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——*Acts Study Guide* 汉译及研究报告

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——A Research Report on E-C Translation of *Acts Study Guide*

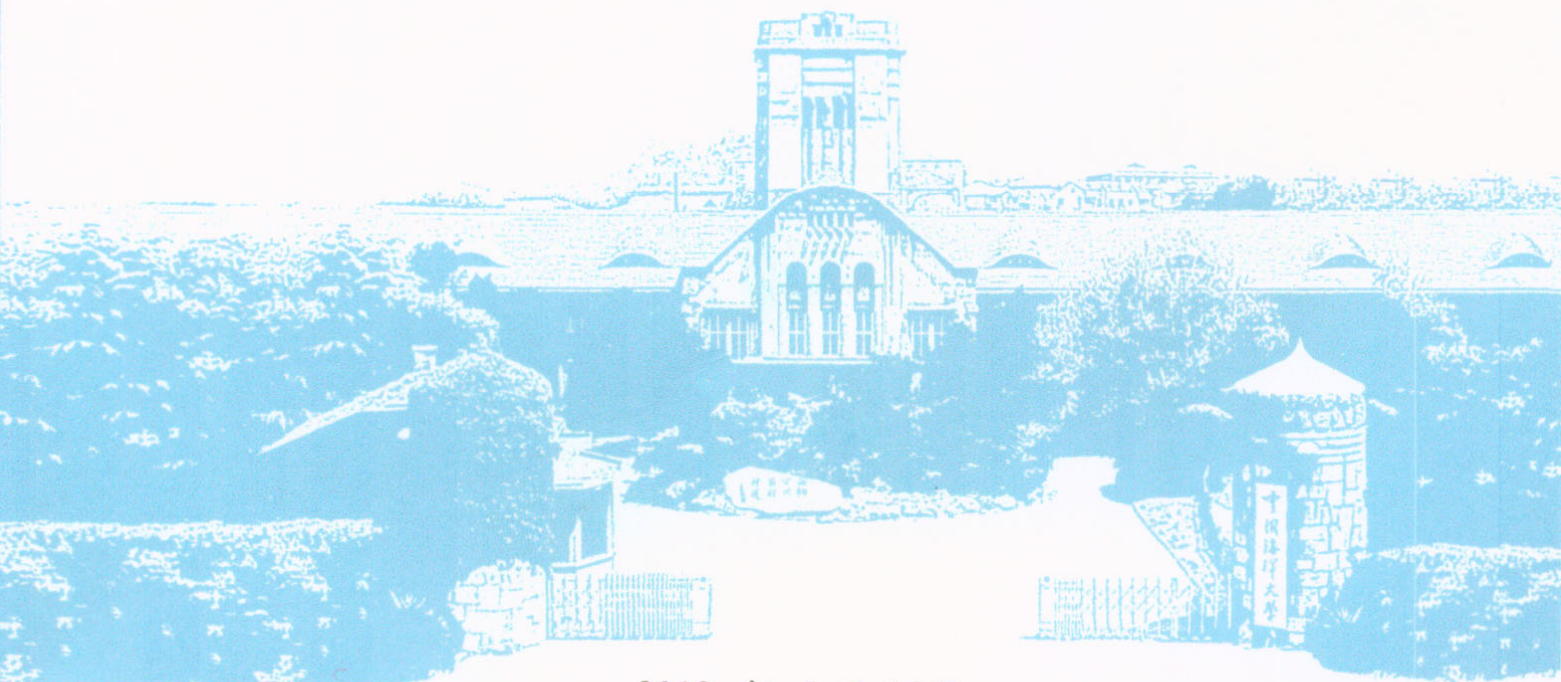
作者: 刘媛

指导教师: 任东升

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谨以此论文献给我的亲人和师友

————— 刘媛

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指导教师签字: 张其成

答辩委员会成员签字: 张其成

李建中

解志

滕植

李力

赵德五

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学位论文作者签名：刘媛

导师签字：

签字日期：2013年6月2日

签字日期：2013年6月2日

汉语基督教语言的传承与新译

——*Acts Study Guide* 汉译及研究报告

摘 要

基督教是世界三大宗教之一,历史悠久、影响深远、信徒更是遍布世界各地。《圣经》作为基督教的经典,集宗教、历史、文学三重属性于一身,一直是世界上出版数量最多、被翻译地最频繁的一部书。其中,圣经汉译源远流长,特别是在近二百年间蓬勃发展,已经成为全世界圣经翻译研究领域的重要一支。本文通过梳理圣经汉译发展的历史,对主要的圣经中文译本进行多方面的历时分析,从中探寻汉语基督教话语系统的建立、传承、以及在圣经及圣经类文本的中文翻译过程中出现的新译,从而探究指导本次翻译实践的理论,同时也为具体的圣经及圣经类文本汉译实践提供指导和建议。

本翻译项目是新约圣经《使徒行传》的解经,译文将作为专用网络资源,供基督徒日常查经和灵修,也可作为了解基督教和《圣经》的阅读资料,供普通读者阅读,从而便于文化交流与传播。本文即对本翻译项目的研究和报告。

本文计六章:第一章简要介绍圣经汉译在中国的历史。第二章通过分析五种类型的《圣经》中文全译本,探寻汉语基督教话语系统的形成过程。和合本作为汉语基督教话语系统的主体,也是汉语基督教话语系统的传统和标杆所在,第三章较为详细地分析了和合本一枝独秀的原因,从而把握汉语基督教话语系统的核心特点。和合本之后,新译本竞相争辉,充实并发展了汉语基督教话语系统,本文第四章将总体分析几大新译本呈现出的新特点,为译者的翻译实践提供新的指导。第五章是译者在经过上述四章的理论积累后,总结出《圣经》及圣经文本汉译的基本原则,用以指导本次翻译实践,并附有翻译实例。最后一章结语,则是译者对理论学习、翻译实践及存在问题的总结。

关键词:翻译研究;报告;汉语基督教话语系统;传承;新译

The Tradition and New Translation of Chinese Christian Discourse

——A Research Report on E-C Translation of *Acts Study Guide*

Abstract

Christianity, with its long history, profound and lasting influence and Christians spreading all over the world, is one of the three major religions in the world. As the scriptures of the Christianity, the Holy Bible which possesses religious, historical and literary attributes has always been published the most and translated the most frequently in the world. Bible translation in China, with its long history as well, has been developing prosperously especially during the recent two hundred years and has already been an important part of the Bible translation study of the world. The thesis researches the establishment, tradition and new changes of translation of the Christian Chinese discourse system by presenting and analyzing the history of Bible translation in China and the main Chinese translations of the Holy Bible from diachronic perspective so as to provide theoretical principles for the translation practice and provide guidance and advice for the translation of the Holy Bible and texts based on the Holy Bible as well.

The translation project is the explanation of *Acts* in the New Testament. The translation will be used as the dedicated network resource in order to support Christians to study Bible and gain spiritual growth. At the same time, the translation can also be used as the reading material for non-Christian readers to have knowledge of Christianity and the Holy Bible. Therefore, cultural exchanges and communication are convenient to achieve. The thesis is the study and report of the translation project.

The thesis includes six chapters. Chapter one mainly introduces the history of Chinese Bible translation. Chapter two aims at researching the establishment process of the Chinese Christian discourse system through analyzing Chinese Bible complete translations of five types. Among the Chinese complete translations of the Bible, the Chinese Union Version plays a main role in the Chinese Christian discourse system and represents the tradition and the standard of the Chinese Christian discourse system. Therefore, chapter three analyzes in detail that why the Chinese Union Version is the most popular in purpose of finding the core characteristics of the Chinese Christian discourse system. Although the Chinese Union Version is the most popular and represents the high standard, new Chinese Bible translations are published one after another, so that the Chinese Christian discourse system further develops. Chapter four focuses on the new characteristics of the main new Chinese Bible translations and provides new guidance for translators. The author attempts to conclude some basic principles in chapter five after studying theories analyzed in the first four chapters in order to provide guidance for the translation practice. In addition, the translation practice is illustrated in chapter five. Chapter six attempts to conclude the theoretical study of the thesis, translation practice of the translation project and problems to be further researched.

Key words: translation study; report; Chinese Christian discourse system; tradition; new translation

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0. 引言：

基督教是世界三大宗教之一，有着悠久的历史 and 众多的信徒，对世界文化的发展也做出巨大贡献并产生深远影响。作为基督宗教三大宗派天主教、东正教、新教共同信奉的经典，《圣经》一直是世界上被翻译最频繁、出版数量最多的一部书，并且集宗教、历史、文学三重属性于一身。在《圣经》悠久的翻译史中，圣经汉译已有一千三百多年的历史，特别是在近二百年间蓬勃发展，已经成为全世界圣经翻译研究领域的重要一支。圣经汉译在其发展的过程中，多个《圣经》中文译本相继问世，汉语基督教话语系统也随之形成，本文通过梳理圣经汉译历史，简要分析对汉语基督教话语系统的形成和发展产生深远影响的《圣经》中文全译本，通过分析它们的翻译目的、翻译原则、语言特色等方面，逐步总结出翻译《圣经》和圣经类文本的指导原则。

本翻译项目是由海外专家发起的宗教经典导读系列中的一卷，具体为新约圣经《使徒行传》的解经，译文将作为专用网络资源，供基督徒日常查经和灵修，也可作为了解基督教和《圣经》的阅读资料，供普通读者阅读，便于文化交流与传播。

本文分为六部分：第一部分简要介绍圣经汉译在中国的历史，对圣经汉译有初步的历史知识的掌握。第二部分注重介绍近二百年来圣经汉译的蓬勃发展，通过历时分析五种类型的《圣经》中文全译本，大体勾勒出汉语基督教话语系统的形成过程。作为汉语基督教话语系统的主体，也是汉语基督教话语系统的传统和标杆所在，中文和合本圣经在中国基督徒的心目中就是权威的化身，本文的第三部分较为详细分析了和合本一枝独秀的原因，从而把握汉语基督教话语系统的核心特点。虽然和合本长期占据权威地位，然而和合本之后的几个新译本也竞相争辉，充实并发展了汉语基督教话语系统，本文的第四部分将总体分析几大新译本在翻译原则、语言特色等方面所呈现出的新特点，为译者的翻译提供新的指导。第五部分是译者在经过上述四部分的理论积累后，总结出《圣经》及圣经文本汉译的基本原则，尤其是指导本次翻译实践的基本原则，并附有翻译实例。最后一部分结语，则是译者对理论学习、翻译实践及存在问题的总结。

1. 传统初立：圣经汉译进入中国

根据大多数学者所接受的观点，圣经汉译活动最早出现于唐朝贞观年间。贞观九年，即公元 635 年，一支在波斯流传的基督教派别派人前往中国长安，向唐太宗呈上《圣经》。这支派别在当时被称作“景教”，现存于西安的“大秦景教流行中国碑”记载：“太宗文皇帝光华启运，名圣临人。大秦国有上德曰阿罗本，占青

云而载真经，望风律以驰艰险。贞观九祀，至于长安。帝使宰臣房公玄龄，总仗西郊，宾迎入内。翻经书殿，问道禁闱。深知正真，特令传授。”从这段文字中可以清晰地看到，阿罗本等人得到皇帝的许可，可以在皇帝的书房进行《圣经》翻译。

虽然圣经汉译活动在唐朝年间就已出现，元代时也有蒙古语的圣经译文，然而大规模的圣经汉译是出现在清朝时期。1807年，英国传教士马礼逊（Robert Morrison 1782-1834）肩负着将《圣经》译成中文的使命来到中国，1813年，马礼逊独立译完《新约》，1819年，他与米怜合作译完《旧约》，并将新旧约译文整理到一起，取名《神天圣书》，这是第一本完整的中文《圣经》。随后，主要由传教士承担翻译工作的圣经汉译活动蓬勃发展，多个圣经中文译本相继问世，既包括圣经单卷中文译本，也有圣经中文全译本。自马礼逊译出《神圣天书》一百年后，也就是1919年，“官话和合本”《新旧约全书》在上海问世，这是传教士在中国翻译的最后一部中文《圣经》，也是“中文圣经翻译史上的巅峰”（《圣经》（新译本）序，2001）。

进入20世纪20年代以后，圣经汉译进入多元化时期，尤其是中国的翻译家也开始独立承担圣经的汉译工作。1933年，王宣忱独立译出《圣经》新约全书，这是第一部由华人学者独立完成的《圣经》中文译本，由此拉开了华人学者独立翻译《圣经》的序幕。圣经汉译的多元化还体现在出版了第一部中国天主教《圣经》全译本，又称“思高本”《圣经》。之后，中国学者陆续译出《圣经》全译本，圣经汉译活动再次进入到一个蓬勃发展的时期。

2. 从主要基督教圣经中文译本发展历程探寻基督教话语系统的形成

圣经的中文译本，或称中文圣经，泛指一切把基督教的《圣经》翻译成中文的译本。（莊柔玉，2000:7）研究圣经汉译史的学者一般将圣经的中文译本分为三类，即景教译本，天主教译本和基督教（专指新教）译本。本章将主要介绍基督教圣经中文译本的分类和其中具有代表性的中文圣经译本。从19世纪到20世纪的圣经汉译史来看，基督教圣经中文译本的发展大体经过深文理译本、浅文理译本、官话译本、方言及少数民族语言译本、还有和合本之后的圣经中文译本。鉴于方言译本不在本文讨论范围之内，下面将介绍剩下四种语言形式的代表译本，从这些译本的翻译背景、翻译原则、翻译目的和对汉语基督教话语系统的贡献几方面做出浅析。

2.1 深文理《神圣天书》译本：汉语基督教话语系统从无到有

马礼逊于 1819 译出的圣经新旧约全书，即《神圣天书》属于深文理译本。在忠实原义、使中国人能够理解、并且博得中国人对《圣经》的尊重这三条翻译原则的要求下，马礼逊查阅了多个译本，同时对中文的文体做了深入探讨，在此基础上，他创立了一套中文圣经术语，为后来的《圣经》译本采用。一些术语一直沿用至今，成为极具基督教特点的专门术语，如：天国、福音、得救、罪、义等等。事实上，马礼逊创立这些术语的过程就是《圣经》文化进入中国文化语境的过程，如何让两者相调和又忠于《圣经》原文，建立一套属于基督教特有的话语系统，是马礼逊以及后来《圣经》译者所面临的问题。

2.2 浅文理“二指版”译本：圣经中文译本从小众走向平民

鸦片战争后，中国国门大开，随之而来的除了屈辱的被侵略的历史以外，还在客观上推动了对外接触和交流，传统观念逐渐动摇，民智开启十分紧迫，于是在民间，“浅文理”逐渐取代文言文。加之此前的深文理圣经译本由于措辞艰深，而普通的中国人受教育程度不高，难以在民间广泛流传。在这样一个大背景下，传教士为了更好的传扬基督教的福音，开始尝试翻译浅文理《圣经》中文译本。在浅文理《圣经》中文译本里，最受教会和信徒欢迎的译本是施约瑟（S. I. J. Schereschewsky, 1831-1906）翻译的新旧约全书，史称“二指版”，这也是唯一的浅文理《圣经》中文全译本。在翻译浅文理新旧约全书的过程中，施约瑟认为“尊重原著要以汉语的承受程度为限。”（James Muller 语，转引自张利伟，1994:43）此外，他注意到，佛经翻译所创造的音译词汇后来都归化成汉语不可分割的一部分，翻译《圣经》也可以借鉴佛教、伊斯兰教和天主教翻译宗教典籍的方法。在遇到汉语中缺乏同《圣经》内容等值的名称或概念时，他便充分权衡释义和名称之间的关系（任东升，2007:172）。

2.3 官话和合译本：中文圣经翻译原则确立，汉语基督教话语系统得到极大充实

浅文理圣经译本一经推出，尽管深受欢迎，然而当时中国约占百分之九十的地方都讲“官话”，传教士为了能够更为广泛的传扬基督教的福音和教义，让更多的中国人能读懂《圣经》，积极顺应汉语的快速发展，开始用官话翻译圣经。官话和合本的翻译蓝本是英文“钦定本”的“修订本”，原文本具有很高的文学价值。在翻译官话和合本时，主译之一的狄考文阐述了他的翻译原则：

(1) 字词应当是操官话的平民百姓所日常使用和明白的……

(2) 文句的结构应清楚简单……

(3) 文笔风格应清楚简单……

(4) 文笔风格应该是真正的中文……

从以上翻译原则来看，官话和合本寻求浅白易懂，以适应在平民百姓中传扬福音和教义的需要。狄考文的继任者富善也提出他的官话和合译本的翻译原则：

(1) 语言必须能通行各地，而不是地方性的……

(2) 语言必须是在讲坛朗读时，所有阶层人士都容易明白的……

(3) 在语言的习惯用法容许之下，译文必须贴近原来的希腊文和希伯来文……

(4) 比喻必须尽可能直接翻译出来，不可意译……（转引自尤思德，2002:325,326）

从这四条翻译原则可以看出，在追求译文浅白易懂的同时，还必须忠实原文，作为宗教典籍的翻译，尤其是《圣经》被视为神语人言，忠实始终都是翻译过程中最重要的翻译原则。此外，第（4）条原则为译文能够彰显《圣经》文本鲜明的异质文化创造了条件，而当时汉语正逐步从文言文向白话文过渡，也为《圣经》中异质文化的彰显打下了基础，渗透在文言文中的千百年来的儒家文化解开了对译文的束缚。一些比喻直接翻译出来，也丰富了汉语和基督教话语系统，例如出现“情愿我的右手忘记技巧”，“情愿我的舌头贴于上膛”之类的表达，并且未做任何注释。传教士和他们的中国助手们在翻译过程中体现了前所未有的创新精神，启用了1000个新的汉语表达方式，新造了87个汉字，还改进了中文标点。

六年后，富善再次论到他的翻译原则时，又添加了“文体虽然要浅白易明，却必须高雅简洁”，并且再次强调“译文必须紧紧接近原文”。这表明，和合本圣经的语言既要浅白，让读者能够较容易读懂，同时，还要保持宗教文本用词高雅的要求，这与“信、达、雅”的翻译原则十分贴合。

2.4 和合本以后的译本：从单一走向多元

自和合本1919年问世后，直到1970年才出现了新的圣经中文全译本——吕振中译本。在《〈吕译新约初稿〉作者自序》中，吕振中认为官话和合本的用词仍有“晦涩费解之处”，他所采用的翻译原则以直译为主，并且看重语言的晓畅流利。吕振中直接从圣经希腊原文翻译，译本准确而忠实，在尊重原文结构的前提下，大胆尝试新词语、新语法，再次丰富了汉语基督教话语系统。1979年，由许牧世、周联华等华人学者翻译的《现代中文译本》在香港出版。这个译本是在奈达的“动态对等”翻译理论的指导下完成的。该译本在忠实原文的前提下，注重

读者反应,因此在翻译过程中,译者尽量避免使用教外人士所不熟悉的宗教术语,使译本不但面向广大的基督徒读者,也使教外人士能够读懂。同时注重译文的流畅性,做到译文口语化,让只具有初中知识水平的普通民众也能读懂。

然而,在新的圣经中文全译本陆续出版的背景下,和合本圣经仍然是中国的教会和信徒们,尤其是大陆的教会和信徒所广泛认可并使用的。在中国信徒眼中,和合本圣经就是最权威的中文译本。为何出版近一百年的和合本在汉语快速发展变化的今天,仍然屹立不倒、流传最广、影响最深,无可取代呢?本文将继续做出探讨。

3. 传统坚立, 标竿不倒: 和合本圣经权威现象浅析

奈达曾指出,当代的基督徒对于圣经译本的传译作用越来越重视,更加看重宗教语言是否清晰易懂,一些圣经译者曾达成共识,圣经的新译本不应该在面世二十年后还不加以修订,不应该在面世五十年后还不做出修改。然而和合本 1919 年问世后,直到 1988 年才出版《新标点和合本》,并且和合本的修订工作更是相当保守,从修订和合本圣经的原则就可见一斑:“第一,尽量保持《和合本》的文风、修辞;第二,能不修改就不修改,尽量少改动;第三,必须修改的,就必须修改。”(教牧亮光,2012)除了和合本自身在修订方面的保守,1970 年以来,多个圣经中文新译本也相继出版,然而即便这样,和合本仍然是中国基督徒心目中最权威的圣经中文译本,流传最广,影响最深。赵维本曾指出:“虽然在这三、四十年间,一些颇具分量的中文圣经译本相继完成面世,但是这部在七十年前出版的《国语和合译本》,在华人基督徒的心目中,仍然高踞着最重要的地位;这情况相信还会继续保持下去。”(赵维本,1993:162)为什么和合本在汉语急速发展的今天,仍然可以“独占鳌头”,本文将作出进一步探究。

3.1 静态的圣经翻译观

“圣经翻译是一种被动与无奈的活动,作用在于保存,因而容纳不下多少创造和改善的空间。这无疑是对圣经翻译一种较为静态的看法。”(莊柔玉,2000:72)将这种所谓的静态翻译观与上文提到的和合本修订原则对比,不难发现两者的相通之处。“能不修改就不修改”,“尽量保持原文文风、修辞”,在和合本修订过程中,更多的是一种保存,而不是创造和改善。这种翻译静态观还体现在对新译本的评论中,如吕振中译本,吕振中作为第一位尝试独立依据圣经原文进行圣经翻译的中国译者,其译本受到较大关注。贾保罗曾在评价吕振中译本时提到:“有几处他采取了或提出了一些有冒险性的经文。但多少都可以说是一个人的而

非正式的翻译应有的自由和权利。”（贾保罗，1965）值得注意的是，在当时的学者中，贾保罗对圣经翻译的态度是相当开放的，然而从他对吕振中译本的评价中不难看出，中国学者相对静态的圣经翻译观为圣经中文新译所提供的创造空间实在是小之又小。但是，如果把和合本“一家独大”和其他新译本“未成气候”的原因归结于翻译观的相对保守未免有失公允，自多部新译本出现后，和合本不再是中国基督徒的唯一选择，然而中国的基督徒在这多种选择之下，仍然钟爱和合本，将其视为权威，更有信徒甚至认为和合本就是圣经原文，不可改动，和合本这种极高的宗教权威又来源于哪里？

3.2 传意对象一体化

根据译文的阅读对象，选择合适的表达方式，这是译者具有读者意识的表现，在圣经翻译过程中，确定圣经的阅读对象，进而选择合适的表达方式，是圣经翻译中不可缺少的一环。上文已经提到过，在和合本出版之前，有深文理圣经中文译本，其主要阅读对象是具有一定文化知识和素养的人士，后来为了更好的传扬福音真理，让未受过多少教育的普通百姓读懂圣经，传教士们又译出了浅文理译本。此外，和合本之后的译本《当代圣经》的序言中有这样一句话：“《当代圣经》是开始阅读圣经的人的入门初阶”，这表明当代圣经的传意对象是未信基督教的读者或是初信的基督徒。然而和合本从出版伊始就未明确其传意对象是基督徒还是非基督徒，并且在之后的几十年中，和合本作为唯一一部在中国广泛流传的圣经中文全译本，既被基督徒奉为权威，也是非基督徒了解、认识并接受基督教的途径，从和合本的修订原则“尽量保持原文文风、修辞”上看，和合本修订并未因汉语的发展而重新确定传意对象，它没有去“迁就”新读者的需要，而是所有华人读者要去“适应”和合本的译文文风和修辞，更为有趣的是，华人读者并未因此表现出不接受的态度。不区分传意的对象，无疑扩大了其读者群体，这也是和合本长久不衰的原因之一。然而值得思考的是，和合本可以在不区分传意对象的前提下同时受到信徒和非信徒的欢迎，这表明和合本在其语言上定有独到之处。

3.3 浅白易懂又神圣庄严的语言

奈达称圣经是“神语人言”（God's word in man's language）。既是神语人言，那么圣经译文既要符合“神语”的神圣庄严，又要呈现出“人语”的浅白易懂，如何在这两者之间取得平衡，是圣经译者所要思考的，也是圣经译本能否广受认可和欢迎的关键。在和合本面世之前，深文理的圣经译本虽然受当时文言文的限制，语言晦涩，然而主译者马礼逊曾表示“我宁可让人觉得译文俚俗不雅，也不愿让

人费解难懂”（转引自任东升，2007:168），和合本在其翻译原则中也提到“文笔风格应清楚简单”，可见浅白易懂、让读者能知所云是圣经译文的标准之一。和合本之后的译本在语言的浅白易懂方面更具优势，现代中文译本的序言中提到的翻译原则之一就是“着重口语化和诵读上的流畅，以初中生的中文程度为标准”，新的译本在语言上更加贴近现代汉语，表意更加清楚明白，相比较之下，和合本的语言已经算不算浅白易懂了，照此推理，和合本被新的译本取代只是时间问题。然而实际情况却是，新的圣经中文全译本陆续出版至今已有三、四十年之久，和合本非但没有被取代，并且仍然一枝独秀，还是中国大陆的教会和信徒所广泛使用的圣经中文译本，可见语言浅白易懂不是圣经译本经久流传的准则。奈达曾指出：“十分浅白易懂的圣经译本可能不为人接受……不少人较喜欢他们并不完全看得懂的译本。”（奈达，1988）可见，神圣庄严的语言更能唤起人们的宗教情感，使信徒或者是非信徒感受到上帝话语的权威和能力。从这一层面就不难理解为何在新译本层出的今天，和合本仍然是中国大陆流传最广、使用最多、影响最大的圣经中文译本。

和合本权威现象的出现有其自身因素，比如译本既浅白易懂又神圣庄严的语言，使得译文在忠实的基础上不失典雅，又如不对传意对象加以区分，反倒取得更好的流传效果。同时也有许多客观因素，比如在和合本出版之后的五十年里，没有出版过新的基督教圣经中文全译本，这在客观上让和合本积累了大批读者。然而，和合本的一枝独秀并不能掩盖新译本的光芒，不管新译本的接受程度如何，圣经汉译逐渐走向多元化已是一个不争的事实。

4. 新译争辉：圣经汉译向多元化发展

和合本在其出版之后，一直是基督教徒心中的权威译本，然而和合本的一枝独秀并不能掩盖新译本的光芒，不管新译本的接受程度如何，圣经汉译逐渐走向多元化已是一个不争的事实。

4.1 译文出现文学化倾向

在和合本与吕振中译本之间的时间段里，虽然没有基督教圣经的中文全译本出版，然而一些中国的翻译家译出了圣经单卷和圣经片段，如李荣芳用“骚体”翻译了圣经的一卷书——《耶利米哀歌》，朱维之也用“九歌体”翻译了《耶利米哀歌》的片段，后来，吴应熊用四言、五言、七言诗和骚体翻译《诗篇》。这表明，在和合本出版之前，圣经是被译者当作宗教文本进行翻译的，宗教属性是圣经的第一属性，忠实是翻译的第一原则，然而，随着圣经汉译文化的不断发展，

中国的翻译家不单单把圣经看作是宗教经典，也尝试着发掘圣经的文学属性，把圣经当作文学性的文本进行翻译，且这些翻译家大多都是诗人、作家，他们的译本也有着很高的文学价值。只是这些译本由于偏重圣经的文学性，因此在信徒或是慕道人士中流传并不广泛。

4.2 译文注重读者反应

对于宗教性文本来说，忠实是翻译的第一原则，在忠实的基础上，如何选用文风和语言，新译本在这些方面有了新的探索和发展。和合本要求文风要清楚简单，语言要既浅白易明，也要高雅简洁，可以简单概括为严复所提出的“信、达、雅”。然而随着翻译研究的不断发展，圣经翻译的翻译原则也随之发展，尤其体现在和合本之后的译本里。如现代中文译本就是以奈达的“动态对等”为指导原则而翻译出来的。在“动态对等”的翻译原则的要求下，译者更加看重读者反应，表现在译文上就是，现代中文译本减少使用音译词，避免使用非基督徒所不熟悉的宗教术语，一些和合本从原文中直译过来的隐喻也淡化为直接的意思。如和合本中“情愿我的舌头贴于上膛”，在现代中文译本中译为“愿我的舌头僵硬，再也不能唱歌”，在意义方面，现代中文译本的译文更容易被中国读者理解。又如圣经中“dragon”的译法，在和合本中译为“大龙”，龙在中国读者的观念中是吉祥和权力的象征，现代中文译本则译为“大戾龙”，加一“戾”字，将圣经中“dragon”代表魔鬼的意象准确地传达给中国读者。此外，为达到“意义相符，效果相等”的原则，在译文的风格方面，译者也可以根据需要进行自由改变原文形式，某种程度上也提高了译者的主体地位。然而不可否认的是，由于两种文化的差异以及两种语言及语境的不同，绝对的“动态对等”是不可能实现的，而且动态对等原则下的译文，语言往往会缺失专属于原文文化的印记。

4.3 传意对象区分更为具体

和合本的传意对象既包括基督徒，又包括非基督徒，在其翻译原则中有这样两条：“字词应当是操官话的平民百姓所日常使用和明白的，语言必须是在讲坛朗读时，所有阶层人士都容易明白的”，这说明和合本并未刻意区分其传意对象，而是面向所有阶层。然而，随着读者意识在译者心中的分量逐渐增强，新译本的译者在传意对象方面相比和合本有更加明确的划分。如吕振中曾在其译本自序中提到：“非基督徒之读书人，与神学生，传道人，经学家等之研究”，传意对象更加明确。现代中文译本则是面向具有初中教育程度的人士。这些原则都体现出新译本在传意对象的区分上更加细致。

5. 译者启发：尊重传统，适当新译

本文简短地总结了圣经汉译在中国的历史，较为详细地探讨了汉语基督教话语系统的形成和发展，并通过对几个影响深远的基督教圣经中文全译本的历时和共时的比较，总结出各个译本的翻译原则、文风和语言特色。作为在中国基督徒中最受欢迎、一枝独秀的和合本中文圣经，也是汉语基督教话语系统的主干部分，本为对其权威现象做了较为详细的分析，从翻译研究的角度找出了和合本为何能够一直保持权威地位的几个原因，为译者翻译圣经类文本带来了启发。和合本虽然一枝独秀，然而新译本也竞相争辉，并且提供了宝贵的翻译原则和翻译角度，使圣经中文翻译从单一走向了多元化。其中有一些原则、经验是译者可以借鉴并采用的，一些不足之处也是译者在今后的翻译中要留心避免的。如何在传统与新译之间找到合适的契合点，使译文既传承传统中的精髓，又能吸收到新译中的精华，这需要译者在尊重传统、吸收新译的基础上，合理发挥译者的主体性。在有了上述理论积累之后，总结出如下几点，用来指导译者的圣经类文本翻译实践：

本翻译原文作为圣经类解经读本，其宗教性仍是第一属性，因此要以忠实为最高翻译原则，不把追求文学性作为主要目标。

本译文将主要用于基督徒的日常查经以及非基督徒了解基督教的读本，因此译者不对传意对象做具体划分，涉及基督教话语系统中的宗教术语，以及人名、地名等，以基督徒视为权威的和合本圣经为根据进行翻译。然而在翻译的过程中，译者要有读者意识，注重读者反应。

承接传统为主，适当体现新译为辅。注重语言流畅性，符合现代汉语规范，既要呈现“人言”的浅白易懂，又要体现“神语”的神圣庄严。

5.1 语言既要浅白易懂，又要神圣庄严

《圣经》被称作是“神语人言”（God's word in man's language），这说明圣经译文既要符合“神语”的神圣庄严，又要呈现出“人语”的浅白易懂。神圣庄严的语言能唤起人们的宗教情感，使信徒或者是非信徒感受到上帝话语的权威和能力；同时，语言浅白易懂，则增强了译文的可读性，有助于译本广泛传播，以达到传教的目的。

【例 1】 We are His temple. He resides in us and works through us, and unless we yield ourselves to be His instruments, He is unable to carry out His supreme purposes, and the great exalted Head is like a man with a paralyzed body that refuses to perform the functions for which that brain has power sufficient, but

the paralyzed members are unequal to the effort. Therefore, the Spirit claims us as the subjects of His working.

