



Acts

Acts 1: Christ ascends/Disciples wait

Tod Kennedy, May 16, 1999

I. Applications or “So what?” from Acts 1

1. God has his own timing for his blessings; we are to practice faith-rest and faith-waiting while we press ahead with our Christian lives (1.4, 7-8, 11).
2. The resurrection of Christ has been demonstrated by convincing proofs (1.3).
3. We are to witness about Christ—tell others who he is and what he has done for us. This is the first mission of the church. The second is to teach and learn the Word of God (1.8).
4. The return of Christ is just as sure, and will be in the some way, as His ascension—bodily, in clouds, in view of mankind, to bring in the visible kingdom (1.10-11).
5. We are to concentrate on what he has revealed and press on with our Christian lives instead of speculating on what God has not chosen to reveal, such as exact dates for future events (1.6-8).
6. The Holy Spirit was sent to give power and purpose to his church (1.8).
7. These believers were armed with what they needed as they awaited the beginning of the church age: clear instructions about what to do (1.1,2,4,8,11,16), unity (13-14), leadership (13,15,21-26), the Word of God—spiritual knowledge (1,11,16), anticipation of future ministry (13-15,22), and faith-waiting for the Holy Spirit (4,8,13,14).

II. Bible Doctrines related to Acts 1

Doctrine: Luke

1. Scripture that speaks about Luke:
 - 1.1. Acts 16.10-17; 20.5-21.18; 27.1-28.16. The “we” passages of Acts fit with Colossians 4.14 and Philemon 24. All the passages taken together tell us that Luke traveled with Paul during at least part of the missionary trips. Luke was the author of Luke and Acts. Luke was with Paul onboard the ship from Caesarea to Rome. He was even with Paul in Rome during the first Roman imprisonment (Acts 27.1-28.16).
 - 1.2. Colossians 4.14. Luke was a physician and well loved. Luke knew many of the same believers that Paul knew.
 - 1.3. Philemon 24. Luke was one of Paul’s fellow workers (sunergo~).
 - 1.4. 2 Timothy 4.11. He stayed with Paul in Rome throughout Paul’s second imprisonment, probably risking personal danger to himself.
 - 1.5. He wrote Luke and Acts (Luke 1.1-4 with Acts 1.1, the “we” passages of Acts, the medical references, and the notes in Colossians 4.14 and Philemon 24.
2. A summary of Luke’s history:
 - 1.1. He was a physician. Paul and others loved Luke—in the divine love sense and personal friendship love sense. This indicates that Luke was orientated to God, to Bible doctrine, to grace, to life, and to people.
 - 1.2. Luke was very loyal to his friend, apostle, and co-worker Paul. He stayed with Paul during the difficult and dangerous times. Luke, therefore, must have had a strong and virtuous character.
 - 1.3. Luke was a member of Paul’s team. He had a very effective ministry, though he was not a professional pastor-teacher or missionary or evangelist or youth director or song leader.
 - 1.4. Luke was Paul’s physician, right hand man, and God’s historian for the early church age.
 - 1.5. Luke and Titus were possibly brothers (2 Corinthians 8.16-24; 12.18; Galatians 2.3).
3. Principles for faith application:
 - 3.1. The clergy laity distinction is a false distinction. People other than "professional ministers" are necessary and productive in God's plan. These believers are fellow workers with communicators of the Word. Together, they do God’s work.

- 3.2. Luke illustrates that teamwork in the ministry brings results in the ministry. Believers work together and accomplish more; the communicator has the time to study and teach; believers with spiritual gifts have opportunities to serve together. Camaraderie and mutual support develop.
 - 3.3. Spiritual endurance and loyalty benefit believers and the ministry. The team members that really helped out Paul are those who stayed with him through the most difficult times and did not try to compete with him for his job, his authority, or his people. Luke subordinated other careers and used his abilities for Lord, not just for himself. Careers, fame, and fortune are unimportant compared to serving the Father at the right time and in the right place.
 - 3.4. We all have spiritual gifts, ministries, and effects. We must use our gifts and ministries for the Father. He will produce the effects. We have the privilege and opportunity as priests to serve God.
 - 3.5. God also uses believers with professional education and training for his service. Remember that Luke was a physician and an historian. Whatever your education, training, profession, or vocation may be, God wants to use you.
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Doctrine: Baptism of the Holy Spirit

1. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the act by which God the Holy Spirit indwells a person the moment he believes in Christ and by this indwelling identifies and unites that believer with Christ and his spiritual body, the church (1 Corinthians 12.13; Ephesians 1.23).
 2. Jesus prophesied the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Matthew 3.11; Mark 1.8; Luke 3.16; John 1.33.
 3. Jesus said that the baptism of the Holy Spirit would occur after his ascension. It was therefore not a part of the age of Israel, but was the fundamental and basic sign of the church age (Acts 1.5).
 4. The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred and was explained in Acts 11.15-16. Peter said that this was what Jesus had spoken about in Acts 1.5.
 5. The baptism of the Holy Spirit happens at the moment one believes in Christ and it happens to every church age believer. You cannot be a believer and in the church apart from the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11.17; 1 Corinthians 12.13).
 6. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a fact, not an experience. It is not something that is felt or has confirming signs. It is an act of God that occurs at the moment a person believes in Christ.
 - 6.1. It is supernatural.
 - 6.2. It is not an experience.
 - 6.3. It cannot be improved upon.
 - 6.4. It is complete and perfect when it happens.
 - 6.5. It is not evidenced by signs.
 - 6.6. It is revealed only by the Word of God.
 - 6.7. It is the basis for the supernatural Christian life.
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Doctrine: Ministries of the Holy Spirit

1. He convicts the unbeliever of his need for salvation (John 16.8-11). He convinces about sin—we are guilty before God, about Christ's righteousness and our need for it, and about judgment that falls on those who disbelieve in Christ.
2. He does at least five spiritual services for a person the moment one believes in Christ—regenerates (Titus 3.5), indwells (1 Corinthians 6.19), baptizes (1 Corinthians 12.13), seals (Ephesians 1.13), and gives a spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 12.11).
3. He carries out spiritual service for every believer--assures of salvation (Rom 8.16), fills (Ephesians 5.18), teaches (John 14.26), guides (Romans 8.14), glorifies Christ (John 16.14), prays for believers

(Romans 8.26-27), produces the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5.22-23), and gives the ability to live without giving in to the old sin nature (Galatians 5.16-17).

Acts 2, Pentecost

Tod Kennedy, May 23, 1999

I. Applications or “So what?” from Acts 2

1. We know that the Word of God is true; Jesus’ fulfilled prophecy validates the truthfulness of the Word of God.
2. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives gives us supernatural ability to serve God. We do not have all the spiritual gifts that the apostles had, but we have the very same power for living and serving that they had.
3. God is now working through us—church age believers. Israel, because she rejected the Messiah and his kingdom, has been temporarily set aside while God works through us. What an amazing opportunity and privilege.
4. People can repent of sin after they have eternal life. Repentance is a turning from sin; believers and unbelievers can repent. We will repent many times during our lifetime.

II. Summary Outline

1. On the day of Pentecost, Sunday, May 24, AD 33, fifty days after Christ arose, God the Holy Spirit came to earth to baptize and fill the waiting believers who were in Jerusalem. This **fulfilled Jesus’ prophecies** (Acts 2.1-4).
2. **The Holy Spirit gave** the disciples (monolingual Galileans) the **supernatural ability to witness about Christ** to the Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem from many nations; and they witnessed in the native languages of the visitors. This was called speaking in tongues, the spiritual gift of tongues—the speaker spoke in a recognized language that he had never learned (Acts 2. 5-12). The purpose was the same as in the original incident found in Isaiah 28.11. In Isaiah 28 God said that Israel would be subjugated by a foreign power because of her unbelief and apostasy, and that the sign of this subjugation would be that the foreigners would use their own language—Assyrian and probably Babylonian—when they commanded the Jews. In Acts 2, the disciples spoke to these visiting Jews in Gentile languages. This called the listener’s attention to the importance of the message from God.
3. God used tongues to deliver three messages: First, Israel would be disciplined for its rejection of Christ, the Messiah; second, that Christ was the Savior of both Jews and Gentiles; and third, that God forming a new spiritual body composed of believing Jews and Gentiles. This was the body of Christ, the church. **Israel was set aside for a time due to unbelief, while the church temporarily became the center of God’s plan** (Acts 2.5-13).
4. Peter reminds them that Joel had predicted that this kind of event would happen, so that they should not blame it on drunkenness; God produced it. God spoke through Joel and said that this would occur before their kingdom age. The reference is to the ministry of the Holy Spirit—a kind of ministry that people will recognize. The Jewish people thought that they were now in the last days; the Messiah had come; now they await the next phase—the long awaited kingdom age. Due to their unbelief the kingdom would not come at that time and the signs associated with that kingdom (Joel) would not occur. The point is that **God intervenes in history and does so to present grace before judgment**; God is offering grace to these Jews (Acts 2.14-21).

5. Jesus Christ came to earth, died for sins, arose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father—all **according to the plan of the Father**. David spoke of this, the Holy Spirit has witnessed to this through tongues, and the Jews that were present had participated in the great rejection of their Messiah; they were guilty (Acts 2.22-36).
6. The Jews listening to Peter **believed the gospel—so they were saved then and there** (Acts 2.37-41). They sensed their enormous wrong, which was a **national sin**; now what should they do? Peter told them all to repent (aorist active imperative, second plural of *metanoew*)—to make the decision to turn from their part in crucifying Christ—and God would give them the Holy Spirit, “you shall receive the Holy Spirit” (future middle indicative, second plural of *labanw*, to take, to receive). Receiving the Holy Spirit refers to the Holy Spirit baptizing them and indwelling them. The indwelling and baptism of the Holy Spirit was the God given sign that they were part of the church—as he had done for the 120 disciples. Then each one should receive water baptism (aorist passive imperative, third singular of *baptizw*). “Repent” actually goes with “for the forgiveness of your sins (“your” is second person plural of *umwn*)—on the basis of forgiveness already gained. They were to make the decision to turn from their part in crucifying Christ. The word translated “for” is *ei~*; this preposition is used for aim, purpose, goal, with reference to, and on the basis of. Matthew 10.41, 12.4, and Romans 4.20 illustrate this last usage. The **Jews were saved when they believed Peter’s message**. This ritual water baptism differentiated each of them from the Pharisees and from the unbelieving nation and therefore from the coming Jewish judgment of AD 70.). To say that repentance or baptism was necessary for eternal life salvation contradicts Peter’s own words in Acts 10.43-48 and Paul’s words in Acts 16.31.
7. The young church grew and experienced spiritual prosperity (Acts 2.42-47). The new believers devoted themselves to doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. They retained the wonder and the thrill of participating in God’s new work. They very generously made sure that everyone in the young church had temporal supplies. They praised God; people saw the gospel in action.

III. Bible Doctrines

1. The doctrine of tongues.
2. The doctrine of salvation.
3. The doctrine of repentance.
4. The doctrine of national repentance.
5. The doctrine of baptism.
6. The doctrine of the last days.
7. The doctrine of distinctives of Christ’s death.
8. The doctrine of the plan of God.
9. The doctrine of the daily plan of God.
10. The doctrine of church growth.
11. The doctrine of witnessing.

Acts 3, Not gold, but health

Tod Kennedy, July, 1999

I. Applications or “So what?” from Acts 3

1. Spiritual health is more important and of greater value than physical health.
2. Christ’s resurrection validates our assurance of salvation and confident expectation of our eternal future.
3. God no longer gives temporary spiritual gifts, but each of us has a permanent spiritual gift and opportunities for service to him.
4. The people of Old Testament times anticipated that their Messiah would come. The people of the New Testament time missed him because they were not listening to the prophets.

II. Summary Outline

1. Peter and John had lately participated in very wonderful events: Christ’s resurrection, Pentecost, more than 3000 people believing unto eternal life, and the healthy growth of the young church. Now as they walked to the temple at 9:00 AM, a congenitally lame man asked them for some money. Peter did not give money; instead, he used this opportunity to drive home a spiritual truth by healing the man in the name of Jesus Christ—the truth that Jesus Christ is God and therefore the Messiah. Peter redeemed the time—exactly what Paul wrote about in Ephesians 5.16 and Colossians 3.17 and what we should do (Acts 3.1-7).
2. Peter used his temporary spiritual gift of healing, a supernatural sign gift, to heal the lame man. The miracle got the man’s attention; he praised God, the source of his healing. The miracle also got the attention of the people in the temple area; they gathered around Peter, John, and the now-healed lame man and were ready for Peter to speak (Acts 3.8-11).
3. Peter saw that he had an audience, so he began with the incident they had just seen—he took advantage of their frame of reference—and said that Jesus was God’s Messiah. They had crucified Jesus but God raised him. Peter identifies the resurrection of Jesus as the work of Israel’s God, while the arrest, unbelief, and crucifixion were Israel’s works (Acts 3.12-15).
4. Jesus Christ healed the man in response to the man’s faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Peter clearly proclaimed that Jesus is God and therefore Israel’s Messiah. Even though the Jewish people and their rulers had not believed that Jesus was the Messiah, God’s prophets had clearly announced what would happen to him (Acts 3.16-18).
5. What did Peter tell his audience to do? He told them to repent—to turn from their sins of rejecting the message of the prophets and therefore rejecting Jesus, the Messiah—and return to the prophets’ inspired message about the Messiah and his kingdom. If they do not believe the prophets’ and Peter’s message, they will not participate in the future blessings promised to Israel—the Kingdom or Millennial blessings. Those who do believe the message will later be resurrected and share as church age saints in the blessings of the coming Millennial Kingdom (Acts 3.19-21).
6. Moses, the leader and lawgiver who lived about 1520 to 1400 BC, precisely predicted that God would send the Prophet-Messiah. Samuel, who lived about 1080-1017 BC, and the other prophets also announced that the Messiah would come. The Jews of Peter’s day had no excuse for missing him. Peter later wrote in 1 Peter 1.10-12 that the prophets studied to know when the great event would happen, for they were convinced that the Savior would come (Acts 3.22-24).
7. The Messiah, Christ, came first to Israel. They were God’s chosen priest nation. Now they had crucified Christ, but God had raised him. The only right conclusion for the Jewish audience is to believe in Jesus Christ, their Messiah, the one in whose name and power the lame man had been healed (Acts 3.25-26).

III. Doctrine Summaries, Definitions, and Descriptions

1. **Temporary spiritual gifts** are supernatural sign gifts (supernatural abilities) that God gave to certain believers for a limited period of time so that they could authenticate their ministry and message about Jesus Christ; the primary purpose was not to cure physical or social ills. These gifts were operational only during the transitional first century. The following are the temporary spiritual gifts: differentiating spirits, faith, prophecy, tongues, word of knowledge, word of wisdom. The principle of temporary spiritual gifts is found in Hebrews 2.3-4, 1 Corinthians 13.8-11, 2 Corinthians 12.12, and Romans 15.18-19. Paul, during his first Roman imprisonment in AD 60-62, was not able to heal Epaphroditus even though he had healed Publius' father and others on the island of Malta two years earlier (Acts 28.7-9; Philippians 2.25-27). Paul could not heal him because God had withdrawn the gift of healing.
2. **Permanent spiritual gifts** are the gifts that we in the church age now possess. A spiritual gift is the special ability that God gives to each believer for ministry within the body of Christ. The permanent spiritual gifts are the public communication gifts (pastor-teacher, teacher, evangelist), church operational gifts (leadership, administrations, service), individual gifts (helping, showing mercy, encouragement), and giving. We must be walking by the Holy Spirit if we want to properly serve, participate with God in the ministry, and spiritually benefit from the use of our spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 12.4-7; 1 Peter 4.10; Romans 12.6-8; Ephesians 4.11).
3. **Redeeming the time** is specifically taught in Ephesians 5.16. To redeem the time means to purchase or buy time, actually points of time or opportunities that are available to us as believers. God wants us to use the time and the opportunities for service to him, while Satan, who is the temporary ruler of this world system, tries to prevent us from doing so. Peter did a good job of using the opportunities that he had. "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Colossians 3.23), is another way of commanding us to redeem the time.
4. **The Millennium** is the one thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ, the Messianic-Theocratic King, over the entire earth. In that time the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New Covenants will be fulfilled. The Millennium begins with the second coming of Christ to the physical earth; it will end with the final rebellion of Satan followed by the Great White Throne Judgment; and the Millennium will then become the eternal kingdom. Jerusalem will be his capital; Israel will be his special nation; righteousness will be his platform. God promised this golden age to Israel when he called Abraham and then through Moses formed the Israeli nation. It will be a time of physical and spiritual blessing called a time of refreshment (Genesis 12.1-3; Deuteronomy 30.1-8; 2 Samuel 7.12-16 Jeremiah 31.31-34; Isaiah 2.2-4; 11.1-11; Daniel 2.44; Zechariah 13.9, 14.1-8; Matthew 24.29-31; Acts 3.19-21; Revelation 20 and many others).
5. We are **witnesses for Christ**. Peter witnessed to the Jewish crowd; they had gathered as a result of the miracle (Acts 3). Peter was a witness for Jesus Christ. He began with the current event that they had seen and used that to move into a message to persuade them that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. He said that to return to the message of the prophets and believe in Jesus Christ would bring blessing, but to reject Jesus Christ would bring judgment. To witness for Christ, then, is to clearly communicate the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins, that he arose, and that whoever believes in him as Savior will be given eternal life. Witnessing for Christ, along with teaching and learning Bible doctrine, is the mission of believers between his first and second comings. The believer gives the gospel, the Holy Spirit convinces the unbeliever and at faith regenerates, indwells, baptizes, seals, and gifts the new believer, and the Father sets in motion his plan for that believer (Matthew 28.18-20, 2 Timothy 3.15; John 16.8-11; Romans 1.14-16; 2 Corinthians 5.11-21).
6. **Repentance** means to decide to turn from one's sin; it is not a condition of salvation; faith in Christ as Savior is the only condition for salvation (John 3.16; Acts 16.31; Ephesians 2.8-9). Both unbelievers (Matthew 12.41) and believers (Luke 15; Acts 19.18-20; 2 Corinthians 7.7-10; Revelation 3.19) repent. When unbelievers repent, it does not mean that they have become believers. An unbeliever's repentance may hold off God's judgment or prepare him to listen more closely to the

gospel. In the case of the believer, repentance may prepare for a confession of personal sin and return to fellowship; at times, it includes the confession of sin as illustrated by the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. Jesus and John the Baptist told Israel to repent. This was not a call to eternal salvation, but instead a call to return to the national relationship with God for which God had prepared them. The call to repentance was to prepare them to believe in their Messiah (Matthew 3.1-3; Luke 3.3, 8-9). Jesus also told the Jewish people to repent from their rebellious political and religious activities; if they did not repent, temporal judgment, including physical death would result (Luke 13.1-9). In summary, the command to repent is a call to the unbeliever or the believer to turn from one's sin. Repentance has a wide scope; on one end it can be a broad call for a nation to return to her heritage and on the other end of the spectrum it can be a precise call for a believer to confess specific sin and return to fellowship with God.

Acts 4: Peter and John on trial

Tod Kennedy, August 22, 1999

I. Applications or "So What?" from Acts 4

1. Spiritual courage is something that we all desire. The apostles demonstrated spiritual courage while facing opposition to their ministry.
2. Our witness to the gospel ought to be clear, gracious, and to the point.
3. Prayer is part of our way of life. When we pray we ought also to express thanks to our heavenly Father.
4. We believers have a relationship to human law and to God's Word. We are to obey the laws of our nation. The exception is that when the laws contradict Scripture, we must obey the Scripture instead of the human laws.
5. We believers have the privilege and responsibility of helping other believers who are in legitimate need.

II. Summary Outline and Doctrine Summary

1. Peter and John proclaimed, in the temple area, the message about resurrection through Jesus which resulted in about 5000 people believing the gospel unto eternal life, yet the message irritated the religious leaders so much that they arrested the two apostles (Acts 4.1-4). Note that the apostles emphasized Jesus, the Messiah, and the resurrection that comes through him. They gave a clear witness to the gospel; we should do the same. The person and work of the Messiah jerked the Jewish leadership into opposition to the apostles. Did the apostles make a public relations snafu?
2. The Jewish **priests** were those of the political religious order who had charge of the temple organization and service. The dedication and service to God by the priesthood had greatly deteriorated from the original standards set by Moses. The priestly functions included the following:
 1. To care for the Holy Place (the incense, lamps, and bread of presence),
 2. To care for the courtyard (the altars and offerings),
 3. To inspect unclean persons, administer oaths, and appraise offerings for the sanctuary,
 4. To teach God's Word to the people.
3. The **captain** of the temple guard was the commander of the temple security police.
4. The **Sadducees** were one of the three religious parties at this time, the others being the Pharisees and the Essenes. The Sadducees were aristocratic priests and very rigid in their acceptance of Moses' written law while rejecting the Pharisaic oral tradition; the Sadducees held to freedom of the will in contrast to the Pharisees who held to divine preordination; the Sadducees rejected bodily resurrection, future punishment, and angels (Mat 22.23; Acts 5.17; Acts 23.8; Josephus *Wars* 2.8.1)
5. The religious leadership kept Peter and John in prison overnight, then interrogated them. They questioned the apostles about the ability (*dunami-*, *dunamis*, the Greek word for power, might, ability) and authority (*omoma*, *onoma*, the Greek word for name). Peter and John declared that the

answer to both questions was Jesus Christ the Nazarene—the rejected cornerstone, the only Savior (Acts 4.5-11).

- 5.1. **Religion** seeks to gain God’s praise based upon human works while Christianity receives God’s blessings by faith. The religious man seeks the credit, while the Christian serves in order to honor God. These priests were not interested in faith alone in the Messiah alone.
- 5.2. The **stone** refers to Christ. The Father sent Christ as the cornerstone of his redemptive plan, but Israel rejected Christ. When the cornerstone is rejected, the building will not function as planned; it must be fixed. Israel was set aside and God now works through the church. Later Israel will be brought back into God’s blessing (Psalm 118.22; Matthew 21.42; 1 Peter 2.7).
- 5.3. When we **witness** we must be accurate in the message, we must be confident, and we must be ready for opposition. We also ought to expect God to do his work in the lives of those to whom we speak. Why do you think five thousand believed the gospel that day? Note 5,000 believers so soon.
- 5.4. We may be imprisoned, but the **word of God is never imprisoned**. These events demonstrate this. Paul’s two-year imprisonment did not hinder the Word of God. He wrote the Prison Epistles, preached, and taught the Word of God (Acts 28.30-31).
6. Peter and John were confident about their message, ministry, and future. This confidence was based on Christ’s person and work to which the resurrection gave the ultimate authentication. The healed man was the extra bit of proof of the apostles’ message about Christ. The Jewish leadership could not argue with this kind of proof. They certainly could not explain it away. Since they could not disprove the message, they simply retreated into an attempt to outlaw the preaching of the gospel. Their real concern was that they might lose authority, prestige, and privilege in the eyes of the people to Jesus Christ, whom they had rejected (Acts 4.13-20). The two apostles gave the only right answer: “we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.” They knew that the only life-giving message was the gospel. They knew the truth of 2 Corinthians 5.18-21, that God had committed to them the ministry of reconciliation (Acts 4.12-22). See Corinthians 9.16 and Romans 1.14-16.
 - 6.1. **Knowledge of the truth** (the facts about Jesus Christ) combined with **faith** in that truth gave the apostles a working confidence and courage to spread the one and only life-giving message, the message of eternal life through the resurrected Christ. We, believers in Jesus Christ, have the knowledge of the truth available to us in the Word of God; we also have the ministry of the Holy Spirit to teach us and to minister through us; we have the privilege to make faith-application of the truth; therefore each of us has the opportunity and privilege to confidently and courageously tell others about Jesus Christ.
 - 6.2. **Faith** is the conviction that something is true. Faith must have an object. In order for a person to gain eternal life, he must believe the gospel, the only correct object of faith. In biblical terms, saving faith “is the inward conviction that what God says to us in the gospel is true” (Zane Hodges, *Absolutely Free*, 31). What he said was that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was judged by God the Father for the sins of the world, including my sins, and that because of his substitutionary, death he offers me eternal life if I will believe in him as my Savior (John 1.12; 3.16; 20.31; Acts 16.31; Ephesians 2.8-9; 1 Timothy 1.15; 1 John 5.13). Jesus Christ is, as John said in John 1.29, “The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”
 - 6.3. Believers are under the **authority** of the laws of their nation; we are to obey them. The exception is that when the laws contradict Scripture, we must obey the Scripture instead of the human laws. Peter and John state this in Acts 4.19-20; Peter records the principle in 1 Peter 2.11-23. Daniel faced this same kind of challenge in Daniel 6.4-17. When we choose for God instead of the human law, we honor God and his plan and at the same time help our country by presenting God’s truth. If we are arrested or harassed we must take the consequences, all the while continuing to learn the Word of God, living by the Holy Spirit, living by faith, and applying the Word of God to life. We have recently studied principles related to these concepts in the doctrines of Human Freedom and Spiritual Freedom, Divine Institutions, Divine Establishment, and Authority.

7. When the Peter and John were released they immediately gathered with other believers to report what had happened and to pray. The gathered believers thanked the Heavenly Father for deliverance and that his plan for history was in force; they asked that the Father would grant that they would continue to confidently proclaim the Word of God. After they prayed the Holy Spirit filled them to empower them to confidently proclaim the Word (Acts 4.23-31).
 - 7.1. They applied the **Doctrine of Prayer** at this time: 1. Believers pray to the Father, in the name of the Son, while living by the Holy Spirit and in fellowship with God, and directed by the Word of God (Ephesians 5.20; 6.18; John 15.7). 2. Prayer shows dependence upon the Father, for He knows everything in advance. 3. Prayer is a way of life (Romans 12.12). 4. The general order of prayer is confession of sin if needed, thanksgiving, pray for others, and pray for self. 5. Prayer should, first of all, be for the spiritual life of people, then for the physical details. Sometimes God leaves the physical problems because he wants to bless us in our spiritual life (Ephesians 6.18-20; 2 Corinthians 12.8-10). We ought to pray: Lord, take care of the opposition, give us boldness, and do your work in people's lives in order to get their attention and to verify the message we deliver. You can look up the doctrine of prayer from previous studies.
 - 7.2. God the Father has a specific **plan for human history**. That plan centers around his Son, Jesus Christ. The specific Bible doctrines that explain this are The Attributes of God, Dispensations, The Theocratic Program, The Angelic Conflict, The Historical Plan of God, and Human Volition or Free Will.
8. Believers in Jerusalem faced persecution during these early days of the church. To ease the struggle believers helped, supported, and encouraged each other. This help was voluntary and temporary; it supplied the temporal needs of a young and struggling church (Acts 4.32-37).
9. Paul states the principle for **helping believers** in Galatians 6.10. He also warned, in 2 Thessalonians 5.10-15, against supporting the lazy believer who would not work.

Acts 5, Apostles Must Obey God

Tod Kennedy, September 5, 1999

I. Application or "So what?" from Acts 5

1. God is sovereign and holy; we had better not try to con him. We must be honest and genuine in our relationship with him; anything else will bring unhappiness and possible divine discipline.
2. Grace giving to God ought to be voluntary, given with no strings attached, motivated by appreciation to God, and given only to please the God and serve him.
3. Supernatural spiritual gifts had a purpose—to authenticate the apostles' ministry—and when that was accomplished God withdrew those gifts; God does not give those gifts today.
4. Mental attitude sins will frustrate us and make us miserable. Not only that, but they will lead us to make bad decisions that will hurt others and us.
5. We ought to continue our God given ministry, no matter what opposition we encounter.
6. We must learn when to obey human authority and also when to say, "that is wrong, I must obey the Word of God."
7. We have the wonderful privilege to suffer rebuke, rejection, and pain because we are believers in Christ and serve him.

II. Summary Outline

1. Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit about their giving. Peter called their bluff; he knew that both had lied to God. God executed both by employing the sin unto death. As one would expect, the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira got people's—believers' and unbelievers'—attention. They will now

be more careful how they relate to God. God used this incident to alert the young church to his authority and their responsibility (Acts 5.1-11).

2. The apostles got the attention of the people from Jerusalem and surrounding cities through the supernatural sign gifts so that more and more people became believers in Christ (Acts 5.12-16). We draw attention to the gospel by our grace mental attitude, by how we treat people, by how we live under pressure and prosperity, by what we talk about, by how we do our job, and by how clear we present the gospel.
3. The religious leadership again demonstrated their mental attitude sins of jealousy by immediately arresting the apostles (Acts 5.17-18).
4. The Angel of the Lord secretly broke the Apostles out of jail—no broken doors or bent bars or strange noises—and commanded them to take their stand in the temple and boldly present eternal life through Christ. The temple police and religious leaders could not figure out what had happened (Acts 5.19-24).
5. A report came in that the apostles were in the temple area teaching the people. Upon hearing this, the officers brought them in for questioning. The officers had to be careful lest the crowd of people turn on them for arresting the apostles (Acts 5.25-28).
6. The apostles went right to the point when they answered, “We must obey God rather than men.” Then they wasted no time in telling their antagonists that Jesus, whom the religious leaders had killed, was alive, was honored by God, was the Prince and Savior, and had authority over Israel and over sin. They further reiterated that they and the Holy Spirit, whom God had given to them, had witnessed these wonderful things (Acts 5.29-32).
7. Gamaliel used some common sense; he told the group of self righteous, jealous, and irritated Jews that they should calm down. If the new movement were a human and not a divine movement, then it would come to nothing just as Theudas and his band and Judas and his band; if what the apostles were doing was directed by God, then by attacking the apostles the religious leaders would be attacking God (Acts 5.34-39).
8. The authorities flogged the apostles and again forbade them to preach Jesus Christ. The apostles, of course, went right back to witnessing and teaching about Christ. They considered it an honor to have suffered because they spoke about Jesus Christ and the resurrection (Acts 5.40-42).

