

## **Lesson #7: Acts**

### **G. Introduction**

The study of the book of Acts requires a slightly different approach than the study of Luke. Dates and places are more significant, since it records history which takes place over a longer period of time and in many different places. The book records events which occur from about AD 30 until about AD 63-64, covering the reign of Romans Emperors from Tiberius (AD 14-37) to Nero (AD 54-68). The events take place first in Jerusalem and then expand to “the uttermost parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Also, beginning in Chapter 13, Acts records the travels of the apostle Paul. He goes on three missionary journeys and a trip to Rome, all of which are recorded in some detail. Some supplementary maps will be included in the study to help you visualize these journeys.

Remember what was said in the introduction to the study on page 2: Acts is not a biography of Peter or Paul but is designed to record the birth and growth of the church. Such a history is critical to our understanding of how the early church functioned. Since the church was functioning under the leadership of the apostles, we can be sure that if we pattern our organization, worship and doctrine after the church of the first century, we cannot be mistaken.

#### **Please read Acts 1:1-2:41 and answer the following questions:**

1. Note the similarities of the first part of Acts with the last part of Luke. What evidence is there that Luke is author of both?
2. What prophecy is made concerning the apostles? [1:4-5]
3. What is the significance of the question which the disciples ask in 1:6? What is a “kingdom” and what were the disciples waiting for? How did Jesus answer and why is it significant?
4. Write out an outline of Acts using only 1:8 as a guide.
5. Where did Jesus go when He was “taken up”? [1:9; cf 2:33; 7:56] What did the men in white apparel mean when they said Jesus would return in the same manner?

6. How many disciples had gathered in the “upper room”? What were they doing? [1:12-15]
7. Who was chosen to replace Judas? What qualifications did a man have to meet to become an apostle? Why can there be no apostles today? [1:15-26]
8. Look carefully at the text and determine who the “they” refers to in 2:1.
9. Who was involved in the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Had such a thing ever happened before? What was the effect? [2:1-13]
10. We’re told that the apostles began to speak with “other tongues.” What does that mean and is it anything like what people are claiming they are doing today? [2:4-11]
11. What was the crowd’s response? [2:7-13]
12. Peter’s is the first sermon recorded, though all of the apostles had been teaching (2:4). Analyze Peter’s sermon and answer the following questions: [2:14-39]
  - a. How does he answer the charge that they are drunk?
  - b. Why does he use so many Old Testament quotations?
  - c. What does the prophesy of Joel refer to and how is Peter making application of it?
  - d. What evidence does Peter give to show that Jesus is the Messiah for whom they have been looking?
  - e. Where was King David at the time Peter spoke and why was it important?
  - f. What is unique about Jesus of Nazareth, especially when compared to all other religious leaders?
  - g. What was the response of the crowd when Peter told them they had killed Jesus?

- h. How did Peter answer their question, "What must we do?"?
  - i. What effect(s) does baptism have, according to Peter?
  - j. What is the "promise" referred to in verse 39?
13. In what sense was the generation "perverse" and why did the people need to be saved from it? [2:40]
14. What was the state of mind of the people who were baptized? How many were there? To what were they added? [2:41]

### **Think About It. . .**

Luke claims that Jesus proved His resurrection by "many infallible proofs." How do you feel about that - are you absolutely convinced? Do you know about those proofs? (See I Cor. 15:3-8)

What do you think when people today claim they are "apostles," such as some in the Mormon church? Is it possible for them to be apostles?

Some claim to speak in "tongues" today - in fact, they claim that you are not truly a Christian unless you do. How do you feel about that? Do you think modern "tongue-speaking" is of the same quality and has the same purpose as we read about in Acts?

What caused the people to be "cut to the heart"? Have *you* ever felt that way? Has it ever happened when you read or heard something about Jesus?

Peter told the people to repent and be baptized for forgiveness of sins. Why did he tell them that? Why didn't he just tell them to "accept Jesus into your heart as your personal savior"? Do you believe Peter was right when he said that baptism was for forgiveness of sins?

Have you ever been baptized? Why or why not? (See Rom. 6:3-7; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12-13; I Pet. 3:21).

