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- XV. *Missionary Journey Two - Prelude Paul and Barnabas differ and separate (15:36-39) And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Come, let us return and visit the brethren in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are." And Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp contention, so that they separated from each other; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus {40} but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. {41} And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. (16) And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek. {2} He was well spoken of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. {3} Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. {4} As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions which had been reached by the apostles and elders who were at Jerusalem. {5} So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily {6} And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. {7} And when they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; {8} so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. {9} And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing beseeching him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." {10} And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them {11} Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, {12} and from there to Philippi, which is the leading city of the district of Macedonia, and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days; {13} and on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. {14} One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul. {15} And when she was baptized, with her household, she besought us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us {16} As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by soothsaying. {17} She followed Paul and us, crying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." {18} And this she did for many days. But Paul was annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. {19} But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the rulers; {20} and when they had brought them to the magistrates they said, "These men are Jews and they are disturbing our city. {21} They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us*

Romans to accept or practice." {22} The crowd joined in attacking them; and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. {23} And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely {24} Having received this charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. {25} But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, {26} and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and every one's fetters were unfastened. {27} When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. {28} But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." {29} And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, {30} and brought them out and said, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" {31} And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." {32} And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. {33} And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family. {34} Then he brought them up into his house, and set food before them; and he rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God {35} But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." {36} And the jailer reported the words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go; now therefore come out and go in peace." {37} But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now cast us out secretly? No! let them come themselves and take us out." {38} The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens; {39} so they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. {40} So they went out of the prison, and visited Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they exhorted them and departed.

A. Outline

1. Resumption - vv. 15:36-37
2. Repudiation - vv. 38-39a
3. Result - vv. 39b-41
4. Recruiting - vv. 16:1-3
5. Return - vv. 4-5
6. Restraints - vv. 6-8
7. Redirection - vv. 9-12
8. Repentance and Rebirth - vv. 13-16
9. Rescue - vv. 17-18
10. Rejection - vv. 19-23
11. Rejoicing - v. 25
12. Result - vv. 26-27
13. Rescue - vv. 28-32
14. Response - vv. 33-34

15. Refusal - vv. 35-38
16. Result - v. 39
17. Resumption - v. 40

B. To a certain extent we have made a move here. In effect the Acts of the Apostles will now become the Acts of Paul. We will hear nothing more of the other Apostles specifically from this point forward. Jerusalem will reappear only briefly. Now the story heads out into mission territory with little looking back. Between chapters 16 & 21 Luke compresses a vivid account of the missionary work of Paul in Asia and Europe.

C. Regarding the split between Paul and Barnabas:

1. The loss of Barnabas to the story here is also significant. Barnabas has occupied a central point in the story up to this point. He intervened for Paul with the other apostles (9:27); he recruited Paul for work in Antioch (11:25-26); he was Paul's companion in the first missionary journey (13-14); he spoke with Paul in defense of that mission at the council (15:12). But after this scene he is never mentioned again in Acts!
2. It is uncertain whether Paul and Barnabas ever reconciled. In Galatians 2:11 Paul seems almost bitter in recalling the fact (not recorded in Acts) that Barnabas "was carried away by hypocrisy" He thus more than implies that Barnabas stood against him or was at least weakened by human respect in the events that preceded the council. Perhaps this helps explain some of the tensions between Paul and Barnabas that led to this parting of the ways.
3. At any rate, the matter is not polished up much. Luke does not give great details but neither does he cover up or try to hide the "sharp contention" that arose between the two. There is no doubt that Paul had a strong personality and could be stubborn. This is not to say he was in the wrong here but simply to show his human side of the equation. We know little about the personality of Barnabas but Paul clearly from his epistles had no trouble speaking his mind and standing firm when he thought it necessary to do so. Some of that seems evident in the difference here although we are not in a position to say whether it was inappropriate to do so in this case.
4. And yet, it must also be observed that John Mark was the nephew of Barnabas (Col 4:10). This may help explain the sharpness of the difference and fierce loyalty that Barnabas seems to have for JM. In this light the whole conflict takes on a bit of a different significance as a conflict between family loyalties and the demands of the apostolic mission.
5. Further, despite the fact that we are not to hear from Barnabas again, we *will* hear from John Mark. He went on to write the first Gospel and Paul himself will ask that John Mark be sent to him "since he is of help to me." (2 Tim 4:11) So, in the end Mark regained his reputation and it may well have been the friendship of Barnabas (a name which means Son of encouragement (Acts 4:36)) which gave John Mark his self respect and made him determined to make good. It is a great thing for a man to have

someone who believes in him.

6. Hence although the split is tragic here we need not assume that the breach was never healed just because we don't hear of it. And yet, we might observe how powerful a story such as that could be. Nevertheless, the fact remains that we do not have it.
- D. **visit the brethren** - the Greek verb here is *episkeptomai* which is related to the role of bishop and has the sense of oversee/inspect. Recall that the word for Bishop in Latin and Greek is *Episcopus* which literally means one who over-sees (epi=over, scopus=to see). Hence Barnabas and Paul are in effect exercising their office of bishop in regard to the Local Churches.
- E. **Paul thought best** - The Greek word *axioo* (literally, consider worthy) has the sense of a prudential judgement rather than a moral one. Thus we are dealing more with a question of what is to be done in a particular situation given the circumstances rather a judgement of the personal holiness or worthiness of John Mark. Paul, given the experience on the first journey does not think John Mark up to the journey, Barnabas does.
- F. **one who had withdrawn from them** the Greek is a little harsher and basically notes that Mark had abandoned them. In fact the Greek verb *aphistemi* can have the sense of apostasy. In fact we must not try to sweep this strong critique by Luke under the rug. In effect he characterized what Mark did as apostasy. They had after all been commissioned by the Church to proclaim the word and to mission but Mark withdrew, abandoned them, in effect apostatized. Our Lord had been very strong in his own language about this: *No one who has once grasped the plow yet keeps looking backward in fit for the kingdom of God.* (Lk 9:62) This also gives an edge to what Barnabas does in preferring to return to Cyprus with Mark rather than continue on the mission. We cannot overlook the polemic used by Luke here; it is a strong critique indeed. Yet too, do not forget that Mark seems to have come around and we can thank the Lord for this conversion and that the Gospel of Mark has now become one of the basic tools in evangelization. God takes the weak and makes them strong in bearing witness to Christ.
- G. **there arose a sharp contention** - the basic Greek word here *paroxunein* has the sense of provoke/irritate/enrage. The conflict then has a strong emotional quality and we see that Luke hides little in describing the conflict nor does he sugar-coat.
- H. **Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus** - It had been Paul's suggestion in verse 37: *Come, let us return and visit the brethren in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord.* Since Paul and Silas set out to Derbe Lystra, Antioch and Iconium by another course but Barnabas sets out as had been done in the first journey to Cyprus. Perhaps they divided up the mission? At any rate we know that Paul did not go to Cyprus but he did go much beyond the scope of the previous mission.
- I. Beginning of Mission two: departure for Syria and Cilicia (15:40-41) Task one is to look at the map of the second missionary journey. See Appendix.
- J. **Paul chose Silas** - Luke presents nothing solemn about the choice of Silas. We are not told why or if he possess any qualifications. Paul mentions him in several of his epistles: 2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1-2; 2 Thess 1:1 But we know little of him. He had been sent back in Acts 15:35 to communicate and circulate the Letter from

the Council of Jerusalem. Silas will share Paul's imprisonment and release at Philippi and will be involved with him in the riot at Thessalonica (AA 16:11-17:9). He would stay with Paul and is mentioned at least through the visit to Corinth where they are joined by Timothy. Later on he is also the courier of the first Letter of Peter (1 Pet 5:12). Another form of his name was Silvanus.