III. Doctrine Summaries, Definitions, and Descriptions

1. **The sin unto death** is the final stage of divine discipline administered by God to a believer because of sin. This discipline is mentioned only a few times; the sins in those cases were seeking information from a medium, lying to the Holy Spirit, and consistently participating in communion with unconfessed sin in the life; there are probably other sins and patterns of sinning that bring on the sin unto death (1 Samuel 28.7; 1 Chronicles 10.13-14; Acts 5.1-10; 1 Corinthians 11.27-30; 1 John 5.16).
2. God disciplines believers (**divine discipline**) in order to bring about right thinking and right living; he wants to protect, correct, train and bless us. God begins with warning (Revelation 3.19-20), then proceeds to punishment if the warning is ignored (Hebrews 12.5-11), and in certain cases he removes the believer from temporal life—the sin unto death (Acts 5.1-10; 1 Jn 5.16).
3. **Suffering and testing** refer to pain, pressure, circumstances, ideas, or people that challenge the believer to live God’s plan in the present evil world system. There are two main categories of suffering and testing: undeserved and deserved. Undeserved suffering and testing is the most prominent category for the believer. All suffering and testing, even divine discipline, is designed for blessing (2 Corinthians 4.16-17; 1 Peter 1.6-9; 4.1-2; 4.12-16; Hebrews 12.7-11).
4. **Authority** is the right to rule and make decisions. Divine authority and human authority ought not to contradict each other. God is the absolute authority and the source of all legitimate human authority (Psalm 135.6). God has created the universe (John 1.1-4; Col 1.16) and his authority maintains the consistent function of the universe (Colossians 1.17). God’s authority establishes human freedom;

human freedom requires responsibility; responsibility protects human freedom and restrains human authority (Romans 13.1-6; 1 Peter 2.13-17). God has instituted human authority in order to 1) protect free will, 2) protect the human race from self destruction, 3) give order to life, 4) maintain peace, 5) allow the gospel and doctrine to spread and influence people, and 6) support the believers' witness by their authority orientation in a rebellious world. He has expressed his authority in His written Word and through Jesus Christ, the living Word (Hebrews 1.1-2; 4.12; 2 Timothy 3.16). Believers have the responsibility to obey human authority except where that authority contradicts God's authority as expressed in his Word (Daniel 6.4-17; Acts 4.19-20; 5.29). Believers are under the authority of the laws of their nation; we are to obey them. The exception is that when the laws contradict Scripture, we must obey the Scripture instead of the human laws. Peter and John state this in Acts 4.19-20; Peter records the principle in 1 Peter 2.11-23. Daniel faced this same kind of challenge in Daniel 6.4-17. When we choose for God instead of the human law, we honor God and his plan and at the same time help our country by presenting God's truth. If we are arrested or harassed we must take the consequences, all the while continuing to learn the Word of God, living by the Holy Spirit, living by faith, and applying the Word of God to life. We have recently studied principles related to these concepts in the doctrines of Human Freedom and Spiritual Freedom, Divine Institutions, Divine Establishment, and Authority.

5. **Mental attitude sins** are thought sins; the other two categories of sin are sins of the tongue and action sins. We can commit mental attitude sins without anyone knowing about it, but God knows. Mental attitude sins are the root of the other sins. Common mental attitude sins are worry, judging others, pride, jealousy, hatred, envy, worldliness, plotting evil, and self-righteousness (Proverbs 6.16-18; 23.7; Matthew 7.1-2; Romans 12.1-2; 2 Corinthians 10.5; James 4.1-6).
6. **Grace giving** occurs when a believer who is walking by the Holy Spirit and in fellowship with God willingly gives to the Lord from his material possessions without any desire for human praise (2 Corinthians 8.1-5; 9.6-8).

Acts 6, Seven Table Servers

Tod Kennedy, September 12, 1999

I. Applications or "So what?" from Acts 6

1. The division of ministry was God's idea. He designed the body of Christ and assigned spiritual gifts so that all believers have a ministry and all the body of Christ receives ministry.
2. Service becomes more beneficial when those serving have a good reputation, when they walk by the Holy Spirit, and when they have and use wisdom.
3. Study of the Word of God, teaching the Word of God, and prayer are the foundations for the day to day life of the church.
4. The church has a responsibility to care for its members; one group of people whom the church ought to help is believing widows who have no family support and who do have a good reputation. Paul also writes about this in 1 Timothy 5.3-16.
5. Religious people hate grace; they persecute grace-oriented believers.
6. Stephen shows us that if we live by the Christian life basics—grace orientation (8), ministry and spiritual gifts (8), knowledge of the Word (10-11), spirituality or living by the Holy Spirit (10), and occupation with Christ (15)— we will not only have an effective ministry, but also a Christ-like mental attitude even though we are slandered and beaten up.

II. Summary Outline

1. The church at Jerusalem grew and with growth came added opportunities and responsibilities. The present opportunity was for the non-apostles to serve believing widows. The disciples chose seven men to take charge of the widows' need. This table service would accomplish two purposes: allow the apostles to concentrate on their specialized ministry of prayer, study, and teaching the Word and insure that the widows were cared for. (Acts 6.1-4).
2. The congregation of believers thought that it was a good idea to care for the widows so they chose seven men. The apostles agreed with their choice and demonstrated their agreement by laying hands (ordaining) on them (Acts 6.5-6).
3. The Word of God spread. The apostles were able to concentrate on prayer, study, and teaching. It is likely that other believers, along with the apostles, were also spreading the Word of God. The Word in context is the gospel about Jesus Christ. Even Jewish priests were among those believing in Christ (Acts 6.7).
4. Stephen received supernatural sign gifts; he ministered through the gifts, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and with grace-orientation. This combination proved so effective that a sect called the Synagogue of Freedman worked up false charges and false witnesses against him. Officials brought Stephen before the religious council, the Sanhedrin. Stephen, of course, because of his faith in Christ and his grace orientation, was completely at ease before the council (Acts 6.8-15).

5. Doctrine Summaries, Definitions, and Descriptions

1. **Ministry** refers to what the believer does to serve God and the body of Christ. God has a production plan for each believer (Ephesians 2.10); spiritual gifts provide the specialized ability for our ministry (1 Peter 4.10-11); we participate in the blessings of ministry when we serve with divine love (1 Corinthians 13.1-7) and walk by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5.16, 22-23). The preparation for service comes through the equipping ministry of the pastor-teacher (Ephesians 4.12-16).
2. **Spiritual gifts** are the abilities that God gives to us so that we may serve him and the church. Permanent spiritual gifts are the gifts that we in the church age now possess. Each gift has a different emphasis.
 - 2.1. The pastor-teacher is the man gifted with the ability to authoritatively care for and lead his congregation and to authoritatively communicate the Word of God to his congregation for their spiritual growth and ministry (Acts 20.17-28; Ephesians 4.11-12; Hebrews 13.17).
 - 2.2. The gift of teacher is the ability to communicate the Word of God to believers so that they may understand its content and grow spiritually (Romans 12.7).
 - 2.3. The evangelist is the person gifted with the ability to communicate the gospel of Christ to the unbeliever so that the unbeliever will understand and believe in Jesus Christ and then become a participant in a local church (Ephesians 4.11-12). God wants all believers to witness, but evangelists seem to lead more people faith in Christ.
 - 2.4. The leadership gift is the ability to lead, direct, and motivate people, areas of thought, and activity for the orderly, efficient, and harmonious attainment of objectives (Romans 12.8).
 - 2.5. The gift of administration is the ability to steer, to guide, and to manage people and things so that a given job is accomplished (1 Corinthians 12.28).
 - 2.6. One with the gift of service has the ability to effectively carry out a task, do a job, engage in an activity for another person or group as a part of the body of Christ. The person with the gift of service serves under authority, with loyalty to that authority, and with an objective or objectives to accomplish (Romans 12.7).
 - 2.7. The gift of help is the ability to help, to assist, and to aid those within the church. Helping is often spontaneous, independent, varied, and short term (1 Corinthians 12.28).

- 2.8. **Showing mercy** is the ability to express sympathy, kindness, and help to the person experiencing earthly, human need (Romans 12.8).
- 2.9. A believer with the gift of **encouragement** is able to express the content of the Word of God to another believer so that the Holy Spirit can bring about biblical mental attitudes and actions in that believer (Romans 12.8).
- 2.10. If you have the gift of **giving**, you have the ability to share with other believers from your material resources over and above the normal giving of believers (Romans 12.8).
- 2.11. Many spiritual gifts may participate in the widow ministry: service, administration, leadership, helping, showing mercy, encouragement, and giving.
3. **Divine good** is a way to describe the good works that God produces through believers (John 15.4-5; Ephesians 2.10; 1 Corinthians 12.4-7). It is the right thing done in the right way under the ministry of the Holy Spirit, while human good is the right thing done in wrong way under the direction of our sinful nature or the wrong thing done in the wrong way under the direction our sinful nature. In order to produce divine good we must be spiritual believers—believers living by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5.16, 22-23), we must be in fellowship with God (John 15.4-5), and we must live in the sphere of divine love (1 Corinthians 13.1-7). The good that we produce during our lives will be evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ; only divine good will pass the test and be rewarded (1 Corinthians 3.10-15).
4. **Deacons** are servants of the church. The seven men in Acts 6 were not official church deacons, but they did demonstrate the service of deacons. A deacon in the church is a man who functions as a servant of God, the pastor-teacher, and the church. He is the person who, under authority of the pastor-teacher, willingly serves the church body by actively carrying out needed tasks for the benefit of the church (Philippians 1.1; 1 Timothy 3.10-13).
5. **Helping other believers:** God has given us the privilege, the opportunity, and the responsibility to help other believers; guidelines come with this responsibility. We are to help widows (Acts 6.1-4) and other believers (Galatians 6.10); families of widows are to help their widows (1 Timothy 5.4,8); the church is to help certain widows (1 Timothy 5.3-7, 9-11); parents are to support their children and children are to honor and support their parents (1 Timothy 5.8).
6. Be aware that there are dangers to avoid when we want to help other believers. The phrase “interest without interference” reminds us to be careful. Believers are to take a genuine interest in the welfare of other believers. We do have a responsibility to other believers; we are to support them, encourage them, come to their aid, and pray for them (Acts 6.1-4; Galatians 6.1-2, 10; 1 Thessalonians 4.18; 5.11, 14; Hebrews 3.13; 10.25). It is not our responsibility to interfere in their personal lives by attempting to run their lives, by judging them, by trying to make them accountable to us, or by being critical of them (Job 42.7-9; Proverbs 11.9-13; John 21.21-22; Romans 14.1-13; 1 Corinthians 4.5; Galatians 6.3-5; Colossians 3.23; 1 Timothy 5.13).

Acts 7, Stephen Goes in Glory

Tod Kennedy, September 19, 1999

I. Applications or “So what?” from Acts 7

1. We learn from Stephen to take into account the listener’s frame of reference when we teach and witness.
2. Each Bible doctrine has a biblical and historical context. We ought to learn the Bible in its context—its historical and doctrinal circumstances and setting. This kind of learning will solve many of our doctrinal and applicational difficulties.
3. We need to think about Jesus Christ and his graciousness when others mistreat us. This will prevent us from seeking revenge, from complaining, from becoming bitter, disillusioned, and unhappy.
4. We, and all church age believers, will immediately go into the presence of the Lord Jesus at the moment we die.

5. We are commanded to forgive others “just as God in Christ has forgiven” us (Ephesians 4.32).

II. Summary Outline

1. Stephen was on trial for his faith in Jesus the Messiah; he made his defense by taking the Sanhedrin on a “talk-through” the Old Testament. He began with Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nation, and ended with Solomon (Acts 7.1-50).
2. He made four main points: First, God had graciously created, cared for and guided the nation, and revealed himself to it (Acts 7.1-19). Second, the people had repeatedly scorned Moses as he attempted to lead the nation (Acts 7.20-40). Third, God had judged his people on several occasions because they scorned him, but only after repeated gracious warnings (Acts 7.41-45). The fourth point of his “talk-through” was that God had Solomon build the temple, a physical structure—something that the Sanhedrin was very proud of—that was a center for Israel’s earthly life. However, the LORD God is not confined to a building that man has constructed; heaven is his throne and earth is his footstool. This, of course, cuts deeply into Jewish legalism, pride, and self-righteousness. God is not confined to their physical temple (Acts 7.46-50).
3. Stephen then made two indictments, applications, or “so whats.” The first was that the present generation was just like the preceding rebellious generations: both had resisted the Holy Spirit; both had killed the prophets. This generation had killed Jesus the Messiah just as the previous generation had killed the prophets who had predicted his coming (Acts 7.51-52). Stephen’s second and final indictment was very telling; the Hebrew nation was the recipient of God’s word, the Law of Moses, and they had scorned it and disobeyed it (Acts 7.53).
4. The Sanhedrin’s response was predictable: quick, emotional, and vicious. They did not discuss what Stephen had said or attempt to prove Stephen wrong—he was not wrong. Stephen was sure of his message; he was calm; he was gracious; he was occupied with Jesus the Messiah; he lived by faith and so had inner rest. The Sanhedrin, on the other hand, violently rushed him and chased him out of the city where they stoned him to death (Acts 7.53-59).
5. Stephen’s response was also predictable; he believed that he was about to enter Jesus’ presence so he committed his life to the Lord Jesus; he also prayed that the Lord Jesus would not hold his stoning against the guilty ones—Stephen forgave them (Acts 7.59-60).

III. Doctrine Summaries, Definitions, and Descriptions

1. **Teach and witness** within a biblical context and take into account the listener’s frame of reference. Stephen, in Acts 7, teaches us the value of presenting the biblical message within the listeners’ frame of reference and within an historical context. He began with the origin of the Hebrew nation, God’s choosing of Abraham. By the time Stephen had finished, the audience could not argue with him; the well-known history had convicted them. We often assume too much on the part of our audience. We need to make sure they understand the context or flow of history and doctrine so that they become convinced of the truth of the message.
2. **Christology** is the biblical study of Christ. Christ (Cristos¹ christos) is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word for “anointed one,” “Messiah” (מָשִׁיחַ messiah). Jesus Christ is God (John 1.1-14; Hebrews 1.1-4,8), the Son of God (Luke 22.70; Hebrews 1.4), man (Luke 2; 1 Timothy 2.5), prophet (Luke 24.19; John 6.14), priest (Hebrews 4.14; 5.5-10), king of Israel (Matthew 27.11; John 1.49), Savior (John 4.42; 1 Timothy 4.10), and world ruler (Zechariah 14.9; 1 Corinthians 15.24-28). Jesus, His human name, means Savior (Matthew 1.21); Christ or Messiah is His title; LORD is the personal name of the revealed covenant God of Israel; Lord is a title for deity; Immanuel comes from Isaiah’s prophecy in Isaiah 7.14 and means in the Hebrew “God with us” (אֱלֹהִים אִמָּנוּעֵל; אֱלֹהִים means God, אִמָּנוּ means us, אִמָּנוּ means with). Jesus was virgin-conceived (Isaiah 7.14; Matthew 1.20-23) so that He

would be undiminished deity and true humanity without a sinful human nature (Luke 1.35; Hebrews 4.15). This means that he had no human father; God caused Mary to become pregnant—a miracle. Christ became man when he was born of Mary in order to die for the sins of the world—to reconcile mankind (2 Corinthians 5.18-21; 1 Timothy 1.15); He was the Lamb of God (John 1.29). Besides not having a sin nature, He never sinned (2 Corinthians 5.21; Hebrews 4.15). Christ is undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever (John 1.1-14; Hebrews 1.1-13; 2.14); the theological name for this is hypostatic union. When He came to earth He voluntarily restricted the independent use of certain divine attributes, though from his birth on he always is undiminished deity and true humanity; the theological name for this truth is kenosis (Philippians 2.6-8). During His time on earth, in His humanity, He relied on the Holy Spirit (Luke 4.14, 18). His purpose for coming to earth was to die in our place for our sins; He was our substitute, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. During the three hours of darkness, while He was on the cross, God the Father judged Christ, His son, for all the sins of all mankind (1 Timothy 1.15; 2 Corinthians 5.18-21; John 1.29; John 19.30; 1 John 2.1-2). He arose from the dead on the third day (Luke 24; 1 Corinthians 15.4); He ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father forty days after He arose (Acts 1.3-9); He now intercedes for believers (Hebrews 4.14; 1 John 2.1-2); He will return for the church to take church believers back to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4.16-18; Titus 2.13), then after the seven years of tribulation on earth, He will come to earth to set up and rule His millennial kingdom (Matthew 24.27-31; Acts 1.10-11; 2 Thessalonians 1.7-10); at the end of the millennium, after one last Satan-led rebellion which will be followed by the Great White Throne Judgment, Christ will turn over the kingdom of God to the Father and the Father will have Him continue to will rule the eternal kingdom, which will reside in a new heaven and a new earth, forever (Revelation 20; 1 Corinthians 15.24-28).

3. **Forgiveness** is the release from guilt, punishment, and penalty. The biblical words “to forgive” and “forgiveness” denote pardon, to cancel, to lift up and send away, and to let go. Forgiveness is necessary because God is absolute righteousness and man is sinful. All sin is ultimately against God (Psalm 51.4; Romans 3.23). God is free to forgive human sin because Jesus Christ paid the penalty for every sin (1 Timothy 1.15; 1 John 2.1-2; John 1.29). God will forgive man (Isaiah 43.25; Psalm 130.3-4; Acts 13.38-39; Ephesians 4.32; 1 John 1.9). God commands believers to forgive other believers (Colossians 3.13; Ephesians 4.32) as many times as is necessary (Matthew 18.21-22); we are to forgive just in the same way that God forgives us—freely and as many times as necessary. We are also to forgive ourselves (Philippians 4.13; 1 Corinthians 4.4). When we have a guilt complex and will not forgive ourselves even though God has forgiven us, we are placing ourselves above God. In practical terms, forgiveness is giving up the right to hurt someone else when they hurt you.

Acts 8, Saul's Inquisition, Philip's Ministry

Tod Kennedy, September 26, 1999

I. Applications or “So what?” from Acts 8

1. Persecution of believers is a part of life. Let us not be surprised when it happens. Jesus told us in John 17.14-16 that the unbelieving world hates believers because, like him, believers are not part of the unbelievers' world system.
2. Biblical witnessing for Christ is a supernatural activity. We want God to direct us to the right people and every time we tell someone the gospel, God must convince that person of its truth.
3. What we say about the gospel must be accurate, clear, and documented by Scripture.
4. Sorcery and magic are wrong because they attempt to take God's place or do what only God can do. If the magic is supernatural, Satan is the source. If it is false, but claims to be real, it can lead people away from God and toward Satan.
5. New believers can be terribly confused about biblical truth. We ought to give them basic doctrine instruction immediately after their salvation.

6. No one can buy a spiritual gift. God sovereignly distributes them through the Holy Spirit.
7. We ought to use the Word of God, the appropriate verses, when we witness. Remember, only the Bible has the message of eternal salvation.

II. Summary Outline

1. Saul, later to be the apostle Paul, was a whole-hearted supporter of the murder of Stephen. When Paul left the scene of the crime, he initiated his own wave of terror against believers in Christ. (Acts 8.1-3).
2. When the believers scattered because of persecution, they carried the gospel with them. Philip, one of the seven table-servers, went to Samaria, which was about thirty-five miles north of Jerusalem (Acts 8.4-5).
3. God gave Philip certain temporary spiritual gifts. The miracles caught the public's attention so that when Philip spoke the gospel, many believed it. Eternal salvation was through believing the gospel. The apostles sent Peter and John from Jerusalem to Samaria; God gave the Holy Spirit to these new believers through Peter and John. This was a public recognition at a crucial point in church history that Samaritans were equal members in the church (Acts 8.6-17).
4. A new believer, Simon wrongly tried to purchase Peter and John's temporary authority to give the Holy Spirit to believers. He completely missed the spiritual significance of spiritual gifts, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the Apostle's ministry. Peter told him to repent; apparently, Simon did (Acts 8.18-25).
5. An angel instructed Philip to go south; an Ethiopian official was traveling between Jerusalem and Gaza. This official was reading Isaiah 53 and needed to be taught what Isaiah meant. Philip opened to Isaiah 53 and explained that this spoke of Jesus; the official believed in Jesus and then requested water baptism, so Philip baptized him. Following this, the Holy Spirit miraculously took Philip to Azotus, the Old Testament Ashdod, which is 20 miles north of Gaza. Philip continued to preach the gospel (Acts 8.26-40).

III. Doctrine Summaries, Definitions, and Descriptions

1. **Persecution** is normal for the Christian; Paul wrote to Timothy "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3.12). Persecution of Christians was local and sporadic until about A.D. 250. It was often initiated by religious authority (Acts 7) and by government authority (Nero, A.D. 54-68; Domitian, A.D. 81-96; Aurelius, A.D. 161-180; Decius; A.D. 249-251; and Diocletian A.D. 284-305). Some persecution was by arrest and interrogation, and sometimes included jail time (Acts 4-5); other persecution was by mob violence as in Acts 7 and 17; Herod Agrippa executed the Apostles James (Acts 12.1-2); Jews stoned Paul at Lystra (Acts 14.19); Peter writes in 2 Peter 3.1-6 that unbelievers enjoyed ridiculing believers; Paul recorded, in 2 Thessalonians 1.4-5, what probably was physical, verbal, and mental persecution of the new Thessalonian believers; the apostle John was put in some sort of solitary confinement on the Island of Patmos (Revelation 1.5). Polycarp, at the age of 86 or older, was burned to death at Smyrna because he would not recant his faith. Rome instigated major persecutions in A.D. 249-251, under Decius, A.D. 258-259, under Valerian, and from A.D. 296-310, under Diocletian and especially under Galerius. The intermingling of church and state which began with Constantine and the growth of the papacy eventually brought persecution by both church and state. There were numerous reasons for persecution: religious establishments have always resorted to the persecution of "heretics"; when the Roman political order thought that Christianity was a threat, the Romans sought to remove the threat by removing Christians; Christians became the scapegoat for failed political policies—Nero and the infamous "Christian torches" is one example.
2. **Saul**, also named Paul, was born in Tarsus, an important city within the Roman world. He was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin and a Roman citizen by birth. We do not know for sure how his family first

acquired Roman citizenship, but "Presumably Paul's father, grandfather or even great-grandfather had rendered some outstanding service to the Roman cause....One thing is certain, however: among the citizens and other residents of Tarsus, the few Roman citizens, whether Greeks or Jews by birth, would constitute a social elite." (F.F. Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free, p. 38-39) (Acts 16.37; 21.39; 22.3, 25-29; Romans 11.1; Philippians 3.5). Saul was a Pharisee, and Gamaliel, the leading Pharisee of the day, had taught him (Acts 23.6; 26.5; Philippians 3.5). He had a wonderful heritage, intellect, ability, and training. He succeeded at whatever he did (Philippians 3.4-6). Saul was hostile to Christ and Christians. He was present at the stoning of Stephen; while there he must have heard the message which Stephen delivered. Later he was armed with written authority to seek out and persecute believers (Acts 7.58-60; 8.1-3; 9.1-2; 22.4-8; 26.9-12; 1 Corinthians 15.9; Galatians 1.13; Philippians 3.6). Later, the Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself to Saul while he was traveling from Jerusalem to Damascus to harass and arrest believers. Saul believed in Christ as Savior at that time. The Lord immediately sent him to Ananias, a believer, in Damascus. God removed Paul's temporary blindness and instructed him through Ananias (Acts 9.1-19; 22.3-16; 26.12-18). Soon after Paul met Ananias, he went into Arabia where the Lord taught him and prepared him for his ministry. Following this training he returned to Damascus to witness and teach Bible doctrine (Acts 9.20-22; Galatians 1.16-18). Later, Saul began his missionary travels. Saul began to go by his Roman name, Paul, about the time his missionary trips to the Gentiles began (Acts 13.1-13).

3. **Baptism of the Holy Spirit** is the act by which the Holy Spirit indwells a person the moment he believes in Christ, and by this indwelling identifies and unites that believer with Christ and his spiritual body, the church (1 Corinthians 12.13; Ephesians 1.23). It happens to every church age believer; you cannot be a believer and in the church apart from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a fact, not an experience. It is not something that is felt nor does it have confirming signs. It is an act of God that occurs at the time a person believes in Christ. During the transition from the age of Israel to the church age, God used the apostles to give the Holy Spirit to select groups of new believers in order to identify these believers as members of the body of Christ (Samaritans, in Acts 8.14-18; Gentiles, in Acts 10.43-48; Ephesians who knew only John the Baptist's baptism, in Acts 19.1-7).
4. **Eternal salvation** comes to a person when he believes in Jesus as Savior—faith alone in Christ alone. The good news is that Jesus Christ offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who believe in Him because He died in our place for our sins. Paul wrote of this in Romans 1.9, 15-16, 1 Corinthians 15.1-4, 2 Corinthians 10.1, Galatians 4.13, Ephesians 1.13, Philippians 4.15, and 2 Timothy 1.8. This good news or gospel of eternal salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone is for the entire world. Eternal salvation becomes the possession of every person at the moment he believes in God's Son for salvation. People wrongly try to add many things to the gospel—discipleship, changing your life, making Jesus the Lord of your life, stop sinning, Christian service, going to church, giving up certain activities, or obedience to God. They may say that unless your life shows morality and Christian growth and service you may not be a Christian. They change grace—grace means that God has done everything Himself and offers us salvation for free—ever so subtly by making us do something to help insure our salvation. They change faith, again very subtly, by making it include obedience to God instead of simply believing in Christ. Faith is a belief, a trust, an inner conviction, a reliance that something is true—faith must be directed toward the right object, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2.8-9; Romans 1.4-8).

Acts 9, Saul's Salvation

Tod Kennedy, November 14, 1999

I. Main points of application or "So what?" from Chapter 9

1. Every person receives eternal life the instant that he believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior. Salvation is an instantaneous event, not a process. Saul received eternal life at the moment that he believed that Jesus was the Lord, the Messiah, the Savior (Acts 9.5-6).

2. God uses faithful, everyday believers to take part in great spiritual events. Ananias was prepared and willing for God to work through him; the results of his Christian service with Saul set the path for future history. Ananias was only mentioned in Acts 9.10, 12, 13, 17, and 22.12.
3. God has a wonderful plan for every believer; the fact that Saul was a notorious persecutor of Christians and very self-righteous before he believed the gospel did not prevent God from using him in a wonderful way (Acts 9.15-16 with 1 Timothy 1.15 and Philippians 3.4-6).
4. Supernatural sign gifts—the temporary spiritual gifts—had the purpose of gaining a hearing for the gospel and of authenticating the apostle’s message.

II. Narrative Outline

1. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Saul while Saul was traveling from Jerusalem to Damascus with religious authority that permitted him to arrest believers and bring them to Jerusalem for trial (Acts 8.1-3). Caiaphas was the high priest at this time (high priest AD 18-36).
2. The Lord’s majesty blinded Saul and knocked him to the ground. Saul knew that someone with this kind of power must be God, so Saul asked his name. When Saul learned that the Lord’s name was Jesus, Saul then realized that Jesus was the Messiah, his Savior, and believed in him. The Lord Jesus said that every time Saul persecuted believers he was also persecuting Jesus (Acts 9.4-5; Galatians 1.15-17; Romans 1.1).
3. The Lord Jesus instructed Saul to get up and go on to Damascus. In Damascus, Jesus would tell Saul what he had planned for him. During this conversation, Saul’s traveling companions heard sounds but were not able to understand what was said (Acts 9.6-9).
4. The Lord Jesus then spoke to Ananias through a vision; he told Ananias that Saul was waiting for Ananias to come and restore his sight. Ananias had, of course, heard about Saul—it was all bad. However, the Lord had good plans for Saul, and God had chosen Ananias to get him started. Ananias went to Saul and reaffirmed that Jesus had sent him to restore Saul’s sight, to instruct Saul on the filling of the Holy Spirit, and to baptize him with water. Saul then spent time with some Damascus disciples (Acts 9.10-19).
5. Saul began his wonderful ministry that would stretch from around A.D. 35—his Damascus road new birth by faith in Jesus Christ as Savior—until Nero had him executed in AD 67 or 68. Saul immediately began witnessing about his Savior; note that he proclaimed ‘Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”’ Saul had connected the Old Testament expectations for the Messiah with the crucified and now resurrected Jesus and made the obvious conclusion that Jesus was God, the Messiah. Soon after his initial ministry in Damascus, Saul went into Arabia where, apparently, the Lord Jesus personally taught him doctrine (Galatians 1.11-17). Saul then returned to Damascus to continue his ministry to Jews. Jewish unbelievers finally had enough of Saul; they hatched a plot to kill him, but his disciples helped him escape from Damascus (Acts 9.20-25).
6. Three years after Saul had believed in Christ, he went to Jerusalem (Galatians 1.18); Saul’s earlier reputation preceded him so that Barnabas had to introduce him to Peter and the other apostles. While at Jerusalem, Saul kept witnessing and teaching, so much so that Hellenistic Jews tried to kill him. This time the believers sent Saul to Caesarea and from there to his home city, Tarsus. By this time, about A.D. 38, the young church was growing—spiritual growth in the Lord and in Word and under the Holy Spirit’s guidance, and numerical growth (Acts 9.26-31).
7. Luke, in his narrative, left Saul in Tarsus and rejoined Peter at Lydda (the Old Testament Lod, a town about 19 miles northwest of Jerusalem). Aeneas, a paralyzed man, lived at Lydda. Jesus Christ chose to get the attention of the people at Lydda by healing Aeneas through Peter. As a result, the people who lived in Lydda and the Sharon plain (a plain that runs north from Joppa to Mt Carmel) turned to the Lord— probably many believed in Christ (Acts 9.32-35).