## NOTES

## Lesson#8: Acts

### H. The Church at Jerusalem

Please read Acts 2:47-6:7 and answer the following questions:

1. In what did the new converts “continue steadfastly”? [2:42]
2. What does the word “fear” mean in 2:43?
3. Describe the atmosphere of the first church. [2:42-47]
4. Who was the Lord adding to the church each day? [2:47] Why doesn't it say the people were *joining* the church?
5. What was the purpose behind the healing of the lame man? [3:1-10] What opportunity did it create? [3:11]
6. Summarize the main points of Peter's second sermon. What does he command them to do? [3:12-26].
7. What was the purpose of prophecy? [3:24]
8. Why were Peter and John arrested - what had they done? [4:1-3]
9. How many people were in the church by now? [4:4]
10. What does it mean to do something in the “name of” someone? In whose name had the apostles acted? Did they have authority for this? In whose name is salvation found? [4:5-12]

11. What steps did the council take to try to silence Peter and John? How did Peter and John respond? [4:13-22]
12. Who was responsible for the death of Jesus and why? [4:27-28]
13. How were the disciples demonstrating their care for one another and for the church? [4:32-37]
14. What lessons do we learn from Ananias and Saphira? [5:1-11]
15. How did the imprisoned apostles escape? What were they told to do? [5:17-21]
16. Why did the Jewish leaders fear the people? [5:26]
17. Who is Gamaliel and what did he have to say about the teaching of the apostles?
18. What was the attitude of the apostles about suffering for the name of Jesus? [5:41]
20. What problem occurred between the Jews (Hebrews) and the Greeks (Hellenists)? How was it handled? [6:1-7]

### **Think About It . . .**

This section records a number of threats to the church. They take three forms: external persecution; internal evil (Ananias & Saphira); and internal strife (the rift between the Jews and Greeks). Why did these occur and how might they occur in the church today? How can they be prevented?

What got into these apostles that caused them to undergo such suffering with no complaint?

What is the church to do when confronted by evil within it?

What is of prime importance in the church? (see 6:2) Do you see evidence that many churches have forgotten this principles?

## NOTES

## **Lesson #9: Acts**

### **I. Critical Events in the Life of Three Pivotal Figures**

**Please read Acts 6:8 - 9:31 and answer the following questions:**

1. Who was Stephen and why were people trying to hurt him? [6:8-15]
2. Carefully read the text of his defense before the council [7:1-53]. Summarize the main points below:
3. What was the response to Stephen's words? What did they do to him? How did Stephen respond? [7:54-60]
4. Who was "consenting to his death" and what did he proceed to do? [8:1-3]
5. What did the stoning of Stephen cause the disciples to do? [8:1-4]
6. Philip is the third major figure introduced in this section. What kinds of things did he do, where did he do them and what was the result of his actions? [9:5-13]

7. Did the people of Samaria just “accept Jesus into their heart” or did they do something else? [8:13]
8. Describe the sin of Simon the Sorcerer. What was required in order for him to be forgiven? [8:14-25]
9. Describe in detail the conversion of the Ethiopian [8:26-39].
10. Saul was still persecuting the church, but something very dramatic happened to him. What was it and why is it significant? [9:1-22]
11. Was Paul saved? At what point? [9:18; cf. 22:16]
12. Stephen had been killed and the church was undergoing severe persecution. What happened to the church, in spite of these things? Why? [9:31]

### **Think About It. . .**

What do the conversions which you have read about so far have in common? Can you construct a “plan of salvation” from them?

Have you undergone a conversion like any of the ones mentioned in Acts?

Does it appear that being a good, moral person is enough to save a person?

## **Lesson #10: Acts**

### **J. The Gospel in Palestine and Syria**

**Please read Acts 9:32 - 12:24 and answer the following questions:**

1. Chapter 10 introduces us to a very important individual named Cornelius. Describe him in as much detail as you can from what is given in this chapter.
2. What was the nature and message of the vision which Peter saw? Why was this necessary? [10:9-16].
3. Why was Peter sent to Cornelius? [10:17-33]
4. What did Peter teach Cornelius? [10:34-43]
5. How did Cornelius respond? Was he saved? At what point? [10:44-48]
6. The conversion of Cornelius is significant for reasons beyond the personal salvation of he and his household. Why? [10:44-48]
7. The first part of Chapter 11 is basically a repetition of the events of Chapter 10. What new information does it add to our understanding of what happened? [11:1-18]
8. Who was Barnabas and how would you describe his attitude? [11:19-26]
9. What is a "prophet"? What did one of them (Agabus) predict about Jerusalem? [11:27-30]

10. Who died at the hand of Herod? [12:1-2]

11. Who did Herod seize and put in prison? [12:3-4]

12. What was the church doing while Peter was in prison? [12:5]

13. How did Peter get out of prison and how did the church respond when told about it? [12:6-16]

14. What happened to Herod? [12:20-23]

15. How is the preaching of the gospel going at this point in the history? [12:24]

### **Think About It. . .**

Cornelius was a very good person but not yet saved when Peter meets him. Why?