- K. ***strengthening the churches*** The two go north and strengthen the Churches. This could be a continuation of the mission of Silas and Judas who were couriers of the Apostolic Letter from Jerusalem but this is a speculation. If this was the case it strengthening could mean encouraging them with the truth of the equality of Jews and Greeks but the verb need not be limited to only this.
- L. ***he came also to Derbe and Lystra*** - It is curious that Luke uses the singular form of the verb here and the pronoun "he" in relation to the team of Paul and Silas. Perhaps Paul's pre-eminence is being underscored here?
- M. ***Timothy*** - here is one of the most important characters in the Pauline mission to follow. He is acknowledged by Paul as a fellow worker. He is listed as one of the co-sponsors of several of Paul's letters (2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; Philemon) Likewise Paul addressed two letters to him which are part of the Canon of sacred Scripture. We shall hear more of Timothy in Acts 17:14-15; 18:5; 19:22; & 20:4
- N. ***he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.*** - well now here's a howdy-do. How can this be? Consider some background to understand the surprise that this line can cause. We have just finished a General Council of the Church where the conclusion was that the Jewish Law was not binding on Gentile converts and further, that it was not saving. Only Jesus by the free gift of grace saves, not circumcision or the Law. Paul was the main proponent of this position and strongly insisted, as he does everywhere in the law that circumcision is pointless regarding salvation. Well Ok, but Paul doesn't here claim Timothy must be circumcised to be saved but does it out of concern for the Jews in that place. Therefore no problem right? Well again, the matter is not so simple. Consider some of the follow texts that describe Paul's position on circumcision.
1. 1 Corinthians 7:18-20 *Was any one at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was any one at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God. Every one should remain in the state in which he was called.*
 2. Galatians 5:2-3,5-6 *Now I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is bound to keep the whole law. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love.*
 3. Galatians 6:12 *It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.*
 4. Galatians 2:11-14 *But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his*

face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

- O. Now all the texts above show that Paul's position on circumcision is that no one may be compelled to be circumcised. If one is not presently circumcised he should stay that way (a). He further argues that human respect is not really an excuse (c & d). Note how he withstood Peter for not mixing with Gentiles when Jews were around. Note two what he said in regard to those who sought circumcision "Christ will be of no advantage to you" (b). All these texts help to underscore the problematic nature of this whole incident. Let's try to answer some of the objections.
1. Answers to the objections.
 - a. in the first place Luke gives the reason Paul had Timothy circumcised: ***because of the Jews that were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek*** - Luke presents this as a reason that there was no conflict with the decision of the council. This means that Luke expects us to see Paul's action as a prudential one. Paul seeks to avoid trouble. He is not saying that circumcision was necessary for Timothy's salvation nor a condition for discipleship. Rather he wants to smooth Timothy's path among the Jews with whom he will certainly have to work or interact. But what's all this stuff about his father being Greek? It seems that Luke is trying to say that Timothy was a Jew but his Gentile father had prohibited his circumcision. This fact makes his circumcision (well after the eighth day!) explainable. The upshot of the whole description is that Timothy is being portrayed as a pious Jew who had not repudiated his Jewish roots freely but under compulsion. Hence, Paul wants everyone to know this and so has him circumcised. He wants to avoid any scandal that the perceived impiety of Timothy would have caused.
 - b. Regarding the conflict that Paul had with Peter, there is a difference. In Peter's case the effect of his actions is to discriminate publicly against all Gentiles by preferring to eat with Jews and avoiding Gentiles. This was public scandal given the decision of the Church and especially due to the fact that it was Peter himself who had authoritatively declared the equality of Jews and Gentiles. Paul's action however, is a private one involving a single individual. Hence Peter's action is quite public, and Paul's private. Further, Paul is trying to avoid giving offense while Peter is surely causing it.
 - c. Finally then, what we are left with is a prudential judgement in a

particular circumstance. Hence Paul can certainly set forth the proper norm of what to do in general cases. But general norms can be superceded by particular circumstances (remember Timothy was a Jew by birth and this created a special set of circumstances). Hence, a general norm: viz. The non-circumcised ought not be circumcised can yield in some cases because it is not an absolute norm. What is clearly excluded is someone being circumcised because he thought it was necessary for salvation. As long as this is understood, circumcision can happen for other reasons (e.g. medical, or, as in Paul's specific judgment here, to avoid trouble).

2. None of these explanations can take away one edge however: Paul seems to regard the opinions of men. This is surprising for Paul who seems to react strongly against human respect in most circumstances (see esp. Gal 6:12 above). Why not here? We are not in a position to second guess Paul. He evidently thought it proper to proceed in this manner. We are not on the scene, in fact are far removed from it. Nevertheless, there is a bit of a surprise here: all things considered.
- P. Paul crosses Asia Minor (16:6-10) The exact course taken by the missionaries here is not stated. Thus most maps just draw a straight line from Psidian Antioch to Troas. What happened along this route is not exactly specified but it is not shrouded in positive terms. Paul evidently sought to head north into Asia but was prevented by the Holy Spirit from doing so. Further, the Spirit seemed to urge Paul on into Europe (Modern Greece).
- Q. ***forbidden by the Holy Spirit...the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them*** - Inquiring minds want to ask Luke why the Spirit forbade them and also how. But Luke supplies none of this detail. Did Paul receive word from a prophet, did he have a vision or receive a locution? Or was it just a deep inner conviction? We'll never know in this life. However, all of this lack of detail though frustrating makes sense given Luke's consistent message about the obedience of faith. Recall how the Holy Spirit has been directing the Church all this time and that there is a requirement of obedience to his directives. This seems to be Luke's essential point: the Holy Spirit forbids it, that is all that needs to be known. It is good to review at this point some of the other places in Acts where we have seen the Holy Spirit at work.
1. Acts 8:26-30, 39 But an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert road. And he rose and went. And behold, an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a minister of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of all her treasure, had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"... And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught up Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.
 2. Acts 10:9,10,15,19-21, 44-47 The next day, as they were on their journey

and coming near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. And he became hungry and desired something to eat; but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance...And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has cleansed, you must not call common." ...And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down, and accompany them without hesitation; for I have sent them." And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?"...While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, "Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

3. Acts 13:1-4 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 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." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed to Cyprus.
4. In each of the passages above we see how the Holy SPIRIT is in the driver's seat and there is a required obedience to His directives. This is Luke's main point.

R. An interesting theory about how they were prevented from going into Asia is to focus on Paul's health. In Galatians 4:13 Paul indicates his need to linger in Galatia was due to ill health. *You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first; and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus* (Galatians 4:13-14) Was this the manner in which the Holy Spirit prevent Paul from going into Asia? Once that moment passed Paul by and as he began to regain his health, he received an encouraging word from someone to go to Macedonia. All of this could be the way the Holy Spirit worked. He prevented Paul through events and happenings. he illness angle also helps explain the likely presence of Luke who was a physician. In a few verses we shall see how the narrative shifts to "we" more than implying Luke was along for those parts of the journey. Perhaps Paul, due to ill health needs a doctor along. All of this is theoretical but is interesting to consider.

