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Act

The Book of Acts, also known as the Acts of the Apostles, is a book in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. It was written by Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke, and it provides a historical account of the early days of the Christian church. The book begins with Jesus' ascension into heaven and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which empowers the apostles to preach the gospel and perform miracles. The apostle Peter becomes a prominent figure in the early church, and the book describes his preaching and the growth of the church in Jerusalem.

Later in the book, the focus shifts to the apostle Paul, who was originally a persecutor of Christians but converted after a dramatic encounter with Jesus. Paul becomes a missionary and travels extensively to spread the gospel, facing opposition and persecution along the way.

The book also describes the establishment of Christian communities in various parts of the Roman Empire and the conflicts that arose within the early church, including debates over circumcision and the role of Gentiles in the church.

Overall, the Book of Acts is an important historical document that provides insight into the early development of Christianity and the struggles and triumphs of the early church. It emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering the apostles and spreading the gospel, and it serves as a bridge between the Gospels and the letters of Paul and other early Christian leaders.

Chapter 1: Jesus ascends into heaven, and the apostles wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2: The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost, and the apostles begin preaching the gospel in different languages. Peter gives a sermon and 3,000 people are baptized.

Chapter 3: Peter and John heal a man who was lame from birth, and Peter preaches to the crowd that gathered.

Chapter 4: Peter and John are arrested for preaching and brought before the religious leaders. They are released but warned not to preach anymore.

Chapter 5: Ananias and Sapphira lie about their donation to the church and are struck dead. The apostles continue to preach and perform miracles, despite opposition.

Chapter 6: The apostles appoint seven deacons to serve the needs of the growing church. One of them, Stephen, is accused of blasphemy and stoned to death.

Chapter 7: Stephen gives a long speech recounting the history of Israel and accusing the religious leaders of rejecting God's messengers. He is stoned to death.

Chapter 8: Saul (later known as Paul) persecutes the church, but Philip preaches in Samaria and converts many people. He also baptizes an Ethiopian eunuch.

Chapter 9: Saul has a vision of Jesus and is converted. He begins preaching the gospel and faces opposition from both Jews and Gentiles.

Chapter 10: Peter has a vision and goes to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile, and baptizes him and his household.

Chapter 11: Peter defends his decision to baptize Gentiles to the other believers in Jerusalem.

Chapter 12: King Herod Agrippa I persecutes the early Christians and has James, one of the apostles, killed. Peter is also arrested but is miraculously freed from prison by an angel.

Chapter 13: Paul begins his missionary journeys, starting in Cyprus and then moving on to cities in modern-day Turkey.

Chapter 14: Paul and Barnabas continue their missionary work, but face opposition from some Jews who reject their message.

Chapter 15: A debate arises among the believers about whether Gentile converts to Christianity should be required to follow Jewish customs. The decision is made that they should not be burdened with these requirements.

Chapter 16: Paul and his companions travel to Macedonia and Greece, where they face both success and opposition.

Chapter 17: Paul travels to Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens, where he preaches to both Jews and Gentiles.

Chapter 18: Paul continues his missionary work in Corinth, where he faces opposition from some Jews.

Chapter 19: Paul travels to Ephesus, where he performs miracles and preaches to many people. However, he also faces opposition from some who practice magic.

Chapter 20: Paul travels to various cities, including Troas and Miletus, where he meets with local believers and gives them encouragement.

Chapter 21: Paul travels to Jerusalem, where he is warned about the dangers he will face.

Chapter 22: Paul speaks to a crowd in Jerusalem and tells them about his conversion to Christianity.

Chapter 23: Paul is put on trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin but is transferred to the Roman governor because of a plot to kill him.

Chapter 24: Paul is put on trial before the Roman governor Felix but is not found guilty.

Chapter 25: Paul is put on trial before the new governor Festus and appeals to Caesar.

Chapter 26: Paul speaks before King Agrippa and shares his testimony.

Chapter 27: Paul is shipwrecked while being taken to Rome as a prisoner.

Chapter 28: Paul arrives in Rome, where he is allowed to live under house arrest and continues to preach the gospel.

Acts 1

New International Version

Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with[a] water, but in a few days you will be baptized with[b] the Holy Spirit.”

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

12 Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk[c] from the city. 13 When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) 16 and said, “Brothers and sisters,[d] the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. 17 He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.”

18 (With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. 19 Everyone in Jerusalem

heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

20 “For,” said Peter, “it is written in the Book of Psalms:

“‘May his place be deserted;
let there be no one to dwell in it,’[e]

and,

“‘May another take his place of leadership.’[f]

21 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, 22 beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.”

23 So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen 25 to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” 26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

Footnotes

Acts 1:5 Or in

Acts 1:5 Or in

Acts 1:12 That is, about 5/8 mile or about 1 kilometer

Acts 1:16 The Greek word for brothers and sisters (adelphoi) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in 6:3; 11:29; 12:17; 16:40; 18:18, 27; 21:7, 17; 28:14, 15.

Acts 1:20 Psalm 69:25

Acts 1:20 Psalm 109:8

Chapter 1 of Acts begins with an introduction, in which the author (Luke) addresses a certain person named Theophilus and explains that he has already written a gospel account about the life and teachings of Jesus, which Theophilus may have already read. In this second volume, Luke says, he will write about what happened to Jesus' disciples after his ascension.

The chapter then describes the final days of Jesus on earth, including his instructions to his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit to come upon them. Jesus is then taken up into heaven, and the disciples return to Jerusalem to wait.

The rest of the chapter focuses on the selection of Matthias as the replacement for Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus and later died. The disciples recognize the need to fill the vacancy left by Judas, so they gather together and pray for guidance. They then cast lots, a common method of decision-making in that culture, and Matthias is chosen to be the twelfth apostle.

Overall, chapter 1 of Acts sets the stage for the rest of the book, describing the disciples' waiting period before the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the process by which they filled the vacancy left by Judas. It also emphasizes the importance of the apostles' witness to Jesus' life, teachings, death, and resurrection, as they prepare to carry out the mission he gave them to spread the gospel message to all nations.

Here are some important verses from the Book of Acts, along with a brief explanation of their meaning and where to find them in chapter 1 of the book:

Verse 8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Explanation: Jesus is telling his disciples that they will receive power from the Holy Spirit and will be witnesses to the world about him and his teachings.

Location: Acts 1:8

Verse 14: "They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers."

Explanation: After Jesus' ascension, the disciples and others gathered together to pray and seek guidance from God.

Location: Acts 1:14

Verse 15: "In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)"

Explanation: Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, spoke to a group of about 120 believers who had gathered together.

Location: Acts 1:15

Verse 26: "Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles."

Explanation: The disciples chose a replacement for Judas Iscariot through a process of casting lots, and Matthias was selected to become one of the apostles.

Location: Acts 1:26

The Book of Acts, also known as the Acts of the Apostles, is a crucial book in the New Testament of the Bible. It serves as a continuation of the Gospel of Luke and provides an account of the early days of the Christian church, detailing the actions and teachings of the apostles, especially Peter and Paul. In Acts chapter 1, there are several theological thoughts and influences that can be identified:

The Ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:9-11): In the opening verses of Acts 1, Jesus ascends to heaven in the presence of his disciples. This event signifies the exaltation of Jesus and his return to the Father. It reinforces the divinity of Jesus and sets the stage for the coming of the Holy Spirit, which is a significant theological theme throughout the book.

The Role of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5, 8): Jesus instructs his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit, who will empower them to be witnesses to the ends of the earth. The promise of the Holy Spirit underscores the importance of divine guidance and empowerment for the mission of the church.

The Restoration of Israel (Acts 1:6-7): The disciples ask Jesus if he is going to restore the kingdom to Israel at this time. His response redirects their focus from earthly kingdoms to the spiritual mission of spreading the Gospel globally. This emphasizes the universal nature of the Christian message.

The Apostolic Succession (Acts 1:21-26): In this chapter, the apostles select Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus. This demonstrates the importance of apostolic authority and the continuation of Jesus' work through his chosen representatives.

Prayer and Unity (Acts 1:14): The early disciples are seen in prayer and in unity as they await the Holy Spirit. This highlights the importance of communal prayer and fellowship in the life of the church.

Theological Influence:

Acts chapter 1 lays the foundation for several theological themes that run throughout the entire book and have had a significant influence on Christian theology and practice:

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Acts emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers for ministry and guiding the early church. This has had a profound influence on pneumatology, the study of the Holy Spirit, in Christian theology.

The Apostolic Tradition: The selection of Matthias as the replacement for Judas establishes the idea of apostolic succession, which has played a role in the development of ecclesiology (the study of the church) within Christian traditions.

The Universal Mission of the Church: Jesus' command to be witnesses "to the ends of the earth" underscores the global and universal mission of the Christian church. This has shaped missionary efforts and the understanding of the church's purpose.

Prayer and Community: The practice of prayer and unity among the early disciples serves as a model for Christian community and fellowship. This has influenced the emphasis on communal worship and support in Christian congregations.

Overall, Acts chapter 1 sets the stage for the rest of the book and introduces theological concepts that have had a lasting impact on Christian thought and practice.

Acts 2

New International Version

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues[a] as the Spirit enabled them.

5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,[b] 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Peter Addresses the Crowd

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 “In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.
18 Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.
19 I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.
20 The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
21 And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.’[c]

22 “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men,[d] put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. 25 David said about him:

“I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.
26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

my body also will rest in hope,
27 because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
you will not let your holy one see decay.
28 You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.’[e]

29 “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“‘The Lord said to my Lord:
“Sit at my right hand
35 until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.’”[f]

36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

The Fellowship of the Believers

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Footnotes

Acts 2:4 Or languages; also in verse 11
Acts 2:9 That is, the Roman province by that name
Acts 2:21 Joel 2:28-32
Acts 2:23 Or of those not having the law (that is, Gentiles)
Acts 2:28 Psalm 16:8-11 (see Septuagint)
Acts 2:35 Psalm 110:1

Chapter 2 of Acts begins with the description of the Day of Pentecost, which was a Jewish festival celebrating the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The disciples were gathered together in one place when suddenly a sound like a rushing wind filled the house and tongues of fire appeared on their heads. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages.

A large crowd gathered outside the house, and the disciples went out to speak to them. The people were amazed to hear the disciples speaking in their own languages, and some of them accused the disciples of being drunk.

Peter then stood up and addressed the crowd, explaining that what had happened was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, which had foretold the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. He preached to the crowd about Jesus, explaining how he had been sent by God, had performed miracles, and had been crucified but had risen from the dead. He urged the people to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.

Three thousand people were baptized that day and joined the disciples. They continued to devote themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. Signs and wonders were performed by the apostles, and the new believers shared their possessions and cared for one another.

Overall, chapter 2 of Acts describes the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and the resulting preaching of Peter, which led to the conversion of many people. It emphasizes the importance of repentance, baptism, and the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ. The chapter also shows how the early believers were devoted to one another and shared their possessions, giving us an example of what it means to live in Christian community.

Here are some important verses from the Book of Acts chapter 2, along with a brief explanation of their meaning and where to find them:

Verse 4: "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

Explanation: The disciples received the Holy Spirit and were able to speak in different languages that they previously did not know.

Location: Acts 2:4

Verse 17: "'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.'"

Explanation: Peter is referencing the prophecy of Joel, that in the last days, God would pour out his Spirit on all people and give them gifts of prophecy, visions, and dreams.

Location: Acts 2:17

Verse 21: "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Explanation: Peter is explaining that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ and by calling upon his name.

Location: Acts 2:21

Verse 38: "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

Explanation: Peter is instructing the people to repent of their sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Location: Acts 2:38

Acts chapter 2 is a pivotal chapter in the New Testament because it describes the events of the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples. This chapter has profound theological thoughts and influences:

Theological Thought:

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4): The most significant event in Acts 2 is the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the believers, accompanied by the sound of a rushing wind and the appearance of divided tongues of fire. This event fulfills Jesus' promise from Acts 1:4-5 and marks the beginning of the Spirit's work in the church. It emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and the church.

Speaking in Tongues (Acts 2:4-11): The disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, begin to speak in languages they had not previously known. This supernatural phenomenon is a sign of the Spirit's presence and is a precursor to the spread of the Gospel to people of various languages and nations. It highlights the universality of the Gospel message.

Peter's Sermon (Acts 2:14-41): Peter delivers a powerful sermon in which he explains the significance of what is happening and proclaims Jesus as the Messiah, crucified and risen. He calls on the people to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. This sermon is a theological exposition of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection and serves as the catalyst for the conversion of thousands.

The Birth of the Church (Acts 2:41-47): Acts 2 describes the formation of the early Christian community. Those who believed were baptized, and they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread (communion), and prayer. This passage sets a precedent for Christian worship, community life, and discipleship.

Theological Influence:

Acts 2 has had a profound theological influence on Christian thought and practice:

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: This chapter is a foundational text for understanding the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church and the individual believer. It has shaped the development of pneumatology (theology of the Holy Spirit) in Christian theology.

The Universality of the Gospel: The miracle of speaking in tongues and the subsequent spread of the Gospel to people of different languages underscore the universal nature of Christianity. It has influenced missions and the understanding of the church's mission to reach all nations.

Repentance and Baptism: Peter's call to repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins has influenced the Christian practice of baptism as a means of initiation into the faith and forgiveness of sins.

Christian Community and Worship: The description of the early Christian community's devotion to teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread (communion), and prayer has had a lasting impact on the structure and practices of Christian worship and community life.

In summary, Acts chapter 2 is a pivotal chapter that highlights the work of the Holy Spirit, the proclamation of the Gospel, and the birth of the early Christian community. Its theological thoughts and influences continue to shape Christian theology and practice to this day.

Acts 3

New International Version

Peter Heals a Lame Beggar

3 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 2 Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

6 Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” 7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. 9 When all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Peter Speaks to the Onlookers

11 While the man held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. 12 When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him

over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. 14 You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. 15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. 16 By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

17 "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. 18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. 19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, 20 and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. 21 Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. 22 For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. 23 Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.' [a]

24 "Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. 25 And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' [b] 26 When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

Footnotes

Acts 3:23 Deut. 18:15,18,19

Acts 3:25 Gen. 22:18; 26:4

chapter 3 of Acts begins with Peter and John going up to the temple to pray. They encounter a man who had been crippled from birth, who asks them for money. Instead, Peter tells him, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."

Peter then takes the man by the hand and helps him up, and the man's feet and ankles become strong. He begins to walk and jump around, praising God. A crowd gathers, and Peter addresses them, telling them that it was faith in Jesus that had healed the man.

Peter goes on to preach to the crowd, urging them to repent and turn to God, so that their sins may be forgiven. He tells them that they had rejected the Holy and Righteous One and had instead asked for a murderer to be released to them. However, God had raised Jesus from the dead, and they were witnesses to this fact.

Peter explains that it was through faith in Jesus' name that the man was healed, and he challenges the people to repent and turn to God. Many people who heard Peter's message believed, and the number of believers grew to about 5,000.

Overall, chapter 3 of Acts demonstrates the power of faith in Jesus' name, as Peter and John heal the crippled man. It also emphasizes the importance of repentance and faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. The chapter shows how the early believers were bold in their witness and were willing to confront the religious authorities of their day.

Here are the important verses from chapter 3 of the Book of Acts:

Verse 6: "Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.'"

Explanation: Peter and John encountered a man who was lame from birth and unable to walk. Peter did not have any money to give the man, but through faith in Jesus Christ, he was able to heal him and give him the ability to walk.

Location: Acts 3:6

Verse 16: "By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see."

Explanation: Peter is explaining to the people that it is through faith in Jesus Christ that the lame man was healed, not through his own power or abilities.

Location: Acts 3:16

Verse 19: "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."

Explanation: Peter is urging the people to repent of their sins and turn to God so that they may experience spiritual renewal and forgiveness.

Location: Acts 3:19

Verse 26: "When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

Explanation: Peter is speaking to the people about how God sent Jesus Christ as his servant to bless them and turn them away from their sinful ways.

Location: Acts 3:26

Acts chapter 3 recounts an important event in the early history of the Christian church: the healing of a lame man at the temple gate by Peter and John. This chapter contains theological thoughts and influences that are significant in Christian understanding:

Theological Thought:

Healing and Miracles (Acts 3:1-10): The healing of the lame man at the temple gate is a miraculous event that demonstrates the power of the name of Jesus. This miracle draws attention to the apostles as vessels of God's healing and serves as a sign of God's presence among His people.

Peter's Sermon (Acts 3:11-26): Following the healing, Peter addresses the crowd that has gathered. In his sermon, he points to the Jewish heritage and scriptures, emphasizing the role of Jesus as the Messiah, whom the prophets foretold. He calls on the people to repent and turn to God. This sermon underscores the continuity between the Old Testament and the coming of Jesus, emphasizing the fulfillment of prophecy.

The Role of Faith (Acts 3:16): Peter emphasizes that faith in the name of Jesus has made the lame man well. This highlights the importance of faith in Jesus as the source of healing and salvation.

Theological Influence:

Acts 3 and its theological themes have had several significant influences:

The Power of Jesus' Name: The healing of the lame man in Jesus' name underscores the belief in the authority and power of the name of Jesus. This has influenced Christian practices such as prayer and healing ministries that invoke Jesus' name for miracles and blessings.

The Continuity of Scripture: Peter's sermon highlights the continuity between the Old Testament and the ministry of Jesus. This has had an impact on Christian biblical interpretation and the understanding of Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

Repentance and Faith: Peter's call for repentance and faith in Jesus as the Messiah remains a central message in Christian evangelism and preaching.

The Role of Apostles: Acts 3 demonstrates the apostles' role as carriers of divine power and authority. This has influenced the hierarchical structure of some Christian denominations and the concept of apostolic succession.

In summary, Acts chapter 3 features a miraculous healing, a sermon by Peter, and theological themes related to faith, repentance, and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy through Jesus. These themes have had a lasting influence on Christian theology and practice, particularly in matters of faith, healing, and the relationship between the Old and New Testaments.

Acts 4

New International Version

Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin

4 The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. 2 They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3 They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. 4 But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

5 The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. 6 Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. 7 They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! 9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, 10 then know this, you and all the people of

Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11 Jesus is

“the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone.’[a]

12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. 14 But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. 15 So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. 16 “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. 17 But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! 20 As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

21 After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. 22 For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

The Believers Pray

23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. 25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
26 The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one.[b]’[c]

27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. 29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great

boldness. 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

The Believers Share Their Possessions

32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all 34 that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), 37 sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.

Footnotes

Acts 4:11 Psalm 118:22

Acts 4:26 That is, Messiah or Christ

Acts 4:26 Psalm 2:1,2

Chapter 4 of Acts begins with Peter and John being arrested by the priests and the captain of the temple guard because they had been preaching about Jesus and his resurrection. The next day, they were brought before the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jewish leaders, and questioned about their teachings.

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, boldly proclaims to the Sanhedrin that the healing of the crippled man was done in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified but whom God had raised from the dead. He asserts that there is no other name under heaven by which people can be saved.

The Sanhedrin is amazed at Peter and John's boldness and recognizes that they had been with Jesus. However, they warn them not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus again.

Peter and John reply, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

(Acts 4:19-20)

After being released, Peter and John return to the other believers and report what had happened. The believers respond by praying for boldness to speak the word of God in spite of the threats they face.

The chapter concludes with a description of the generosity of the early believers. They sold their possessions and shared everything in common, so that no one was in need.

Overall, chapter 4 of Acts demonstrates the boldness of Peter and John in proclaiming the name of Jesus in the face of opposition. It shows how the Holy Spirit empowers believers to speak truthfully and courageously. The chapter also emphasizes the importance of living in community and sharing resources, as the early believers did.

