For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. ²⁸And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. ²⁹Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised Him from the dead. ³¹He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people.

Verses 26-31.

1. To whom had “the word” been sent forth?
2. What key events of Jesus death are mentioned?
3. What two things did the Jews not know (v 27)?
What did they accomplish because of this ignorance (v 27 and 29)?
4. What is the significance of Jesus’ death “on a tree”?
(see also Acts 5:30, 10:39; Gal 3:13)
5. What evidence is presented that God raised Jesus up?

Verses 32-37.

1. To whom was the promise to the fathers being fulfilled?
2. Where is the prophecy in v. 33 found?
Read the Psalm. What is its message?
Based this teaching, when was Jesus “begotten”?
(See also Heb 5:5-10, and Ps 89:26,27.)
3. Where is the prophecy in vs 34 found?
What are the “sure mercies” [“holy things”] of David?
(see Ps 89:35,36)
Read the next two verses in the Isaiah reference. How does verse 5 apply to the Antioch audience?
Read on to Is 55:6,7 (and back to chapter 53). What other concept is associated with this new order?
4. What other Psalm does Paul quote in v 35?
Where did we hear this prophecy mentioned before?

Verses 38-41; 46, 47

1. What was being preached through Jesus?
2. What is required to be justified? (Justified from what?)
What system of justification will not work?
3. Where is the quotation in v 41 taken from?
What was its context (what is the book about)?
What response is Paul warning against in v 40,41?
Is this a reference to (warning of) a coming judgment?
4. How does this warning become relevant in v 45, 46?
5. Paul quotes a part of Is 49:6. Read Is 49:5-7 and note the relevance to the circumstances in Antioch.
6. How does v 48 illustrate the purpose of Paul’s sermon?

E. Conclusions

1. How is this sermon suited for both Jews and Gentiles?
2. Does this sermon appear to presume the audience has a good knowledge of the Old Testament?
3. Consider the evidence that the Jews fulfilled prophecy by killing Jesus. Is it more impressive that a prophecy is fulfilled by someone who knows and understands it, or by someone who is ignorant of it?
4. Find our themes in this sermon (use the worksheet).

³²And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers.

³³God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘*You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.*’ ³⁴And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: ‘*I will give you the sure mercies of David.*’

³⁵Therefore He also says in another Psalm: ‘*You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*’ ³⁶For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; ³⁷but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.

³⁸Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; ³⁹and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

⁴⁰Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:

⁴¹ ‘*Behold you despisers, Marvel and perish; For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.*”

⁴²And when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.

⁴³Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. ⁴⁴And the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. ⁴⁵But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. ⁴⁶Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘*I have set you to be a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.*”

⁴⁸Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Lesson 7 – Paul at Lystra & Athens (Acts 14:14-17; 17:22-31)

A. Objectives (the student will be able to):

- Describe the circumstances and settings of both sermons.
- List arguments made for the non-physical nature of God.
- List at least one sin for which pagans will be judged.

B. Background at Lystra (Acts 14:6-13).

1. Which “missionary journey” of Paul’s is this?
2. How has Paul been treated in Antioch (13:50) and Iconium (14:5,6), before coming to Lystra?
3. Who generally accepted their teaching (13:46-48; 14:1)?
Who stirred up the opposition (13:50; 14:2; 14:19)?
4. Find Lystra in Lycaonia on a map. Describe the religious environment (14:11-13) indicated in Luke’s account.
5. What event attracted a following?
What conclusion did the crowds (and priests) draw (v 11)?
Were they altogether wrong? What did they get right?
6. Why did Barnabas & Saul feel compelled to speak?

C. Analysis of the Sermon at Lystra (Acts 14:14-18)

1. What was first, and most urgent point made?
2. Why would worship of Barnabas & Saul be wrong?
What message were they preaching (“gospel-izing”)?
3. What were they to turn from?
What were they to turn to?
4. How had God dealt with [non-Israelite] nations in the past?
Did they have no evidence of Him? What did they have?
5. While this sermon does not mention Jesus, is it nevertheless a challenge to a major change?
Does it emphasize the exclusiveness of Truth? How?