S. ***And a vision appeared to Paul*** - Visions are nothing new in Acts. For example, Paul had one just prior to his conversion. Peter had one on the rooftop. Now again, Paul has another. We might wish to have such visions to clearly direct us! Alas, this is a rare gift given only to some among the Christian faithful. We must not however, overlook the glorious fact that we have the very Word of God in the Bible. In this case we are better off even than Paul who could not have access to

that yet to be compiled section. Further, he had to write a lot of it! We must also not overlook the glorious fact that we are guided by the teaching authority of the Church and the two thousand years of tradition and reflection that have gone before us. We are blessed indeed and should therefore not consider ourselves to be deprived because we don't have visions. Consider well the warning given in the story of Lazarus: Luke 16:27-31 *And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"*

- T. **a man of Macedonia** - was this Luke? Since in the next verse the narrative shifts to "we" this is a possibility. There is a Tradition that Luke was from Macedonia but it is only that. The problem with this theory is that the man appears to Paul while he is in a trance or having a vision. This would tend to preclude the "man" as being actually present there. Given Paul's ill health however he may have experienced as a vision what was a delirium wherein his physician Luke was actually present but Paul's experience was more dreamlike. This is a bit dissatisfying however, since we ought to resist saying that a biblical text does not mean what it says but in fact reflects someone's mistaken notion. When the Bible says a vision was had we ought not rush to try and conclude it was something other than just what it says it is: a spiritual vision.
- U. **we** - here is a rather jarring transition into the "we" sections of acts. Why have we gone from the third to the first person so quickly. The easiest answer is that Luke has joined on with the missionary band. Thus now he goes to the first person plural in his narrative. Some scholars dispute this as a very reliable theory however. But their theory is equally weak when they assume that Luke has now just shifted to quoting an unnamed eyewitness directly. If that is the case, why has he suddenly started to do this when all along he has used the third person? Thus this theory has much to demonstrate.
- V. **Samothrace** - this is a mountainous Island off the coast of Macedonia
- W. **Neapolis** - This was the port city of Philippi. Philippi sat some ten mile inland.
- X. **Philippi** - A city of NE Macedonia. It lies in a plain surrounded by Mountains. It had been founded on the site of an older city by Philip II of Macedon and passed under Roman Rule in 167 BC. It was a Roman colony and under Roman Law and had a sizeable population of Roman army veterans. This city will become an important city for Paul in his European mission and he describes it so in Phil 1:5. We know too that Paul received financial support from here (Phil 4:15-18) and that he regarded the community with great affection (Phil 4:1-7)
1. Philippians 1:3-5 *I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.*
 2. Philippians 4:15-18 *And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only; for even in*

Thessalonica you sent me help once and again. Not that I seek the gift; but I seek the fruit which increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more; I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

3. *Philippians 4:1-3 Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. And I ask you also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.*

Y. ***we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer*** - There seem to have been very few Jews since there was no synagogue. For there to be a synagogue, at least ten Jewish men had to live in the area. If there was no synagogue what ever Jews there were met at some predesignated area for prayers. Rivers or bodies of water we common meeting places and it is therefore no surprise that Paul finds himself at a riverside on the Sabbath and there meets Lydia and some others gathered with her.

Z. ***Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God*** - Here is a question from Bible trivia: Q: Who was the first European Convert? A: Lydia the purpler. Although this last sentence is in jest, there is nothing trivial here. We have just opened a new Chapter. The Gospel has now made another leap. From Jerusalem, north to Samaria, Still further north to Antioch. Then to Asia Minor and now, across into Europe. As with these other places, Europe will Never be the same: Jesus Christ has arrived. We know several things about Lydia:

1. She was a wealthy woman. Purple dye had to be gathered drop by drop from certain shellfish and was extremely costly. Only the very wealthy could afford to wear purple garments. To dye one pound of wool would cost up to \$200 in modern equivalents.
2. She was likely not a Jew by birth but was a convert, a "God-fearer"
3. She was not a native of Philippi but of Asia Minor. Thyatira is a city that lies between Sardis and Pergamum. The purple dye industry was the great industry of that city. Although this good woman comes from that city there is also a rather severe indictment of the city in the Book of Revelation regarding another woman, a Jezebel in their midst: Revelation 2:18-25 *"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. 'I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and beguiling my servants to practice immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her doings; and I will strike her children*

dead. And all the churches shall know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve. But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay upon you any other burden; only hold fast what you have, until I come.

- AA. ***The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul.*** True conversion is never effect by man alone. It is always a work of the Holy Spirit who is the mover of human hearts. This must be remembered by everyone who seeks to have the Gospel spread. Humility demand that we acknowledge this as a work of God and not glory in it as though it we our own doing. Further, we must not loose heart. When we preach we must understand that the Holy Spirit goes before us to prepare hearts and minds. Hence we need not worry so much of our own eloquence and learnedness. Surely we should strive to be as effective as possible, but in the end we must understand that if the Word is received, it will be a work of God who can use even the weak and make them strong in bearing witness to God. On more than a few occasions Paul seems to imply he was not a great preacher. A humorous story to anticipate this point will take place later in Acts that it might be good to anticipate here: Acts 20:7-12 *On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and he prolonged his speech until midnight. There were many lights in the upper chamber where we were gathered. And a young man named Eutychus was sitting in the window. He sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer; and being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and bent over him, and embracing him said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. And they took the lad away alive, and were not a little comforted.*
- AB. ***she was baptized, with her household,*** - The baptism is abrupt but no more so than in other instances (2:41; 8:12; 8:38; 9:18; 10:48). This may offend later notions that baptism should be delayed until thorough instruction but later developments need not be imposed here. Luke is not presenting a full sacramental theology here. Later reflection by the Church, especially as she grew larger and more cosmopolitan concluded that more thorough instruction should precede baptism. Some early catechumenates lasted as long as three years. Now we average about one year. Nevertheless, even with these instructions periods, there is still a strong recommendation given to the ancient tradition of the "disciplina arcanis" (the discipline of the secret). Certain things were only taught or revealed to catechumens after their baptism. All of this helped focus on the fact that the renewed mind, renewed by baptism was alone sufficient to appreciate certain truths of the faith. Likewise, it bridged the gap to the Biblical tradition of very quick baptism because it does not make baptism merely an intellectual pursuit and a kind of graduation from study. Rather, baptism and the holiness it confers it total gift, unmerited and unachieved. We can discuss more of this balance in class.
- AC. ***come to my house and stay*** - this is a great benefit to Paul and company since they now have a base of operations and, more than likely, wealthy benefactor.

Hospitality was very important in the ancient world, much more so than is appreciated today. There weren't lots of drive-in motels. There were inns for travelers but they were not intended for long stays. To refuse hospitality to the passer-by was a serious neglect of charity in the ancient world and it was widely decried as a sign of decadence when it was perceived. Surely there were limits but the general instinct was that travellers should be assisted and treated with respect. All of this is an indirect way of saying that Lydia was not just giving lip-service to the faith, she was practicing it in significant ways.