Here are the important verses from chapter 4 of the Book of Acts:

Verse 12: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

Explanation: Peter is speaking to the religious leaders about how salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ and that there is no other way to be saved.

Location: Acts 4:12

Verse 19-20: "But Peter and John replied, 'Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.'"

Explanation: Peter and John are speaking to the religious leaders about how they cannot stop sharing their experiences of Jesus Christ and his teachings, even if it goes against the authorities.

Location: Acts 4:19-20

Verse 31: "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly."

Explanation: The disciples prayed and the Holy Spirit filled them, giving them the boldness to speak God's word with courage.

Location: Acts 4:31

Verse 32: "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had."

Explanation: The early believers were unified in their faith and shared their possessions with one another, demonstrating their love and care for each other.

Location: Acts 4:32

Acts chapter 4 continues to provide important theological thoughts and influences within the context of the early Christian community:

Theological Thought:

The Response to the Healing (Acts 4:1-4): The chapter begins with the response of the religious authorities to the healing of the lame man and the preaching of Peter and John. The religious leaders are disturbed and order Peter and John to be arrested. This sets the stage for a conflict between the burgeoning Christian movement and the established religious order.

Peter's Boldness (Acts 4:5-22): Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, boldly defends the healing and proclaims Jesus as the source of salvation. He emphasizes that there is no other name under heaven by which people can be saved. This proclamation underscores the exclusivity of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Prayer for Boldness (Acts 4:23-31): After their release, Peter and John return to the believers, and they pray for continued boldness in proclaiming the Gospel. This prayer highlights the reliance on God's power and guidance in the face of opposition.

Sharing Possessions (Acts 4:32-37): The chapter ends with a description of the early Christian community's practice of sharing their possessions and caring for one another. This reflects a communal lifestyle influenced by their devotion to Jesus and each other.

Theological Influence:

Acts 4 and its theological themes have had significant influences on Christian theology and practice:

Salvation through Jesus: The proclamation that there is no other name under heaven by which people can be saved (Acts 4:12) has reinforced the central Christian belief in the exclusivity of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Bold Witness: The boldness displayed by Peter and John in their defense of the Gospel message has inspired Christians throughout history to courageously share their faith, even in the face of opposition and persecution.

Prayer for Boldness: The example of the early Christians praying for boldness in their witness has encouraged believers to seek the empowerment of the Holy Spirit through prayer for effective ministry.

Community and Sharing: The communal lifestyle described in Acts 4 has influenced Christian communal experiments and movements, emphasizing the importance of caring for the needs of fellow believers.

Conflict with Authority: The tension between the early Christians and the religious authorities highlights the potential conflicts that can arise when the Christian message challenges established religious norms and structures.

In summary, Acts chapter 4 continues to emphasize the bold proclamation of the Gospel, the exclusivity of salvation through Jesus, the importance of prayer, and the communal nature of the early Christian community. These theological thoughts and influences have played a role in shaping Christian faith, mission, and community life.

Acts 5

New International Version

Ananias and Sapphira

5 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. 2 With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? 4 Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God."

5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. 6 Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 Peter asked her, “Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?”

“Yes,” she said, “that is the price.”

9 Peter said to her, “How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.”

10 At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

The Apostles Heal Many

12 The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade. 13 No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. 14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. 15 As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. 16 Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.

The Apostles Persecuted

17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 20 “Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people all about this new life.”

21 At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. 22 But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, 23 “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” 24 On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.

25 Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.” 26 At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

27 The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. 28 “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”

29 Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! 30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. 31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. 32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

33 When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. 34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. 35 Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: “Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. 36 Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. 37 After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. 38 Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. 39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.”

40 His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. 42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

Chapter 5 of Acts begins with the story of Ananias and Sapphira. They sold some property and gave some of the proceeds to the apostles, but they kept back some of the money for themselves. When Peter confronts Ananias about his deception, Ananias falls down dead. Later, when Sapphira also lies to Peter about the money, she too falls down dead.

This event causes fear and awe to come upon the people, and many come to believe in the Lord. The apostles continue to perform many miraculous signs and wonders among the people, and they gather in Solomon's Colonnade.

The high priest and the Sadducees become jealous of the apostles' popularity and arrest them, putting them in jail. But during the night, an angel of the Lord opens the doors of the jail and tells the apostles to go and preach in the temple courts.

The next morning, the high priest and the Sanhedrin assemble to question the apostles. Peter responds by telling them that they must obey God rather than men and declares that they are witnesses to Jesus' resurrection. The Sanhedrin is furious and wants to put the apostles to death, but a Pharisee named Gamaliel advises caution, saying that if the apostles' work is from God, it cannot be stopped, but if it is from men, it will fail on its own.

The Sanhedrin agrees to flog the apostles and orders them not to speak in the name of Jesus. But the apostles leave rejoicing, because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the name of Jesus, and they continue to preach and teach about Jesus in the temple courts and from house to house.

Overall, chapter 5 of Acts demonstrates the seriousness of sin and the importance of honesty and integrity in the community of believers. It also shows the power of God in working through his people, even in the face of opposition and persecution. The chapter highlights the apostles' obedience to God and their willingness to suffer for the sake of Jesus' name.

Here are some important verses from the Book of Acts, chapter 5, along with a brief explanation and where to find them:

Verse 3: "Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"

Explanation: Peter is confronting Ananias about his deception and greed, as he had sold a piece of land and lied about the amount he received from the sale.

Location: Acts 5:3

Verse 29: "Peter and the other apostles replied: 'We must obey God rather than human beings!'"

Explanation: Peter and the apostles are telling the high priest and Sanhedrin that they must obey God's commands, even if it goes against human authority.

Location: Acts 5:29

Verse 32: "We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

Explanation: Peter and the apostles are telling the Sanhedrin that they are witnesses of Jesus Christ's resurrection and the Holy Spirit confirms their testimony to those who obey God.

Location: Acts 5:32

Verse 41-42: "The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah."

Explanation: The apostles were persecuted and punished for preaching the gospel, but they were joyful because they were counted worthy of suffering for the name of Jesus. They continued to preach the gospel every day, both in the temple courts and from house to house.

Location: Acts 5:41-42

Acts chapter 5 contains significant theological thoughts and influences within the context of the early Christian community:

Theological Thought:

Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11): This section recounts the story of Ananias and Sapphira, a married couple who sold a piece of property but kept back a portion of the proceeds while pretending to give the full amount to the church. Both of them died as a result of their deception. This event underscores the seriousness of hypocrisy, deceit, and the importance of honesty and integrity within the Christian community.

Miraculous Signs and Wonders (Acts 5:12-16): Acts 5 describes the ongoing signs and wonders performed by the apostles, including healings and the casting out of unclean spirits. These miracles demonstrate the continuation of divine power and the authority of the apostles.

Opposition from the Religious Leaders (Acts 5:17-42): The religious authorities become increasingly hostile to the apostles and arrest them. However, an angel miraculously releases them from prison, emphasizing God's protection and intervention. The apostles continue to preach the Gospel despite the threats and persecution.

Theological Influence:

Acts 5 and its theological themes have had several influences on Christian theology and practice:

Honesty and Integrity: The story of Ananias and Sapphira serves as a stark warning against hypocrisy and dishonesty within the Christian community. It highlights the importance of sincerity and integrity in one's relationship with God and fellow believers.

Miraculous Signs: The ongoing signs and wonders performed by the apostles reinforce the idea of divine intervention and the presence of God's power within the early church. This has influenced the belief in the continuation of spiritual gifts and miracles in various Christian traditions.

Perseverance in the Face of Opposition: The apostles' steadfast commitment to preaching the Gospel despite persecution and threats has inspired generations of Christians to remain faithful in the face of adversity.

Divine Intervention: The angelic intervention that releases the apostles from prison underscores the belief in God's protection and guidance for His servants. This has influenced the understanding of God's providence and care for His people.

Conflict with Religious Authorities: The conflict between the apostles and the religious leaders highlights the tension that can arise when the Christian message challenges established religious institutions and practices. This theme has been echoed in various periods of Christian history.

In summary, Acts chapter 5 emphasizes the importance of honesty and integrity, the continuation of miraculous signs, the perseverance of believers in the face of opposition, and the belief in divine intervention. These theological thoughts and influences have played a role in shaping Christian ethics, spirituality, and the understanding of God's presence and power within the church.

Acts 6

New International Version

The Choosing of the Seven

6 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews[a] among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Stephen Seized

8 Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. 10 But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

11 Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.”

12 So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. 13 They produced false witnesses, who testified, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. 14 For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.”

15 All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Footnotes

Acts 6:1 That is, Jews who had adopted the Greek language and culture

Chapter 6 of Acts begins with the problem of the distribution of food to widows in the early church. The Greek-speaking widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food, and so the apostles called a meeting to address the issue.

The apostles suggest that they select seven men full of the Spirit and wisdom to oversee the distribution of food. The proposal is well received, and the seven men are chosen, including Stephen, who is described as being full of faith and the Holy Spirit.

The chapter then shifts to the story of Stephen, who performs great wonders and signs among the people. But some of the Jews become jealous of Stephen's popularity and falsely accuse him of blasphemy against Moses and God. They bring him before the Sanhedrin, where he delivers a long speech recounting the history of Israel and their rejection of God's prophets, culminating in their rejection and murder of Jesus.

The Sanhedrin becomes enraged and begins to stone Stephen, who looks up to heaven and sees Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He proclaims, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and then falls to his knees and asks God to forgive his accusers.

The chapter concludes with a description of a great persecution that breaks out against the believers in Jerusalem, and many are scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. However, those who are scattered continue to preach the word of God wherever they go.

Overall, chapter 6 of Acts highlights the importance of caring for the needs of the community and shows how the early church addressed problems and found solutions through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The chapter also emphasizes the importance of standing firm in the face of persecution and shows how Stephen demonstrated great faith and courage even in the midst of his suffering.

Here are some important verses from the Book of Acts, chapter 6, along with a brief explanation and where to find them:

Verse 1-4: "In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.'"

Explanation: The early church faced the challenge of serving and distributing food to the needy. The apostles decided to delegate this task to qualified people, allowing them to focus on their primary responsibility of preaching and teaching the Word of God.

Location: Acts 6:1-4

Verse 8: "Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people."

Explanation: Stephen was one of the seven chosen to serve, and he was filled with God's grace and power. He performed great miracles and signs among the people.

Location: Acts 6:8

Verse 10: "But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke."

Explanation: Stephen was brought before the Sanhedrin and was questioned about his beliefs. However, his response was filled with the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit, and they could not refute him.

Location: Acts 6:10

Verse 15: "All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel."

Explanation: The Sanhedrin was struck by Stephen's boldness and the Holy Spirit's presence in him. His face shone like that of an angel.

Location: Acts 6:15

Acts chapter 6 introduces theological thoughts and influences related to the organization and ministry of the early Christian community, particularly regarding the appointment of the first deacons:

Theological Thought:

Appointment of the Seven (Acts 6:1-7): In this chapter, we see a dispute arise within the early church concerning the fair distribution of food to widows. To address this issue, the apostles instruct the community to select seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, to oversee this task. These individuals are the first deacons in the Christian church.

The Role of Deacons: The appointment of the seven deacons highlights the importance of servant-leadership within the church. Their primary responsibility was to serve the physical needs of the community, allowing the apostles to focus on preaching and prayer. This model of ministry has influenced the development of the diaconate in many Christian traditions.

Theological Influence:

Servant Leadership: Acts 6 underscores the idea that leadership within the Christian community involves serving others. The role of deacons as servants has had a lasting influence on the concept of servant leadership within the church, emphasizing humility and service as key qualities for Christian leaders.

Church Organization: The appointment of the seven deacons marks an early instance of the church organizing itself to address practical needs. This has influenced the development of ecclesiology (theology of the church) and the structure of Christian congregations, including the establishment of deacons and other church offices.

The Unity of the Church: The resolution of the dispute in Acts 6 helps maintain the unity of the early Christian community, preventing division and discord. This has influenced the understanding of unity and harmony within the church.

The Balance of Ministry: Acts 6 illustrates the importance of balancing the various ministries within the church, including both spiritual and practical aspects. This balance is reflected in the distribution of responsibilities between the apostles and the deacons.

In summary, Acts chapter 6 introduces the theological thought of servant leadership and the appointment of the first deacons to address practical needs within the Christian community. These theological thoughts have had a lasting influence on the organization, leadership, and ministry of the Christian church, emphasizing the importance of serving others and maintaining unity within the body of believers.

Acts 7

New International Version

Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin

7 Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these charges true?"

2 To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran. 3 'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.' [a]

4 "So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Harran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. 5 He gave him no inheritance here, not even enough ground to set his foot on. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child. 6 God spoke to him in this way: 'For four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated. 7 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,' God said, 'and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.' [b] 8 Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

9 "Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him 10 and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt. So Pharaoh made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.

11 "Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our ancestors could not find food. 12 When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our forefathers on their first visit. 13 On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. 14 After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all. 15 Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our ancestors died. 16 Their bodies were brought back to Shechem

and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money.

17 “As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt had greatly increased. 18 Then ‘a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.’[c] 19 He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our ancestors by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die.

20 “At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child.[d] For three months he was cared for by his family. 21 When he was placed outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. 22 Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

23 “When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. 24 He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. 25 Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. 26 The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, ‘Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?’

27 “But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, ‘Who made you ruler and judge over us? 28 Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’[e] 29 When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

30 “After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. 31 When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to get a closer look, he heard the Lord say: 32 ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’[f] Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.

33 “Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. 34 I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.’[g]

35 “This is the same Moses they had rejected with the words, ‘Who made you ruler and judge?’ He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 He led them out of Egypt and performed wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the wilderness.

37 “This is the Moses who told the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your own people.’[h] 38 He was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living words to pass on to us.

39 “But our ancestors refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. 40 They told Aaron, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don’t know what has happened to him!’[i] 41 That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and reveled in what their own hands had made. 42 But God turned away from them and gave them over to the worship of the sun, moon and stars. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets:

“Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings
forty years in the wilderness, people of Israel?
43 You have taken up the tabernacle of Molek
and the star of your god Rephan,
the idols you made to worship.
Therefore I will send you into exile’[j] beyond Babylon.

44 “Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the covenant law with them in the wilderness. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. 45 After receiving the tabernacle, our ancestors under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, 46 who enjoyed God’s favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.[k] 47 But it was Solomon who built a house for him.

48 “However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says:

49 ““Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.
What kind of house will you build for me?
says the Lord.
Or where will my resting place be?
50 Has not my hand made all these things?’[l]

51 “You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 52 Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— 53 you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

The Stoning of Stephen

54 When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

57 At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 58 dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Footnotes

Acts 7:3 Gen. 12:1

Acts 7:7 Gen. 15:13,14

Acts 7:18 Exodus 1:8

Acts 7:20 Or was fair in the sight of God

Acts 7:28 Exodus 2:14

Acts 7:32 Exodus 3:6

Acts 7:34 Exodus 3:5,7,8,10

Acts 7:37 Deut. 18:15

Acts 7:40 Exodus 32:1

Acts 7:43 Amos 5:25-27 (see Septuagint)

Acts 7:46 Some early manuscripts the house of Jacob

Acts 7:50 Isaiah 66:1,2

Chapter 7 of Acts is a lengthy speech delivered by Stephen before the Sanhedrin, in response to the false accusations of blasphemy against Moses and God. Stephen begins his speech by acknowledging the importance of Abraham in Jewish history and his obedience to God's call to leave his homeland.

Stephen then goes on to recount the history of Israel, highlighting how the people had repeatedly rejected God's messengers and prophets, including Joseph, Moses, and David. He points out that even the temple, which was considered the holiest place in Judaism, was not the dwelling place of God, but rather God's presence was with His people wherever they went.

Stephen also accuses the Sanhedrin of being just like their forefathers who rejected God's messengers and killed the prophets, ultimately leading to the betrayal and murder of Jesus, the Righteous One.

The Sanhedrin becomes enraged at Stephen's words and begins to stone him, but Stephen remains faithful to God and prays for forgiveness for his accusers. As he is dying, he sees a vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he declares, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Overall, chapter 7 of Acts emphasizes the continuity of God's plan throughout Jewish history and highlights the importance of obedience to God and faithfulness to His word. Stephen's speech also serves as a warning to the Sanhedrin and the Jewish people, as he accuses them of being guilty of the same sins as their forefathers and calls them to repentance.

Here are some important verses from the Book of Acts, chapter 7, along with a brief explanation and where to find them:

Verse 2-3: "To this he replied: 'Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran.'"

Explanation: Stephen is addressing the Sanhedrin and giving a speech that summarizes the history of Israel. He starts by recalling the appearance of God to Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation.

Location: Acts 7:2-3

Verse 9-10: "Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt. So Pharaoh made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace."

Explanation: Stephen recounts the story of Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers but eventually became a ruler in Egypt by the grace of God.

Location: Acts 7:9-10

Verse 22: "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action."

Explanation: Stephen is speaking about Moses, who was raised as a prince in Egypt and received a first-class education, including training in rhetoric and physical training.

Location: Acts 7:22

Verse 51-53: "You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it."

Explanation: Stephen rebukes the Sanhedrin for their hard-heartedness and resistance to the Holy Spirit. He reminds them of the history of their ancestors, who persecuted and killed the prophets, and accuses them of being responsible for the murder of Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

Location: Acts 7:51-53

Acts chapter 7 features the lengthy speech of Stephen, one of the seven deacons appointed in the previous chapter. In his speech, Stephen provides a defense of the Christian faith and recounts the history of Israel, focusing on their relationship with God. Here are the key theological thoughts and influences from Acts chapter 7:

Theological Thought:

Stephen's Apologetic Defense: Stephen's speech serves as an apologetic defense of the Christian faith before the Jewish religious leaders. He presents a comprehensive review of Israel's history, highlighting key moments and figures from the Old Testament.

God's Faithfulness: Throughout his speech, Stephen emphasizes God's faithfulness to His covenant promises with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. He portrays God as the central figure in Israel's history who is always faithful to His people.

Rejection of God's Prophets: Stephen accuses the Jewish leaders of consistently rejecting and persecuting God's chosen messengers, including Joseph, Moses, and the prophets. He argues that they have also rejected Jesus, the Messiah, and have resisted the Holy Spirit.

The Temple's Role: Stephen mentions the significance of the temple in Jewish history but also challenges the idea that God can be confined to a physical building. He suggests that God is not limited to dwelling in a temple made by human hands.

Theological Influence:

Apologetics: Stephen's defense of the Christian faith in Acts 7 serves as an early example of Christian apologetics, demonstrating how believers can articulate their faith and respond to accusations and questions.

God's Faithfulness: Stephen's emphasis on God's faithfulness has had a profound influence on Christian theology, reinforcing the belief in God's unwavering commitment to His people and His promises.

Rejection of Prophets: Stephen's critique of Israel's consistent rejection of God's messengers underscores the theme of rejection and persecution faced by prophets and, ultimately, Jesus Himself. This theme plays a role in understanding the challenges faced by early Christians and the importance of faithfulness in the face of opposition.

The Role of the Temple: Stephen's mention of the temple has influenced discussions about the nature of worship and the idea that God's presence is not confined to a physical structure. This theme has implications for Christian theology and ecclesiology (theology of the church).

In summary, Acts chapter 7 contains Stephen's apologetic defense of the Christian faith, emphasizing God's faithfulness, the rejection of God's messengers, and the significance of the temple. These theological thoughts and influences have contributed to the development of Christian apologetics, the understanding of God's faithfulness, and the relationship between God and His people in the Christian tradition.