8. Joppa, now a suburb of Tel Aviv, was a Mediterranean seaport about 11 miles northwest of Lydda. A disciple named Tabitha (Aramaic name) and Dorcas (Greek name), who was known for her good works, lived there. She suddenly became sick and died. Other disciples heard that Peter was nearby, so they sent for him. He came and through the gift of miracles brought her back to life (resuscitation, not resurrection). This miracle got the attention of the people so that they listened to the gospel of Jesus Christ, believed in him and so received eternal life (Acts 9.36-43).

III. Doctrine Dictionary

1. **Gospel** is the good news that God sent his son, Jesus Christ, into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1.15). Whoever will believe in Jesus Christ, trust Jesus Christ to give him eternal life, receives eternal life at that moment of faith (John 3.16). Six words help to explain the gospel: God, man, sin, Christ, grace, and faith. 1. God: is righteous, to be honored and served (Deuteronomy 32.3-4; Psalm 99.9); 2. Man: was created to reflect God's glory and to love and serve Him (Genesis 1.21; Revelation 4.11) 3. Sin: all have sinned, all are separated from God, and all are under His judgment (Romans 3.23; 6.23); 4. Christ: came into the world to die for our sins, arose, and is the only way to God (1 Timothy 1.15; John 14.6); 5. Grace: salvation is a free gift, not a reward (Ephesians 2.8-9; Romans 6.23); 6. Faith: believe in Christ; trust Him to save you (John 3.16-18; John 20.31; Acts 16.31).
2. **Temporary spiritual gifts** are supernatural sign gifts (supernatural abilities) that God gave to certain believers for a limited period of time so that they could authenticate their ministry and message about Jesus Christ; the primary purpose was not to cure physical or social ills. These gifts were operational only during the transitional first century. The Bible lists the following temporary spiritual gifts: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, working miracles or powers, apostle, prophet and prophecy, differentiating of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12.8-10; 28-31; 13.8-9). The principle of temporary spiritual gifts is found in Hebrews 2.3-4, 1 Corinthians 13.8-11, 2 Corinthians 12.12, and Romans 15.18-19. Paul, during his first Roman imprisonment in AD 60-62, was not able to heal Epaphroditus even though he had healed Publius' father and others on the island of Malta two years earlier (Acts 28.7-9; Philippians 2.25-27). Paul could not heal him because God had withdrawn the gift of healing.
3. **Saul**, also named Paul, was born in Tarsus, an important city within the Roman world. He was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin and a Roman citizen by birth. We do not know for sure how his family first acquired Roman citizenship, but "Presumably Paul's father, grandfather or even great-grandfather had rendered some outstanding service to the Roman cause....One thing is certain, however: among the citizens and other residents of Tarsus, the few Roman citizens, whether Greeks or Jews by birth, would constitute a social elite." (F.F. Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free, p. 38-39) (Acts 16.37; 21.39; 22.3, 25-29; Romans 11.1; Philippians 3.5). Saul was a Pharisee, and Gamaliel, the leading Pharisee of the day, had taught him (Acts 23.6; 26.5; Philippians 3.5). Saul had a wonderful heritage, intellect, ability, and training. He succeeded at whatever he did (Philippians 3.4-6). Saul was hostile to Christ and Christians. He was present at the stoning of Stephen; while there, he must have heard the message which Stephen delivered. Later he was armed with written authority to seek out and persecute believers (Acts 7.58-60; 8.1-3; 9.1-2; 22.4-8; 26.9-12; 1 Corinthians 15.9; Galatians 1.13; Philippians 3.6). Later, the Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself to Saul while he was traveling from Jerusalem to Damascus to harass and arrest believers. Saul believed in Christ as Savior at that time. The Lord immediately sent him to Ananias, a believer, in Damascus. God removed Paul's temporary blindness and instructed him through Ananias (Acts 9.1-19; 22.3-16; 26.12-18). Soon after Paul met Ananias, he went into Arabia where the Lord taught him and prepared him for his ministry. Following this training he returned to Damascus to witness and teach Bible doctrine (Acts 9.20-22; Galatians 1.16-18). Later, Saul began his missionary travels. Saul began to go by his Roman name, Paul, about the time his missionary trips to the Gentiles began (Acts 13.1-13).

Acts 10, Cornelius and Peter
 Tod Kennedy, December 5, 1999

I. Main points of application or “So what?” from Acts 10

1. God will bring the gospel to those who desire to know it and to know God. Cornelius, a God-fearer, demonstrates this truth.
2. God sometimes trains his servants on the job. God taught Peter step by step and had him ready for the ministry God prepared for him.
3. God guides believers; divine guidance is a practical reality. God uses prayer, his Word, thinking, circumstances, and the Holy Spirit to guide believers into his will. See how God guided Peter to go to Cornelius’ house and deliver the right message.
4. The good news of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ is offered to all mankind—Jew and Gentile. There are no restrictions as to who may believe the gospel.
5. All believers are equal members in the body of Christ, the church. They have different functions, but they have equal position in Christ.

II. Summary Outline

1. God sent an angel to instruct Cornelius, a God-fearer and a Roman centurion stationed in Caesarea, to send for Simon Peter, who was staying with a tanner in Joppa. Cornelius obeyed the Lord by sending two house servants and a God-fearing soldier to ask Peter to come to Caesarea. Cornelius wanted to know God—he was ready to hear the gospel of Christ (Acts 10.1-8).
2. While the men were traveling to Joppa, Peter went up to the housetop at noon to pray. During his prayer time God gave him a vision: a large sheet that contained unclean creatures—animals, insects, and birds—descended from heaven; the Lord told Peter to eat from the unclean creatures and Peter said that he could not eat because the Mosaic Law forbade this activity; this happened three times and then the vision ended (Acts 10.9-16).
3. When the men arrived at the tanner’s house, Peter was wondering about what he had seen. The Holy Spirit told him to go with the men even though Cornelius and the three messengers were strangers to Peter (Acts 10.17-22).
4. The next day Peter left for Cornelius’ house with the men. When Peter arrived, he awed Cornelius, but Peter reminded Cornelius that he was also a man and was not to be worshipped. Peter entered the house and found a crowd had gathered to hear him speak from God (Acts 10.23-27).
5. God had set the stage for a history changing meeting: Peter had his Jewish frame of reference; he had just experienced the sheet vision; the Holy Spirit had told him to go with the men; he had first hand knowledge of Jesus Christ the Savior; and a crowd of Gentiles awaited his message from God. Cornelius told Peter and the crowd why he had sent for him—God’s angel had told him to send for Peter (Acts 10.28-33).
6. Peter realized that God set up this meeting. The purpose was to explain to those present, mostly Gentiles, what Peter now understood: the good news of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ was not restricted to Israel; it was the message for all people (Acts 10.34-36).
7. Peter reviewed the main events of Jesus’ life—he gave a life of Christ walk-through. John had baptized Jesus; the Father anointed him with the Holy Spirit; Jesus performed miracles; the disciples witnessed all these events; the authorities crucified Jesus; the Father resurrected Jesus and presented him alive to the disciples and many others; and Jesus had commissioned the disciples to witness that Jesus is God, the Messiah, about whom the prophets also testified “that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins” (Acts 10.34-43).

8. Those whom Cornelius had gathered in his house believed in Jesus Christ as Savior. They immediately received the Holy Spirit. By causing them to speak in tongues in front of the Jewish believers God demonstrated that he accepted Gentiles as equal members in the body of Christ without their having to become Jews. The Jewish believers marveled when they realized that God accepted Gentiles on an equal basis with Jews. Peter then baptized the new believers with water (Acts 10.44-48).

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. **Barnabas** was Jewish, a Levite, and a believer in Christ. He was originally from Cyprus; he was generous; he had an active, varied, and wonderful ministry. His original name was Joseph, but the apostles gave him the name Barnabas, which means Son of Encouragement (Acts 4.36-37). He was the cousin of John Mark (Colossians 4.10). About A.D. 37, at a time when believers were still somewhat afraid of Saul, Barnabas took Saul in hand and introduced him to the apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 9.26-27). Later, when the Jerusalem church heard that a large number of Greeks at Antioch were believing in Christ, the leaders sent Barnabas there to witness the ministry. After seeing the good ministry, he encouraged the believers at Antioch. Luke records that Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and faith (Acts 11.23-24). Barnabas then went to get Saul, who was in Tarsus; Saul and Barnabas spent a year in Antioch teaching the Word of God (Acts 11.19-30). Barnabas was Saul's partner on the first missionary trip (Acts 13-14, about A.D. 48-49) and at the Jerusalem council meeting (Acts 15.1-5). Barnabas served in evangelism, teaching, reconnaissance, financial responsibilities, and encouragement of believers. Though he was a grace oriented believer, even he gave in to the pressures of the legalists in Antioch; these legalists objected to Peter sitting down to dinner with Gentiles, and so Barnabas, along with Peter, separated from the Gentiles until Paul corrected them (Galatians 2.11-19). Barnabas and Paul disagreed on whether they should take John Mark with them on the second missionary trip; Barnabas said yes, Paul said no. The two men separated; Barnabas took John Mark to Cyprus and Paul took Silas and began the second trip (Acts 15.36-40, about A.D. 50). Barnabas illustrates biblical application for us: be flexible in the use of gifts and training; the prepared believer has a variety of ministry opportunities; no service is insignificant; spiritual failure does not remove one from future ministry; be an encouragement to others, not a discouragement; and beware of legalism.
2. **Roman Army:** The Roman army helped provide the stability and peace for the age in which Christ was born, kept peace during the time of the early church, and participated in both the persecution and protection of believers. Jesus marveled at the faith of a centurion, a non-commissioned officer, whom he met in Capernaum (Matthew 8.5-13). The Roman army took part in the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 23.47; John 18-19); it both protected and arrested Paul (Acts 21.27-33; 27.31-42); a centurion sent for Peter in order to hear him give God's message, the gospel (Acts 10.1-2,22); the army arrested Peter on orders from Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12.3,18); the Roman army was so well known that Paul taught believers how to prepare themselves for spiritual battle by comparing believers to Roman soldiers and their armor (Ephesians 6.10-17) and by comparing the Christian life to a soldier's life (1 Corinthians 9.6; 2 Timothy 2.3-4); and Paul lived with a Roman soldier during his first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28.16) and ministered to the Praetorian Guard and to Caesar's household (Philippians 1.13 and 4.22). The largest army group was a legion, which was four to six thousand men; six tribuni commanded, in rotation, the legions. A legion had ten groups, called cohorts, of 600 men. A cohort was manned by three maniples, each made up of 200 men. Each maniple was composed of two centuries; a centurion commanded a century. A century had from 70-100 men. The Roman army also had independent or volunteer cohorts made up of 1000 men; Acts 10.1 mentions the Italian cohort and Acts 27.1 mentions Julius, a centurion of the Augustan cohort.
3. **God-Fearer** was the term for Gentiles who were attracted by the monotheism and ethical standards of the Jewish community; some practiced in a more limited way the Jewish observance of the Sabbath and the dietary laws; some attended the synagogue and prayed regularly. God-fearers were

respected by the Jewish people (Acts 10.2,22; 12.6,26); they were often open to the gospel and many God-fearers responded in faith to the gospel and became a strong force in the early church (Acts 10.35). Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian cohort who lived in Caesarea, was a God-fearer. God instructed Cornelius to send for Peter, who would reveal the gospel to him. Cornelius, along with other Gentiles, listened to Peter, believed the gospel, received the Holy Spirit, and was baptized in water (Acts 10). A God-fearer was, then, a Gentile who, influenced by the Old Testament, had passed through God-consciousness and was ready to hear the accurate gospel of Christ.

4. **Divine Guidance** means that God makes his will known to believers. Sometimes we know his will all at once (Jude), and sometimes he reveals his will a step at a time (Peter). God guided Peter in the Cornelius situation through a combination of Peter's prayer, the Word (the sheet vision), Peter's thinking about the vision, circumstances, and through the urging of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10. 9-22 and Acts 11.4-12). Peter did not fully know to what end God was guiding him until he arrived at Cornelius' house and heard Cornelius' explanation as to why he had sent for Peter (Acts 10.34-35). Peter followed God's guidance step by step. God guided Jude to change the subject of his letter from salvation to an appeal that believers earnestly contend for the faith because of the surrounding apostasy (Jude 1-4). God guided Jude through a combination of Jude's knowledge of Bible doctrine, the circumstances of apostasy, and a strong inner necessity produced by the Holy Spirit. After the Scripture was completed, God stopped guiding by visions or direct revelations; we now have his completed Word, Bible doctrine. Therefore, we need to know the Word of God, walk in fellowship with God, walk by the Holy Spirit, and listen to the Word and the Holy Spirit.
5. **Water baptism** is the church age ritual that publicly identifies a believer with Jesus Christ as Savior and with the new eternal kind of life in Christ Jesus. The Greek word "to baptize" is *baptizw*, which means to dip, immerse, plunge, overwhelm, and so to identify with something. Israel, during the Exodus, was baptized into Moses, which means that the nation was identified with Moses, their leader (1 Corinthians 10.2). Water baptism is not necessary for salvation; it points to relationship with Christ, not to the person administering the ritual; it ought to be done reasonably soon after receiving eternal life by faith in Christ; the ritual is performed by immersion in water and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is of secondary importance to the gospel and to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Any believer can baptize another believer, though usually pastors or evangelists administer the ritual (Matthew 28.19-20; Acts 16.33; 1 Corinthians 1.13-17).

Acts 11, Peter's Gentile Report

Tod Kennedy, December, 1999

I. Main points of application or "So what?" from Acts 11

1. We ought to gather the facts before we make statements about ministries elsewhere.
2. Each of us ought to be teachable so that we may recognize God's guidance.
3. God guides through our prayer, the Word, thinking, circumstances, and the urging of the Holy Spirit.
4. Everyone—Jew and Gentile—who believes in Christ as Savior receives eternal life and the Holy Spirit. The gospel is for the entire world.
5. Follow up evangelism by teaching Bible doctrine to the new believers; continue to rejoice with them in the Lord, to encourage them, and to challenge them to spiritual growth and service in the Lord.
6. The most important thing that new believers need is Bible teaching.
7. Believers have the privilege to graciously and wisely give money and supplies, on a short term basis, to help other believers when they genuinely need help.

II. Summary Outline

1. Peter returned to Jerusalem to find some Jewish believers criticizing him for going to Cornelius' house in Caesarea and meeting with Gentiles (Acts 11.1-3).
2. Peter reported exactly what had happened and why he had gone to Caesarea; while he related what had happened he was showing them how God had guided him to make the right decision and take the right action. To begin with, Peter had been praying; while praying, God spoke to him through a vision and taught Peter that Gentiles are not to be avoided (Acts 11.4-10); three men arrived from Cornelius (Acts 11.11); the Holy Spirit told him to go with the men (Acts 11.12); Cornelius told Peter that an angel from God had instructed him to send for Peter, who would tell Cornelius and his family and friends how to be saved (Acts 11.13-14). The assembled guests believed the message about Jesus Christ and immediately the Holy Spirit indwelt them; Peter remembered that Jesus had predicted that the Holy Spirit would come upon believers (Acts 11.15-16). Peter concluded that even Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit when they believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, and now believing Jews and Gentiles form the one body of Christ (Acts 11.17).
3. Those in Jerusalem who had criticized Peter now understood that Jews and Gentiles were saved the same way, by faith in Jesus Christ the Messiah (Acts 11.18).
4. Many believers had scattered from Jerusalem because of Stephen's death. They carried the gospel with them where ever they went. For the most part, they evangelized Jews, but some went to Antioch and began to spread the gospel to Greeks (Gentiles) with the result that many Gentiles believed in Christ as Savior (Acts 11.19-21).
5. When the Jerusalem church heard about the faith response to the gospel in Antioch, the church sent Barnabas there to help the ministry. Barnabas witnessed God's grace at work in Antioch (Acts 11.22-24).
6. Barnabas left Antioch to go to Tarsus to get Saul. The two returned to Antioch where they spent a year witnessing to unbelievers and teaching Bible doctrine to believers; the church at Antioch grew, and there the disciples first got the name Christians (Acts 11.25-26).
7. Agabus, a prophet, prophesied in Antioch that a famine would soon occur, so Antiochian believers gathered a free-will offering for Judean believers. Barnabas and Saul carried the offering to the Jerusalem elders (Acts 11.27-30). This famine occurred about AD 46-47, during Claudius' reign (AD 41-54).

III. Doctrine Summaries, Definitions, and Descriptions

1. **Peter was not the first Pope.** In fact, the papacy is a product of man's design, not God's. Peter was not even the outstanding leader of the apostles. He was a fisherman turned disciple and apostle by God's grace. He denied the Son of God during Jesus' trial (Matthew 26.33-35, 69-75). He was a busybody about John's ministry (John 21.15-22). Peter gave in to legalism during a trip to Antioch and Paul had to correct him (Galatians 2.11-14). Yet Peter was also the disciple who answered Jesus' question, "But who do you [all] say that I am?" with "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus responded by telling Peter, "And I also say to you that you are Peter [petro-, a stone or rock; this is nominative masculine singular; it refers to Peter], and upon this rock [petra, a massive rock or rocky place, the form is petral, dative feminine singular; it refers to Peter's statement about Christ] I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it." Jesus told Peter that he was correct and that Jesus would build his church on himself (Jesus Christ), the doctrine of which was embodied in Peter's statement "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." Jesus then told Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16.15,16,19). Jesus meant that Peter would be the one to both formally and publicly open the kingdom of heaven, through preaching the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter did this with the Jews in Acts 2.38-40, with the Samaritans in Acts 8.14-17, and with the Gentiles in Acts 10.34-36. With regard to Peter's authority over "binding and loosing," this statement was made to Peter (Matthew 16.19), then to all the

disciples-apostles (Matthew 18.18). This authority refers to the apostles' leadership and ruling authority during the apostolic period of the first century. Peter, for example, used the authority in Acts 3 with the lame man and in Acts 5 with Annanias and Sapphira. John 20.23 is different from the two Matthew passages. John records that Jesus extended this authority to declaring the results of a person's response to God's terms for forgiveness of sins—those who believe in Jesus have been forgiven and those who disbelieve Jesus have not been forgiven. Roman Catholic theology also wrongly uses Luke 22.32 to support Peter's authority by making this Scripture teach that Christ's prayer for Peter guaranteed Peter's infallibility; the theology also applies this guarantee to those bishops who succeed Peter. From these biblical statements and tradition (religious and historical) the Roman Catholic Church builds its doctrine of the papacy. The Roman church is, of course, quite wrong. Peter later wrote that he was a fellow elder with other elders and so on equal footing with them (1 Peter 5.1). James was the leader of the Jerusalem church, not Peter (Acts 15.13-19). Peter, when writing about the rock, the stone, the foundation, means Christ; all church believers are living stones of the building called the church (1 Peter 2.4-8; Acts 4.11-12). Peter himself stated that only God can forgive sins (Acts 10.48; 13.38-39). John, another apostle, quoted Jesus' restrictive statement "and I [Jesus] have the keys of death and of Hades" (Revelation 1:18). After the church began, God appointed Peter as the apostle to the Jews. God worked through Peter to build up and enlarge the church. God inspired Peter to write First and Second Peter; the gospel of Mark is possibly Peter's gospel penned by Mark. While Peter may have spent some time in Rome, there is no evidence that he was ever a bishop of Rome. In summary, Peter was an apostle, the apostle to the Jews (Galatians 2.7-9); God worked through him to help begin, build, and strengthen the church; Peter never thought of himself as the leading apostle, and he certainly was not the first Pope of the Roman Catholic Church nor was he infallible. Some of the Roman Catholic proclamations and their dates are of interest: 1545-1563, the Council of Trent, which made the teachings of the Roman church into binding law, one of which was the denial of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone; 1854, Mary's immaculate conception; 1869-1870, First Vatican Council, which proclaimed papal infallibility 1870; 1950, Mary's bodily assumption into heaven at her death; 1962-1965, the Second Vatican Council reaffirmed the rulings of the Council of Trent; 1994, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* officially restated for the first time in 400 years the traditional beliefs of the Roman Catholic church.

2. Indwelling by the Holy Spirit.
3. Encouragement of believers.
4. Importance of Bible doctrine.
5. Temporary spiritual gift of prophet.
6. Grace giving for believers under pressure and in need.
7. Ministry, the right person in the right place at the right time.

Acts 12, James Killed, Peter Freed

Tod Kennedy, January 9, 2000

I. Main points of application or "So what?" from Acts 12

1. Peter applied faith in God and his Word and so was able to rest the night before his scheduled execution. God really does control our lives; when we are confident of this we can rest in the midst of great turmoil and uncertainty. This is spiritual rest, "a calm soul" because we believe God.
2. God answers prayer, even at times when we do not believe that he will, because he is very gracious to us. Let's not be so surprised when he answers our prayers.
3. Let's not get mad at God when he does not always answer the way we want. Remember that James was killed before Peter was freed.
4. Pride does not pay good dividends. James wrote in James 4.6 that God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble.

5. God controls human rulers; he may not always do what we think that he should do with bad rulers, but they are always under his sovereignty.
6. The word of God is able to spread and believers are able to grow in Christ and the church is able to prosper even in the midst of turmoil and persecution.

II. Summary Outline

1. In the spring of AD 44 Herod Agrippa I had James the apostle executed. Herod was of Hasmonean descent and therefore more acceptable to the Jews than the other Herods. One way of strengthening his favor with the Jews was to attack the church (Acts 12.1-2). The events of Acts 12 occurred between Acts 11.28 and Acts 11.30.
2. Of course the Jewish population was overjoyed at the death of James. Herod Agrippa then decided to get Peter. He did so right before the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread. The feast of unleavened bread was celebrated for seven days immediately after the Passover; they were observed about the first week of April (Acts 12.3-4).
3. Peter was in a humanly hopeless situation, yet this was just the right opportunity for God to demonstrate his glory and his grace. Herod Agrippa tightened security by placing a quaternion guard around Peter. Four soldiers made up a three hour shift; two soldiers guarded Peter in the cell and two soldiers stood guard outside the cell. Herod did not want another escape by Peter like the one of Acts 5.18-25. Little did Herod know that he was in for a rerun. During what Herod had planned to be Peter's last night, Peter slept between his two guards, and believers prayed for Peter (Acts 12.5-6).
4. God sent an angel to release Peter. The angel appeared inside Peter's cell, and without the soldiers knowing what was happening, the angel awoke Peter, removed the chains, told Peter to dress, and led Peter to freedom outside of the prison. The prison was probably in the fortress Antonia which was north-west of the temple (Acts 12.7-10).
5. When Peter found himself in the street he realized that God had delivered him from Herod Agrippa and from the Jewish people. He immediately went to a house where he knew that friends were praying for him (Acts 12.11-13).
6. Rhoda answered the door. She was so happy to see Peter that she left him standing there while she told the others. They had been busy praying for Peter; when Rhoda told them that their prayers had been answered, they did not believe her. This, of course, is our very common response when we pray; we often pray but do not really expect God to answer. God is very gracious to us; he answers even though we do not believe that he will answer (Acts 12.14-15).
7. Peter quickly reported to the gathered believers what had happened. He gave instructions to report his rescue to James, who was the Lord's brother, and to other believers. After this Peter left and apparently went into hiding. Peter does not appear in the record again until the Jerusalem conference of Acts 15, which was about AD 49 or 50 (Acts 12.16-17).
8. Herod Agrippa's search could not find Peter; the soldiers had no plausible answers about Peter's disappearance. Therefore, Herod executed them. Herod then went to Caesarea. Tyre and Sidon were coast cities; they depended upon Galilee for their food. The people, after some kind of break in relations with Herod Agrippa, attempted to repair the damage by taking advantage of a festival that Herod Agrippa gave in honor of Caesar. Josephus reported that Herod Agrippa wore a silver robe which reflected the sun. When the crowd saw the brilliance, they flattered him by saying that he was more than mortal. Luke wrote that the people cried, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" This appealed to the pride of Herod Agrippa. God judged Herod Agrippa, and he became ill and died five days later (Acts 12.18-23).
9. Even with death of James, the persecution of Peter and others, and in the middle of political turmoil, the Word of God spread; people believed the gospel and believers began to grow to spiritual maturity. Also during this time Barnabas and Saul and John Mark returned to Antioch, from where the first missionary trip would soon begin (Acts 12.24-25).

III. Doctrine Summaries, Definitions, and Descriptions

1. **Chronology of Acts 1-12** helps our perspective of the events covered by Luke's history. Pentecost, Sunday, May 24, AD 33 (Acts 2); Saul's conversion, summer AD 35 (Acts 9); Peter's trip to Cornelius' house, AD 40-41 (Acts 10.-11.18); Barnabas sent to Antioch, AD 41 (Acts 11.19-24); Paul went to Antioch, spring AD 43 (Acts 11.25-26); Agabus predicted the famine, spring AD 44 (Acts 11.27-28); Agrippa killed James, spring AD 44 (Acts 12.1-2); Barnabas and Saul take the relief offering to Jerusalem, fall AD 47 (Acts 11.30); Barnabas and Saul are back in Antioch, fall AD 47 to spring 48 (Acts 12.25-13.1). (Harold W. Hoehner, Dallas Theological Seminary)
2. **The Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread** was the first of the three great annual feasts (Exodus 12.1-28; 23.5; Leviticus 23.4-8; Numbers 28.16-25; Deuteronomy 1.1-8). The Passover commemorated God's deliverance from the tenth plague which brought the death of the firstborn and the exodus from Egypt. It was a spring festival, the first festival of the religious calendar, and occurred on Nisan 14. Nisan was the first month of the religious calendar and equivalent to March-April. *The Passover taught redemption.* The Feast of Unleavened Bread was a seven day festival that began the day after the Passover and lasted from Nisan 15-21. Passover and Unleavened Bread were one unit; the Passover marked the sacrifice and Unleavened Bread marked the feast following the sacrifice. Unleavened Bread commemorated the separation from Egypt under God's direction and protection. *Unleavened Bread taught separation from the past to a new life with the Lord.*
3. **Prayer** is the way we talk with our heavenly Father: 1. Believers pray to the Father, in the name of the Son, while living by the Holy Spirit and in fellowship with God, and directed by the Word of God (Ephesians 5.20; 6.18; John 15.7). 2. Prayer shows dependence upon the Father, for He knows everything in advance. 3. Prayer is a way of life (Romans 12.12). 4. The general order of prayer is confession of sin if needed, thanksgiving, pray for others, and pray for self. 5. Prayer should be, first of all, for people's spiritual lives, then for the physical details. Sometimes God leaves the physical problems because he wants to bless us in our spiritual life (Ephesians 6.18-20; 2 Corinthians 12.8-10). We ought to pray: Father, strengthen us in our spiritual lives, give us boldness to live for you, take care of the opposition, and do your work in people's lives in order to get their attention and to verify the message we deliver. You can look up the doctrine of prayer from previous studies.
4. **Faith** in God and his Word will produce a **rest and soul calm** in the life of the believer. When we believe God, we rely on him to do his work while we rest in the assurance that he really does care for us. In order to have a calm soul and spiritual rest, we must know specific principles from God's word and then believe those principles. Jeremiah is a good illustration (Lamentations 3.19-26). Wonderful faith-rest promises are Psalm 16.8, Psalm 37.4-5, Psalm 56.3-4, Proverbs 3.5-6, Romans 8.28, Philippians 4.6-7, and 1 Peter 5.7.