- AD. Trouble with the occult (16-23)- In effect the slave girl was mad and/or troubled by a demon. She was what the ancient people called a python. The ancient world had a strange respect for mad people. They thought that the gods had taken away their wits in order to put the minds of gods in them. Thus they had an ability to tell the future and give oracles that would guide men in important questions. Here then is a mad slavegirl but she brings her masters much profit due to her affliction. Luke's description of her seems to reflect all this. Though mad she does discern the truth and in her own mad manner runs along behind our missionary band declaring that what they say is the saving truth. We shall touch upon this irony below.
- AE. ***a slave girl who had a spirit of divination*** - the Greek describes here literally as "having a python spirit" The Greek word python originally designated the dragon or serpent who guarded the delphic oracle. Later the word came to mean "a spirit of divination" and even a ventriloquist.
- AF. ***She followed...crying "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."*** - This is ironic in many ways. A python spirit proclaims salvation in Christ Jesus! Although it is ironic it is not uncommon. It has happened in several places in the gospels. The demons recognize who Jesus is even before most of his disciples. For once, demons tell the truth. And yet they do not say it in as a type of adhering faith but more out of pride: *I* know who you are! Here are some other examples from the gospels and the Epistle of James.
1. Luke 4:33-37 *And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon; and he cried out with a loud voice, "Ah! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. And they were all amazed and said to one another, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." And reports of him went out into every place in the surrounding region.*
 2. Luke 8:26ff *Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. And as he stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons; for a long time he had worn no clothes, and he lived not in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech you, do not torment me." For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert.) Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss.*
 3. James 2:17 ff *So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But some one*

will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe -- and shudder. Do you want to be shown, you shallow man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by works, and the scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness"; and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

- AG. Hence we can see that again the Acts shows how the Gospel patterns are repeated. What happens to Jesus happens to his ministers and his Church, a constant Lucan theme.
- AH. **Paul was annoyed** - exactly why he was annoyed is not clear. Perhaps she interrupted his preaching? Some commentators have him annoyed simply because she is possessed. But if this is the case, why did he wait some days before expelling the demon? It does seem that the annoyance was a cumulative effect. Paul may not have immediately discerned that she was in fact possessed. Perhaps she just seemed a pesky fan at first. But after a while Paul, based on her behavior and words, saw that she was possessed and expelled the demon. This would comport well with the present practice of the Church regarding demonic possession. It is not a rushed judgement. Certain and solid evidence must be presented before an exorcist is appointed by the bishop.
- AI. **"I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."** - This formula of exorcism "Come out" was accomplished by Jesus with his own power. Paul however, invokes the power of the Name of Jesus. Faith is essential to this power for it can only be accomplished by the power of Jesus. Here again, the Catholic tradition emphasizes this. The priest who is called to be an exorcist can only do so by special permission of the Bishop. The Roman Ritual states: *The priest who with the particular and explicit permission of his Bishop is about to exorcise those tormented by an evil spirit must have the necessary piety, prudence and personal integrity. He should perform this most heroic work humbly and courageously, not relying on his own strength, but on the power of God...Besides, he should be of mature age and be respected as a virtuous person.*
- AJ. **But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas** - The proper response to see in someone freed from a demon or any other irregularity is joy. Yet these "owners" see only their profits going out the window. There is a particularly ugly side of human nature that seeks to profit from human suffering and misery. Circus freak shows have been replaced in our own times with the television talk shows which parade an endless variety of human dysfunctionality before the populace for profit.
- AK. **These men are Jews** - true enough they are but the charge is ironic in that they are proclaiming Christ and the missionary band also suffers at the hands of the Jews for this. Nevertheless, the disenfranchised "owners" now incite anti-Semitic sentiments to enrage a crowd and evoke fear.
- AL. Despite the vague charges, **They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us**

Romans to accept or practice, the two are stripped, beaten and imprisoned with the instruction to the jailer that they be kept safely. Gee, thanks. Safety means little now. At least the two were not killed. Paul has suffered a lot. He was stoned and left for dead on the previous journey now he is seriously injured due to a flogging. All this recalls the words of our Lord to Ananias in Acts 9:15-16 *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."*

- AM. ***the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks*** - At this part of the prison there would have been the worst conditions: little or no light, rats, other bugs, little ventilation, bad smells etc. With their feet fastened they thus had little mobility. All for these vague charges. True enough, Romans were forbidden by Roman Law from Jewish practices. But The real "crime" was to expelling the demon and freeing the girl from her slavery of mind. What they had done was to hit the "owners" in their wallet. But how do we find them? Angry, full of despair?
- AN. ***[They] were praying and singing hymns to God*** - here is the proper Christian disposition to suffering: Sing and praise the Lord. *Sorrowful yet always rejoicing.* 2 Cor 6:10
- AO. ***prisoners were listening to them*** - when they give you lemons, make lemonade. There is no place where the preaching task cannot be carried out. Even where it is forbidden by law to do so, the Christian need not recognize such laws. Thus, there is no situation no matter how unfortunate where the gospel cannot be preached in some way.
- AP. ***and suddenly there was a great earthquake*** - although earthquakes were common in the area. Luke presents the earthquake as a response to the prayers. The upshot is that our missionaries were freed from the chains by all this.
- AQ. ***[the jailer] drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.*** - There was a roman edict upon a soldier who lost his prisoner(s). He had to suffer the penalty of his prisoners who escaped. Hence he figures to get it over with but Paul intercedes to save his bodily life. Soon enough he shall grant him salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.
1. ***trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas,***
 2. ***"Men, what must I do to be saved?"***
 3. ***"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."***
- AR. Further confrontations with civil authorities (35-40)

XVI. Acts 17:1-9 *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. {2} And Paul went in, as was his custom, and for three weeks he argued with them from the scriptures, {3} explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." {4} And some of them were persuaded, and joined Paul and Silas; as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. {5} But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked fellows of the rabble, they gathered a crowd, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the people. {6} And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brethren before the city authorities, crying, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, {7} and Jason has received them; and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." {8} And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard this. {9} And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. {10} The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Beroea; and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. {11} Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so. {12} Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. {13} But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Beroea also, they came there too, stirring up and inciting the crowds. {14} Then the brethren immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. {15} Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed. {16} Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. {17} So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market place every day with those who chanced to be there. {18} Some also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers met him. And some said, "What would this babblers say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities" -- because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. {19} And they took hold of him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you present? {20} For you bring some strange things to our ears; we wish to know therefore what these things mean." {21} Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. {22} So Paul, standing in the middle of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. {23} For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. {24} The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, {25} nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything. {26} And he made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation, {27} that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him. Yet he is not far from each one of us, {28} for 'In him we live and move and have our*

being'; as even some of your poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.' {29} Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the Deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, a representation by the art and imagination of man. {30} The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent, {31} because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead." {32} Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, "We will hear you again about this." {33} So Paul went out from among them. {34} But some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

A. Outline:

1. Proclamation - vv. 1-3
2. Persuasion - v. 4
3. Persecution - vv. 5-9
4. Persistence - vv. 10-12
5. Persecution - vv. 13-14
6. Passion - vv. 15-17
7. Puzzlement - vv. 18-21
8. Preaching - vv. 22-29
 - a. Affirmation - v. 22
 - b. Access - v. 23
 - c. Attributes (of God) - vv. 24-29
 - (1) Immanence - vv. 25-28
 - (2) Image - v. 29
9. Period (in which we live) - vv. 30-32
10. Product - vv. 33-34