我们就是圣灵的殿。他住在我们心里并通过我们做工，除非我们愿意降服，甘做他的器皿，他就无法实现他至高的旨意，那位至大至高的首领也就像一个瘫痪的人那样，其身体可以被大脑支配，但却无法执行大脑的指令，而那些瘫痪的部位又不能胜任。因此，圣灵要求我们做他成就事工的器皿。（例子中的译文均为本人翻译）

“His supreme purposes”在译文中译成“他至高的旨意”。“Purpose”一词在《牛津高阶英汉双解词典》中的解释有：the intension, aim or function of sth, 意图，目的，用途，目标。在基督教教义中，上帝是宇宙的创造者，也是主宰者，此处译者将其译为“旨意”，而不是“目的”、“意图”，是为突出上帝的威严、权力以及这种至高的统治地位，从而能够符合“神语”的神圣庄严。另有“instruments”和“subjects”译成“器皿”，《罗马书》9:21节：“窑匠难道没有权柄从一团泥里拿一块做成贵重的器皿，又拿一块做成卑贱的器皿吗？”圣经中把上帝创造的人比作窑匠做成的器皿，窑匠对自己所做的器皿有绝对主权，因此上帝对于自己所创造的人也有绝对的主权，这里将 instruments 和 subjects 译为“器皿”，符合整句话的语义，人要降服在上帝的权能之下，接受上帝的支配，服从上帝的命令，同时也使语言达到神圣庄严的要求。此外，除去以上两个词，本句译文没有使用生僻字词、句式，都是使用符合现代汉语规范的词句，为使译文在达到语言神圣庄严的同时，也能保证浅白易懂。

5.2 具备读者意识，注重读者反应

随着翻译研究的不断发展，圣经翻译原则也随之发展，尤其体现在和合本之后的译本里，如现代中文译本就更加看重读者反应，这表明圣经译者的读者意识日益增强。

【例2】There are various social and political advantages which we can turn to account in our service of the Gospel, but they cannot carry us very far, and ultimately we are better off if we step out upon the waters simply because Jesus says, —Come.

我们可以利用各种社会和政治上的优势来为传福音服务，然而，它们不能帮助我们走得很远；耶稣说：“你来吧。”如果我们单单因这句话而在水面上加快行走的步伐，最终都会渐入佳境。（加注：参考马太福音 14:29）

这段文字有一个背景，记载在圣经《马太福音》第 14 章，大体是说耶稣在海面上行走，彼得看见后对耶稣说：“主，如果是你，请叫我从水面上走到你那里去。”耶稣说：“你来吧。”寓意是基督徒在耶稣呼召他们的时候，要凭着对主的信心，义无反顾，勇往直前，因为在基督教的教义中，基督徒要成事，不是倚靠势力，不是倚靠才能，乃是要倚靠主的灵。但这段文字的前后文并没有提到这个背景，如果读者对此背景不熟悉，就难以理解为何要“在水面上加快行走的步伐”，耶稣所说的“你来吧”又有怎样的深意，为让对这段背景不熟悉的读者看懂，体现读者意识，译者选择在译文后面加注，便于读者查找此背景，能够更好的理解译文。

加注除用于介绍背景经文，还可以用来给读者补充历史知识，提供历史背景，如下面这一例子：

【例 3】 In trying to please these Jews, Festus asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem to be tried there, but this time Paul had complete recognition that it would only mean his death, and it would not accomplish God’s purposes for his life. Therefore, as a Roman citizen, he demanded that he be brought before Caesar, who was the young emperor Nero.

为了取悦这些犹太人，非斯都询问保罗是否愿意回到耶路撒冷接受审问。然而这一次，保罗完全认识到回去就意味着死亡，就不能成就上帝在他身上的旨意。因此，保罗作为罗马公民要求上告凯撒，就是那位年轻的罗马皇帝尼禄。（加注：尼禄（公元 37-68），于公元 54 年成为古罗马皇帝，是古罗马的暴君。）

《圣经》的三大属性之一就是历史性，《圣经》中的历史事件和历史人物数不胜数，然而，《圣经》的读者，不论是基督徒还是非基督徒，却并不都通晓世界史或欧洲史。此处加注是为让读者对主要的历史人物有简单的了解，同时，鉴于尼禄这个君王对下文中事件的发展有影响，为使读者可以顺利的阅读和理解下文，此处加注十分必要，这也是译者具有读者意识的体现。

译者的读者意识除体现在加注上，在译文附录方面也有所体现，下面的例子是截取部分译文附录

【例 4】

原文	通行的译法	可选择的译法	错误的译法
Incarnation	道成肉身		

Person	位格		
Heathens		外邦人，异教徒	野蛮人
Synagogue		犹太会堂，犹太集会	
Instrument		器皿	
Lord	主		地主

对本译文中主要的基督教词语做一个总结,可以使得读者对基督教语言有一个较为直观的认识,初信的读者可以快速掌握这些特殊用语,而没有信仰背景的读者也可以通过这个附表了解基督教,从而不会感觉到译文奇怪,这体现了译者注重读者反应。

5.3 尊重传统，适当采用新译

和合本中文圣经是最受中国基督徒欢迎并推崇的圣经中文全译本,是汉语基督教话语系统的主干部分。虽然和合本自出版至今都占据权威地位,然而和合本之后出版的新译本也竞相争辉,并且提供了宝贵的翻译原则和翻译角度,使圣经中文翻译从单一走向了多元化。其中有一些原则、经验是译者可以借鉴并采用的,一些不足之处也是译者在今后的翻译中要留心避免的。因此,在翻译过程中,译者需要遵循尊重传统、适当新译的原则。

【例 5】 The sphere of their ministry was to be an ever-expanding one: —in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (1:8).....and then finally will lead us out in sympathy and service to be in some sense missionaries to the very heathen lands and send the gospel to the uttermost part of the earth.

使徒们传道的区域是不断扩大的：“从耶路撒冷、犹太全地和撒玛利亚，直到地极”（1:8）……最后，让我们怀着怜悯与事奉之心出发，像传教士那样，到外邦传教，把福音传到天涯海角。

“in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”是《使徒行传》1:8 的部分经文,和合本译作“要在耶路撒冷、犹太全地和撒玛利亚,直到地极,(作我的见证)”,现代中文译本译作“要在耶路撒冷、犹太,和撒马利亚全境,甚至到天涯海角,为我作见证”,这两个译文最大的区别在于现代中文译本把和合本中的“地极”改作“天涯海角”,现代中文译本在新译方面的特点之一就是频繁使用中文成语和四字结构,汉语的四字结构音韵和美、表意丰富,可提

高译文的可读性,使译文贴近中文读者的阅读习惯。因此,译者在翻译的过程中,有意在合适的地方选用汉语的四字格。然而,在整篇译文中,凡涉及到圣经原文的地方,译者都是以和合本的译文为标准,这是考虑到和合本在多个圣经中文译本里一枝独秀,在信徒心中是权威的象征,本文前面也对这种现象进行了较为详细的分析,鉴于第一句是圣经中的原文,因此就不做改动,“ends of the earth”按照和合本译为“地极”,在后面的解释里,“uttermost part of the earth”和“ends of the earth”是同样的意思,借鉴现代中文译本多用四字格,译者选择把“uttermost part of the earth”译作“天涯海角”,在尊重传统的基础上,加以新译,增强译文的可读性。

【例 6】 And so let us wait for the promise of the Father. Let us receive in all His fullness and the blessed Holy Spirit; and if any reader has not yet proved this promise true, be encouraged, dear friend, to follow even the dim light that is now shining in your heart, even the faintest longing that is springing in your soul.

所以,让我们等候天父的应许。让我们得着他所有的丰盛,得着赐福的圣灵,如果哪位读者还没有确认这真实的应许,亲爱的朋友啊,请鼓起勇气,追随你心中正在闪烁的亮光吧,即便它还微弱,追随你灵魂里正在跳跃的渴望吧,即便它还弱小。

在这一小段的翻译中,译者把“promise”和“fullness”分别译为“应许”和“丰盛”,这是两个基督教徒常用词语。“应许”表示上帝和人类的约定,上帝是守约的,在信徒的心中,上帝话怎样说,事就必怎样成就,且“应许”一词本身就带有祝福的含义,比如,《圣经》记载的流奶与蜜的迦南地就叫做“the land of promise”,即“应许之地”,可见,“应许”是基督信徒们很喜欢的一个词语,所以,译者没有将其译作“承诺”等在现代汉语中更为常用的词,而是尊重传统、尊重读者,译作“应许”。“丰盛”一词在基督教徒的心中也有美好的意象,象征上帝一切的慈爱和恩典,同样出于尊重传统的原则,译者也不做替换,且这两个词并不生僻,普通读者也可读懂,甚至可以细细品味其中蕴含的美好意象。

6. 结语

要做好一项翻译实践,翻译理论的指导作用是必不可少的。本次翻译实践属于基督教圣经类文本,关于圣经及圣经类文本的翻译研究在世界上有着悠久的历史,也有着丰富的研究成果,而圣经汉译在中国经过近二百年的蓬勃发展,也形成了自己的传统,并且在传承中有新的发展。为做好这次翻译实践,译者首先做了理论上的学习和积累,通过探寻汉语基督教话语系统的建立、传承和发展,总

总结出适用的翻译指导原则，并且在翻译实践中体现出之前的理论铺垫。使译本有理有据，并且体现译者的个人色彩，适当发挥了译者的主体性，同时也为今后的圣经和圣经类文本的翻译奠定了理论和实践基础。然而，翻译是一个永无止境的追求完美的过程，在这次的翻译实践中，也遇到了难以处理的问题，有一些译法也需要再认真考虑、推敲，这些问题也是鞭策译者继续努力的动力所在。

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附录

译文

《使徒行传》研读指南

导言

在《路加福音》里，作者路加医生所展示的是基督开始在地上所做的事工；路加还写了《使徒行传》，在这部书里，他展示了基督通过圣灵继续做的事工。主被接升天是《路加福音》结束的场景，而《使徒行传》则是以这个场景为开端。

路加接着记录使徒的第一次讲道，使徒所行的第一个神迹，迈向组织基督教运动的第一步，信徒们第一次被迫害，第一位殉道的基督徒，第一位非犹太人的信仰转变，以及第一次宣教旅程。

福音书描述的是那位降世来为我们的罪而死的人子。《使徒行传》展示的是上帝之子通过圣灵的大能所继续作的事工。福音书讲述的是被钉死在十架之上而又复活升天的救主，《使徒行传》则将他描绘成被接升天而又至高的主，是他的身体——教会的首领。福音向我们揭示了基督的教训，在《使徒行传》里，我们则通过使徒们的作为看见了这些教训的果效。

这部书真实地记录了使徒们通过圣灵所行的事。“圣灵”一词出现了约有70次。“你们要作我的见证”是这部书的核心所在，而且“见证”一词也出现了30多次。

上帝的灵在众人面前作清楚明白的见证，这就是第一代教会能够取得显著成功的原因。直至今日，他的大能和智慧依旧，每个信徒要做的，就是知晓他的道路，倚靠他的大能，奋勇向前，为基督在这个世纪的事工献上自己。

《使徒行传》1:1-7

“使徒行传”有时还被称作“圣灵行传”、“升天之主行传”，后两个书名都很恰当，事实上比“使徒行传”这个平常不过的书名要恰当许多。这部书不仅记录了教会初期的历史，还有圣灵起初在地上的事工，以及主升天后所做的事工。

“我从父出来，到了世界”，“我又离开世界，往父那里去”（《约翰福音》16:28），“我去是与你们有益的……你们若爱我，因我到父那里去，就必喜乐”（《约翰福音》16:7；14:28）。在这些以及许多相似的宣告中，主为着他的离开对他的门徒作了预备，让他们晓得他在地上的事工现在已经完成了，他的升天仅仅是他伟大救赎计划的一部分。

他为升天所做的预备是精心、完备的。他不是急匆匆地离开，而是在地上逗留了40天，经常向门徒显现，在他回到天上尽大祭司和君王职责之前，先把所预言的在地上还未成就的事工完成。“用许多的凭据将自己活活地显给使徒看”（《使徒行传》1:3）。他毫不迟疑地显明自己，并将有关上帝之国的教诲完全赐

予他们。约翰告诉我们，若是将耶稣所行的事一一地都写出来，所写的书就是世界也容不下。这样，我们可以肯定地说，《使徒行传》记载的使徒们的行事，是靠主亲口所说的话语来引导的，我们只有像使徒们一样顺服主的话语，才能领会主的话语，主的话语也才能临到我们。

（《圣经中的基督》，A.B. 辛普森著）

《使徒行传》排在新约 27 部书的第五部，如此神圣的排位或许是因为它在福音书和书信之间承上启下。这部书（《使徒行传》）记录着：

从犹太教到基督教的转变

从律法到恩典的转变

从王国到教会（基督的身体）的转变

《使徒行传》1:6 里，耶稣提到关于复兴以色列国的时间，解释一下耶稣这样说的含义。

《罗马书》1:16；《罗马书》3:21-23；《以弗所书》3:8-11。

《使徒行传》1:8

圣灵降临，不是来做基督体系中最后的代理人，而是来做临时的管理工作：首先要去完成基督在地上的事工，其次要为基督的二次降临预备道路。然而，我们若想领会圣灵的降临，就需要首先看清楚两点——离开的主和再来的主——以及在这之间，就像一段间歇期，要由圣灵来做承上启下的工作。因此，让基督再来，就是圣灵以及在他管理之下的教会的工作，以此来成就基督在地上开始的事工，就在他曾经被拒绝、被钉死的地方，建立基督为王的王国。

在明白了圣灵的使命之后，我们再来看一看主离开时赐下的圣灵的应许。

1. 圣灵是一个位格，就和基督自己一样。他不是我们在深层的生命里从上帝而得的，而是他自己向我们显明让我们认识他，让我们看到他是真实的，并且驻在我们心里，成为一切力量和喜乐的源泉。

2. 圣灵作为大能的圣灵而降临。人是最软弱的，比自己有罪的本性软弱，比周围的环境软弱，甚至比交由自己管理的牲畜还软弱。但是圣灵来了要赐给人力量，让人的生命结果子，当圣灵进驻到我们的生命里，他就会动工。他要成就一些事。他远远大过一种情感、一种感觉亦或是一种想象。他是无穷无尽的力量，他让我们的生命有力量，使我们作为基督的门徒，完成一切我们蒙召去做的事。他的大能胜过罪、胜过人、胜过世界、胜过疾病、胜过撒旦，他的大能使我们能活着、去做工、去忍受、去征服。

3. 圣灵不是离开我们去做工。主独自受死、踏上酒醉，独自去到魔鬼那里击败他。然而圣灵不像基督这样。我们就是圣灵的殿。他住在我们心里并通过我们做工，除非我们愿意降服，甘做他的器皿，他就无法实现他至高的旨意，那位至大至高的首领也就像是一个瘫痪的人那样，其身体可以被大脑支配，但却无法执行大脑的指令，而那些瘫痪的部位又不能胜任。因此，圣灵要求我们做他成就事

工的器皿。

4. 圣灵的大能主要显明在我们为基督作见证上。这也是我们的事奉所在。我们不仅仅要见证真理，要成为智慧、出色的演说家或是教师，而是要为基督作见证。我不知该如何表达才能更好地说明我们要做的事情，我们要做的是把耶稣活活地展现给世人，我们要为此而生活、而说话，好让世人看见我们内心或是通过我们去看见一种大能、一种同在，也让他们同样渴望生命中能有那份充满爱的、全能的帮助。因此，向世人传讲基督就是我们能蒙召去做的最高层次的事奉，也是我们为那些软弱的、有罪的人所能做的帮助最大的事情。

5. 使徒们传道的区域是不断扩大的：“从耶路撒冷、犹太全地和撒玛利亚，直到地极”（1:8）。就像使徒时期的教会在伟大的传教事奉里所遵循的这一不断扩大的圈子，我们也要到不断扩大的区域去传教，绝不能停止，直到整个世界都领受基督的信息。这一节经文引人注目，它是整部《使徒行传》的目录表，后面的章节会为它做最详尽的注解，我们看到，福音相继在耶路撒冷、犹太全地而后是撒玛利亚直至最遥远的外邦国家植根下去。

在这里，我们无疑也看到被圣灵充满的个体基督徒的事奉过程，事奉一般都是从家里开始，家就是我们的耶路撒冷；接着向外传给我们的亲戚（犹太全地）；然后就要临到我们的敌人，那些离我们很远或许还对我们有不当言论的人——撒玛利亚；最后，让我们怀着怜悯与事奉之心出发，像传教士那样，到外邦传教，把福音传到天涯海角。

6. 使徒们要等候圣灵的施洗，否则他们绝不能开展事工，包括我们也是一样。即便主自己都是在接受圣灵的施洗后才开始他在地上的事工，我们又怎敢倚靠自己的力量冒然前行并且代表他呢！

为什么使徒们需要等候？或许是必须要等时候到了，因为根据犹太历法，五旬节就是圣灵降临所成就的时候，就要到了。然而，更或许是因为使徒们还没有准备好，他们要做好属灵的预备，所以这段等候圣灵降临的时间对他们十分必要，可以让他们看见自己是多么有限，看到自己的需要，让他们有时间去探求自己的内心，加深那份饥渴慕义之情，从而有助于他们能存感恩之心领受祝福，并且在自己的心里腾出足够的空间和最佳的通路，等待圣灵的进驻和做工。

所以，让我们等候天父的应许。让我们得着他所有的丰盛，得着赐福的圣灵，如果哪位读者还没有确认这真实的应许，亲爱的朋友啊，请鼓起勇气，追随你心中正在闪烁的亮光吧，即便它还微弱，追随你灵魂里正在跳跃的渴望吧，即便它还弱小。我们无法用言语向你讲说这应许临到你时的感受。如果你内心，有一种你明明需要却还没有得到的感觉——呼求上帝赐你纯洁、得胜、能力和安息——这是祝福已经开始了。如果你继续恳求认识主，你就必然会认识他。当你伏在他的脚前等候，他绝不会赐给你渴慕的心却又让你失望。等候天父的应许，“当趁耶和華可寻找的时候寻找他，相近的时候求告他（《以赛亚书》55:6）”，“圣灵

降临在你们身上，你们就必得着能力；并在耶路撒冷、犹太全地和撒玛利亚，直到地极，作我的见证”（《使徒行传》1:8）。

（《圣经中的基督》，A.B. 辛普森著）

作为基督徒，请解释下面圣灵的每一项事工是如何影响我们的生命：

1 把上帝显明给我们。

2 赐我们力量胜过罪、胜过自己、胜过世界、胜过疾病、胜过撒旦，让我们依靠他的大能去活着、去做工、去忍受、去征服。

3 把我们打造成合乎他使用的器皿。

4 将基督真实地显给众人。

5 让我们能够为基督作见证。

6 为我们施行大能的洗礼。我们应该为此等候吗？

《使徒行传》1:9-11

主的离开十分引人注目，而且满有荣耀。他刚从门徒们的视野中消失，门徒们就害怕起来，怕他是永远的离开了，因此，用另一个异象鼓励他们就变得必要。所以，当他们定睛看那远去的云彩时，有两位闪闪发光的天使，就像另一个世界来的访客，站在他们身边，说：“加利利人哪，……你们为什么站着望天呢？这离开你们被接升天的耶稣，你们见他怎样往天上去，他还要怎样来”（《使徒行传》1:11）。

（《圣经中的基督》，A.B. 辛普森著）

伴随耶稣升天到进入他从天赐下的新约，这种能力和权柄的转换是如何发生的？使徒们将从谁那里得到什么？在这之后，谁将会接受出于恩典的福音（福音将传给谁）？

《使徒行传》1:8；《使徒行传》2:17-21；《使徒行传》2:33,39。

既然耶稣已经升天，他现在的角色是什么？

《以弗所书》1:20-23；《约翰一书》2:1。

《使徒行传》1:12-26

彼得认为“十二”这个数字带有某种神圣感，应该得到恢复——这是他自己的想法，在没有得到主的引领前，他不能做任何事，只有等候。然而，这还是那个在主被捕时鲁莽地拔刀护主的彼得，还是那个当主告诉他们去加利利等候时说“我打鱼去”（《约翰福音》21:3）的彼得。主早已肯定地告诉过他们，“离了我，你们就不能做什么”（《约翰福音》15:5），然而彼得还没有接受圣灵的训导。

彼得给出这些指示：（1）新使徒必须是那时在聚会的120人中的一位，（2）这人必须是在耶稣受洗到升天的这一段时间内，常与使徒们作伴的人，这样他就可以为耶稣的复活作见证。这完全是出于人的判断，如果上帝的心里对他的使徒还有更多的要求，那么彼得就违背了上帝的心意。至于那两个被选出的信徒，他们的名字再也没有在历史和《新约》里出现过。

大多数的学者都相信，之后的保罗才是上帝所拣选的，因为在他被圣灵充满后，就和彼得一样，成为一名合格的使徒（《加拉太书》1:11-17，《加拉太书》2:7-9）。保罗还有非常珍贵的一点，是其他任何蒙召之人iv所不能及的——他直接受命于升天的主。

五旬节过后，就再也没有听说过用摇签作决定的方法，因为这是出于肉体的，如今，使徒们有了圣灵的不断引导。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

你认为使徒们选出第十二位使徒的行为公正吗？为什么人数要保持在12位？保罗后来受膏成为外邦人的使徒，他在使徒们当中是什么角色？

《约翰福音》1:48；《罗马书》1:16；《腓立比书》2:5。

摇签是一种得到认可的做决定的方式吗？

《使徒行传》2:1-3

使徒们满怀敬畏之情，定睛望着，上帝的荣耀近得触手可及，这或许就是上帝近距离的显现，主确实借着圣灵回来了，他的同在以肉眼可见的方式显明出来。那声音就像是一阵大风，舌头如火焰般显现，这都是基督在圣灵里面的彰显。我们可以看到，每一个基督徒是如何能够领受同一位基督。基督的无所不在本是他们不能明白的真理，然而现在却能够理解了，因为他们亲眼看到了。

在这之前，使徒通过悔罪得着基督的义（参见《罗马书》4:3），然而如今，他们是通过主的赐予而得着他的义，是接受基督的生命而成为重生的人（参见《彼得后书》1:4）；因此，每个人都会拥有基督所拥有的。那应许赐下的圣灵已经降临并与他们同在（参见《约翰福音》14:16-18）——主在使徒们的里面，使徒也在主的里面！

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

当我们认罪悔改的时候，圣灵是如何用他全部的丰盛来吸引我们的呢，这些我们意识到了吗？圣灵不断地充满意味着什么？

《弥迦书》3:8；《约翰福音》3:35,36；《路加福音》4:1；《罗马书》8:11；《罗马书》15:16；《加拉太书》5:22,23；《帖撒罗尼迦后书》2:13；《约翰一书》2:20,27；《彼得后书》1:4；《约翰福音》14:16-18。

《使徒行传》2:4-14

五旬节期间，使徒们用各种语言说话，这是为了成就耶稣的命令——福音要从耶路撒冷开始，传遍整个世界。福音首先临到犹太人。在上帝旨意的运行下，犹太人从世界各地赶来参加这个福音的v盛宴，那天回转的3000人全部都是犹太人，没有外邦人。

请注意，犹太人是来自世界各国赶回来的，9到11节的经文里提到了至少16个国家。

这些都是犹太人，或是皈依犹太教的人。他们聚集在这里，还要把福音的信

息传给全世界。今后就要口口相传。这个民族注定要将福音的消息传给全世界。这些犹太人从世界各国回到家乡，听到用他们自己的语言和乡谈所讲述的信息，就是那被钉死在十字架上又复活的基督。

（《圣灵降临节及其后》，M.R. 德哈安著）

圣灵涌出的大能一次就使得 3000 犹太人回转，这实在让人惊异，请根据你的理解，谈谈这看得见的帮助，就是上帝在逾越节后 50 天所赐下的。在恩典的时代，上帝正在用这种大能而奇妙的方式引导他的新教会，这样说对吗？

《使徒行传》2:15-21

先知约珥曾用农场语言描述过圣灵的降临。就像是雨水自由滴落到每个人的身上，不分年龄、性别和阶层。男人、女人、孩子甚至是仆人都可以接纳他，绝无区别对待。用雨水落下描绘基督在圣灵里降临，真是传神至极，倾洒下来的雨水谁都可以得到，正如基督一样，这也用另一种方式展现了他的无处不在。彼得说，在末后的日子谁都可以得救，因为基督已经在圣灵里降临，任何人都可以接待他。耶稣就是上帝的恩赐（参见《罗马书》6:23）。圣灵的恩赐就是基督的恩赐。然而，彼得虽被圣灵充满，却还没有意识到承受这应许的也包括外邦人——他仍然需要在主里认识这一点（参见《使徒行传》10:9-34）。

约珥的预言同时也清楚说明了末后时代的终点。经文 18 节和 19 节之间的时间跨度——到现在已有 2000 年之久。末后时代的开始是以极大的喜乐和属灵的祝福为标志，将要结束时则充斥着各样的毁灭和灾难。许多人都在找寻五旬节的一幕能重新上演，然而它不会出现了。日子将近，灾难会越来越多，地上的一切都要废去。约翰在《启示录》第 6 章 12 节关于上帝大怒之日的描述就是根据约珥的这段预言。地上的杀戮将会极其可怕（参见《启示录》14:20）。只有主的再来才会让杀戮终止（参见《马太福音》24:22,29,30）。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S. 洛维特释义版）

你认为约珥剩下的预言何时会成就呢？不管怎样，这预言适用于当下吗——如果灾难即将开始，作为基督徒该怎么应付呢？

《使徒行传》14:22；《罗马书》5:3；《罗马书》8:35-37；《罗马书》12:12；
《哥林多后书》7:4；《以弗所书》3:13。

《使徒行传》2:22-36

彼得向众人解释完所发生的奇事，就开始他的第一次讲道，圣灵的大能藉着他并在他身上大大地显明——他说起话来和从前判若两人！信息完整地传讲给了以色列人——仅是犹太人，我们可以看到，这是第二次给他们摆上上帝的国——这国他们曾经拒绝过。若是这一次他们仍然拒绝，那么福音将向外传播进入整个外邦世界。基督授予他们的使命是按顺序来的，首先是传给耶路撒冷、犹太全地直至整个以色列国，然后传到撒玛利亚，最终传向地极。这里彼得说——以色列人哪——表明福音只是传给犹太人。

请注意彼得的信息。彼得受引导把曾被以色列人拒绝过的基督的信息重新带给他们。对于听众们所熟悉的《旧约》经文，他信手拈来，接着向他们宣讲福音——就是那被钉死在十架之上，被埋葬而又从死里复活的基督的信息——他们真正的弥赛亚！彼得又引用大卫的话来证明，这位被犹太人拒绝并钉死的就是真正的弥赛亚，是真正的王。

明白这些后，众人知道自己都犯了大罪，问道：“我们当怎样行？”彼得回答说：“要悔改，受洗……”他这样回答是因为和他说话的这些人都曾公然拒绝耶稣，因此，现在他们也要公开承认他、认他作自己的弥赛亚。他们已经相信天父和圣灵的名，但是现在，他们必须要在曾被他们拒绝过的耶稣基督里面，宣称他们的信仰。接受洗礼是证明这些犹太人痛悔拒绝耶稣之罪的条件。

福音必须首先为以色列国摆上，之后将传入撒玛利亚直到地极。如果以色列国接受了这第二次摆上的福音，他们的弥赛亚就会回来，然而，上帝知道他们还是会拒绝，因此，在福音先传给犹太人、又被他们拒绝后，上帝就为教会作出了规划。