Acts 8

New International Version

8 And Saul approved of their killing him.

The Church Persecuted and Scattered

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. 3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

Philip in Samaria

4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. 5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. 6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. 7 For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8 So there was great joy in that city.

Simon the Sorcerer

9 Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, 10 and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.” 11 They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. 12 But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money 19 and said, “Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”

20 Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! 21 You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. 23 For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”

24 Then Simon answered, “Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me.”

25 After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

Philip and the Ethiopian

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian[a] eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

31 “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

33 In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.”[b]

34 The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” [37] [c] 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Footnotes

Acts 8:27 That is, from the southern Nile region

Acts 8:33 Isaiah 53:7,8 (see Septuagint)

Acts 8:37 Some manuscripts include here Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

Chapter 8 of Acts begins with the persecution of the church in Jerusalem, following the stoning of Stephen. Saul (later known as Paul) is introduced as a young man who is "ravaging the church" and arresting believers, causing them to scatter throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.

One of these believers is Philip, who travels to Samaria and preaches the gospel, performing many miraculous signs and wonders. The Samaritans believe and are baptized, and even Simon, a local magician, is amazed by Philip's abilities and becomes a believer.

Next, an angel of the Lord instructs Philip to go south on a road that leads to Gaza. There, he encounters an Ethiopian eunuch who is reading from the book of Isaiah but cannot understand it. Philip explains the meaning of the prophecy to him, and the eunuch believes and is baptized.

After baptizing the eunuch, Philip is carried away by the Spirit to another place, while the eunuch continues on his way rejoicing. Meanwhile, Philip finds himself in the city of Azotus and begins preaching the gospel there.

The chapter ends with a brief mention of Saul, who is still persecuting the church and "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord."

Overall, chapter 8 of Acts highlights the spread of the gospel beyond Jerusalem and Judea, as believers are scattered due to persecution. The chapter also emphasizes the importance of preaching and evangelism, as well as the power of the Holy Spirit to lead believers where they need to go and to open the hearts of those who hear the gospel.

Here are some important verses from the Book of Acts, chapter 8, along with a brief explanation and where to find them:

Verse 4: "Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."

Explanation: After the stoning of Stephen, the followers of Jesus were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. As they went, they continued to proclaim the gospel.

Location: Acts 8:4

Verse 12: "But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

Explanation: Philip, one of the seven chosen to serve tables in Acts 6, goes to Samaria and preaches the gospel. The people believe and are baptized.

Location: Acts 8:12

Verse 17-18: "Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money."

Explanation: When the apostles in Jerusalem hear that the Samaritans have received the gospel, they send Peter and John to pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Simon, a former sorcerer who had become a believer, offers money to the apostles in an attempt to buy the power to confer the Holy Spirit.

Location: Acts 8:17-18

Verse 26-27: "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship."

Explanation: Philip is directed by an angel to go to a desert road where he meets an Ethiopian eunuch who was a high-ranking official in the Ethiopian government. The eunuch was reading from the book of Isaiah but did not understand it.

Location: Acts 8:26-27

Verse 35: "Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus."

Explanation: The Ethiopian eunuch asks Philip to explain the passage of Scripture he was reading, and Philip takes the opportunity to preach the gospel to him.

Location: Acts 8:35

Acts chapter 8 contains significant theological thoughts and influences, particularly related to the spread of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem and the inclusion of Samaritans in the Christian community:

Theological Thought:

Philip's Ministry in Samaria (Acts 8:4-13): In this chapter, Philip, one of the seven deacons appointed in Acts 6, goes to Samaria and preaches the Gospel, performing miraculous signs. Many Samaritans believe and are baptized. This event marks the expansion of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem and the inclusion of Samaritans, who were traditionally considered outsiders by many Jews.

The Response of Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24): Simon, a magician, believes and is baptized, but he attempts to purchase the power to impart the Holy Spirit. Peter rebukes Simon for his worldly and selfish motives, emphasizing that the Holy Spirit cannot be bought. This episode highlights the need for genuine repentance and the purity of motives in seeking spiritual gifts.

The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40): Philip encounters an Ethiopian eunuch who is reading the book of Isaiah but does not understand it. Philip explains the Gospel to him, and the eunuch believes and is baptized. This encounter illustrates the universal nature of the Gospel and the willingness of God to include all who believe.

Theological Influence:

The Universality of the Gospel: Acts 8 demonstrates that the Gospel is not limited to a specific geographical location or a particular group of people. It begins to fulfill Jesus' command to take the message to "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), extending beyond Jerusalem to Samaria and even to an Ethiopian eunuch.

Inclusion of Samaritans: The inclusion of Samaritans in the Christian community challenges ethnic and religious boundaries. This event has influenced Christian theology and practice by emphasizing the universality of God's grace and the breaking down of barriers between different groups of people.

Authentic Faith and the Holy Spirit: The story of Simon the Sorcerer highlights the importance of genuine faith and pure motives when seeking spiritual gifts. This has implications for discussions about the charismatic movement, the use of spiritual gifts, and the authenticity of faith.

Conversion and Baptism: The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch and his immediate baptism reflect the New Testament practice of baptizing believers upon their confession of faith. This has influenced Christian baptismal practices and theology.

The Work of the Holy Spirit: Acts 8 continues to emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in the spread of the Gospel and the empowerment of believers for ministry. This theme

underscores the ongoing influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church.

In summary, Acts chapter 8 highlights the universality of the Gospel, the inclusion of Samaritans in the Christian community, the importance of authentic faith and motives, the practice of baptism, and the role of the Holy Spirit. These theological thoughts and influences continue to shape the mission and practice of the Christian church.

Acts 9

New International Version

Saul's Conversion

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem.¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. 20 At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. 21 All those who heard him were astonished and asked, “Isn’t he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn’t he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?” 22 Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

23 After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, 24 but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. 25 But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

26 When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. 28 So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews,[a] but they tried to kill him. 30 When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Aeneas and Dorcas

32 As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord’s people who lived in Lydda. 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. 34 “Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat.” Immediately Aeneas got up. 35 All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

36 In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. 37 About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. 38 Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, “Please come at once!”

39 Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

40 Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. 41 He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. 42 This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. 43 Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

Footnotes

Acts 9:29 That is, Jews who had adopted the Greek language and culture

Chapter 9 of Acts begins with the dramatic conversion of Saul, who is on his way to Damascus to arrest and persecute believers there. Suddenly, a light from heaven flashes around him, and he falls to the ground. A voice asks him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Saul responds, "Who are you, Lord?" And the voice answers, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

Blinded by the encounter, Saul is led into Damascus, where he stays for three days without food or drink. Meanwhile, the Lord speaks to a disciple named Ananias, instructing him to go and pray for Saul, who will recover his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ananias is initially hesitant, as Saul is known for his persecution of believers, but he obeys the Lord and visits Saul. He lays his hands on him and prays, and Saul's sight is restored. He is also baptized and begins to preach the gospel, causing great amazement and confusion among those who knew him as a persecutor of believers.

After some time, Saul's preaching angers the Jews in Damascus, and they plot to kill him. His disciples lower him in a basket over the city wall, allowing him to escape.

The chapter then shifts to the story of Peter, who is visiting believers in Lydda and Joppa. There, he heals a paralyzed man named Aeneas and raises a woman named Tabitha from the dead, causing many to believe in the Lord.

Overall, chapter 9 of Acts is a pivotal chapter in the book, as it introduces the dramatic conversion of Saul and his transformation into the apostle Paul, who will go on to become one of the most influential figures in the early church. The chapter also highlights the power of God to change hearts and lives, as well as the importance of obedience to His call.

Here are some important verses from the Book of Acts, chapter 9, along with a brief explanation and where to find them:

Verse 1-2: "Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem."

Explanation: Saul (who later becomes the apostle Paul) was a zealous persecutor of Christians. He was on his way to Damascus to arrest any Christians he found there when he had a dramatic encounter with Jesus on the road.

Location: Acts 9:1-2

Verse 3-4: "As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'"

Explanation: As Saul was on his way to Damascus, he had a miraculous encounter with Jesus Christ. Jesus appeared to him in a bright light, and Saul was struck blind.

Location: Acts 9:3-4

Verse 10-11: "In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, 'Ananias!' 'Yes, Lord,' he answered. The Lord told him, 'Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.'"

Explanation: The Lord speaks to Ananias, a disciple in Damascus, and instructs him to go to Saul, who is staying in the house of Judas on Straight Street. Ananias is hesitant because he knows Saul's reputation as a persecutor of Christians.

Location: Acts 9:10-11

Verse 17-18: "Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized."

Explanation: Ananias goes to Saul, lays his hands on him, and prays for him. Saul's sight is restored, and he is filled with the Holy Spirit. He is then baptized and begins to preach the gospel.

Location: Acts 9:17-18

Verse 31: "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers."

Explanation: After Saul's conversion, the church in the region experiences a time of peace and growth. The believers continue to live in the fear of the Lord and are encouraged by the Holy Spirit.

Location: Acts 9:31

Acts chapter 9 is a pivotal chapter in the New Testament because it records the dramatic conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who later becomes known as the apostle Paul. This chapter contains significant theological thoughts and influences:

Theological Thought:

The Conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1-19): Acts 9 begins with Saul, a zealous persecutor of Christians, traveling to Damascus to arrest followers of Jesus. On the road, he has a powerful encounter with the risen Christ, resulting in his conversion. Saul is struck blind, and Jesus instructs him to go to Damascus, where he will be told what to do. This

experience highlights the transformative power of encountering Christ and the possibility of radical conversion.

Ananias' Role (Acts 9:10-19): Ananias, a disciple in Damascus, is called by the Lord to go and lay hands on Saul to restore his sight. Initially hesitant due to Saul's reputation as a persecutor, Ananias obeys the Lord's command. This episode underscores the importance of obedience to God's call and the role of ordinary believers in God's redemptive plan.

Saul's Preaching (Acts 9:19-31): Following his conversion and time in Damascus, Saul begins to preach Jesus as the Christ in the synagogues, proclaiming his newfound faith. This marks the beginning of Saul's ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles and one of the most influential figures in early Christianity.

Theological Influence:

The Transformative Power of Conversion: Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus serves as a powerful illustration of the transformative power of encountering Christ. This theme has had a profound influence on Christian theology, emphasizing the possibility of radical change and redemption through faith in Jesus.

Divine Calling and Obedience: Ananias' response to God's call to minister to Saul illustrates the theme of divine calling and obedience in Christian service. Ananias' willingness to follow God's direction despite his initial reservations has inspired believers to be obedient to God's leading in their lives.

The Apostle Paul: Acts 9 marks the beginning of Paul's ministry, and his conversion experience on the road to Damascus is a foundational event in the New Testament. The teachings and writings of the apostle Paul have had a profound and enduring influence on Christian theology, particularly in areas such as salvation by grace through faith, justification, and the role of the Gentiles in the church.

The Expansion of the Gospel: Saul's conversion and subsequent mission to the Gentiles played a pivotal role in the expansion of the Gospel beyond Jewish communities. This influence has shaped the understanding of the church's mission to reach people of all nations and backgrounds.

In summary, Acts chapter 9 emphasizes the transformative power of conversion, the importance of divine calling and obedience, and the influential ministry of the apostle Paul. These theological thoughts and influences continue to shape Christian understanding of salvation, discipleship, and the mission of the church.

Acts 10

New International Version

Cornelius Calls for Peter

10 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. 2 He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. 3 One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked.

The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. 5 Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. 6 He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.”

7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. 8 He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

Peter’s Vision

9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13 Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

14 “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

15 The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate. 18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three[a] men are looking for you. 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

21 Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?”

22 The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” 23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Peter at Cornelius's House

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. 24 The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. 26 But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

27 While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. 28 He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. 29 So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

30 Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me 31 and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. 32 Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' 33 So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

34 Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35 but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. 36 You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37 You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

39 "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, 40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 41 He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. 43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues[b] and praising God.

Then Peter said, 47 “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” 48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Footnotes

Acts 10:19 One early manuscript two; other manuscripts do not have the number.

Acts 10:46 Or other languages

Chapter 10 of Acts begins with the story of Cornelius, a Roman centurion who is described as a devout man who feared God, gave generously to the poor, and prayed regularly. One day, an angel appears to Cornelius and tells him to send for a man named Peter, who is staying in Joppa.

Meanwhile, Peter has a vision in which a sheet descends from heaven, containing all kinds of animals, both clean and unclean according to Jewish dietary laws. A voice tells Peter to kill and eat, but Peter refuses, saying that he has never eaten anything unclean. The voice responds, "What God has made clean, you must not call common."

As Peter is pondering the meaning of the vision, Cornelius' messengers arrive and ask him to come to Cornelius' house. Peter agrees to go, despite the fact that Cornelius is a Gentile, and Jews at that time did not associate with Gentiles.

When Peter arrives at Cornelius' house, he explains that it is not lawful for a Jew to associate with Gentiles, but that God has shown him that he should not call any person common or unclean. Peter then preaches the gospel to Cornelius and his household, and the Holy Spirit falls on all who hear the message, causing Peter and his Jewish companions to be amazed.

Peter baptizes Cornelius and his household, and they become the first Gentile converts to the Christian faith. This event marks a significant turning point in the early church, as it demonstrates that the gospel is for all people, regardless of their ethnicity or background. Overall, chapter 10 of Acts emphasizes the inclusivity of the gospel message, which is available to all people, regardless of their cultural or religious background. The chapter also highlights the power of God to break down barriers and unite people from diverse backgrounds in the shared experience of faith in Christ.

Here are some important verses from the Book of Acts, chapter 10, along with a brief explanation and where to find them:

Verse 1-2: "At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly."

Explanation: Cornelius was a Roman centurion who lived in Caesarea. He and his family were devout and God-fearing, and he was known for his generosity to the poor and his regular prayer to God.

Location: Acts 10:1-2

Verse 9-16: "About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four

corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. Then a voice told him, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.' 'Surely not, Lord!' Peter replied. 'I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.' The voice spoke to him a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'

Explanation: Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, has a vision in which he is told to eat animals that were considered unclean under Jewish law. He protests, saying he has never eaten anything impure or unclean. However, he is told not to consider anything impure that God has made clean.

Location: Acts 10:9-16

Verse 34-35: "Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.'"

Explanation: Peter speaks these words to Cornelius and his household, recognizing that God does not show favoritism based on nationality or ethnicity. He declares that God accepts anyone who fears him and does what is right.

Location: Acts 10:34-35

Verse 44-46: "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God."

Explanation: As Peter is speaking to Cornelius and his household, the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and they begin to speak in tongues and praise God. This astonishes the Jewish believers who had come with Peter, as they had not previously believed that Gentiles could receive the Holy Spirit.

Location: Acts 10:44-46

Verse 47-48: "Then Peter said, 'Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.' So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days."

Explanation: After seeing that Cornelius and his household had received the Holy Spirit, Peter orders that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. He stays with them for a few days, likely to teach and encourage them in their faith.

Location: Acts 10:47-48

Acts chapter 10 is a crucial chapter in the New Testament because it records the conversion of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and the inclusion of Gentiles (non-Jews) into the Christian community. This chapter contains significant theological thoughts and influences:

Theological Thought:

Cornelius' Vision and Peter's Vision (Acts 10:1-23): Cornelius, a devout Gentile, receives a vision from God instructing him to send for Peter in Joppa. Meanwhile, Peter has a vision of a sheet filled with unclean animals being lowered from heaven and is told to kill

and eat. These visions lead to a profound theological revelation: God is opening the way for the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian faith.

Peter's Sermon (Acts 10:34-43): Upon arriving at Cornelius' house, Peter realizes the significance of his vision and declares that God shows no partiality but accepts people from every nation who fear Him and do what is right. He preaches the Gospel to Cornelius and his household, emphasizing the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the means of forgiveness and salvation.

Gentile Conversion and the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-48): While Peter is still speaking, the Holy Spirit falls upon Cornelius and his household, evidenced by speaking in tongues and praising God. This event highlights the immediate inclusion of Gentiles into the Christian community and underscores the role of the Holy Spirit in confirming their acceptance.

Theological Influence:

Inclusion of Gentiles: Acts 10 is a pivotal moment in the New Testament because it represents the clear theological shift toward the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian faith without requiring them to become Jewish proselytes first. This event has had a profound influence on Christian theology and practice, emphasizing the universality of the Gospel message and the breaking down of ethnic and cultural barriers.

The Role of the Holy Spirit: The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his household without circumcision or conversion to Judaism marks a significant theological development. It has influenced discussions on the role of the Holy Spirit in confirming faith and the experience of spiritual gifts.

The Authority of Peter: Acts 10 highlights Peter's role as a key figure in the early church and underscores his authority in proclaiming the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. This has influenced the understanding of apostolic authority within Christianity.

The Universality of Salvation: Peter's sermon in Acts 10 reinforces the theological idea that salvation is available to all people, regardless of their nationality or background. This theological perspective has shaped Christian missions and outreach to diverse cultures and nations.

In summary, Acts chapter 10 emphasizes the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian faith, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the universality of salvation through Jesus Christ. These theological thoughts and influences continue to shape Christian theology, mission, and the understanding of God's inclusive grace.

Acts 11

New International Version

Peter Explains His Actions

11 The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised

believers criticized him 3 and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

4 Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: 5 “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. 6 I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. 7 Then I heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’

8 “I replied, ‘Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

9 “The voice spoke from heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’ 10 This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

11 “Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. 12 The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. 13 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. 14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.’

15 “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with[a] water, but you will be baptized with[b] the Holy Spirit.’ 17 So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?”

18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

The Church in Antioch

19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. 21 The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

22 News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. 24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

27 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29 The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. 30 This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Footnotes

Acts 11:16 Or in

Acts 11:16 Or in

Chapter 11 of Acts begins with Peter's report to the apostles and brothers in Jerusalem about his visit to Cornelius' house and the conversion of Cornelius and his household. At first, some of the Jewish believers criticize Peter for associating with Gentiles and eating with them, which was against Jewish law. However, when Peter explains the vision he had received from the Lord and how the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his household, they begin to praise God and acknowledge that the gospel is for all people, not just Jews. The chapter then describes how some believers who had been scattered during the persecution that broke out after Stephen's death began preaching the gospel to Gentiles in Antioch. The Lord blesses their ministry, and a great number of people come to faith in Christ. When the apostles in Jerusalem hear about this, they send Barnabas to Antioch to investigate and encourage the new believers.

Barnabas is pleased with what he sees and encourages the new believers to remain faithful to the Lord. He also seeks out Saul, who has been preaching in Tarsus, and brings him to Antioch to help teach the new believers. Together, Barnabas and Saul spend a year teaching and discipling the new believers in Antioch.

The chapter concludes with a description of how prophets from Jerusalem come to Antioch and predict a severe famine. The believers in Antioch respond by sending relief to the believers in Judea, demonstrating their love and concern for their fellow believers in other parts of the world.

Overall, chapter 11 of Acts emphasizes the importance of unity and inclusivity in the early church, as well as the need for believers to care for and support one another, even across cultural and geographical boundaries. The chapter also highlights the role of leaders like Barnabas and Saul in teaching and discipling new believers, and the importance of listening to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in ministry.