What qualities did Cornelius have that we should emulate?

The church prayed for the release of Peter but didn't believe it when he was released. If we're going to pray, shouldn't we pray with faith? (Cf. Luke 18:1-8)

Herod killed James. God killed Herod. Who would you rather be - Herod or James?



4. What did the people of Lystra try to do with Paul and Barnabas? Why? How did they respond? [14:8-18].

5. What did Paul and Barnabas do when they returned through the cities of Lystra, Iconium and Antioch? [14:21-23]

6. What question was raised by “certain men” from Judea and how was it handled? [15:1-29]

7. As you read through Chapter 15, note how certain methods were employed to establish the authority for the decision. Find an example of: **command**, **approved example**, and **necessary inference**.

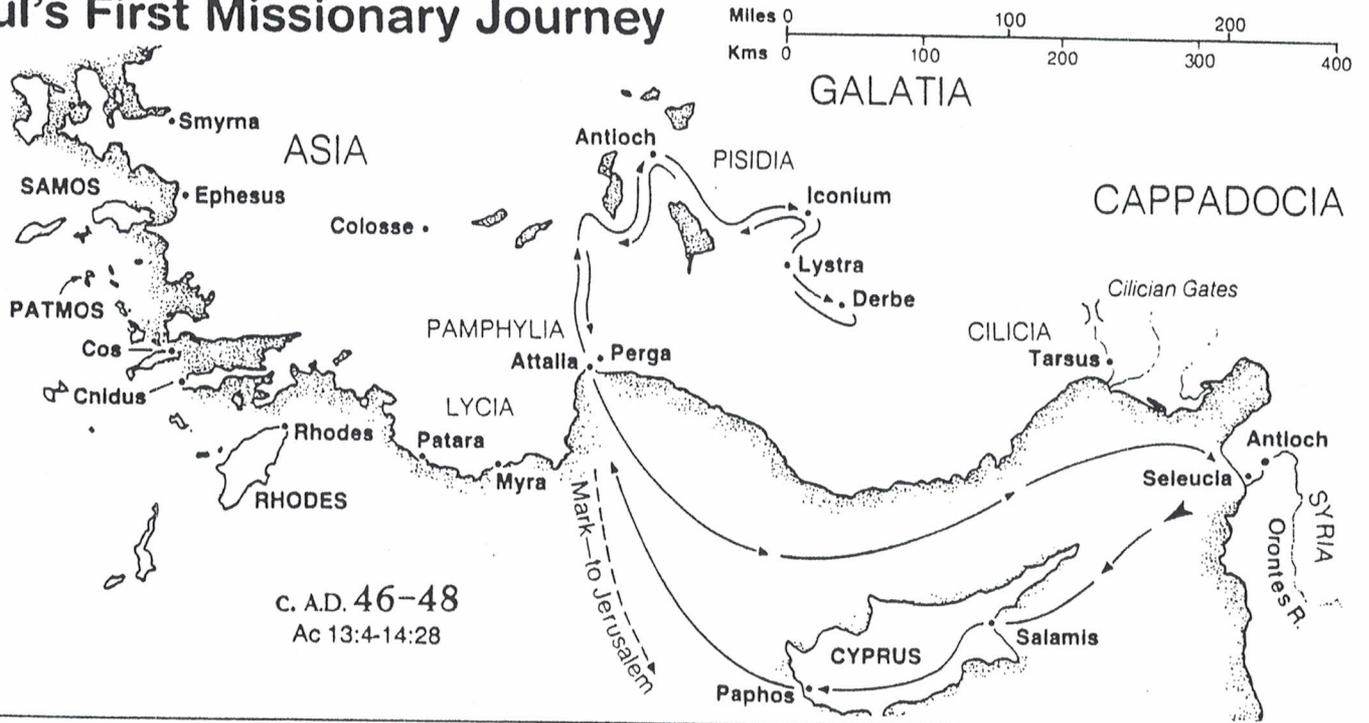
### **Think About It. . .**

What does Chapter 15 teach about the necessity of keeping the Ten Commandments or any other aspect of the Old Testament?