Acts 13, First Trip (Pisidian Antioch)

Tod Kennedy, February, 2000

I. Main points of application or "So what?" from Acts 13

1. It is helpful when spreading the gospel to take into account the frame of reference (background, education, experience) of those to whom you witness about Christ; you simply accurately and clearly and honestly witness to them so that they understand the gospel and may believe it.
2. The message of the missionary is the eternal life gospel of Jesus Christ—Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. The missionary's mission is not to change the society; that only comes with teaching and application of the Bible in the lives of believers.
3. One way to present the gospel to a group is to take them through a brief biblical history of mankind and show that history leads to Jesus Christ—to his first coming, to each person's belief or unbelief in

him as Savior, to his second coming for the church and later his coming to earth, to his reign on earth, and to his rule in eternity.

4. Different responses: some people will believe the gospel, and many will reject it. Some who believe in Christ will pass the gospel to others while some who reject Christ will cause great trouble for believers.
5. Regardless of circumstances, believers have the privileges of being filled with the Holy Spirit and being filled with inner happiness.
6. God does have a plan for the life of each believer and because of that each of us can have security and confidence.

II. Summary Outline

1. During the course of the church's Christian life ministry at Antioch, which included prayer and fasting in order to more fully concentrate on God's will, the Holy Spirit directed the believers to set Barnabas and Saul apart for missionary work. John Mark went with them as their helper (Acts 13.1-3).
2. Barnabas and Saul first stopped at Salamis on the island of Cyprus. They preached initially in the synagogue. Why did they go there first if the gospel was open to all people? Because the Jews had a frame of reference for the gospel and because the gospel was offered to "the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1.16; Acts 13.4-5).
3. At Paphos, the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, wanted to hear the truth of God but a magician named Bar-Jesus or Elymas tried to prevent the proconsul from listening to the gospel and believing in Christ. Bar-Jesus demonstrates religious negative volition and Sergius Paulus demonstrates positive volition at God consciousness. Later critics criticized Luke for using the title "proconsul" in Acts 13 because Cyprus was an Imperial province; critics said that the correct title was "propraetor." A proconsul was governor of a province ruled by the Roman Senate (a Senatorial province), while a propraetor was governor under the direct control of the emperor (an Imperial province). But history tells us that Augustus made Cyprus a Senatorial province in 25 BC, and so proconsul is the accurate title. Again the Bible is accurate (Acts 13.6-8).
4. Saul, also now using the name Paul, froze Elymas with a stare; Paul had correctly diagnosed the spiritual antagonism of Elymas. Then the Lord, through Paul, temporarily blinded Elymas. This, of course, got the proconsul's attention. He was so amazed at the works of the Lord that he believed what Paul had said—apparently about Christ and eternal life. This is another example of the temporary spiritual gift of miracles being used to get one's attention and authenticate the apostles' message (Acts 13.9-12).
5. The next stop was Pisidian Antioch, a commercial center in Phrygia but near Pisidia in the middle of Asia Minor; it was on the trade route between Ephesus and the Cilician Gates (near Tarsus). John Mark returned to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas did as before: they went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day where, after the Scripture reading, they were asked to speak to the congregation. Paul did as Stephen had done; he talked through the history of Israel; today we would call this a walk through the Old Testament (Acts 13.13-16).
6. Paul began by saying that God had, through the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), chosen Israel; he then formed the nation in Egypt before he led them to Canaan in the Exodus (13.17-18). Paul continued his message by speaking of Israel's conquest of Canaan (13.19), the judges (20), King Saul and King David (13.21-22). Paul noted that the promised Savior, Jesus, came from David's line (13.23). Paul made the direct link from David to Jesus. Paul, of course, was referring to God's promises that were found in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. The most recent prophet of Jesus was John the Baptist (13.24-25).
7. At this point in his message, Paul applied his Old Testament walk through to his audience. He began by saying that the message of salvation has been sent to them. The Jewish people, including their

- rulers, rejected Jesus and had him crucified; God raised Jesus from the dead and then his disciples and many people saw him alive (13.26-331).
8. Paul concluded his message by clearly stating that he and Barnabas preached the good news about the promised Savior, Jesus, whom God resurrected from the dead (13.32-33). David, in Psalm 16, even spoke of resurrection—not his own, but the promised Savior’s resurrection (13.34-37). Paul said that forgiveness of sins comes through believing in Jesus (13.38-39). He closed his message by warning them that the prophets said that many, called scoffers, would see Jesus, marvel at him, and perish because they would not believe the message; Paul told them not to be among that group (13.40-41).
 9. There were two clear responses to the good news that Paul preached: many Jews and God-fearers wanted to hear more about God’s grace through Jesus, while many others turned on Paul and repudiated the good news (13.42-45). At this point Paul had fulfilled “to the Jew first” and now turned his ministry to the Gentiles. The Gentiles rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord. Many believed the gospel and therefore gained eternal life (13.46-48). “Appointed to eternal life” means that God had previously positioned them in his eternal salvation plan because he knew that they would, at a time in their lives, believe the gospel.
 10. The Word of God continued to spread with the result that unbelievers intensified their action against the gospel and those who proclaimed it, while believers who kept their minds on Christ and the Word of God had inner happiness and lived by the Holy Spirit. Meanwhile, Paul and Silas had fulfilled their mission in Pisidian Antioch, so they moved on to Iconium (13.49-52).

III. Doctrine Summaries, Definitions, and Descriptions

1. **Missions** is the spiritual ministry that takes the gospel to people who live in geographical regions (foreign missions or home missions) where the gospel is not accurately proclaimed; “regions beyond” were Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 10.16 (Matthew 28.19-20; Acts 1.8; Romans 1.14-16; Acts 13-28 is Luke’s record of the missionary trips; Ephesians 4.11-16). The purpose of missions is 1. to proclaim the good news that eternal salvation is a free gift to all who will believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, 2. to teach the new believers Bible doctrine for spiritual growth and ministry, 3. to help the indigenous believers to form a local church, select a pastor-teacher and deacons, and begin to grow and serve Christ. The missionary will then repeat this process with other people in the same, similar, or different regions. Missionaries ought to revisit the new churches on occasion in order to encourage and teach the believers until they are self-sufficient. Missionaries should be sent out from a home local church and be supported by that church and possibly by other churches in that geographical area. Missionaries ought to return to their own local church to report on their ministry and to be taught and further equipped by the pastor-teacher. A missionary ought to have one of the public communication spiritual gifts: evangelist, teacher, or pastor-teacher. Missionaries must be biblically grounded in all Bible doctrine, but especially the gospel, grace, faith, and basic Christian life doctrines (occupation with Christ, knowledge of the Word, faith-rest, confession of sin, spirituality, prayer, and ministry).
2. **Election**, in practical terms, means that God has selected and secured those whom he knows will believe in Christ. The word “election” means selection, choice, differentiation. Charles Ryrie, in *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, page 116, writes that election is "the action of God in choosing certain people for certain purposes. The reason the definition is so broad is so that it can include the various people and groups who are said to be elect in the Bible." God selects those who will believe in Christ for eternal life, for privileges, and for opportunities. Life, privileges, and opportunities are only given to those who are related to God by faith (Ephesians 1.3-14). He elected people according to their foreknown faith response to the gospel. He selected and secured these faith people for personal participation and blessing inside His gracious plan (Ephesians 1.3-14; Ephesians 1.4-5; 1 Thessalonians 5.9; 2 Thessalonians 2.13; 1 Peter 1.1-2). Acts 13.48, “and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed,” links God’s election in the past to man’s belief of the gospel in the present. The meaning of “election” has been hotly debated. I believe the following interpretation of

election according to God's foreknowledge answers the most questions and best brings all the Scripture on this subject together. Many think election means that God simply programs people to believe or not believe, and that this definition of election protects God's sovereignty, but it takes greater sovereignty and power to create beings who have the freedom and ability to accept or reject God's gift of salvation than to create beings who do just what they were programmed to do. God created man with volition; God was smart enough and powerful enough to plan for every contingency, every bad decision and every good decision and make it all come out to fulfill his plan and honor his character. Predestination is different from election and only applies to believers. It means God designed a destiny for every believer. That destiny is that he will be like Christ (Romans 8.29; Ephesians 1.5-6). Believers, therefore, are predestined to be like Christ. Predestination has nothing to do with man's eternal destination.

Acts 14, First Trip (Paul Stoned)
 Tod Kennedy, March 12, 2000

I. Main points of application or "So what?" from Acts 14

1. Stay gospel-minded: continue to pray for opportunities to witness about Jesus Christ the Savior; watch for opportunities to witness; and witness when God gives those opportunities to you.
2. There will always be opposition to the gospel. Don't let this intimidate or deter you from telling others about eternal life through Jesus Christ.
3. Explain the Word of God to new believers and continue to encourage them in their Christian walk. The church is Christ's body and needs spiritual food, encouragement, protection, and challenges.
4. Idolatry and polytheism are prevalent in our time just as they were in the time of Paul and Barnabas. Do not allow this to be an excuse for not speaking out for Christ and God's viewpoint.
5. Missionary reports greatly encourage those in the home church who support the missionaries.
6. People may try to put you on a pedestal like they did Paul and Barnabas. If they mistakenly think that you are a super Christian, be careful. If you begin to take their praise of you seriously, you are not only setting yourself up for divine discipline, but you are also taking God's honor and glory to yourself.
7. Whenever you are beaten up for witnessing for Christ, pick yourself up and resume the spiritual conflict; this is your royal birthright mission: "striving together for the faith of the gospel."

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 14.1-7. Paul and Barnabas traveled about 100 miles southeast from Pisidian Antioch to Iconium. Iconium was an ancient city that, in Paul's day, was a part of the Roman province of Galatia. When they reached Iconium, they did as before: they went to the Jewish synagogue where they preached the gospel with many Jews and Greeks believing the gospel. As Paul came to expect, many disbelieving Jews attacked him and Barnabas, but this did not stop their ministry. Finally, when the city divided over the gospel and events became too dangerous, the two missionaries left to take the gospel to the Lycaonian area of Roman southern Galatia—Lystra and Derbe. Timothy was from this region (Acts 16.1-2).
2. Acts 14.8-18. In Lystra, Paul healed a congenitally lame man. This miracle made Paul and Barnabas immediate celebrities, so much so that that the people hailed them as gods. The people of Lystra simply extended their idolatry to two more god. The missionaries could not take that: they ran out into the crowd and said that they were also men and that they had come to this city to tell them about the one true God, the creator who has always had a witness to himself through the orderly seasons and

harvests that he has brought to mankind. God has always revealed himself to all mankind through general revelation—General revelation includes creation or nature (Psalm 19.1-6), weather (Acts 14.17), order in creation (Colossians 1.17), God-consciousness (Romans 1.18-21), Israel (Hebrews 11.1-2,26-27; Joshua 24; Act 7).

3. Acts 14.19-20. “Religious” unbelievers are often very antagonistic and intolerant toward believers who witness for Jesus Christ. The rabble-rousing Jews from Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13) and Iconium (Acts 14) showed up in Lystra and got the crowd worked up against the apostles; they stoned Paul and left him for dead. He apparently died and was given a brief glimpse of heaven before God resuscitated him. Paul wrote about this in 2 Corinthians 11.25. It probably happened while he was at Damascus, Jerusalem, or Tarsus—between Acts 9.23 and Acts 11.30. God the Father brings tests—not always stoning—into our lives so that we depend upon him and his grace and so that humility replaces pride. Paul later wrote in 2 Corinthians 12.1-10 of another painful condition, the thorn in the flesh, that also forced him to depend on God’s grace.
4. Acts 14.20-21. The next stop was Derbe, another city in Roman Galatia about sixty miles from Lystra. Here they again presented the gospel of eternal life through faith in Christ, then taught the new believers, and so “made many disciples.” Do you see the pattern that Paul follows? He goes to an area where he first teaches about Jesus Christ, the Savior. He then teaches basic doctrine to the new believers who are called disciples or pupils of Jesus Christ.
5. Acts 14.21-26. Derbe was the turnaround point for this first trip. Paul and Barnabas left Derbe and revisited Lystra and Iconium on their way back to Antioch. At each of these stops they taught Bible doctrine to the new believers and encouraged them to continue in the faith. Paul and Barnabas did not leave these new believers footloose and without spiritual leadership. They appointed elders; these elders were the pastor-teachers who had the responsibility of teaching (the explaining of the Word of God) and shepherding (leading and protecting) the believers in the various churches. After Iconium, they stopped briefly in Perga to witness and teach before they went on to Pisidian Antioch. They had finished their first missionary circuit.
6. Acts 14.26-28. Since Paul and Barnabas had been sent out by the believers in Antioch, after they arrived (Greek aorist tense) and gathered together (Greek aorist tense) the church, they took some time reporting (Greek imperfect tense) what God had done (Greek aorist tense) with them. The aorist tense looks at an act generally as a whole, while the imperfect tense was used to relate that the missionaries took some time and went into detail about the wonderful ministry that God had completed through them. Verse 28 continues to bring this out by saying “they were spending (Greek imperfect tense) not a little time together with the disciples.” When we send missionaries, we are responsible to pray for them and provide support for them. When they return, we need to hear about the mission so that we can better pray and support them and the new churches.

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. **Abundant life** is what we all want—that extraordinary and supernatural and eternal kind of life in our day to day experience. Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1.3-4 that God has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness. This life is ours to enjoy. The movie “It’s a Wonder Life” starring Jimmy Stewart illustrates the point that we often reject or miss that which we really want. George did not recognize and appreciate what he already had until he thought he had lost it. God has given every believer the opportunity to live an abundant life; whether we experience this kind of life depends upon our day to day relationship with God and his Word. We often miss the opportunity to love life and to experience God’s day to day blessings. Jesus said in John 10.10, “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.” Jesus uses the word “life” in three ways in John 10—eternal life, an abundant spiritual life in time, and physical life. Peter wrote about the abundant spiritual life in 1 Peter 3.10; he quoted the Psalmist, “Let him who means to love life and see good days....” Both John and Peter have day to day life in mind—an abundant and fulfilling and enjoyable temporal life that is possible because believers possess eternal life. To enjoy eternal life in time, the abundant daily experience of

eternal of life, we must continue to live in a growing and submissive relationship to Christ our Shepherd. John 10 includes four elements for the abundant life (John 10.3, 4, 9, 10, 14): 1. A sheep-person must be a part of the shepherd's flock (believe in Christ). 2. The sheep-believer must follow the shepherd (listen to him and watch him). 3. The sheep-believer must depend on the shepherd (trust him, believe him). 4. The sheep-believer must obey the shepherd (faith application of the Word). The abundant life can be lived during days that are filled with routine or suffering or testing or success or prosperity because it does not depend on circumstances; it depends on relationship with Jesus Christ our shepherd. Jesus taught the disciples, in John 13-17, the central truths that they would need to live the abundant life: occupation with Christ, knowledge of the Word, faith-rest, confession of sin, spirituality, prayer, and ministry in order to experience this abundant life.

2. **Blessings** are good things—a word, an act, a gift—that encourage us, lift us, and help us. All blessing begins with God because he created the heavens and the earth and all living creatures. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines the verb bless “to confer well-being or prosperity on” and the noun “something promoting or contributing to happiness, well-being, or prosperity; a boon.” These definitions are accurate for the Hebrew (kṛb, berach, hkrb berachah) and the Greek (eulogeo, eulogho- eulogetos, makario- makarios) words for blessing. Believers receive unique blessings because of their relationship with Christ. God blessed Israel in the past and will bless Israel in the future because of the conditional covenant with Moses (Mosaic Law, Deuteronomy 28) and unconditional covenants for Israel (Abrahamic, Genesis 12.1-3, Palestinian, Deuteronomy 30.1-10, Davidic, 2 Samuel 7.14-16, and New, Jeremiah 31.31-34). God has blessed every church age believer with positional blessings—the same blessings for all believers—simply because we are believers in Christ (Ephesians 1.3; Romans 4.6-9; Galatians 3.14). He also blesses individual believers with experiential blessings—individualized blessings for those who practice accurately the Christian life (Acts 20.35; Romans 15.29; Galatians 4.15; Hebrews 6.7; 1 Peter 3.14; 4.14; Revelation 22.7). God also has blessings for believers during the millennial kingdom and eternity; these begin with Christ coming for his church (Titus 2.13; Matthew 5.3-11; Revelation 19.9; 20.6).
3. **Encouragement** is the general ministry of believers to each other in which we encourage, comfort, and challenge each other. Each of us is encouraged by knowing that God cares for us (1 Peter 5.7), that we can go to God's gracious throne in prayer (Hebrews 4.16), that “God works all things together for good” (Romans 8.28), that God is our helper and will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13.5-6), and that no one or nothing can take us out of his gracious and mighty hand (John 10.27-29). This general encouragement ministry by all believers is different from the special ministry of encouragement directed by the spiritual gift of encouragement (Romans 12.8). God wants us to encourage each other (1 Thessalonians 4.18; 5.11, 14; 2 Thessalonians 2.17; Hebrews 3.13; 10.25). We learn to encourage others through our own personal hardship, tests, and suffering (2 Corinthians 1.3-5). We can encourage with the Word of God (Romans 15.4; 1 Thessalonians 4.18; Hebrews 12.5; 13.27; 1 Peter 5.12), with news of the spiritual growth and momentum made by other believers (2 Corinthians 7.6-7, 13; Ephesians 6.22; Philippians 2.19; Colossians 4.8; 1 Thessalonians 3.7; Philemon 7), by stressing the great encouragement that comes through our relationship with Christ (2 Corinthians 1.5), and by reminding others that God encourages us (Acts 9.31; Romans 15.6; 2 Corinthians 1.3; 7.6; 2 Thessalonians 2.16-17).
4. **Happiness** is a joyful and contented attitude that begins with faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior (John 20.29) and then continues as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5.22-23). Happiness is also the by-product of God's blessings (Psalm 144.12-15) and of the faith application of the principles of the Bible (John 13.17). This application of Bible doctrine takes many roads that lead to happiness: 1. gracious treatment of the poor (Proverbs 14.21), 2. Our possession of God's wisdom (Proverbs 3.13), 3. Occupation with Christ and therefore gladness that we are related to Jesus Christ and follow him (Philippians 4.4), 4. Knowing that believers to whom we have ministered are growing in their Christian lives (Philippians 4.1), 5. Our understanding and application of the Word of God (John 13.17), 6. Knowing that we are doing the right thing (Romans 14.22), 7. We recognize the tests that come from God and know that God is strengthening us, blessing us, and will reward us later on

(James 1.2, 12; 5.11), 8. Knowing that the gospel is going to unbelievers and that we have a part in this spread of the gospel (Philippians 1.18), and 9. Awareness of our privilege to serve God (Luke 1.45-48; 2.10). A sure way to make ourselves unhappy is to make our own happiness the goal of our life, especially at the expense of others.

5. **Revelation** means that God has communicated himself and his word to mankind (John 1.18; 2 Timothy 3.16-17). There are two kinds of revelation: General and Special. Mankind knows, through General or Natural revelation, that God, exists but General revelation does not tell mankind how to have relationship with God (Psalm 19.1-6). We see God's glory and design when we look at the heavens (Psalm 19.1-6) or recognize the seasons and weather (Acts 14.17). We know he exists when we see the design and order of the unseen but accepted laws that govern and maintain the solar system (Colossians 1.17). Since the creation of man all mankind has possessed God-consciousness—an inner knowledge of God's attributes, power, and nature (Romans 1.18-21). The very existence and survival of Israel documents that God exists and has a purpose for the world (Hebrews 11.1-2, 26-27; Joshua 24; Act 7). Special revelation refers to the way that God has revealed specific details about himself and his redemption plan: he has specifically revealed himself through his Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ, the living word (John 1.18; Hebrews 1.2-3) and through the Bible, the written word (1 Corinthians 2.10; 2 Timothy 3.16-17). The Bible is without error (Joshua 23.14-15; Matthew 5.18; 22.31-32; Luke 24.44; 2 Timothy 3.16-17; Deuteronomy 25.4; Matthew 10.10; Titus 1.2). God has made his written word, the Bible, known and understood to mankind through three steps: revelation (Acts 3.18-22; 1 Corinthians 2.10; 2 Peter 1.21), inspiration (2 Timothy 3.16-17), communication (Ezekiel 2-3; Ephesians 4.11-12). Both general and special revelation honor God and bless mankind (Psalm 119).
6. **Spirituality** (Galatians 6.1) is the absolute condition of any believer "walk[ing] by the Spirit" (Galatians 5.16) and "filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5.18). God the Holy Spirit permanently indwells every believer (1 Corinthians 3.16; 6.19 12.13), but every believer is not always spiritual. Spirituality emphasizes Christian life practice, while fellowship emphasizes Christian life relationship with God (1 John 1.1-10). Spirituality is distinct from spiritual maturity. Carnality, which describes the condition any believer controlled by his sinful nature, is the opposite of spirituality (1 Corinthians 1.1-3 and Galatians 5.16-17). Every believer is either spiritual or carnal at any point in time. Spirituality is the normal condition of the believer's life, but personal sin quenches (1 Thessalonians 5.19) or grieves (Ephesians 4.30) the Holy Spirit and places the believer under the control of the sinful nature; this condition is carnality (1 Corinthians 3.1-3). Spirituality is regained by confession of sin (1 John 1.9 and 1 Corinthians 11.30 compared to Galatians 5.16-17) and trusting the Holy Spirit to live through one (Galatians 3.2-5). The Holy Spirit controls the sinful nature while a believer is spiritual; the spiritual believer possesses the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5.22-23); he can serve in the restoration of carnal believers (Galatians 6.1); he has the spiritual freedom to please God instead of following a legal code out of duty (Galatians 5.18); the spiritual believer has the spiritual freedom to reflect God's ongoing transformation of him to Christ-likeness (2 Corinthians 3.17-18); and spirituality orders and uplifts the believer's soul and makes him thankful (Ephesians 5.19-20).

Acts 15, Jerusalem Council

Tod Kennedy, April 30, 2000

I. Main points of application or "So what?" from Acts 15

1. We ought to live for God because we want to please him, not because we think that the way to successful Christian living is by following taboos or religious regulations, which is legalism.
2. Am I clear on what the gospel is and what is the right response to the gospel? The gospel is the good news that Christ died for the sins of the entire world and then arose from the dead. The right response to the gospel is faith alone in Christ alone.

3. What is my attitude toward the church age rituals of the Lord's Table and water baptism? What am I thinking during those rituals? A ritual symbolizes or pictures a real event and the truth that that event teaches. A biblical ritual symbolizes something that God has done and the Bible doctrine associated with that event. It teaches and reminds people of God's grace. The ritual itself has no merit. Circumcision was a ritual; the Levitical offerings were rituals; water baptism and the Lord's Table are rituals.
4. God's word has been founded upon historical events: God did make a covenant with Abraham; Jesus was born into the world and was the Christ; Jesus Christ did die and arise; Peter, Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and James were real people who lived in the first century and got the church started.
5. When believers gather to define policy or solve problems, they ought to make use of appropriate evidence and wise people to come to the best decisions. Then they ought to try to maintain unity about the acceptance and application of the policy.
6. John Mark, Peter, and Paul illustrate that failure in the Christian life does not prevent future ministry. God continued to teach, use, and bless them.

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 15.1-4. Legalistic Jews tried to convince the believers in Antioch that Gentiles must be circumcised in order to gain eternal life; what they were saying was that a Gentile had to become a Jew in order to gain eternal life. They contended that faith alone in Christ alone would not work. Paul and Barnabas would have none of that. The Antioch believers wanted to know what the apostles thought about this so they sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to meet with Peter, James, and the others. When Paul and Barnabas arrived in Jerusalem they gave their missionary report to the church and presented the question from the believers in Antioch. Circumcision was a physical sign, a ritual, a human work showing that one believed God's covenant to Abraham. The Abrahamic covenant was God's promise that he would bless the human race through the seed of Abraham. Paul wrote in Galatians 3.16 that Jesus Christ was the seed through whom blessing would come.
2. Acts 15.5-6. A Pharisee who was a Christian had become confused about salvation by grace through faith and about the place of the Mosaic Law in the life of a Christian. He argued that Gentile believers must be circumcised and follow the Mosaic Law. He was wrong, but due to the Jewish nature of the young church, this disagreement had to be addressed and settled. The fundamental question was whether eternal life was gained by faith alone in Jesus Christ or faith in Jesus Christ plus something else. Here that something else was circumcision and obedience to the Law of Moses. Today we face the same kind of disagreement: does one gain eternal life by faith alone in Christ alone or by faith in Jesus Christ plus water baptism or making Jesus Lord of one's life or demonstrating holiness by one's life or
3. Acts 15.7-11. Peter, Barnabas and Paul, and James each took a turn in the debate. Peter argued based on God's revelation to him throughout the Cornelius episode of Acts 10-11. Peter concluded that both Jew and Gentile are saved the same way that Cornelius and the others were saved: by God's free gift—grace—through faith alone in Christ alone; there was no need for circumcision or obedience to the law of Moses.
4. Acts 15.12. Barnabas and Paul explained how God had worked through them on behalf of the Gentiles during their first missionary trip (13.48; 14.20-21, 27). Many Gentiles were saved without circumcision or any other legal observance. They were saved by faith alone in Christ alone.
5. Acts 15.13-21. James, the half brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church, referred to Peter's ministry among the Gentiles (15.14) and said that this was just what the prophets said would happen. His point is not the specific fulfillment of the Amos prophecy, but that Gentiles will be included in

God's salvation and that the Gentiles will not prevent Israel's promised future. James concluded that Jews ought not to require Gentiles to follow the Mosaic Law: leave them alone and allow them to freely believe in Christ (15.19). Since every city has Jewish people who hear the law read in the synagogue every Sabbath, the second part of the decision was to recommend that Gentiles refrain from four activities that would bother Jews and especially new Jewish believers and therefore cause unnecessary tension between Jews and Gentiles: do not eat food offered to idols; do not engage in sexual immorality; do not eat food from an animal that had been strangled (the blood would still be in it); do not eat meat from an animal from which the blood had not been drained.

6. Acts 15.22-29. The church in Jerusalem, including the apostles and elders, agreed to James' conclusion. Note the process that they followed to arrive at the right decision: the question was stated; each side presented its case; those closely associated with what God had been doing among the Gentiles presented evidence; the evidence was confirmed by Scripture; James, the recognized leader in Jerusalem gave his decision; this decision was agreed to by the council; and they made a strong effort to maintain unity among the believers in Jerusalem and elsewhere. The conclusion was written up in the form of a letter. The church leaders chose Paul and Barnabas to carry the letter to Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. They also chose Judas, a Jew, and Silas, a Gentile to go along with Paul and Barnabas—presumably to lend credence to the letter by having a representative from both Jews and Gentiles.
7. Acts 15.30-35. Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and Judas traveled to Antioch where they read the letter to the gathered believers. The believers were very glad to hear that Gentiles were saved without becoming Jews or accepting Jewish laws. At this point the four men began to teach Bible doctrine to the Antioch church. Soon after, Judas returned to Jerusalem while Paul and Barnabas continued to teach the Word of God to the Antioch believers.
8. Acts 15.36-40. After a period of Bible teaching, Paul suggested that they return to southern Galatia in order to follow up believers in those areas. At this point Paul and Barnabas disagreed about whom to take with them on the trip. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark but Paul said no to that. Paul did not think that John Mark should go because he had left them at Perga on the first trip to return to Jerusalem (13.13). Out of this disagreement two missionary teams arose. Barnabas took John Mark and went to Cyprus and Paul and Silas began the second missionary trip; they would revisit southern Galatia, then go as far west as Macedonia and Greece. Scripture does not say why John Mark left Paul and Barnabas; there are a number of possible reasons. The important thing to remember is that whatever the reason, it did not disqualify John Mark from future ministry. Spiritual growth along with Barnabas' encouragement turned him into a valuable minister of the early church. Later on, Paul writes favorably of him in Colossians 4.10, Philemon 24, and 2 Timothy 4.11. John Mark authored the gospel of Mark.

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. **Legalism** is the belief that a person must follow religious regulations or taboos in order to gain eternal life or to live a successful Christian life. Coupled with this is another belief: that God will bless, help, and prosper the one living this way. A legalist follows the letter of Scripture and tradition in order to gain good from God or show his own righteousness. Legalistic people work for God's blessing, they confuse cause and result, and they misunderstand grace. In contrast to the legalist, a biblical believer follows the meaning of the scripture from a desire to please God. Scripture teaches that a believer is to think and act rightly because of genuine appreciation for God. Legalism becomes a heavy yoke or load to live under (Matthew 11.28). Legalism is against salvation by grace (Galatians 1.6-9; 2.16), spirituality by grace (Galatians 3.2-5; 5.5), and the freedom to live the Christian way of life by grace—which is the freedom to live apart from pressure imposed by a religious community or a taboo list (Galatians 4.8-11; 5.1-5). Legalistic people attempt to force their lifestyle upon others and thereby judge and interfere in the freedom of other believers (John 7.19-24;

Romans 14.1-12; Galatians 2.1-5). Pride, self righteousness, and a critical mental attitude characterize legalists and perpetuate legalism (Matthew 12.10; Luke 18.9-12; Galatians 2.3-5; 6.12-13). The legalistic person has separated himself from the light load and easy yoke of freedom in Christ (Matthew 11.30; Galatians 5.1-4). Legalistic people replace Bible doctrine and the spirit of Bible doctrine with human standards (Matthew 12.1-8; 15.1-3). Common legalistic practices in Bible times include observing religious ritual for the sake of ritual (Acts 15.5; Galatians 4.10-11; Colossians 2.16), observing special days, months, seasons, and years (Galatians 4.10-11; Colossians 2.16-18), circumcision (Galatians 2.3-5; 5.2-4), taboo lists (Colossians 2.20-22), hand washing before eating (Matthew 15.1-20), special rules for the Sabbath (Matthew 12.1-1-5, 9-14), self righteousness (Luke 18.9-14), and depending on personal heritage, ability, and conformity to a regulatory system to please God (Philippians 3.4-6). Current day expressions of legalism related to salvation include believe plus promise to change one's life, believe plus make Christ Lord, believe plus join the church, believe plus give up habits such as smoking and movies, believe plus an emotional experience, and believe plus participate in church sacraments. Current day expressions of legalism related to the Christian way of life may include right activity done for the wrong reasons: praying regularly, giving money, reading the Bible, and experiencing emotional highs during a church service. Legalism related to the Christian life may also include wrong activity for the wrong reasons: imitating famous Christians, basing one's spiritual life on emotional responses to God, avoiding certain taboos such as smoking, attending movies, or playing sports on Sunday. Legalism ultimately emphasizes human works. The Bible teaches that a believer is unable to contribute anything to God through his own human efforts. Grace emphasizes God's work and the believer's dependence upon God's work.