Here are some important verses from Acts chapter 11, along with a brief explanation and their location in the chapter:

1. "The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God." (Acts 11:1) Explanation: This verse sets the stage for the rest of the chapter, which tells the story of how the early Christian community

- grappled with the idea that Gentiles (non-Jewish people) could also be welcomed into the faith.
2. "So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?" (Acts 11:17)
Explanation: This is a statement made by the apostle Peter, who has just recounted his experience of sharing the Gospel with a group of Gentiles and witnessing them receive the Holy Spirit. The statement emphasizes the idea that God's grace is available to all people, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background.
 3. "The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord." (Acts 11:21) Explanation: This verse describes the spread of Christianity among the Gentiles, particularly in the city of Antioch. It emphasizes the power of God's presence and the transformative impact of the Gospel message.
 4. "Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." (Acts 11:25-26) Explanation: This passage describes the introduction of Saul (later known as Paul) into the Christian community and his work alongside Barnabas to teach and disciple new believers in Antioch. It also notes the origin of the term "Christians," which was first used to describe the followers of Jesus in this city.

Acts chapter 11 continues the narrative from Acts chapter 10, providing additional theological thoughts and influences related to the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian community and the expansion of the Gospel:

Theological Thought:

Peter's Report to the Jerusalem Church (Acts 11:1-18): In this chapter, Peter returns to Jerusalem after his encounter with Cornelius and is confronted by Jewish believers who question his association with Gentiles. Peter recounts his vision and the events at Cornelius' house, explaining how the Holy Spirit had fallen upon the Gentiles just as it did upon the Jewish believers at Pentecost. This explanation leads to a theological revelation that God has granted repentance that leads to life even to the Gentiles.

The Gospel Spreading to Antioch (Acts 11:19-26): The believers who were scattered due to persecution in Jerusalem begin preaching the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles in Antioch. The church in Antioch becomes a significant center for early Christianity, where the disciples are first called "Christians."

Relief for Judea (Acts 11:27-30): The chapter concludes with a mention of a prophecy concerning a famine throughout the Roman world. The disciples in Antioch collect resources to send as relief to the believers in Judea, demonstrating the sense of unity and care among early Christians.

Theological Influence:

Inclusion of Gentiles: Acts 11 reinforces the theological thought introduced in Acts 10 regarding the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian community. It provides additional confirmation of God's acceptance of Gentiles into the body of believers, challenging the idea that Christianity was exclusively for Jews.

The Role of the Holy Spirit: The recognition of the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of Gentile believers without prior Jewish conversion has significant theological implications. It highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in confirming and empowering faith and underscores the universality of the Spirit's work.

Unity in the Church: The relief effort for Judea reflects the sense of unity and care among early Christians, emphasizing the importance of mutual support and assistance within the Christian community. This has influenced the concept of charity and the church's role in providing for the needs of its members and beyond.

The Emergence of the Term "Christian": Acts 11 marks the first usage of the term "Christian" to describe the followers of Jesus. This term has become central in identifying believers in Christ and has had a lasting influence on Christian identity and nomenclature.

In summary, Acts chapter 11 continues to emphasize the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian community, the role of the Holy Spirit, unity within the church, and the spread of the Gospel to diverse regions. These theological thoughts and influences contribute to the understanding of the early church's mission and the universality of the Gospel message.

Acts 12

New International Version

Peter's Miraculous Escape From Prison

12 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3 When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. 4 After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

6 The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

8 Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. 9 Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10 They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

11 Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."

12 When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. 13 Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. 14 When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

15 "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

16 But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. 17 Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this," he said, and then he left for another place.

18 In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. 19 After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed.

Herod's Death

Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. 20 He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. After securing the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.

21 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 22 They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." 23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

24 But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.

Barnabas and Saul Sent Off

25 When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from[a] Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

Footnotes

Acts 12:25 Some manuscripts to

Chapter 12 of Acts begins with the persecution of the church by King Herod Agrippa. Herod puts James, the brother of John, to death with the sword, which pleases the Jewish leaders. Herod then arrests Peter and places him in prison, intending to execute him after the Passover.

However, the church in Jerusalem begins to pray fervently for Peter's release. One night, while Peter is sleeping in prison, an angel of the Lord appears to him and miraculously frees him from his chains. The angel leads Peter out of the prison, and Peter realizes that he has been delivered by the Lord.

Peter goes to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many believers have gathered to pray for his release. When he knocks on the door, a servant girl named Rhoda recognizes his voice and is so overjoyed that she forgets to let him in. When she tells the others that Peter is at the door, they think she is crazy, but when they open the door and see Peter, they are amazed and grateful to the Lord for his miraculous deliverance.

The chapter then describes how Herod, who has been seeking to capture Peter, is struck down by an angel of the Lord and dies. The word of the Lord continues to spread and grow, and Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch after delivering the relief funds to the believers in Judea.

Overall, chapter 12 of Acts emphasizes the power of prayer and the miraculous deliverance of Peter from prison. The chapter also highlights the persecution faced by the early church, as well as the opposition from Jewish leaders and Roman authorities. The death of Herod serves as a reminder that even those who oppose the gospel will ultimately face judgment from the Lord.

Here are some important verses from Acts chapter 12, along with a brief explanation and their location in the chapter:

1. "About that time King Herod laid hands on some who belonged to the church, in order to mistreat them." (Acts 12:1) Explanation: This verse sets the stage for the rest of the chapter, which tells the story of how King Herod persecuted the early Christian community.
2. "So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him." (Acts 12:5) Explanation: This verse describes how Peter was arrested and imprisoned by King Herod, but also emphasizes the power of prayer within the Christian community.
3. "Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. 'Quick, get up!' he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists." (Acts 12:7) Explanation: This verse describes the miraculous intervention of an angel of the Lord, who helped Peter escape from prison.
4. "When Peter realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying." (Acts 12:12) Explanation: This verse describes how Peter sought refuge with other believers after his escape from prison.
5. "But the word of God continued to spread and flourish." (Acts 12:24) Explanation: This verse concludes the chapter by highlighting the ongoing growth

and impact of the early Christian movement, despite the persecution and obstacles it faced.

Acts chapter 12 recounts the persecution faced by the early church and the miraculous deliverance of the apostle Peter from prison. While this chapter doesn't introduce major theological concepts, it does provide some theological thoughts and influences:

Theological Thought:

Persecution and Prayer (Acts 12:1-5): King Herod Agrippa I, seeking to gain favor with the Jewish leaders, arrests James, the brother of John, and imprisons Peter with the intention of executing him. The church responds with fervent prayer for Peter's release, highlighting the importance of seeking God's intervention in times of persecution and difficulty.

Peter's Miraculous Release (Acts 12:6-19): While Peter is imprisoned, an angel of the Lord miraculously frees him, leading him out of the prison. This event underscores the belief in divine intervention and the power of prayer in the face of persecution.

Herod's Demise (Acts 12:20-23): Herod, who had sought to persecute the church and exalt himself, is struck down by an angel of the Lord and dies. This episode illustrates the theological concept of divine judgment on those who oppose God's purposes.

The Growth of the Word of God (Acts 12:24-25): The chapter ends by emphasizing the continued growth and spread of the Word of God despite opposition and persecution. This theme reflects the unstoppable nature of the Gospel message.

Theological Influence:

The Power of Prayer: Acts 12 emphasizes the power of prayer in times of persecution and crisis. The church's earnest prayers for Peter's release illustrate the importance of seeking God's intervention through prayer, a practice that has continued to influence Christian theology and practice.

Divine Intervention: The miraculous release of Peter from prison underscores the belief in God's ability to intervene supernaturally on behalf of His followers. This has influenced the understanding of divine providence and the belief that God can work miracles in response to the prayers of His people.

Divine Judgment: Herod's demise, portrayed as divine judgment for his persecution of the church, serves as a reminder of the biblical concept of divine justice and judgment. It has influenced discussions on the consequences of opposing God's purposes.

The Unstoppable Gospel: The chapter concludes by highlighting the continued growth of the Word of God, despite persecution and opposition. This theme has inspired Christians

to persevere in spreading the Gospel message, trusting that God's Word will ultimately prevail.

In summary, Acts chapter 12 reinforces the importance of prayer, divine intervention, divine judgment, and the unstoppable nature of the Gospel. These theological thoughts and influences have shaped Christian faith, prayer practices, and the understanding of God's sovereignty in the face of persecution.

Acts 13

New International Version

13 1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

On Cyprus

4 The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. 5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

6 They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, 7 who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. 9 Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, 10 "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? 11 Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun."

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12 When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

In Pisidian Antioch

13 From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. 14 From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. 15 After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak."

16 Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! 17 The God of the people of Israel chose our

ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; 18 for about forty years he endured their conduct[a] in the wilderness; 19 and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. 20 All this took about 450 years.

“After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. 21 Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. 22 After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’

23 “From this man’s descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. 24 Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. 25 As John was completing his work, he said: ‘Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.’

26 “Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. 27 The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. 28 Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. 29 When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead, 31 and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

32 “We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

“‘You are my son;
today I have become your father.’[b]

34 God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said,

“‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’[c]

35 So it is also stated elsewhere:

“‘You will not let your holy one see decay.’[d]

36 “Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. 37 But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

38 “Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39 Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. 40 Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:

41 ““Look, you scoffers,
wonder and perish,
for I am going to do something in your days
that you would never believe,
even if someone told you.’[e]”

42 As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. 43 When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. 47 For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

““I have made you[f] a light for the Gentiles,
that you[g] may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’[h]”

48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. 50 But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51 So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Footnotes

Acts 13:18 Some manuscripts he cared for them

Acts 13:33 Psalm 2:7

Acts 13:34 Isaiah 55:3

Acts 13:35 Psalm 16:10 (see Septuagint)

Acts 13:41 Hab. 1:5

Acts 13:47 The Greek is singular.

Acts 13:47 The Greek is singular.

Acts 13:47 Isaiah 49:6

Chapter 13 of Acts marks a significant turning point in the book, as it begins the section where the focus shifts from Peter to Paul and his missionary journeys.

The chapter begins with the church in Antioch commissioning Barnabas and Saul (who is also called Paul) for the work to which the Holy Spirit has called them. The two men set out on their first missionary journey, traveling to the island of Cyprus and then to various cities in Asia Minor.

In each city they visit, Barnabas and Paul first go to the Jewish synagogue and preach the gospel to the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles who worship there. They often meet with opposition from the Jews, who are jealous of their success and accuse them of blasphemy.

In one city, Pisidian Antioch, Paul gives a lengthy sermon in the synagogue, tracing the history of Israel from the time of the patriarchs to the coming of Jesus Christ. Many of the Jews and Gentiles who hear Paul's message believe and are saved, while others reject it and persecute Paul and Barnabas.

The chapter also describes how the Holy Spirit sets apart Barnabas and Saul for a specific work, and how they fast and pray before beginning their journey. It highlights the power of the gospel to bring salvation to both Jews and Gentiles, and the role of persecution and opposition in the spread of the gospel.

Overall, chapter 13 of Acts sets the stage for the rest of the book, as it introduces Paul as the primary figure in the missionary work of the early church. It emphasizes the importance of being led by the Holy Spirit and the power of the gospel to transform lives and bring salvation.

Here are some important verses from Acts chapter 13, along with a brief explanation and their location in the chapter:

1. "Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul." (Acts 13:1) Explanation: This verse introduces the church at Antioch and the leaders who were active there, including Saul (who would later become known as the apostle Paul).
2. "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" (Acts 13:2) Explanation: This verse describes how the Holy Spirit spoke to the leaders in Antioch and called Barnabas and Saul to begin a new mission, which would become known as Paul's first missionary journey.
3. "So Barnabas and Saul were sent off by the Holy Spirit. They went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus." (Acts 13:4) Explanation: This verse describes how Barnabas and Saul obeyed the Holy Spirit's call and began their journey by traveling to Cyprus.
4. "But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, 'You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?'" (Acts 13:9-10) Explanation: This verse describes an encounter between Paul and a man named Elymas, who was opposing the gospel message. Paul speaks boldly and confronts Elymas, and also reveals that he will now be known as Paul (rather than Saul).

5. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed." (Acts 13:48)

Acts chapter 13 is a pivotal chapter in the New Testament because it records the beginning of Paul's first missionary journey, which had a profound impact on the spread of Christianity to the Gentile world. This chapter contains significant theological thoughts and influences:

Theological Thought:

Commissioning of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:1-3): The chapter begins with the church in Antioch commissioning Barnabas and Saul (later known as Paul) for missionary work. This event underscores the church's active involvement in sending out missionaries, highlighting the importance of missions and the role of the local church in advancing the Gospel.

Paul's Sermon in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:14-41): In this chapter, Paul delivers a significant sermon in the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia, recounting the history of Israel and emphasizing Jesus as the promised Messiah. He proclaims salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins. This sermon reflects the core message of the Gospel and serves as a model for Christian evangelism.

Opposition and Turning to the Gentiles (Acts 13:42-52): The Jewish leaders in Antioch of Pisidia reject Paul's message, leading him to declare that since they have rejected the Gospel, he will turn to the Gentiles. This turning point represents a significant theological shift in the mission of the early church, moving from primarily Jewish outreach to a broader Gentile mission.

Theological Influence:

Missions and Sending of Missionaries: Acts 13 illustrates the importance of missions and the sending out of missionaries to proclaim the Gospel to unreached and distant places. This has had a lasting influence on the practice of mission work and the establishment of missionary societies and organizations.

The Message of Salvation through Jesus: Paul's sermon in Antioch of Pisidia encapsulates the core theological message of the Gospel—that salvation is available through faith in Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins. This message has been central to Christian preaching and evangelism throughout history.

The Shift Toward Gentile Inclusion: Acts 13 marks a significant theological shift in the early church's mission. Paul's declaration that he will turn to the Gentiles reflects the broader inclusion of non-Jews in the Christian community. This shift has influenced the understanding of the universality of the Gospel and the inclusion of Gentiles without requiring Jewish conversion.

The Establishment of Christian Communities: Throughout Paul's missionary journey in Acts 13 and subsequent chapters, he plants churches and establishes Christian communities in various regions. This has influenced the organization and structure of Christian congregations and the development of early Christian theology.

Paul's Apostolic Ministry: Acts 13 marks the beginning of Paul's prominent role as an apostle to the Gentiles. His missionary journeys and teachings have had a profound and enduring influence on Christian theology, particularly in areas such as soteriology (theology of salvation), ecclesiology (theology of the church), and eschatology (theology of the end times).

In summary, Acts chapter 13 emphasizes missions, the message of salvation through Jesus Christ, the turning to the Gentiles, and the influential ministry of the apostle Paul. These theological thoughts and influences continue to shape Christian mission, theology, and the global spread of the Gospel.

Acts 14

New International Version

In Iconium

14 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. 2 But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3 So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. 4 The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. 5 There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. 6 But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, 7 where they continued to preach the gospel.

In Lystra and Derbe

8 In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. 9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed 10 and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

11 When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" 12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. 13 The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: 15 "Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these

worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. 16 In the past, he let all nations go their own way. 17 Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.” 18 Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

19 Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. 20 But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

21 They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, 22 strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said. 23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders^[a] for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. 24 After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, 25 and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

26 From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. 27 On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

Footnotes

Acts 14:23 Or Barnabas ordained elders; or Barnabas had elders elected

Chapter 14 of Acts continues the account of Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey. They travel to several cities in Asia Minor, preaching the gospel and establishing churches.

In Iconium, Paul and Barnabas preach in the Jewish synagogue and many Jews and Gentiles believe, but they also face opposition from unbelieving Jews who stir up the crowds against them. The apostles stay in Iconium for some time, continuing to preach and perform miracles, but eventually have to flee the city due to a plot to stone them. In Lystra, Paul heals a man who was lame from birth, and the people there believe that he and Barnabas are gods in human form. The people begin to offer sacrifices to them, but the apostles quickly correct this misunderstanding, preaching that they are only men who have come to bring them the good news of salvation.

However, unbelieving Jews from Antioch and Iconium come to Lystra and stir up the crowds against Paul and Barnabas, causing them to be stoned and left for dead. But the Lord miraculously heals Paul, and the apostles continue on to the city of Derbe, where they preach the gospel and make many disciples.

After they have completed their journey, Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, where they report on the work that the Lord has done through them, including how He opened a

door of faith to the Gentiles. The chapter ends with the apostles staying in Antioch for some time, continuing to teach and preach the word of the Lord. Overall, chapter 14 of Acts highlights the opposition and persecution faced by the early church, especially from those who reject the message of salvation. It also emphasizes the power of the gospel to transform lives and the importance of staying focused on the Lord despite difficulties and setbacks.

Here are some important verses from Acts 14, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed." (Acts 14:1)

This verse describes how Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium and preached in the synagogue, converting many Jews and Greeks to Christianity.

2. "But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers." (Acts 14:2)

This verse highlights the opposition that Paul and Barnabas faced from those who did not believe their message, causing them to turn others against them.

3. "So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders." (Acts 14:3)

Despite the opposition they faced, Paul and Barnabas continued to preach and perform miracles, with the Lord confirming the truth of their message.

4. "In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, 'Stand up on your feet!' At that, the man jumped up and began to walk." (Acts 14:8-10)

This verse describes the miraculous healing of a lame man by Paul, which amazed the crowds and helped to spread the message of Christianity.

5. "Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe." (Acts 14:19-20)

This verse describes the persecution that Paul and Barnabas faced, with Paul being stoned and left for dead by his opponents. However, with the help of his disciples, he was able to recover and continue preaching.

Acts chapter 14 continues to document the missionary journey of the apostle Paul and his companion Barnabas. This chapter contains theological thoughts and influences related to their mission and the response of the people they encountered:

Theological Thought:

Miraculous Healings (Acts 14:8-10): In the city of Lystra, Paul heals a man who had been lame from birth. The crowd responds by believing that Paul and Barnabas are gods. This

event highlights the power of God to perform miracles through His apostles and underscores the need for discernment in recognizing the true source of divine power.

Preaching the Good News (Acts 14:15-17): In Lystra, when the people attempt to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas, they declare that they are merely human beings proclaiming the good news of the living God. They emphasize the importance of turning from idols to serve the true and living God. This reflects the core message of the Gospel and the call to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Perseverance Amid Persecution (Acts 14:19-20): In Iconium and Lystra, Paul faces opposition and is stoned and left for dead. However, he miraculously survives and continues his mission. This illustrates the theme of perseverance in the face of persecution and the commitment to proclaim the Gospel despite hardships.

Theological Influence:

Miraculous Healings and Divine Power: The accounts of miraculous healings in Acts 14 reinforce the belief in divine power and the authority of the apostles to perform signs and wonders. These accounts have influenced the understanding of spiritual gifts and the role of miracles in the early church.

The Message of Repentance: Paul and Barnabas emphasize the need for people to turn from idols and serve the true and living God. This message of repentance and turning to God remains a central theological theme in Christian evangelism and preaching.

Perseverance in Ministry: The apostle Paul's perseverance in continuing his mission despite facing stoning and persecution has inspired generations of Christians to endure hardships and remain steadfast in their faith and service.

Theological Endurance: Acts 14 highlights the resilience and theological endurance of the early Christian missionaries. Their determination to preach the Gospel in the face of adversity has served as a model for Christian mission work and ministry in challenging circumstances.

In summary, Acts chapter 14 emphasizes the power of God, the message of repentance, perseverance amid persecution, and the theological endurance of Paul and Barnabas in their missionary journey. These theological thoughts and influences have played a role in shaping Christian mission, evangelism, and the understanding of divine power and perseverance in the Christian faith.

Acts 15

New International Version

The Council at Jerusalem

15 Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”² This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So

Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. 3 The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. 4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

5 Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”

6 The apostles and elders met to consider this question. 7 After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. 8 God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. 9 He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. 10 Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? 11 No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

12 The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. 13 When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me. 14 Simon[a] has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. 15 The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

16 ““After this I will return
and rebuild David’s fallen tent.
Its ruins I will rebuild,
and I will restore it,
17 that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,
even all the Gentiles who bear my name,
says the Lord, who does these things’[b]—
18 things known from long ago.[c]

19 “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. 20 Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. 21 For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

The Council’s Letter to Gentile Believers

22 Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers. 23 With them they sent the following letter:

The apostles and elders, your brothers,

To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:

Greetings.