How do you determine what scriptures apply to you? How do you establish religious authority for an action? How do you suppose God views actions done without His authority?

The following two pages contain maps of Paul's three missionary journeys and his trip to Rome, covering a period of about fifteen years, from AD 46 to 60. Take special note of how the gospel spread, even in the face of stiff opposition. You can use the space below to make notes on some of the highlights of these trips.

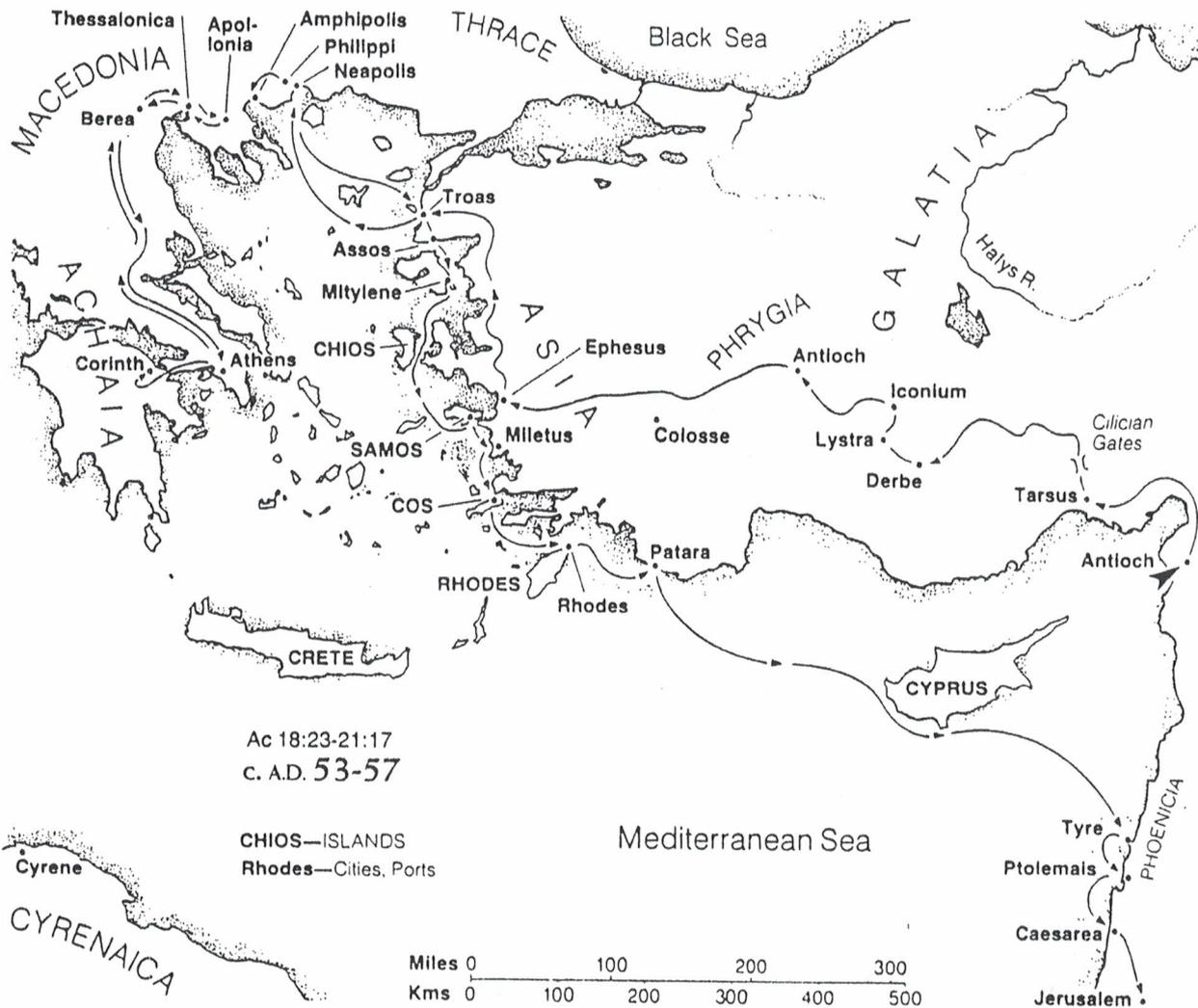
# Paul's First Missionary Journey



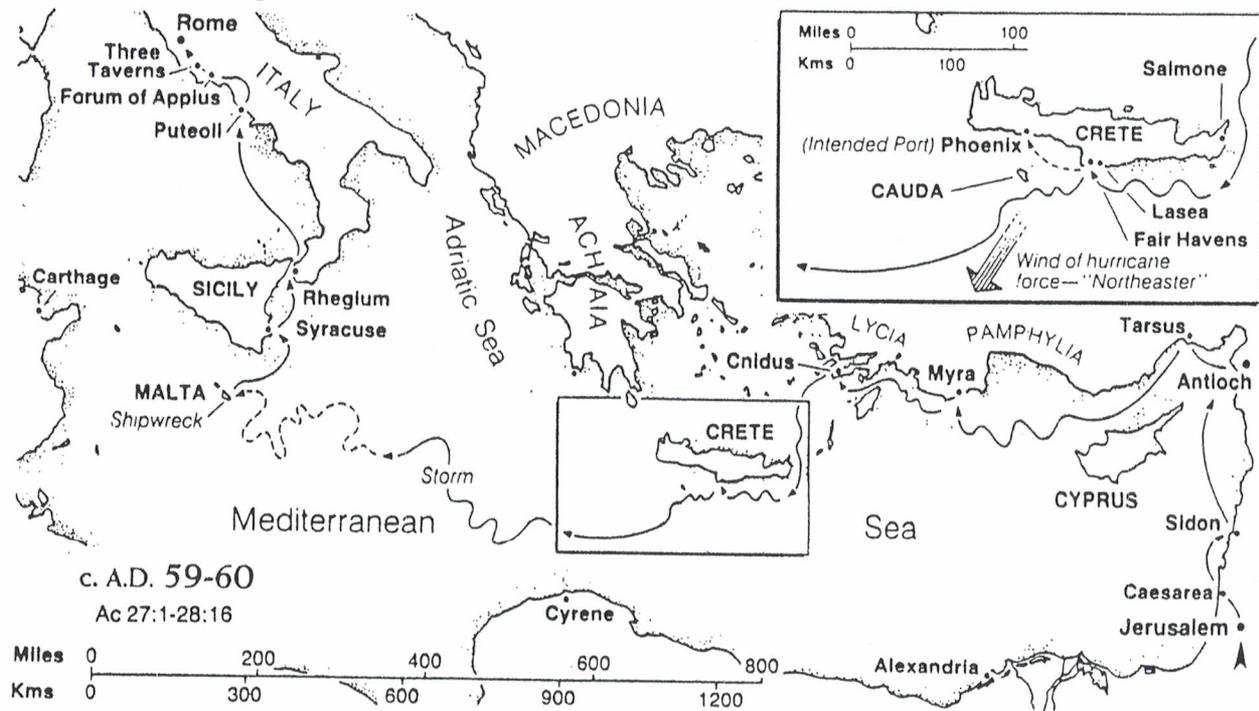
# Paul's Second Missionary Journey



# Paul's Third Missionary Journey



# Paul's Journey to Rome



## **Lesson #12: Acts**

### **L. Paul's Second and Third Journeys**

**Please read 15:36 - 20:38 and answer the following questions:**

1. There arose a sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas. Why and what was the result? What does this tell us about the concept of "agreeing to disagree"? Should all disagreements divide the church? [15:36-40]
2. Who was Lydia? Describe her conversion. [16:11-15]
3. Describe the conversion of the Phillipian Jailer. Note especially his attitude afterward [16:25-34].
4. Compare the mind-set of the Bereans with the Thessalonian Jews. Who was more "noble-minded" and why? How did each group respond to the teaching of the gospel? [17:10-15]
5. Note the approach Paul uses in trying to reach the Athenians with the gospel. Why did he talk about an "unknown God"? [17:16-34]
6. Describe the attitude of the Athenians both before and after Paul preached. Did he have much success there? Why or why not?