D. Background at Athens (Acts 17:15-21).

1. Paul was waiting in Athens alone for Silas & Timothy.
What reaction did he have to the idolatry of the city?
How is this similar to what happened in Lystra?
What did it provoke him to do (v 17)?
2. What attracted the interest of the philosophers?
What statements made them think he was “proclaiming strange gods” (v 18b)?
3. Summarize the philosophy/theology of:
 - Epicureans
 - Stoics
4. Were these philosophers hostile or threatening in any way?
Were they arguing with each other?
Why were they interested in Paul’s message?
5. What would these men know about the Law of Moses or the ministry of Jesus?

Acts 14:14-18

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothing and ran in among the multitude, crying out¹⁵ and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these vain things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,¹⁶ who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.¹⁷ Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”¹⁸ And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.

Acts 17:22-34

Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;²³ for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:²⁴ God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.²⁵ Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.²⁶ And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,²⁷ so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;²⁸ for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’

²⁹“Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.³⁰ Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,³¹ because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

³²And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter.”³³ So Paul departed from among them.³⁴ However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

E. Outline of the Sermon at Athens. Write a title for each section.

- 17:22-23
- 17:24-28
- 17:29-31

F. Analysis of the Sermon at Athens (Acts 17:22-31)**Verses 22-23**

1. What was Paul's perception of the "men of Athens"?
Why would he say this, given what is known of the Epicureans & Stoics' theology?
2. Reference to "The Unknown God," made a good opening line, but what was he implying about their worship (theology) generally?

Verses 24-28

1. What fact does Paul assert about God in v 24?
What obvious conclusions must be drawn if God created everything, and "gives to all...all things," about God's:
 - Lordship (power & control - v 24)?
 - Dwelling Place (limitations on His presence – v 24)?
 - His dependence on the service of men (v 25)?
2. Paul next asserts several things about how man has been created (his nature).
Is there a similarity (kinship) between all men?
Are they all under God's direction and control?
3. What purpose is served by the "determined" and "preappointed" actions of God (v 27)?
4. Is the success or lack of success in seeking God due to His distance from us?
5. In what sense, or for what reason does Paul reason that God "is not far from us" (v 28)?
Who else had already figured that out (v 28b)?

Verses 29-31

1. If we are God's offspring (creation), why is it ridiculous to think that God is "something shaped by man's devising"?
2. Is there an implication that God is not pleased with this kind of thinking (or ignorance)?
3. How can God command repentance from ignorance (v 30)?
What does this command imply about ignorance of God's nature (see Rom 1:28)?
4. What evidence for the coming Judgment Day is given?
Could someone deduce this fact (a coming Judgment) from observing the natural world?

G. Conclusions & Applications

1. Compare 14:16 with 17:30. Do these passages suggest that the universal nature of the Gospel has also increased man's accountability to God?
2. In the sermon in Athens, Paul says "we are God's offspring". How is that different from the likely theology of the Epicureans (and many theologians today)?
3. In both of these sermons (neither of which was primarily to explain God's plan for salvation) Paul still emphasizes the need to be acceptable to God—and to be ready to make changes (repent) to do that. Is it possible to reach that conclusion from observing the physical world and the spiritual nature of man?
4. What special challenges come with teaching the gospel to those who are irreligious and/or have little knowledge of the Bible? What approaches are suggested by these sermons?

Lesson 8 – Paul at Miletus (Acts 20:17-35)

A. Objectives (the student will be able to):

- Describe the circumstances, location, & audience.
- List the two dangers Paul predicted would be coming.
- List the life examples Paul set among the Ephesians.

B. Background of the Discussion (Acts 20:1-16).

1. What journey is this sermon a part of?
2. What was Paul's long-range plan (19:21)?
3. Where was Paul when he made this plan (19:1, 26)?
4. Where did he go after leaving Ephesus (20:1-6)?
5. For what purpose did he travel through Macedonia & Achaia (see Rom 15:25,26; I Cor 16:1-7; Acts 24:17)?
6. How long was Paul's stay in Ephesus? (19:8, 10; 20:31) Characterize his work there (19:10, 20, 30, 20:1; and see I Cor 16:8,9; & I Cor 15:32)?
7. Describe the occasion, location, & audience for this sermon (20:16-18).