（《圣灵降临节及其后》，M.R. 德哈安著）

通过这些经文我们可以知道，犹太人认为真正的弥赛亚不会死，他降临的时候，会让他的敌人作他的脚凳并且统治他们（参看《诗篇》110:1-2）。你认为犹太人在读了《诗篇》110篇又看到耶稣的受死、埋葬和复活后，会有怎样的感受？

《使徒行传》2:39-47

那日，3000人在圣灵里接受洗礼，加入这个120人的教会。对犹太民族来说，五旬节无疑让他们想起了自己的祖先从埃及为奴之地逃至西奈山时的光景，两者发生在同一天。那时，摩西上山去领受上帝的十条诫命，亚伦在山下等着摩西回来，百姓们要求造一个神像以便让他们敬拜，亚伦就和百姓们造了一只金牛犊。摩西回来后看见百姓拜偶像，上帝的审判就要临到他们，摩西呼求上帝，结果，有3000百姓被击杀！而在五旬节有3000人成为信徒！

接着是对早期教会聚会的简单介绍。内容十分简单，有以下几方面：1) 学习《圣经》——使徒的教训；2) 彼此相交——互作见证；3) 擘饼——纪念主；4) 祷告。

自从他们有了圣灵的引导，一切复杂的组织结构都消失不见。也没有我们现今教会的各种复杂的组织。就是一众信徒在圣灵的带领下听道，各人作见证，纪念主以及作祷告；然后去到各地为他们的主和基督作见证。

《使徒行传》的第二章以一幅“圣经共产主义”的图画结束，与我们今天所了解的政治上的共产主义截然相反。这种共产主义的理想是建立王国。使徒们仍然将这国摆在以色列面前，一千年里基督为王，这是不可改变的法则。不会再有贫穷，每个人都坐在自己的葡萄藤和橄榄树下，上帝把有形的祝福平等地赐下，人人都得饱足。

早期的基督徒是一个受鄙视的群体。他们遭受着世界的迫害、忽视、怠慢和漠视。他们都在等候弥赛亚回来建立王国，所以就住在一处。这不是强迫的，而是在完全自愿的基础上，与他人分享自己所有的一切。

当建立王国的盼望明亮地燃烧着，信徒们的做法成为一种惯例，将一直沿用到王国的时代，直到万膝都向基督跪拜。

（《圣灵降临节及其后》，M.R. 德哈安著）

早期教会信徒们都住在一起，诸如此类，我们现今还应该效仿吗？你是怎样分别有多少是属于基督的，有多少是属于自己呢？

《玛拉基书》3:8-10；《罗马书》14:5；《哥林多前书》9:9-14,19-23。

《使徒行传》3:1-26

彼得和约翰年纪相差很大，个人的恩赐和观点更是相去甚远。他们曾是对手，现在却走在一起。这件事发生在下午三点钟。当他们走上圣殿的台阶时，一定多次说起过主曾经也和我们一起走过。然而，他们知道，主依然和以前一样离他们很近，所以，他们要成为连接主荣耀的医治大能和这个病人的工具。因为主与他们一同行走，这个病得医治的人能够成为他们中间的第四人。

殿门很漂亮，然而却不能治病。人所需的不只是美和艺术。或许我们没有足智多谋的才智，也没有屈梭多模的金口，然而我们必须看到，我们要为这个麻痹的、即将毁灭的世界带来些什么。让我们行动起来，让人能够对我们有所盼望，然后把基督带给他们。瘸腿的人需要力量，而这正是福音神圣的恩赐。福音本是上帝的大能。拯救者让我们能够在上帝的道路上行走和跳跃。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

就在瘸腿的人病得医治的地方，主也曾治愈了一个瞎眼的人，参看《约翰福音》第9章，现在，彼得和约翰奉拿撒勒人耶稣基督的名施行医治。你认为这个人会怎样看待这些曾经是渔夫的人的生活？

《罗马书》8:9-11,20,21；《罗马书》15:1-3；《以弗所书》2:8-10；《以弗所书》5:1,2,8-10。

等到万物复兴的时候，就是上帝从创世以来，藉着圣先知的口所说的（《使徒行传》3:21），这句话有什么深意？

《创世纪》12:2,3；《申命记》30:3；《撒母耳记下》7:16；《撒迦利亚书》12:8；《罗马书》8:18-23；《启示录》21:1-7。

《使徒行传》4:1-22

经文中特别提到了撒都该人，他们是那个时代的不可知论者，对于看不见的和永恒的事物完全不信。因此，他们痛恨我们的主复活的事实。守殿官是利未守卫的头，很可能就是听从他们的人。软弱的人啊，在违抗上帝的时候，露出的是怎样一副嘴脸！他们能做的只是把使徒们囚禁起来，然而他们束缚不了、也囚禁不了活着的圣灵，不能阻止得救之人口口相传得救的信息，因此，信徒们的人数

不断增加。

彼得一定会想到之前他在这殿里的表现，对比现在，那时的他相信自己的力量；现在他被圣灵充满，为的就是做伟大而庄严的忏悔。耶稣的名就是基督荣耀的存在。因为这人已经与永活的基督合一，所以使得疾病却步，健康得以恢复。耶稣的名就像一首甘甜的诗歌，把这几章内容串联起来。他是这么真实地活着，触手可及，否则，能力与恩典之激流怎会倾倒，使得干枯的生命如生长在上帝的花园里一般怒放。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

撒都该人因他们（彼得和约翰）教训百姓，本着耶稣，传说死人复活，就很烦恼（《使徒行传》4:2）。当耶稣在髑髅地受死之时，好像是恶人掌握着所有权柄。如今通过这节经文可以知道，上帝自己已经完全扭转了这一局面。请补全下面的叙述：

就在八周前，这些统治者还判了基督的死罪，希望能够终结基督教的信息。彼得引用《诗篇》118 篇 22 节的经文来谴责犹太官府，官员们能理解他的话吗？你就是那拒绝_____的_____？他们知道他们正在成就预言吗？这些官长们看见彼得、约翰的能力和胆量，就是他们曾在_____看见过的，都哑口无声。当人的禁令与上帝的命令冲突时，就毫无施展之地——这些官长和祭司不就是所谓的熟知摩西五经（也成为律法书）的教师吗？（请回答是/否）_____

《使徒行传》4:23-35

物以类聚，人以群分；犹大自己去了，使徒们却回到同伴当中。祷告是应对威胁最好的方法。正当那时，使徒们同心合意地求赐胆量。他们不屑于求自己的平安；唯有让主得荣耀。

这荣耀的祷告包含着怎样令人欢呼喜悦的胜利啊，竟是来自几个身处危险之人！他们知道，他们在上帝特别的看顾保守之下，就是这位上帝，他创造了万有，为先知们所传讲，是主耶稣的天父。他们以为，医治疾病的神迹越多，越会有助于他们事工的开展，然而那时他们并不明白，他们的合一、相爱、盼望、愿意分享好行为的心志以及他们放胆无惧的行为，才是他们最有说服力的论据。请注意，尽管许多疾病是直接在他们行善的手中得了医治，然而他们十分清楚，只有上帝伸出手来，疾病才能得到医治。他们已经被圣灵充满过，然而他们又再次被充满。恳求圣灵不断充满，让我们能够发光作盐，这乃是我们的权柄。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

这些刚被圣灵充满的信徒会遇到属灵的争战，你同意吗？为了我们能够度过属灵的争战并且完全战胜敌人，我们的主同样也赐给我们哪些权柄和力量呢？

《马可福音》16:17, 18；《使徒行传》16:16-18；《哥林多前书》12:10；《以弗所书》6:10-18。

《使徒行传》4:36-《使徒行传》5:11

上帝的圣灵是慷慨、丰盛的供给的源头。市场、集市、还是冰激凌晚宴，都不能代替圣灵的给予。当教会被圣灵充满，圣灵是如此的满有恩典、满有温暖，教会这块小小的地方就容易被倒空。让太阳在诸天之上升起，冰冻的河流立即解冻，一路高唱着，将荒原变作花园。

请注意对比亚拿尼亚（《使徒行传》5:1）和巴拿巴（《使徒行传》4:36）的行为。亚拿尼亚的罪不在于他私自留下一部分卖田产的钱，而是在于他装作把所有卖田产的钱都给了使徒。他希望一边假装做一个圣徒，一边为自己安排一个安乐窝。在做奉献方面，我们绝不能留一点地方容许撒旦或是自私占领，若是这样，我们即刻就会让出心灵之路的通行权，使得道路全开，涌进各样的走私禁品。彼得无疑拥有圣灵的品性。绝不能欺哄有影响的！请注意在经文第3节和第4节里，圣灵和上帝的互换。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

彼得知道撒旦狡猾，因为他也曾做过魔鬼的代理人，他曾对主说钉十字架的事必不临到主身上（参见《马太福音》16:23）。如今，他里面有圣灵的大能，立即就知道了亚拿尼亚的谎言和罪。——全教会和听见这事的人都甚惧怕（《使徒行传》5:11）。现今，上帝仍然恨恶信仰上的虚伪，然而这的确普遍在于教会中。教会是如何错失和忽视上帝的告诫的？为什么会这样？

《何西阿书》4:6；《启示录》3:15-19。

《使徒行传》5:12-26

上帝的使者来打开监狱的门。你正处在极大的难处中看不到出路吗？你正被关押在怀疑和绝望的牢狱里吗？还是你正在遭受极大的迫害？哦，上帝的保护环绕着你！要放胆相信那看不见的手会为你开门。什么也阻挡不了上帝的旨意。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

如果你处在一种看不见出路的境况里无法脱离，你该牢记什么以使你能拥有安慰、远离绝望、忍耐盼望开出路的时候呢？（下面是一些经文，也请添加你自己牢记的经文。）

《诗篇》34:6,7,17-19；《诗篇》37:3-6,18；《诗篇》40:1-3；《以赛亚书》41:10。

《使徒行传》5:27-42

大祭司等人发现，他们能让使徒们停止呼吸，却不能让使徒们停止讲说基督，于是就谋划杀害他们，希望以此结束使徒们的事工。然而，一种神圣的平安和心灵的平静在使徒们的身上完美地契合，他们继续着事奉基督的事工，他们心里还有一丝甜甜的欢喜，看到那些迫害他们的人内心一直疑惑、焦虑，并且烦恼不安，继续敌对基督。

（《马太·亨利全本圣经注释》，马太·亨利著）

《使徒行传》第5章29节说到——顺从上帝，不顺从人，是应当的，你是

怎么理解的？当死亡的威胁临近，我们该怎么预备自己才能坚守这一立场？谁才是更高的掌权者？

《使徒行传》6:1-15

这里提到的希腊人是居住在国外并且讲说希腊语的犹太人。教会里尚无外邦人。犹太教的一个附加条件就是，必须成为犹太人才能享有犹太人的特权。

在这里足以一见初期教会的质朴和热心！天天供给食物救助信徒，挑选敬虔的门徒管理世俗事务，把祷告和宣讲上帝的话语作为头等重要的事；使徒们对人的权利的认识——这一切都非常属灵，实在配得成为圣灵的时代。唉，如此明亮的黎明在任何时候都可能被阴暗遮蔽！

教会必须将那些按照圣灵指引所拣选的人归给上帝。司提反和扫罗都是各自团体的领导者。根据第9节经文——基利家的（扫罗来自基利家的大数），我们可以看出扫罗的踪迹。司提反的敌人用粗暴胜过他，然而司提反却因羔羊的血和自己所见证的道胜过了他们（参见《启示录》12:11,12）。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

关于按手在头上（《使徒行传》6:6），《圣经》给出的原因是什么？《圣经》里列出的九条原因，看看你能说出多少？

《创世记》48:14,20；《出埃及记》29:10,15,19；《利未记》1:4；《利未记》4:14,15；《民数记》8:10；《民数记》27:18-23；《马太福音》9:18；《马太福音》19:13-15；《使徒行传》6:6；《使徒行传》13:2,3；《使徒行传》8:17,18；《提摩太前书》4:14。

上帝要明显区分圣殿计划和新教会的时候到了——上帝拥有做这份工作的合适人选——年轻的司提反在升天的基督的大能下，放胆讲说上帝的话语。司提反满得圣灵的能力，能看见《旧约》和基督的联系，这甚至是使徒们都看不见的。上帝需要一个人来划分开犹太教和教会，上帝藉着司提反的心思意念来为整个以色列国发出最后一次呼吁，为了让他们能够相信耶稣就是弥赛亚，能够在他的里面认罪悔改，复活新生。在第9、10节经文中，一群来自会堂的人与司提反辩论，司提反是以圣灵所赐的智慧说话，他们被驳斥地体无完肤。犹太公会里败下阵来的犹太人要怎样处理他们受伤的骄傲之心？他们对司提反的控告与那些控告耶稣的话是怎样的相似？

《路加福音》20:1,2,19-26；《使徒行传》4:1,13-21。

《使徒行传》7:1-60

司提反复述完以色列的历史，就开始请求。这是上帝的国最后一次为以色列摆上：

你们这硬着颈项，心与耳未受割礼的人，常时抗拒圣灵；你们的祖宗怎样，你们也怎样！

哪一个先知不是你们祖宗逼迫呢？他们也把预先传说那义者要来的人杀了；

如今你们又把那义者卖了、杀了。

你们受了天使所传的律法，竟不遵守（《使徒行传》7:51-53）。

众人听见这话，就极其恼怒，向司提反咬牙切齿。

但司提反被圣灵充满，定睛望天，看见上帝的荣耀，又看见耶稣站在上帝的右边。就说：“我看见天开了，人子站在上帝的右边”（《使徒行传》7:54-56）。

决定性的时刻到来了。主藉着司提反再一次要建立他的王国、复兴以色列国并且引导以色列人认罪悔改。他们拒绝了施洗约翰的传道，拒绝了耶稣的门徒们的传道，拒绝了彼得在五旬节上的传道，现在，最后的机会已经来临。司提反看见以色列的弥赛亚站在天上。我们主升天的时候，他是坐在天父上帝的右边（参见《希伯来书》1:3；《希伯来书》10:12）。然而在这里，他站在天国的门口。这含义应该很清楚。如果以色列接受司提反的传道，认罪悔改，他们的弥赛亚马上就会回来。但是正相反，他们拒绝了，天国的门关上了，耶稣又一次坐下，等待那个时候，到时教会废去，他们将仰望曾经被他们刺穿的主，并且认罪悔改。上帝预知以色列的这次拒绝，使他在以色列被搁置一边的时候，带来他的身体——教会。

（《圣灵降临节及其后》，M.R. 德哈安著）

在这里，司提反是通过以色列的领导者们，对整个以色列国讲话。他的话是上帝最后一次向以色列发出的邀请，要他们认罪悔改，接受自己的弥赛亚。在司提反之后，上帝会拣选谁来给以色列写使徒书信，让他们知道是自己瞎眼，拒绝了基督？

根据下面的经文，写一个简短的总结，说明以色列是如何只守他们自己的因律法称义，而不守因信称义：

《罗马书》9:30-33；《罗马书》第十章全部内容；《罗马书》11:25-33；《哥林多后书》4:3-6。

尽管以色列拒绝基督，然而上帝与他们所立的约还继续存在吗？以色列国的复兴在《圣经》中得到坚立了吗？

《以赛亚书》27:12；《以赛亚书》54:10；《以赛亚书》60:15, 16, 19-22；《耶利米书》16:14-21；《耶利米书》31:31-34；《耶利米书》33:1-8, 11, 16-17；《撒迦利亚书》9:11, 12；《撒迦利亚书》10:6；《撒迦利亚书》12:10。

司提反的殉道标志着耶稣给门徒们的使命的第一部分——从耶路撒冷开始的结束。使命的第二部分将由腓利在犹太全地和撒玛利亚的传道来完成，详见第八章。然而，在第二阶段开始前，我们看到了上帝预备去完成最后一部分使命——一直到地极的那个人。这人是谁；他出现在用石头打死司提反的现场吗；他在其中扮演了什么角色？

《使徒行传》8:1-4

逼迫使得本来已经发展得十分兴盛、安定的教会四散开来，教会需要记起主

的命令是让他们走遍世界，把福音传给每一个被造的人。光必须传播出去，盐必须四围散开。多少次本该我们欢欢喜喜、即刻去做的事，要等到上帝不得不用患难驱使我们去做啊！

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

司提反的殉道使得那些原是耶稣的追随者、现在又成为门徒的人发生了什么变化呢？这样的变化有助于施行上帝把救恩带给整个世界的伟大计划吗？这时的扫罗似乎是最不可能成为被上帝使用的器皿、去推进伟大计划的最后一步——传到地极。请写下你对此事的评论。

《使徒行传》9:1；《罗马书》1:16；《提摩太前书》1:15。

《使徒行传》8:5-25

行邪术的西门受洗归入基督教，然而却与圣灵无份。他看到使徒们按手时出现的神迹，以为那只是比他所行的更厉害的邪术，他拿钱给使徒，想他的手也能得到这种能力。现在有个词叫买卖圣职罪，就来自于这人的行为——利用神圣之物去获利。

前有犹太为钱卖主，现在西门又想用钱买到圣灵。这表明西门的心里没有圣灵，否则他为什么要买圣灵呢？拥有圣灵的人知道在圣灵里面（参见《约翰一书》4:13）。彼得或许是想到了犹太被魔鬼入了心的事。彼得不但宣告西门不是一个得救的人，还告诉他因着他想用钱买到上帝的恩赐，他的钱会和他一同灭亡。他仍然相信邪术，因此他还在苦胆当中，被罪恶捆绑。现今教会中，也有许多人处于同样的险境里，然而只要他们寻求上帝的赦免，上帝就会最大限度地拯救他们。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

在整个人类历史当中，撒旦的工作十分明显，就是不断破坏上帝救赎人类的伟大计划。请用一两句话总结这里所提到的教训和告诫。

《申命记》18:10-12；《玛拉基书》3:5；《启示录》9:21；《启示录》21:8。

《使徒行传》8:26-40

这片土地（埃塞俄比亚）上的人敬拜太阳，然而这人不知怎地得知要敬拜以色列的上帝。他就是被上帝分别出来要接受福音的人，因此主派腓利出现在这人的车要经过的路上，腓利听见他可能用希腊语在读《旧约圣经》。（《七十士译本》是在埃及的亚历山大城译出的《旧约圣经》的希腊译本，供在此地区的犹太人使用。）

这人刚从耶路撒冷过来，一定听说了许多关于基督被钉十字架并且死而复活的事，还有五旬节的神迹奇事。腓利，作为一个会说希腊语的犹太人，听见他大声地读经，又受圣灵的驱使，就走到这人的车旁，问他是否明白他所念的。（圣灵明显是在引导他读经，因他所读的旧约圣经《以赛亚书》53章，正是预言弥赛亚所要遭受的最引人注目的部分。）腓利不仅完整地给他讲解了这段经文，还继续向他传讲基督的事迹。因为那时还没有《新约圣经》，腓利本该不知道从何

讲起。然而通过这个高贵之人的反应我们可以得知，腓利给他讲地很清楚——耶稣是为他而死。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

腓利引了这个埃提阿伯太监归主，并且应他的要求给他施洗，这样，福音就继续传到埃提阿伯，并向更远的地方传去。

请填空：

腓利是一位_____（参见《使徒行传》21:8），他在_____（参见《使徒行传》8:5）传道。

《使徒行传》9:1-6

保罗是以一种超自然的方式悔改的——天上有光照他，还有声音对他说话。伴着一股强大的力量，保罗摔倒在地上（请注意，《圣经》并没有像许多图片展示的那样，说保罗是骑着马的）。

五旬节之后，基督只从天上显现了三次，向保罗的显现就是其中一次。升天的主第一次是显现给司提反看见，参见《使徒行传》7:56。之后，保罗看见他（基督），并且听见他说话，他的荣光比正午的太阳还要明亮（参见《哥林多前书》15:8）。最后一次显现是在拔摩岛，主把自己显现给约翰（参见《启示录》19:11）。

主在升天之后的这三次显示与他第二次降临的三个层面是一致的：首先，他要向等候他的教会显现，这是向司提反显现的寓意。接着，他要向以色列显现，这是向保罗显现并让他悔改的寓意。这样，整个以色列国（扫罗所代表的）都将抬头仰望这位曾被他们刺穿的主——他们将在苦难中仰望他，并且得蒙拯救。最后，他要显现，就像约翰在拔摩岛看见的那样，来审判这个世界，建立他早就应许过的千年王国。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

随着不断地学习，你会发现，上帝与所有愿意到他面前来的人恢复关系的作为是何等谨慎和完全，请用几句话表达一下它对你心灵的震撼。

《使徒行传》9:7-18

这里我们再一次看到耶稣在《使徒行传》1:8所作的宣告的三个阶段，他告诉使徒们——要在耶路撒冷、犹太全地和撒玛利亚，直到地极，作我的见证。

耶稣整个计划的第一阶段已经随着司提反被石头打死而结束（耶路撒冷）；第二阶段记载在《使徒行传》第8章，福音传到犹太全地，进入撒玛利亚，第三阶段以第9章保罗的悔改为开始，之后他要做外邦人的使徒——直到地极。

保罗（开始叫扫罗）不是罪犯，也不是穷困潦倒之人；相反，他是一位极受尊重、博学多才、遵守律法又信仰虔诚的人。可以说，他和尼哥底母都不是从贫贱粗俗中而来，而是拥有上层人的生活，却完全看不出耶稣真正是谁，也看不到自己对他强烈的需要。

（《圣灵降临节及其后》，M.R. 德哈安著）

请评价上帝计划的绝妙和完全。

《使徒行传》9:19-28

这时，距离保罗悔改已经过了三年（参见《加拉太书》1:18），他计划去耶路撒冷，第一次去看望在耶路撒冷的使徒们。在阿拉伯接受上帝的操练期间，他接受了关于教会的特别启示，这启示是耶路撒冷的使徒们还一无所知的；他们仍然盼望着基督王国的建立。这个崭新的、充满奥秘的真理，一开始还不被使徒们欢然接受。

（《圣灵降临节及其后》，M.R. 德哈安著）

在了解了保罗作为基督徒的早期生活后，你对上帝的一些方式有没有比较清晰的理解呢？如今，一些人刚刚从大的罪愆和堕落中得救，我们就能听到他们作出令人惊讶的见证。你看到这其中有什么危险——在我们有能力成为灵魂的得胜者之前，上帝需要或要求我们做什么呢？一些好心的基督徒，在自己还没有被上帝的话语充分武装之前，就试图给处于试炼中的他人带去安慰和解决的办法。请也说说这种现象。

《罗马书》8:12-27；《罗马书》8:31-38；《罗马书》12:1,2；《罗马书》12:9-21；
《哥林多前书》3:18-23；《哥林多前书》9:19-27；《哥林多前书》11:27-34；《哥林多前书》13:1-13；《哥林多后书》4:7-15；《哥林多后书》10:3-6。

《使徒行传》9:29-43

保罗开始传道之前，在大数等待了些日子，等待彼得正式打开外邦人得救的大门。同时也是彼得在这个场景中的最后一次出现。所以，《使徒行传》第9章作为一个平衡点，之前记述的是关于彼得的事工，而保罗正准备在《使徒行传》剩下的部分成为叙述的重点。彼得在耶路撒冷、犹太全地和撒玛利亚的事工要最先结束了。所以当保罗在大数等候的时候，彼得去了吕大，治愈了瘫痪八年之久的以尼雅。从吕大又去了在海边的约帕。在约帕城里，一个叫多加的信徒患病死了。人们知道彼得在吕大，或许还听说了他医治以尼雅的事，就去接彼得来距离吕大只有约10英里的约帕。在约帕，彼得使多加从死里复活了。请记住，这全都在撒玛利亚境内。彼得还没有越过基督赋予他们的使命的第二阶段——“在耶路撒冷、犹太全地和撒玛利亚。”

（《圣灵降临节及其后》，M.R. 德哈安著）

思考《使徒行传》这一部分的内容，从下面三个问题中选择一个写下你的答案，可能包含上帝在改造你的生命的过程中，运用这样独特的方法所发生的一些事：

1) 当我们热切想要事奉主的时候，他的引领能否吸引我们去向那些看似绝望的人们传扬真道？

2) 如果我们看似正在忙于主的事工，然后被突然带到一些比我们预想的还要有挑战性的事，这时，我们应该抱着怎样的态度呢？

3) 在生活中遇到的任何一件事情上都要倾听上帝的声音，我们准备好了吗——比如，一封暗示你整个计划都要完全变动的信？或者，你的雇主或是老师对你有额外的要求，使你感觉到自己被侵占了的时候？

《使徒行传》10:1-23

上帝成就他旨意的道路是人的智慧难以理解的，然而又十分奇妙，在这一整章经文中得到了完全的体现。此时，他的道路是将福音的大能藉着圣灵完全地向外邦人（长期以来都受到犹太人的鄙视）敞开，同时又完全说服那些爱主的犹太人，这样做是因他完美的意志——他拆毁了中间分隔的墙，使两下归为一体——他的教会（参见《以弗所书》2:14-18）。

由于部分罗马军队驻扎在凯撒利亚，这里就成为罗马政府在巴勒斯坦的总部。哥尼流是一个意大利营的长官，这营的人很可能都是罗马当地人，可以确定，哥尼流是外邦人。他无疑是因为看到犹太人只简单地敬拜一位上帝，而且拥有高标准的道德准则，就被犹太人的宗教所吸引。我们得知他很虔诚，又广施善行，但是他还没有得救（参见《使徒行传》11:14）。

下午三点钟是犹太人的祷告时间，哥尼流正在切切地祷告时，看见天使对他说话。他就害怕、惊叫起来，然而天使的话使他安心了，天使告诉他，上帝已经纪念他的祷告和善行，并且喜悦他。然后，上帝让他派人去约帕找到彼得，清楚地告诉他彼得所在的地方和同行的人。显然彼得就是他应该去交谈的人，因为彼得是使徒中最大的，蒙召要把福音传给外邦人。

记述的场景又转向彼得这一边，彼得在一个叫西门的人家里留宿，这人专门买卖不洁净的动物。事情发展到这里，彼得的事工还是局限在犹太人和半洁净的撒玛利亚人当中。他最排斥的莫过于向外邦人传讲福音，不论那些外邦人是多么虔诚。彼得认为，外邦人要想得救，必须先接受割礼，将自己委身于律法之下，以此成为犹太人。他还全然不知，基督的受死摧毁了隔在犹太人和外邦人之间的墙，使他们归于一体，就是基督教会。在彼得能够把上帝的话带给哥尼流之前，他的确需要从上帝而来的启示——但是，当他能这样做的时候，福音的大门就向外邦人敞开了。

彼得当然没有做好准备迎接外邦的传信人——在他考虑和哥尼流派来的人一同回凯撒利亚之前，他要战胜自己的重重顾虑。作为正统派的犹太人，即便彼得敬畏上帝，他也不能想象自己进入一个外邦人的家中。但是，上帝要改变这一切！彼得到房顶去作正午的祷告（彼得一天祷告三次），他觉得饿了，就传话下去让人给他带些午饭来。（上帝从不落下一点能让人信服的细节！）正等待的时候，他魂游象外，看见一块大布从天降下，里面盛有各种不洁净的动物，有爬行动物，也有飞鸟，上帝对他说：“彼得，起来，宰了吃！”彼得拒绝了。对于正统派的犹太人来说，这样做就是犯罪。这都是些不洁净的、被玷污的东西，然而要洁净这些东西，在宰它们之前就需要一定的仪式。按教规，这不是洁净可吃的！

上帝要彼得做的完全违背他的生活方式以及犹太人的良知，并且，这确实也是《利未记》第 11 章里上帝关于饮食的律法所明令禁止的。当彼得被告知要去做一些违背他本性的事情，他往往畏缩后退。你会记起，主要给彼得洗脚，他说——不要！主预言彼得将会不认主，他说——不会！他现在真是困惑，主明明在律法中写明什么都可吃，只是那不洁净的不能吃，怎会现在又转来命令他吃那些不洁净的事物呢？但是，请注意上帝的坚定的回答——上帝所洁净的，你不可当作俗物。这样的场景重复出现达三次！

如果彼得刚才的所见所闻都是真的，就意味着上帝取消了有关饮食规定的律法。但是，上帝自我矛盾了吗？当然不是。彼得不晓得上帝已经改变了计划。他命令以色列作为一个国家的许多事情（包括规定饮食的律法）是要把他们同外邦人分隔开。只要以色列人是他启示的管理人，他就要把他们分别出来，《利未记》所定的律法就是为成就它而设立的。但是，随着教会的建立，要把犹太人和外邦人归为一体，起先那些用于分隔他们的律法就变得不合时宜。彼得现在明白了这一真理。他要看见这一真理应用于食物之外。事实上，那些显现给他的动物代表着人，所以，不会再区分洁净和不洁净的人了。

上帝的时间总是完美无缺——彼得正在全然思考他刚才所见的时候，就有人敲门，彼得按照命令要和他们同去。他得知，这些人是受上帝引导，因此他不该迟疑。然而，他仍然疑惑，但是，等他知道这些传信人为何而来，就会得到能让他明白这一切的线索了。

（《圣灵降临节及其后》，M.R. 德哈安著）

请填空：

西门是一位做贸易生意的_____，他买卖不洁净的动物的毛皮。

上帝已经将王国的_____赐给彼得，他要成为上帝的器皿，用来向外邦人打开_____之门。

彼得相信_____不是为外邦人准备的，但他停留在_____的家中。

如果有外邦人想要得救，他必须成为一个_____，接受_____，并将自己委身于摩西的_____之下。

在彼得看来，外邦人就是不洁净的_____。

彼得还没有认识到，_____和_____之间隔绝的_____墙已经被推倒，在_____里，不分犹太人还是外邦人，不分_____还是自由的。

《使徒行传》10:24-43

《圣经》中的记载显示出哥尼流真是热切盼望见到彼得，俯伏在彼得脚前拜他——这样的行为在某种程度上是自然而然做出的，因为罗马人习惯将某些人看作神，比如凯撒。彼得说他只是个人，这句话的意义极其深刻，因为这句话一扫两者之间存在了 1400 多年的巨大差异——然而彼得知道了那块大布所传递的信息！他清楚地明白了上帝的心意，没有人是不洁净的或是受玷污的，在这之前，

彼得的确对外邦人怀有极大的偏见。作为首位使徒，彼得掌管着王国的钥匙，在用这把具有决定意义的钥匙找到外邦人之前，他需要完全明白上帝也接受外邦人。

哥尼流和许多跟随他的人早就预备好要听彼得的讲道，他们心灵的土壤也都预备好了，因为他们已经相信，只有一位上帝。他们心里公正，毫无偏见，并且敞心门接受上帝为他们预备的一切。他们不是来做判断，乃是要照他们所听的行出来。

在看到天降大布的启示前，彼得一直相信上帝有偏爱之心——以色列是上帝最喜爱的种族。当他说出上帝是不偏待人的话时，彼得扫除了犹太人长达 20 个世纪的偏见。基督道成肉身、五旬节圣灵降临以及扫罗悔改，都使彼得这句话在外邦世界中得以坚立。这开启了人类历史的新纪元！引人注目的是，这本来来自于摩西所说的真理（参见《申命记》10:17），彼得只是刚刚领悟到。彼得以前只是在理论上知道这一真理，如今借着哥尼流一事向其显明了。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

除了下面的经文，请列出你能找到的其他经文，证明上帝的心意是将福音传给所有人，不分种族，不分性别。

《约翰福音》3:16；《罗马书》5:8；《以弗所书》2:4-6；《以弗所书》2:11-18。

《使徒行传》10:44-48

第 44 节经文，圣灵降临在听众身上，就如五旬节降临一样。这些人一定得到了美妙的触动与感动，换种方式说，就像我们看到现在的人被天国的微风吹拂过，成为一片收获的田地。彼得根本没有讲完。就好像圣灵把使徒带到一边，说：“你说的已经足够多了，剩下的交由我吧！”

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

《腓立比书》1:6 是如何与这段信息呼应的？

《使徒行传》11:1-8

对耶路撒冷那些受过割礼并且谨守律法的犹太人来说，彼得的所作所为简直是背信弃义。彼得确实触犯了犹太人的律例，他拆除了阻挡在犹太人和外邦人之间的墙——犹太人相信是神圣的律法把他们区分开来。彼得看似是将犹太人的传统行为弃之不顾。这些犹太人更加关心自己的律例是否被打破，而不是先前的道能否临到许多失丧的灵魂。他们害怕一股来自外邦人的浪潮会横扫整个教会，使得教会失去她所有的犹太特性——这是多么让他们感到忧虑的前景啊！

彼得没有同众人一样谴责他们对律法的狭隘理解，而是表现得十分镇静、宽厚，他叙述了在在哥尼流和他的朋友们身上发生的事，通过指明其中那些令人惊异的超自然现象，尽力说明自己的所作所为是正当合理的，也以此来安慰他身边的兄弟们。听众们只有相信他的行为是受上帝指示，才能对他的话信服——那六个与彼得同去凯撒利亚的犹太人就是见证人，他们在这里证实彼得所说并无虚

言。

彼得的辩护不是基于他自己的所作所为，乃是完全基于上帝的作为——辩护的最精彩之处便是上帝真的用圣灵给这些外邦人施了洗。事实上，彼得还没有向他们传完道，圣灵的施洗就临到了他们身上，彼得见了，就歇了讲道。正如他们所说的，整件事清楚地表明，让这些外邦人得救是上帝的旨意，由于彼得证实了这是上帝的作为，众人也就不言语了。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

你认为彼得对这些外邦人得救的描述能把犹太信徒们带回到五旬节时他们自己接受圣灵时令人激动的场面吗(《使徒行传》2:36-39)?他们能领会这是同一位圣灵用同样的大能和无可争辩的显明,就像降临在他们身上一样也临到外邦人身上吗?他们能从接受割礼和谨守律法的严格的律例中释放吗?