2. **Circumcision** was a physical sign, a ritual, a human work showing that one believed God's covenant to Abraham. Circumcision is the surgical removal of the foreskin from the male sex organ. It began with Abraham and the Mosaic Law included circumcision (Leviticus 12.3). It is a ritual which signifies that the individual has accepted the Abrahamic covenant—God's unconditional covenant that he would bless Abraham by giving him and his heirs a land, by giving him children who would expand into a nation, and by blessing the whole human race through one of his heirs (Genesis 12.1-3; 17; Romans 3.1-2)—by faith (Genesis 17.1-14; Romans 4.10-11). Circumcision was established for all male Jewish children 8 days old (Genesis 17.12), male Gentile children born into the house or purchased (Genesis 17.12-13), and male foreigners wishing to celebrate the Passover or become citizens of Israel (Exodus 12.48). True circumcision was a sign that a particular Hebrew family accepted by faith the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 17.1-14; Romans 2.24-29). Circumcision was a prerequisite for eating of the Passover meal. The Passover is indirectly a commemoration of the Abrahamic Covenant (Exodus 12.40-51). Circumcision was never necessary for salvation (Romans 3.30-4.12; 1 Corinthians 7.19; Galatians 2.3-7). There have been two types of circumcision in Israel's history. True circumcision was the surgical procedure based upon faith in correct doctrine. False circumcision was the surgical procedure based upon works and incorrect doctrine (John 7.14-24; Romans 2.25-29; 9.1-9; Philippians 3.1-7). Circumcision has no spiritual significance in the church age (Acts 15; Galatians 2; 5.1-13; 6.12-18). The Baptism of the HS is the spiritual sign that a person is a part of the church just as circumcision was a physical sign that the person was a part of Israel under the Abrahamic covenant (Romans 6.3-4; 1 Corinthians 12.13; Colossians 2.11-13).
3. **Eternal salvation** comes to a person when he believes in Jesus as Savior—faith alone in Christ alone. The good news is that Jesus Christ offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who believe in Him because He died in our place for our sins. Paul wrote of this in Romans 1.9, 15-16, 1 Corinthians 15.1-4, 2 Corinthians 10.1, Galatians 4.13, Ephesians 1.13, Philippians 4.15, and 2 Timothy 1.8. This good news or gospel of eternal salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone is for the entire world. Eternal salvation becomes the possession of every person at the moment he believes in God's Son for salvation. People wrongly try to add many things to the gospel—discipleship, changing one's life, making Jesus the Lord of your life, stopping sinning, performing Christian service, going to church, giving up certain activities, or obeying God. They may say that unless your life shows morality and Christian growth and service you may not be a Christian. They change grace—grace

means that God has done everything Himself and offers us salvation for free—ever so subtly by making us do something to help insure our salvation. They change faith, again very subtly, by making it include obedience to God instead of simply believing in Christ. Faith is a belief, a trust, an inner conviction, a reliance that something is true—faith must be directed toward the right object, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2.8-9; Romans 1.4-8).

4. **Faith** is the conviction that something is true; faith is trust; faith is reliance upon an object. Faith must have an object. We use faith every day. When we are driving a car and step on the brakes, we believe that they will slow the car down; that is faith. When we go to church we believe that there will be a service; that is faith. In order for a person to gain eternal life, he must believe the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ. “Saving faith” is simple faith in the only object who is able and willing to save—Jesus Christ. In biblical terms, saving faith “is the inward conviction that what God says to us in the gospel is true” (Zane Hodges, *Absolutely Free*, 31). What he said was that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was judged by God the Father for the sins of the world, including my sins, and that because of his substitutionary death he offers me eternal life if I will believe in him as my Savior (John 1.12; 3.16; 20.31; Acts 16.31; Ephesians 2.8-9; 1 Timothy 1.15; 1 John 5.13). Jesus Christ is, as John said in John 1.29, “The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

Acts 16, Second Trip, Philippi Tod Kennedy, May 20, 2000

I. Main points of application or “So what?” from Acts 16

1. Remember to follow up with new and young believers whom you have started in the Lord and in the Word.
2. We often make divine guidance a guessing game; it is not. God guides us through his Spirit, by his written Word, by controlling circumstances around us, by us thinking about what his will may be, and by our prayer for guidance.
3. Demons cannot indwell believers but they can influence our thinking and decision making. Drugs, alcohol, emotionalism, idolatry, and cult activity can put us in a place where we may be more susceptible to demon activity.
4. Evangelism and Bible teaching ought to have as high a value and priority to us as they did to Paul and Silas. Periodically we ought to ask ourselves how we value evangelism and Bible teaching and then adjust our lives accordingly.
5. How do we relate to undeserved suffering? Undeserved suffering because we are believers is our privilege and opportunity as members of Christ’s body. Peter tells us to rejoice and that we are blessed through this suffering (1 Peter 4.13-14).
6. Always make the gospel accurate and clear. Say what you mean and mean what you say. “Believe on the Lord Jesus” is the challenge to the unbeliever.

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 16.1-3. Paul, on his second missionary trip, revisited Lystra where he met Timothy, who was a believer in Christ (2 Timothy 1.5; 3.14-15). Timothy’s mother was a Jewish believer and his father, probably deceased, was a Greek and likely an unbeliever. Timothy had a good reputation among the believers of Lystra and Iconium. Paul recognized that God had gifted Timothy for spiritual leadership and communication of the Word. Paul wanted to take Timothy on as a team member, but he anticipated possible trouble because Timothy had both Jewish and Gentile parents. To prevent the

false issue of circumcision from deflecting or distracting their ministry to Jews, he circumcised Timothy before they left town.

2. Acts 16.4-8. God the Holy Spirit clearly guided Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy to Troas which is on the northeast Aegean coast. There were many places in which they would have liked to teach the Word, but God kept pushing them north and west. Along the way they did revisit believers in cities along the route of their first missionary trip. The Holy Spirit kept them from going into Bithynia in the north and Mysia to the northwest and Asia in the west.
3. Acts 16.9-12. One night, when Paul was at Troas, God instructed him through a vision to go to Macedonia and there spread the gospel and teach Bible doctrine. The missionary team went to Macedonia, a Roman Imperial province. They visited Philippi, a Roman colony named for Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. They next visited Thessalonica, the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. From there they went, in a great hurry because of the riot, to Berea.
4. Acts 16.13-15. Luke wrote that on the Sabbath day Paul went to a place outside the city gate where people gathered, instead of going to the synagogue; he wanted to speak to whoever gathered there. Lydia was among the crowd to whom Paul preached. Luke, by calling her a “worshipper of God,” noted that she was God-conscious and interested in knowing more about God. She had passed through the first stage, God-consciousness, and was now ready and willing to hear the gospel. Lydia listened to Paul speak about forgiveness of sin and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. As a result she believed in Christ. Apparently her family was there also and they trusted Christ as Savior. Paul then baptized them.
5. Acts 16.16-24. While Paul was evangelizing and teaching at Philippi, a demon possessed servant girl, who made money for her masters by telling fortunes, made a nuisance of herself to Paul and his team. He finally commanded the demon to leave her. This, of course, meant a loss of revenue to her master, and her masters had Paul and Silas arrested. They charged that the missionaries were throwing the city into confusion by spreading illegal propaganda. This was, of course, false but he had aroused the local citizens so much that the authorities had the missionaries beaten. This was illegal to do to Roman citizens. The authorities did not know it yet, but Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. The authorities then put Paul and Silas into prison—“locked and stocked.”
6. Acts 16.25-28. Paul and Silas did what strong believers ought to do when in undeserved suffering—they continued to live the Christian life (1 Peter 2.19-21; 4.12-16). The men applied by faith their learned Bible doctrine. They prayed and sang hymns of praise to God. The jailer and the other prisoners heard them and probably wondered “What God do they serve that they rejoice in Christ even when they are unjustly treated?” At that point God caused an earthquake that shook the prison so much that the cell doors opened and the prisoners’ chains broke. The guard, who had been sleeping while on duty, realized that he was responsible if the prisoners escaped and so his only choice was suicide. Paul yelled at him “Don’t do that. We are all here.”
7. Acts 16.29-34. This was too much for the jailer. He wanted to know about this salvation that Paul had been speaking and singing about. He asked the most important question that anyone can ask: “What must I do to be saved?” Paul answered with the only possible answer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved.” Paul’s answer was crucial. We ought to give the same answer when we tell people how to gain eternal life. Instead, believers often answer with a confusing and incorrect message. The jailer believed in Christ as Savior and immediately he was made a new creature in Christ and given eternal life (2 Corinthians 5.17). When the jailer was off duty he took Paul and Silas home with him, where they witnessed to his family who also believed in Christ as Savior. Paul baptized the entire family and then they celebrated.
8. Acts 16.35-40. Paul and Silas returned to prison with the jailer. The next morning the authorities ordered the missionaries to be released. At that point Paul made known their Roman citizenship; their rights as Roman citizens had been denied. A Roman citizen was not to be flogged, beaten with rods, or crucified. Why did Paul choose this time to announce his Roman citizenship? He did not want to leave the impression that Christians were a rebellious sect. Paul wanted the authorities and the citizens to know that Christians were not troublemakers of any kind and that they were not a danger

to Rome. Christians who were also citizens of Rome deserved protection under Roman law. The missionaries left not as a group of rebels or criminals, but as lawful citizens who were believers in Jesus Christ and as Roman citizens who possessed the rights, protection, and honor of Roman citizens.

9. Acts 16.40. They last thing they did before they left Philippi was to visit Lydia at her house. There they encouraged the new believers with their testimony about God's faithfulness and a challenge to grow in their new faith.

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. **God-consciousness and gospel hearing** identify the two stages of thought and decision that a person goes through before he believes in Jesus Christ as Savior. God-consciousness is the stage when a person knows that God exists. The age that this occurs varies with individuals and cultures. God has made it possible for every person to arrive at God-consciousness through natural revelation and through special revelation (Romans 1.18-32; Psalm 19.1-6; Acts 14.17; 17.22-24, 28; Colossians 1.17; Titus 2.11). If, after God-consciousness, that person desires to have an eternal relationship with God through faith in the only Savior, Jesus Christ, God will reveal the gospel to him—give him gospel hearing—so that he may believe, if he chooses, in Christ as Savior and so become a child of God and possess eternal life (John 7.17; Acts 17.26-27).
2. **Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs** are biblical names for different kinds of songs that believers sing. Psalms (yal mo~) are Bible words put to music. Examples are “Holy, Holy, Holy” from Isaiah 6.3 and “The Lord Is My Shepherd” from Psalm 23. Hymns (umno~) are doctrinal words put to music and addressed to God. Examples are “How Great Thou Art,” “Revive Us Again,” and “God of Our Fathers.” Spiritual songs (wdh pneumatikh) are doctrinal testimonies addressed to oneself and to others. Examples are “O For A Thousand Tongues,” “Onward Christian Soldiers,” “Victory In Jesus,” and “He Lives.”
3. **Roman administrative authority extended far beyond the city of Rome.** Though Augustus did not originate the administrative system, he did give careful attention to it. Rome administered the lands that were not a part of the physical city by designating them as provinces, territories, or colonies. All fell under Rome's administrative authority. The provincial system had two kinds of provinces, imperial and senatorial. There were thirty-two provinces when Paul made his missionary trips: twenty-one were imperial provinces and eleven were senatorial provinces. An imperial province came under the direct control of the emperor. These provinces were in newer and more unstable areas of the empire. The emperor appointed a governor or imperial legate who served until death or until the emperor removed him. The emperor paid the governor a salary and commanded just treatment of the people. The emperor also stationed Roman legions in the provinces to keep peace and to protect Roman interests. Imperial provinces included Bithynia, Pamphylia, Galatia (with Lystra, Pisidian Antioch, and Iconium), Cappadocia, Syria (with Tarsus, Damascus, and Antioch of Syria), and after A.D. 70, Judea. A senatorial province was governed by the senate through a proconsul, who served a one year term. The emperor kept a watchful eye on the senatorial provinces. The proconsul had a small military force at his disposal. Senatorial provinces included Crete, Macedonia (with Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea), Achaia (with Athens and Corinth), and Asia (with Ephesus as the capital city). Territories were foreign lands ruled by a client-king. Often provinces began as territories. The king, later on, yielded the territory to Rome. Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, Pamphylia, Macedonia, and Achaia began as territories. A Roman colony was a small piece of the city of Rome that was geographically separated from Rome; Luke correctly records that Philippi (Acts 16.12) was a Roman colony; Augustus had granted colony status to Philippi. The Roman colony policy began very early with groups of 300 families sent to garrison coastline cities. The colony policy changed over the years; political reasons surpassed strategic reasons and colonies were used for emigration of common folk or veteran soldiers. Colonies helped to Romanize native communities and to protect Rome's interests. A colony was a small copy of Rome.

4. **Undeserved suffering** is pressure, pain, ridicule, injustice, and any harassment that a Christian faces because he is a believer in Christ or because he is living in a way that pleases God. Genuine undeserved suffering comes upon us because we are believers in Christ and are living the Christ-like life: by faith, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and according to the Word of God. Undeserved suffering is part of a believer's supernatural Christian life (2 Corinthians 6.3-10). Undeserved suffering is not caused by personal sin, spiritual immaturity, or failure to apply Bible doctrine. Paul and Silas were witnessing about Christ and teaching Bible doctrine in the city of Philippi. Even though they both were Roman citizens and had broken no law, they were falsely accused, beaten, and imprisoned—because they were believers in Christ and living in a way that pleased God (Acts 16). Paul, during his first Roman imprisonment, continued to live occupied with Christ and ready and willing to carry on his God given ministry (Philippians 1). His faith in God and God's word continued to clothe him and to encourage him during his second Roman imprisonment, even though he knew then that he faced physical death because he was a believer and living Christ's kind of life (2 Timothy 4.6-8). Believers who endure undeserved suffering through faith application of the Word of God are living examples of God's grace, and this kind of life pleases God (1 Peter 2.19-20). When we endure undeserved suffering because Christ's kind of life is living out through us we ought to rejoice; we have been granted a great privilege (1 Peter 4.13). We also are being blessed because the Spirit of God's glory, the Holy Spirit, is at that time abiding in us (1 Peter 4.14). We ought to continue to live God's kind of life—the Christ-like life—through the faith application of the Word of God, even if it brings more undeserved suffering on us (1 Peter 4.19). We have God's promise that he is working his good out of hard circumstances (Romans 8.28), that he is on our side (Romans 8.31), that he will provide all the spiritual resources we need (Romans 8.29). God honors with the crown of life those who continue to live the supernatural Christian life while enduring undeserved suffering (Revelation 3.10).

Acts 17, Second Trip (Thessalonica, Berea, Athens)

Tod Kennedy, July 2, 2000

I. Main points of application or "So what?" from Acts 17

1. Bible based evangelism is the best method. Explain Scripture and give biblical evidence for what you say (Acts 17.1-4).
2. Unbelief can express itself by hatred and violence against believers. The gospel divides men (Acts 17.5-8, 13).
3. Those who believe the gospel immediately become possessors of the spiritual royal birthright. This birthright is the foundation for all church age blessing and service (Acts 17.12).
4. God designed, revealed, and authorized both Old Testament and New Testament doctrine. Neither one came from pagan religions (Acts 17.18-21).
5. God has designed and orchestrated history, including nations and laws, so that mankind may come to God-consciousness, hear the gospel, and have the opportunity to believe the gospel (Acts 17.26-27).
6. Apologetics, which is a defense of the faith or why we know the faith is true, is often an important part of witnessing about Christ (Acts 17.18-31).
7. What God is like, God's nature and essence, is the most foundational truth for mankind (Acts 17.18-31).
8. We ought to warn people that God will judge unbelievers. If one refuses to believe in Christ as his Savior, then he must endure God's wrath (Acts 17.31).
9. When we present the gospel, there will be differing responses. Our ministry is to present the gospel accurately and clearly (Acts 17.32-34).

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 17.1-4. Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke traveled on the Egnatian Way from Philippi to Thessalonica, a distance of about 100 miles. This famous highway stretched 540 miles and connected Rome to its eastern provinces. When Paul reached Thessalonica, he resumed his practice of going first to the synagogue to teach the Jews that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. This had two advantages: first, Paul wanted to make sure that the Jews had a clear opportunity to believe in their Messiah, and second, the Jews already had a biblical frame of reference about the Messiah (Acts 17.3). The Jews had long awaited their Messiah; he would be their mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2.5; Hebrews 8.6), their king (Luke 19.38; John 1.49), their priest (Hebrews 2.17; 4.14-15; Hebrews 5.10). Paul's biblical evangelism received a good response. Many believed in Christ as Savior.
2. Acts 17.5-6. As happened so often with Paul, he spoke so clearly and with such grace, confidence, and authority that people had a hard time staying neutral. Those who did not receive his message about Jesus the Christ got mad. They aroused the people into a riot and even gathered some "hired rioters" to further inflame the crowd. The trouble makers then went looking for Paul, apparently now staying with a man named Jason, so the crowd gathered at Jason's house.
3. Acts 17.7-9. Since the mob did not find Paul, they attacked Jason and forcibly took him to the authorities, to whom the rioters made false accusations—that the missionaries attempted to overthrow Caesar and put Jesus in his place. This was a serious accusation, but Roman law protected those with Roman citizenship; Thessalonica was in the Roman senatorial province of Macedonia. The governing authorities made Jason pay a bond, money to guarantee that Paul would not incite revolution, and then let him go.
4. Acts 17.10-15. The Thessalonian believers thought it best to get Paul out of town, so they sent him, Silas, Timothy, and probably Luke to Berea. Berea was a Macedonian city about fifty miles west of Thessalonica. The current name is Verria. They went to the synagogue to teach about Jesus the Messiah. Both Jews and Greeks believed the gospel and were given eternal life; they became part of Christ's spiritual body, the church, members of God's kingdom, and possessors of the church age spiritual royal birthright. Luke writes that the Bereans compared what Paul said with Scripture in order to determine whether his message was biblically true. This habit of comparing a teacher's statements with Scripture is one that we all should develop; it is a protection of the priesthood of the believer and encourages us to spend time studying the Bible. You can guess what happened: the Thessalonian Jews found out that the Bereans were believing in Christ as Savior, so they rushed to Thessalonica and caused more rioting. It was time for Paul to again move on. A group of believers took Paul to Athens. Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea; they were to join Paul later at Athens.
5. Acts 17.16-18. Athens had a history of classical sculpture, literature, oratory, and philosophy. Socrates (469-399 B.C.) and Plato (429-347 B.C.) were natives of Athens. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), Epicurus (341-270 B.C.), and Zeno (335-263 B.C.) moved to Athens. Epicurus founded a school in Athens in 306 B.C. Epicureans believed that the gods were uninterested in man and that pleasure and the tranquil life—freedom from the fear of the gods and of death, freedom from pain and anxiety—were the chief goals for man. Zeno founded the Stoic school in Athens. Stoics believed in rationalism, individualism, pantheism, and duty. Athens was a city full of idol temples and images. Athens was filled with religion but empty of Christ. As Paul waited for Silas and Timothy, he wandered the city and was provoked by the idolatry. In this religious climate he witnessed for Jesus Christ—in the synagogue and in the market—daily. As a result of his witnessing, he got into discussions with the philosophers. Paul was talking about Jesus and the resurrection, both new ideas to the Greek philosophers. The newness of the ideas to the philosophers demonstrates that Christianity did not borrow its foundational doctrines from ancient religions as some claim; Jesus the Savior and the resurrection were new to the philosophers of Athens. (God designed and revealed both Old Testament Judaism and New Testament Christianity; they are one faith and the one faith is unique.)

6. Acts 17.19-31. The philosophers took Paul to the ancient and famous Court of Areopagus. The name identified the place that city fathers met in early times to discuss concerns of politics and religion. In the time of Pericles (c. 495-425 B.C.) it was even a criminal court. The hill of Ares was 377 feet high. Ares is the Greek god of war. Mars is the Roman god of war and so Mars Hill is the Latin form of Areopagus. There philosophers discussed and debated ideas. The Court was well known, widely respected, and in Paul's time was accepted as authoritative in religious and moral debate. To this court Paul was invited. They asked him about Jesus and the resurrection. Paul began by noting that they were a religious group. He then referred to an altar to an unknown god. These altars could be seen in Athens at that time. He then formed his message around the unknown God: 1. God is the creator and sovereign (17.24-25). 2. God, who began the human race with Adam, planned human history, including the divine dispensations, the way he did so that mankind might come to God-consciousness which means to believe that God exists and go from that belief to faith in the gospel (17.26-27). 3. Since God created us in his image, we should not reduce God to a metal image; the creator cannot be reduced to an idol (17.28-29). 4. God has moved on from the past dispensation in which the revelation about Christ was partial to the present time when Jesus Christ has been fully revealed. God was patient; he has left that in the past. The message about Christ is now complete so God wants everyone to repent. An unbeliever's repentance may hold off God's judgment or prepare him to listen more closely to the gospel. God wants each person to turn from his human viewpoint and sin and set his attention closely to the gospel so that he might understand it, believe it, and be saved (17.30). 5. Be sure that God's judgment is coming; God will judge the world of mankind through his resurrected Jesus Christ (17.31).
7. Acts 17.32-24. The response to Paul's message differed among the listeners. Some sneered at it, some wanted to hear it another time, and some believed and were saved. The parable of the sower taught the same things: when people present the gospel, there will be differing responses.

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. **Eternal salvation** comes to a person when he believes in Jesus as Savior—faith alone in Christ alone. The good news is that Jesus Christ offers forgiveness and eternal life to all who believe in Him because He died in our place for our sins. Paul wrote of this in Romans 1.9, 15-16, 1 Corinthians 15.1-4, 2 Corinthians 10.1, Galatians 4.13, Ephesians 1.13, Philippians 4.15, and 2 Timothy 1.8. This good news or gospel of eternal salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone is for the entire world. Eternal salvation becomes the possession of every person at the moment he believes in God's Son for salvation. People wrongly try to add many things to the gospel—discipleship, changing one's life, making Jesus the Lord of your life, stopping sinning, performing Christian service, going to church, giving up certain activities, or obeying God. They may say that unless your life shows morality and Christian growth and service you may not be a Christian. They change grace—grace means that God has done everything Himself and offers us salvation for free—ever so subtly by making us do something to help insure our salvation. They change faith, again very subtly, by making it include obedience to God instead of simply believing in Christ. Faith is a belief, a trust, an inner conviction, a reliance that something is true—faith must be directed toward the right object, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2.8-9; Romans 1.4-8).
2. **Faith** is the conviction that something is true; faith is trust; faith is reliance upon an object. Faith must have an object. We use faith every day. When we are driving a car and step on the brakes, we believe that they will slow the car down; that is faith. When we go to church we believe that there will be a service; that is faith. In order for a person to gain eternal life, he must believe the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ. "Saving faith" is simple faith in the only object who is able and willing to save—Jesus Christ. In biblical terms, saving faith "is the inward conviction that what God says to us in the gospel is true" (Zane Hodges, *Absolutely Free*, 31). What he said was that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was judged by God the Father for the sins of the world, including my sins, and that

because of his substitutionary death he offers me eternal life if I will believe in him as my Savior (John 1.12; 3.16; 20.31; Acts 16.31; Ephesians 2.8-9; 1 Timothy 1.15; 1 John 5.13). Jesus Christ is, as John said in John 1.29, “The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

3. **God-consciousness and gospel hearing** identify the two stages of thought and decision that a person goes through before he believes in Jesus Christ as Savior. God-consciousness is the stage when a person knows that God exists. The age that this occurs varies with individuals and cultures. God has made it possible for every person to arrive at God-consciousness through natural revelation and through special revelation (Romans 1.18-32; Psalm 19.1-6; Acts 14.17; 17.22-24, 28; Colossians 1.17; Titus 2.11). If, after God-consciousness, that person desires to have an eternal relationship with God through faith in the only Savior, Jesus Christ, God will reveal the gospel to him—give him gospel hearing—so that he may believe, if he chooses, in Christ as Savior and so become a child of God and possess eternal life (John 7.17; Acts 17.26-27).
4. **Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs** are biblical names for different kinds of songs that believers sing. Psalms (yal mo~) are Bible words put to music. Examples are “Holy, Holy, Holy” from Isaiah 6.3 and “The Lord Is My Shepherd” from Psalm 23. Hymns (umno~) are doctrinal words put to music and addressed to God. Examples are “How Great Thou Art,” “Revive Us Again,” and “God of Our Fathers.” Spiritual songs (wdh pneumatikh) are doctrinal testimonies addressed to oneself and to others. Examples are “O for a Thousand Tongues,” “Onward Christian Soldiers,” “Victory in Jesus,” and “He Lives.”
5. **Roman administrative authority** extended far beyond the city of Rome. Though Augustus did not originate the administrative system, he did give careful attention to it. Rome administered the lands that were not a part of the physical city by designating them as provinces, territories, or colonies. All fell under Rome’s administrative authority. The provincial system had two kinds of provinces, imperial and senatorial. There were thirty-two provinces when Paul made his missionary trips: twenty-one were imperial provinces and eleven were senatorial provinces. An imperial province came under the direct control of the emperor. These provinces were in newer and more unstable areas of the empire. The emperor appointed a governor or imperial legate who served until death or until the emperor removed him. The emperor paid the governor a salary and commanded just treatment of the people. The emperor also stationed Roman legions in the provinces to keep peace and to protect Roman interests. Imperial provinces included Bithynia, Pamphylia, Galatia (with Lystra, Pisidian Antioch, and Iconium), Cappadocia, Syria (with Tarsus, Damascus, and Antioch of Syria), and after A.D. 70, Judea. A senatorial province was governed by the senate through a proconsul, who served a one year term. The emperor kept a watchful eye on the senatorial provinces. The proconsul had a small military force at his disposal. Senatorial provinces included Crete, Macedonia (with Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea), Achaia (with Athens and Corinth), and Asia (with Ephesus as the capital city). Territories were foreign lands ruled by a client-king. Often provinces began as territories. The king, later on, yielded the territory to Rome. Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, Pamphylia, Macedonia, and Achaia began as territories. A Roman colony was a small piece of the city of Rome that was geographically separated from Rome; Luke correctly records that Philippi (Acts 16.12) was a Roman colony; Augustus had granted colony status to Philippi. The Roman colony policy began very early with groups of 300 families sent to garrison coastline cities. The colony policy changed over the years; political reasons surpassed strategic reasons and colonies were used for emigration of common folk or veteran soldiers. Colonies helped to Romanize native communities and to protect Rome’s interests. A colony was a small copy of Rome.
6. **Spiritual Royal Birthright** is the possession of every church age believer. The birthright (the right or privilege to which a person is entitled by birth, *American Heritage Dictionary*) of every citizen of a country is the national heritage, national purpose, and reason for national courage. The birthright belongs to each citizen because he is a citizen. The value of the birthright depends, of course, upon the value and credibility of the founders and the founding documents. Every church age believer is a citizen of heaven: “our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3.20). The Father has “transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved son” (Colossians 1.13). We are “sons of God through faith in Christ

Jesus” (Galatians 3.26). We are “in Christ...a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5.17). We are “a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 3.9). This relationship to God through Jesus Christ confers spiritual royalty upon us. We have, therefore, a spiritual royal birthright. God has given to every believer in the church a royal heritage, a royal mission, and a reason for royal courage. This threefold birthright is the foundation for living the Christian way of life (Philippians 1.27-30). Our royal birthright heritage is summarized in Philippians 1.27: “standing firm in one spirit” (sthkete en eni pneumati). This refers to our unique oneness or commonness of spiritual life in Christ. The three parts of our heritage are the in Christ heritage, the Word of God heritage, and the blessings of God heritage. Our royal birthright mission is summarized in Philippians 1.27: “striving together for the faith of the gospel” (mia yuch sunaylounterth pistei tou euaggeliou). We actively serve together for the faith like athletes who train and compete in athletic games. Our common mission is to spread the gospel, learn and pass on the word of God, and support believers. Our personal mission is to produce divine good through our spiritual gifts combined with the filling with the Holy Spirit and the word of God in our souls. Our royal birthright courage is summarized in Philippians 1.28: “in no way alarmed by your opponents” (mh pturomenoi en mhdeni upo twn antikeimenwn). Courage is acting on what we believe—faith-rest and faith-application. This spiritual courage, when used, makes us undaunted in the face of enemy attack. We have courage to fulfill our royal birthright mission because we have and believe our royal birthright heritage.