24 We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. 25 So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— 26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. 28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: 29 You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell.

30 So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. 31 The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. 32 Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. 33 After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. [34] [d] 35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas

36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. 39 They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Footnotes

Acts 15:14 Greek Simeon, a variant of Simon; that is, Peter

Acts 15:17 Amos 9:11,12 (see Septuagint)

Acts 15:18 Some manuscripts things’— / 18 the Lord’s work is known to him from long ago

Acts 15:34 Some manuscripts include here But Silas decided to remain there.

Chapter 15 of Acts focuses on a major controversy within the early church regarding whether or not Gentile believers needed to be circumcised and follow Jewish law in order to be saved.

The chapter begins with some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem coming to Antioch and teaching the Gentile believers that they must be circumcised and follow Jewish law in order to be saved. This causes a great dispute and debate, and eventually Paul and Barnabas are sent to Jerusalem to discuss the matter with the apostles and elders there. When they arrive in Jerusalem, they meet with the apostles and elders and report on the work that God has done among the Gentiles through their ministry. Some of the Pharisees who had become believers also argue that Gentiles must be circumcised and follow Jewish law in order to be saved.

After much discussion, Peter stands up and reminds everyone that God had already shown His acceptance of the Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He had given to the Jewish believers. He argues that it would be wrong to put a yoke on the Gentile believers that even the Jews were unable to bear.

James, the brother of Jesus, also speaks, quoting from the Old Testament to show that God had always intended to save Gentiles, and that the apostles should not make it difficult for them to turn to God. He suggests that the Gentile believers should simply be asked to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality.

The apostles and elders agree with this suggestion and write a letter to the Gentile believers, informing them that they do not need to be circumcised or follow Jewish law in order to be saved, but they should follow the guidelines James suggested. The letter is sent with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, where it is well received and brings joy to the believers.

Overall, chapter 15 of Acts shows how the early church dealt with a major issue of theology and practice, emphasizing the importance of seeking God's guidance through prayer and discussion, and ultimately finding unity in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It also highlights the importance of God's grace and the fact that salvation is available to all who believe, regardless of their cultural or religious background.

Here are some important verses from Acts 15, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: 'Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.'" (Acts 15:1)

This verse describes the controversy that arose among early Christians over whether circumcision was necessary for salvation.

2. "After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: 'Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.'" (Acts 15:7)

This verse describes Peter's defense of the Gentile converts to Christianity, arguing that they should not be required to follow Jewish customs such as circumcision.

3. "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God." (Acts 15:19)

This verse summarizes the decision reached by the council of apostles and elders in Jerusalem, that Gentile converts to Christianity should not be required to follow Jewish customs beyond a few basic requirements.

4. "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality." (Acts 15:28-29)

This verse outlines the basic requirements that the council of apostles and elders in Jerusalem agreed upon for Gentile converts to Christianity.

5. "Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers." (Acts 15:32)

This verse describes the role of Judas and Silas in encouraging and strengthening the early Christian community.

Acts chapter 15 records a significant event in the early church, often referred to as the Jerusalem Council. This chapter contains important theological thoughts and influences related to issues of circumcision and the inclusion of Gentile believers:

Theological Thought:

The Circumcision Controversy (Acts 15:1-5): Some Jewish believers, often identified as the "Judaizers," were teaching that Gentile converts to Christianity needed to be circumcised and follow Jewish customs to be saved. This led to a significant dispute within the church. The theological question at the heart of this controversy was whether salvation required adherence to the Jewish law and customs.

Peter and Paul's Testimony (Acts 15:6-12): At the council in Jerusalem, Peter and Paul share their experiences of God's acceptance of Gentiles through faith, emphasizing that God had purified the hearts of Gentile believers by faith and that they should not be burdened with the law.

James' Decision (Acts 15:13-21): James, the leader of the Jerusalem church, offers a decision that the Gentile believers should not be burdened with circumcision and the full weight of the Jewish law. However, he does recommend that Gentile believers abstain from certain practices, primarily those associated with idolatry and sexual immorality.

Theological Influence:

Theological Position on Circumcision: The Jerusalem Council's decision not to require Gentile believers to be circumcised and fully observe the Jewish law has had a profound theological influence on the Christian understanding of salvation. This event marks a crucial moment in the early church's recognition that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone and not by adherence to Jewish customs.

Salvation by Grace Through Faith: The theological principle that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ is central to Christian theology and was reaffirmed at the Jerusalem Council. This concept has had a lasting influence on the understanding of justification, salvation, and the relationship between faith and works.

The Inclusivity of the Gospel: The decision to include Gentiles in the Christian community without imposing Jewish customs reflects the inclusivity of the Gospel message. This has influenced the understanding that the Gospel is for all people, regardless of their cultural or ethnic background.

Moral Guidelines for Gentile Believers: The recommendations made by James regarding the avoidance of idolatry and sexual immorality have influenced discussions on Christian ethics and moral guidelines for believers, emphasizing the need for holy living.

The Authority of Church Leadership: The Jerusalem Council's decision, led by James, demonstrates the authority of church leaders and the importance of resolving theological disputes within the framework of the church. This has influenced discussions on church governance and decision-making processes.

In summary, Acts chapter 15 addresses theological questions related to circumcision, salvation by faith, the inclusivity of the Gospel, moral guidelines, and the authority of church leadership. These theological thoughts and influences have played a significant role in shaping Christian doctrine, ethics, and the understanding of salvation.

Acts 16

New International Version

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

16 Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. 2 The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Lydia's Conversion in Philippi

11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district[a] of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Paul and Silas in Prison

16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." 18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

19 When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. 20 They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar 21 by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. 23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24 When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. 27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

35 When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: “Release those men.” 36 The jailer told Paul, “The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.”

37 But Paul said to the officers: “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.”

38 The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. 39 They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. 40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

Footnotes

Acts 16:12 The text and meaning of the Greek for the leading city of that district are uncertain.

Chapter 16 of Acts begins with Paul and Silas traveling through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, where they deliver the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem to the churches. They then set out for Asia, but the Holy Spirit prevents them from preaching there, leading them instead to travel to the region of Macedonia.

In Macedonia, they come to the city of Philippi and meet a woman named Lydia, who is a worshiper of God. She and her household are baptized, and she invites Paul and Silas to stay in her home. While they are there, they encounter a slave girl who is possessed by a spirit of divination. Paul commands the spirit to leave her, which angers her owners, who had been profiting from her fortune-telling abilities. They have Paul and Silas arrested and beaten, and they are thrown into prison.

While in prison, Paul and Silas pray and sing hymns to God, and suddenly there is a great earthquake that shakes the prison doors open and loosens everyone's chains. The jailer, fearing that the prisoners have escaped, draws his sword to kill himself, but Paul stops him, assuring him that all the prisoners are still there. The jailer then asks what he must do to be saved, and Paul and Silas share the gospel with him and his household, who are all baptized.

The next day, the magistrates send word to release Paul and Silas, but Paul insists on their legal rights as Roman citizens and demands that they be released publicly. The magistrates agree, and Paul and Silas leave the city, visiting the believers in Lydia's house before departing.

Overall, chapter 16 of Acts highlights the spread of the gospel to new regions and people, as well as the opposition and persecution that often accompany it. It also showcases the power of God to bring about supernatural deliverance and salvation, and the importance of sharing the gospel message even in difficult circumstances.

Here are some important verses from Acts 16, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia." (Acts 16:6)

This verse describes how the Holy Spirit directed Paul and his companions to avoid preaching in certain areas and instead focus their efforts in other regions.

2. "During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'" (Acts 16:9)

This verse describes how Paul received a vision directing him to go to Macedonia and spread the message of Christianity there.

3. "One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message." (Acts 16:14)

This verse describes how Lydia, a successful businesswoman and worshiper of God, became a Christian after hearing Paul's message.

4. "The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'" (Acts 16:29-30)

This verse describes how Paul and Silas were able to convert a jailer to Christianity, even after being imprisoned themselves.

5. "They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.'" (Acts 16:31)

This verse summarizes the message of Christianity that Paul and Silas shared with the jailer and his household.

Acts chapter 16 narrates several key events in the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul and his companions. While it doesn't introduce major theological concepts, it does contain theological thoughts and influences related to the expansion of the Gospel and the response of individuals to the message:

Theological Thought:

The Macedonian Call (Acts 16:6-10): Paul, Silas, and Timothy embark on a missionary journey and receive a vision of a man from Macedonia asking for help. They interpret this as a call from God to preach the Gospel in Macedonia, which includes the city of Philippi. This event highlights the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the spread of the Gospel.

Conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:11-15): In Philippi, the missionaries meet Lydia, a seller of purple fabrics. She becomes the first convert in Europe and opens her home for them. This event underscores the importance of God's sovereign work in drawing people to faith and the role of hospitality in the early Christian community.

The Philippian Jailer's Conversion (Acts 16:16-40): Paul and Silas are arrested in Philippi and imprisoned. During an earthquake, the prison doors are opened, but Paul and Silas remain. The jailer, fearing for his life, asks how he can be saved. Paul and Silas proclaim the Gospel to him, and he and his household believe and are baptized. This episode

emphasizes the power of the Gospel to bring about salvation and the importance of faith in Christ.

Theological Influence:

Guidance of the Holy Spirit: The Macedonian Call in Acts 16 highlights the belief in the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the mission of the early church. This has influenced Christian missions and the understanding that God directs His people in carrying out His purposes.

Sovereignty of God in Conversion: The conversion of Lydia and the Philippian jailer illustrate the theological concept of God's sovereignty in drawing people to faith. Their conversions emphasize that salvation is a work of God, and He opens hearts to receive the Gospel.

Hospitality and Christian Community: Lydia's hospitality to Paul and his companions reflects the importance of hospitality in the early Christian community. This practice has influenced Christian hospitality traditions and the idea of welcoming strangers and fellow believers into one's home.

Salvation by Faith in Christ: The Philippian jailer's conversion underscores the core theological message of the Gospel: salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. This theme has had a profound and enduring influence on Christian theology and evangelism.

The Power of the Gospel: The conversion of the Philippian jailer, who previously had no knowledge of Christianity, illustrates the transformative power of the Gospel to bring about salvation and change lives. This has influenced evangelistic efforts and the belief in the Gospel's efficacy.

In summary, Acts chapter 16 highlights the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God's sovereignty in conversion, the practice of hospitality, salvation by faith in Christ, and the power of the Gospel. These theological thoughts and influences continue to shape Christian mission, evangelism, and the understanding of God's work in bringing people to faith.

Acts 17

New International Version

In Thessalonica

17 When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,” he said. 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

5 But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.[a] 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. 9 Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

In Berea

10 As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. 12 As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

13 But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. 14 The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. 15 Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

In Athens

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. 18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. 19 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean." 21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and

everything else. 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28 ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’[b] As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’[c]

29 “Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

Footnotes

Acts 17:5 Or the assembly of the people

Acts 17:28 From the Cretan philosopher Epimenides

Acts 17:28 From the Cilician Stoic philosopher Aratus

Chapter 17 of Acts begins with Paul and Silas continuing their journey through Macedonia, where they preach and encourage the believers in various cities. They come to the city of Thessalonica, where they go to the Jewish synagogue and reason with the people from the Scriptures, explaining that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. Some Jews and a large number of Greeks believe and join them, but others oppose them, stirring up a mob and accusing them of treason against Caesar. Fearing for their safety, the believers send Paul and Silas away to Berea.

In Berea, Paul and Silas go to the synagogue and again reason with the Jews and Greeks from the Scriptures. The Bereans are more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, because they receive the message with great eagerness and examine the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many Jews and Greeks believe, but opposition arises from Thessalonica, and Paul leaves Berea and goes to Athens.

In Athens, Paul sees the city full of idols and is deeply distressed. He goes to the synagogue and the marketplace, where he argues with the Jews and the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. He speaks to them about the unknown God whom they worship, and declares that God has overlooked the times of ignorance and is now calling all people everywhere to repent. Some mock him, but others are interested and want to hear more. Paul then speaks on Mars Hill, addressing the Athenians and telling them that God made the world and everything in it, and that he is not far from each one of us. He quotes their own poets and points to the resurrection of Jesus as proof of God's judgment and plan for salvation. Some mock him again, but others believe, including a woman named Damaris. Overall, chapter 17 of Acts highlights the preaching of the gospel in new regions and the opposition that arises from those who reject it. It also showcases the importance of examining the Scriptures and being open to new teachings, as well as the power of God

to change hearts and minds. The chapter ends with Paul continuing his journey to Corinth, where he will face new challenges and opportunities to spread the gospel message.

Here are some important verses from Acts 17, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures." (Acts 17:2)

This verse describes how Paul preached the message of Christianity in the synagogues, using the Jewish Scriptures to support his teachings.

2. "Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." (Acts 17:11)

This verse describes how the Berean Jews carefully examined the Scriptures to determine whether Paul's teachings about Christianity were accurate.

3. "So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there." (Acts 17:17)

This verse describes how Paul preached the message of Christianity not only in the synagogues, but also in the marketplace where many people gathered.

4. "So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, 'Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD."'" (Acts 17:22-23)

This verse describes how Paul addressed the philosophers of Athens, using their own altar to an "unknown god" as a starting point to introduce them to the Christian God.

5. "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill." (Acts 17:29)

This verse summarizes Paul's message to the philosophers of Athens, arguing that the Christian God is not like the idols they worship, but rather a transcendent being who created humanity and desires a relationship with them.

Acts chapter 17 recounts Paul's missionary journey to Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. This chapter contains important theological thoughts and influences related to the proclamation of the Gospel in various cultural contexts:

Theological Thought:

Preaching in Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17:1-15): In Thessalonica, Paul and his companions preach the Gospel in the synagogue. Some Jews believe, but there is also opposition. In Berea, the people are described as more noble because they search the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul and Silas are preaching is true. This highlights the importance of examining and testing the message of the Gospel.

Paul in Athens (Acts 17:16-34): In Athens, Paul engages with the intellectual and philosophical culture of the city. He addresses the Athenians at the Areopagus, where he proclaims the Gospel by referencing their altar to the "unknown god." He argues that this "unknown god" is the God who made the world and raised Jesus from the dead. Paul's approach in Athens demonstrates the contextualization of the Gospel message to reach diverse audiences.

Theological Influence:

Engagement with Culture: Paul's approach in Athens demonstrates the theological influence of engaging with the cultural and philosophical context of his audience. He doesn't impose a rigid, preconceived message but instead adapts the Gospel message to resonate with the Athenians' own religious and philosophical ideas. This has influenced Christian missions and apologetics, encouraging thoughtful engagement with various cultural and intellectual contexts.

Berean Model of Discernment: The Bereans' practice of searching the Scriptures daily to test the truth of Paul's message has influenced discussions on biblical discernment and the importance of examining teachings in light of Scripture. This model of discernment remains relevant for believers today.

God as the Creator: Paul's emphasis on God as the Creator of the world in his speech to the Athenians reflects a theological concept foundational to Christian thought. It underscores the belief in God's sovereignty over creation and His role as the source of all existence.

Resurrection of Jesus: Paul's proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead in Athens is a core theological message of the Gospel. It has profound implications for Christian soteriology (theology of salvation) and the hope of eternal life through Christ's resurrection.

Adaptation of the Message: Paul's approach in Athens highlights the theological principle of adapting the Gospel message to different cultural and intellectual contexts. This has influenced discussions on contextual theology and the presentation of the Gospel in a relevant manner.

In summary, Acts chapter 17 illustrates the theological thought of engaging with culture, the Berean model of discernment, the belief in God as Creator, the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus, and the adaptation of the Gospel message. These theological thoughts and influences continue to shape Christian outreach, apologetics, and the communication of the Gospel in diverse cultural settings.

Acts 18
New International Version
In Corinth

18 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3 and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. 4 Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

5 When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. 6 But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

7 Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. 8 Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. 10 For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” 11 So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

12 While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united attack on Paul and brought him to the place of judgment. 13 “This man,” they charged, “is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.”

14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to them, “If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. 15 But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.” 16 So he drove them off. 17 Then the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the proconsul; and Gallio showed no concern whatever.

Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos

18 Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. 19 They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. 21 But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God’s will.” Then he set sail from Ephesus. 22 When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.

23 After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

24 Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in

the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor[a] and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

27 When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. 28 For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

Footnotes

Acts 18:25 Or with fervor in the Spirit

Chapter 18 of the book of Acts begins with the apostle Paul leaving Athens and traveling to Corinth, where he meets a couple named Aquila and Priscilla. They were tentmakers like Paul and he stayed and worked with them for a while.

On the Sabbath, Paul went to the synagogue and began preaching about Jesus. Some Jews and Gentiles believed and were baptized, but others opposed him and blasphemed. Paul shook the dust off his feet and declared that he was not responsible for their fate.

After this, Paul moved to a house next to the synagogue and continued to teach there. The Lord spoke to him in a vision and told him not to be afraid but to keep speaking and teaching about Jesus.

The proconsul of Achaia, Gallio, then came to Corinth, and the Jews brought Paul before him, accusing him of persuading people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.

However, Gallio refused to hear their case and dismissed them.

After this, Paul remained in Corinth for some time, continuing to teach and preach about Jesus. He eventually left with Aquila and Priscilla and sailed to Syria, stopping in Ephesus briefly before continuing on to Jerusalem.

In summary, chapter 18 of Acts tells the story of Paul's ministry in Corinth, including his encounters with Aquila and Priscilla, his preaching in the synagogue, his appearance before Gallio, and his departure from Corinth to continue his mission elsewhere.

Here are some important verses from Acts 18, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth." (Acts 18:1)

This verse describes how Paul traveled from Athens to Corinth, which became an important center of early Christianity.

2. "There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them," (Acts 18:2)

This verse describes how Paul met Aquila and Priscilla, who became important supporters of his ministry and helped him spread the message of Christianity.

3. "But when Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah." (Acts 18:5)

This verse describes how Paul focused his efforts on preaching the message of Christianity to the Jews in Corinth, emphasizing that Jesus was the Messiah they had been waiting for.

4. "But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth rose up together against Paul and brought him to the tribunal, saying, 'This man is inducing people to worship God contrary to the law.'" (Acts 18:12-13)

This verse describes how the Jews in Corinth opposed Paul and brought him before the Roman proconsul Gallio, accusing him of breaking the law by preaching about Christianity.

5. "But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, 'If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. But since it is a question of words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of such things.'" (Acts 18:14-15)

This verse describes how Gallio dismissed the charges against Paul, arguing that the dispute was a matter of religious doctrine and not a criminal offense.

Acts chapter 18 continues to chronicle the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul, with a particular focus on his ministry in the city of Corinth. While this chapter doesn't introduce major theological concepts, it does contain theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's mission and interactions with various individuals:

Theological Thought:

Ministry in Corinth (Acts 18:1-18): In Corinth, Paul engages in both preaching the Gospel and working as a tentmaker. His teaching focuses on the message that Jesus is the Christ. Despite opposition and challenges, he persists in sharing the Gospel with both Jews and Gentiles.

Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28): Apollos, a learned man from Alexandria, is fervent in spirit and eloquent in teaching, but he only knows the baptism of John. Priscilla and Aquila instruct him further in the way of the Lord, particularly regarding the full message of Jesus. This passage highlights the importance of accurate theological instruction and growth in understanding.

Theological Influence:

Tentmaking Ministry: Paul's example of working as a tentmaker while engaging in missionary work has influenced discussions on vocational ministry and the concept of self-sufficiency in ministry. This approach reflects the idea of not burdening the church financially and being a positive example to others.