《使徒行传》11:19-30

耶路撒冷的牢骚怨言暂时静默了，然而在整个国家存在了 1400 多年的偏见不可能像拧上水龙头那样一下子止息住。大马士革之路式的经历改变了彼得的心志，然而教会中剩下的那部分人将会很难改变。不久之后，当保罗开始向外邦人传道，一群坚持割礼的人也试图阻止保罗的事工。按理说，教会现在十分清楚，福音是为整个世界预备的，然而，门徒们并不是迫切地要将它付诸实践。这是耶路撒冷教会犯下的极大的错误。

在这里，作者路加笔锋一转，回忆起那些离开耶路撒冷四处传道的门徒们的事工(参见《使徒行传》8:4)。路加在这里没有继续记述保罗的悔改、腓利向撒玛利亚人的传道以及哥尼流事件。他通过讲述那些向北逃离去传道的门徒们的事工，迫切地要告诉人们，这些门徒们是怎样被主使用，在安提阿创立了伟大的外邦教会。这些人当中应该有尼哥拉(第七位执事，参见《使徒行传》6:5)，他是从安哥拉来的，一位归依犹太教的异教徒。他们当时还只是向犹太人作见证，还要经历一段时间才能向外邦人传道。

随着时间的推移，另一群说希腊语的犹太人从塞浦路斯和古利奈到达安提阿。他们习惯了自由不受拘束，也不像早期分散出来的那些说希腊语的犹太人那样谨守他们的犹太教信仰。他们无所畏惧的精神，加之安提阿的自由氛围，促使他们采取了一个大胆的举动——向这城里的希腊人传讲基督。这些希腊人里有一些显然是敬畏上帝的人(或许是寻求上帝的人)，向他们传讲耶稣是再自然不过的事。这样，安提阿城接受福音的时机已然成熟，而耶路撒冷教会的各样律例似乎离他们很远。这些希腊人欢欢喜喜地接受基督的话语。

耶路撒冷教会的领袖们听闻这些事，就派巴拿巴带领一群人去调查这令人吃惊的事态的发展。再也挑不出比巴拿巴更合适的人了，因为他自己就是从塞浦路斯来的一个会说希腊语的犹太人，他比任何一个没有出过犹太地的犹太基督徒都更有同情心。他一到安提阿就欢喜，并开始传道。他教导众人不要紧紧依靠这

些有关耶稣的讲道，而是要紧紧地依靠耶稣自己。

随后，他没有回到耶路撒冷述职，而是前往大数去寻找扫罗，因为他曾看见扫罗在耶路撒冷冒着生命危险，向说希腊语的犹太人传讲基督。最后，扫罗离开那里，登上了一个可以充分发挥他特别才能的舞台。罗马异教徒第一次称呼这些在安提拉的信徒们为基督徒——这是异教徒称呼那些一直宣讲基督的人的方式。在希腊语中，基督徒意为——基督的百姓。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

基督徒 (Christian) 是希腊语 christianos 的音译词，用来称呼那些早期跟随基督的人。希腊词语 chritos 与今天的信徒被称作“信耶稣的人”没什么不同。你认为这是一种称赞 (大多数情况下) 还是嘲笑？

《使徒行传》12:1-19

这里所提到的希律王是希律·阿格里帕一世，他的爷爷就是在耶稣降生后宣布屠杀男孩的大希律王。希律·阿格里帕一世有一半犹太血统，在罗马长大，深受罗马法庭的喜爱。他于公元 37 年登上王位，统治叙利亚南部的多块地区。他统治时期，王国的疆土不断增加，到公元 41 年，他统治整个巴勒斯坦，包括犹太。为了获得支持，他假装遵守犹太教的习俗，并且处死雅各 (约翰的哥哥) 来讨好法利赛人。

你可能会回忆起在耶路撒冷的一些使徒们也赞成保持严格的犹太特性，然而现在，彼得已经遇见了哥尼流，标志着教会开始接受外邦人。而这当然会引起一些犹太人的不满，希律王察觉到这些不满后，就下令捉拿彼得，以此来提高他的威望。然而，在逾越节结束前，希律不想处死彼得，打算逾越节后公开地办他。

由于上一次彼得从监狱里逃出来 (参见《使徒行传》5:17-20)，这次就派重重守卫看管他，教会立即为他迫切地祷告，而且上帝确实应允了信徒们的祷告。天使去牢里叫醒他，悄悄解开他手上的锁链以免吵醒外面的看守，然后就带彼得出去，到了一条街上。彼得立刻意识到上帝真是为他争战。他知道很快会有追兵赶来，就去到马可的母亲马利亚的家里，在那里，基督徒们正在为他切切地祷告。大家看到彼得都十分惊奇，彼得就让他们把这件事告诉耶稣的弟弟——教会的领导者雅各。然后，他毫不迟疑地向北去往安提阿，那里不属于希律的管辖范围。

最后，希律因为兑现不了他给犹太人的承诺，就羞愧不已地离开耶路撒冷回到他在凯撒利亚的宫殿去了。在那里他决定为罗马皇帝举办一场盛大宴会，以此来挽回些颜面。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

根据你所知道的上帝在《圣经》里施行全能拯救的作为，说一说上帝是在怎样的情况下派遣天使或者如何运用超自然的办法？请各自给出《圣经》中的例子。

《使徒行传》12:20-25

腓尼基的两个城市推罗和西顿依靠加利利供给食物。这两个城市不知为何得

罪了希律王，于是就派人到希律那里求和。当时，希律很愿意在他计划向凯撒致敬的那天听到这些人的求和。根据史学家约瑟夫的记载，我们看到希律王身穿光彩夺目的朝服，盛装出现，使得百姓大喊道——这是上帝的声音，不是人的声音！希律算是半个犹太人，他应该知道这是亵渎上帝的话，当痛恨、远离这些，然而他的虚荣战胜了自己，他愿意百姓把他视为神圣。

由于一切尊荣只属于上帝，希律即刻就得了一种可怕的疾病，他的肚子疼痛无比。约瑟夫告诉我们，五天后希律王就气绝身亡了，享年 54 岁，在位 17 年。路加笔下，希律是被虫所咬，呈现出膀胱破裂或是腹膜炎的症状。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

回想第 12 章第 1 节的经文，记载了希律王下手苦害教会中的几个人。下面所列的经文都是描述上帝的神圣保护。请总结每一条经文所表现出的上帝神圣保护的特点。例如，《诗篇》121:3-8 表明上帝连续的保护。

《约书亚记》1:5 _____ 《以赛亚书》41:10 _____ 《约翰福音》
10:28-30 _____ 《哥林多后书》12:9,10 _____ 《诗篇》
121:1 _____

《使徒行传》13:1-12

这一章经文是新约《圣经》里意义最为重大的章节之一，它标志着福音事工一个新的起点，从此，福音要开始传向地极（参见《使徒行传》1:8）。这或许是位于耶路撒冷的教会母会太过保守，不肯听从圣灵的督促去把福音传向整个世界，因此圣灵不得不使用安提阿的教会。相比而言，她更加机动灵活，更容易让人类的热情所感动，身处在庞大的外邦世界的边缘，她就像茫茫大海岸边的一座灯塔。

(《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著)

主早就指明，扫罗是那个奉他的名去外邦传讲福音的人。自从保罗受命于主已经过了 12 年，如今，圣灵呼召保罗和巴拿巴启程去做他召他们所做的工。他们带上约翰（也叫马可）做助手，坐船前往离海边 60 英里的塞浦路斯岛。当时的塞浦路斯是罗马的一个省，由罗马总督vii管理。巴拿巴就是从塞浦路斯出来的，因此对这里的百姓非常了解。他们先是在每一个犹太会堂里讲道，保罗作为拉比viii，百姓都接受他。

在帕弗有位罗马官员（方伯）叫做士求·保罗，他很渴望听到使徒们教导些什么。保罗熟知上帝关于如何处置行巫术的教训（参见《利未记》20:27），又被圣灵充满，就谴责行巫术的人，并让他瞎眼。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

请填空：在经文的这一段里，扫罗改名为_____，这是他的罗马（外邦）名字。巴拿巴是个出色的年轻人，作为保罗的助手，他被大大地使用，来鼓励保罗。以吕马阻挡他人认识真道，如今自己却变成_____。当士求·保罗听见保罗所说

的，又看见这令他惊异的事情，就成为了一名_____。在同撒旦的争战中，若保罗没有_____的同在，是不可能做出这些事情得胜撒旦的。

《使徒行传》13:13-25

他们一到彼西底的安提阿，就先去犹太会堂给犹太人讲道，由于保罗是一位前来访问的拉比，他们就受到了热情欢迎。安息日在会堂，众人先读了律法书（摩西五经），接着又读了解释律法书的先知书，然后就邀请保罗说劝勉的话。在这里，我们第一次看到记录下来的保罗对犹太人的布道。（在后面的部分，路加还向我们提供了保罗向基督徒和异教徒所传讲的信息。）

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

这是典型的《使徒行传》里的布道，包括：1）回顾犹太人的历史；2）简要讲述基督的一生，以他的复活为讲述重点；3）通过旧约《圣经》中的经文证明耶稣就是弥赛亚；4）呼召人来听道，认罪悔改，信仰基督。

（《圣灵充满新生命圣经》，新钦定版，《使徒行传》脚注13:17-41）

通过学习使徒第一次宣教旅程的经文，我们清楚地看到，保罗和巴拿巴怎样传讲福音、该去哪里传讲、向谁传讲，这一切都在圣灵清晰的引导带领之下。或许你们当中的一些人也已经踏上征程，或是即将踏上。我们应该怎样获得方向和计划，请就此做出评论。此外，对这些计划的处理不当会有怎样的危险？绝对必不可少的有哪些？

《使徒行传》13:26-37

在保罗看来，基督的复活总是整个信仰的要旨。他自己也特别留心确信这一基本事实的真实性。保罗通过他自己的经历，详细陈述了基督复活的证据，在《哥林多前书》第15章达到一个高潮，他也将自己的信仰安立在基督复活的事实之上。保罗曾得见那赐福的救主，并听见主亲口对他说话。他分别引用了《诗篇》2:7、《以赛亚书》55:3和《诗篇》16:10的经文，用一种不似寻常的方式来解读引用的第一条经文，教导众人说这句经文已在基督的复活里得蒙成就。死亡之上闪耀着新光。这不是死亡而是出生，不是结束而是开始。我们的主是从死亡中首生的。我们说圣者已经死了；天使们说他已经出生了。

请注意第36节经文对于大卫不寻常的评价，大卫在世的时候遵行了上帝的旨意。这应该成为我们生命中至高的目标。不是获得成功，不是赚取钱财，也不是取悦自己，而是完全顺服那赐我们生命的上帝的旨意。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

大卫能用上帝喜悦的方式来事奉上帝，是因为他的心在上帝面前显为正义。“他是合我心意的人，凡事要遵行我的旨意”（《使徒行传》13:22）。从属灵意义上说，我们该怎样认识自己的心？我们该怎样做才能在我们的主面前拥有一颗纯全的心？

《撒母耳记上》1:13；《诗篇》51:7；《诗篇》73:1；《诗篇》112:7,8；《诗

篇》101:2；《箴言》10:8；《马太福音》5:8；《马太福音》12:35；《使徒行传》2:46；《哥林多后书》4:6。

《使徒行传》13:38-41

这里首次提及因信称义的教义，它与保罗的事工紧密相连。在耶稣里有赦罪的道。对于那些信靠耶稣的人，他们过去犯的罪都一笔勾销，永远不会再被提及，也永远不会被带到未来的审判中。我们的档案就如同海浪轻拂过的沙滩一般清洁干净。我们不仅罪得赦免，而且还得以称义。主对待我们就像我们从来没有犯过罪一样，让我们在一切事上都称为义。这就是摆在我们面前的事实。你或许没有感觉到自己已经称义或是罪得赦免，但是，只要你相信耶稣，就在你信他的那一刻，你已经和天堂里的圣徒们一样，确定无疑并且完完全全得称为义。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

称义，简言之，就是在上帝面前承认有罪，从而称义。

请填空：

人不是靠_____称义（参见《罗马书》3:20,28）。不是靠_____称义（参见《罗马书》10:1-4）。也不是靠_____称义（参见《罗马书》4:1-5）。而是靠这些称义：_____（参见《罗马书》5:17-21）_____（参见《罗马书》5:9）_____（参见《罗马书》10:3）。

《使徒行传》13:42-52

保罗和巴拿巴服事的那些人从未听过有这般讲解《圣经》的，就请求他们下一个安息日再来讲道，帮助他们更清楚地明白经文。这表明，上帝的恩典正在这些人的心灵深处做工。

尽管许多犹太人都欢迎这一传讲福音的新方式，然而更多的犹太人看到外邦人和他们同等地领受就心怀嫉妒。他们不能接受保罗绕开犹太人要求，只传讲信靠基督才是一切当中最紧要的这种做法。他们怒不可遏，甚至要咒骂保罗。保罗和巴拿巴都十分谨慎，他们都是先把福音传给犹太人，但是如果犹太人不接受，那么他们就要把福音传给所有需要的人。这种做法就成为贯穿保罗所有传教旅程的标准程序。他们每到一个新城，都是先去犹太会堂传道，但当这些犹太人一起拒绝所传的信息时，他就把福音传给这城的外邦人。这也成就了《以赛亚书》49:6节的经文。

在彼西底的安提阿的犹太人对外邦人可以不受任何限制就得到救恩感到愤恨，然而外邦人自己对此却十分激动兴奋。因为现在他们已经不再受犹太会堂和犹太人的每一条要求的限制。于是，他们当中的许多人就离开犹太人的组织，建立自己的外邦教会。他们真正让自己脱离了拘泥于律法的负担。这些基督的新门徒们尽管遭受周围犹太人的愤恨，但他们在彼此身上找到了真正从圣灵而来的喜乐，生命不断长进，对主的认识也不断加深。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

第 48 节经文告诉我们——凡预定得永生的人都信了。在单个人得救方面，你能从这节经文中看出上帝自己的主动性吗？透过《圣经》我们看到上帝能够影响人、改变人类历史的进程。你是否也能看清在永久改变你和他人生命的过程中，上帝所做的特别的精心安排呢？请简要述说。

《箴言》16:9；《但以理书》4:34,35；《使徒行传》2:22-24；《以弗所书》1:3-5。

《使徒行传》14:1-7

保罗和巴拿巴几乎每到一个地方都会遭到反对，然而他们并不气馁，继续去往有外邦人居住的地方。这次他们从安提阿向东沿罗马军用道路走了 90 英里，来到以哥念，一个现在叫做科尼亚的地方。他们在这儿遇到许多希腊人和一些罗马士兵，这里还有一块古老的犹太人聚居区。按照一贯做法，保罗先到犹太会堂传道。上帝再一次赐下丰盛的祝福，使得许多犹太和外邦人回转归主。

这里不信的犹太人也再一次针对保罗、巴拿巴以及悔改的信徒散播不实言论，然而保罗所传讲的是圣灵的信息，传道事工顺利进行。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

尽管不停地面对迫害、谎言以及各种残酷的对待，甚至是被石头打死，这些属上帝的人们仍然满有信心。信心本身就是对其他见证的相信，一个人的忠心就是要在他的生命中把信心变成活生生的现实。忠心可以通过许多方式显明，这里也列出一些相关的《圣经》经文以供参考。请完成阅读后简要写下你自己忠心的状态。忠心显明在：服事上帝（参见《马太福音》24:45）；宣告上帝的道（参见《耶利米书》23:48）；能做见证（参见《箴言》14:5）；遮隐事情（参见《箴言》11:13）；帮助他人（参见《约翰三书》5）；忠于职分（参见《尼希米书》13:13）；责备他人（参见《箴言》27:6）；传讲信息（参见《箴言》25:13）；以及在最小的事情上（参见《路加福音》16:10-12）。

《使徒行传》14:8-20

路司得城里没有犹太人居住，也就没有犹太会堂，因此保罗一行就不得不到街上传道。然而就在街上，上帝让保罗施行神迹，医治了一个生来瘸腿的人，这件事吸引了许多人前来，刚好让保罗向他们传道。然而这件事引起了另一个危机——这些异教徒们按照自己的信仰方式，把保罗和巴拿巴想象成天上的神灵。他们认为，保罗既然治愈了那个瘸腿的人，应该就是众神的传话者希耳米 ix，而巴拿巴则是宙斯，是古代众神中的主神，是神、人之父。众人就争先恐后地准备食物来献祭，他们希望神灵的造访可以终结他们所面临的一切难题。保罗和巴拿巴赶紧撕开衣服，这是犹太人用来表示害怕亵渎上帝的行为——或许他两人是想起了希律王亵渎上帝后的命运。保罗和巴拿巴决不该受这样的敬拜，这也使他们想起耶稣受撒旦试探时，撒旦让耶稣俯伏拜他，他就把荣华和权力赐给耶稣。他两人赶紧否认自己有神性，告诉会众他们也是人，一样会遭受苦难，也会像所有人

一样终有一死。

保罗向犹太人传道的时候，犹太人都知道并且敬拜唯一的真上帝，保罗也向他们传讲从应许来的基督，也就是弥赛亚。然而，路司得城里的人对《圣经》中的上帝一无所知，因此保罗不得不打开大自然这本书，宣告自然的创造者正是上帝。众人听到保罗告诉他们仅有一位上帝，是他创造天、地和海，就十分惊奇，因为他们的信仰中，每一个领域都设有一个神。保罗后来在《罗马书》中教导，上帝藉着所造之物，为他的永能和神性作了完全的见证，叫人无可推诿（《罗马书》1:20）。

不久之后，犹太人从别处赶到路司得，不知用了何种方式挑唆众人，让他们转而抵挡保罗，又用石头打他，以为他死了，就拖出城去。保罗后来在《哥林多后书》11:25 写道：“被石头打了一次，”就是他想起了这时的情景。然而上帝再一次用他的信实托起保罗，他就和巴拿巴前往特庇去了。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

我们无法想象保罗在这种情况下所遭受的一切，然而上帝总会为那些在试炼中仍然向他摆上的仆人开出路。《使徒行传》16:1-2 告诉我们，保罗在信仰中得了个儿子——提摩太，提摩太爱保罗，也忠心跟随保罗传讲福音。保罗为上帝公义的事工所遭受的苦难，无疑也使得提摩太的心转向他。今天，我们不必害怕石刑，然而我们可能会遭到别人的误解、躲避、取笑以及不实的指控。当我们处在这些境况中，《圣经》中哪些强有力的话语会成为我们力量的支柱？

《使徒行传》14:21-28

在特庇，保罗和巴拿巴的事工没有受到阻碍，他们把福音传给许多人并且教导他们，事工取得极大的成功。之后，保罗和巴拿巴就回到路司得，也就是保罗遭受石刑的地方。然而这一次，新上任的地方官对于这些传教事工没有表现出敌意。保罗和巴拿巴去往各处教会，选立长老——这里面包括教会所有的管理人员，以此来坚固门徒们的心。保罗又大大地劝勉信徒，告诫他们要预先看到作为基督徒会遇到的苦难。《新约》教导我们，上帝的子民都要遭受苦难，然而遭受苦难却是通往荣耀的道路（参见《罗马书》8:16,17；《帖撒罗尼迦后书》1:4；《提摩太后书》2:12）。传教的征程一直都有牺牲和死亡。有这样一种说法，我们停止流血之时，就是不再接受祝福之时。

本着这样一种信念，保罗和巴拿巴又折回到安提阿，走访各个教会，于是，他们完成了第一次的传教征程。使徒们踏遍了 1400 多英里的路途，前后时间约有两年多，甚至还更长（公元 45—48 年）。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

请用几句话总结一下你对第一次传教旅程的评价。你认为上帝的旨意已经成全了吗？

《使徒行传》15:1-18

外邦人仅仅因信就能得救，不附加其他任何条件，当保罗把这个消息带到耶路撒冷的时候，一众信奉律法的教师就急匆匆地赶往安提阿，教训那儿的信徒说保罗所讲的是错的。巴拿巴和保罗一边捍卫上帝的恩典，然而这些来自耶路撒冷的信奉律法的犹太教徒们坚持信徒要受割礼，并且要遵行律法。从第2节经文就能清楚地得知，教会里起了争论。接着出现了教会历史上第一次不同教派之间的会议，保罗和巴拿巴代表安提阿出席了会议。

这里我们要插入一点保罗在写给加拉太教会的书信里所揭示的内容（当然，在这次会议举行的时候，他还没有写《加拉太书》）。彼得应该是早已听到保罗和巴拿巴满有恩光的事工报告，于是就亲自去安提阿掌握第一手信息。保罗和巴拿巴结束第一次传教旅程回到耶路撒冷，彼得就去看望他们。彼得作为一个正统派的犹太人，当他在这些外邦基督徒的身上看见上帝的恩典，就放下了所有出自摩西律法的约束，他认识到保罗所传讲的恩典的信息是真实的，并且自己也完完全全地进入到与外邦信徒们的团契里。彼得与他们一同吃饭，去探访这些外邦信徒，与他们一起团契，就好像历史的或是律法上的偏见未将他们分隔开过。彼得与外邦信徒在上帝恩典的自由里一同欢呼喜乐。

然而，等到那些奉行律法又严守安息日的教师们从耶路撒冷来到安提阿，彼得却因害怕遭到这些严守律法的犹太教律法教师们批评，自己躲了起来。这让保罗十分生气，公开指责彼得这种前后不一的行为。保罗在《加拉太书》2:11-14中记录了自己的言语。这也让彼得无可辩驳，我们也没有再听到他说任何话语，直到他们在耶路撒冷的大会上相见。

保罗、巴拿巴以及其他同工们计划前去耶路撒冷，使得这些问题能够得到彻底解决。他们也应召在沿途的各教会传道。

彼得率先起来说话，他说上帝自己都不要求人做什么，让人只凭着恩典就能得救，所以他们没有权力把割礼和犹太人的传统强加于人！这是很让人感动的一番话。彼得接着说，他们这些人中，包括他们的祖宗，没有一个能遵行律法的（律法就是让人知罪），因此，遵行律法不能成为外邦人获得就恩的途径。耶稣曾说过，——当负我的轭，学我的样式，耶稣把他满有恩典的爱与律法的严格苛刻做了鲜明的对比。

巴拿巴和保罗讲述了上帝藉着他们在外邦人中间所行的神迹奇事。

新的救赎计划很难得到认可，然而就算接受了，还有一个至关重要的问题没有答案。如果上帝正在建立教会，那么所有关于大卫的王国的应许怎么成就呢——这些应许都要成就在教会上吗？如果教会就是那新的王国，那么就必须遵行王国的要求，外邦人必须接受割礼且要委身于王国的律法之下。一阵长时间的沉默之后，上帝给出了这个问题的答案。耶稣的弟弟雅各，也就是这次会议的领导者，在经文的13-18节回答了这个问题，他引用了《阿摩司书》9:11,12节的经文。关于在基督第一次降临和第二次降临之间设立教会时代的原因，圣灵彻底地回答

了这个问题；并且确定在弥赛亚再来之时，定会建立弥赛亚的王国。

在第 16 节经文里，雅各说到基督，“此后，我要回来，重新修造大卫倒塌的帐幕……”

（《圣灵降临节及其后》，M.R. 德哈安著）

请注意这句话：“此后，我要回来。”我们会问，是在什么之后？是在上帝完成他的计划，在外邦人中分别出那些信靠他名的人。耶稣第一次降临是为以色列人摆上王国，结果他们拒绝了，以色列这个国家也因此被搁置一旁，上帝赐下新的启示——教会，基督的身体，在我们的主被拒绝和他第二次来临建立大卫的王位这一段时期内，就是教会的时代。这就是他今日正在做的工——呼唤教会，王的新娘，在这过后，他要再来，成就所有关乎王国的应许。关于这个问题还有些疑问，主忘记以色列了吗？教会就是王国吗？对于这些疑问，雅各的回答是“不”！当最后一个成员进入到基督的身体，主就会回来，他要复兴以色列国，并带来满有荣耀的、千年的和平时代。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S. 洛维特释义版）

以上内容不仅仅是历史问题，还简要地告诉我们上帝那关乎全人类的伟大旨意。请二选一作答：1) 如果你认为自己对于上面所讲的上帝的计划已经有了较为清楚的认识，请自己组织语言写下一段话来加以说明。2) 如果你认为自己还没有领会上帝的计划，请大概记下你的问题，留待进一步学习之后解决。

《使徒行传》15:19-41

由于那时《新约》还没有写成，参会的使徒和长老们制定了《耶路撒冷教令》，用来记录这次会议的成果，并且定下了几件外邦人不能做的事（见第 29 节）。这些规定有助于缓和外邦人与犹太人之间的争执，这些争执源于外邦人享受自由，而犹太人要遵行更加严格的规定。

先知犹大和西拉受差遣，与保罗和巴拿巴一起带着书信去到安提阿，给那里的人们带去了极大的喜乐和鼓舞。

此时，保罗要同巴拿巴开始第二次传教的征程。然而两人却因马可（也叫约翰）起了争执，马可曾在第一次传教事工中离开他们做了逃兵，保罗和巴拿巴因为要不要带上马可而争吵以至彼此分开。保罗带上西拉开始了第二次的宣教旅程。从这里开始（《使徒行传》16-28 章），我们将看到保罗第二次和第三次的传教过程，以及最后他如何被当作囚犯带到罗马。《使徒行传》最后以保罗关在监狱里而结束（《使徒行传》28:31）。

（《圣灵降临节及其后》，M.R. 德哈安著）

在《使徒行传》前面的部分，我们看到彼得的性格使得他害怕那些严厉的犹太人，以至于选择躲开外邦人——现在保罗和巴拿巴又因为意见不同而彼此分开。保罗的这种态度对不对——你能用《圣经》里的话来支持你的判断吗？