7. **Undeserved suffering** is pressure, pain, ridicule, injustice, and any harassment that a Christian faces because he is a believer in Christ or because he is living in a way that pleases God—the Christ-like life: by faith, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and according to the Word of God. Undeserved suffering is part of a believer’s supernatural Christian life (2 Corinthians 6.3-10). Undeserved suffering is not caused by personal sin, spiritual immaturity, or failure to apply Bible doctrine. Paul and Silas were witnessing about Christ and teaching Bible doctrine in the city of Philippi. Even though they both were Roman citizens and had broken no law, they were falsely accused, beaten, and imprisoned—because they were believers in Christ and living in a way that pleased God (Acts 16). Paul, during his first Roman imprisonment, continued to live occupied with Christ and ready and willing to carry on his God given ministry (Philippians 1). His faith in God and God’s word continued to clothe him and to encourage him during his second Roman imprisonment, even though he knew then that he faced physical death because he was a believer and living Christ’s kind of life (2 Timothy 4.6-8). Believers who endure undeserved suffering through faith application of the Word of God are living examples of God’s grace, and this kind of life pleases God (1 Peter 2.19-20). When we endure undeserved suffering because Christ’s kind of life is living out through us we ought to rejoice; we have been granted a great privilege (1 Peter 4.13). We also are being blessed because the Spirit of God’s glory, the Holy Spirit, is at that time abiding in us (1 Peter 4.14). We ought to continue to live God’s kind of life—the Christ-like life—through the faith application of the Word of God, even if it brings more undeserved suffering on us (1 Peter 4.19). We have God’s promise that he is working his good out of hard circumstances (Romans 8.28), that he is on our side (Romans 8.31), that he will provide all the spiritual resources we need (Romans 8.29). God honors with the crown of life those who continue to live the supernatural Christian life while enduring undeserved suffering (Revelation 3.10).
8. **Witnessing** for Christ is our privilege; Peter witnessed to the Jewish crowd; they had gathered as a result of the miracle (Acts 3). Peter was a witness for Jesus Christ. He began with the current event that they had seen and used that to move into a message to persuade them that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. He said that to return to the message of the prophets and believe in Jesus Christ would bring blessing, but to reject Jesus Christ would bring judgment. Paul witnessed for Christ throughout his ministry (Acts 16-17). We are to witness for Christ (2 Corinthians 5.18-19). To witness for Christ, then, is to clearly communicate the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins, that he arose, and that whoever believes in him as Savior will be given eternal life. Witnessing for Christ, along with teaching and learning Bible doctrine, is the mission of believers between Christ’s first and second comings. The believer gives the gospel, the Holy Spirit convinces the unbeliever and at faith

regenerates, indwells, baptizes, seals, and gifts the new believer, and the Father sets in motion his plan for that believer (Matthew 28.18-20, 2 Timothy 3.15; John 16.8-11; Romans 1.14-16; 2 Corinthians 5.11-21).

Acts 18, Second Trip (Corinth)

Tod Kennedy, August 6, 2000

<http://www.spokanebiblechurch.com/study/acts/acts.htm>

I. Main points of application or “So what?” from Acts 18

1. Bible-based evangelism is the best method. Explain Scripture and give biblical evidence for what you say (Acts 17.1-4).
2. “Tent-making” in order to support oneself in the ministry is at times necessary and very helpful; there are advantages, though, to having the freedom to study, teach, and shepherd the flock without the need to “make tents” (Acts 18.3-5).
3. God often uses non-believing civil authorities to provide the national stability so that the word of God may be proclaimed (Acts 18.12-17).
4. The supernatural Christian life is a life that does not depend on the rulers and political policies; they will change for the better or worse, but believers continue to live according to the Word of God, by faith, and by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 18.12-17).
5. Everyone who does the work of an evangelist— especially missionaries to people in new locales— should continue make sure that new believers and new churches receive adequate Bible teaching and shepherding until they become spiritually self-sustaining (Acts 18.23).
6. A knowledge of the word of God, graciousness, humility, willingness to learn, and a sense of divine responsibility help the members of the body of Christ prepare for service and to work together in service (Acts 18.24-28).
7. The biblically prepared believer has the privilege of demonstrating the truthfulness of the Scripture to those who will listen (Acts 18.4, 19, 20, 28).

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 18.1-4. Paul left Athens and traveled to Corinth, which had become the capital of the senatorial province of Achaia in 27 B.C. Paul remained in Corinth from about A.D. March, 51 until September, 52. Corinth was an ancient city on the west end of the Isthmus of Corinth, the land bridge that connected the northern part of Greece (Athens and Thebes) with the Pelopennese, the southern part of Greece (Sparta and Mycenae). He stayed with Aquila and Priscilla, Jewish believers who, along with all other Jews, had been evicted from Rome by Emperor Claudius in A.D. 51. Both Paul and Aquila were tent-makers; both used tent-making to support their ministries. It was the custom for a Rabbi to combine the study of the Torah with some trade. Rabbinic leaders thought that this was a good combination. Paul followed his usual habit of speaking about Christ in the synagogue every Sabbath.
2. Acts 18.5-11. Silas and Timothy soon arrived from Berea of Macedonia (17.13-15). After they arrived Paul spent all his time studying and teaching the Word of God. Paul’s concentration on his ministry was possible because Macedonian believers brought gifts for his support (2 Corinthians 11.8-9) and they also were able to personally help Paul so that he could devote himself to his ministry. As was usual, most of the Jews violently rejected Christ’s salvation. Paul left the synagogue and moved his ministry next door to the home of Titus Justice. Some Jews did believe the gospel, which reminds us that believers may come from unexpected places. Crispus, the leader of the synagogue in Corinth, was one such person. The Lord Jesus Christ promised Paul a fruitful and protected ministry in Corinth, so he stayed there 18 months teaching the Word of God. We again see Paul’s emphasis on studying and teaching the Word of God—Bible teaching evangelism and Bible teaching for spiritual growth.

3. Acts 18.12-17. It should not surprise us that once the gospel and Bible doctrine found a welcoming audience, the non-believing Jews went on the attack. This time Jews accused Paul before Proconsul Gallio. (A proconsul was the head of government in a senatorial province and Corinth was the capital of the senatorial province of Achaia. An inscription found at Delphi confirms that Gallio was proconsul of Achaia in A.D. 51/52 or 52/53, during Claudius' rule as emperor.) The accusation was that Paul taught contrary to the Old Testament. Judaism was recognized by Rome, so the accusation was that Paul was promoting an illegal religion. Much to the Jews' disgust, Gallio took the view that Paul was teaching a variant of Judaism, which was legal. He told them that Paul was not a criminal and to solve their own theological problems, then threw the case out of court. These Corinthian trouble makers failed in their attack against Paul, so they attacked someone else whom they thought they could harm; they attacked Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue in Corinth and likely the believer mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1.1. Gallio, the governor, was the brother of Seneca. Seneca, the philosopher and advisor to Nero, along with Burrus, tried to influence Nero for good during Nero's early reign. Gallio, therefore, had high standing in the empire; his decision set a precedent that would protect Christianity for the next decade. But rulers and policies change; by A.D. 62 Nero had turned tyrannical and murderous; his policy became clearly anti-Christian. In A.D. 65 he forced Seneca and Gallio to commit suicide. Nero's torture of Christians because of the fire in Rome demonstrates how the change in rulers and policy can change the treatment of Christians. The supernatural Christian life is a life that does not depend on the rulers and political policies; they will change for the better or worse, but believers continue to live according to the Word of God, by faith, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. Acts 18.18-22. Paul left Corinth for Syrian Antioch, the city of origin and final destination of his second missionary trip. Before he left, he had his hair cut at Cenchræa, a harbor city about eight miles east of Corinth, to end a vow he had taken. We do not know anything about this vow; it is out of character for Paul. It is likely that he took a simplified Nazarite vow (Numbers 6.1-21) for a short period of time to demonstrate to the Jewish population of Corinth his dedication to God and the ministry for Christ. The two times Paul is associated with a Jewish vow he got into trouble (Acts 18.12-18 and Acts 21.22-36). Is there a lesson there for us? The church age is the age of "newness of life" (Romans 6.4) and the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8.2) which Paul wrote about some 7 years later to the Roman believers. The only clear rituals that we observe are both related to the work of Christ and our faith in that work—water baptism and the Lord's table. Priscilla and Aquila accompanied Paul as far as Ephesus where he taught for a short time. Paul went on to Caesarea and from there to Antioch, where he concluded this second missionary trip. Antioch was the third largest city of the empire after Rome and Alexandria. Pompey made Syria a Roman imperial province in 64 B.C., after his defeat of Mithradates in 66 B.C., near Nicopolis, south of the eastern part of the Black Sea.
5. Acts 18.23. After a stay in Antioch, during which Paul would have thoroughly reported on his trip and taken the opportunity to teach God's word to the believers in Antioch (Acts 14.26-28 and Acts 15.30-35), he began his third missionary trip. He began by applying his principle of returning to young churches in order to teach, encourage, and advise the believers (Acts 14.21-23). Everyone who does the work of an evangelist—especially missionaries to people in new locals—should continue make sure that new believers and new churches receive adequate Bible teaching and shepherding until they become spiritually self-sustaining. This was Paul's pattern and this is the command of Scripture (Acts 20.25-31).
6. Acts 18.24-26. Priscilla and Aquila remained in Ephesus. They were soon joined by Apollos, a Jewish believer born in Alexandria, Egypt. Apollos had a wonderful knowledge of the Old Testament and, apparently, had learned from the ministry of John the Baptist. Apollos was enthusiastic about the Lord Jesus; he understood and clearly communicated the life and ministry of Jesus Christ to his audiences. He was a captivating speaker. Apollos had been baptized with the baptism of John. This baptism was different from the baptism of believers in the name of Jesus Christ. John was the herald of the Messiah King and the King's long waited for kingdom (Mark 1.1-8; John 1.19-28). To be

baptized with John's baptism meant that one believed John's message that the kingdom promises were about to be fulfilled through the promised Messiah. Church age water baptism emphasized a believer's relationship with Christ in Christ's death to sin and resurrection to new life. The baptism of the Holy Spirit began after Pentecost and is unique to the church age; each believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and made a member of Christ's spiritual body, the church (1 Corinthians 12.12-14).

Apollos was deficient in church age doctrine. He did not understand water baptism of believers, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the newness of life that each believer has through union with Christ and living by the power of the Holy Spirit. Aquila and Priscilla carefully took him aside and taught him the foundational church age truths that he was lacking. Apollos had been applying the doctrine that he knew and God blessed his ministry; now God used two servants to further instruct him. Priscilla and Aquila were very gracious in the way they helped Apollos and Apollos was very teachable. Good teaching, learning, spiritual growth, and ministry thrive when a knowledge of Bible doctrine combines with graciousness, humility, and willingness to learn. We strengthen each other.

7. Acts 18.27-28. Apollos' ministry became more effective. He believed that he should go to Corinth. The believers in Ephesus, including Priscilla and Aquila, supported him in this decision. They wrote an introductory letter to the Corinthians. When Apollos got to Corinth, he taught the believers. He also had a wonderful apologetics ministry to Jews; he used Scripture to answer their questions about the Messiah and clearly showed that Jesus was the Messiah.

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. **Apollos** was a Jewish believer born in Alexandria, Egypt. He had a wonderful knowledge of the Old Testament and, apparently, had also learned under the ministry of John the Baptist. He had only been baptized with the baptism of John, which meant that he believed John's message that the kingdom promises were about to be fulfilled through Jesus, the promised Messiah (Mark 1.1-8; John 1.19-28). Apollos was a captivating speaker and was enthusiastic about the Lord Jesus. He spent some time in Ephesus in about AD 52 or 53. He taught what he understood about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ to his audiences, even synagogue audiences (Acts 18.24-26). He was not very familiar with church age doctrine, including church age water baptism of believers, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the newness of life that each believer has through union with Christ and living by the power of the Holy Spirit. While he was in Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla carefully took him aside and graciously taught him "in the way of God more accurately." The Bible does not specify which doctrines they taught him, but the contexts of Acts 18-19 and 1 Corinthians seem to indicate that Aquila and Priscilla instructed him on the distinctions between Israel and the church, about John's baptism and church age believer's baptism, about the eternal life gospel, about the doctrine of Christ, and possibly other basic Christian life doctrines. Apollos humbly received their instruction (Acts 18.26). As a result, in about AD 53, Apollos went to Corinth where he became more effective for the Lord (Acts 18.27). While in Corinth, he used Scripture to demonstrate to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18.28). Paul recognized Apollos as a leader and valuable fellow-worker for the spiritual growth of the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 3.4-6, 22; 4.6). Apollos became very prominent at Corinth, so much so that when the church split into factions, one faction claimed to follow Apollos (1 Corinthians 1.12-14). The carnal Christians became such a problem in Corinth that Apollos left; Paul encouraged him to return (1 Corinthians 16.12). Paul, near the end of his own life, spoke highly of Apollos (Titus 3.13). Apollos teaches us many things: the importance of humility; spiritual enthusiasm; eagerness to learn Bible doctrine; a willingness to work together in the ministry with other believers; the value of biblical preparation so that one may teach the Word of God—especially to demonstrate from the Scripture that Jesus is the Christ—and the value of a sustained ministry over many years. Spiritual growth and service for Christ thrive when knowledge of Bible doctrine combines with graciousness, humility, willingness to learn, and enthusiasm for teaching the Word.
2. **Baptism** is a word used many times in the New Testament and is often misunderstood. The Greek word "to baptize" is *baptizw*, which means to dip, immerse, plunge, overwhelm, and so to identify

with something. There are at least seven different kinds of baptism mentioned in the Bible. Three are wet baptisms and four are dry baptisms. The three wet baptisms use water: 1. The baptism of John meant that one believed John's message that the kingdom promises were about to be fulfilled through Jesus, the promised Messiah (Mark 1.1-8; John 1.19-28); 2. The baptism of Jesus by John was a one-time only baptism. This baptism identified Jesus with God the Father's plan that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world, and the king of Israel (Matthew 3.13-17; Luke 3.21-22); 3. Church age water baptism emphasized a believer's relationship with Christ in Christ's death to sin and resurrection to new life (Matthew 28.19; Acts 8.12 and 16; Acts 16.33; 1 Corinthians 1.13-17). The following four baptisms are dry baptisms: 1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit began after Pentecost and is unique to the church age; each believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and made a member of Christ's spiritual body, the church (1 Corinthians 12.12-14); 2. The baptism of Moses occurred during the Exodus. Israel was baptized into Moses when the nation went through the Red Sea and was led by the cloud during the day; the nation was identified with Moses, their leader (1 Corinthians 10.2); 3. The baptism of the cup is a figure of speech which Jesus used to identify himself with his suffering and death on the cross. Jesus said that both James and John would also drink his cup, by which Jesus meant that they would suffer severely for him (Mark 10.38-39; Mark 14.36; Matthew 20.22-23; Luke 12.50); 4. The baptism of fire is a reference to some kind of judgment upon those who reject Christ as Messiah. It will probably be fulfilled at his second coming to earth (Matthew 3.10-12; Luke 3.16-17). Mark 1.8 and John 1.33 are parallel passages and omit the baptism of fire because they also omit the judgment material that Matthew and Luke contain.

3. **Ministry** refers to the believer's individual Christian way of life within God's plan, with emphasis on serving God (Ephesians 4.12-16; 1 Corinthians 12.4-7; 1 Peter 4.10-11). God has a production plan for each believer, and that plan forms the basis for his ministry (Ephesians 2.10). Effective ministry is dependent upon the preparation of the believer (Ephesians 4.12) and upon the controlling ministry of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5.16-6.1; Ephesians 5.18). The preparation for service comes through the equipping ministry of the pastor-teacher (Ephesians 4.12-16) and through practice using the spiritual gift in service (Hebrews 5.12-14). Spiritual gifts provide the specialized ability for the ministry of each believer (Romans 12.3-8; 1 Corinthians 12; 1 Peter 4.10-11). In order for a ministry to be effective, it must be carried out in conjunction with the love spectrum (1 Corinthians 13.1-7) which is related to the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5.22-23). We participate in the blessings of ministry when we serve with divine love (1 Corinthians 13.1-7) and walk by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5.16, 22-23).
4. **Missions** is the spiritual ministry that takes the gospel to people who live in geographical regions (foreign missions or home missions) where the gospel is not accurately proclaimed; "regions beyond" were Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 10.16 (Matthew 28.19-20; Acts 1.8; Romans 1.14-16; Acts 13-28 is Luke's record of the missionary trips; Ephesians 4.11-16). The purpose of missions is
 1. To proclaim the good news that eternal salvation is a free gift to all who will believe in Jesus Christ as Savior,
 2. To teach the new believers Bible doctrine for spiritual growth and ministry,
 3. To help the indigenous believers to form a local church, select a pastor-teacher and deacons, and begin to grow and serve Christ. The missionary will then repeat this process with other people in the same, similar, or different regions. Missionaries ought to revisit the new churches on occasion in order to encourage and teach the believers until they are self-sufficient. Missionaries should be sent out from a home local church and be supported by that church and possibly by other churches in that geographical area. Missionaries ought to return to their own local church to report on their ministry and to be taught and further equipped by the pastor-teacher. A missionary ought to have one of the public communication spiritual gifts: evangelist, teacher, or pastor-teacher. Missionaries must be biblically grounded in all Bible doctrine, but especially the gospel, grace, faith, and basic Christian life doctrines (occupation with Christ, knowledge of the Word, faith-rest, confession of sin, spirituality, prayer, and ministry).
5. **Witness by teaching** the Bible means to communicate God's Word to the listener so that the listener can understand the message and choose to believe or reject it. To better communicate, one ought to take into account the listener's frame of reference. Stephen, in Acts 7, teaches us the value of presenting the biblical message within the listeners' frame of reference and within an historical

context. He began with the origin of the Hebrew nation, God's choosing of Abraham. By the time Stephen had finished, the audience could not argue with him; the well-known history had convicted them. Paul witnessed for Christ to the Athenian philosophers by presenting truths from God's Word. When he spoke with them about Christ, he took into account their own understanding about the gods (Acts 17.16-33). Apollos, in Corinth, used the Word to demonstrate to Jews that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18.28). We often assume too much on the part of our audience: we need to make sure they understand the context or flow of history and doctrine so that they become convinced of the truth of the message; we need to make sure that we relate the truth to their understanding or frame of reference; we also need to make sure that we use Scripture when we witness about Christ and teach Christian life truth.

Acts 19, Third Trip (Ephesus)

Tod Kennedy, October 8, 2000

I. Main points of application or "So what?" from Acts 19

1. Defend the biblical faith against those who are willing to discuss biblical topics, even though they may be critical of biblical truth. Ask questions, answer questions, explain Scripture, and challenge them to examine the evidence.
2. Do not try to speak in tongues, to prophecy, to heal people, or to perform miracles. Those spiritual gifts ceased by the end of the first century. God does heal and work miracles today, but your part in miracles and healing is now limited to prayer, medicine, and help.
3. Do not seek a special baptism of the Holy Spirit. If you have believed in Christ as your Savior, you have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the sign of the church age believer. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit has regenerated you, baptized you into the body of Christ, indwelt you, sealed you, and given you a spiritual gift.
4. Avoid anything that draws power and influence from demons. Demon magic is magic performed through the ability of demons. It is prominent in various times and locations in the world.
5. People often reject the gospel and the one witnessing about the gospel. Do not be surprised, and do not take this rejection personally. Unless you are confusing the gospel or you are witnessing ungraciously, they are rejecting God, not you.

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 19.1-7. On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) God moved past the dispensation of Israel into the dispensation of the church. Not everyone knew this yet. Paul, in the spring of AD 53, went to Ephesus where he found some Old Testament believers who had learned under the ministry of John the Baptist; they were still living under the Old Testament or age of Israel way of life. These had believed in Jesus as their Messiah and so possessed eternal life, yet Paul found that they were unaware of the church age and its doctrine. The baptism of the Holy Spirit and indwelling of the Holy Spirit were especially unique to the church age. Paul, a church age apostle, instructed them in these doctrines and then baptized them in water (believer's baptism). Since they were unaware of the change from God especially working through Israel (the age of Israel) to God especially working through the church (the church age), Paul gave them the Holy Spirit through laying his hands on them. The recipients spoke in tongues and prophesied. By giving the use of the supernatural temporary gift of tongues to those who had just received the Holy Spirit, God publicly demonstrated the coming of the Holy Spirit and the change of divine administration. The gift of prophecy provided instruction for the new believers. Luke records this phenomenon—the change from Israel to the church marked by the universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit in all church age believers and that indwelling originally demonstrated by the supernatural temporary spiritual gift of tongues—four times in Acts: Acts 2

records the coming of the Holy Spirit witnessed by Jews; Acts 8 records the coming of the Holy Spirit to Samaritans, and Peter and John reported back to Jews in Jerusalem; Acts 10 records the coming of the Holy Spirit to Gentiles witnessed by Jews; Acts 19 records the coming of the Holy Spirit to Old Testament believers who were uninformed about the church age and its distinctions. The gift of tongues was a first century spiritual gift. God does not give this gift today. Its purpose was to dramatically notify Jews (tongues was a sign gift) that God was now judging them because they had rejected his word delivered through his prophets and his Messiah, and that God was making a new body consisting of believing Jews and Gentiles called the church.

2. Acts 19.8-9. After this, Paul witnessed and taught in the synagogue at Ephesus for three months. His subject was the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is God's rule over his creation. It has at least two aspects: the universal kingdom includes all creation; the theocratic (God rules through his appointed one) or mediatorial (mediator between God and man) kingdom includes God's redemptive plan through Israel. Paul, in Acts 19, spoke about both aspects of God's kingdom. He wanted mankind to become willing members of God's kingdom by faith in God's king and Savior, Jesus Christ. Paul explained the Scriptures, answered questions, questioned the listeners, gave proofs, and challenged his listeners ("reasoning and persuading"). "Reasoning" is *dial egomai*, present middle participle, masculine nominative singular, circumstantial participle of manner, to discuss, to argue, to speak before people (19,8). "Persuading" is *peiqw*, present active participle, masculine nominative singular, circumstantial participle of manner, to convince, persuade, appeal to, win over (19,8). People made choices for or against what Paul said. Some who rejected the Paul's message became very antagonistic to him. This resulted in unreasoning and emotional attacks. This often happens when one rejects God's message but is unable to demonstrate that God's message is untrue. Paul, in Ephesians 4.17-19, describes what happens to the one who persists in rejecting God's message—he hardens himself against God and forms scar tissue on his soul. At this point Paul had enough of the opposition. He moved his Bible classes to a school run by Tyrannus where he conducted classes for two years, "Reasoning daily." "Reasoning" is *dial egomai*, present middle participle, masculine nominative singular, circumstantial participle of manner, to discuss, to argue, to speak before people (19,9). From Paul's Bible classes the gospel and Bible doctrine spread throughout the Roman province of Asia.
3. Acts 19.11-17. God gave Paul the temporary sign gifts of healing (*ijama* healing 1 Corinthians 12.28) and miracles (1 Corinthians 12.28, *dunami* ~ might, power, strength, miracle). The purpose of these gifts was to authenticate his ministry and message about Jesus Christ; the primary purpose was not to cure physical or social ills (Hebrews 2.3-4, 1 Corinthians 13.8-11, 2 Corinthians 12.12, and Romans 15.18-19). Sometimes physical and mental disease was caused by demon activity; in these cases Paul would cast out the demon and the person would return to normal (19.12). Jewish exorcists tried to copy Paul. One group of seven brothers received the shock of their life. A demon talked back to them and then attacked them. The demon knew Jesus and Paul, but these brothers had no divine authority. The news of this incident spread throughout the city so that people gained an awesome fear of Paul and his workers and Jesus' name gained great honor. The temporary sign gifts had served their purpose.
4. Acts 19.18-20. The Lord used the Bible teaching of Paul and others to change the values and standards of new believers so as to bring them in line with God's standards. Demon-influenced magic was the most prominent practice that began to stop. The magic was a mixture of spells written on scrolls. Some are now in famous museums. "Ephesian Scripts" was a name given to magic scrolls because Ephesus was especially known for magic. Christians who had dabbled in this form of demonism burned their books of magic spells. Believers replaced this magic with the reality of the Word of God.
5. Acts 19.21-22. By this time, Paul had decided to go to Jerusalem and, after Jerusalem, to Rome, but first he had to revisit Macedonia and Achaia. Jerusalem would be the start of four years of imprisonment for Paul. Did he make the right choice? Regardless, God brought good out of this

imprisonment. He would write Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. He would witness to Nero's household. He would teach, strengthen, and encourage many believers.

6. Acts 19.23-34. The ancient world had an openly idolatrous worldview. Ephesus had a very famous temple, the temple of Artemis, the moon goddess and the goddess of hunting (Diana is the Roman name). Idolatrous people needed idols and someone to make the idols. The gospel taught that there is one true God. When that message got around and when people believed the gospel, those who earned their living by making idols tended to get nervous. Paul commended the Thessalonians because they had turned to God from idols (1 Thessalonians 1.10). Demetrius was a silversmith in Ephesus. He got together the local silversmiths in order to beat back the loss of business. His argument was twofold: we will lose money and Ephesus will lose her tourist trade. The usual riot erupted; they probably could not find Paul, so they grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, two of Paul's friends (19.29), and took them to the assembly. The assembly was out of control: emotions and false accusations ran rampant. It was even unsafe for Paul to go to the assembly. Jews tried to distance themselves from Paul by trying to have Alexander, a Jew, renounce Paul, but Alexander was shouted down.
7. Acts 19.35-41. Finally the town clerk (secretary, clerk, a title of a high official in Ephesus), the highest official in Ephesus and the link between the city government and the Roman provincial government, was able to quiet the crowd. Ephesus was the capital of the senatorial province of Asia and Rome would not stand for such riotous activity. The official made four points: Artemis is great and these men cannot harm her (35-37), the silversmiths could meet with the provincial governor at a regular assembly (38), or they could wait for the gathering of the civic assembly (19.39), but whatever they do, Rome will punish the city if this riotous activity continues (40-41).

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. **Apologetics** is the biblical and reasoned defense of the biblical faith. God gives believers many opportunities to give evidence to others that what we believe is true. We talk with people about the evidence for the existence and nature of God, Jesus Christ—his life and times, physical resurrection, the reliability of the Bible, Christianity and pagan myths, the origin of the universe and of man, miracles, salvation by faith alone in Christ alone, biblical and non-biblical worldviews, and other doctrines of the Word of God. When we answer the critic's questions, explain why we believe what we believe, and challenge them to consider what the Bible says, we are not only evangelizing and teaching, we are also practicing apologetics. The word "defense" comes from the Greek word *apologia* "a speech of defense or reply." The writers of the New Testament use the word eight times—Acts 22.1; 25.16; 1 Corinthians 9.6; 2 Corinthians 7.11; Philippians 1.7 and 17; 2 Timothy 4.16, and 1 Peter 3.15. Peter tells us to be ready to give a defense for the hope that is in us: "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3.15). Paul had an apologetics ministry in Athens and in Ephesus. In Athens he spoke with Jews, God-fearing Gentiles, and Greek philosophers: "reasoning [*dial egomai*, to discuss, converse, preach] in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place [Acts 17.17].... they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, 'May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?' [Acts 17.19]." In Ephesus he spoke in the synagogue and in the school of Tyrannus: "reasoning [*dial egomai*, to discuss, converse, preach] and persuading [*peiqw*, to persuade, to have confidence] them about the kingdom of God [Acts 19.8]....reasoning [*dial egomai*, to discuss, converse, preach] daily in the school of Tyrannus [Acts 19.9]." Apollos was using apologetics when he discussed the faith with some Jews in Corinth: "for he powerfully refuted [*diakatel egcomai*, refute completely] the Jews in public, demonstrating [*epideiknumi*, demonstrate, show, point out] by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18.28). Paul wrote from a Roman prison that he had a ministry of "defense [*apologia*] and confirmation of the gospel" (Philippians 1.7) and "I am appointed for the defense [*apologia*] of the gospel" (Philippians 1.16). Paul also instructed Titus that the elders-overseers-pastor-teachers should "be able...to refute

[ε]εγcw, expose, convince, correct] those who contradict” sound doctrine (Titus 1.9). Luke (Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1-3) and Paul (1 Corinthians 15) used evidence to give others a reason to consider that Jesus Christ is the only Savior. Jude interrupted a letter about our salvation through Christ and instead wrote to encourage believers to earnestly contend [εpagwnizomai, to contend, to fight] for the faith: “I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Then in Jude 22-23, he made it clear that there are some who have doubts about the Word of God. We ought to have mercy on them, which includes teaching, answering questions, and challenging them so that they might grow strong in the biblical faith. Apologetics is a part of witnessing, teaching, and preaching God’s word. Apologetics is doing what God said to do. Apologetics is giving evidence that “the Word of God is living and powerful” (Hebrews 4.12). We are all called upon to “always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” and “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (1 Peter 3.15; Jude 3).