C. Outline of the Address. Write a title for each section:

- 20:18-21
- 20:22-27
- 20:28-31
- 20:32-35

D. Analysis of the Sermon at Athens (Acts 20:17-35)

Verses 18-21

1. What "manner" had Paul shown in his work (v 18, 19)?
2. Where and to whom did he preach?
What was the summary of his message (v 21, & see 25)
3. Why might his rejection by the Jews have led to tears?
(See Rom 9:1-5, written a few weeks earlier.)

Verses 22-27

1. What did Paul expect to happen when he gets to Jerusalem (v 23)? How did he know this?
2. What was most important to him?
What was not important to him (v 24)?
3. Did he expect to see these Ephesians again?
Did he (see I Tim 1:3 and 4:13; II Tim 4:13, 20)?
4. Why does he claim to be "innocent of the blood of all men"?

Verses 28-31

1. To whom were these elders to "take heed" (v 28)?
What were they to do (v 28)?
2. How did the "Holy Spirit make them overseers"?

Acts 20:17-35

¹⁷From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. ¹⁸And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, ¹⁹servicing the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; ²⁰and how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, ²¹testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. ²²And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. ²⁴But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. ²⁵And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. ²⁶Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

²⁸Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. ³¹Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

³²And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. ³⁴Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. ³⁵I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

3. What terrible events would occur after Paul's departure ?
 Would there be damage among the flock?
 What does this mean? (What would it look like at Embury Hills?)
4. The "wolves" represent dangers from outside. Who else would "draw away disciples"?
5. Were these urgent warnings new news?

Verses 32-35

1. As Paul departed, what power did he count on to sustain and protect them (v 32)?
2. What lesson were they to draw for their own behavior?
3. Where is the statement of Jesus (v 35) found in the gospel accounts?

E. Conclusions & Applications

1. If Paul was "innocent of the blood of men" because he "shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God," what may be said of us if we do not teach others?
2. Note the phrases that Paul uses to describe his preaching. Are these different messages?
 - v 20
 - v 21
 - v 24
 - v 25
 - v 27
 - v 32 (and note the protective power of the Word)
3. Consider this sermon in light of the duties of elders (see I Pet 5:1-4; Heb 13:17).
 - Was Paul intending to set an example for the elder's work (see v 35)?
 - Note from the sermon what characteristics of life Paul was showing them:
 - v 19
 - v 20
 - v 24
 - v 27
 - v 31
 - v 33,34
 - What are practical ways in which elders can set this same kind of example?
 - What dangers should be the most frightening to elders?
 - In "laboring like this," (v 35) whom are elders primarily "supporting"?
 - Is this support financial? (Defend your answer from the text.)
 - Who are the weak?
 - Based on the above, what is the meaning of the quotation of Jesus in verse 35?
4. Which of the above characteristics of life are not required of all Christians?
 How do you measure up to this example?
5. Do Paul's warnings suggest future apostasy and error in the church at Ephesus?
 What later epistles describe these problems (and predict there will be more)?

Lesson 9 – Paul before Agrippa and Festus (Acts 26:1-31)

A. Objectives (the student will be able to):

- Describe the circumstances, location, & audience.
- List the key points of Paul’s autobiography given.
- List the evidence Paul presents to Agrippa.