《马太福音》5:9；《马太福音》5:43-45；《马太福音》6:14, 15；《马太福音》

7:1-5。

《使徒行传》16:1-5

保罗在年轻人心里有着极好的影响。提摩太、提多和马可都被保罗所打动。在前面的章节里，当犹太人坚决要求外邦人受割礼时，没有人比保罗更坚决地反对；然而犹太人对外邦人的偏见缓解之后，保罗十分愿意退让，接受割礼，因为就割礼本身而言，只是件无关紧要的事。正像司提反遭受石刑为赢得保罗迈出了第一步，前面所记载的保罗在路司得遭受石刑，也很有可能为他赢得提摩太。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

我们知道，保罗后来给他在信仰里的儿子提摩太写了《提摩太前书》和《提摩太后书》。提摩太接受了保罗悉心的教导，成为门徒。不久之后，在保罗第一次被罗马政府拘禁期间，他就让提摩太负责以弗所教会的事情。保罗在《提摩太前书》1:12-16节是如何描述自己的，请用自己的话说一说。你认为保罗作为福音的传讲者，他的诸多经历使他此时成熟老练许多了吗？

《使徒行传》16:6-10

我们的生命道路常常会面临这样一种现实：引到直路的门上了锁，被禁止通过，我们除了继续前进，别无选择。保罗先是向左走，结果被阻拦，圣灵禁止他去亚细亚地区x讲道；接着又向右走，还是被阻拦，圣灵也不许他去庇推尼xi。最后到了特罗亚xii，面前就是一片海，与欧洲隔海相望。

在特罗亚，保罗看见异象，为他留下了深刻印象。他看见一个马其顿人站着求他说：“请你过到马其顿来帮助我们。”

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

在某种程度上，路加是在说明圣灵如何把自己的意志传递给这些传道人。圣灵会通过提示、预言或是外在的环境（我们经常提到的开门或是关门）来显明他的意志。据我们所知，马其顿位于希腊北部，包括腓立比和帖撒罗尼迦两座城市，保罗后来也给这两座城市的教会写了三封书信。在你自己的生命里，你是如何确信圣灵在某个情势下引导了你，能给出事例吗？

《使徒行传》16:11-34

腓立比城是马其顿四个地区中的一个，保罗先来到这里传道，和以往的惯例一样，保罗在安息日先要前往犹太会堂讲道，然而他却没有找到会堂。按照犹太习俗，最少十个犹太男子就可以聚会来诵读摩西五经，这说明在罗马的这片殖民地上，犹太男子人数很少，不足以有个会堂。然而，在城外有个祷告的地方，犹太妇女和敬畏上帝的外邦人在这里聚集，进行犹太教的祷告事奉。

《圣经》告诉我们——主就开导她的心，吕底亚是个做买卖的妇人，很可能还是个寡妇，她留心听保罗的讲道。主总是能触动人的心灵，不仅仅靠他仆人的话语，更是通过触动人的方式来建立他自己的教会。吕底亚可能是第一个悔改归主的欧洲人，并且多年以后，保罗还会给腓立比教会写书信。福音给妇女们带

来的荣耀是多么引人注目，这也再次使我们相信，在主看来，世上的每一个生命都特别宝贵！

在希腊原本里，路加告诉我们这个使女被认为是占卜之神阿波罗的传话人（或是神谕）。腓立比城的人相信她得到了阿波罗的启示，就愿意付给她许多钱来获知自己的命运。魔鬼也是可以揭示某些信息的，她狡猾的主人们就随意玩弄容易上当受骗的百姓。她里面的邪灵认出了保罗一行人的身份（参见《马可福音》1:24；《路加福音》4:41），就不断地喊叫，令人厌烦；再者，保罗也知道这是撒旦的爪牙在作怪，就直面这鬼，奉耶稣的名把他赶跑了。这种赶鬼的权柄只能是来源于主自己！这个使女也即刻平静下来。她有没有成为一名基督徒（极有可能成为了基督徒），我们不得而知，但是她或许是欧洲第二个认罪悔改的人——又是一名女性。然而，她那些邪恶的主人们知道用来赚钱的生意黄了，就想设法拘捕了保罗和西拉，并且指控他们，然而不是指控保罗和西拉损害了他们的利益，而是指控他们非法组织犹太教活动，破坏治安。这时在腓立比城的犹太人都是从罗马被驱逐出来的，正处于一种特别耻辱的境地。严酷的罗马法律也禁止他们在罗马人中间宣传自己的宗教（这里是罗马的殖民地）。在保罗一行人里，路加是外邦人，提摩太算半个犹太人，他们没有遭到拘捕。

读到这儿，人们可能会有疑问，那个马其顿人藉圣灵所发出的呼求在哪里呢？这里的人把保罗和西拉当做流浪的犹太人，认为他们严重伤害了两个罗马市民！当地人先用棍子打了他们，然后又把他们关进监狱，这个监狱很可能位于地下，四处黑暗又不透风，他们的脚还被上了木狗。

《圣经》告诉我们，尽管保罗和西拉的伤口疼痛、流血，然而他们的心还是向着上帝，只做上帝让他们做的事——在半夜祷告唱诗赞美上帝！上帝就让大地震动，以此来败坏魔鬼的工作，让保罗和西拉重获自由。

禁卒深知罗马军队的规定，这时他十分惊惧害怕，就要自杀，保罗赶紧大声呼叫他，及时制止了他的自杀行为，他把保罗等人带出监狱后，就祈求他们告诉他怎样能得救。这人就成为在基督的大能降临腓立比后第三个得救的人。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

上帝因着这些传教士的信心，就用超自然的大能搭救他们，然后又令人难以置信地让这个罗马禁卒从黑暗向光明转变，每当思想上帝这些奇妙的作为，我们必须问一问自己：如果我们也面临这样艰难的试炼，我们有足够的信心胜过吗？我们相信上帝会搭救我们，并且会把救恩赐给相关的人吗？请写下你对这一问题的思考，或是找出符合这种情境的经文。

《哥林多后书》5:7；《希伯来书》11:24-26；《以赛亚书》41:10；《诗篇》34:6；《诗篇》37:5,6,17。

《使徒行传》16:35-40

第二天，地方官员要放保罗他们出来，然而保罗他们本身就是罗马公民，这

样审判和关押他们是不合法的，于是他们坚持要官长来领他们出去，官长就去监狱向他们道歉，劝他们离开城里。我们很难明白为什么保罗如此坚持他的公民权利，因为这并不代表作基督仆人的标准。

他们没有立即离开腓立比城，而是去了吕底亚家里，这里已经成为教会弟兄姊妹见面的地方。或许那个得救的禁卒和他家人也在其中。然后保罗和西拉就带着提摩太离开腓立比城。路加没有和他们同行。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

在学习怎样倚靠上帝的力量、智慧和引导方面，这一课给了我们很多教导。当今社会，许多人在很大程度上因着尖端和易得的知识，就倚靠自己的判断，很难意识到人类理性的愚昧。下面是一些相关的经文，请继续添加你找出的经文。

《罗马书》8:14 ;《罗马书》14:7-12 ;《罗马书》15:3 ;《哥林多前书》1:26-29 ;
《哥林多前书》2:5,11,14-16。

《使徒行传》17:1-9

保罗一行人途径的两个城市都没有犹太会堂，他们就来到帖撒罗尼迦这个马其顿最大的城市，有许多犹太人都居住在这里。帖撒罗尼迦人口众多，是个富裕的商业中心。保罗一连三个安息日都在这个地位重要的犹太会堂传讲基督。他殷勤地教导众人，根据《旧约》证明耶稣就是弥赛亚。《圣经》预言了弥赛亚的受难和复活，而耶稣是唯一一位成就这些预言的，这是保罗所传讲的要点所在。有一些犹太人信了，然而大多数悔改的都是敬畏上帝的外邦人。也有大批开明的妇女归入了基督。

大部分犹太人都相信保罗所讲的信息，而且对保罗他们教导希腊人所取得的成功十分嫉妒。这些犹太人就召集了一些不良分子，满城散布关于传教人员的充满恶意和不实的言论。后来，这群丑恶的暴徒闯进耶孙家里，耶孙曾在保罗和西拉的教导下认罪悔改，并且还接待了他们。耶孙的犹太名字是约书亚或耶稣，然而因为某种原因，他使用自己的希腊名字。耶孙和其他信徒被控告在家里藏匿政治和宗教的煽动者，还违背凯撒的命令说另有一位王。

没错，耶稣是王，但他不是要来争夺凯撒的王位，他自己本就有王位。这一部分真理引来了更加严厉的指控。

他们把耶孙和他的朋友们带到地方官长那里。保罗意识到他应该离开了，如果再留在这里就会危及到新教会，还有可能给刚刚归主的信徒们带来困苦。后来我们得知，这里的教会成为火热传扬基督的中心（参见《帖撒罗尼迦前书》1:6-10）。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

我们很容易发现，这些传教人的事工越是透彻深刻、详尽彻底，撒旦对不信者的阻拦就越是显而易见。有没有传教士的事工开始时似乎进展顺利，越进行却越遭受阻拦和迫害呢？请说出这样一位近代传教人的名字。如果上帝呼召你去其

他地方为失丧的灵魂传讲福音，圣灵对你的哪些预备是必不可少的呢？

《使徒行传》17:10-15

《圣经》告诉我们，弟兄们赶紧把保罗和西拉送到庇哩亚去，在那里，他们还是去犹太人的会堂讲道。等待他们的是一个大大的惊喜，这些住在庇哩亚的犹太人很是虚心，并且欢迎保罗一行带来的新讲解。他们渴慕听道，还查考《圣经》来确认保罗他们所讲的是否正确。在帖撒罗尼迦，信徒大部分都是希腊人，而在庇哩亚，大部分是犹太人。一些开明的希腊妇女也信了。直到现今，还有《圣经》查经小组取名叫庇哩亚人，因为庇哩亚人勤勉的学习习惯一直流传下来。这也应该成为所有基督徒每天的习惯——检查有无违背真道的教训，这样做可以避开许多陷阱。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

《使徒行传》17:16-17

第13-15节经文讲述了帖撒罗尼迦的犹太人给传教的人们设置各种困难，以及这些传教人离开帖撒罗尼迦后的行程。庇哩亚的弟兄们很有智慧，看见保罗成为全城搜寻的目标，就赶紧带保罗离开。第16节则告诉我们，保罗看见雅典随处都是拜偶像的，就心中忧伤痛苦。这样的事实也使得雅典那些壮美威严的建筑失了光彩。保罗知道雅典是引领古代文化与哲学的中心，但这里却没有一个人敬拜真上帝。他们所有的智慧和手工艺无不表明这个城市是属异教的，但是这一极度的偶像崇拜一点儿也不能启迪人的灵魂。保罗看到这一切富丽堂皇都是献给受魔鬼驱使的假神，内心就极其忧伤（参见《哥林多前书》10:20）。是的，那些有文化有教养的人比他人更容易陷入偶像崇拜。

在等待西拉和提摩太的时候，保罗每天都去市场（古雅典市民辩论会场），那里每天都聚集着许多有学问的人，他们在思考各种新思想。保罗本与这种高雅的格调不相匹配，然而他绝不以福音为耻！他就把福音的道理传给这个城市里最有智慧和才能的智者，从这件事上也让保罗看到，这个世界的智慧是怎样与上帝的智慧相悖。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

现今社会或许没有人手雕刻的偶像，然而人本该敬拜上帝的心却充斥着各种偶像崇拜的行为和欲望。财富、权力是不是我们现在最大的偶像？

正如我们都愿意在人前作见证，我们是否应该让人认清一个事实，就是他们的观念、认识都是谬误，只有耶稣基督的福音才是唯一真道？或者说，先对他们的哲学做一番细致的探究，尝试指出他们的思想中哪一部分可能是好的，进而打破他们的思维方式，告诉他们，我们的主拥有如何满足他们需要的答案，也拥有每个人生命的答案，这种接近他们的方式是不是更加智慧呢？请说出你的观点，然后去看看保罗是如何赢得他们的。

《使徒行传》17:18-22

伊壁鸠鲁学派的人都是无神论者，他们相信世界就是一个意外，人今天在这里，明天就离开了，所以何不尽情享乐呢？在他们看来，生命的主要目的就是寻求快乐。他们不否认神灵的存在，然而他们认为神灵根本不关心人的事情，而是让人自己去寻找快乐。结果他们就陷入了庸俗的感觉论。这个学派的创始人是伊壁鸠鲁（Epicurus），公元前 270 年死于雅典。他留下自己的房屋和花园作为伊壁鸠鲁学派的总部。保罗在雅典的时候那些东西依然存在。

斯多亚学派的观点与伊壁鸠鲁学派的正好相反。他们是泛神论者，宣称上帝存在于每件事和每个人。他们认为快乐不好，疼痛不坏。美德是奖赏，邪恶是惩罚。他们否认灵魂的不朽，认为人的肉体死后，就会在上帝那里彻底消失。在基督教到来以前，不管是伊壁鸠鲁学派还是斯多亚学派，他们都想解决关于生命的问题。现代的异教未能提出任何更好的见解。斯多亚学派的创始人芝诺（Zeno）也生活在雅典，与伊壁鸠鲁创建学说是在同一时期。尽管这两个互为对手的思想流派都反对彼此的观点，然而他们却一致认为这个巡回的犹太传道人所传讲的毫无价值，但是保罗的一些话还是引起了他们的好奇。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特著）

当保罗讲说耶稣和他的复活，这些人以为他讲的是一位新神和新女神。这就是为什么这些人想要把保罗送去大会，也就是古雅典的法庭接受询问。开会的地方是露天的，开会的人就坐在以罗马战神马耳斯命名的山上的岩石上。这也是全雅典方便保罗讲话的最佳地点。

这些雅典人热衷于哲学和新思想，他们不是要遵照新思想做什么，而是仅仅想要听一听！一旦听到的这个思想过时了，他们立刻就着迷于新的消息和观点。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

这些希腊人有的说保罗是在胡言乱语，有的说他是在讲奇怪的神明，他们这样的行为能够得到称赞吗？

《使徒行传》17:22-34

雅典人为自己不认识的神筑坛，为的是不触犯任何一位还不认得的神。所有的人心里都有基本的敬拜的天性，保罗利用这一点让他们知道，这位他们还不认识的神就是真实而唯一的上帝。保罗教导他们，这位真上帝是掌管天上地下所有一切的上帝，人不能用自己的手来敬拜他，他们听了这些话就极其惊异，因为他们生活的每一个领域都有一个神！因为他们对《圣经》毫无知晓，保罗没有引用《圣经》的话来教训他们，而是引用了他们自己的诗人的一句诗——我们也是他所生的。

保罗很有技巧地引导他们认识到地上所有的人都是这位上帝创造的，他们不能从物质上寻求这位上帝，而是需要从灵里寻求他。保罗就带领他们从已知走进未知——福音真道，在福音里，上帝指派了人子，有一天人子会因人的罪来审判人。保罗所讲的是他们的希腊哲学未曾涉及的。保罗认真地教导他们，上帝的人

子不仅是要把上帝显明给人类，他还要为人的罪舍掉生命。然后全能的上帝要让人子从死里复活！

此时，这些人属世的聪明与上帝神圣的智慧发生了冲突，他们嘲笑保罗所讲的。然而，有一些人信了——其中有一个叫丢尼修，他是雅典最高法院（也叫做阿瑞斯山，罗马名字叫马耳斯，是哲学辩论的场所）的 12 人陪审团中的一员。一个叫大马哩的妇女听后就信了。后来保罗告诉哥林多教会，十字架的道理在这些希腊人为愚拙（参见《哥林多前书》1:18）。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

保罗把救恩的信息带给对《圣经》一无所知的雅典人，你同意他用的办法吗？作为基督徒，为让他人接受基督，哪些是我们该做的呢？如果他们不相信，我们的责任是什么？

《马太福音》10:14；《约翰福音》8:18；《使徒行传》4:12；《罗马书》5:8；《哥林多前书》1:18；《以弗所书》2:5,8；《提多书》3:5。

《使徒行传》18:1-17

离开雅典，保罗向南走了 45 英里，来到一个商业大城，城里有两个海港，一个面朝欧洲，一个面朝亚洲。这就是哥林多城，十分开放，也以富裕和邪恶为人们所知。作为世界性的商业中心，哥林多城有一大块犹太人聚居地，也有供奉美神亚富罗底特的神庙，还能看见成千上万的女神职人员靠做妓女来过活。

保罗很高兴来到这里，因为这儿能为他提供许多传讲福音的机会。我们看到保罗在哥林多这里制造帐棚，他也因此认识了其他制造帐棚的犹太人，比如亚居拉和他的妻子百基拉。在《帖撒罗尼迦前书》2:9，保罗也告诉我们他为了生计辛苦做帐棚。

亚居拉和百基拉以及其他的犹太人在公元 49 年被革老丢皇帝从罗马赶了出来。《圣经》没有说他们在遇见保罗之前是否已经得救了，但是他们都成为保罗一生的朋友。

每逢安息日，保罗就去犹太会堂教导犹太人和敬畏上帝的外邦人。他在《哥林多前书》2:1-3 说的话的确就是他在这里采用的方法：“从前我到你们那里去，并没有用高言大智对你们宣讲上帝的奥秘。因为我曾定了主意，在你们中间不知道别的，只知道耶稣基督并他钉十字架。我在你们那里，又软弱，又惧怕，又甚战兢。”在雅典的传道让保罗看到人的智慧没有什么用处，因此在这里，他决定单单用《旧约》有关弥赛亚的经文来传讲耶稣的福音，立定耶稣的名。

西拉和提摩太完成在马其顿的事工后就前来和保罗会合，他们还从腓立比教会带来些钱财给保罗。这使得保罗有更多的时间来向犹太人传道，但是犹太人对保罗（还有对基督）的敌意日渐强烈，最终导致保罗坚决与他们一刀两断。从此保罗只把福音传给外邦人。他将自己的事奉移到了会堂隔壁的外邦人家里！这当然还不够，他又引领管理会堂的基利司布归向主！

保罗在哥林多面临的局势十分紧张，但是眼看要成爆发之态时，复活升天的主在异象中向保罗显现，用话语坚定他，安慰他，并赐下神圣保护。保罗在哥林多教会传讲了 18 个月的福音，大概是从公元 50 年的秋天开始，直到公元 52 年的春天。在这期间，保罗还写了给帖撒罗尼迦教会的两封书信。之后的五年，保罗不再把时间花在建立更多的新教会上，而是殷勤坚固并扩展他在以弗所和哥林多的事工。在以弗所事奉时期，他也给哥林多教会写了书信。

新的地方官上任后，愤怒的犹太人以为这位地方官会支持他们，就把保罗带到他面前判罪，希望以此让保罗停止传道。然而事与愿违，犹太人错看了这位地方官，他只对罗马法律感兴趣，对犹太人的律法没有兴趣。如果保罗真地遭受指控，那么福音就要传到其他的罗马省份，这样一来，保罗的事工就会陷入危险。但是这一切没有发生，因为他的主早已经应许赐他神圣保护！

这事过后，希腊人抓住管理会堂的所提尼（这人以前迫害过保罗），打了他一顿。然而正如《圣经》告诉我们的那样，地方官员迦流不管这些事。结果，那恨恶保罗的人现在自己迫害了自己！

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

对于那些顺服真道、忠心为福音作见证的人来说，这条路并不容易——上帝教导我们，一路会有考验和试炼，只有在主里面拥有刚强的信心且忍耐到底的人才能胜过。我们知道上帝带给人生命的一切事物，都有他自己的旨意。请翻看之前的经文，说一说为什么上帝允许有考验和试炼。

《使徒行传》18:18-23

保罗在哥林多又住了一些时间，他心里有个强烈的愿望，要回到叙利亚的安提阿去。他打算带上百基拉和亚居拉同去，他们从哥林多城东边的海港出发前往叙利亚，顺路还可以经过以弗所。保罗因为许过愿，就在坚革哩剪了头发。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

我们很难搞清楚保罗许过什么愿。因为拿撒勒人许愿不能在犹太地以外的地方还愿，所以这可能是保罗自己因感谢上帝成就了给他的应许（参见第 9, 10 节经文）而许的愿，也为上帝在哥林多对他的看顾保守而感恩许愿。

（《圣灵充满新生命圣经》，新钦定版，《使徒行传》脚注 18:18）

《使徒行传》18:24-28

亚波罗集希腊人的雄辩才能与犹太人的信仰本能于一身。他来自亚历山大城一所著名大学，认罪悔改接受了福音，并且精通《旧约》，他拥有超人的辩论恩赐，是那个时代基督徒力量中的刚强伙伴。然而，他需要知道基督的受死、复活以及升天的大能，需要经历五旬节圣灵降临的恩典。圣灵赐予朴实而又谦卑的信徒多么美好的神圣智慧啊，让他们做老师来教训那些自认为聪明的人吧！

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

这段经文极好地描述了亚波罗在主里面的能力。他口才过人，熟知《圣经》；

灵里火热，教导准确，与其他基督徒关系融洽，反驳犹太人也讲究技巧，并且坚定地信靠耶稣基督。如今，一个谦卑的人也能做到亚波罗所做的吗？这是不是在启示我们作为基督徒要竭力为主呢？

《出埃及记》32:26-29；《民数记》13:30；《民数记》25:1-9；《箴言》3:9；《罗马书》12:1,2；《哥林多前书》6:20；《使徒行传》27:22-26。

《使徒行传》19:1-10

保罗一到以弗所，就遇上几个门徒，他们对圣灵的认识都有缺陷。他们的老师知道施洗约翰教导的关于基督教的一些基本的教义，显然他们不清楚五旬节的事情。因此，这些门徒也只是受了施洗约翰的洗礼。这表明他们接受圣灵的施洗并悔改认罪的时候到了（参见《马太福音》3:11），然而他们却不知道这时候已经到了（《使徒行传》2:1-4）。保罗就用水给他们施洗（《新约》仅有一次这样的记述），以此作为补救，并且引导他们更丰富地经历圣灵（参加第6节）。五旬节的一幕显然在重演，圣灵充满在这些门徒的身上，他们就说方言，又说预言。

（《圣灵充满新生命圣经》，新钦定版，《使徒行传》脚注19:1-7）

路加详细地记述了这一课，既是为保罗那个时代的信徒们理解真道，也为我们能够理解领悟。约翰施洗时，他只给那些真心痛悔拒绝耶稣之罪的犹太人传道。对于这些犹太人来说，接受约翰的施洗是从罪里回转的外在象征，但是约翰也告诉这些人，他们要转向那位在他以后来的——也就是说，他们要将自己的信仰建立在耶稣里面。

对于前面提到的这些门徒来说，接受约翰的施洗不足以让自己能够预备好接受基督，因此，这种施洗是不够的。彼得也在《使徒行传》2:38节清楚地指出，他们需要再受洗来接受圣灵，所以，上面提到的门徒需要再受洗也是出于这个原因。约翰给犹太人施洗是发生在救恩成就之前，是悔罪的象征（参见《使徒行传》2:38），你能理解吗？使徒保罗为基督徒施洗是在救恩成就之后，是为了接受新生命（参见《罗马书》6:4），你也能理解吗？

《使徒行传》19:11-20

上帝的灵在哪里做工，撒旦也就离那里不远。在这段经文里，敌人的爪牙们真是卑鄙低劣，想借耶稣的名为自己多赚几块钱。然而，没有圣灵大能的运行，名就没有果效。魔鬼嘲笑那些乱称耶稣名的人，这对赶鬼的人来说真是糟糕。“你们却是谁呢？”意思就是，你们不算数。这些魔鬼知道基督是神圣上帝，也知道保罗是基督的仆人，但是这些驱鬼的犹太人虚伪空洞，就如同空响的锣。放在天平里就必浮起，“他们一共比空气还轻”（《诗篇》62:9）。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

看完驱鬼的把戏，这里有必要说明一个道理，奉耶稣之名的权柄，只赐予那些信他的人（参见《马可福音》16:17；《路加福音》10:17-20）。任何想要奉耶稣之名的祷告或是传道，都要与主的属性和旨意相一致。

(《圣灵充满新生命圣经》，新钦定版，《使徒行传》脚注 19:13-17)

《圣经》告诉我们士基瓦七个儿子行恶事的后果，他们不但仓皇而逃，而且许多人还因此前来忏悔自己的罪恶，要信靠主，这都让主耶稣的名得了荣耀。

上帝的道也大大兴旺起来。领悟了道的大能，请简要学习下面的内容：

耶稣是活泼的逻各斯（道）——《约翰福音》1:1

《圣经》是写下来的逻各斯——《希伯来书》4:12

圣灵解释逻各斯——《哥林多前书》2:13

《使徒行传》19:21-41

以弗所的信仰生活被强烈的女神崇拜所包围，人们都拜伟大的母亲——亚底米（罗马名字），也就是狄安娜（希腊名字），供奉她的神庙是古代世界七大奇迹之一。保罗在以弗所的传教事工取得了如此巨大的成功，以致对亚底米的狂热崇拜和它那巨大的神庙都受到严重冲击。底米丢显然是银匠行会的头儿，为神庙和女神制作神像。一群闹事之人闯进戏园，从考古学以及碑刻铭文的资料上我们得知这个园子很有名。众人们喊“大哉，以弗所人的亚底米啊”，这在考古上已经得到了证实。“大哉”一词在古代的时候经常用于标榜神性。亚底米的像以及其他物品也都已经找到，一些碑文上也有关于它们的介绍。

(《安革尔圣经手册》，M.F. 安革尔著)

底米丢唯一真正担心的是怕卖不出雕像赚不到钱，但是他却假装是为了敬拜亚底米（狄安娜）才去指控保罗。事实上，保罗并没有攻击他们敬拜亚底米，也没有攻击他们的巫术——是的，他没有，他只是传讲基督！在当今的文化里，上帝的道是教导我们去和反上帝组织做斗争，还是只让我们传讲耶稣基督就够了呢？上帝的道还教导我们要传讲他为我们被钉十字架，又复活升天，并且他还要再来，为一切信他的人带来新生和盼望，对吗？在你看来，哪些攻击是应当避免的？福音信息中哪些引起令人不快的对抗是没有必要的？请找出经文来支持你的观点。

《加拉太书》5:13,14。

《使徒行传》20:1-31

如果你认真读完《使徒行传》第20、21章，就会对保罗要到耶路撒冷的决心留下深刻印象。他因此而在每个经过的地方只是稍作停留，花在讲道上的时间也越来越少。

从希腊出发后，保罗在特罗亚住了几天，等待他的同伴来和他会合。在特罗亚，保罗好像只讲了一次道（一直讲到半夜）。接着保罗又依次去到亚朔、米推利尼、撒摩、特基林，最后到达米利都。他本希望在以弗所停留，然而他只是派人去把以弗所的长老请到米利都相会。整个行程就是不断赶路、赶路、赶路。经过这么多地方，他只在一处停下来讲道。如今在米利都，保罗却没有时间去以弗所，即便这两座城市相隔不足45英里。为什么保罗一直在赶路？是什么让他如

此焦急和匆忙？我们可以在《使徒行传》20:16 找到答案——乃因保罗早已定意越过以弗所，免得在亚细亚耽延。他急忙前走，巴不得赶五旬节能到耶路撒冷（20:16）。

这节经文的关键词是定意。保罗定意放弃他在亚细亚的事工，以便可以到达上帝严厉禁止他去的地方。保罗受命去给外邦人传福音，并且要离开耶路撒冷城。只要保罗一心坚持他向外邦人传福音的事工，所有外邦人就会呈现一种良好态势；但是，当保罗满心充斥着越过上帝旨意的欲望，要到耶路撒冷去的时候，他向外邦人传道的事工就戛然而止，这位满有恩典的使徒将会发现，恩典也不能把违反主旨意的行为变成正当。

在下面的研读里，我们将学习《使徒行传》最后几章所记载的保罗的经历，几乎全部都是关于他被抓捕、受试炼以及最后被关在罗马监狱里的事情。

在结束这一部分的研读之前，我们想说明一个有切实意义的道理。恩典不是违背上帝的通行证。不论我们的心多么真诚，都不能成为我们不顾上帝清楚的旨意的借口。保罗也不例外。在他坚定地宣告接受上帝那无条件的恩典之后，为什么主还允许这位满有恩典的使徒跌入拘泥于律法的试探？为什么在保罗各种奇妙的传道事工之后，圣灵会启示路加医生记录下保罗公开传道的悲剧结局？为什么我们必须要知道，曾经那样忠心事主的保罗会在监狱里度过生命中最后的日子，并且要为自己的信仰被处死？把这些记录下来是为了警戒我们。即便是最敬畏上帝的人（即便是保罗），当他随意对待上帝清楚而无误的告诫时，也会屈服于来自肉体的试探。保罗更加明白这一切，他曾借用以色列人在旷野的经历来教导我们，我们不能违背上帝的旨意，否则逃不过上帝的审判（参见《哥林多前书》10:1-10），保罗说：他们遭遇这些事都要作为鉴戒，并且写在经上，证实警戒我们这末世的人。所以，自己以为站得稳的，须要谨慎，免得跌倒（《哥林多前书》10:11,12）。

（《圣灵降临节及其后》，M.R. 德哈安著）

路加医生告诉我们——他死了（参看《使徒行传》20:9），然而保罗靠着驻在自己心中的主的大能，让这个少年人又活了。保罗对聚会的人说：“他的灵魂还在身上”（《使徒行传》20:10），保罗并不因行了这个神迹就把荣耀归给自己，他唯一的目标就是荣耀主耶稣，并且继续给特罗亚的弟兄们讲道。保罗讲了一整晚，最后他们一起擘饼，领受圣餐。

跌落楼下的少年人名叫犹推古，这个名字意为“幸运”！的确如此，这让我们更加明白上帝的方式，他当然预先就知道会发生这个意外，而且要导致少年死亡；然而，这也给保罗一个机会，他用奇妙的方式证明上帝通过他的儿子耶稣所显明的令人敬畏的大能。不论你现在正遇到怎样的难题或是遭受怎样的试炼，你能确定无疑地看到这不是上帝的手一定要带给你的，而是他允许的吗？你内心也能毫无怀疑地相信上帝会救拔你，并且他这样做是为向你显明他许多的恩典吗？