2. **Baptism with the Holy Spirit** is the act by which the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ the moment he believes, and by this indwelling God identifies and unites that believer with Christ and his spiritual body, the church (1 Corinthians 12.13). One cannot be a believer and in the church apart from the baptism of the Holy Spirit; the Corinthian believers, with all of their spiritual failures, had been baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 11.15-18; 1 Corinthians 12.13; Ephesians 1.22-23; Romans 8.9). The baptism of the Holy Spirit provides the basis for Christian living, because the baptism of the Holy Spirit identifies each believer with Christ in Christ’s death to sin and in Christ’s new resurrection kind of life (Romans 6.1-11) and because the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the time when the Holy Spirit comes to indwell the believer in Christ (Acts 11.15-18). Jesus prophesied the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Matthew 3.11, Mark 1.8, Luke 3.16, John 1.33, and Acts 1.5. Jesus said, in Acts 1.5, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was future to his ascension. It was therefore not a part of the age of Israel, but was the fundamental and basic sign of the church age. The baptism of the Holy Spirit first occurred in Acts 2.1-4 with Jews. God later proved that everyone who believes in Christ will be baptized with the Holy Spirit when he visibly gave the baptism of the Holy Spirit to Samaritans in Acts 8.12-17, to Gentiles in Acts 10.43-48, and to Old Testament believers in Acts 19.1-6. Luke wrote in Acts 10 that, while Peter was preaching to Jews and Gentiles at Cornelius’ house in Caesarea, Peter and his audience witnessed the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Gentiles who believed the gospel (Acts 10.44-47). Shortly after, Peter went to Jerusalem where Jewish believers criticized him for eating with those Gentiles. He explained to them what had happened when the Gentiles believed the gospel that he delivered; Peter said that he saw the Gentiles being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Peter then explained that this baptism was exactly what Christ had predicted when he spoke to his disciples before his ascension (Acts 1.5 and Acts 11.15-18). The baptism of the Holy Spirit is something that God does for each believer in Christ; it is not something that is felt; it occurs at the time a person believes in Christ; it is supernatural; it cannot be improved upon; it is complete and perfect when it happens; it is not now evidenced by signs, though several times in the young church it was evidenced by signs in order to confirm that the Holy Spirit was given to every church age believer in Christ; it is revealed only by the Word of God; it is the basis for the supernatural Christian life.
3. **Tent-making** (skhnopoiol’) was Paul’s money-making occupation while he witnessed for Christ and taught the Word of God (Acts 18.3-5). He did this in order to support himself when the churches did not support him. Even though those who witness about Christ and teach the Word of God have the God-given right to receive support from those who benefit from their ministry (1 Corinthians 9.6-14 and Galatians 6.6), there are times when believers will not provide support or are unable to provide that support (Philippians 4.13-17); tent-making then becomes necessary. There are other times when taking support would confuse the issue of God’s free gift of salvation (1 Corinthians 9.15-19); when taking support does confuse grace, Christ’s servant ought to graciously refuse support and take up tent-making while continuing to preach the Word. Tent-making in order to support oneself in the

ministry was, and still is, at times necessary and very helpful; there are advantages, though, to having the freedom to study, teach, and shepherd the flock without the need to “make tents.”

4. **Tongues** is one of the temporary spiritual gifts; it is the ability to speak in a known human language that the speaker had not learned. The principle of temporary spiritual gifts is found in Hebrews 2.3-4, 1 Corinthians 13.8-11, 2 Corinthians 12.12, and Romans 15.18-19. The Greek word for “tongue” is *glwssa*, which means the tongue or a language (Acts 2.3, 4, 11; 10.46; 19.6; 1 Corinthians 12.10, 28, 30; 13.1, 8; 14.2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 39). The purpose of the gift of tongues was to dramatically notify Jews (tongues was a sign gift) that God was now judging them because they had rejected his word delivered through his prophets and his Messiah (Isaiah 28.11-13; 1 Corinthians 14.18-22). Israel was judged and dispersed between May 67 and May 73 AD; this was the administration of the fifth cycle of divine discipline promised by God through Moses. Moses described the five cycles, which were increasingly severe divine judgments on Israel, in Leviticus 26.14-39; the fifth cycle is found in Leviticus 26.27-39. God fulfilled the fifth cycle judgment and set aside Israel due to her rejection of his Word and his Messiah. The gift of tongues ceased when the purpose had been accomplished (1 Corinthians 13.8-11).

Acts 20, Third Trip (Miletus)

Tod Kennedy, October 22, 2000

I. Main points of application or “So what?” from Acts 20

1. Israel had rituals. The church has two rituals, the Lord’s Table and water baptism. Do they mean anything to you?
2. Take time to reflect on, to think through, and pray about the biblical faith and what your heavenly Father wants you to do in service to him.
3. Listen to, learn from, and apply the teaching, encouragement, and spiritual exhortation from your pastor-teacher.
4. Pastor-teachers: your-God given job is to teach the word of God and shepherd or pastor the flock-congregation that God has given to you. That is your divine duty.
5. Pastor-teachers: reject the temptation to covet material possessions; do not make the focus of ministry material gain. If necessary “make tents” so you can support yourself and help others.
6. Conferences for pastor-teachers are a good thing to have. They provide teaching, warning, encouragement, vision for ministry, and build the spiritual camaraderie.

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 20.1-5. After the riot in Ephesus, Paul and his missionary team traveled west through Macedonia and into Greece. The major cities on his Macedonian itinerary were Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. The cities of Greece that Paul spent time in were Athens and Corinth. After Paul taught about God’s grace for three months in Greece, the Jews had enough of grace; they wanted him silenced. God made the plot known to Paul and guided him west by a different route. As a result, Paul set out for Syria by way of Macedonia. Recall that each of his missionary trips had begun in Antioch of Syria. He first traveled through Macedonia and then on to Troas. Luke notes the home cities of some of their team members: Sopater of Berea and Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica in Macedonia; Gaius and Timothy of Derbe in Galatia; and Tychicus and Trophimus, possibly of Ephesus of Asia. Paul and Luke sent these ahead to wait at Troas. Throughout Paul’s ministry he had certain men whom he taught and trained to help him in the ministry. Pastors should do the same; they should teach and prepare men to help in the ministry, and be ready to carry on after them.

2. Acts 20.6. Paul stayed in Philippi during the feast of Unleavened Bread. This was a seven day Jewish festival that began the day after the Passover and lasted from Nisan 15-21. The Jewish month, Nisan, was the same as March 15 to April 15. The mention of the feast of Unleavened Bread was Luke's way of dating the visit; it was not a statement that the church should observe the Jewish feasts. The feasts had taught spiritual truth to the Jews. We in the church learn from the feasts but do not observe them. Passover and Unleavened Bread were one unit; the Passover marked the redemptive sacrifice, and Unleavened Bread marked the feast following the sacrifice. Passover commemorated and taught redemption by God; Unleavened Bread commemorated the separation from Egypt under God's direction and protection and taught separation from the past to a new life with the Lord. From Philippi, Paul and Luke sailed to Troas, where they remained a week. Troas was a Roman colony located near Homer's ancient city of Troy, the site of the Trojan War.
3. Acts 20.7-13. Three things stand out from Paul's stay in Troas: The desire for Bible teaching by the believers, Paul's long Bible class, and the miraculous resuscitation of Eutychus. Believers gathered for fellowship—to eat and possibly to observe the Lord's table—and to listen to Paul the apostle. They crowded into a third floor room that was lighted by oil lamps. Paul continued to talk to them, probably about his missionary trip and Bible doctrine that they needed to know. As the hours passed, the room temperature rose. The crowd of believers did not complain; they wanted to hear God's message through Paul. Eutychus fell asleep and fell three stories; the fall killed him. Paul still possessed the gift of miracles and brought Eutychus back to life. The Troas believers set a pattern for us: they were willing to assemble with each other and to listen to Paul teach the Word of God, not just for forty-five minutes or one hour, but for many hours. We often tend to put church assembly and Bible teaching at the bottom of our list. We might complain that today's pastors are not equal to Paul; that is true, but the center of the assembly is Christ and the Word of God. They do not change.
4. Acts 20.13-16. Paul's group sailed for Assos, while he walked, intending to meet them and sail the rest of the homeward journey, a voyage that would take them to Chios, Samos, Miletus, Cos, Rhodes, Patara, and Tyre. Assos was thirty miles from Troas by sea—shorter by land. Paul probably needed to think and pray without the interruptions that go with traveling with a group who would have question after question for him. There is a time to talk and actively serve and a time to think and reflect. Talk and activity depend on the time to think and reflect; without that we will have little worthwhile to say and the activity will become busywork without value.
5. Acts 20.17. Paul had his heart set on reaching Jerusalem by Pentecost, so he did not go to Ephesus. Instead, when he reached Miletus, a prosperous city 36 miles south of Ephesus, he sent for the Ephesian pastors to come to him for a pastors' conference. These were the men whom Paul had boldly taught in the School of Tyrannus and elsewhere for three years (Acts 19.1-20.1; Acts 20.31). Compare Acts 20.17 and 28, Ephesians 4.11-12, Titus 1.5 and 7, and 1 Peter 5.1-2, and you will see that the pastor and teacher is the same person as the elder and as the bishop. The different words highlight different aspects of the pastor-teacher's ministry. Paul alerted the pastors to the dangers to them and their congregations because of the great spiritual battle they had joined.
6. Acts 20.18-36. The conference emphasized three topics: Paul's sacrificial ministry for them (Acts 20.18-21); Paul's resolve to continue his apostolic ministry even in the face of more tests, more misunderstandings, more criticism, more accusations, more pain, and more imprisonment (Acts 20.22-24); and Paul's message to the gathered pastors about their responsibilities as elders-bishops-pastors and teachers (Acts 20.25-35). No matter what the consequences, Paul had taught these men and other believers Bible doctrine; and to unbelievers—Jews and Greeks—he preached “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (20-21, 27). Repentance is the call to think about one's need for relationship with God and what to do about it; faith in Jesus Christ was the only way to gain eternal life and begin a relationship with God. When unbelievers repent, it does not mean that they have become believers. An unbeliever's repentance may hold off God's judgment or prepare him to listen more closely to the gospel. Even Paul was clear that repentance was not necessary to gain eternal life (Acts 16.31 and Ephesians 2.8-9). The Holy Spirit warned Paul about what was in store for him if he went to Jerusalem, but Paul did not change his resolve (22-24). Paul

taught the pastors to be on guard because many people, even believers from their own churches and other pastors, will try to distract and break up the churches by teaching false doctrine (28-30). He then entrusted them to God and God's gracious word, the only sources for spiritual growth, protection, and future spiritual inheritance (32). He concluded by challenging them to reject the temptation to covet material possessions; they should not make the focus of ministry material gain. If necessary "make tents" ("these hands...working hard" 34-35) so they can support themselves and help others.

7. Acts 20.36-38. Before Paul sailed away, they all got on their knees and prayed together. It was an emotional farewell. They thought that this was the last time they would be together.

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. **Feasts of Israel** (Biblical feasts, Leviticus 23) were five in Number. **1. The Passover and Unleavened Bread** were the first of the three great annual feasts (Exodus 12.1-28; 23.5; Leviticus 23.4-8; Numbers 28.16-25; Deuteronomy 16.1-8). The Passover commemorated God's deliverance from the tenth plague, which brought the death of the firstborn, and the Exodus. It was a spring festival, the first festival of the religious calendar, and occurred on Nisan 14. Nisan was the first month of the religious calendar and was equivalent to March-April. *The Passover taught redemption by God.* The Feast of Unleavened Bread was a seven day festival that began the day after the Passover and lasted from Nisan 15-21. Passover and Unleavened Bread were one unit; the Passover marked the sacrifice, and Unleavened Bread marked the feast following the sacrifice. Unleavened Bread commemorated the separation from Egypt under God's direction and protection. *Unleavened Bread taught separation from the past to a new life with the Lord.* **2. Pentecost**, celebrated in May-June, was the second great annual feast (Exodus 23.16; 34.22; Leviticus 23.15-16; Numbers 28.26; Deuteronomy 16.10). It was also called the feast of Weeks (Exodus 34.22; Deuteronomy 16.10, 16), the feast of Harvest (Exodus 23.16) and "the day of first fruits" (Numbers 28.26). Israel observed Pentecost seven weeks plus 1 day (50 days, Pentecost) after the Nisan 16 wave offering of the barley sheaf during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Pentecost linked the spring barley harvest to the early summer wheat harvest. *Pentecost stressed thanksgiving and taught that God provides the necessities for life for Israel.* **3. Trumpets** occurred in the fall, during Tishri, September-October, the seventh religious month and the first civil month (Leviticus 23.23-25; Numbers 29.1-6). It marked the beginning of the civil year, like our New Years Day. Israel blew trumpets on the first day of every month (Numbers 10.1, 10), but this trumpet blast was on the first day of the seventh religious month or first of the civil month. The trumpet blasts symbolically called on the Lord to bless Israel (Numbers 10.10). *Trumpets called the Lord's attention to Israel's need of His blessing; it may have prepared for the Day of Atonement, besides opening the civil year.* **4. The Day of Atonement** occurred on the 10th day of Tishri, the seventh religious month, September-October (Leviticus 16; 23.26-32; Exodus 30.10-30; Numbers 29.7-11). This was the most important annual festival. The high priest entered the holy of holies. The scapegoat was sent into the wilderness, signifying the sending away of the people's sins. *The Day of Atonement taught that God graciously forgives all sin.* **5. The Feast of Booths or Tabernacles** was the third great annual feast (Leviticus 23.33-43; Numbers 29.12-39; Deuteronomy 16.13; Nehemiah 8.18; John 7.2, 37). It occurred during Tishri 15-21, the seventh religious month, September-October. The name comes from the fact that Israel was to live seven days in temporary booths that they made out of boughs. This commemorated that God took care of Israel during the exodus, during which they did not have permanent houses. *Booths taught that God gives fatherly care and protection.* In summary: the Passover taught redemption by God, and Unleavened Bread taught separation from the past to a new life with the Lord; Pentecost stressed thanksgiving and taught that God provides the necessities for life for Israel; Trumpets opened the civil year and called the Lord's attention to Israel's need of His blessing, and it may have prepared for the Day of Atonement; The Day of Atonement taught that God graciously forgives all sin; and Booths taught that God gives fatherly care and protection.

2. **Pastor and teacher** or pastor-teacher is the man gifted by God to equip believers for ministry and for the edification of the church (Ephesians 4.11-14). We often shorten the title to pastor, but that includes the teaching part of the job. God gives each pastor-teacher his own flock or local church congregation to teach and to shepherd (Acts 20.28; 1 Peter 5.1-4). The general profile indicates that he is to study the Word of God and to authoritatively teach the Word of God for spiritual growth and application, and to lead, encourage, and protect his own God-given flock. This will result in believers who are able to minister and participate in the build up of the body of Christ and therefore represent God on earth (Ephesians 4.11-14; Acts 20.17 and 28; Romans 12.7; 2 Timothy 2.15; Titus 2.15; 1 Peter 4.11-12; 1 Peter 5.1-4). There are three terms that refer to the pastor-teacher: "Pastor and teacher" (ποιμνὴ καὶ διδασκαλοῦ), which can also be written as pastor-teacher, is the working title for the man God gifts to teach, encourage, lead, and protect his flock or congregation. Pastor emphasizes leadership, encouragement, care for, protection, correction. Teacher emphasizes communication and instruction of the Word of God. Pastor-teacher emphasizes the person and ministries that result from the gifts. The pastor-teacher is also the overseer and elder (Ephesians 4.11; Acts 20.17 and 28). The title "overseer" (ἐπίσκοπος~, guardian, superintendent) is an official title emphasizing the supervisory activity (1 Timothy 3.2; Titus 1.7). The title "elder" (πρεσβυτέρος~, elder, older man) is an official title emphasizing the rank. Both refer to the pastor-teacher as the leader, and both carry authority (1 Timothy 5.17; Titus 1.5; 1 Peter 5.1-4). The pastor-teacher seems to be multi-gifted in order to perform God's function. The gifts most apparent are teaching, leadership, encouragement, and administration (Acts 20.28; Ephesians 4.11-12). God gives each pastor-teacher a specific flock or congregation to teach and to shepherd (Acts 20.28; 1 Peter 5.2-3). Along with this God-given responsibility, God also gives the pastor-teacher the spiritual authority to serve his own congregation. This authority has been delegated from God through the Holy Spirit and the Bible (Ephesians 4.11-16; Acts 20.17-28; 1 Peter 5.1-4; 1 Timothy 5.17; Hebrews 13.17). The pastor-teacher must be a servant and must not abuse his authority (Matthew 20.25-28; John 13.15-17; 1 Pet 5.3). In human terms he is a general and a soldier, and a coach and a player. The character of the overseer (pastor-teacher) must be good, but it does not indicate that spiritual leaders are more holy than anyone else. All possess sin natures, all have weaknesses, and all fail (1 Timothy 3.2-7, Titus 1.5-9, and 1 Peter 5.1-3). The pastor-teacher must please the Lord, not people; God wants him to equip his congregation (Galatians 1.10; 1 Thessalonians 2.4-6; Ephesians 4.11-12; Titus 2.15). In day to day life the practice of the pastor-teacher is to study the Bible, from the original languages if possible, and to communicate the content for application, to lead and encourage the church, and to protect the congregation from bad doctrine and disruptive influences in the church (Acts 20.28-31; Ephesians 4.11-12; Philippians 1.25; 2 Timothy 2.15; 4.2).

Acts 21, Third Trip (Jerusalem Arrest)
 Tod Kennedy, April 29, May 6, 2001, May 13, 2001

I. Main points of application or "So what?" from Acts 21

1. *Christian camaraderie* is a wonderful blessing that God has given believers who share the same faith—that is, believe, hold, and apply the same Bible doctrine. Preserve it, strengthen it, and enjoy this camaraderie.
2. *God guides us* into his will. Know and be willing to do his will. The main ways that God guides us are through his word, through the Holy Spirit compelling us within our soul and spirit, and through events and circumstances that coordinate with his word and his Spirit.
3. God does not always guide us away from trouble. We often have *hard choices to make* about jobs, school, Christian service, rejection by others, and even personal danger because we, like Paul, live in a world that is at war with God. Like Paul, we should push ahead, once we know God's will, even though pressures lay ahead.

4. *Each of us must apply the Bible doctrine* that we know and listen to the guiding from the Holy Spirit. We will at times ask for the wisdom of others; but, ultimately we must make our decisions before the Lord and be willing to take the consequences.
5. *Pray for other believers* even if they do not serve in exactly the same way that we would if we had their job. Pray for their Christian lives, their ministries, and for God to use them and bless them.
6. *Hospitality* is a cordial and generous attitude toward and treatment of Christian guests. It comes from the gracious attitude of believers to believers. What about us? Do we resent the opportunities to show hospitality to other believers? Why not show hospitality to believers; we like to receive it and God likes us to show it.
7. *Legalism* can ignite pride and emotion. This combination can destroy people, churches, and service.
8. Paul gave us the *principles of spiritual liberty*, love, sacrifice, profit, restoration, and burden bearing to guide us in doubtful circumstances. How well do we apply them?
9. *We cannot always say* whether another person has disobeyed God's will about the way he goes about his own ministry. In fact, that is not our responsibility. We ought to think graciously toward him even when he disagrees with our ministry, and not only that, we continue to pray for and encourage him. He is responsible to God to gain and to apply Bible doctrine.

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 21.1-8. In the spring of A.D. 57 Paul said good-bye to his friends at Miletus and began the trip back to Jerusalem. He made short stops at Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Tyre, Ptolemais, and Caesarea, before his final leg to Jerusalem. He traveled southwest; most of the trip was by ship—from Miletus to Caesarea. Paul made a seven day visit with believers in the Phoenician port of Tyre, which was probably evangelized because Stephen was martyred; he also stopped at the Roman colony of Ptolemais for one day, and at Caesarea (some days). Through these stops and visits with believers, Luke impressed the readers that Christianity had spread to many towns and cities—there were believers everywhere. He also demonstrated for us the Christian camaraderie that believers possess, even when they are from different backgrounds and geographical regions. Adherence to the common faith produces this camaraderie—in the past and right now. Christian camaraderie is the good will, rapport, comradeship among believers that must first begin with fellowship with God, learning and believing the same basic Christian doctrine, and living or applying this doctrine by faith. Growing out of this fellowship with God, believers love each other, encourage each other, and apply Bible doctrine in their lives with each other. What we then have is a rapport and comradeship based the same faith that each of us share. Paul emphasized this to the Philippians in Philippians 2.1-4.
2. Acts 2.9-12. While at Caesarea, Paul stayed in the home of Philip, one of the table-servers of Acts 6 and the evangelist of Acts 8 of some twenty years earlier. At this time, Agabus, the prophet whom Paul had met at Antioch in Acts 11.27-28 and who had predicted the famine that occurred in AD 46, visited Paul. He prophesied by what he said and by his one man drama that Paul would be arrested in Jerusalem and be imprisoned by the Gentiles. Agabus did not change Paul's mind about going to Jerusalem; Paul was resolved to go (Acts 19.21). The Holy Spirit had revealed to Agabus what was to happen to Paul. Was this God telling Paul that God did not want him to go to Jerusalem? Or, was the prophet simply indicating that which was to happen if and when Paul went to Jerusalem, and God wanted Paul to make his own choice. Paul's friends and missionary team even tried to talk him out of going to Jerusalem. They loved Paul. They had emotional attachments to Paul, so it was very natural that they did not want to thrust him into danger. We act this same way toward those we know well and work with. We pray, "Use them in your service, Lord, but don't sent them to a dangerous place." Instead, pray for their Christian lives, their ministries, and for God to use them and bless them
3. Acts 21.13-14. Paul answered that he was going to go to Jerusalem no matter what lay ahead. He was ready to be imprisoned and even to die "for the name of the Lord Jesus" (21.13). Paul's friends

accepted Paul's decision and entrusted him to the Lord: "The will of the Lord be done!" What we learn from this incident is that God very definitely revealed to Paul what was to happen, but this revelation was not to keep him from going to Jerusalem, but to both inform Paul about what was ahead and to test his willingness to stay with the ministry (Acts 16.6; 20.22-24; 23.11). People debate whether Paul should have gone on to Jerusalem. It appears that Paul made the right choice; he certainly wanted to do God's will, even if there was promised danger. We also have hard choices to make about jobs, school, Christian service, rejection by others, and even personal danger because we, like Paul, live in a world that is at war with God. The battle is on three fronts: the angelic conflict (Ephesians 3.10 and 6.10-18), the non-biblical worldview (Jude 3; 1 John 2.15-17), and the battle within ourselves with our sinful nature (Romans 7.25; Galatians 5.16-17). Like Paul, we should push ahead, once we know God's will, even though pressures lay ahead (Philippians 1.30; 1 Corinthians 9.24-27; Hebrews 12.1-2). Just because testing and trouble lies ahead, that does not mean that God does not want us to continue onward. To determine whether to go ahead or change course we need to think through the primary principles of divine guidance: The Word of God (2 Timothy 3.16-17; Hebrews 4.12), events or circumstances (Acts 11.11-15; Jude 3, 4), and the inner compulsion of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 9.16; Romans 8.14; Jude 3). Acts 11.1-17 and 10.1-35 and Jude 3 and 4 illustrate God guiding believers.

4. Acts 21.15-17. Paul's missionary team, along with some Caesarean disciples, left Caesarea for Jerusalem about sixty-four miles away. When they arrived they went to the house of Mnason, an early disciple (*arcaiw/maqth*) from Cyprus, possibly one of the 120 of Acts 1.15. Note the hospitality available to Paul wherever he went. Hospitality is a cordial and generous attitude toward and treatment of Christian guests. Paul and his team of spiritual soldiers received cordial and generous treatment; this treatment stemmed from the gracious attitude of believers to believers. What about us? Do we resent the opportunities to show hospitality to other believers? Why not show hospitality to believers; we like to receive it and God likes us to show it (Romans 12.13; Hebrews 13.2; 1 Peter 4.9).
5. Acts 21.18-26. The next day Paul and his fellow ministers met James, who was the half-brother of Jesus and the leader of the Jerusalem believers. Paul gave a complete report of his ministry with the Gentiles. The Jerusalem elders told Paul that there were many believing Jews and that most were very zealous of the Law of Moses. These had heard that Paul taught that the law was done away with in Christ (Paul's letter to the Galatian believers taught this). The question to Paul was, "What should we do? If they find out that you are here, there may be trouble. Prove to them that you have not forsaken the law." The case to demonstrate this was that four men were under a Nazirite vow; the Jerusalem elders wanted Paul to participate in the ritual purification and then pay the men's vow expenses to conclude the vow. Paul had to sort through grace and legalism, the principles of love and liberty, and how to please God and apply doctrine before people. What should he do? The elders seemed to think that he should demonstrate that he also kept the Law (Acts 21.25). Were they right? Did Paul keep the Law? Should he try to prove to others that he kept the Law? Did he want others to regulate their Christian lives around the law? The best that we can say is that the elders wanted to keep the "spiritual peace," but their emphasis on the law in the life of believers was wrong. Apparently to show that they had a precedent, the Jerusalem elders repeated the earlier recommendations for Gentile believers that they had formulated at the Jerusalem meeting, which Luke narrated in Acts 15. They, themselves, apparently did not understand that the law was completed at the cross. They should have read Galatians. The first three of the four recommendations were counter to Paul's teaching on spiritual freedom. Paul agreed to ceremonially purify himself, go into the temple, and pay for the sacrifices of the men completing the Nazirite vow. Paul gave us the principles of spiritual liberty, love, sacrifice, profit, restoration, and burden bearing to guide us in doubtful circumstances. How well did he apply those principles? How well do we apply them?
6. Acts 21.27-30. Some Asian Jews recognized Paul. They falsely accused him of speaking out against Jews, against Moses' law, and against the temple, and of bringing a Gentile, a believer named Trophimus of the city of Ephesus (Acts 20.4), into the temple are reserved only for Jews. Their

antagonism and legalism brought about their emotional revolt against Paul and his grace message. These accusations stirred up a riot; the crowd surged around Paul, dragged him out of the temple area, and began to beat him with intent to kill him. Notice how legalism sets people up to believe lies about grace oriented believers. Legalistic people tend to be very self-righteous and non-gracious towards grace believers. They attack those who do not perform exactly as they do. Paul also wrote of this in Galatians 4. Paul stated the principle in Galatians 4.29, “But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.” Legalism can ignite pride and emotion. This combination can destroy people, churches, and service. Our test is that we who say we understand grace do not treat legalists the way they treat grace believers.

- Acts 21.31-40. The Antonia Fortress (barracks, Acts 21.27) was attached to the northwest side of the temple. Claudius Lysias (Acts 23.26), the Roman commander (CIL IARCO", chiliarchos, commander of a thousand, 21.31) of this detachment of the Tenth Roman Legion stationed there to keep peace during the Jewish Passover, took his soldiers (speira, speira, body of soldiers, a cohort, 21.32) and centurions (ekatonarch", ekatonarches, centurion, commander of 100 men, 21.32) and rescued Paul. They chained Paul and tried to question him, but the crowd was out of control so they took Paul up the two flights of stairs to the barracks. Paul spoke up just before they went into the barracks. Paul spoke in Greek to the commander, who immediately found out that Paul was not the Egyptian assassin who claimed to be a prophet—still on the Roman wanted posters—and who had caused so much trouble in Jerusalem in AD 54. At that point the commander granted Paul’s request to speak to the riotous crowd from the barracks steps. Paul began his defense and spoke in Hebrew (Aramaic in this part of the world), which when the crowd heard, they quieted and paid attention.

Acts 22, Paul’s First Defense

Tod Kennedy, 17, 2001

I. Main points of application or “So what?” from Acts 12

- Do we who believe God, ask him, like Paul did after he believed in Christ, “What shall I do, Lord?” (Acts 9.6 and 22.10)
- Like Paul in Acts 22.14-15, God has given each of us a special ministry for him. Peter clearly speaks of this in 1 Peter 4.7-11. Paul wrote of this in Ephesians 2.10 and Philippians 1.27-28.
- Prepare yourself—especially through the local church—and so be ready, like Paul was, to give a reasoned and spirited defense of what you believe (Acts 22.1; 1 Peter 3.15; Jude 3; Ephesians 4.11-16).
- Put your preparation into practice throughout each day. Look for your own opportunities to speak for Christ. When you have an opportunity to tell another about your hope in Christ, use that opportunity. James taught this in James 2.14-26, and Paul taught in it Philippians 4.9.
- Paul needed prayer support while he was in Jerusalem. He asked, about three years later, in his letters to the Ephesians (6.18-20) and the Colossians (4.2-4), that we support, by prayer, him and those who witness to unbelievers. Do we consistently pray for others who serve the Lord?