B. Background of the Hearing (Acts 24:22-25:27).

1. What had prompted Paul’s original arrest (22:26-30)?
2. Paul’s first defense was before Felix. What kind of a man (and governor) does he seem to be (24:22-27)?
3. How long did Paul wait to be heard (24:27)?
4. What prompted the next hearing (24:27-25:12)? On what basis does Festus seem to be making decisions?
5. What was Festus’ dilemma that he presented to King Agrippa (25:13-21, esp. v 18, 21)? What stood out about Paul’s message in his mind (v 19)?
6. As Festus introduced the proceedings the next day, what dilemma does he present to the “prominent group” (25:23-27, esp. v 26,27)?
7. What were the accusations against Paul (21:28; 21:38; 22:21,22; 23:6; 23:29; 24:5,6; 25:7; 25:19)?
8. What had been his simple defense? (24:17-19)

C. Outline of the Address. Write a title for each section:

- 26:2-3
- 26:4-11
- 26:12-18
- 26:19-23
- 26:25-29

D. Analysis of the Sermon at Athens (Acts 20:17-35)

Verses 2, 3

1. Find out about Herod Agrippa II & Bernice. How were they related? What was Agrippa’s religion?
2. Was Paul required to defend himself to Agrippa after his successful appeal to Caesar (25:11,12, 21,22)? What about Agrippa made him “happy” to do so (v 3)?

Verses 4-11

1. Had Paul ever lived in any way that was objectionable to the Jews? What special discipline had he followed? In what city?
2. Paul narrows down the “question about their own religion” (see 5:19) to a specific topic in v 6. How does he describe this issue in v 6? How important is this topic to the Jewish nation?

Acts 26:1-31

¹Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: ²"I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, ³especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

⁴My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. ⁵They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. ⁶And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. ⁷To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. ⁸Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

⁹Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities. ¹²While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, ¹³at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. ¹⁴And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

¹⁵ "So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?'

"And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. ¹⁷I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, ¹⁸to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

3. Verse 8 seems to change the subject, but how is the raising of the dead connected to the Jewish hope? (Remember Ps 16:10, for example.)
4. Paul now continues to describe his personal religious history, proving his zeal by things done “contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth”.
By whose authority did he do these things (v 10)?
What is the relevance of this activity to the accusations?
5. What is the connection between God’s power to raise the dead (v 8) and Jesus (v 9)?
Would Agrippa have made this connection (see 25:19)?

Verses 12-18

1. The narrative adds details not found in chapters 9 & 22. What does it mean to “kick against the goads”?
2. What was the purpose of the appearance to Paul (v 16)?
Of what was he to be a witness?
3. From whom would he be delivered (v 17)?
4. To whom was he sent (v 17)?
For what purpose was he sent to them (v 18)?

Verses 19-23

1. As Paul “obeyed the heavenly vision,” what was his message to those in Damascus and Jerusalem (v 20)?
2. What were the actual reasons (v 21) that the Jews seized Paul in the temple and tried to kill him?
3. To whom is he presently witnessing?
4. How does Paul summarize his activities & message in verses 22, 23? Has he departed from Jewish scripture?

Verses 25-29

1. Does Festus’ interruption seem sudden? Why would he interrupt Paul at this point?
2. In contrast, Paul responds calmly, using the terms “truth and reason”. To whom does he turn his attention?
3. What things does Paul assert that King Agrippa knows and believes (v 26-27)?
4. In King Agrippa’s famous reply (v 28), he uses a term not introduced by Paul. Where had this term come from (see Acts 11:26)? What does his awareness of this term imply?
5. Does Paul deny that he has used his defense as a conversion attempt? Compare to v 22.
6. What is indicated about Agrippa’s attitude when he stands and leaves?
What conclusion does he reach (v 31, 32)?

¹⁹“Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. ²¹For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²²Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— ²³that the Christ would suffer, that He should be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.”

²⁴Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, ‘Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!’

²⁵But he said, “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. ²⁶For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.”

²⁸Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian.”

²⁹And Paul said, “I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains.”

³⁰When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; ³¹and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, “This man is doing nothing worthy of death or chains.”

E. Conclusions & Applications

1. Compare the statement of Paul’s mission to the Gentiles in verse 18 to “the hope of the promise” in verses 6 and 7. What prophecies have we seen that link the ideas of a Jewish Messiah with bringing spiritual salvation for all nations, including the Gentiles.
2. What does Paul’s personally-aimed conclusion say about whom we should be teaching?