- B. The Coming of Christianity to Thessalonica was a very important step. The great Roman road from the Adriatic sea to the Middle East was called the Egnatian way; the main street of Thessalonica was that road. If the Christian faith could be firmly planted in Thess. it could spread both east and west along the road until it reached far and wide.
- C. ***passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica*** - The journey from Phillipi to Thessalonica was just over 100 miles.
- D. ***there was a synagogue of the Jews. {2} And Paul went in, as was his custom*** - As usual Paul began his work in the synagogue. Paul had some success there but primarily among the Gentiles who were attached in some way to the synagogue. This upset some of the Jews more than likely due to the fact that among the Greeks (God-fearers) were some of the leading women of the city. Thus, they were set to loose some benefactors? At any rate they are angry and, as we have seen before, Paul is set for trouble. Note that the phrase "as was his custom" is also used by Luke in reference to Jesus' visits to the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16). Paul's practice of going to the synagogue first is in imitation of Jesus and a very consistent pattern for Paul (Acts 13:14,44; 14:1; 16:13, 16) and we shall see it in Corinth (18:4) and Ephesus (19:8). Despite the particular success among the Gentiles, Paul never really loses his instinct of seeking to spread the Gospel among and through his own people.
- E. ***for three weeks he argued with them from the scriptures, {3} explaining and proving*** - philosophical discussions about the scriptures were not at all uncommon in synagogues especially in their capacity of a house of study. In other, it does not necessarily follow that these debates took place in the context of the regular synagogue service but perhaps at other times of study and debate.
- F. ***explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead*** - The Greek verb here is *dainoigo* ("open") Thus Paul opened the meaning of the scriptures. This all recalls the descriptions by Luke of the post resurrection preaching of Jesus in the Gospel: Luke 24:25-28,32 *And he said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" & Luke 24:44-47 Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*
- G. ***But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked fellows of the rabble, they gathered a crowd, set the city in an uproar...they dragged Jason and some of the brethren before the city authorities, crying, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also..."*** - Notice what the enemies of Paul and Silas do. They stir up a mob and then accuse Paul and Silas of stirring up trouble.

"People of the rabble" were people of the low class who hung around the public squares. Some of them worked as day-laborers.

- H. **Jason's house** - We are never formally introduced to Jason. Who is he? Paul does mention in Rom 16:21 a certain Jason as among his fellow workers. It is also quite possible that Jason's house was the base of operations for Paul and Silas in Thessalonica just as Lydia's was back in Philippi. The enemies of Paul seem to know where to go, thus it is likely that Jason had been a notable convert as that it was widely known that Paul was staying at his house.
- I. **they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.** - All of this is stunning and ironic. The Jews hated the Roman dominance and especially their oppression of the Holy land. But here they invoke the very Laws of sovereignty they hate. It all recalls the Jews shouting that they had no king but Caesar and how they accused Jesus of subversion. The whole ironic motif is played out again. They use the very Laws they hate most to sentence a compatriot, a fellow Jew.
- J. **And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.** - In other words Jason made bail. The Authorities did not simply give in to the mob as they did at Philippi. Rather, a court date is set to investigate the charges.
- K. Paul speaks elsewhere of his difficulties in Thessalonica
1. 1 Thess 2:2 ... *but though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the face of great opposition.*
 2. 1 Thessalonians 2:13ff *And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea; for you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all men by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles that they may be saved -- so as always to fill up the measure of their sins. But God's wrath has come upon them at last!*
 3. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-4 *Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's servant in the gospel of Christ, to establish you in your faith and to exhort you, that no one be moved by these afflictions. You yourselves know that this is to be our lot. For when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction; just as it has come to pass, and as you know.*
- L. **Paul and Silas away by night to Beroea** - This is not the first time Paul had to make a hasty escape due to the trouble his preaching has generated: from Damascus (9:23-25); from Jerusalem (9:30); from Psidian Antioch (13:50-51); from Lystra (14:20) and now from Thessalonica. Beroea was 60 miles to the west of Thessalonica. Again the first place they went was to the Synagogue.
- M. **Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with all eagerness** - A little polemical here, Luke? The interesting point

is how frequently Luke is almost anxious to point out that men and women of high social standing were accepting the Gospel. Luke's Gospel had a special solicitude for the poor but now he seems quite to show interest in the wealthy; no sin but a change. Perhaps we have here a sort of naive glee at the social success of the movement: because those who are powerful take it seriously it seems more important. At another level there is also a slighting of the Jews who form the opposition. Note how in the last section they had to garner their support from the "riff-raff" of society. It also especially helps to explain the jealousy of the Jewish opponents. Lastly there is also some what of an apologetic for the Gentile mission likely going on under the surface.

N. ***they received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*** - what things? the likely issue that has been hinted at throughout this chapter is whether Jesus was the Messiah or not. Many Jews were certain that Jesus was not the Messiah because he had been crucified. To them such a man was accursed by God and thus no Messiah. Paul more than likely used passages like Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 to show that Jesus was not forsaken but was in fact the Messiah and one who fulfilled what was prophesied concerning him. Crucifixion was in fact prophesied of him. Consider these passages for they were likely the cornerstone of Paul's preaching (and probably the key passages used by Jesus to open their minds to the scriptures).

1. *Isaiah 53 Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? {2} For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. {3} He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. {4} Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. {5} But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. {6} All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. {7} He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. {8} By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? {9} And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. {10} Yet it was the will of the LORD to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand; {11} he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities. {12} Therefore I will divide him a portion with*

the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

2. *Psalms 22 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? {2} O my God, I cry by day, but thou dost not answer; and by night, but find no rest. {3} Yet thou art holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. {4} In thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. {5} To thee they cried, and were saved; in thee they trusted, and were not disappointed. {6} But I am a worm, and no man; scorned by men, and despised by the people. {7} All who see me mock at me, they make mouths at me, they wag their heads; {8} "He committed his cause to the LORD; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" {9} Yet thou art he who took me from the womb; thou didst keep me safe upon my mother's breasts. {10} Upon thee was I cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me thou hast been my God. {11} Be not far from me, for trouble is near and there is none to help. {12} Many bulls encompass me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me; {13} they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. {14} I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted within my breast; {15} my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; thou dost lay me in the dust of death. {16} Yea, dogs are round about me; a company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hands and feet -- {17} I can count all my bones -- they stare and gloat over me; {18} they divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots. {19} But thou, O LORD, be not far off! O thou my help, hasten to my aid! {20} Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog! {21} Save me from the mouth of the lion, my afflicted soul from the horns of the wild oxen! {22} I will tell of thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee: {23} You who fear the LORD, praise him! all you sons of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you sons of Israel! {24} For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; and he has not hid his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. {25} From thee comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him. {26} The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD! May your hearts live for ever! {27} All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. {28} For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. {29} Yea, to him shall all the proud of the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and he who cannot keep himself alive. {30} Posterity shall serve him; men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation, {31} and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, that he has wrought it.*

- O. ***examining the scriptures daily*** - thus we have here more than the Sabbath Synagogue service. There was a daily gathering for study and discussion that

provided the basis for this preaching.

- P. ***the Jews of Thessalonica...came there too, stirring up and inciting the crowds.*** - this is just what happened to Paul on the first journey where the Jews from Antioch and Iconium pursued him to Lystra back in 14:19.
- Q. ***the brethren immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there.***- Yet again Paul has to make a hasty escape with the help of friends.