7. What does God command all men to do today? Why? [17:30-31]
8. What does Paul offer as proof that there will be a resurrection some day? [17:30-31]
9. What important couple did Paul meet in Corinth? [18:2]
10. How long did Paul stay in Corinth? [18:11-18]
11. By way of review, trace the path Paul took on his second preaching tour and note the events that took place along the way.
12. The record of Paul's third tour begins in 18:23. Trace the movements of Paul on this journey.
13. What happened at Ephesus that illustrates the commitment people had made to the Lord? [19:11-20]
14. We read about a riot in Ephesus. Who and what precipitated it? How was it finally resolved?
15. What does Acts 20:7 teach us? Why?

16. How did Paul preach when he was in Ephesus? [20:17-21]

17. Paul knew that when he went to Jerusalem he would suffer. Did that stop him? Why? [20:22-24].

18. What problems did Paul predict for the church and from where would they come? [20:28-31]

### **Think About It. . .**

What is impressive to you about the conversions of Lydia and the Jailer?

Would you honestly put yourself in the category of the Bereans, who were more “noble-minded” than the Thessalonians? Why?

The Athenians were always looking for something “new”? Why does that attitude make it difficult to receive the gospel?

Have you thought about the reality of judgment recently? How will you answer when you are asked to give an account of your life? (Cf. Romans 2:6ff.)

If we are attached to something physical that is opposed to the word of God, what will we do when we are truly converted, in light of 19:19?

What do you think is involved in declaring the “whole counsel of God” (20:27)?

## Lesson #13: Acts

### M. Paul's Journeys to Jerusalem and Rome

Please read Acts 21:1 - 28:31 and answer the following questions:

1. What was Paul's attitude about serving Christ? Was he crazy or truly committed to a risen Lord? [21:11-14]
2. After the mob seized Paul and had beaten him, he was arrested and taken to some barracks. But he was allowed to address the mob. Read his speech carefully and note the major points he makes below [22:1-21]:
3. At what point did the crowd become incensed again? How did Paul save himself? [22:22-29]
4. How is it that Paul could say he lived "in all good conscience" if he had "persecuted the Way to the death"? What is the function of the conscience? [23:1]
5. What is the difference between the Sadducees and the Pharisees and how did Paul use this difference to his advantage in his speech before the Sanhedrin (the Jewish High Court)? [23:3-10]
6. What lie did the commander tell in his letter to Felix? (Cf. 22:25ff. with 23:26-30)
7. What charge was levied against Paul to Felix by Tertullus? Were any of them true? [24:1-9]

8. Study Paul's defense and Felix' response. [24:10-27] When Felix called for Paul again, what was he hoping to get and what did he get instead? Why was he afraid - what had Paul reasoned with him about?
9. Even though neither Felix nor Festus had cause to bind Paul they both left him imprisoned. Why? [24:27; 25:9]
10. To whom did Paul finally appeal and why was this significant? [25:11-12; 26:32]
11. Outline the defense which Paul makes before King Agrippa. How is it similar and how is it different to previous defenses that he has made? [26:1-32]
12. What was Agrippa's response when Paul appeals to his conscience and knowledge?
13. Chapter 27 describes the beginning of Paul's trip to Rome and tells of a shipwreck. Note how Paul's faith is displayed and expressed in this crisis and make some notes below.
14. What interesting event took place on the island of Malta? What did it prove? [28:1-10]

15. How was the church viewed in the eyes of society, according to the people in Rome? [28:22]

16. What circumstance was Paul in while in Rome and what did he do there? Why do you think the book ends so abruptly? [28:30-31]

Think About It . . .

Paul was ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem. Why? Are you ready to make that kind of commitment to God?

Paul relates how he was told to be baptized and “wash away your sins” (22:16). Do you think it is possible for one’s sins to be “washed away” without baptism? Are your sins washed away?

Paul persecuted the church and even consented to the death of some of its preachers (22:4, 19-20). Yet he was sure he was saved. How did he overcome his extreme guilt? Do you think you’ve done something so evil that you could never be saved? Think about Paul, who called himself the “chief of sinners” in I Timothy 1:15. No one is beyond the reach of God’s grace if he or she will obey Him.

Festus became afraid when Paul preached about righteousness, self-control and the judgment (24:25), which indicated that he still had a conscience. But he responded by putting off hearing any more from Paul. Have you ever procrastinated about doing something important? How about your obedience to the gospel? Will there be a *more* convenient time?

After Paul recounted his conversion experience and asked King Agrippa if he believed the prophets, Agrippa said, “Paul, you almost persuade me to become a Christian.” Almost persuaded, but lost. Are you almost or “altogether” persuaded?