II. Summary Outline

- Acts 22.1-2. Paul, after the Roman soldiers rescued him, began a reasoned and spirited defense or “apologia” of his faith to the Jewish mob—“brethren and fathers”—in the Aramaic language, the language of the Jews at that time.
- Acts 22.3-21. Paul’s defense took the form of an autobiographical sketch in which he traced his life from his physical birth in Tarsus of Cilicia to the first time the religious Jews ran him out of Jerusalem about three years after his salvation. Luke recorded Paul’s defense. Paul, in Acts 22.3-4, first spoke of his wonderful heritage. He was a Roman citizen by birth and a Pharisee by education and training. He studied under Raban Gamaliel the Elder. Paul, like much of unbelieving Israel

(Romans 10.2), had great zeal for God, but a zeal that was not according to knowledge. He then, in Acts 22.5-9, explained his Damascus road encounter with the Lord and his sudden realization that Jesus was the Lord and Messiah; he trusted Jesus as his Savior. In the third part of Paul's message, Acts 22.10-21, he explained that once he had accepted Jesus as his Messiah he asked, "What shall I do, Lord?" Everything that Paul had learned about the God of Israel and Israel's Messiah now became clear in the person of Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus is Lord God and Savior, so Paul's response was to serve him completely. God revealed Paul's new ministry to him through Ananias in the city of Damascus. Paul was to witness about the Righteous One, Jesus Christ, and witness especially to Gentiles.

3. Acts 22.22-23. At this point the Jews could no longer restrain their hatred of Paul and his gospel. Paul made two points that finally brought the crowd to its feet against him. He identified himself and the religious Jews with the death of that great martyr, Stephen, and then he had the nerve to say that God had commissioned him to witness to the Gentiles, which implied that Jews and Gentiles were equal before God through Jesus Christ, and that the law was not in any way necessary for this relationship with God.
4. Acts 22.24-26. The Roman commander had seen enough, though he could not understand Paul, since he spoke in Aramaic. He had his soldiers bring Paul into the barracks for scourging and questioning. The scourge was a murderous type of torture. A scourge had leather thongs attached to a wooden handle. The thongs had pieces of bone and metal attached. This torture would cripple or kill its victim. Just before the Romans began scourging Paul, he dropped a verbal bomb: he was a Roman citizen. That stopped the Romans in their tracks. Early Roman laws protected Roman citizens from undergoing this punishment. "By the Valerian and Porcian laws, passed at various times between 509 B.C. (the traditional date of the founding of the Roman Republic) and 195 B.C., Romans citizens were exempted from degrading forms of punishment and had certain valued rights established for them in relation to the law." (F.F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts, The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 340)
5. Acts 22.26-30. Once the commander learned that Paul was a Roman citizen by birth he had to release him from his chains. The commander then ordered the Sanhedrin to meet, to which he brought Paul. This was a religious matter and the Sanhedrin had to make any legitimate charges against Paul.

IV. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. Apologetics
2. Witnessing for Christ

Acts 23, Jerusalem conspiracy

Tod Kennedy, July 8, 2001

I. Main points of application or "So what?" from Acts 23

1. Paul was confident and courageous before the Sanhedrin. Like Paul, we can have spiritual courage because we know who we are (believer in Christ), we know what we believe (Bible doctrine), and we know what God wants us to do (Christian service) (Acts 23.1).
2. We can live with a good conscience like Paul did. He was not hypocritical or arrogant. He had a good conscience because he knew that he had been honest with God and with himself while he lived the Christian life (Acts 23.1).
3. We should try to understand the people to whom we witness and their motives. Paul knew the Pharisees and the Sadducees; he knew their beliefs and he used his understanding to better witness for Christ and to protect himself (Acts 23.6).
4. God has that knack of always coming to the rescue when we are ready to listen to him. The Lord Jesus rescued Paul from possible discouragement by reminding him of his mission and of his divine support (Acts 23.11).

5. We should rightly use our citizenship as we serve God. God has given us the divine institutions and the laws of civilization to help us. Paul certainly claimed his citizenship—for example, Acts 16.36-40 and 22.25-29—for his own protection, for the protection of other believers, and for the furtherance of the faith (Acts 23.17).
6. Once we are convinced that God is working in us and through us, we can continue to serve him and maintain an attitude of faith-rest, even when we suffer because we are Christians. When Paul's nephew told him about the assassination plot, Paul told the centurion and turned human work over to him, yet he trusted God to do the right thing (Acts 23.17).

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 23.1-5. Paul looked into the eyes of the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin and told them that his conscience was clear—he had followed God's instructions by preaching salvation through Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Naturally, the religious Jews struck out at Paul. After all, he preached that the one they had rejected and had crucified was their awaited Messiah and they were wrong in what they had done.
2. Acts 23.6-10. Paul understood the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Because he did, he was able to divide the Sanhedrin and use this to his own advantage. Note that he did not bend or compromise the truth. He spoke of the resurrection at just the right time. Paul was not just playing on the people; he realized the central biblical truth that both groups needed to know.
3. Acts 23.11. Jesus Christ knew that Paul was under great attack. He encouraged Paul when he appeared to him during the night and stood right next to him. Jesus was reminding Paul that he was Paul's defense. Just as a Roman guard had his duties to protect one charged to him, so the Lord had taken the responsibility to protect Paul.
4. Acts 23.12-21. Paul's nephew learned of a plot to assassinate the apostle. How he found out we do not know. We do not even know what he was doing in Jerusalem. Maybe Paul's nephew had followed in his uncle's footsteps and gone to Jerusalem from Tarsus in order to study at the university. Whatever was in the background, he had an affection for the apostle so that he told him of the plot. Once the plot was discovered, Paul introduced his nephew to a centurion who took him to the commander (CIL ARCO~ chilarchos, commander of a thousand).
5. Acts 23.22-32. The commander, Claudius Lysias, made the necessary arrangements to move Paul to Caesarea. He ordered 200 foot soldiers and 70 cavalymen to protect Paul on the 60 mile trip. The commander wrote the necessary letter to the governor, Antonius Felix, who ruled Judea from AD 52-60. Tacitus said of Felix, "He exercised the power of a king with the mind of a slave" (Histories v.9).
6. Acts 23.33-35. The soldiers turned Paul over to the custody of governor Felix. He was kept at Herod's Praetorium. Herod the Great had built this for his own residence; it contained jail cells. Paul had to wait until his accusers came so that there might be a hearing. The Jewish accusers were unsuccessful, but Paul ended up staying in Caesarea for two years because Paul would not pay a bribe to Felix and because Felix wanted to do a favor for the Jews.

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. Pharisees
2. Sadducees
3. Spiritual Courage

Acts 24, Caesarea Prison, Felix
 Tod Kennedy, July 29, 2001

I. Main points of application or “So what?” from Acts 24

1. We can ask this question about ourselves that we ask about Paul: How did Paul survive all these difficult situations and yet continue to have an inner contentment and to strive to accomplish God’s will? Paul would have answered that knew who he was in Christ, and he knew how to stay strong in Christ, and he knew his ultimate destiny in Christ.
2. Paul gained spiritual courage by believing and applying these three categories of Bible doctrine. He had the ability to face many different challenges because he acted on what he believed. We can be spiritually courageous in our difficult situations just like Paul was in his.

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 24.1-9. Ananias, the high priest from Jerusalem, who had just recently interrogated Paul, and a group of Jewish elders arrived at Caesarea, including their attorney, Tertullus. The attorney made three charges against Paul: political treason (Acts 24.5), religious heresy (24.5), and temple desecration (24.6). Tertullus claimed that Felix would see the truth in these charges and decide against Paul.
2. Acts 24.10-21. Paul stood up and made his own defense. He answered each charge. To the first charge he said that the time period involved was too short to have organized a political rebellion. Furthermore, there was absolutely no indication or evidence to support the charge (24.10-13). Paul admitted that he was a believer in Jesus Christ; his faith was in agreement with the Old Testament Law and Prophets. He, as they, believed in a future resurrection of the righteous and the wicked (24.14-16). As to the charge that he desecrated the temple, there was no truth to that. He had come to Jerusalem to deliver alms (money) that other Christians had sent to help out the struggling Jerusalem Christians. Besides that, Paul told of his visit to the temple, during which he had followed the correct procedure. The riot that eventually resulted was caused by Jews from Asia who were wrong when they claimed that Paul had brought a Gentile into the temple (24.17-19). Paul concluded his defense by reminding Felix that the Sanhedrin had not even charged Paul (24.20-21).
3. Acts 24.22-23. Felix put off making a decision. He would wait for commander Lysias to come from Jerusalem before he decided the case. Felix was somewhat familiar with Christianity because he had been governor of Judea and Samaria for six years and knew a little of what had been going on. In addition to that, his wife, Drusilla, was Jewish. Meanwhile, Paul was house arrest.
4. Acts 24.24-27. Paul ended up staying under house arrest in Caesarea for two years. During this time Paul told both Felix and Drusilla about Jesus Christ. Felix became a little frightened when Paul told him that in the future God will judge all mankind, but we have no biblical evidence that Felix or Drusilla ever believed the gospel even though Paul talked with Felix many times over the next two years. It turned out that Felix was hoping that Paul would pay him to gain his release. Paul did not. So, for that reason and also in order to gain favor with the Jews, Felix never closed Paul’s case.

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. Spiritual courage
1. Salvation from the penalty of sin, from the power of sin, and from the presence of sin.

Acts 25, Caesarea Prison, Festus

Tod Kennedy, September 9, 2001

I. Main points of application or "So what?" from Acts 25

3. Paul was a Roman citizen. He appealed to his rights as a Roman citizen many times to gain protection, freedom from unlawful imprisonment, and freedom to teach God's word. We are citizens of the United States of America, and as citizens we have many freedoms and guaranteed rights. We, like Paul, should obey our constitutional authorities, and also use our rights of citizenship.
4. Religious people tend to be self-righteous. They do not understand nor accept grace. Religious people emphasize themselves and what they do. Believers in Christ emphasize what God graciously has done and is doing in and through them. Do not be surprised that religious people criticize, malign, or attack you.
5. Good works are among the opportunities, privilege, and responsibilities that God gives to believers in Christ. God wants us live out what we believe resulting in good works. This is the normal Christian life. If we do not put our faith into action we are Christians and possess eternal life, but our faith is not active at the present time.

II. Summary Outline

5. Acts 25.1-5. In July of AD 59, Porcius Festus, who had just replaced Felix as governor of Judea, traveled to Jerusalem in order to meet with the leadership of the Jews. Paul had already spent two years in prison at Caesarea—June of 57 to July of 59. Festus' trip was necessary since Judea was populated by Jews and he wanted to gain favor with the Jews. The Jewish leaders, of course, lost no time in trying to persuade Festus that Paul was a criminal and ought to be tried in Jerusalem. Behind this request was a plan to assassinate Paul while he was being transported. Festus refused. He told them to send some influential men to Caesarea and there they could accuse Paul.
6. Acts 25.6-8. After about a week (8-10 days) Festus returned to Caesarea. Representatives of the Jewish Sanhedrin followed. Festus allowed the Jews to again voice their charges against Paul. The charges (25.8) were the same as had been presented to Felix: political treason (Acts 24.5), religious heresy (24.5), and temple desecration (24.6). As before, they had no proof and Paul soundly denied the charges.
7. Acts 25.9-12. Festus wanted to start off right with the Jews, so, even though there was no proof that Paul was guilty, he tried to get Paul to go to Jerusalem to stand trial before the Sanhedrin. This would make the Jews happy; it would also put Paul in harm's way. Festus was a novice when it came to dealing with the Jewish leaders and Paul was afraid that the Jews would sway Festus to their side. Paul took the best course available and refused to be tried at Jerusalem. He appealed to Caesar. This was the right of a Roman citizen. Roman citizens had long had the right to appeal to the people of Rome and to the emperor. By this time in history the two had merged since all power now resided with the emperor. These rights could be used at any time in the trial process. Romans had the added right to appeal a verdict before a judge or a tribune. Paul, as a Roman citizen and a Christian, took advantage of the Roman laws. Festus granted his request.
8. Acts 25.13-21. Herod Agrippa II was the son of Herod Agrippa, the ruler whom God struck down when the people said of him "the voice of a god and not of a man!" (Acts 12), and the great grandson of Herod the Great. This petty king was much more familiar with Jewish tradition and law, so when he came to pay his respects to the new governor Festus told him what was going on, with the hope that Agrippa could help him out of the dilemma.

- Acts 25.22-27. Agrippa wanted to hear what Paul had to say. The day after Agrippa arrived, Festus had a hearing at which Agrippa, Bernice, and other prominent men could hear what Paul had to say. Festus hoped to find something that he could write to the emperor when he sent Paul.

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

- Divine establishment and divine institutions.
- Faith and works in the Christian life.

Acts 26, Caesarea Prison, Agrippa

Tod Kennedy, October 28, 2001

I. Main points of application or “So what?” from Acts 26

- Combine God’s love and authority orientation, and humility will result. Paul was good at this (Acts 26.1-3).
- It is often helpful to relate the good news about Christ to the Old Testament predictions and develop the gospel theme through biblical history. This demonstrates that the Christian message is rooted in real history and is not a fanciful human message. Jesus (John 8), Peter (Acts 2 and 3), Stephen (Acts 7), Paul (Acts 13, 24, and 26), and others all said the Old Testament predicted Jesus as the Savior. Paul believed in Christ when he realized that Jesus was the Messiah of the Old Testament (Acts 26.14-16).
- Are you willing and able to clearly state God’s message before people of power and authority? Paul spoke to governors, kings, and the Roman emperor (Acts 26.22-23).
- God purpose does not end with our salvation from the penalty of sin. He has a plan for us; He puts us into service for him just like he did Paul (Acts 26.16-18 and Ephesians 2.10).
- Israel has a future—individual and national resurrection. God will keep his promises to Israel (Acts 26.6-7),
- The resurrection of Jesus matters. It proved that he is God, our Savior (Acts 26.14-16).
- Paul’s broad message was to repent, turn to God, and do good works (Acts 26.20). He called people to harmony with God and holy living. But, these were not requirements for eternal salvation. When the how of eternal salvation was the message, Paul said “Believe on the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved” (Acts 16.31; Acts 26.18; Romans 4.5; Ephesians 2.8-9).
- Christians are sanctified people—made acceptable to God—and as such we are forgiven people and heirs of God’s blessings (Acts 26.18).

II. Summary Outline

- Acts 26.1-3. Paul began his defense with the recognition of Agrippa’s authority and his knowledge of Jewish life. With Agrippa’s permission, Paul reasonably and passionately told his story. He knew that Agrippa was familiar with Jewish history and traditions.
- Acts 26. 4-11. Paul then moved into the second part of his defense, his pre-salvation life. He began by pointing out that as a youth he had lived among the Jewish people, both at Tarsus and in Jerusalem. Later on he became a Pharisee. Remember that he had been educated by Gamaliel: Acts 22:3, “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today.” If the Jews would speak up, they would confirm what Paul said. Paul gave a short digression in verses 6-8. The Old Testament taught that the Jews—all twelve tribes— had a future. That future included a future resurrection. He had mentioned this earlier in his defense before Felix (Acts 24.15-16). The God of Israel is quite able to raise the dead, so he asked the question, “Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead?” After his digression about the resurrection hope of

Israel he continued to note that he had, as a Pharisee, done everything that he could to stop the spread of Christianity. He got the proper authority from the chief priests and had believers arrested (10). He promoted the execution of Christians (10). He verbally attacked believers in the synagogues and elsewhere, even in cities outside of Judea (11).

3. Acts 26.12-15. Paul then moved to the time he believed in Christ as Savior. While Paul was on his way to Damascus (which is north of Jerusalem) to continue his assault on believers, Jesus appeared to him. Paul at first did not know that it was Jesus. He only knew that the Lord appeared to him. The Lord identified himself as Jesus and asked why Paul kept persecuting him. Paul had been persecuting Jesus by attacking believers and their recognition that Jesus was indeed God's Messiah. Up to this point Paul had rejected Jesus as being God's Messiah. At this point Paul believed that Jesus was God's Messiah and all that that meant. This was Paul's day of salvation from the penalty of sin. Paul later gave the way of salvation in Acts 16.31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." John 20. 30-31 is John the apostle's statement of the requirement for salvation: "That you may believe the Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."
4. Acts 26.16-18. The Lord Jesus did not end with granting Paul eternal life. He had a plan of spiritual service for Paul. At this point Paul told the court that Jesus gave him a job to do. Jesus appointed Paul as a minister (*uphretēth*" *huperetes*, under rower, servant) and a witness (*martu*" *martus*, witness) to Jesus Christ. Jesus would even give Paul more revelation to write—New Testament doctrine. He would use Paul to remove spiritual blindness about God's kingdom of light and Satan's kingdom of darkness so they may receive forgiveness and a spiritual inheritance—all by faith in Jesus. Furthermore, along the way, Jesus would deliver him any lasting attacks by the Jews and Gentiles. Paul would be able to finish his life for the Lord. Paul later confirmed, just before he was executed, that he had completed his course (2 Timothy 4.7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.").
5. Acts 26.19-21. Paul continues his defense by telling Agrippa and the court that he has been doing just that—witnessing to Jews and Gentiles that Jesus is the Messiah. Mankind should repent and turn to God. Repentance is not part of the salvation requirement. Paul and others use repentance for the broad idea of changing one's mind toward God. Both unbelievers and believers repent. The call to repentance is a call to harmony with God. Salvation from the penalty of sin is by faith alone in Christ alone (Acts 26.18, "by faith in me," and Acts 16.31, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved."). Paul went on to say that "performing deeds appropriate to repentance" were part of the Christian life, but were in no way required for salvation from the penalty of sin nor were they proof that one was a Christian. Jews reacted to Paul's message and so he now stood under arrest before Agrippa.
6. Acts 26.22-28. Paul reaffirmed that his message had its roots in the Old Testament—the Prophets and Moses. The Old Testament said that the Christ would suffer and die and then arise from the dead and then proclaim salvation to both Jews and Gentiles. Festus could endure Paul's message no longer. He broke in and said that Paul was out of his mind. Paul then used Agrippa as a witness that what Paul had been saying was indeed true to the Old Testament. Agrippa was caught in a vice. He could not deny the basic Old Testament doctrines for fear of making the Jews mad, but on the other hand he could not side with Paul for the same reason. Agrippa's decision: he did not answer Paul's summons; he avoided the issue.
7. Acts 26.29. Paul made a final plea that Agrippa and all who heard him would someday become like he—a believer in the Christ—, except that he did wish arrest or suffering on them.
8. Acts 26.30-32. Agrippa, Festus, and Bernice agreed that Paul was not guilty of imprisonment or death. He would have been set free had he not appealed to Caesar. By appealing to Caesar Paul had set in motion Roman law. Agrippa and Festus thought that Paul had wrongly appealed to Caesar. They likely imagined that Paul would be sorry for his decision. Paul had confidence that God would continue to use him and bless him even though he had to go to Rome. He probably recalled what the Lord promised him the night following his hearing before the Sanhedrin: "Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to my cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also." (Acts 23.11).

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. Inheritance for believers
2. Old Testament taught resurrection
3. Repentance

Acts 27, Shipwreck

Tod Kennedy, November 18, 2001

I. Main points of application or “So what?” from Acts 27

1. The foundation for living the normal Christian life, including biblical leadership, is knowledge of the word of God plus spirituality or walking by the Holy Spirit plus faith in God and his word.
2. Acts 27 teaches that believers who know Bible doctrine and apply that doctrine by faith are able to handle enormous pressures of life. In spite of the pressures the growing believer can exhibit courage, humility, self-control, inner peace, and inner strength.
3. Furthermore, believers who know and apply Bible doctrine by faith are able to take leadership for people in times of crisis.
4. Believe God’s inerrant word. It is the absolute truth. His word will not fail.
5. Do not be afraid to mention God and his control of history to people—even unbelievers—in times of crisis. You will encourage others and witness for Christ.

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 27.1-5. Paul and other prisoners boarded a west bound Adramyttian ship; Adramyttium was an Aegean seaport near the island of Lesbos. Julius, a centurion of the Augustan cohort, was the military commander in charge of the prisoners. “Julius, at any rate, appears from the duties assigned to him to have been a legionary centurion, possibly seconded for service at this time with the cohort of officer-couriers; he had a body of soldiers under his command on the voyage to Rome” (*Acts, The International Commentary on the New Testament*, F.F. Bruce, 1980 reprint, Eerdmans, 500-501). Because Paul was a Roman citizen and had appealed to the Caesar, he was treated much better than the average prisoner. When the ship put into Sidon, Julius allowed Paul to visit with his friends. The band of prisoners stayed with the ship as far as Myra in Lycia. Paul, as a believer in Jesus Christ and as a Roman citizen was in a position to be a leader. His spiritual gifting and spiritual growth combined with his daily faith application of doctrine prepared him to give leadership during this coming period of danger and testing.
2. Acts 27.6-8. At Myra, the centurion, with his prisoners, transferred to a grain ship that was based in Alexandria, Egypt, and bound for Italy. Egypt provided much of the grain for Rome, and this was a private grain ship in the service of Rome. They sailed to Cnidus, about 130 miles west of Myra. There, due to headwinds, they turned southwest to Fair Havens, a town near Lasea on the south central coast of Crete and about 200 straight-line miles from Cnidus.
3. Acts 27. 9-12. The ship arrived in Fair Havens around the fall fast (the Great Day of Atonement) which in AD 59 was October 5. Ancient sea travel in the Mediterranean was very dangerous after mid-September and essentially stopped from early November until March due to the terrible storms. Luke mentions this fact to give historical context to Paul’s warnings against further travel. Paul, who had been shipwrecked at least twice before (2 Corinthians 11.25), again stepped forward and warned them all, but the centurion, who had authority to decide, sided with the ship owner and the captain to push ahead. The ship captain set out for Phoenix, some sixty miles to the west of Fair Havens.

4. Acts 27.13-26. Just as Paul had warned, the ship was engulfed in a violent Mediterranean storm. They were tossed in the storm for two weeks. Luke recorded that the ship was caught in a Euraquilo—a feared northeasterly wind known for its treachery. From here on the sailors tried every trick to hold the ship together and survive the storm. Paul remained calm and provided encouragement and leadership to those on board. God had again revealed to him, as he had that night in the Antonio barracks prison in Jerusalem (Acts 23.11), that he would survive and he would indeed stand before Caesar; and, not only he, but that all who would stay with the ship would also survive (27.21-26). Paul based his complete confidence in God's revelation to him and we ought to have complete confidence in God's written word.
5. Acts 27.27-37. The storm continued to rage and to drive them west for two weeks. The Adriatic (also called the Hadriatic) Sea (27.27) was actually the central Mediterranean. As they neared what they thought was land they checked the depths of the sea and put out drag anchors to brake their speed. They did not know where they were, but land was welcome. In actual fact, they were approaching what was later named St Paul's Bay at the island of Malta. Malta was about 560 miles west of Fair Havens. An argument now arose about staying with the ship. Paul said that all must stay with the ship in order to survive. Some sailors tried to leave in a lifeboat, but because of Paul's warning, the centurion prevented them. Paul encouraged them all to eat and told them that God would deliver each one of them. That said, Paul took his food and publicly thanked God for it and ate. The crew, soldiers, and prisoners took great encouragement from Paul and then ate as Paul suggested they do. Luke noted that there were 276 people on board.
6. Acts 27.38-41. Now they felt better and began trying to lighten the ship by throwing wheat overboard. At daybreak they saw land and a bay, now known as St Paul's Bay, but at the time did not know where they were. They attempted to drag anchors and beach themselves, but the ship hit a reef and began breaking up.
7. Acts 27.42-44. The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners to prevent escape. The centurion wanted to save Paul, so he prevented the killing. He ordered those who could to swim to land; the others could hold to planks and other things that would float and try to get to shore. All arrived safely just as God had promised Paul and Paul had relayed to those on board.

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. Biblical leadership illustrated by Paul in Acts 27.
2. Knowledge of the Word of God.
3. Faith Rest.
4. Faith application of the Word of God.
5. Spiritual courage.

Acts 28, Malta and Rome Tod Kennedy, January 27, 2001

I. Main Points of Application or So What? From Acts 28

1. We should strive for spiritual maturity so that we, like Paul, gain the ability to handle prosperity and adversity. We only reach it by spiritual growth. Paul was a prisoner, shipwrecked, poisoned, and hailed as a god. He handled each with grace so that God was honored (Acts 28.1-6).
2. Concentrate on acts of kindness like Paul did. Kindness gains more for the gospel and for oneself than selfishness, pride, and unkindness (28.7-10).
3. Believers ought to encourage other believers, especially those who find themselves in unfamiliar places (28.11-16).

4. Try to persuade people to believe the gospel. First, you may have to answer their questions. Be clear, gracious, biblical, and accurate (28.22-23).
5. Be ready and willing to present the gospel to anyone who might listen (28.30-31).
6. Make the most of the time, place, and people that God has given to you. They are a gift of service that you can exploit for blessing to yourself and to others (28.30-31).

II. Summary Outline

1. Acts 28.1-6. At Myra in Lycia, Paul had been transferred to an Alexandrian ship that would take him to Rome (27.6). The last two weeks of the voyage (27.33) found the ship and passengers caught in an overwhelming storm. God protected them all and drove the ship west to Malta, an island just south of Sicily. As they approached the island, the ship was caught on rocks, and the storm broke the ship apart (27.41). Paul's centurion guard had high regard for Paul because of Paul's spiritual maturity (27.21-25, 31-32, 33). Therefore the centurion protected him and the other prisoners from the other soldiers, who wanted to kill the prisoners. All on board were allowed to try to get to land; all succeeded (27.44). The natives of Malta showed great kindness to the crew and passengers. While Paul was gathering firewood, a poisonous snake struck his hand. The natives at first thought the gods were punishing Paul. Then when Paul did not die, they said he was a god. Of course, God had protected Paul; he had a job for him in Rome. Neither the condemnation nor the praise affected Paul. He continued to live the Christian life: in the word, by the Spirit, and by faith. Paul's spiritual growth and maturity showed.
2. Acts 28.7-10. Publius was an official of Malta. He had an estate nearby to which he invited the shipwrecked party. God had arranged that Paul would have a ministry to Publius, his father, and to many others on the island. Publius' father was ill—likely with Malta fever, a gastro-intestinal disease. Paul healed him through his temporary spiritual gift of healing (*iaōmai* *iaōmai* aorist middle indicative, third singular, to heal, 1 Corinthians 12.9). Naturally, many other sick people then came to Paul, and he healed them. It is interesting that the Roman soldiers allowed Paul to minister. His testimony had gained him this privilege.
3. Acts 28.11-15. After three months they set sail on another Alexandrian ship to Syracuse, Rhegium, and then to Puteoli. At Puteoli some believers invited Paul to stay for a week. Paul then traveled north to Rome on the Appian Way. News of his coming to Rome had preceded him. A group of believers went south from Rome and met him at Three Taverns, thirty-three miles from Rome; others went ten miles farther and met him at Appii Forum. These believers and their interest in Paul greatly encouraged him. Time after time believers who find themselves rejected or imprisoned or beaten up or ridiculed or alone or venturing into new service have been encouraged by other believers through a letter or a call or a visit or some other sign of support. Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5.11, tells us to encourage each other.
4. Acts 28.16-22. Three days after Paul reached Rome, he invited the Jewish leaders, unbelievers, to meet with him. He did not know what rumors or accusations may have preceded him and wanted to set the record straight about his ministry, arrest, and imprisonment. The Jewish leaders replied that they had not received letters or personal reports that criticized Paul. These men wanted to learn from Paul about this new faith, the Christian faith. They were quite aware that Christianity was widely criticized and attacked.
5. Acts 28.23-29. Paul used the Hebrew Scriptures to explain and testify and persuade the Jews that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the one who offered the kingdom of God to them. Some believed Paul, but most did what Isaiah had predicted in Isaiah 6.9-10: they rejected the message and left. Paul quoted the Isaiah passage to them and then told them that the Gentiles would listen. Paul had given the Jews every chance to receive their Messiah, but they would not. Paul gave his best shot—their

own Scriptures—, yet they would not accept the biblical message. Many times we will find the same response. This should not discourage us from continuing to explain and testify and persuade people to receive Jesus Christ.

6. Acts 28.30-31. Once Paul had given the Jews a clear opportunity to receive their messiah and they had refused, he settled in and concentrated on proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about Jesus Christ to whomever came to him. Note Paul's emphasis: proclaiming and teaching. Paul was content with his ministry. He gave his attention to those whom God sent his way. These two years were a time of wonderful ministry for Paul. During this arrest he wrote the four prison epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Paul made the most of the time, place, and people that God had given him. We should follow his example.

III. Dictionary of Bible Doctrine

1. Apologetics
2. Encouragement
3. Ministry
4. One day at a time
5. Spiritual contentment.
6. Spiritual Growth
7. Spiritual Maturity
8. Temporary Spiritual Gifts
9. Witnessing