- R. We have seen the power of the gospel to reach the rich and the poor, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female. Now there is a meeting between Jerusalem and Athens. But can the gospel hold its own in the sophisticated intellectual environment of a university town? Let us see.
1. Paul arrival in Athens can be seen as another in a series of encounters between the Word of the Gospel and the aspects of the world it was destined to transform. Luke's selection of material is not arbitrary. We have seen all levels of society and both major groups (Jews and Gentiles) called. The Holy Spirit is clearly setting forth the universal call of the Catholic faith.
 2. Athens was the greatest University town of the Ancient world. It was also a city of many gods. It was said that there were more statues of gods in Athens than in all the rest of Greece combined. Further, in Athens it was easier to meet a god than a man. Clearly all this bothers Paul and by his vexation of spirit he is motivated to proclaim the gospel. The scene is not entirely unlike that of modern day America where a myriad of religious thought and practice as well as there being a huge number of very confused and uncatechised individuals who go from one "religious" experience to the next. The major difference between Athens and America is that Athens had a certain virginal innocence in relation to the Gospel whereas America is like a divorced women who has wandered off to play the harlot. This is because we have had the Gospel but have corporately set it aside. The result is confusion and decline. Are we enough like Paul to be vexed so as to take action?
 3. Another way of describing Paul's reaction to Athens is, frankly, unimpressed. Athens appeared to him as little more than a wasteland of idols. Though he debates with them they seem a bit dense. Finally one of them, in a hilarious example of snobbish realization comes to the stunning discovery, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities." (v. 18). Further, they have a thin veneer and they seem to lack depth. Novelty attracts them more quickly than the truth. So much for the heights of the pagan intelligencia.
 4. In Greece there were many philosophers and philosophies. Broadly speaking as Acts describes two groups
 - a. The Epicureans - a school of thought traced to 300 BC by Epicurus. They believed that everything happened by chance, that after death there was nothing, that gods were remote from the world and did not care, and that pleasure was the chief end of man.
 - b. The Stoics believed that everything was god who was fiery spirit. Everything that happened was the will of God and must therefore be accepted without question. Every so often according to a certain cycle the world was devoured by fire and started all over again.
 5. Paul was drawn into all this through a rather rude remark by some of the Greek debaters: *What would this babblers say?*. They consider him a peddler of second-rate religious thought. They use a Greek word that has

the connotation of a gossip and busybody.

- S. They invite Paul to explain his views partly out of curiosity and partly out of amusement with "exotica" As if to say, "Oh look, something new and quite curious." Thus they say, ***"What this new teaching is which you present? {20} For you bring some strange things to our ears; we wish to know therefore what these things mean."*** But they clearly have a curiosity more rooted in "something new and strange" rather than a real interest to hear and be enriched by something new for the text adds, ***[A]ll the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.***
- T. ***brought him to the Areopagus*** - he Greek phraseology is a bit ambiguous here. It all depends on how we interpret the participle of *epilambano*. Does it mean simply "a taking along" or does it mean "arrest" ? At issue is how Luke wants us to regard the who scene. Is it a friendly inquiry or is it a trial? The tone of the discussion leans in the direction of an inquiry but there is an ambiguity.
- U. Paul begins as a good rhetorician begin by first flattering his audience, calling them religious and noting in a respectful manner their various altars. Idolaters these men may be but at least they are searching. Paul then seizes on an open door by invoking the "Altar to the Unknown God." and essentially tells the Athenians that it's time to get to know Him. Then Paul proceeds to a kind of argument from the created order or natural theology which works like this: We look at the created world and we perceive order and a form. This leads us to the conclusion that the order, life and form were put there by some intelligence and this intelligence we call "God." Paul uses a kind of argument from creation in the Letter to the Romans. Albeit, he is more critical of the pagans who fail to grasp the obvious. Perhaps the strong character of the letter is partly due to his experiences here in Athens? At any rate it is good to review his remarks in Romans to perhaps give us a wider idea of his thoughts here:
1. Romans 1:18 *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. {19} For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. {20} Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; {21} for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. {22} Claiming to be wise, they became fools, {23} and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. {24} Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, {25} because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.*
- V. Hence Paul does what every good preacher of the Gospel must do when he goes among the pagans who know nothing of or do not accept the authority of Scripture. He starts from what is known, namely the created order and the longings of the human heart which are the same everywhere. From here he builds

a case for the fact that the longings of the human heart and the understanding of the created order are best explained by the Christian understanding of God. He even quotes an Athenian poet.

- W. But eventually he must cross over from theology to the realm of faith. It is at this point that he brings in the central truth of the Christian faith: the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This befuddles most of his interlocutors. It must be remembered that most of the Greek philosophers of the time had an aversion to the body and to the physical. True liberation for most of them consisted in the spirit flowing free from the body. The body was like a cage that trapped the bird. Hence, the resurrection of the body seemed to them both absurd and unnecessary. In fact, many may have considered such a concept a real set back. In our modern times many Christians have become tinged by this ancient dualism. It has also been a constant battle for the Church to overcome in various ages through its manifestation in numerous heretical packages: e.g. Gnosticism, and Albigensianism. We can discuss these and other related heresies in class if time warrants. Suffice it to say here that dualism always involves a disdain for the body in some way with surprisingly various results.
- X. ***being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man*** - the phrase is explanatory not simply declarative. In other words it is because God is Lord of all things that he cannot be circumscribed by any of them. This statement recalls Stephen's speech back in 7:48 wherein he engaged in a diatribe against the temple in the prophetic tradition.
- Y. ***ignorance*** - this is not a particular charge levelled against the Greeks as though the Jews did not have their own problems with ignorance. The Greeks are called from ignorance that sees an adequate representation of the divine in physical forms, so the Jews are called from the ignorance that requires the Messiah the credentials of physical rule rather than the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is amazing how often a defective philosophy can produce opposite errors. For example in our own age the error of materialism has produced both communism (a materialist ideology which denies the existence of the spiritual order and subjects the individual to the needs of the centralized state) and the excessive consumerism (also a materialist philosophy since it tells us to find the purpose of our existence in material possessions) of the west. So here in this passage, worldliness is the cause of both these errors: either seeing God as synonymous with the created order or seeing the messiah as a political and/or economic (i.e. worldly) savior rather than one who comes to save us from our sins.
- Z. ***he has fixed a day*** - the day of judgement is a very consistent theme in the bible. Consider some of these texts:
1. Amos 5:15-19 *Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph. Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord: "In all the squares there shall be wailing; and in all the streets they shall say, 'Alas! alas!' They shall call the farmers to mourning and to wailing those who are skilled in lamentation, and in all vineyards there shall be wailing, for I will pass through the midst of you," says the LORD. Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It*

is darkness, and not light; as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house and leaned with his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him.

2. *Isaiah 2:10-21 Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust from before the terror of the LORD, and from the glory of his majesty. The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the pride of men shall be humbled; and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up and high; And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the pride of men shall be brought low; and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. And the idols shall utterly pass away. And men shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the glory of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. In that day men will cast forth their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the glory of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.*
3. *Luke 17:24-33 For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of man be in his day. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was in the days of Lot -- they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom fire and sulphur rained from heaven and destroyed them all -- so will it be on the day when the Son of man is revealed. On that day, let him who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away; and likewise let him who is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.*
4. *Romans 2:5-11 But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. For he will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.*
5. *1 Corinthians 1:4-8 I give thanks to God always for you because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him with all speech and all knowledge -- even as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you -- so that you are not*

lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ; who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

6. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-9 *For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When people say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child, and there will be no escape. But you are not in darkness, brethren, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all sons of light and sons of the day; we are not of the night. For those who sleep sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. But, since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

7. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12 *This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be made worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering -- since indeed God deems it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant rest with us to you who are afflicted, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his call, and may fulfil every good resolve and work of faith by his power; so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

AA. **some mocked** - the same sort of response is described as occurred on the day of Pentecost. The bottom line seems to be that among the educated Greeks the Gospel was no more universally accepted than it was among the Jewish educated class (scribes and pharisees). Some accepted it but most did not.