The Message of Jesus as the Christ: The central theological message in Paul's ministry is that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. This foundational Christian confession continues to be central to Christian theology, emphasizing Jesus' identity as the Savior and Lord.

Importance of Accurate Teaching: The interaction between Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos underscores the theological importance of accurate teaching and discipleship within the early Christian community. It emphasizes the need for believers to grow in their understanding of the faith.

Continued Ministry Amid Opposition: Paul's perseverance in continuing his ministry despite opposition serves as a theological example of determination and commitment to sharing the Gospel. This has influenced discussions on the challenges and trials that often accompany ministry.

Paul's Missionary Strategy: Acts 18 demonstrates Paul's missionary strategy of first preaching to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. This approach has influenced discussions on evangelistic methods and strategies for reaching different cultural and religious groups.

In summary, Acts chapter 18 contains theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's ministry in Corinth, the message of Jesus as the Christ, the importance of accurate teaching and growth, continued ministry amid opposition, and missionary strategies. While not introducing entirely new theological concepts, this chapter reinforces and illustrates important aspects of early Christian mission and teaching.

Acts 19

New International Version

Paul in Ephesus

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples² and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when^[a] you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

³ So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

⁴ Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues^[b] and prophesied. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.

⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

13 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

17 When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. 18 Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. 19 A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas.[c] 20 In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

21 After all this had happened, Paul decided[d] to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must visit Rome also.” 22 He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

The Riot in Ephesus

23 About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. 24 A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. 25 He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: “You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. 26 And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. 27 There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”

28 When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” 29 Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together. 30 Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. 31 Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

32 The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. 33 The Jews in the crowd pushed

Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. 34 But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

35 The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Fellow Ephesians, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? 36 Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. 37 You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. 38 If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. 39 If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. 40 As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it." 41 After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

Footnotes

Acts 19:2 Or after

Acts 19:6 Or other languages

Acts 19:19 A drachma was a silver coin worth about a day's wages.

Acts 19:21 Or decided in the Spirit

Chapter 19 of the book of Acts begins with Paul traveling to Ephesus, where he meets some disciples of John the Baptist. He asks them if they have received the Holy Spirit since they believed, and they tell him that they have not even heard of the Holy Spirit. Paul then baptizes them in the name of the Lord Jesus and lays his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and they speak in tongues and prophesy.

Paul then goes to the synagogue and speaks boldly for three months, reasoning with the Jews about the kingdom of God. However, some of them become stubborn and reject his message, so he withdraws from the synagogue and begins teaching in a hall.

God performs many miracles through Paul, and even handkerchiefs and aprons that he touched were taken to the sick, and they were healed. However, some itinerant Jewish exorcists attempt to use the name of Jesus to cast out demons, but they are unsuccessful and end up being overpowered by the demons.

As a result of these events, many people in Ephesus begin to fear the name of the Lord Jesus, and many who had practiced magic brought their books and burned them publicly, confessing their sins. This caused a significant disturbance in the city, and some of the craftsmen who made silver shrines of the goddess Artemis became angry because they were losing business.

They gather a crowd and start a riot, dragging Paul's companions Gaius and Aristarchus into the theater, and shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" The town clerk eventually quiets the crowd and tells them that the men have not committed any crimes and that there is a proper legal way to address their grievances.

After this, Paul leaves Ephesus and travels to Macedonia and Greece before returning to Jerusalem. In Macedonia, he raises a young man named Eutychus from the dead after he fell from a window while listening to Paul speak.

In summary, chapter 19 of Acts tells the story of Paul's ministry in Ephesus, including his encounters with John the Baptist's disciples, his teaching in the synagogue and hall, the miracles he performed, the failed exorcism attempt, the burning of magic books, and the riot caused by the angry craftsmen. It also mentions Paul's travels to Macedonia and Greece and his raising of Eutychus from the dead.

Here are some important verses from Acts 19, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' They answered, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 19:1-2)

This verse describes how Paul met some disciples in Ephesus who had not yet received the Holy Spirit, an essential aspect of Christian belief.

2. "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying." (Acts 19:6)

This verse describes how Paul baptized the disciples in Ephesus and they received the Holy Spirit, which manifested in them speaking in tongues and prophesying.

3. "Also many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver." (Acts 19:19)

This verse describes how many people in Ephesus renounced their previous practices of magic and sorcery and burned their books, demonstrating their commitment to Christianity.

4. "But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!'" (Acts 19:34)

This verse describes how a riot broke out in Ephesus when Paul's teachings threatened the city's lucrative trade in Artemis statues, highlighting the challenges early Christians faced in spreading their message.

5. "And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, 'Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky?'" (Acts 19:35)

This verse describes how the town clerk of Ephesus was able to calm the rioters by reminding them of the city's importance as the temple keeper of Artemis, emphasizing the need for diplomacy and understanding when encountering opposition to Christian teachings.

Acts chapter 19 describes Paul's ministry in the city of Ephesus, where he encounters followers of John the Baptist and faces opposition from those practicing magic and idolatry. While this chapter doesn't introduce major theological concepts, it contains theological thoughts and influences related to the spread of the Gospel and the power of God:

Theological Thought:

Disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-7): Paul encounters a group of disciples in Ephesus who had been baptized by John the Baptist but were not yet aware of the Holy Spirit's coming and the fullness of the Gospel through Jesus Christ. Paul explains to them the significance of John's baptism and then baptizes them in the name of Jesus, after which they receive the Holy Spirit.

The Power of God's Word and Miracles (Acts 19:8-12): Paul goes on to teach and perform extraordinary miracles in Ephesus. Handkerchiefs and aprons touched by Paul are used to heal the sick and cast out evil spirits. This highlights the power of God's Word and the working of miracles through Paul.

The Riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41): The chapter concludes with a riot instigated by silversmiths who are concerned that Paul's preaching against idols and idol-making will harm their trade. This event underscores the tension between the message of the Gospel and the economic interests of the idolatrous culture.

Theological Influence:

Baptism in the Name of Jesus: The episode with the disciples of John the Baptist in Acts 19 has theological implications regarding the understanding of Christian baptism. It reinforces the importance of baptism in the name of Jesus and the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.

The Power of God's Word and Miracles: Acts 19 highlights the power of God's Word and the working of miracles through Paul. While not introducing a new theological concept, this event serves as a reminder of the miraculous signs that accompanied the apostolic ministry and the authority of the apostles in spreading the Gospel.

Conflict Between the Gospel and Idolatry: The riot in Ephesus reveals the theological tension between the message of the Gospel and the idolatrous culture of the time. This has influenced discussions on the challenges and conflicts that arise when Christianity confronts deeply ingrained cultural and religious practices.

The Expansion of the Gospel: The continued ministry of Paul in Ephesus and the impact it has on the city underscore the theological theme of the Gospel's relentless expansion. This has influenced discussions on the missionary efforts of the early church and the spread of Christianity.

In summary, Acts chapter 19 contains theological thoughts and influences related to baptism in the name of Jesus, the power of God's Word and miracles, the conflict between the Gospel and idolatry, and the expansion of the Gospel. These elements contribute to the overall narrative of the early church's mission and the challenges it faced in spreading the message of Jesus Christ.

Acts 20

New International Version

Through Macedonia and Greece

20 When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia. 2 He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, 3 where he stayed three months. Because some Jews had plotted against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. 4 He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. 5 These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. 6 But we sailed from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas

7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. 9 Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. 10 Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “He’s alive!” 11 Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. 12 The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

Paul’s Farewell to the Ephesian Elders

13 We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. 14 When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. 15 The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. 16 Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

17 From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. 18 When they arrived, he said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. 19 I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. 20 You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. 21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

22 “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23 I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. 24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.

25 “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. 26 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. 27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. 28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God,[a] which he bought with his own blood.[b] 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

32 “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. 34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. 35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

36 When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. 37 They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. 38 What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

Footnotes

Acts 20:28 Many manuscripts of the Lord

Acts 20:28 Or with the blood of his own Son

Chapter 20 of the book of Acts begins with Paul leaving Macedonia and traveling through Greece. He spends three months in Greece before sailing for Syria, but he stops in Troas, where he stays for a week.

On the first day of the week, the disciples come together to break bread, and Paul speaks to them until midnight. A young man named Eutychus falls asleep and falls out of a third-story window but is raised back to life by Paul.

Paul then leaves Troas and sails to Miletus, where he sends for the elders of the church in Ephesus. When they arrive, he speaks to them, reminding them of his ministry among them and warning them of the dangers that lie ahead. He tells them that he is bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem, where he will face persecution and imprisonment.

He charges them to take care of the flock, warning them of false teachers who will come in among them and draw away disciples after themselves. He exhorts them to be diligent and to remember the words of Jesus, who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

After he finishes speaking, he kneels down and prays with them, and they weep and embrace him. They accompany him to the ship, where they say their final goodbyes. Paul then sails to various ports, stopping at Tyre and staying with the disciples there for seven days. He also stops at Caesarea and stays with Philip the evangelist, who has four virgin daughters who prophesy.

While in Caesarea, a prophet named Agabus comes from Judea and prophesies that Paul will be bound and handed over to the Gentiles if he goes to Jerusalem. However, Paul insists that he must go and is willing to suffer for the sake of the Lord.

In summary, chapter 20 of Acts tells the story of Paul's travels through Macedonia and Greece, his ministry in Troas and Miletus, and his warning to the elders of the church in Ephesus. It also describes his visits to Tyre and Caesarea, his encounter with the prophet Agabus, and his determination to go to Jerusalem despite the danger.

Here are some important verses from Acts 20, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia." (Acts 20:1)

This verse describes how Paul left Ephesus and traveled to Macedonia, continuing his missionary work and spreading the message of Christianity.

2. "On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight." (Acts 20:7)

This verse describes how Paul preached to the people in Troas, staying up late into the night to share his teachings with them.

3. "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood." (Acts 20:28)

This verse describes how Paul urged the leaders of the church in Ephesus to take responsibility for their congregations and to lead them in a way that honors God.

4. "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35)

This verse describes how Paul emphasized the importance of serving others and helping those who are less fortunate, echoing Jesus' teachings on compassion and generosity.

5. "When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him." (Acts 20:36-37)

This verse describes how Paul prayed with the leaders of the church in Ephesus, demonstrating the importance of communal worship and emotional connection in the Christian faith.

Acts chapter 20 presents an important account of the apostle Paul's farewell address to the elders of the Ephesian church before his departure. While it doesn't introduce entirely new theological concepts, it contains significant theological thoughts and influences relevant to the ministry of the early church:

Theological Thought:

Paul's Ministry and Sacrifice (Acts 20:17-24): Paul reflects on his ministry among the Ephesian believers, emphasizing his dedication to proclaiming the Gospel and his

willingness to endure hardships and persecution for the sake of Christ. He likens his ministry to a race that he is determined to finish faithfully.

Guarding the Flock (Acts 20:25-31): Paul warns the Ephesian elders about the dangers of false teachers and wolves who will come from within and outside the church to distort the truth and lead believers astray. He emphasizes the importance of vigilance and safeguarding the spiritual welfare of the congregation.

The Words of Jesus (Acts 20:35): Paul quotes a saying of Jesus not recorded in the Gospels: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." This reflects a teaching of Jesus that was passed down orally and highlights the Christian principle of selflessness and generosity.

Theological Influence:

Paul's Example of Ministry: Paul's dedication to the ministry and his willingness to endure suffering for the sake of the Gospel have had a profound influence on Christian thought and practice. His commitment to finishing the race faithfully has inspired countless Christians to persevere in their faith and service.

Guarding Against False Teaching: Paul's warning about false teachers and the need to protect the flock from doctrinal error has influenced discussions on the role of church leaders in safeguarding sound doctrine and the importance of discernment within the church.

Oral Traditions and Jesus' Teachings: Paul's quotation of a saying of Jesus not found in the Gospels highlights the existence of oral traditions about Jesus' teachings in the early church. This has led scholars to consider the broader scope of Jesus' teachings and their transmission.

Generosity and Selflessness: Paul's reference to Jesus' saying about giving has influenced Christian teaching on generosity, emphasizing the spiritual blessing of giving to others. This principle has shaped Christian ethics and practices related to charity and helping those in need.

In summary, Acts chapter 20 contains theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's ministry and sacrifice, the need to guard against false teaching, the transmission of Jesus' teachings, and the principle of generosity. These elements contribute to the ongoing development of Christian theology and practice, particularly in the areas of leadership, doctrine, and Christian ethics.

Acts 21

New International Version

On to Jerusalem

21 After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. 2 We found a ship

crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. 3 After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. 4 We sought out the disciples there and stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5 When it was time to leave, we left and continued on our way. All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. 6 After saying goodbye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

7 We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day. 8 Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. 9 He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

10 After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

12 When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

15 After this, we started on our way up to Jerusalem. 16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

Paul's Arrival at Jerusalem

17 When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. 18 The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. 19 Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20 When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. 21 They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. 22 What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, 23 so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. 24 Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. 25 As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality."

26 The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

Paul Arrested

27 When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, 28 shouting, “Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place.” 29 (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple.)

30 The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. 31 While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

33 The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. 34 Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. 35 When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers. 36 The crowd that followed kept shouting, “Get rid of him!”

Paul Speaks to the Crowd

37 As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, “May I say something to you?”

“Do you speak Greek?” he replied. 38 “Aren’t you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the wilderness some time ago?”

39 Paul answered, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people.”

40 After receiving the commander’s permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic[a]:

Footnotes

Acts 21:40 Or possibly Hebrew; also in 22:2

Chapter 21 of the book of Acts begins with Paul and his companions sailing from Miletus to Cos, Rhodes, and Patara before finally arriving at Tyre. There they stay with the disciples for seven days and receive a warning from the Holy Spirit, through the prophet Agabus, that Paul will be bound and handed over to the Gentiles if he goes to Jerusalem.

Despite this warning, Paul and his companions continue on to Caesarea, where they stay with Philip the evangelist. While they are there, a prophet named Mnason comes from Cyprus and offers to take them in.

In Caesarea, a prophet named Agabus again prophesies that Paul will be bound and handed over to the Gentiles if he goes to Jerusalem. However, Paul is determined to go, saying, "I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Paul and his companions arrive in Jerusalem and are warmly received by the brethren there. However, some Jews from Asia accuse Paul of teaching against the law of Moses and defiling the temple by bringing Gentiles into it.

To prove that he has not defiled the temple, Paul undergoes a purification rite with four other men. However, when some Jews from Asia see him in the temple, they stir up the crowd and try to kill him. The Roman commander intervenes, and Paul is taken into custody.

While being taken into custody, Paul asks to address the crowd, and he speaks to them in Hebrew, telling them about his upbringing, his conversion, and his mission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The crowd listens until he mentions his mission to the Gentiles, at which point they become enraged and shout for his death.

The Roman commander orders that Paul be taken into the barracks and examined by flogging, but when Paul tells him that he is a Roman citizen, the commander becomes afraid and releases him. However, the next day, Paul is brought before the Sanhedrin, where he testifies about his beliefs and his mission, causing a division among the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

The Roman commander again intervenes, and Paul is taken back to the barracks for his own safety. However, that night, the Lord appears to him and tells him that he must testify in Rome.

In summary, chapter 21 of Acts tells the story of Paul's journey from Tyre to Caesarea and then to Jerusalem, where he is accused of teaching against the law of Moses and defiling the temple. It also describes his speech to the crowd, his imprisonment by the Roman commander, and his appearance before the Sanhedrin. Finally, it mentions the Lord's appearance to him and his mission to testify in Rome.

! Here are some important verses from Acts 21, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara." (Acts 21:1)

This verse describes how Paul and his companions continued their journey, traveling from one place to another as they spread the message of Christianity.

2. "When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly." (Acts 21:17)

This verse describes how Paul and his companions were welcomed by the Christian community in Jerusalem, demonstrating the unity and support that existed among early believers.

3. "The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present." (Acts 21:18)

This verse describes how Paul met with James and other church leaders in Jerusalem, highlighting the importance of communication and collaboration within the early Christian movement.

4. "Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them." (Acts 21:26)

This verse describes how Paul followed Jewish customs and traditions, demonstrating his respect for Jewish culture and his desire to build bridges between Jews and Christians.

5. "When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him..." (Acts 21:27)

This verse describes how Paul was arrested and accused of bringing Gentiles into the temple, highlighting the tension that existed between Jewish and Gentile believers and the challenges that early Christians faced in navigating these cultural differences.

Acts chapter 21 continues to document the travels and experiences of the apostle Paul as he journeys to Jerusalem. While this chapter doesn't introduce major theological concepts, it does contain theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's commitment to the Gospel and his willingness to face persecution for the sake of Christ:

Theological Thought:

Paul's Determination to Go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-14): Despite being warned by the Holy Spirit and fellow believers about the hardships and imprisonment he may face in Jerusalem, Paul is determined to go. He expresses his readiness to suffer for the name of Jesus.

Arrival in Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-16): Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Paul meets with James and the elders of the church, providing an account of his ministry among the Gentiles. This reflects the ongoing theological dialogue within the early church regarding the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian community.

Paul's Attempt to Reconcile with Jewish Believers (Acts 21:17-26): Paul participates in a purification ritual at the temple and sponsors the expenses of four men taking a Nazirite vow to demonstrate his commitment to keeping the Mosaic law and to avoid causing offense to Jewish believers.

Theological Influence:

Paul's Commitment to the Gospel: Paul's determination to go to Jerusalem, despite knowing the potential dangers and persecution he may face, highlights the theological principle of unwavering commitment to the Gospel message. This has influenced Christian missionary zeal and the willingness of believers to endure hardship for the sake of Christ.

Inclusivity of the Gentiles: The meeting between Paul and the Jerusalem church leaders underscores the ongoing theological discussion about the inclusion of Gentiles in the Christian community. This issue had significant theological implications, including questions about adherence to Jewish customs, the role of the law, and the unity of the church.

Paul's Efforts at Reconciliation: Paul's participation in a purification ritual and his sponsorship of the Nazirite vow demonstrate his willingness to accommodate Jewish customs and traditions to promote unity within the early church. This reflects the theological principle of seeking harmony and avoiding unnecessary offense for the sake of the Gospel.

Theological Dialogue and Contextualization: Acts 21 reflects the ongoing theological dialogue and contextualization within the early church as it navigated the challenges of integrating Jewish and Gentile believers into one body. This has influenced discussions on cultural adaptation and the unity of diverse Christian communities.

In summary, Acts chapter 21 contains theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's commitment to the Gospel, the ongoing dialogue about the inclusion of Gentiles, Paul's efforts at reconciliation, and the theological context in which these events occur. These elements contribute to the understanding of early Christian mission, unity, and theological adaptation in a diverse and evolving church.

Acts 22

New International Version

22 1 “Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense.”

2 When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said: 3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. 4 I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, 5 as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

6 “About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. 7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’

8 “‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked.

“ ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. 9 My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

10 “What shall I do, Lord?” I asked.

“Get up,” the Lord said, “and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.” 11 My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

12 “A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. 13 He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.

14 “Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15 You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

17 “When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw the Lord speaking to me. ‘Quick!’ he said. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.’

19 “Lord,” I replied, “these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. 20 And when the blood of your martyr[a] Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.”

21 “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’ ”

Paul the Roman Citizen

22 The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!”

23 As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, 24 the commander ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and interrogated in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. 25 As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, “Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been found guilty?”

26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. “What are you going to do?” he asked. “This man is a Roman citizen.”

27 The commander went to Paul and asked, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?”

“Yes, I am,” he answered.