《申命记》31:8；《以赛亚书》26:3；《诗篇》27:1-5；《诗篇》27:14；《诗篇》28:7；《诗篇》46:1-3；《诗篇》91:2；《诗篇》121（整篇）；《哥林多后书》4:8,9；《约翰福音》14:27。

在第20章中，我们和保罗面对面相见，他是真正属于上帝的人。他先是为主耶稣基督和主的道献上自己，又为各地能够得救的人们献上自己，不论这些人是犹太人还是外邦人，我们的心不能不为他的爱和热心而感动。保罗为什么这般坚持不懈地要到耶路撒冷去？或许是他认为钱财有助于把犹太人和外邦人连在一起？还是他对在耶路撒冷的使徒们的爱，包括对耶稣的兄弟雅各的爱，驱使他前去？请给出你思考的答案，如有可能，可以用《圣经》里的话。

《使徒行传》20:32-38

在这一章最后，保罗说道，他是靠自己做工来养活自己，不为自己保留丝毫。在他写给哥林多教会的书信（《哥林多前书》9:13,14）里，他清楚地告诉众人，那些传讲福音的人可以从接受他们教导的人那里得到生活供给。当然，保罗是通过自己做工来养活自己，因此使得他所传的福音真道无可指摘。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版）

关于我们怎样供给那些传福音的人，上帝的旨意还通过哪些经文（包括上面提到的那一处）向我们显明？我们在乐意奉献方面做得如何？

《使徒行传》21:1-14

当我们跟随保罗和他同伴们的旅程，乘船驶往巴勒斯坦地区时，我们看到经文清晰地表明，他们一行在各地都受到基督徒们热情的接待，那些地方都因着他们早期的努力事奉使福音广传。自从在第8章那里最后听到腓利传讲福音，到这时已经过了20年，然而我们看到腓利的忠心还在他四个女儿的身上延续，上帝赐给她们说预言的恩赐。我们又一次看到了亚迦布，保罗一行在安提阿的时候，他曾经预言会有饥荒。但是这一次，他引人注意的预言意味着对保罗的强烈告诫，不要继续前往耶路撒冷。尽管保罗的朋友们坚持劝说他不要去，然而保罗决意要去耶路撒冷，因为他知道上帝强有力地按手在他身上，并要藉着他来建立自己的教会。

（洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特著）

在这段经文中，圣灵几次告诫保罗前去耶路撒冷会遇到麻烦。但是使徒保罗执意要去，后来保罗被捕并由守卫送到罗马。有关保罗是不是行在上帝完美的旨意里的争论已无意义。我们需要注意的有这几点：1）预言不需对决定起重大影响，或是控制那些敬畏上帝之人的意志；2）即便预言可能是真的，然而上帝的旨意迟早会成就，在保罗这件事上，上帝最终的心意是要把保罗带去罗马。

（《圣灵充满新生命圣经》，新钦定版，《使徒行传》脚注，21:4-12）

根据记载，我们很快就要看到保罗生命的终结了。通过这次学习，以及你阅读过的占《新约》2/3篇幅的保罗书信，请用几句话说明你对保罗一生的整体思

考。你有没有要效法保罗的愿望？如果你是保罗，你会改变一些事情吗？

《使徒行传》21:15-30

保罗和他的同伴们又受到雅各以及长老们的热情接待，大家对于他们的奉献都很感恩。保罗讲述了他五年的传教历程——如今庞大的基督教中心已在爱琴海两岸建立起来，一边是在哥林多，另一边是在以弗所。然而，问题是保罗自己正在耶路撒冷，一些信奉犹太教的人认为保罗在教导外邦人背弃摩西的教训，教导他们不再受割礼，也不用守律法。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

这当然不是事实。然而保罗的确教导过外邦人，受割礼和守律法与救恩无益（参见《加拉太书》2:15,16）。但是保罗从没有说他们是在触怒上帝。结果，保罗就被描绘成律法的敌人。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特著)

教会的领袖们在这里强烈建议的行为(四个人都有愿在身)似乎与保罗在《加拉太书》2:3-5所清楚描述的不一致。或许对保罗来说，在节期结束以前，默不做声是更加明智、更加有力的方式。但是我们也必须看到，亲近犹太圣殿对耶路撒冷的教会生活所带来的深刻影响，保罗十分愿意听从雅各的引导，他对雅各的判断深信不疑。而且，他还愿意在一些不关乎原则的问题上退让。为着仁爱的缘故，他默许这一系列的事情，因此，向犹太人，他就作犹太人，为要得犹太人（《哥林多前书》9:20）。

(《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著)

我们知道，雅各关于还愿的建议是为了保罗的益处，按照雅各建议的作法或许会平息那些信奉犹太教的人对保罗的愤怒。只要不触及原则，保罗也愿意为调和事态做任何事。请用自己的话说一说发生了什么，而不是计划了什么。然后，请回答这些问题：

1) 由于只有犹太人可以进入圣殿，那些控告保罗的人相信他把以弗所的外邦信徒特罗非摩带入圣殿并因此玷污圣殿了吗？

2) 这些信奉犹太教的人是不是最不会注意到保罗虔诚的一面？

3) 上帝给雅各的计划是什么？出现过他们为寻求上帝旨意而禁食祷告的记载吗？

4) 关于保罗执意要去耶路撒冷而不是罗马，你现在有什么想法？

《使徒行传》21:31-40

尽管人按着最好的意图控制事态，然而，当保罗被百姓拉出城外处死、以免让他玷污圣殿之时，上帝藉罗马驻军的千夫长之手来应对百姓的暴行。保罗的犹太人身份也给他争取到请求自我辩护的权利。

《使徒行传》22:1-16

请看保罗的讲道！他的讲坛是从圣殿到安东尼亚城堡的台阶。他的听众是愤

怒的人群，站满了他下面的法庭，然而当他们听到保罗用神圣的希伯来语讲道，又镇静下来，只是周围的罗马人听不懂希伯来语。他讲的内容是永活的基督真实而亲自干预他迫害信徒的行为，并且让他认罪悔改。对于使徒保罗来说，这个事实是所有事实中最重要，那就是他看见了耶稣基督，并且因着他的所见所闻而彻底转变。任何光明的事情都不曾彻底改变过他的生命。他对《旧约》的热情以及他对基督教宗派的迫害，都是他反基督教的证据。保罗既不肤浅也不易变，更不可能被任何事情轻易打动，除了那个对他有强制命令的启示。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

你肯定会承认，保罗对主怀有极大的热心，在他生活的时代里，在这一点上没有人能与他相比，保罗的热心体现在：他渴望到犹太人中间；他决意把福音传给所有人；他愿意为基督献上一切；他计划前去那些还没有福音传播的地方，并且自己养活自己。然而，当热心不能完全都在上帝不断的旨意里，就会带来令人伤心的结果。摩西（参加《出埃及记》32:19-32）和大卫（参见《撒母耳记上》17:26）对主也有极大的热心。根据你对这些人的了解，简单谈一下他们的人生是如何与上帝对他们的呼召产生联系的。

《使徒行传》22:17-30

保罗悔改归主的过程在《使徒行传》第9章有过记载，在这里，使徒保罗又添加了一段详细的描述：他在圣殿里祷告时与主交谈那一令他难忘的情景。那时，主命令他离开耶路撒冷，去向外国传福音，这是赋予他的不可更改的使命，保罗就向主询问原因。能得到许可听见这样的对话是多么大的特权啊！门徒与主的关系是多么亲密无间！上帝允许亚伯拉罕、摩西和耶利米与他理论。上帝不去压制我们的智慧。“你们来，我们彼此辩论，”——这是上帝自己说的。但是有一点我们不能逾越，就是我们必须完全服从我们伟大首领的最终指令。

保罗是一个自由的罗马人。他不止一次要求自己作为罗马公民所应有的权利，比如在腓立比的时候。我们可以利用各种社会和政治上的优势来为传福音服务，然而，它们不能帮助我们走得很远；耶稣说：“你来吧。”如果我们单单因这句话而在水面上加快行走的步伐，最终都会渐入佳境。xiii

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

在第21节经文里，保罗告诉众人，上帝派他去给外邦人传福音，百姓听他这样说就生气喧嚷。根据他们对《旧约》的理解，特别是上帝赐给他们的信心之父——亚伯拉罕的应许，就该知道上帝的心意是透过他们，让万国都蒙福。换言之，整个世界都应该拥有真理的福音。在你看来，犹太人为什么对于外邦人接受福音表现地如此刚硬（和气愤）？

《创世记》12:1-3；《诗篇》2:1-9；《以赛亚书》9:1-7；《以赛亚书》42:1-4；
《以赛亚书》52:13-15；《罗马书》1:1,2；《加拉太书》3:6-9；《以赛亚书》53:11,12。

《使徒行传》23:1-5

罗马的千夫长召集犹太人的最高评议会，也就是犹太公会，这足以显示出罗马统治犹太人的权力有多大。保罗在自我辩护时告诉他们，他的良心在上帝面前清晰可见。大祭司亚拿尼亚听见后就让人打保罗的嘴。历史学家约瑟夫告诉我们，这个亚拿尼亚十分贪婪、凶暴，他曾因煽动加利利人和撒玛利亚人的矛盾被免职。然而，革老丢出于政治原因又让他官复原职。

看到亚拿尼亚的暴躁之举，保罗称他是粉饰的墙，这是犹太人认为一个人虚伪的说法。事实如此，亚拿尼亚私自留下本该给下一级神职人员的钱。他让人打保罗是违法的，因为根据犹太律法，在找到保罗犯罪的事实前，他都是无罪的。因此，这位大祭司恰恰违反了他自己本该遵守的律法。

在得知他是祭司之后，保罗立即向这些当权者道歉，保罗没有逾越到律法之上，他对律法总是抱有一颗清洁之心。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

《使徒行传》23:6-10

保罗被圣灵启示，灵机一动，成功转移了这群控告他的邪恶之徒的注意力，让他们转而注意自己党派间的差别——法利赛人与撒都该人的差别，这也使得他们彼此争辩。

法利赛人相信以色列的盼望和复活是紧紧相关的。然而撒都该人不但不相信复活，也不相信有鬼魂和天使。但是，这些人都相信上帝的灵。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特著)

这时，保罗声称自己是法利赛人（他曾经是），为的是让这群人尽量和他站在一边。同时，通过证明自己的观点，他可以传讲耶稣基督，因为他要表明主是复活的主，是以色列真正可以盼望的。请阅读《彼得前书》2:13-18，联系上面所讲的内容，将这些真理也虔诚地应用于你自己的生命。

《使徒行传》23:11-15

救主当晚就启示保罗，这是多么及时而珍贵啊！当时，保罗独自呆在监牢里，心里消沉，他开始意识到或许亚迦布和其他人的预言就要成就了。突然间，他看见主向他显现。不要倚靠自己的聪明，乃是要让你的主来引导你的道路。请记住，无论黑暗至极还是光明无比，主都在你身边。就在夜里四更天，主的启示临到你，他坚固你疲惫绝望的灵魂，打消你的疑虑，让你不再孤单。

主告诉他的仆人去罗马为他作见证，但是那些密谋要杀保罗的人却不让他离开耶路撒冷。这种冲突发生后，结果只有一个——上帝的道必然坚立，而那些起誓不先杀保罗就不吃不喝的人，看到他们作恶的计划朝相反方向发展，必要一败涂地。

(《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著)

保罗和我们一样，也有灰心丧气的时候。我们知道，在《使徒行传》18:9那里，保罗在哥林多近乎绝望，是主将他高举。另一件事会出现在他去罗马的途

中(27:23),然而主再一次把他从绝望中高举起来!主不会让他所不能承受的试探临到(参加《哥林多前书》10:13)。对于你自己所处的境遇,尤其是在看起来惨淡无望的环境里,这段研读能给你怎样的启发?你可以用哪些经文把安慰和力量传递给他人?

《使徒行传》23:16-35

《圣经》从没有提及保罗的家庭,除了此处,主安排保罗的外甥发现了人们打算杀死保罗的密谋,从而告诫千夫长要及时带走保罗。晚上九点,他们和许多步兵、马兵一起前往凯撒利亚,在那里,保罗将面对巡抚腓力斯。保罗逃脱犹太人之手,终于要去往罗马。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究, C.S.洛维特释义版)

《使徒行传》24:1-7

保罗总是在阴郁的天空中寻找一线亮光。在如此黑暗的时刻(第10节),他找到一个让自己喜乐起来的理由。他以名副其实的尊贵支撑自己,他是上帝的使者,在人类堕落邪恶的法庭中,他代表天国的法庭。对于自己所遭受的发表煽动言论的指控,保罗要求他的敌人们出示证据。保罗指出,在一个明显分为法利赛人和撒都该人的国家里,很难找出他作为一个属于第三宗派——拿撒勒人犯罪的证据。有关他们所说的宗派,或叫做异端(第14节),保罗说他是敬拜上帝的,但是他从没有在圣殿或是犹太公会里煽动冲突。他坚决地表示,自己一生的目标乃是在上帝和人面前存无亏的良心。

起初,巡抚腓力斯对于保罗颇有好感。他也是精通早期教会教义的人(第22节)。腓力斯已经系统地研究过教义,并且乐于把握这次机会,在教会首要的传道人面前认罪悔改。然而,他与犹太女子土西拉有不正当关系,而且土西拉的丈夫还活着,此外,腓力斯还希望从保罗那里收取贿赂,这也使得他在基督的要求上变的愚钝、麻木不仁。另一方面,保罗似乎也未曾想过自己,或者是未曾想过自己可以依靠一下这个巡抚的心血来潮,有一次还给这位灵魂软弱且利欲熏心的人讲说救恩之道,结果是徒劳。腓力斯已经在烂泥滩上抛锚,不会借此机会去跟从生命的浪潮。

(《每日读经》, F. B. 迈耶著)

当来到长官或是国王面前时,许多人都认为他们应该向这些统治者献上极高的敬意和赞誉。然而,这种言语上的称赞往往是虚情假意,因为他们知道,这些统治者也在罪的辖制下。然而,保罗虽然对他们彬彬有礼,而且清楚他们的地位,但是他从没有像世人那样把他们摆在一个虚假的高度上。保罗为什么和别人不一样,请说出你的看法。

《使徒行传》25:1-12

我们对波求非斯都知之甚少,仅知道他比那位杀了许多犹太领袖的前任腓力斯更有尊荣。历史学家约瑟夫告诉我们,非斯都对犹太人和他们的阴谋几乎一无

所知，而且早早地就死在任上。非斯都前去耶路撒冷是为了使他所管辖的区域太平，在耶路撒冷，他不停地面对犹太领袖们坚持处死保罗的请求。这些人就又一次随从非斯都回到凯撒利亚，为要控告保罗犯了大罪，但是他们并没有证据。

为了取悦这些犹太人，非斯都询问保罗是否愿意回到耶路撒冷接受审问。然而这一次，保罗完全认识到回去就意味着死亡，就不能成就上帝在他身上的旨意。因此，保罗作为罗马公民要求上告凯撒，就是那位年轻的罗马皇帝尼禄xiv。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

耶稣还在地上的时候，就给门徒完全的指示，告诉他们该做什么该说什么。当他们被带到国王和官员们的面前，就能为他作见证。请读《马太福音》10:16-33，《路加福音》12:1下-12，摘抄几句耶稣在这方面满有力量的教导。

《使徒行传》25:13-27

非斯都不是一个训练有素的官员，特别是在处理犹太人的事务上，他不知道怎样起草一份书信，将保罗的事情告诉凯撒，同时使得关于他自己的记载也空空如也。过了些日子，亚基帕王二世和百妮基氏前来祝贺他成为巴勒斯坦地区的长官。这位犹太教会的世俗国王将会给他提供好的建议，尤其是处理关于犹太人和他们的信仰的事情。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究，C.S.洛维特释义版)

这时的王是希律亚基帕二世，他是希律亚基帕一世的儿子，希律亚基帕一世曾经将雅各（约翰的兄弟）斩首，把彼得关进监狱。亚基帕一世正在发表讲话却被上帝击杀（参见《使徒行传》12:20-23）的时候，他的儿子亚基帕二世才17岁。等到他成年，在罗马接受完教育后，革老丢王就把位于哈尔基斯（大马士革北部）的一小块土地封给他，并授予他王的称号。随着他的声望不断加强，又把腓立比城四分之一的辖区封给他，就是加利利海东部和东北部的区域。新增加的这块地区就是由非斯都管理的。亚基帕二世多半属犹太血统，是马加比家族中祭司兼君王的后裔。他在耶路撒冷有自己的宫殿，还经常慷慨地资助圣殿。他的私生活是另一番景象，他丝毫不守犹太律法，好做奸淫之事，和他的姐姐土西拉完全一样，都充满肉欲，愿意寻欢作乐，土西拉就是嫁给已经离职的巡抚腓力斯的那个女子。

非斯都对犹太人的事务很无知，然而却足够精明地抓住了犹太人控告的中心问题。好像是关于一个“名叫耶稣”的人。非斯都的评论显示出他的不敬。他愚昧无知不认识主。从这里我们可以得知，在犹太人所有愤怒的控告里，其真正的问题乃是耶稣自己。非斯都这般愚昧，自然看不到这个问题的真正重要性。然而亚基帕王不像非斯都这般。他听到耶稣和保罗的名字就为之一振。撇开他的生活方式不谈，亚基帕王是一个热心的犹太人。他经常听到这两个人的名字。得知基督教运动的杰出领袖就在他住的这所宫殿里，这实在是激起了他的兴趣。在非斯都看上去如繁琐小事一般，但在亚基帕看来却是独一的机会。他兴奋地让非斯都

在第二天安排保罗出来辩论。

(洛维特的《使徒行传》研究, C.S.洛维特著)

我们看到,这些统治者拥有属世的权力来审判保罗,而保罗曾在上帝里面将生命彻底改变更新,蒙上帝的许可和呼召去传扬福音——面对这种总是存在于属世的、属肉体的人和那些属圣灵的人之间的冲突,你最先想到的是什么?

《罗马书》8:5-8;《罗马书》8:18-21;《加拉太书》5:16-26;《以弗所书》2:4-7。

《使徒行传》26:1-32

保罗对于辩论得心应手。他向王和官员们作见证,这见证是他一生不断追求的目标,非斯都听到保罗说死里复活,就立即打断他,说保罗是癫狂了。保罗给予非斯都足够的尊重,然后转向亚基帕,寻求他的支持。但是,亚基帕不想陷入关于信仰的深层真理的讨论。在亚基帕眼里,保罗就是个幻想家,以为一个穿着紫袍的人就能让人相信被钉死的弥赛亚,亚基帕带着一种世人的蔑视,对保罗狂热的正经一笑置之。他仿佛说过:你想稍微一劝,便叫我作基督徒啊(或作:你这样劝我,几乎叫我作基督徒了)! xv

(《每日读经》, F. B. 迈耶著)

亚基帕面对着一一种进退两难的局面。如果他说不相信,就会激怒犹太人;如果他说相信,保罗就会进而劝他相信福音真道,这无疑会让他丢面子。

(《新日内瓦研读版圣经》,《使徒行传》脚注 26:27)

《圣经》中的真理也是定论,你同意这种说法吗?另一个例子是约拿因上帝呼召他去拯救尼尼微大城的人而发怒的事情。请选择一个问题回答:1) 尽管有阻拦,然而上帝的道最终会成就他的旨意,请在《圣经》中找出相关的例子。2) 当亚基帕意识到他错过了上帝的国作为他最终目的地的机会时,你认为他会说什么,请发挥你的想象力。几乎——多么重要的一个词啊!

《使徒行传》27:1-44

这群前往罗马的人真是幸运,他们在每拉遇见一只从埃及运小麦驶往罗马的大船。船上可以为百夫长、士兵、犯人以及其他跟随他们的人提供住处。当时已接近九月底,到达佳澳的时候,或许使徒保罗和船上所有的犹太基督徒都在守赎罪日,就是犹太历法上禁食的节期。适宜航海出行的季节已接近尾声,保罗就建议过些时候再出发,然而那些人却不在意他所说的。事实是,认识上帝的人比熟悉大海的人更有智慧。

船上的人在应对风浪时耗尽体力,极度疲乏,而且还要忍饥挨饿,所以,当使徒保罗站出来给予建议和鼓励时,他们更愿意听从他的话。之前,这些人无视保罗的建议,然而这一次,他们变聪明了,愿意接受保罗的建议。

这种镇定稳妥的信心如何造就了我们!在暴风雨的狂啸里,我们可以安然入睡,当我们的心安静依靠在上帝里面,梦中就会有天使出现。传达上帝信息的天

使能穿过最阴郁黑暗的天空，也无惧最为强烈的狂风暴雨，去救助那些需要他们帮助的人。“我所属、所事奉的上帝，”——这是多么美好的宣告！

保罗再一次鼓励众人，并劝说他们吃东西。他以身作则，当着众人的面向上帝祝谢后就吃了。人们可能会说，基督的教导是无法照行的；然而，一个人一旦开始倚靠这些教导而活，完全顺服基督的教导，并且绝对信靠他，这人就会像一只充满勇气的狮子。我们倚靠上帝，才得施展大能，因为践踏我们敌人的就是他（《诗篇》60:12）。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

这次航海出行是船上每个人都要经历的极大试炼，如果众人早就听从保罗的警告，这次试炼就可以避免。保罗的心一直追随上帝一切的话语和指引，然而那些不认识上帝的人只能依靠自己的直觉和力量。最终，这艘船在一个岛上搁浅了，保罗从上帝那里得到确信，整条船上不会有一人丧命，他对上帝的话语深信不疑，这也让众人都来依靠他的领导。当我们处在试炼的狂风暴雨之中，我们当紧紧依赖什么才能寻得方向、安慰和平安？除了下面列出的经文，请尽可能多地找出其他经文。我们也需要尽本分吗？

《以赛亚书》40:1,2；《以赛亚书》41:10；《帖撒罗尼迦前书》5:14；《哥林多后书》2:7；《哥林多后书》7:5-7。

《使徒行传》28:1-10

借着上帝在每一种情况下的不断看顾，他们在马耳他岛（在西西里和意大利的南部）获救了，这岛曾叫做梅利塔，意为避难所，岛上的土人向他们展现出非比寻常的友好，这也证明马耳他岛的确是为他们预备的庇护所。

意外事件不是上帝的惩罚。毒蛇咬住保罗的手，这不是上帝愤怒的表现，乃是上帝允许发生的，是要给这些心地单纯的土人们作见证，让他们能够看到上帝对他的仆人的眷顾。

让我们凭公义而不是凭外表判断人。保罗甩开了毒蛇，他们就认为保罗是神；若是保罗死了，他们就会认为他是罪无可赦的罪人。我们也要摆脱试探引诱。虽然不能阻止它来攻击我们，但是我们不要把毒蛇引进心里。

（《每日读经》，F. B. 迈耶著）

每个人的一生都会遇到不同寻常的环境，我们会问——这是出于上帝还是可能出于撒旦。我们应该极度谨慎，不要过早做判断，因为上帝常常借着环境条件的展示，向我们显明一些特别的启示或是给予我们特别的教导。就像下面的经文中教导我们的，要等候耶和華，这是多么智慧啊！在你等候主的时候，真实可靠的平安就会随时临到你；你就知道你是走在上帝所预备的正确的道路上！接下来就等候他的启示显明吧！

《以赛亚书》30:15,18；《以赛亚书》40:31；《诗篇》103:1-5；《哥林多后书》4:8-12,16-18。

《使徒行传》28:11-31

正如我们所见,保罗之前就预见自己要在极度艰难的环境里前往罗马,然而,这也使他获得了生命里最好的机会。他所遭遇的都是为促进福音的传播而预备的。除了这种方式,他找不到别的办法,可以接近百夫长、或是凯撒王室里的人,或是部百流、或是尼禄自己。

(《每日读经》,F. B. 迈耶著)

在罗马,保罗给犹太人详细地讲解《圣经》,未了,他明白许多犹太人拒绝接受耶稣基督所成就的弥赛亚的真理。他知道,这些犹太人会继续刚硬他们的心,切断自己与永活上帝的关系。在保罗看来,这些犹太人就像是橄榄树上折下的枝子——橄榄树代表着真以色列——因为这些犹太人属灵的生命已经死了。保罗说过,因为他们的不信,所以他们被折下来(参见《罗马书》11:20)。人若一直不信,心里就会刚硬。心里刚硬就会背信弃教,犯了这至于死的罪(参见《约翰一书》5:16)。

(《使徒行传 诠释》,西蒙·吉斯特梅克著)

保罗在罗马期间,以巴弗前来看望他,并带来有关歌罗西教会里令人不安的消息。保罗随后写了《歌罗西书》作为回应,后来又写了《以弗所书》,这封书信不仅仅是为以弗所的教会所写,也是为亚细亚的全体教会而写。

在罗马的两年里,保罗引导一个叫做阿尼西母的逃跑的奴隶归向基督,并且写了一封信把他送回到他的主人腓利门那里去,这封信就是我们所熟知的《腓利门书》。

最后,保罗站到尼禄的面前。在等待裁决期间,他还写信给腓立比教会,那里的弟兄姊妹曾给他带来爱的礼物,还让以巴弗提来服侍他。

在这之后,保罗被释放了。根据优西比乌的记载,保罗不但在西班牙传道,还去往罗马帝国的边界传道。在这期间,他写下了《提摩太前书》和《提多书》。历史学家认为,就在保罗殉道之前,他又一次被捕送往罗马,在那里写下了《提摩太后书》。

“我现在被浇灌,我离世的时候到了。那美好的仗我已经打过了,当跑的路我已经跑尽了,所信的道我已经守住了。从此以后,有公义的冠冕为我存留,就是按着公义审判的主到了那日要赐给我的;不但赐给我,也赐给凡爱慕他显现的人”(《提摩太后书》4:6-8)。

ⁱ 直译为大能的施洗。

ⁱⁱ 此处为增译。

ⁱⁱⁱ 此处为增译。

- iv 直译为：被任命的人。
- v 此处为增译。
- vi 屈梭多模（约 347 ~ 407），一位出色的解经家和讲道家，享有“金口”的美誉。
- vii 旧译为方伯。
- viii 拉比即为老师。
- ix 希耳米，又译赫尔墨斯，希腊神话中众神的使者，掌管道路、商业、科学、发明、幸运、口才等。
- x 今天的亚洲地区。
- xi 现今在土耳其境内。
- xii 小亚细亚北部地区。
- xiii 参看《马太福音》14:29。
- xiv 尼禄（公元 37-68），于公元 54 年成为古罗马皇帝，是古罗马的暴君。
- xv 参看《使徒行传》26:28。

译文附录

原文	通行的译法	可选择的译法	错误的译法
Holy Spirit	圣灵		
Holy Ghost	圣灵		
Spiritual	属灵的		
Trinity	三位一体		
Incarnation	道成肉身		
Person	位格		
Messiah	弥赛亚		
Synagogue		犹太会堂	
Sanhedrin		犹太公会	
Believer		信徒	
Apostle	使徒		
Disciple		门徒	
Fellowship		（信徒的）彼此相交	
Pentecost	五旬节		
Witness		见证	
Instrument		器皿	
Gentile		外邦人	
Messiah	弥赛亚		
Choose		拣选	
Lord	主		地主

Heathens		外邦人，异教徒	野蛮人
Confess		忏悔	
Salvation		救赎，拯救，救恩	
Joy		喜乐	
Vision		异象	
Declare		宣告	
Consecration	分别为圣		
Sanctification	成圣		
Rabbi		拉比，老师	

原文

Acts

INTRODUCTION

In the Gospel of Luke, the author, Dr. Luke, shows what Christ began to do on earth; Luke also wrote the Book of Acts, in which he shows what Christ continued to do by the Holy Spirit. The ascension of the Lord is the closing scene in the Gospel of Luke, and in the Book of Acts it is the opening scene.

Luke then proceeds to report on the first sermon by a disciple, the first miracle by a disciple, the first step towards organizing the Christian movement, the first orchestrated persecution of believers, the first Christian martyr, the first non-Jewish convert, and the first missionary trip.

The Gospels set forth the Son of Man who came to die for our sins. Acts shows the continued workings of the Son of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Gospels speak of the crucified and risen Savior; the Book of Acts portrays Him as the ascended and exalted Lord and Leader of His Body, the Church. In the Gospels, we are given the revealing teachings of Christ, and in Acts we see the effects of these teachings through the acts of the apostles.

This book truly becomes the acts of the apostles through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is mentioned about seventy times. “Ye shall be My witnesses” is the heart of this book, and the word “witness” is used over thirty times.

God’s Spirit making bold witnesses out of ordinary people is the reason behind the phenomenal success of the first-generation church. He remains the power and wisdom for today, and it is incumbent upon each believer to learn His ways and walk in His power for Christ’s culminating work of this century.

Acts 1:1-7

The "Acts of the Apostles" has been variously called "The Acts of the Holy Spirit" and "The Acts of the Ascended Lord." Both names are appropriate, much more appropriate, indeed, than the more ordinary title of "Acts of the Apostles." This book records not only the first chapters of Church history, but the first acts of the Holy Spirit on earth and the ascended Lord in heaven.

"I came from the Father and entered the world"; again, "I am leaving the world and going back to the Father" (John 16:28), "It is for your good that I am going away.... If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father" (16:7; 14:28). In these and many similar intimations, the Lord had prepared them for His departure, and made them understand that His work on earth was now finished and that His ascension was only part of His great redeeming plan.