AB. **So Paul went out from among them** - the whole conclusion is a bit anti-climatic. But this too is a good description of the evangelical task. Not every day would see 3000 added to their number. Clearly there were some converts, even some Greek noblemen and this would serve as a seed for the Church in Athens and in the Greek world.

AC. There is another lesson beneath the surface here as well: the difficulty of teaching and preaching among the learned. It must be said that there are a great many learned men and women in the ranks of saints. One of the greatest among them, St. Thomas Aquinas remarked that ignorance and intellectual simplicity is no more a path to holiness than is great learnedness. This is true but it is also true that intellectual pride is a special temptation to those of great learning. This is certainly part of what Paul confronts here. Remember that Paul was a man of

great learnedness thus we do not have here a disdain for learning but only the reminder of the difficulties the learned must overcome if they are to fully embrace the faith with childlike openness. In the educated and affluent West we do well to heed such a warning for we think we know a few things. And it is true we do know a FEW things. But we must beware for as scripture says

1. Matthew 11:25-26 *At that time Jesus declared, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to the merest children; yes, Father, for such was thy gracious will.*
2. Psalms 8:1-2 *O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth! Thou whose glory above the heavens is chanted by the mouth of babes and infants, thou hast founded a bulwark because of thy foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.*

XVIII.

Chapter 18 *After this he left Athens and went to Corinth. {2} And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them; {3} and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them, and they worked, for by trade they were tentmakers. {4} And he argued in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks. {5} When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with preaching, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. {6} And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." {7} And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue. {8} Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. {9} And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; {10} for I am with you, and no man shall attack you to harm you; for I have many people in this city." {11} And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. {12} But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack upon Paul and brought him before the tribunal, {13} saying, "This man is persuading men to worship God contrary to the law." {14} But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, I should have reason to bear with you, O Jews; {15} but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I refuse to be a judge of these things." {16} And he drove them from the tribunal. {17} And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to this {18} After this Paul stayed many days longer, and then took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he cut his hair, for he had a vow. {19} And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there; but he himself went into the synagogue and argued with the Jews. {20} When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined; {21} but on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus. {22} When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch 23 After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. 24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and expounded to him the way of God more accurately. 27 And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, 28 for he powerfully confuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.*

A.

Outline :

1. Procession - vv. 1-3
2. Proclamation - vv. 4-5
3. Provocation - v. 6
4. Product - vv. 7-8
5. Protection - vv. 9-18
6. Pause - vv. 18-22

7. Purification - v. 23
 8. Portrait - vv. 24-28
- B. Corinth - One look at our map and we will see that Corinth was destined for greatness. Greece is divided into two halves and the top half is joined to the bottom half by a narrow isthmus only four miles across. All land traffic from the north to the south had to pass through this narrow space of land. Further, even water transport passed this way since the southern end of Greece that juts out into the Mediterranean was famous for its storms and turbulence. There were two proverbs of Cape Malea: "Let him who sails round Malea forget his home." & "Let him who sails round Malea first make his will!" This meant that all traffic through Greece passed through Corinth. All this made Corinth a great commercial town and a sort of Vanity Fair of the ancient world. Corinth was a rich and populous city. But she was wicked too. The Greek word *korithiazesthai* (=to live like a Corinthian) became synonymous with debauchery, drunkenness and immorality. "Corinthian girl" meant prostitute and any time a Corinthian was depicted in ancient plays he was drunk. The greatest source of evil in the city was on the Hill of the Acropolis: the Temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. One thousand priestess/prostitutes conducted their "sacred rituals" from that temple. In the days of Paul the city was a Roman colony (having been captured by the Romans in 146 BC. The population Paul encountered was very mixed: Roman veterans, merchants from all over, Jews, Phoenicians, Phrygians, people from the far east et al... Paul stayed longer in Corinth than any other city except Ephesus. he stayed in Corinth 18 months. Luke compresses this whole stay into 17 verses! He had reasonable success here. But we know too that it was a turbulent Church and Paul had to write rather severely to them from Ephesus. We know from that correspondence that the Church in Corinth was torn by factions and that they tolerated a high degree of immorality. Paul had a very turbulent relationship with the Corinthian Church.
- C. ***because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome*** - this happened in 49 AD. What is fascinating is that, according to Suetonius in his *Life of Claudius* (25:4), the expulsion was caused by *impulsore Chresto* which in turn led to commotion among the Jews which led to action of Claudius. *Impulsore Chresto* likely refers to the preaching of Christ in Rome. Thus what we have seen in almost every city before, when Christ is preached there tends to be a strong, even violent reaction from some among the Jews. This may well have happened in Rome and caused the authorities (who were probably looking for a reason) to expel the Jews along with the Christians. Remember pagan civil authorities made no distinction between Jews and Christians at this point. The whole matter was a sectarian squabble among the Jews to them. What is important here is that this is strong evidence that the Gospel had already reached Rome by the 40's.
- D. That ***Priscilla and Aquila*** came from there and that there is no mention Paul converted them means that they were likely already Christian when Paul met them. This is significant. It means two things.
1. Priscilla and Aquila may well have been engaged in missionary activity when Paul arrived. If so, this is the first example of the gospel "meeting itself coming back."
 2. In both cases we see how persecution has the effect of pushing the Gospel

forward not back. Now the missionary activity is so widespread that they are meeting each other.

- E. ***because he was of the same trade he stayed with them, and they worked, for by trade they were tentmakers.*** Paul was a rabbi and according to Jewish practice every rabbi must have a trade. He must take no money for preaching and teaching and must make his own living. Jews revered work. Here are some Jewish proverbs about work: "Love work!", "He who does not teach his son a trade, teaches him robbery." "Excellent is the study of the law along with a worldly trade; for the practice of them both makes a man forget iniquity." All this meant that Rabbis never became detached scholars: they knew the life of the working man. Paul was anxious not to be a burden to anyone and often gloried in his work. Recall these passages from elsewhere.
1. 1 Thessalonians 2:9 *For you remember our labor and toil, brethren; we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you, while we preached to you the gospel of God.*
 2. 2 Thessalonians 3:7-13 *For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, we did not eat any one's bread without paying, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you. It was not because we have not that right, but to give you in our conduct an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: If any one will not work, let him not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work in quietness and to earn their own living. Brethren, do not be weary in well-doing.*
 3. 2 Corinthians 11:9 *And when I was with you and was in want, I did not burden any one, for my needs were supplied by the brethren who came from Macedonia. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way.*
- F. ***tentmakers*** - the Greek word here really means more than tentmaker - it is better translated, leather-worker. Back in his hometown of Tarsus there were herds of a certain kind of goat with a special kind of fleece good for making tents, curtains and hangings. This is the likely background of his trade and how he finds himself engaged in that here at Corinth.
- G. ***From now on I will go to the Gentiles.***" - this does not mean that he will no longer attempt to convert his fellow Jews or that he will cease to go to the Synagogue first. He simply means that he will move his base of operations in Corinth. In Ephesus Paul repeats his usual pattern of going first to the synagogue (18:19) but then moving out to the Gentiles.
- H. ***And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; {10} for I am with you, and no man shall attack you to harm you; for I have many people in this city."*** - This may well be the basis for Paul's long stay in Corinth, the reassurance he experienced as a result of this vision.
- I. ***he shook out his garments*** - this is a Jewish gesture of rejection. It is a little different than what Jesus recommended but it is similar: Luke 10:10 *But*

*whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you; nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on that day for Sodom than for that town. There is also a recollection of what happened in Pisidian Antioch: Acts 13:51 *But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and went to Iconium.**

- J. ***And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue.*** - This does not mean that Paul changed his lodgings. He continued to live with Aquila & Priscilla but he moved the place of his teaching out of the synagogue. Rather boldly he moves right next door and sets up shop!
- K. ***Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord,*** - despite his troubles with the Jews of that synagogue, Paul does get quite an important convert, the archsynagogue - the very leader of the synagogue.
- L. ***And he stayed a year and six months*** - sometimes we can lose sight of the timeline with which Luke is dealing. Occasionally Luke gives us a direct indication of the time and it is seldom as short as it might seem if we only follow the narrative. So here we see that Paul spent a year and a half. The task involves much time. Consider these time indicators from other sections of Acts:
1. Acts 11:26 Antioch: *...and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church, and taught a large company of people; and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians.*
 2. Acts 14:28 *And they remained no little time with the disciples.*
 3. Acts 19:10 Ephesus: *This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.*
 4. Acts 24:27 Caesarea: *But when two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.*
 5. Acts 28:30 Rome: *And he lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him,*
- M. ***the Jews made a united attack upon Paul and brought him before the tribunal,*** - in a familiar pattern, Paul's success enrages his opponents and they stir up trouble for him. In this case they bring up their concerns to the proconsul Gallio and the Roman Tribunal. They claim Paul is teaching religion contrary to the law. Gallio interrupts them and indicates his unwillingness to settle sectarian squabbles among the Jews. For a proconsul this was a bit of a judgement call. Sectarian squabbles could lead to civil disorder. Recall how concerned Pontius Pilate was to settle the whole question about Jesus. In the end he condemned a man he considered innocent to avoid civil disturbance. But Gallio thought the matter apparently rather small and dismissed the case. Even the fist fight that ensued did not persuade him to take up the case.
- N. ***they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him*** - this is all very confusing. Who are they? Why did they do it? Why did Gallio tolerate such a scrape before his bench? Was Sosthenes a Christian or a Jew. If he was a Jew (which seems obvious since he is the archsynagogue). Then perhaps it is his

fellow Jews who turn on him out of frustration that he did not carry the day in court? Is it possible though that they were aware that Sosthenes had so sympathies toward Christians? Paul does later list a certain Sosthenes as a co-sponsor of his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 1:1) but there is no way to tell that it is the same man. Others speculate that it is the Greeks who attack Sosthenes perceiving him to be vulnerable. This might explain why Gallio stood idly by as it happened. Presuming he had the typical anti-Semitism of the Gentiles, he might have found it mildly amusing to see a Jew attacked by Gentiles and so he "ignored" the whole incident. One thing only is sure, Paul got out without a scratch!

- O. ***Paul stayed many days longer*** - the upshot of the incident for Paul was that it had little effect on his ministry and he stayed on. This is contrary to other incidents which have usually led to him moving on. Thus, at Corinth Paul's enemies seem either dispersed or disorganized.
- P. ***and with him Priscilla and Aquila*** - why exactly they go along is not clear. Nevertheless they were longtime co-workers with him and are mentioned frequently in his letters as valuable helpers. (1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19; Rom 16:3)
- Q. ***At Cenchreae*** - this is the seaport of Corinth. It is really more of a suburb of Corinth. It was about seven miles to the south facing the Aegean Sea. According to Romans 16:1 there was a Church established there
- R. ***he cut his hair, for he had a vow*** - This seems to be the Nazarite vow referred to in Numbers 6:1-21. A Jew could dedicate himself to God in a special way by abstaining from strong drink and uncleanness and the sign of this was letting his hair grow during the period of the vow. There are some curiosities here however. The shaving of the head at the end of the period of the vow was to be done only at the temple in Jerusalem. Paul is in Cenchreae. One explanation is that there were permanent Nazarite vows in this case they were to cut (not shave) their hair every month. This did not have to be done in Jerusalem. It is significant in this regard that Luke uses the Greek word *keiro* (cut) rather than *xuero* (shave). All this would imply that his vow was permanent and it was the routine, ritual cutting. Yet another possibility was that this was the beginning of a Nazarite vow (either permanent or temporary) which was begun also by the cutting of the hair. Luke does not give us enough information to know what the solution is. And then question arises: why does Luke bother with this story at all? It is likely to demonstrate Paul's continuing allegiance to Judaism and the Jewish-Christian community. With all of Paul's writings regarding the ineffectiveness of the Law (precious to the Jews) especially in Galatians and Romans, one might think he had wholly abandoned Judaism. But such is not the case as is evident here. At any rate here is the O.T. text from Numbers that pertains to the Nazarite vow.
 1. Numbers 6:1-21 *And the LORD said to Moses, {2} "Say to the people of Israel, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, {3} he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink, and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried. {4} All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins. {5} "All the*

days of his vow of separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the LORD, he shall be holy; he shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long. {6} "All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. {7} Neither for his father nor for his mother, nor for brother or sister, if they die, shall he make himself unclean; because his separation to God is upon his head. {8} All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD. {9} "And if any man dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. {10} On the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest to the door of the tent of meeting, {11} and the priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned by reason of the dead body. And he shall consecrate his head that same day, {12} and separate himself to the LORD for the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb a year old for a guilt offering; but the former time shall be void, because his separation was defiled. {13} "And this is the law for the Nazirite, when the time of his separation has been completed: he shall be brought to the door of the tent of meeting, {14} and he shall offer his gift to the LORD, one male lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb a year old without blemish as a sin offering, and one ram without blemish as a peace offering, {15} and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and their cereal offering and their drink offerings. {16} And the priest shall present them before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering, {17} and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall offer also its cereal offering and its drink offering. {18} And the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the door of the tent of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering. {19} And the priest shall take the shoulder of the ram, when it is boiled, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazirite, after he has shaven the hair of his consecration, {20} and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD; they are a holy portion for the priest, together with the breast that is waved and the thigh that is offered; and after that the Nazirite may drink wine. {21} "This is the law for the Nazirite who takes a vow. His offering to the LORD shall be according to his vow as a Nazirite, apart from what else he can afford; in accordance with the vow which he takes, so shall he do according to the law for his separation as a Nazirite."

- S. **they came to Ephesus** - The city of Ephesus was the capitol of Asia Minor (Modern day Turkey). It was a great commercial and religious center. Ephesus was renowned in the ancient world for its temple and cult of Artemis and for its cadre of magicians. The temple was huge and considered one of the seven

wonders of the ancient world. There was a stadium, a racetrack, and a theater that seated 24,000(!). There were also libraries and market places. All in all the city was magnificent and crowned by a grand columnaded main street. The temple was the central attraction and the silversmiths who plied quite a trade in their idol making for the cult of Artemis would be the ones to later rise up in riot against Paul who was cutting into their business. In the next chapter Luke will provide some vivid snapshots of first Century life in this city.

- T. ***and he left them there*** - Paul, Aquila and Priscilla part company amicably here. They evidently return to Corinth and he goes to the synagogue to preach. But his stay in Ephesus will be only brief. Later he shall return and stay for almost two years.
- U. ***When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch*** - Here ends the second missionary journey. This whole sequence from Ephesus to here is very truncated and abrupt. Luke just seems to want to bring the second journey to a quick end so he gives us little detail. Antioch was Paul's home base for his missionary operations.