28 Then the commander said, “I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship.”

“But I was born a citizen,” Paul replied.

29 Those who were about to interrogate him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.

Paul Before the Sanhedrin

30 The commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews. So the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the members of the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

Footnotes

Acts 22:20 Or witness

Chapter 22 of the book of Acts begins with Paul addressing the angry crowd in Jerusalem after he had been arrested by the Roman commander. He speaks to them in Hebrew, telling them about his background as a Jew and a Pharisee, and how he had persecuted the followers of Jesus before his conversion.

Paul tells the crowd about his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, and how he was blinded and heard the voice of Jesus. He also explains how Ananias, a disciple in Damascus, healed him and baptized him in the name of the Lord.

The crowd becomes quiet and listens to Paul until he mentions that Jesus had sent him to the Gentiles, at which point they become angry again and shout for his death. The Roman commander orders that Paul be taken back into the barracks.

The next day, the commander brings Paul before the Sanhedrin again, but this time he speaks to them in a more conciliatory tone. He tells them that he is on trial because of his hope in the resurrection of the dead, which is a common belief among the Pharisees. However, when he mentions that Jesus is the one who was raised from the dead, the Pharisees and Sadducees begin to argue, and the commander orders Paul to be taken back to the barracks.

That night, the Lord appears to Paul again and tells him to be of good cheer, for he will testify in Rome. The next day, some Jews make a plan to kill Paul, but his nephew overhears their plan and tells the commander, who sends Paul to Caesarea under guard.

In summary, chapter 22 of Acts tells the story of Paul's address to the angry crowd in Jerusalem, his testimony about his conversion and encounter with Jesus, his appearance before the Sanhedrin, and his journey to Caesarea under guard. It also mentions the Lord's appearance to him again, and his promise that Paul will testify in Rome.

Here are some important verses from Acts 22, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense." (Acts 22:1)

This verse marks the beginning of Paul's defense before the Jewish people in Jerusalem, as he tries to explain his actions and beliefs.

2. "When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance..." (Acts 22:17)

This verse describes a vision that Paul had, in which he received a message from Jesus Christ. This vision was a turning point in Paul's life and ministry.

3. "Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" (Acts 22:21)

This verse highlights the fact that Paul's mission was not just to the Jewish people, but also to the Gentiles. It shows that Christianity was meant to be a universal message, not limited to one particular group.

4. "The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, 'Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!'" (Acts 22:22)

This verse describes the negative reaction of the Jewish crowd to Paul's message. It illustrates the hostility that existed between some Jewish people and the early Christian movement.

5. "The commander ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks and that he be flogged and interrogated to find out why the people were shouting at him like this." (Acts 22:24)

This verse describes the actions of the Roman commander who was responsible for maintaining order in Jerusalem. It shows the complex political situation in which early Christianity existed, as it was subject to both Jewish and Roman authorities.

Acts chapter 22 features Paul's defense before a Jewish audience in Jerusalem following his arrest. This chapter doesn't introduce entirely new theological concepts but does contain theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's personal testimony and his role as an apostle to the Gentiles:

Theological Thought:

Paul's Personal Testimony (Acts 22:1-21): Paul addresses the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem, recounting his personal history and conversion experience. He describes how he was a zealous Pharisee who persecuted Christians but was transformed by a vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus. This testimony highlights the power of Christ's encounter to bring about conversion and a radical change of heart.

Paul's Commission as an Apostle (Acts 22:21): In his defense, Paul emphasizes that Jesus commissioned him to be an apostle to the Gentiles. This reflects the theological thought of Paul's unique calling and mission to take the Gospel to the Gentile world.

Theological Influence:

Personal Testimonies of Conversion: Paul's personal testimony of conversion serves as an influential model for Christian testimonies throughout history. It underscores the transformative power of encountering Christ and the potential for radical life change through faith in Jesus.

Paul's Apostleship to the Gentiles: Paul's declaration of his commission as an apostle to the Gentiles underscores the theological understanding of the apostolic mission to reach non-Jewish populations with the Gospel. This has had a significant influence on the

understanding of the inclusivity of the Gospel message and the role of apostles in spreading it.

Contextualization of the Gospel: Paul's approach of speaking to the Jewish audience in their own language and recounting his personal experience demonstrates the theological principle of contextualization—communicating the Gospel message in a way that the audience can relate to. This has influenced missionary strategies and evangelism in diverse cultural settings.

Transformation Through Encounter with Christ: Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus highlights the theological concept of transformation through a direct encounter with Christ. This has influenced Christian spirituality and the belief in the life-changing power of a personal relationship with Jesus.

In summary, Acts chapter 22 contains theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's personal testimony, his role as an apostle to the Gentiles, the power of conversion through an encounter with Christ, and the practice of contextualizing the Gospel message for diverse audiences. These elements contribute to the understanding of Paul's ministry and the broader mission of the early church.

Acts 23

New International Version

23 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, “My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.” 2 At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!”

4 Those who were standing near Paul said, “How dare you insult God’s high priest!”

5 Paul replied, “Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: ‘Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.’[a]”

6 Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead.” 7 When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees believe all these things.)

9 There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. “We find nothing wrong with this man,” they said. “What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” 10 The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.

11 The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, “Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”

The Plot to Kill Paul

12 The next morning some Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. 13 More than forty men were involved in this plot. 14 They went to the chief priests and the elders and said, “We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. 15 Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here.”

16 But when the son of Paul’s sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him.” 18 So he took him to the commander.

The centurion said, “Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you.”

19 The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, “What is it you want to tell me?”

20 He said: “Some Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him. 21 Don’t give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request.”

22 The commander dismissed the young man with this warning: “Don’t tell anyone that you have reported this to me.”

Paul Transferred to Caesarea

23 Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, “Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen[b] to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. 24 Provide horses for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix.”

25 He wrote a letter as follows:

26 Claudius Lysias,

To His Excellency, Governor Felix:

Greetings.

27 This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. 28 I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin. 29 I found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment. 30 When I was informed of a plot to be carried out against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his accusers to present to you their case against him.

31 So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. 32 The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. 33 When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. 34 The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will hear your case when your accusers get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

Footnotes

Acts 23:5 Exodus 22:28

Acts 23:23 The meaning of the Greek for this word is uncertain.

Chapter 23 of the book of Acts begins with Paul appearing before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council, and stirring up a controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees by proclaiming his belief in the resurrection of the dead. This results in a heated argument and the Roman commander orders that Paul be taken back to the barracks for his own safety.

That night, the Lord appears to Paul and tells him to be of good cheer, for he will testify in Rome. The next day, more than forty Jews make a vow to kill Paul, but Paul's nephew informs the commander, who sends Paul to Caesarea under guard to protect him from harm.

In Caesarea, Paul appears before the governor, Felix, and is accused by the high priest Ananias and a group of elders of sedition and defiling the temple. Paul defends himself and claims that he has done nothing wrong, but Felix does not make a decision and keeps Paul in custody for two years, hoping for a bribe from Paul or his supporters.

During this time, Felix's successor, Festus, arrives and hears Paul's case. The Jewish leaders ask Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem for trial, but Paul appeals to Caesar, invoking his right as a Roman citizen to have his case heard in Rome.

In summary, chapter 23 of Acts tells the story of Paul's appearance before the Sanhedrin, the plot by some Jews to kill him, and his transfer to Caesarea under guard. It also describes his appearance before the governor Felix and his accusation by the high priest and a group of elders, his continued imprisonment, and his appeal to Caesar.

Here are some important verses from Acts 23, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, 'My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.'" (Acts 23:1)

This verse marks the beginning of Paul's defense before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. It highlights Paul's commitment to his faith and his desire to do what is right in the eyes of God.

2. "Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, 'My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead.'" (Acts 23:6)

This verse shows how Paul used his knowledge of Jewish sects to his advantage in his defense. By aligning himself with the Pharisees, who believed in the resurrection of the dead, he was able to create division among the council and avoid being condemned by them.

3. "The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, 'Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.'" (Acts 23:11)

This verse describes a vision that Paul had, in which Jesus Christ appeared to him and encouraged him to continue his mission to spread the gospel message. It provides reassurance and inspiration to Paul as he faces opposition and persecution.

4. "The next morning some Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul." (Acts 23:12)

This verse describes the plot against Paul's life that was hatched by some Jewish people who were opposed to his message. It illustrates the danger and risk that early Christians faced as they spread the gospel.

5. "When the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul." (Acts 23:16)

This verse shows how Paul's family was involved in protecting him and ensuring his safety. It demonstrates the importance of community and support in the early Christian movement.

Acts chapter 23 continues the narrative of Paul's experiences, particularly his appearance before the Sanhedrin and the ongoing opposition he faces. While this chapter does not introduce new theological concepts, it does contain theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's defense and the protection of his life:

Theological Thought:

Paul's Defense Before the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:1-10): Paul is brought before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council, to defend himself against charges. In his defense, he emphasizes his conscience's integrity before God and his belief in the resurrection of the dead, which leads to a dispute between the Pharisees (who believed in the resurrection) and the Sadducees (who did not).

Divine Protection and Assurance (Acts 23:11): In the midst of the turmoil, the Lord appears to Paul, encouraging him and assuring him that he will testify about Jesus in Rome. This reflects the theological belief in divine guidance, protection, and the fulfillment of God's purpose in Paul's life.

Theological Influence:

Resurrection of the Dead: Paul's assertion of belief in the resurrection of the dead and the subsequent debate between the Pharisees and Sadducees has theological implications. It highlights the importance of the resurrection as a theological concept within Judaism and early Christianity. This theme is central to Christian eschatology (theology of the end times) and the hope of eternal life through Christ's resurrection.

Conscience and Integrity: Paul's emphasis on maintaining a clear conscience before God reflects the theological concept of the importance of moral integrity and a sincere commitment to following God's will. This has influenced discussions on ethics and Christian conduct.

Divine Guidance and Assurance: The Lord's appearance to Paul and His assurance of protection and purpose reinforce the theological belief in God's guidance and sovereignty over the life of a believer. This has influenced Christian trust in God's providence and guidance in times of difficulty.

Fulfillment of God's Plan: The assurance given to Paul that he will testify about Jesus in Rome underscores the theological concept of the fulfillment of God's divine plan and purposes. This has influenced Christian trust in God's sovereign control over the course of events in the lives of believers.

In summary, Acts chapter 23 contains theological thoughts and influences related to the belief in the resurrection of the dead, the importance of conscience and integrity, divine guidance and assurance, and the fulfillment of God's plan. These elements contribute to the understanding of Paul's ministry and the broader theological themes within the book of Acts.

Acts 24

New International Version

Paul's Trial Before Felix

24 Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. 2 When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. 3 Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. 4 But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly.

5 "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect 6 and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. [7] [a] 8 By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him."

9 The other Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.

10 When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: “I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense. 11 You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12 My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. 13 And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me. 14 However, I admit that I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, 15 and I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. 16 So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

17 “After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. 18 I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. 19 But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. 20 Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin— 21 unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: ‘It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.’”

22 Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. “When Lysias the commander comes,” he said, “I will decide your case.” 23 He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs.

24 Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. 25 As Paul talked about righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, “That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.” 26 At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

27 When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.

Footnotes

Acts 24:7 Some manuscripts include here him, and we would have judged him in accordance with our law. 7 But the commander Lysias came and took him from us with much violence, 8 ordering his accusers to come before you.

Chapter 24 of the book of Acts begins with Paul appearing before the governor, Felix, and the accusations brought against him by the high priest Ananias and a group of elders.

Paul defends himself against the charges of sedition and defiling the temple, stating that he had come to Jerusalem to worship and had not caused any disturbances. Felix, who had heard about the Way (the term used to refer to the early Christian movement) but was not familiar with its teachings, postpones his decision and orders that Paul be kept in custody but given some freedom to receive visitors. Days later, Felix and his wife Drusilla listen to Paul speak about faith in Jesus Christ and righteousness and self-control, and Felix becomes afraid. He postpones his decision again, hoping that Paul will offer him a bribe. Two years later, Felix is succeeded by Porcius Festus, who inherits Paul's case. The Jewish leaders ask Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem for trial, but Paul appeals to Caesar, invoking his right as a Roman citizen to have his case heard in Rome. Festus agrees to send Paul to Rome, and shortly thereafter King Agrippa and his sister Bernice visit Festus. Festus explains Paul's case to them and invites them to hear Paul speak for himself. In summary, chapter 24 of Acts tells the story of Paul's appearance before Governor Felix, his defense against the accusations brought against him, and Felix's postponement of his decision. It also describes Felix's fear after hearing Paul speak about faith in Jesus Christ, the two-year period of Paul's imprisonment under Felix, his appeal to Caesar, and the involvement of King Agrippa and Bernice in Paul's case.

Here are some important verses from Acts 24, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "After five days the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor." (Acts 24:1-2)

This verse sets the scene for Paul's trial before the governor Felix. It shows how the Jewish leaders, including the high priest, had traveled to Caesarea to present their case against Paul to the Roman authorities.

2. "When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: 'We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation.'" (Acts 24:10)

This verse shows how Tertullus, the Jewish lawyer, flattered Felix and sought to win his favor in order to secure a guilty verdict against Paul. It also provides insight into the political and social context of the time.

3. "I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets." (Acts 24:14)

This verse highlights Paul's defense before Felix. He identifies himself as a follower of the Way, which was an early name for Christianity, and emphasizes his adherence to the Jewish law and prophets.

4. "I admit that I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked." (Acts 24:14-15)

This verse expands on Paul's defense and highlights his belief in the resurrection of the dead, which was a central tenet of early Christian belief. It also underscores his common ground with the Jewish leaders who were accusing him.

5. "When Felix heard these things, he had them put off. He said, 'When Lysias the commander comes, I will decide your case.'" (Acts 24:22)

This verse shows how Felix delayed making a decision in Paul's case, perhaps hoping to receive a bribe or to use Paul's imprisonment as leverage in his dealings with the Jewish authorities. It also prolongs the tension and uncertainty of Paul's situation.

Acts chapter 24 narrates the legal proceedings involving the apostle Paul as he stands before Governor Felix, who listens to the accusations made against Paul by the Jewish leaders. While this chapter doesn't introduce major theological concepts, it does contain theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's defense and the nature of his faith:

Theological Thought:

Paul's Defense Before Felix (Acts 24:1-27): In response to the accusations brought by the Jewish leaders, Paul presents his defense before Felix. He argues that he has maintained a clear conscience and that he worships the God of his ancestors, believing everything written in the Law and the Prophets. Paul asserts that he has hope in the resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous and that he strives to maintain a blameless conscience before God and others.

Felix's Response and Delay (Acts 24:22-27): Governor Felix hears Paul's defense but postpones making a decision, hoping for a bribe from Paul. Despite this, Felix converses with Paul often and appears to be interested in the message of the Gospel.

Theological Influence:

Resurrection of the Dead: Paul's mention of his belief in the resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous underscores the theological concept of the resurrection. This belief is central to Christian eschatology, emphasizing the future resurrection of all people and the final judgment.

Conscience and Integrity: Paul's emphasis on maintaining a clear conscience reflects the theological principle of moral integrity and the importance of living in a way that aligns with one's faith. This has influenced discussions on Christian ethics and personal conduct.

Paul's Defense Strategy: Paul's defense before Felix illustrates a theological influence related to the practice of presenting a reasoned and respectful defense of one's faith and beliefs. This approach has influenced Christian apologetics and the art of defending the Christian faith in diverse contexts.

Interest in the Gospel Message: Felix's interest in hearing from Paul and his conversations with him suggest that the message of the Gospel was compelling even to those in positions of authority. This reflects the theological influence of the Gospel's power to draw people to Christ, regardless of their social status.

In summary, Acts chapter 24 contains theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's defense, his belief in the resurrection, the importance of conscience and integrity, and the reception of the Gospel message. These elements contribute to the understanding of Paul's ministry and the broader theological themes within the book of Acts.

Acts 25

New International Version

Paul's Trial Before Festus

25 Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, 2 where the chief priests and the Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul. 3 They requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. 4 Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon. 5 Let some of your leaders come with me, and if the man has done anything wrong, they can press charges against him there."

6 After spending eight or ten days with them, Festus went down to Caesarea. The next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him. 7 When Paul came in, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him. They brought many serious charges against him, but they could not prove them.

8 Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law or against the temple or against Caesar."

9 Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?"

10 Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. 11 If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

12 After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!"

Festus Consults King Agrippa

13 A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. 14 Since they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He said: "There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner. 15 When I went to

Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned.

16 “I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over anyone before they have faced their accusers and have had an opportunity to defend themselves against the charges. 17 When they came here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in. 18 When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. 19 Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. 20 I was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges. 21 But when Paul made his appeal to be held over for the Emperor’s decision, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar.”

22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear this man myself.”

He replied, “Tomorrow you will hear him.”

Paul Before Agrippa

23 The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high-ranking military officers and the prominent men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. 24 Festus said: “King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. 25 I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome. 26 But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. 27 For I think it is unreasonable to send a prisoner on to Rome without specifying the charges against him.”

Chapter 25 of the book of Acts begins with Festus, the new governor, arriving in Judea and taking over Paul's case. The Jewish leaders ask Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem for trial, but Paul appeals to Caesar, invoking his right as a Roman citizen to have his case heard in Rome.

Festus then asks King Agrippa to hear Paul's case so that he can better understand the charges against him. Agrippa agrees to hear Paul speak and, during the hearing, Paul defends himself against the accusations of the Jewish leaders.

After the hearing, Agrippa tells Festus that Paul could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar. Festus then consults with his advisors and decides to send Paul to Rome.

In the meantime, King Herod Agrippa II visits Festus and hears about Paul's case. Festus explains that Paul has appealed to Caesar and that he cannot be tried again. Agrippa expresses his desire to hear Paul speak and Festus arranges for a hearing.

During the hearing, Paul tells his story and explains his belief in Jesus Christ. Agrippa and Festus both acknowledge that Paul has done nothing deserving of death or imprisonment, but they agree to send him to Rome to have his case heard by Caesar. In summary, chapter 25 of Acts tells the story of Festus taking over Paul's case, the appeal to Caesar, King Agrippa's hearing of Paul's case, and the decision to send Paul to Rome to be heard by Caesar.

Here are some important verses from Acts 25, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, where the chief priests and the Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul." (Acts 25:1-2)

This verse sets the stage for the ongoing conflict between the Jewish leaders and Paul, as Festus arrives in Jerusalem and hears their case against him.

2. "Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, 'You have appealed to Caesar; to Caesar you shall go.'" (Acts 25:12)

This verse shows how Festus, as the new governor of Judea, decided to grant Paul's request to appeal to Caesar rather than hand him over to the Jewish leaders for trial. This decision would ultimately lead to Paul's journey to Rome.

3. "When Agrippa arrived, the king and the governor sat down together and asked Paul to speak. Paul replied, 'I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews.'" (Acts 25:23-24)

This verse shows how King Agrippa and Festus asked Paul to speak about his case. It highlights Paul's defense against the accusations of the Jewish leaders and his willingness to speak boldly about his faith.

4. "At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. 'You are out of your mind, Paul!' he shouted. 'Your great learning is driving you insane.'" (Acts 25:24)

This verse highlights the tension and confusion surrounding Paul's case, as Festus interrupts his defense and accuses him of being insane. It also shows how Paul's teachings and arguments were challenging to those who did not understand or accept them.

5. "Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?'" (Acts 25:28)

This verse shows how King Agrippa responded to Paul's defense, expressing his reluctance to be convinced by Paul's teachings in such a short time. It also underscores the significance of Paul's message and its potential to impact those who heard it.