His preparations for the ascension were deliberate and complete. He did not go with unseemly haste, but lingered for 40 days, meeting with them often and finishing all that remained of His prophetic ministry on earth before He assumed His priestly and kingly functions in the heavens. "He showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive" (Acts 1:3). He left no doubt whatever of His identity, and He gave them full instructions concerning the kingdom of God. John tells us that if all the things He said had been recorded, the whole world could not contain the books that should be written. We may be sure then that the practice and example of the apostles, as recorded in the book of Acts, were covered by explicit directions from the Master's lips in messages that have not come to us except as we can infer them from the manner in which the apostles themselves obeyed them.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

Acts was placed as the fifth book in order of the 27 books of the New Testament—and perhaps divinely so, for it is the connecting link between the gospels and the epistles. This book (Acts) records the transition from:

Judaism to Christianity

Law to Grace

Kingdom to Church (Body of Christ)

Explain what Jesus meant in Acts 1:6 when He spoke concerning the time of restoration of the kingdom of Israel.

Rom. 1:16 Rom. 3:21-23 Eph. 3:8-11

Acts 1:8

The Holy Spirit comes, not to be the final factor in the Christian dispensation, but as a temporary administration: first, to finish Christ's earthly work, and secondly, to prepare the way for His second coming. But we are not prepared to understand the coming of the Spirit until we first see these two clear points—the departing and returning Lord—and between them, like a parenthesis, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit to follow the one and herald the other. The business therefore, of the Holy Spirit, and the Church through which He operates, is to bring Christ back again, and so to complete the ministry which He began on earth that He can come to bring its final stage in the setting up of His millennial kingdom on the very place where He was rejected and crucified.

Having understood this, the place of the Spirit's dispensation, let us look at the promise of the Spirit as given us by the departing Lord.

1. He was to be a Person as real as Christ Himself. It is not something that we receive from God in this deeper life, but Somebody who comes to make Himself known to us, to make Himself real to us, and to be in us the source of all strength and happiness.

2. He was to come as the Spirit of power. Man is the weakest of beings, weaker than his own sinful nature, weaker than the elements around him, weaker even than the brutes over whom he was sent to exercise dominion. But the Holy Spirit comes to give him power, to make his life effectual, and when the Holy Spirit comes into our life He does something. He accomplishes something. He is more than a sentiment, a feeling, a fancy. He is an infinite force that makes our life powerful, and enables us to accomplish all for which we are called as the disciples of Christ. It is power over sin, power over self, power over the world, power over sickness, power over Satan, power to be, to do, to suffer and to overcome.

3. The Holy Spirit does not work apart from us. The Master died and trod the wine press alone, single-handed, and went to the dragon's den and destroyed him. But the Holy Spirit is not like Christ. We are His temple. He resides in us and works through us, and unless we yield ourselves to be His instruments, He is unable to carry out His supreme purposes, and the great exalted Head is like a man with a paralyzed body that refuses to perform the functions for which that brain has power sufficient, but the paralyzed members are unequal to the effort. Therefore, the Spirit claims us as the subjects of His working.

4. The Spirit's power is to be shown chiefly in our witnessing for Christ. That is the form of our service. We are not to witness of truth merely, not to become wise and

wonderful orators or teachers, but we are to be witnesses of Him. I do not know how to express this better than to say that our business is to make Jesus real to men, so to live and so to speak that they shall see in us and through us a power and a Presence that will make them long for the same loving and almighty help in their lives. Thus to minister Christ to men is the highest service to which we can be called, and the most helpful thing we can do for weak and erring men.

5. The sphere of their ministry was to be an ever-expanding one: —in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (1:8). Of course, we cannot now stop to follow this widening circle as the apostolic Church followed it through their great missionary campaign until the whole inhabited world had received the message of Christ. This remarkable verse is just a table of contents of the whole book of Acts, and the chapters that follow are best commentary upon it, as successively we see the gospel planted first in Jerusalem, then throughout all of Judea, next in Samaria, and finally in the remotest heathen nations.

Doubtless, also, we have here a hint for the individual Christian, of the Spirit-filled life and service that will always begin at home, our Jerusalem; and then reach out to our relatives (—all Judea); and next find its way to our very enemies, those farther removed from us and having, perhaps, no natural claim upon us—Samaria; and then finally will lead us out in sympathy and service to be in some sense missionaries to the very heathen lands and send the gospel to the uttermost part of the earth.

6. They were to tarry for this baptism of power. Without it they must not attempt their work, nor must we. If the Lord Himself would not begin His earthly ministry until He had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, how much less dare we presume to go forth in our own strength and represent Him!

Why should they need to tarry? First, perhaps because the fullness of the time must first come, and the Pentecostal hour which, according to the Hebrew calendar, was to be interpreted and fulfilled in the coming of the Spirit, should have arrived. But secondly, and doubtless much more probably, because they themselves were not ready, and the waiting days were necessary for their spiritual preparation, to bring them to the end of themselves, to show them their need, to give them time to search their hearts, to deepen the hunger and the longing which were necessary for them to appreciate the blessing, and to make full room and right of way in their hearts for His indwelling and outworking.

And so let us wait for the promise of the Father. Let us receive in all His fullness and the blessed Holy Spirit; and if any reader has not yet proved this promise true, be encouraged, dear friend, to follow even the dim light that is now shining in your heart, even the faintest longing that is springing in your soul. No words that we could speak would make you understand this experience until it comes to you. If there is within you a sense of something that you need and do not have—a cry for God in some way to give you purity, victory, power and rest—that is the blessing already begun. If you follow on to know the Lord, then surely will you know Him. He would never give you that longing desire and disappoint it when you come to tarry at His feet. Wait for the promise of the Father, —Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near (Isaiah 55:6), and —you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

As Christians, explain how each of the following ministries of the Holy Spirit affects our lives:

1. Makes God known to us.
2. Gives us power over sin, self, the world, sickness, satan, power to be, to do, to suffer to overcome.
3. Makes us instruments for his use.
4. Makes Jesus real to people.
5. Enables us to witness for Christ.
6. Gives us the baptism of power. Should we have to tarry for this?

Acts 1:9-11

The incidents of His departure were most impressive and glorious. He had just disappeared from their view, and they were in danger of thinking that He had gone forever, therefore it is necessary to arouse them by another vision. And so, as they intently watch the distant and receding cloud, lo, two shining angels stand beside them, who speak to them as visitors from another world: —Men of Galilee,....why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven (Acts 1:11).

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

With the ascension of Christ into His new rule from heaven, how was the transfer of power and authority to take place; what would the disciples receive, and

from whom? Following this, who would receive the Gospel of Grace (to whom would it be preached)?

Acts 1:8 Acts 2:17-21 Acts 2:33, 39

Now that Jesus has ascended to heaven what is His current role?

Eph. 1:20-23 1 John 2:1

Acts 1:12-26

Peter feels the number twelve is somehow sacred and should be restored—this is his own idea for he has had no leading of the Lord to do anything but wait. However, this is the same Peter who drew the sword to help the Lord at His arrest. And the Peter who said, —I’m going fishing, when the Lord told them to wait in Galilee (John 21:3). Jesus had firmly told them, —Without Me ye can do nothing, (John 15:5), but Peter had not yet been trained by the Holy Spirit.

Peter gave these instructions: (1) the new disciple must be one of the 120 then present, and (2) he had to have been in the company of the apostles from the time of Jesus’ baptism to His ascension, so he could bear witness to Jesus’ resurrection. This was purely human judgment, and if God had more in mind for His apostles, then Peter was out of order. As for the two names that were chosen, neither history nor the New Testament speaks of either of them again.

Most scholars believe that Paul later would be God’s choice, for after he was filled with the Spirit, he was as well qualified as Peter to be an apostle (Gal. 1:11-17, Gal. 2:7-9). Paul also had one great qualification which no appointee could match—he was commissioned directly by the risen Lord.

After Pentecost, the method of using lots for reaching decisions is never heard of again, for this manner was after the flesh, and now they had the Holy Spirit’s guidance continually.

(Lovett’s Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Do you think the disciples were justified in their action to choose another apostle? Why should the number remain at twelve? What is Paul’s role among them, for he was later anointed the Apostle to the Gentiles?

John 1:48 Rom. 1:16 Phil. 2:5

Was casting lots ever a sanctioned method for making decisions?

Acts 2:1-3

The disciples, watching in awe, were within arm’s length of the glory of God, for this may have been the Shekinah glory at close range. The Lord was indeed returning in Spirit, and this visible manifestation symbolized His presence. The sound,

like a mighty rushing wind, and the tongues of fire symbolized the diffusion of Christ in the Spirit. It revealed how each Christian could have the one Christ. Omnipresence had been a truth beyond them, but they could understand this, for they saw it happen.

Prior to this the disciples had Christ's righteousness by imputation (Rom. 4:3), but now they have His righteousness by impartation, which is the experience of receiving Christ's nature by regeneration (2 Pet. 1:4); therefore, each had all there was to have of Christ. The promised Replacement had come to be in them (John 14:16-18)—He was in them and they were in Him!

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

How much of the Spirit do we realize and know is available to us in all His fullness when we repent and come to Christ for forgiveness? And what is meant by the continuous fillings of the Holy Spirit?

Mic. 3:8 John 3:35, 36 Luke 4:1 Rom. 8:11 Rom. 15:16 Gal. 5:22, 23 2 Thess. 2:13 1 John 2:20, 27 2 Pet. 1:4 John 14:16-18

Acts 2:4-14

The purpose of the speaking in various languages at Pentecost was in fulfillment of Jesus' command that the Gospel should begin in Jerusalem, and then go into all the world. It was to the Jews first. In the providence of God, Jews from every part of the world were present at the Feast. There were no Gentiles addressed, and among the 3,000 converted on that day, there were none but Jews.

Notice, Jews from every nation under Heaven, and at least sixteen countries are mentioned in verses 9 to 11.

These are all Jews or Jewish proselytes. Here they are gathered, and they are to spread the message of the Gospel to the whole world. Hence the speaking in tongues. It was to proclaim the Gospel message by the nation destined to tell it to all the world. Then these Jews from all these nations went back to their homes all over the world knowing the message of the crucified, resurrected Christ, having heard it declared in their own language and dialect.

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan)

From your personal understanding of the mighty power poured out by the Holy Spirit, resulting in the utterly amazing conversion of 3,000 Jews at one time, please speak to this —visual aid that God brought about on this day, which is 50 days following the Passover Feast. Would you say that He is introducing His new Church and the Age of Grace in a mighty dramatic way?

Acts 2:15-21

The prophet Joel used farm language in speaking of the Spirit's coming. It would be like rain falling freely on everyone without regard for age, sex, or rank. Men, women, children and even servants could receive Him, for there was to be no distinction. The imagery of rain is most apt for picturing the coming of Christ in the Spirit, for the outpouring speaks of Christ's availability, which is another way of expressing His omnipresence. All during the last days, says Peter, anyone can be saved, for Christ has come in the Spirit and anyone can receive Him. Jesus is the —gift of God (Rom. 6:23). The gift of the Spirit is the gift of Christ. As full of the Spirit as he was, Peter was yet unaware that this promise included the Gentiles—He still has to learn this from the Lord (Acts 10:9-34).

Joel's prophecy also spells out precisely the terminal points of the —last days. There is a time span between verses 18 and 19—one which is now 2000 years long. While the beginning of the last days was marked by great joy and spiritual blessing, the end of that age is to be characterized by destruction and disaster. Many are looking for a repeat performance of Pentecost, but it won't come. The days will grow increasingly troublesome and faith will all but vanish from the earth. John's description of God's Day of Wrath in Rev. 6:12 is also based on this same prophecy in Joel. The slaughter on the earth will be horrific (Rev. 14:20). Only the return of the Lord will end the carnage (Matt. 24:22, 29, 30).

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett)

When do you believe the rest of Joel's prophecy will be fulfilled? Does that prophecy apply in any way to our present day—and what then is expedient upon us as Christians if this tribulation is about to begin?

Acts 14:22 Rom. 5:3 Rom. 8:35-37 Rom. 12:12 2 Cor. 7:4 Eph. 3:13

Acts 2:22-36

After Peter had explained the strange happenings to the assembled crowd, he began his first sermon, and the power of the Holy Spirit is greatly manifest in and through him—he spoke as never before! The entire message was addressed to Israel—Jews only, and we shall see that it was the second offer to them of the Kingdom—the Kingdom which they had once refused. When this offer is again refused, then the Gospel would go out into all the Gentile world. The order of Christ's commission was first in Jerusalem and Judaea to the nation of Israel, then to Samaria, and finally, to the uttermost part of the earth. But here Peter addresses —Ye men of Israel —it was to Jews only.

Notice now his message. Peter was led to bring to Israel the message of the rejected Christ. He quotes freely from the Old Testament with which his hearers were familiar, and then goes on to proclaim the Gospel—the message of a crucified, buried, risen Christ—their true Messiah! Then he quotes from David to show that this was truly the Messiah King whom they had rejected and slain.

With this, great conviction came upon the crowd, and in reply to their question of —What shall we do? , he says, —Repent and be baptized.. The reason for his answer was because he was speaking to the very people who had openly rejected Jesus, and now they therefore must also openly acknowledge and own Him as their Messiah. They already believed in the name of the Father and Holy Ghost, but now they must assert their faith in Jesus Christ whom they rejected. Baptism for these Jews was a condition to prove they had repented of their rejection of Jesus.

The offer must first be made to the nation of Israel, and after that the message would go into Samaria and then the uttermost parts of the earth. If the nation of Israel had received this second offer of the Kingdom, their Messiah would have returned, but God knew this offer would also be rejected, and so planned His program for the Church after the Gospel has been given to the Jew first, and rejected by them.

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan—paraphrased)

We can understand from these Scriptures that the Jews had thought that a —real Messiah could not possibly die, and that when he came he would make his enemies His footstool and rule over them (Ps. 110:1-2). How do you think the Jews felt knowing scripture like that in Psalms 110 and now knowing of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection?

Acts 2-39-47

Three thousand souls were added to the Church of 120 and all were baptized that day in the Holy Spirit. To the Jewish nation, Pentecost was an occurrence that strongly reminded them of the Mt. Sinai experience following their escape from Egyptian bondage, and it occurred on the same day of the year. At that time, while Moses was in the mount receiving the Ten Commandments from God, below in the valley with Aaron awaiting Moses’ return, the people began demanding a —god to worship, and Aaron allowed them to make a golden calf for that purpose. When Moses returned and saw their abject idolatry he turned to God who brought down absolute judgment upon them, and as a result of that day, 3000 people perished! Contrast this to the 3000 souls becoming believers at Pentecost!

Then follows a brief picture of an Early Church meeting. It was the essence of simplicity. It was characterized by the following: 1) Bible study—apostles’ doctrine; 2) Fellowship—testimony; 3) Breaking of bread—remembering the Lord; and 4) Prayers.

Since they were led by the Holy Spirit, there was a complete absence of complex structure. All the complexity of our present-day church organizations was missing. Just a company of believers led by the Holy Spirit to listen to the Word, give their testimony, remember the Lord and pray; and then go out everywhere witnessing for their Lord and Christ.

The second chapter of Acts closes with a picture of —Bible communism” which is entirely opposite to the political communism we know today. Theirs was the Kingdom ideal. The apostles were still offering the Kingdom to Israel, and in the Millennium when Christ shall be King, this will be the voluntary rule. There will be no poverty, everyone will have enough, by equal distribution of God’s physical blessings when every man shall sit under his own vine and his own fig tree.

These early Christians were a despised company. They were persecuted and ignored, slighted and disregarded by the world. They were waiting for Messiah to return and set up the Kingdom, and so they formed this community program. This was not mandatory, but entirely on a voluntary basis; no one was forced to share all his possessions with others.

Their ways became a practice while the hope of the Kingdom was burning brightly, and it will work in the Kingdom Age when every knee shall bow to Christ.

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan—paraphrased)

Is a community program, like the early church, something we should be doing today? How do you decide how much belongs to the Lord and how much belongs to you?

Mal. 3:8-10 Rom. 14:5 1 Cor. 9:9-14, 19-23

Acts 3:1-26

Peter and John differed greatly in age, in gift, and in point of view. They had been rivals; now they walked together. It was at three in the afternoon that this incident took place. As they climbed the Temple steps, they must have spoken of the many times that the Master had walked at their side. But they realized, too, that He was still as near as ever, and so they became the means of linking this withered man to His glorious health-giving power. It was because Jesus went with them that the healed man was able to become the fourth of the group.

The gate was beautiful, but it could not heal. More is needed than beauty or art. We may have neither the silver of profound intellect, nor the golden speech of Chrysostom, but we must see that we have something to give to a paralyzed and perishing world. Let us so move among men as to lead them to expect that we have something to give, and then give them Jesus. The lame man needed strength, and this is the divine gift of the Gospel. —It is the power of God unto salvation. The Savior makes us able to walk and leap in God's ways.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

The healing of this lame man occurred in the same place where Jesus had healed the blind man of John 9, and now Peter and John spoke and healed in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene. What do you think this man now sensed as being in the lives of these former fishermen?

Rom. 8:9-11, 20, 21 Rom. 15:1-3 Eph. 2:8-10 Eph. 5:1, 2, 8-10

What is meant by —the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the age began? (Acts 3:21)

Gen. 12:2, 3 Deut. 30:3 2 Sam. 7:16 Zech. 12:8 Rom. 8:18-23 Rev. 21:1-7

Acts 4:1-22

The Sadducees are particularly mentioned, because they were the agnostics of the age and had no belief in the unseen and eternal. The fact of our Lord's resurrection was, therefore, especially obnoxious to them. The captain of the Temple, who was head of the Levitical guard, was probably their nominee. How weak man shows himself when he sets himself against God! All that they could do was to shut the apostles up, but they could not bind nor imprison the living Spirit or the speech of one saved soul to another, and so the numbers of disciples kept mounting up.

Peter must have contrasted this with his former appearance in that hall. Then he trusted in his own power; now he was specially filled with the Holy Spirit for a great and noble confession. The name of Jesus stands for His glorious being. It was because the man had come into vital union with the ever-living Christ that disease was stayed and health restored. The name of Jesus rings through these chapters like a sweet refrain. Evidently He was living and at hand, or the streams of power and grace could not have poured forth to make desert lives begin to blossom as the garden of the Lord.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

The Sadducees were —grieved that they (Peter and John) taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:2). At Calvary when Jesus was put to death, it truly seemed that wicked men held all the power. Now, in

this Scripture, God Himself has completely turned this around. Complete the following statements:

Just eight weeks before this present situation, this ruling body had put Christ to death, hoping that would finish the —Christian message. Would the Sanhedrin understand Peter’s accusation that came from Psalm 118:22, and Peter’s statement, You are the _____ who rejected the _____? Could they realize they were fulfilling this prophecy? The mouths of these rulers were stopped by seeing the same power and boldness in Peter and John that they had seen in _____. The prohibitions of man can’t carry any weight when they conflict with God’s commands—and hadn’t these rulers and priests been the so-called teachers of the Pentateuch (also known as the Torah)? (Answer yes or no) _____

Acts 4:23-35

Like draws like; Judas went to his own place, and the apostles to their own company. The best answer to threats is prayer. The apostles’ one petition just then was for boldness. They scorned to ask for their own safety; it was enough if Jesus was glorified.

What a note of jubilant triumph was in that glorious prayer, offered by this threatened little band! They realized that they were under the special protection of God, who had made the world, had spoken by the prophets, and was the Father of Jesus. They thought that more miracles of healing would promote their cause, but though they did not realize it at the time, their unity, love, hope, willingness to share their goods, coupled with their intrepid bearing, were their most potent arguments. Notice that in their consciousness, it was God’s hand that was being stretched out to heal, though their hands were the immediate channel of its beneficent operations. They had been filled before, but they were filled again. It is our privilege to claim repeated infillings to make good our leakage and evaporation.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Can you agree that these new Spirit-filled believers were being introduced to spiritual warfare? What rights and strengths has our Lord given us as we, too, go through spiritual warfare and truly engage our enemy?

Mark 16:17, 18 Acts 16:16-18 1 Cor. 12:10 Eph. 6:10-18

Acts 4:36 - Acts 5:11

The Spirit of God is the source of generous and liberal giving. It is a poor substitute to set up bazaars and fairs, and ice cream suppers. When the Church is filled with the Holy Spirit, her pockets will be easily emptied before His gracious,

thawing presence. Let the sun arise in the heavens, and the frozen streams are instantly liberated and begin to sing on their way to transform wildernesses into gardens.

Mark the contrast between Ananias (Acts 5:1) and Barnabas (Acts 4:36). The sin of Ananias was not in keeping back part of the purchase money, but in pretending to have brought all to the apostle. He wished to pose as a saint, and at the same time to line his own nest. In the act of consecration, we must not allow one corner for Satan or selfishness to possess, because instantly we shall have to concede the right of way, and a thoroughfare will be opened along which all manner of contraband may be smuggled in. Peter had no doubt as to the personality of the Holy Spirit. You cannot lie to an influence! Note the interchange of —Holy Ghost and —God in vv. 3 and 4.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Peter knew of Satan's subtlety because he had once been the devil's agent when he suggested that the Lord avoid the cross (Matt. 16:23). Therefore, now having the Holy Spirit's power within, he knew the lie and sin of Ananias immediately. —And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things (Acts 5-11). Today God still hates religious hypocrisy, but it is indeed prevalent in the church. In what ways has the church missed and ignored God's warnings, and why?

Hos. 4:6 Rev. 3:15-19

Acts 5:12-26

The angel of God comes to open prison doors. Are you in sore trouble, from which there is no apparent deliverance? Are you imprisoned in the dungeon of doubt and despair? Are you being heavily persecuted? Oh, wrap around you the divine protection! Dare to believe that the doors will open as by unseen hands. Nothing can stay the purposes of God.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

If you were trapped in a situation where there seemed to be no way out, what could you keep in mind to comfort you, to keep you from despairing, and to persevere in hope for deliverance? (Following are a few verses; add your own also.)

Ps. 34:6, 7, 17-19 Ps. 37:3-6, 18 Ps. 40:1-3 Isa. 41:10

Acts 5:27-42

Since they see that they cannot stop their mouths any other way than by stopping their breath, they take counsel to slay them, hoping that they shall cause the work to cease. While the apostles went on in the service of Christ, with a holy security and

serenity of mind, perfectly composed, and in a sweet enjoyment of themselves, their persecutors went on in their opposition to Christ, with a constant perplexity and perturbation of mind, and vexation to themselves.

(Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Matthew Henry)

What does Acts 5:29 mean to you—We ought to obey God rather than men ?
What can prepare us for this strong stand if death is threatened? Who truly is the greater Authority?

Acts 6:1-15

The Grecians here mentioned were Jews who had lived abroad and spoke Greek. There were as yet no Gentiles in the Church. It was regarded as an annex to Judaism, and people had to become Jews before they were admitted to its privileges.

What a glimpse is here afforded of the simplicity and fervor of the primitive Church! The daily ministration of relief; the choice of godly men to attend to secular details, the prime importance of prayer and the ministry of the Word; the recognition by the apostles of the rights of the people—all is so spiritual and so worthy of the era of the Holy Spirit. Alas, that so fair a dawn should ever have been overcast!

The Church must dedicate to God those whom she has chosen under the guidance of His Spirit. Stephen on the one hand, and Saul on the other, were the leaders of their respective parties. We see traces of the latter in the references to —them of Cilicia, v. 9 (Saul was from Tarsus of Cilicia). Stephen's enemies prevailed over him by brute force, but he was conqueror through the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony (Rev. 12:11, 12).

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

What were the Scriptural reasons for the laying on of hands (Acts 6:6)? See how many of the nine reasons listed in the Bible you can name.

Gen. 48:14, 20 Ex. 29:10, 15, 19 Lev. 1:4 Lev. 4:14, 15 Num. 8:10, 11 Num. 27:18-23 Matt. 9:18 Matt. 19:13-15 Acts 6:6 Acts 13:2, 3 Acts 8:17, 18 1 Tim. 4:14

It was God's time for a sharp division between the temple program and the new Church—and God had just the man for the job—the young Stephen who fearlessly preached with the power of the risen Christ. Deeply spiritual, he saw things in the Old Testament relating to Christ, which even the apostles did not yet know. God needed a man to create a division between Judaism and the Church, and He used the mind and heart of Stephen to frame the last appeal to Israel as a nation, for them to consider Jesus as their Messiah, and to repent and receive new life in Him. In verses 9 and 10 a group from the Synagogue debated Stephen and were badly defeated by his wisdom

given him by the Holy Spirit. How did the defeated Jews of the Sanhedrin handle their wounded pride? How were their accusations against Stephen similar to those of Jesus' accusers?

Luke 20:1, 2, 19-26 Acts 4:1, 13-21

Acts 7:1-60

Stephen, having finished his review of Israel's history, now makes his application. It is the last offer of the Kingdom to Israel:

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain those who foretold the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it (Acts 7:51-53).

This was too much for the enemies of Stephen, and . . . they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:54-56).

The critical moment has come. Once more the Lord through Stephen offers to set up the Kingdom, restore the nation and deliver Israel upon condition of repentance. They had rejected it when it was preached by John the Baptist and by the disciples of Jesus. They had rejected it when Peter made the offer at Pentecost, and now for the final time the offer is made. Stephen sees the Messiah of Israel standing up in heaven. When our Lord ascended into Heaven, He sat down at the right hand of God the Father (Heb. 1:3; Heb. 10:12). But here He is standing up before an opened door in heaven. The meaning should be clear. Their Messiah is ready to return, if Israel will repent at this invitation by Stephen. But instead, they reject the offer, the door in heaven is closed, and Jesus sits down again to await the time when, after the Church is gone, they will —look upon Him whom they had pierced and be converted. God foreknew this rejection, in order that He might bring in, during the days of Israel's setting aside, the Church which is His Body.

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan)

Here Stephen was placed in a position to address the entire nation of Israel through its leaders. His words would be God's final invitation to Israel to repent and receive her Messiah. Who would later be chosen by God to write epistles to the nation of Israel telling them of their blindness in rejecting Christ?

Give a brief write-up from the following Scriptures how Israel followed their own righteousness of the law, and not the righteousness of faith:

Rom. 9:30-33 All of Rom. 10 Rom. 11:25-33 2 Cor. 4:3-6

In spite of Israel's rejection of Christ, will God's covenant with them remain, and has their restoration been established in Scripture?

Isa. 27:12 Isa. 54:10 Isa. 60:15, 16, 19-22 Jer. 16:14-21 Jer. 31:31-34 Jer. 33:1-8, 11, 16-17 Zech. 9:11, 12 Zech. 10:6 Zech. 12:10

Stephen's death now marks the conclusion of the first part of Jesus' commission to His disciples—the —beginning at Jerusalem. The second part of His commission will be accomplished by Philip's ministry in Judea and Samaria, in chapter 8. Before this second stage, however, we are introduced to a new personality whom God plans to use to carry out the final part of His commission—and to the uttermost part of the earth. Who is this man; was he present at the stoning of Stephen; what part did he play in it?

Acts 8:1-4

This persecution was overruled to scatter the Church, which had grown too prosperous and secure, and needed to be reminded of the Lord's injunction to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. The light must be diffused; the salt must be scattered. How often God has to drive us by trouble to do what we ought to have done gladly and spontaneously!

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Following Stephen's death, what happened to many who were followers of Jesus, and now also to the disciples? Did this help to promote God's great plan of bringing salvation to the whole world? And Saul at this point seems the most unlikely character to become God's instrument to use for His final thrust of —unto the uttermost part of the earth. Please write your comments regarding this.

Acts 9:1 Rom. 1:16 1 Tim. 1:15

Acts 8:5-25

Simon the Sorcerer had formally identified himself with Christianity by submitting to baptism, but he wasn't involved with the Spirit. When he saw the miracle accompanying the laying on of hands, he viewed it as a sorcery superior to his

own, and he offered money to try to gain that power for his hands. Our modern word simony is derived from this man's actions—it has to do with exploiting sacred things to make money.

Judas sold the Lord for money, and now here is Simon trying to buy the Holy Spirit with money. This shows that Simon did not have the Spirit, else why would he try to buy Him? Those who have the Spirit know it (1 John 4:13). Peter may have been thinking of Judas when he perceived the evil of the magician's heart. He not only declared him an unsaved man, he told him that his money would perish with him since he thought the gift of God could be purchased with money. He was still trusting in magic, thus he remained in the bond of iniquity and poisoned by bitterness. Today many in our churches are in that same plight, but God is ready to save to the uttermost any who will seek His forgiveness.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

During all of human history, the work of Satan is readily evident in his continuous attempt to destroy God's great plan of redemption for mankind. Please make a statement or two summing up the lesson and the warning shown here.

Deut. 18:10-12 Mal. 3:5 Rev. 9:21 Rev. 21:8

Acts 8:26-40

While sun worship was one of the religions of his land (Ethiopia), this man was somehow taught to worship the God of Israel. He was the man that God had marked out to receive the gospel, and therefore the Lord transported Philip to the road where this man's carriage would pass, and he hears him reading the Old Testament probably in Greek. (The Septuagint was a Greek translation of the Scriptures made in Alexandria, Egypt and was prepared for use by Jews throughout the region.

Having just come from Jerusalem, he no doubt heard much about the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, as well as the wonders of Pentecost. Philip, being a Greek-speaking Jew, heard him reading aloud, and being compelled by the Holy Spirit, he came alongside the carriage and asked the man if he understood what he was reading. (The Holy Spirit evidently was guiding his reading for he was studying one of the most striking predictions of the Messiah's suffering in the O.T.—Isaiah 53.) Philip not only explained this passage fully, but proceeded to unfold the whole story of Christ. Since there were no N.T. Scriptures as yet, he couldn't have chosen a better place to begin. The nobleman's response tells us that Philip made it clear to him that Jesus had died for him personally.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Philip did lead the eunuch to the Lord and baptized him at his request and thus the gospel continued on to Ethiopia and beyond.

Fill in the following spaces:

Philip became known as an _____ (Acts 21:8) and preached throughout _____ (Acts 8:5).