Acts chapter 25 primarily focuses on the legal proceedings involving the apostle Paul as he appears before Governor Festus and King Agrippa. This chapter does not introduce new theological concepts but does contain theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's defense and the presentation of the Gospel message:

Theological Thought:

Paul's Appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:1-12): In Caesarea, Paul is brought before Governor Festus, and the Jewish leaders continue to accuse him. Paul, recognizing the hostility in Jerusalem, appeals to Caesar as a Roman citizen, which grants him the right to have his case heard by Caesar himself. This decision is driven by Paul's desire to ensure the Gospel message is heard in Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire.

Paul's Defense Before Agrippa (Acts 25:13-27; Acts 26): Festus later brings Paul before King Agrippa, along with other dignitaries, to explain his case. In Acts 26, Paul provides a detailed account of his background, conversion, and ministry, emphasizing his mission to bring the light of Christ to both Jews and Gentiles.

Theological Influence:

Paul's Determination to Spread the Gospel: Paul's decision to appeal to Caesar reflects his theological commitment to spreading the Gospel message. He is willing to go to great lengths, even facing a trial in Rome, to ensure that he has the opportunity to proclaim the message of Christ.

Presentation of the Gospel in Legal Settings: Paul's defense before Festus and Agrippa showcases the theological influence of presenting the Gospel message in a legal context. His testimony about his conversion and mission provides an example of how to communicate the Christian faith and message when facing legal charges or inquiries.

Inclusivity of the Gospel: Throughout his defense before Agrippa, Paul emphasizes his mission to both Jews and Gentiles, highlighting the theological understanding of the inclusivity of the Gospel. The message of salvation through Christ is intended for people of all backgrounds and cultures.

Faithfulness to God's Calling: Paul's unwavering commitment to his calling as an apostle and a witness for Christ serves as a theological example of faithfulness to God's mission. This influence has inspired countless Christians to be steadfast in their commitment to sharing the Gospel.

In summary, Acts chapter 25 contains theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's determination to spread the Gospel, the presentation of the Gospel in legal settings, the inclusivity of the Gospel, and the faithfulness to God's calling. These elements contribute to the understanding of Paul's ministry and the broader theological themes within the book of Acts.

Acts 26

New International Version

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: 2 "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the

accusations of the Jews, 3 and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

4 “The Jewish people all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. 5 They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion, living as a Pharisee. 6 And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. 7 This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. King Agrippa, it is because of this hope that these Jews are accusing me. 8 Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

9 “I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord’s people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

12 “On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 13 About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. 14 We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic,[a] ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

15 “Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. 16 ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. 17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

19 “So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. 20 First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. 21 That is why some Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. 22 But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen— 23 that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”

24 At this point Festus interrupted Paul’s defense. “You are out of your mind, Paul!” he shouted. “Your great learning is driving you insane.”

25 “I am not insane, most excellent Festus,” Paul replied. “What I am saying is true and reasonable. 26 The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.”

28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?”

29 Paul replied, “Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”

30 The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. 31 After they left the room, they began saying to one another, “This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment.”

32 Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

Footnotes

Acts 26:14 Or Hebrew

Chapter 26 of the book of Acts begins with King Agrippa giving Paul permission to speak for himself. Paul tells the story of his life, including his strict adherence to Judaism and his persecution of Christians before his conversion to Christianity.

Paul then describes his encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, and how Jesus had told him that he would be a witness for Him. Paul explains that he had preached the message of Jesus Christ to both Jews and Gentiles, and that he had been arrested and imprisoned for his beliefs.

Paul then addresses King Agrippa directly, asking him if he believes the prophets and their message of a coming Messiah. Agrippa responds by saying that Paul has almost persuaded him to become a Christian.

Festus, who had been listening to Paul's defense, interrupts and accuses Paul of being insane. Paul responds by saying that he is not insane, but is instead speaking the truth. In the end, Festus and Agrippa both agree that Paul has done nothing deserving of death or imprisonment. Agrippa tells Festus that Paul could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.

The chapter ends with Paul being sent to Rome to be heard by Caesar, accompanied by a group of other prisoners.

In summary, chapter 26 of Acts tells the story of Paul's defense before King Agrippa, his retelling of his life and his conversion to Christianity, and his proclamation of the message of Jesus Christ. It also depicts the reactions of Festus and Agrippa to Paul's testimony, and the decision to send Paul to Rome to be heard by Caesar.

Here are some important verses from Acts 26, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You have permission to speak for yourself.' So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense." (Acts 26:1)

This verse shows how Paul was given an opportunity to speak to King Agrippa about his faith and his defense against the accusations of the Jewish leaders. It highlights the importance of Paul's message and his willingness to share it with those in power.

2. "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord's people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them." (Acts 26:9-10)

In this passage, Paul speaks about his past persecution of Christians and how he was convinced that he should oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. It underscores the dramatic transformation that took place in Paul's life when he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus.

3. "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds." (Acts 26:19-20)

Here, Paul explains his mission and how he preached to both Jews and Gentiles about repentance and turning to God. It emphasizes the universal nature of Paul's message and his desire to share the gospel with as many people as possible.

4. "I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains." (Acts 26:29)

This verse shows how Paul was not only concerned for King Agrippa but for all who were listening to him, praying that they might come to believe in Jesus as he did. It highlights the importance of sharing the gospel with others and praying for their salvation.

5. "At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. 'You are out of your mind, Paul!' he shouted. 'Your great learning is driving you insane.'" (Acts 26:24)

This passage repeats what was said in Acts 25:24, highlighting the tension and confusion surrounding Paul's case and the accusations against him. It also underscores the difficulty of sharing the gospel with those who do not understand or accept it.

Acts chapter 26 records the detailed defense and testimony of the apostle Paul before King Agrippa. This chapter contains important theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's conversion, mission, and the Gospel message:

Theological Thought:

Paul's Conversion (Acts 26:4-18): In his defense, Paul recounts his pre-conversion life as a Pharisee who persecuted Christians. He describes his encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, where Jesus commissioned him to be an apostle to the Gentiles and to open their eyes, turning them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.

Paul's Obedience to God's Call (Acts 26:19-23): Paul explains that he obeyed the heavenly vision, preaching repentance and faith in Christ to both Jews and Gentiles. He asserts that he has spoken nothing but what the prophets and Moses foretold regarding the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah.

Paul's Desire for All to Be Saved (Acts 26:24-29): King Agrippa responds to Paul's testimony by acknowledging that he almost persuades him to become a Christian. Paul expresses his desire for all who hear him, including King Agrippa, to become as he is, except for his chains.

Theological Influence:

Conversion and Transformation: Paul's dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus underscores the theological concept of conversion and transformation through encountering Christ. This has influenced Christian understanding of the power of Christ to radically change lives.

The Divine Commission: Paul's testimony about his encounter with Christ and his commission to be an apostle to the Gentiles highlights the theological concept of divine calling and mission. It has had a significant influence on the understanding of apostolic authority and the spread of the Gospel to non-Jewish populations.

Preaching Repentance and Faith: Paul's declaration that he preached repentance and faith in Christ aligns with the theological emphasis on the essential elements of the Gospel message. His proclamation of salvation through repentance and faith continues to shape Christian evangelism and preaching.

Desire for Salvation: Paul's expressed desire for all to be saved reflects the theological concept of God's universal offer of salvation. It has influenced Christian evangelistic efforts and the understanding that God desires the salvation of all people.

Persuasion and Conviction: King Agrippa's response to Paul's testimony highlights the theological influence of persuasion and conviction in the presentation of the Gospel. It underscores the role of the Holy Spirit in convicting hearts and drawing people to faith.

In summary, Acts chapter 26 contains theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's conversion and calling, the preaching of repentance and faith, the desire for salvation, and the role of persuasion and conviction in evangelism. These elements contribute to the understanding of Paul's ministry and the broader theological themes within the book of Acts.

Acts 27

New International Version

Paul Sails for Rome

27 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. 2 We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

3 The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs. 4 From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. 5 When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. 6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. 7 We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. 8 We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.

9 Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement.[a] So Paul warned them, 10 “Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.” 11 But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. 12 Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.

The Storm

13 When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. 14 Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. 15 The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. 16 As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure, 17 so the men hoisted it aboard. Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Because they were afraid they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor[b] and let the ship be driven along. 18 We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. 19 On the third day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands. 20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

21 After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: “Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. 22 But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. 23 Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me 24 and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.’ 25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in

God that it will happen just as he told me. 26 Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.”

The Shipwreck

27 On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic[c] Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. 28 They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet[d] deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet[e] deep. 29 Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. 30 In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. 31 Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.” 32 So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away.

33 Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. “For the last fourteen days,” he said, “you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven’t eaten anything. 34 Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.” 35 After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. 36 They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. 37 Altogether there were 276 of us on board. 38 When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

39 When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. 40 Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. 41 But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

42 The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. 43 But the centurion wanted to spare Paul’s life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. 44 The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely.

Footnotes

Acts 27:9 That is, Yom Kippur

Acts 27:17 Or the sails

Acts 27:27 In ancient times the name referred to an area extending well south of Italy.

Acts 27:28 Or about 37 meters

Acts 27:28 Or about 27 meters

Chapter 27 of the book of Acts begins with Paul and other prisoners being handed over to a centurion named Julius, who is tasked with taking them to Rome. They set sail on a ship from Caesarea and make stops at various ports along the way.

As they journey towards Rome, the ship encounters strong winds and is caught in a storm. The sailors struggle to keep the ship afloat, and eventually the ship is wrecked on the island of Malta.

Paul and the other prisoners are saved by swimming to shore, and they are welcomed by the natives of the island. While on the island, Paul heals a man who is sick and is believed to be possessed by evil spirits.

After three months on the island, the prisoners are able to board another ship that is headed towards Rome. They make stops at various ports along the way, and eventually arrive in Rome where they are greeted by other believers.

In summary, chapter 27 of Acts tells the story of Paul's journey to Rome as a prisoner, the shipwreck on the island of Malta, and Paul's healing of a sick man. It also depicts the various stops along the way to Rome and the eventual arrival in Rome.

Here are some important verses from Acts 27, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment." (Acts 27:1)

This verse sets the stage for the events that follow, introducing the characters and their circumstances. It shows how Paul, a prisoner, was taken by ship to Italy under the supervision of a Roman centurion named Julius.

2. "But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship." (Acts 27:11)

This passage illustrates the challenge that Paul faced in trying to persuade others to follow his advice. It shows how the centurion chose to listen to the advice of other experts rather than to Paul's warnings about the dangerous conditions ahead.

3. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "we have been in constant suspense and have endured much suffering. [...] But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed." (Acts 27:20, 22)

Here, Paul encourages the crew and passengers of the ship, assuring them that they will all survive despite the stormy conditions they were facing. It emphasizes Paul's leadership and his ability to inspire hope even in the face of great adversity.

4. "Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. 'For the last fourteen days,' he said, 'you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.'" (Acts 27:33-34)

In this passage, Paul again shows his concern for the well-being of those around him, urging them to eat in order to stay strong and survive. It underscores his practicality and his desire to help others, even in the midst of a crisis.

5. "The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely." (Acts 27:44)

This verse shows how, despite the shipwreck, everyone aboard the ship was able to reach land safely, just as Paul had predicted. It highlights the power of faith and the trust that can be placed in God even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Acts chapter 27 recounts the harrowing journey of the apostle Paul and others on a ship from Caesarea to Rome, including their shipwreck on the island of Malta. While this chapter doesn't introduce new theological concepts, it does contain theological thoughts and influences related to God's providence, faith in difficult circumstances, and the role of prayer:

Theological Thought:

Paul's Warning (Acts 27:9-12): Paul, a prisoner on the ship, warns the crew and centurion that their voyage will result in disaster, but his advice is disregarded. Despite the warning, they set sail, leading to a dangerous journey.

God's Providence and Angelic Encouragement (Acts 27:23-24): While the ship is caught in a severe storm, an angel of God appears to Paul, assuring him that he will stand trial before Caesar. This divine encounter provides encouragement and underscores the theological belief in God's providential care even in the midst of trials.

Paul's Leadership (Acts 27:30-32): As the situation becomes increasingly dire, Paul encourages the crew to stay on the ship, assuring them that they will survive. His leadership reflects the theological principle of faith in God's guidance and protection.

Prayer and Thanksgiving (Acts 27:35): In the midst of the storm, Paul gathers those on board and offers a prayer of thanksgiving before taking food. This act of prayer and thanksgiving in a challenging circumstance emphasizes the theological practice of seeking God's presence and provision.

Theological Influence:

God's Providence in Adversity: The events in Acts 27 illustrate the theological influence of God's providential care even in the face of adversity. Paul's divine encounter and assurance that he will reach Rome serve as a reminder of God's sovereignty over difficult circumstances.

Faith and Leadership: Paul's faith and leadership during the storm serve as a theological example of trusting God's guidance and provision. This influence has inspired Christians to exhibit faith and leadership in challenging situations.

Prayer in Crisis: Paul's act of prayer and thanksgiving during the storm influences the practice of turning to God in times of crisis and seeking His presence and provision through prayer.

Divine Encounters: The angelic visitation to Paul reinforces the theological understanding that God may intervene and provide guidance through divine encounters. This has influenced Christian belief in God's ability to communicate with and provide reassurance to His followers.

In summary, Acts chapter 27 contains theological thoughts and influences related to God's providence, faith in adversity, leadership in challenging situations, the practice of prayer, and the belief in divine encounters. These elements contribute to the understanding of how faith and trust in God's guidance and care can be demonstrated in the midst of trials and difficulties.

Acts 28

New International Version

Paul Ashore on Malta

28 Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. 2 The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. 3 Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. 4 When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, “This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live.” 5 But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. 6 The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

7 There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. 8 His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. 9 When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. 10 They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

Paul's Arrival at Rome

11 After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island—it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. 12 We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. 13 From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. 14 There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. 15 The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged. 16 When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

Paul Preaches at Rome Under Guard

17 Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. 18 They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. 19 The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people. 20 For this

reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”

21 They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. 22 But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect.”

23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. 24 Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. 25 They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

26 “Go to this people and say,
“You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.”

27 For this people’s heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.’[a]

28 “Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” [29] [b]

30 For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. 31 He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

Footnotes

Acts 28:27 Isaiah 6:9,10 (see Septuagint)

Acts 28:29 Some manuscripts include here After he said this, the Jews left, arguing vigorously among themselves.

Chapter 28 of the book of Acts begins with Paul and the other prisoners arriving on the island of Malta, where they are greeted by the natives and shown kindness. While there, Paul heals many people who are sick.

After three months on the island, they are able to board another ship that takes them to Rome. Upon arriving in Rome, Paul is allowed to live in his own rented house with a guard.

Paul then calls for the leaders of the Jews to come and hear his message, and he explains to them that he is in chains because of his belief in the hope of Israel, which is the resurrection of the dead. Some of the Jews believe Paul's message, while others do not. Paul spends two years in Rome preaching the message of Jesus Christ, and he receives many visitors while under house arrest. The book of Acts ends with the statement that Paul continued to preach the kingdom of God and to teach about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

In summary, chapter 28 of Acts tells the story of Paul's arrival in Rome, his ability to live in his own rented house with a guard, and his continued preaching of the message of Jesus Christ. It also depicts his interactions with the leaders of the Jews and his reception by others in Rome. The book of Acts ends with the statement that Paul continued to preach the kingdom of God without hindrance.

Here are some important verses from Acts 28, along with brief explanations and their locations in the chapter:

1. "Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta." (Acts 28:1)
This verse introduces the location where Paul and the other survivors of the shipwreck end up. Malta is a small island in the Mediterranean Sea, and this sets the stage for the events that follow.

2. "The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold." (Acts 28:2)

This verse describes the hospitality shown to Paul and the other survivors by the people of Malta. It highlights the generosity of strangers, even in difficult circumstances.

3. "Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand." (Acts 28:3)

This passage describes how Paul is bitten by a venomous snake, an event that was seen by the people of Malta as a sign of his guilt and punishment by the gods. It shows how even those who have experienced great hardships may still face challenges and adversity.

4. "He shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects." (Acts 28:5)
In this verse, we see that despite being bitten by a snake, Paul miraculously suffers no ill effects. This is seen as a sign of his divine protection and strengthens the faith of those who witness it.

5. "Paul stayed there two whole years in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him." (Acts 28:30)

This verse describes how Paul spends two years in Malta, where he continues to preach and teach about Jesus to all who will listen. It emphasizes Paul's unwavering commitment to spreading the gospel and his willingness to do so even in challenging circumstances.

Acts chapter 28 is the final chapter of the book of Acts and describes the apostle Paul's arrival in Rome and his ministry there. While it doesn't introduce new theological concepts, it does contain theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's continued witness and the reception of the Gospel:

Theological Thought:

Paul's Arrival in Rome (Acts 28:11-16): After a perilous journey, Paul and the ship's passengers arrive on the island of Malta, where they receive kind treatment from the locals. From there, they eventually reach Rome, where Paul is allowed to live in a rented house under guard.

Paul's Ministry in Rome (Acts 28:17-31): While in Rome, Paul continues to proclaim the Gospel. He gathers Jewish leaders and explains his situation, testifying about Jesus and the hope of Israel. Some believe, while others do not. Paul's ministry in Rome highlights the theological principle of the continued spread of the Gospel message, even in challenging circumstances.

Paul's Focus on the Kingdom of God (Acts 28:30-31): The chapter concludes by noting that Paul lived in Rome for two years, welcoming all who came to him. He preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. This emphasizes the theological message of the centrality of the kingdom of God in the Gospel message.

Theological Influence:

Continued Gospel Witness: Paul's ministry in Rome, despite his imprisonment and challenging circumstances, has influenced the understanding that the proclamation of the Gospel is not limited by external constraints. Christians have been encouraged to continue sharing the Gospel message in all situations.

Reception of the Gospel: The mixed response of the Jewish leaders in Rome to Paul's message reflects the theological reality that the Gospel is received differently by individuals. Some accept it, while others reject it. This has influenced discussions on the role of human free will and God's sovereignty in salvation.

Focus on the Kingdom of God: Paul's emphasis on preaching the kingdom of God underscores the theological principle of the kingdom's central place in Christian teaching. This influence has shaped Christian eschatology and the understanding of the kingdom as a key aspect of God's plan.

Boldness in Ministry: Paul's ministry in Rome with boldness and without hindrance has influenced Christian leaders and missionaries to boldly proclaim the Gospel message, regardless of opposition or challenges.

In summary, Acts chapter 28 contains theological thoughts and influences related to Paul's continued Gospel witness, the reception of the Gospel message, the focus on the kingdom of God, and the boldness in ministry. These elements contribute to the understanding of how the Gospel spreads and is received, even in the face of adversity and opposition.

Notes:

in Christian bible; the book " Act "; what are most difficult questions and yet with no answer

In the book of Acts, there are several difficult questions that have been debated and discussed by scholars and theologians over the years. Here are a few examples:

1. What was the nature of the tongues spoken on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13)? Were they human languages or a heavenly language? And what is the significance of this event?
2. What is the relationship between Paul's preaching of grace and James' emphasis on works (Acts 15:1-35)? How do we reconcile their apparently different views on salvation?
3. What was the purpose of the signs and wonders performed by the apostles (Acts 3:1-10; 5:12-16)? Were they simply displays of God's power, or did they have a deeper theological meaning?
4. What was the nature of Paul's "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)? Was it a physical ailment or a spiritual struggle? And why did God not remove it despite Paul's prayers?

These are just a few examples of the difficult questions that arise from the book of Acts, and there are many more. While there may not be clear-cut answers to these questions, they provide opportunities for deeper exploration and reflection on the mysteries of faith.