Acts 9:1-6

Paul's conversion was in a supernatural manner—there was a light from heaven, and an audible voice speaking from heaven. It was accompanied by a physical shock which threw Paul to the ground (note that Scripture does not speak of his riding a horse as many pictures denote).

The appearance of Jesus to Paul was one of only three instances after Pentecost when Christ revealed Himself from heaven. The first one to see the ascended Lord was Stephen in Acts 7:56. Then, Saul saw and heard Him (Christ) in that glory brighter than the noonday sun (1 Cor. 15:8). The last time the glorified Christ manifested Himself was to John on the island of Patmos (Rev. 19:11)

These three appearances after the ascension coincide with the three aspects of His Second Coming: First, He will appear to His waiting Church, represented by Stephen. Then He will appear to Israel, represented by the conversion of Saul. Thus the nation of Israel (typified by Saul) will —look upon Him whom they have pierced —they will behold Him in the Tribulation and be saved. And then finally He will appear as John saw Him at Patmos, as the One who comes to judge the earth and set up His long-promised millennial Kingdom.

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan- paraphrased)

As you continue learning how meticulously and perfectly God restores to fellowship with Himself all who will come freely, state here in a few words how this is striking your heart and mind.

Acts 9:7-18

Here we see once again the three stages of Jesus' proclamation in Acts 1:8, where He tells them that —ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The first stage of Jesus' program ended with the stoning of Stephen (Jerusalem); the second stage is recorded in Chapter 8 where the gospel goes throughout Judaea and into Samaria, and the third and last stage begins with the conversion of Saul, in chapter 9, for he later becomes the apostle to the Gentiles—the uttermost part of the earth .

Paul (first called Saul) was not a criminal or a down-and-outer; rather he was a highly respected, cultured, law-abiding, religious man. He and Nicodemus are examples of two men, who were not from the gutter, so to speak, but who in their —upper class— lives, were truly blind as to who Jesus really was, and their deep need of Him.

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan- paraphrased)

Please make your comments on the sheer wonder of God's plan and how perfect it is.

Acts 9:19-28

At this point, more than three years have passed since his conversion (Gal. 1:18), and his planned visit to Jerusalem will be his first visit to the apostles in Jerusalem. During his training under God in Arabia, he received special revelation concerning the Church, about which the apostles in Jerusalem as yet knew nothing; they were still expecting the setting up of the Kingdom. This new mystery truth was not too readily received by the apostles at first.

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan- paraphrased)

In reviewing all the details of Paul's early life as a Christian, does this account give us a clearer understanding of some of God's ways? Today we often hear astounding testimonies by someone who has just been saved out of a life of great sin and degradation. What dangers do you see in this—what is it that God needs and requires of us, before we are capable soul-winners? Other well-meaning Christians attempt to bring comfort and resolution to another's trials, before they, themselves, are adequately equipped with the Word. Speak to this also.

Rom. 8:12-27 Rom. 8:31-38 Rom. 12:1, 2 Rom. 12:9-21 Cor. 3:18-23 1 Cor. 9:19-27 1 Cor. 11:27-34 1 Cor. 13:1-13 2 Cor. 4:7-15 2 Cor. 10:3-6

Acts 9:29-43

Here in Tarsus Paul spent some time waiting for the official opening of the door to the Gentiles by Peter, before embarking on his first missionary journey. In the meantime Peter is to make his final appearance on the scene. The balance of Acts 9, therefore, is an account of Peter's ministry, while Paul is being prepared to take the spotlight in the rest of the book of Acts. Peter's ministry to Jerusalem and Judaea and Samaria is first to be concluded. So while Paul is waiting in Tarsus, Peter travels to Lydda and heals a man by the name of Aeneas who had been paralyzed for eight years. From there he goes to Joppa on the seacoast. In the city of Joppa a certain disciple named Dorcas took sick and died. Knowing that Peter was in Lydda and probably

having heard of the healing of Aeneas, they sent for Peter to come to Joppa, a distance of only about ten miles from Lydda. Here Peter raises Dorcas from the dead. Remember all this was still in Judaea. Peter had not yet gone beyond the confines of the second stage of Christ's commission, "beginning at Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and Samaria."

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan)

In thinking about this portion of Acts, choose one of the following three and write your statements about it, which could include some incident of this particular way of God operating in your life:

1) When we are earnest in our desire to serve the Lord, could His leading call us to minister to people whose cause seems hopeless?

2) What should our attitude be if we are seemingly busy about the Lord's work, and then we are turned suddenly away from that, and to something that might appear more challenging than we had expected?

3) Are we to be ready to hear God's voice in anything that comes into our lives—say a letter indicating that our plans have to be radically changed?—Or, say an employer or teacher who requires —over and above from you some —extra that you might feel is an encroachment upon you?

Acts 10:1-23

This chapter is devoted entirely to God's mysterious, yet always wondrous ways of accomplishing His purposes. At this point His way was to completely open up the full power of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles (whom the Jews had long despised), and at the same time to fully persuade the Jewish people who loved the Lord, that this was His perfect will—that He would tear down the wall of separation and make of the two one body—His Church (Eph. 2:14-18).

Caesarea was the headquarters of the Roman governor of Palestine, since portions of the Roman army were garrisoned there. Cornelius was possibly a captain who belonged to a battalion made up of Italians, who were probably natives of Rome, and he was clearly a Gentile. No doubt he was drawn to the Jews' religion by the simplicity of worshiping one God and the Jews' high moral code. We are told that he was very religious and filled with good works, yet he was not saved (Acts 11:14).

Cornelius is deeply in prayer at the 3 o'clock Jewish hour of prayer when he has a vision of an angel coming to speak to him. Though he cries out in fear, the angel set him at ease, by telling him that God has taken note of all his good works and his giving unto God, and is pleased with him. Then God tells him to send men to Joppa to

find Peter, and tells him exactly where he is staying and with whom. Peter is indeed the one whom he should talk with, for Peter is the head apostle and he is called by God to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Now the scene changes to Peter who had taken lodging in the home of a man named Simon, a tanner who handled unclean animals. At this point in our story, Peter's ministry had been confined to Israelites and the half-breed Samaritans. Truly nothing could possibly be more repulsive to him than offering the Gospel to Gentiles, no matter how religious they were. To his mind, for a Gentile to be saved, he must first be circumcised, place himself under the Law, and become a Jew. As yet he knows nothing of how Christ's death destroyed the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, creating one body, the Church. It will indeed require divine intervention before Peter can bring God's answer to Cornelius' prayers—but when he does, the door will be opened to the Gentiles.

He certainly is not ready to welcome any Gentile messengers—and many of his scruples would have to be overcome before he could think of returning with them to Caesarea. As an orthodox Jew, Peter could not think of entering the house of a Gentile, even if he were a God-fearing man—but God is about to change all that! Peter went to the housetop for his midday devotions (he prayed three times a day), and while there he became hungry, and he sends word for some lunch to be brought him. (God never leaves any detail out when it is needed to convince a person!) While waiting, he falls into a trance, and in it sees a large sheet let down from the sky containing all kinds of unclean animals, reptiles and birds, and God speaks to him saying, —Rise, Peter, kill and eat! Peter is repulsed! Such a thing is an offense to an orthodox Jew. It was a mixture of unclean, which were contaminated, and clean—but even these required a certain ritual before they could be killed. It would not be kosher!

What Peter had been told to do horribly violated his life style and Jewish conscience, and it actually was strictly forbidden by God's dietary laws of Leviticus 11. Peter has always recoiled when told to do something contrary to his nature. You will recall that when the Lord wanted to wash his feet, he said, —Never! And also when the Lord said he would deny Him, he said, —Never! He is surely baffled now, for how could the One whose Law forbade the eating of anything but kosher food turn around and order him to eat it? But note God's firm reply—What God has cleansed, you must not call common. And this whole scene was repeated three times!

If what Peter has just seen and heard is really true, it means God has cancelled the dietary laws. But has God contradicted Himself? No. What Peter doesn't

understand is that God has changed the program. Many of the things He commanded of Israel as a nation (including dietary laws) were to keep them separated from the Gentiles. As long as Israel was the custodian of His revelation, He wanted that nation isolated from all others, and the levitical laws had served to accomplish this. But now with the coming advent of the Church, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, those former separating laws become obsolete. Peter is now meeting that truth. He will come to see that the meaning goes well beyond articles of food. In fact, the animals being shown him represent people, and therefore clean and unclean men is now at an end.

God's timing is always perfect—at the very time Peter fully meditated on what he had seen, men were knocking at the gate, and Peter was being ordered to go with them. He is told that they, too, are divinely directed and therefore he should not hesitate. He is still puzzled, however, but his first clue will come when he learns the reason for the messengers' visit.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Fill in the following spaces:

Simon was a _____ by trade and he handled skins of unclean animals.

God had given Peter the _____ of the kingdom and he would be the instrument God would use in opening the _____ to the Gentiles.

Peter believed the _____ was not for the Gentiles but was limited to the house of _____.

If any Gentile desired to be saved, he must become a _____, submit himself to _____, and place himself under the _____ of Moses.

To Peter, the Gentile was an unclean _____.

Peter was yet to learn that the _____ wall of partition between _____ and _____ had been broken down, and that in _____ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, _____ or free.

Acts 10:24-43

Our Scripture indicates that Cornelius was indeed eager to meet Peter and that he prostrated himself before him—this act was somewhat natural due to the Roman practice of regarding certain men as gods, an example being Caesar. For Peter to say that he was just a man was quite a meaningful statement for in so doing he had to sweep aside 1400 years of tremendous difference—but Peter was getting the message of the lowered sheet! And he made it clear that God was the one to show him that no man was to be considered unclean or defiled, for prior to this, his prejudice against

Gentiles had been great indeed. Peter as the top apostle, holding the keys to the kingdom, needed to fully understand that the Gentiles are acceptable to God, before using this final key in reaching out to them.

Cornelius and the people he had with him were more than prepared to hear Peter's message; the soil had already been prepared, for they already believed there was but ONE God. Their minds were unbiased, free of prejudice, and wide open to all that God has for them. They had not come to pass judgment, but to act upon what they would hear.

Prior to the revelation of the lowered sheet, Peter had always believed that God was partial—that Israel was His favorite race. In saying that God has no favorites, Peter sweeps away 20 centuries of Jewish prejudice. Next to the incarnation of Christ, the day of Pentecost, and the conversion of Saul, stand these words of Peter to the Gentile world. This is an epoch in human history! And it is remarkable that Peter is only now coming into this truth, for it is as old as Moses (Deut 10:17). Peter knew this truth in theory, but it took the crisis of Cornelius to make it real to him.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Besides the following Scripture verses, list any others that you can find that bear out the truth that the Gospel is intended by God for every race and every gender:

John 3:16 Rom. 5:8 Eph. 2:4-6 Eph. 2:11-18

Acts 10:44-48

The Holy Spirit fell upon the audience, as on the day of Pentecost, v. 44. There must have been that wonderful stirring and moving among the people which we have beheld, in a modified form, in modern audiences when moved by the celestial wind, as a harvest field by the breeze. Peter never finished his sermon. It seemed as if the Holy Spirit put the apostle aside, saying, —You have spoken enough; leave the rest to Me!

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

How does Philippians 1:6 fit in with this message?

Acts 11:1-18

To the circumcised, law-keeping Jews at Jerusalem, Peter's actions appeared to be —treason. Peter had clearly violated strict Jewish rules. It had the effect of tearing down the wall between Jew and Gentile—a separation they believed to be established by divine law. Seemingly he had brushed aside all Jewish procedure. They cared more that Jewish rules were violated than having the precious Word go to lost

souls, and they feared that if a tide of —heathen should sweep into the church, it would lose all of its Jewishness—what an alarming prospect!

Rather than denouncing their narrowminded prizing of rules more than people, Peter calmly and generously did his best to justify his actions and conciliate his brethren, by pointing out the amazing supernatural elements in the story regarding Cornelius and his friends. His listeners will only be convinced if they believe his actions were ordered by God—and the six Jewish witnesses who had accompanied Peter to Caesarea, were present to confirm his story.

Peter’s defense was not based on what he did, but only on what God did—and the climax of his argument is that God truly baptized these new Gentiles in the Holy Spirit. In fact, this happened before Peter had finished his teaching to them. And here Peter rests his case. The events, as they unfolded, clearly showed it was God’s will for these Gentiles to be saved, and since he proved it was God’s doing, his argument was irresistible.

(Lovett’s Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Do you think that Peter’s accounting of these Gentiles being saved might have taken these Jewish believers back to their own dramatic receiving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:36-39)? Did they grasp that the same Holy Spirit, with the same power and undeniable manifestations, had truly come upon the Gentiles, as well as upon them? Will they release their strong rulings regarding circumcision and the keeping of the Law?

Acts 11:19-30

There in Jerusalem the —grumbling was silenced for the moment, but 1400 years of national prejudice cannot be turned off like a faucet. It had taken a —Damascus Road type experience to change Peter’s mind, and the rest of the church will die hard. Later on, a new —Circumcision party will try to block Paul’s work when he begins preaching to the Gentiles. In theory, the church is now acknowledging the Gospel is for the whole world, but the disciples will be in no hurry to put that theory into practice. This was a great fault in the Jerusalem church.

Now Luke flashes back in his story to take up the account of what happened to those who fled Jerusalem (Acts 8:4). He had interrupted himself to tell of Saul’s conversion, Philip’s ministry to the Samaritans, and the Cornelius affair. In telling the story of those who fled northward, he is eager to show how they were used to create the great Gentile church at Antioch. Among these would be Nicolas (the seventh deacon, Acts 6:5) for he was a —proselyte from Antioch. They were still

witnessing to Jews only, and some time would pass before they minister to the Gentiles.

With the passing of time, a different breed of Hellenist Greek arrived in Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene. They were use to freedom and were not nearly so strict in their Judaism as the Hellenists who were scattered earlier. Their more daring spirits, plus the freedom of Antioch, prompted them to try a bold step—sharing Christ with the Greeks of that city. Evidently some of them were God-fearers (perhaps seekers) and it seemed only natural to tell them about Jesus. Thus the city of Antioch was ripe for the Gospel, and the rules of the Jerusalem church seemed far away. These Greeks happily received the word of Christ.

The leaders of the Jerusalem church, upon hearing of these happenings, sent a delegation headed by Barnabas, to check out this startling development. They couldn't have picked a better man, because Barnabas himself was a Hellenist from Cyprus, and he would be more sympathetic than any of the Christian Jews who had never been outside of Judea. He was overjoyed upon arrival and helped by teaching. In this teaching he urged the people to cling to the person of Jesus rather than the teachings about Him.

Then, rather than return to Jerusalem with his report, he sought for Saul in Tarsus, for he had seen him risk his life for Christ while preaching to Greek-speaking Jews in Jerusalem. And at last Saul stepped out onto the stage where his particular talents would be well used. And here in Antioch the believers were first called —Christians by the pagan Romans—it was their way of describing those who were always talking about Christ. In Greek, the name means —Christ-people.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

—Christian is a transliteration of the Greek *christianos*, which was a simple name given to the early followers of Christ. Greek —*christos* is not unlike a believer today being called a —Jesus-person. Do you feel this was meant to be complimentary (in most cases), or derisive?

Acts 12:1-19

This Herod is Herod Agrippa 1, the grandson of Herod the Great who had the baby boys killed after Jesus was born. He was a half-Jew, raised in Rome, and a favorite of the Roman court. He was given the title of king in A.D. 37 and ruled over parts of southern Syria. More territories were added to his kingdom, so that by A.D. 41 he ruled over all of Palestine, including Judea. In order to gain favor, he pretended

that he observed the Jewish customs, and to please the Pharisees he had James (John's brother) executed.

You will recall that a number of the apostles at Jerusalem favored strict Jewishness, but now Peter has met with Cornelius, which marked the beginning of the church embracing Gentiles. This, of course, caused the displeasure of many of the Jews, and when Herod detected this, he ordered Peter to be seized in order to boost his own prestige. He could not execute him, however, until the Passover was ended, and he planned to do it publicly.

Peter was under heavy guard watch since he had been delivered from prison before (Acts 5:17-20), but the people of the church immediately went to fervent prayer, and God indeed answered their prayers. An angel awoke him, snapped his chains silently so as not to wake the guards, and led him out to the street. Soon Peter realized that God had truly intervened on his behalf. Knowing that he soon would be followed, he went to the house of Mary, Mark's mother, where Christians were praying for him. Following their utter amazement, Peter asked them to get word to James, Jesus' brother, who now was head of the church. He then no doubt headed north toward Antioch where he would be free of Herod's jurisdiction.

Finally, Herod was so embarrassed that he could not carry out his promises to the Jews, that he left Jerusalem and returned to his palace at Caesarea. There he decided to hold a great festival in honor of the emperor, in order to save face.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

From your knowledge of mighty deliverances that God has performed in the Bible, on what type of occasions does God use these, employing angelic and the supernatural? Give an example from the Bible of each type.

Acts 12:20-25

The Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon had depended on Galilee for food for many years. The people of these cities had also offended Herod in some way unknown to us, so at this time they sent a delegation to him in order to make peace, and the king then consented to hear them on the same day on which he planned to honor Caesar. From the writings of Josephus the historian, we learn that Herod made his appearance to them decked out in dazzling royal finery, which aided in the people suddenly shouting that —This is a god speaking and not just a man! Herod, being a half-Jew, should have remembered that this was blasphemy, and turned away from it—but his vanity took over, and he allowed them to think of him as divine.

Since glory belongs only unto God, Herod was immediately smitten with a terrible disease, causing him to suffer severe pain in his abdomen. Josephus tells us that he died five days later at the age of 54, in the seventh year of his reign. Luke reports his symptoms which describe a ruptured cyst or peritonitis, which corresponds to being worm eaten.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Here recall verse 1 of chapter 12, where Herod the king —stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Listed below are Bible verses depicting God's divine protection. For each verse, name the characteristic of His divine protection as shown in that verse. For example, Psalm 121:3-8 shows his continuous protection.

Joshua 1:5 _____ Isaiah 41:10 _____ John 10:28-30 _____ 2
Corinthians 12:9, 10 _____ Psalm 121:1 _____
Acts 13:1-12

This is one of the greatest chapters in the New Testament, making a new departure in the ministry of the Gospel, which henceforth begins to pass out to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). It is likely that the mother church at Jerusalem was too conservative to lend herself to the pressure of the Holy Spirit, urging worldwide evangelization, and that He had to employ the more mobile church at Antioch, which was more susceptible to the passion for humanity since it stood on the edge of the great heathen world, like a lighthouse on the shore of a desolate sea.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

The Lord had earlier directed that Saul would be the bearer of His name among the Gentiles. Twelve years have passed since Paul was commissioned by the Lord, and now the Holy Spirit orders that he and Barnabas be set apart for the work to which He had called them. They took along John Mark who would tend to their various needs, and set sail for Cyprus, an island 60 miles out to sea. At this time Cyprus was a Roman province managed by a proconsul. Barnabas had also come from Cyprus so knew the area and people well. They preached in every Jewish synagogue first of all, and this was acceptable for Paul was a rabbi.

In the capitol of Paphos the Roman governor (proconsul), named Sergius Paulus was eager to learn what these men taught. Paul well knew God's teaching about the evils of sorcery (see Lev. 20:27), and also, being filled with the Holy Spirit, he condemned this sorcerer and caused blindness to fall upon him.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Please fill in the following blanks: In this passage of Scripture, Saul is now called by the name of _____ which was his Roman (Gentile) name. Barnabas was an excellent —junior partner of Paul, and he was greatly used in encouraging Paul. This man, Elymas, who blinded others to the truth, now became _____ himself. When Sergius Paulus heard and saw this amazing happening, he became a _____. In this battle against Satan, Paul could not have done this except he was in partnership with the _____.

Acts 13:13-25

They always traveled to the Jewish synagogues when they arrived—to the Jew first —and since Paul was a visiting rabbi, they received many welcomes. The practice on the Sabbath in the synagogue was the reading first from the Torah (first five books of Moses), followed by a portion from one of the Prophets that gave understanding to the passage from the Law. Paul was invited to speak, and here we have his first recorded sermon, which was addressed to the Jews. (Later on, Luke does give us parts of Paul’s messages to Christians and pagans.)

(Lovett’s Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

This was a typical Acts sermon including 1) a review of Jewish history; 2) a sketch of the life of Christ with an emphasis on the resurrection; 3) Old Testament texts to prove that Jesus is the Messiah; 4) a call to hear the message, repent and believe.

(NKJ New Spirit Filled Life Bible, footnote for Acts13:17-41)

By studying this first missionary journey, it is quite evident that Paul and Barnabas were being explicitly led by the Holy Spirit regarding how to preach the Gospel, where they should go, and to whom. Perhaps some of you have gone on missionary trips, or will be going. Please comment on how the direction and planning should come about. Also, are there serious dangers of mishandling these plans? What are the absolute requisites?

Acts 13:26-37

For Paul the resurrection was always the keystone of faith. He had taken particular care to assure himself of the reality of that foundation fact. In 1 Cor. 15 he sets forth at length the testimony culminating in his own experience, on which he rested his belief. He had been allowed to see that blessed One and hear the word from His mouth. He quotes Ps. 2:7, Isa. 55:3, and Ps. 16:10. He makes unexpected use of the first of these quotations, teaching that it was fulfilled in the resurrection. This sheds new light on death. It is not death but birth, not an ending but a beginning. Our

Lord was the firstborn from the dead. We say that a saint has died; angels say that he has been born.

Notice that great word about David, v. 36. He served God's counsel, or purpose, in his own generation. That should be the supreme objective of our lives. Not to succeed, or to make money, or to please ourselves, but to serve the will of God who sent us forth.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

David could serve God in the way God desired because his heart was right before Him. He was —a man after My own heart, who shall fulfill all My will (Acts 13:22). Spiritually speaking, how can we define the heart? And what is required for us to nurture a good heart before our Lord?

1 Sam. 1:13 Ps. 51:7 Ps. 73:1 Ps. 112:7, 8 Ps. 101:2 Prov. 10:8 Matt. 5:8 Matt. 12:35 Acts 2:46 2 Cor. 4:6

Acts 13:38-41

The doctrine of justification by faith, so closely associated with the work of Paul, is here stated for the first time. In Jesus there is forgiveness. For those who trust in Him, past sins are absolutely put away, never to be named again, never to be brought up at any future judgment day. Our record is as clear as the sand which has been swept smooth by the ocean waves. We are not only forgiven, but justified. We are treated as though we had never sinned, and —are justified from all things. It is a present fact. You may not feel justified or forgiven, but if you are trusting in Jesus, you are at this moment as certainly and as fully justified as have been the saints in heaven.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

The doctrine of justification in a nutshell is —accounting the guilty as just before God. Please fill in the blanks below:

Man can never be made just by the _____ (Rom. 3:20, 28). Nor by _____ (Rom. 10:1-4). Nor by _____ (Rom. 4:1-5) However, man can be made just by the following: _____ (Rom. 5:17-21) _____ (Rom. 5:9) _____ (Rom. 10:3)

Acts 13:42-52

The people to whom Paul and Barnabas were ministering had never heard such handling of the Scriptures before, and they begged them to come again the next Sabbath to help them understand more clearly. This was proof that the grace of God was working deeply in their hearts.

Although many Jews welcomed this new presentation of the Gospel, the larger number of them displayed jealousy that it was being offered to the Gentiles on an equal basis with the Jews. They could not accept that Paul by-passed the Jewish requirements, preaching that all that mattered was faith in Christ. Their anger went so far as to curse him. Paul and Barnabas were careful to honor—to the Jew first—but if they did not receive it, then it was to be offered to all those who did want it. This action then became standard procedure throughout all of Paul's journeys—in each new town they went first to the synagogues, but when these Jews as a body would reject the message, he then preached to the Gentiles in that city. The words of Isaiah 49:6 were being fulfilled.

Although the Jews of this Psidian Antioch resented the idea of unrestricted salvation for Gentiles, the Gentiles themselves were thrilled and delighted. For now they had become free of the synagogue and every Jewish requirement. And as a result many of them departed from organized Judaism to form Gentile churches of their own. This truly set them free from the burdens of legalism. These new disciples of Christ found the true joy of the Holy Spirit in their midst, and continued on in their growing and learning in the Lord, in spite of the Jewish resentment around them.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Verse 48 tells us that—as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. Can you see in this God's own initiative in individual salvation? Throughout the Bible we see God influencing people and altering the course of human history. Can you also recognize God orchestrating particular events that have changed yours or others lives forever? Please address this briefly.

Prov. 16:9 Dan. 4:34, 35 Acts 2:22-24 Eph. 1:3-5

Acts 14:1-7

Although they experienced opposition almost everywhere they went, Paul and Barnabas refused to be discouraged—rather they kept going deeper into Gentile territory. They traveled eastward from Antioch at this time, 90 miles along the Roman military highway to Iconium, which today is called Konya. They encountered there many Greeks, a few Roman soldiers, and an old Jewish colony. As was his custom, Paul went to their synagogue first. Here again, God richly blessed them by causing a large number of both Jews and Gentiles to turn to the Lord.

The unbelieving Jews once again circulated false reports about Paul and Barnabas and also the new converts, but Paul's message was that of the Holy Spirit, and their work progressed well.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

These men of God, in the face of continual persecution, lies, cruelty and even stoning, were faithful. Faith itself is known as the confidence in the testimony of another, and one's faithfulness is making faith a living reality in one's life. Faithfulness can be manifested in many ways, some of which are listed here with the Bible references. After reading these and the references, please write a few sentences regarding the status of your own faithfulness. Faithfulness is manifested in: God's service (Matt. 24:45); in declaring God's Word (Jer. 23:28); in bearing witness (Prov. 14:5); in keeping secrets (Prov. 11:13); in helping others (3 John 5); in holding offices of trust (Neh. 13:13); in reproofing others (Prov. 27:6); in conveying messages (Prov. 25:13); and in the smallest things (Luke 16:10-12).

Acts 14:8-20

In Lystra there was no Jewish synagogue because there was no Jewish population, so their preaching had to be done on the streets. Here, however, God allowed Paul to perform a miracle of healing on a man lame from birth, and this indeed drew the crowds he needed for preaching. But this caused another kind of crisis—these pagan people envisioned Paul and Barnabas as gods from heaven, for such was their type of belief. In their thinking, because he had brought healing to the cripple, Paul was considered to be Hermes, the spokesman for the gods. Barnabas was Zeus, the mightiest of all the ancient gods, and the father of other gods and men. The people rushed to prepare sacrifices of food, for they hoped the visit of these —gods meant that they would put an end to all their problems. Paul and Barnabas immediately tore their clothes which was a Jewish gesture of horror at an act of blasphemy—and possibly they thought of the fate of King Herod. Paul and Barnabas would have none of this —worship which reminds us of Satan's offer of fame and power to Jesus if He would bow down and worship him. They quickly denied any deity, telling their hearers that they, too, suffered and would die like all men.

When Paul had preached to the Jews, they understood and worshiped the one true God, and he could also speak of the promised Christ, or Messiah. However, the people in Lystra knew nothing of the God of the Bible, so Paul first had to open the Bible of nature and declare its Creator. They were amazed to have him tell them that there was only one God who made heaven, earth, and sea, for they had a god for each realm. Paul later teaches in Romans that this God has provided a completely sufficient testimony in nature so as to leave them without excuse (Rom. 1:22).

Immediately following this, Jews came from other areas and by some means captured the attention of the crowds, and turned them against Paul, so that they stoned him, dragging him outside of the city, and left him there as dead. Later, in 2 Cor. 11:25, Paul writes, —Once I was stoned, and this is the occasion he is thinking of. Yet God, again in His faithfulness, raised him up, and he and Barnabas departed to Derbe.

(Lovett’s Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

We only fail in trying to imagine Paul’s suffering on this occasion—yet God always has a way of bringing good out of trials when they are committed to Him. From Acts 16:1, 2, we see that Paul gained his —son in the faith in Timothy, who loved him and became devoted to him, and followed him in preaching the Gospel. No doubt Paul’s suffering for God’s righteous cause turned his heart toward Paul. We do not fear stoning today, but we can be misunderstood, shunned, mocked and have false accusations made against us. What strong Bible verses can be our pillar of strength at such a time?

Acts 14:21-28

At Derbe, Paul and Barnabas preached and taught the gospel to many with great success and were not molested. They then returned to Lystra where Paul had been stoned. However, new magistrates were ruling who were not hostile to these missionaries. They visited the churches and endeavored to strengthen them by appointing elders—these included all church officers. Paul greatly encouraged the believers but warned them of the tribulations that they should expect as Christians. The New Testament teaches that suffering is the norm for God’s people, but it is the pathway to glory (Rom. 8:16, 17; 2 Thess. 1:4; 2 Tim. 2:12). Missionary endeavor has always included sacrifice and death. It has been said, —When we cease to bleed, we cease to bless.

Following this, they retraced their steps, visiting the churches, and returned to Antioch, thus completing the first missionary journey. The apostles had covered more than 1400 miles and were gone for more than two years or longer (A.D. 45-48).

(Lovett’s Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Please sum up in a few sentences your critique of this first missionary journey. Would you say that God’s purposes had been accomplished?

Acts 15:1-18

When the news of Paul’s report—that Gentiles were being saved by simply believing—plus nothing—reached Jerusalem, a group of legalistic teachers hurried

down to Antioch and began to teach the believers there that Paul was wrong. Barnabas and Paul on the one hand were defending the grace of God, while these legalistic Judaizers from Jerusalem insisted upon circumcision and the keeping of the Law. That there was a real church fight is quite evident from verse 2. This was to be the first ecumenical council in church history, and Paul and Barnabas were delegates from Antioch.

Here we insert a bit of material which Paul revealed in his epistle to the Galatians (this, of course, was not yet written at the time of this meeting). It seems that Peter had heard the glowing report of Paul and Barnabas, and personally had gone down to Antioch to get firsthand information. Paul and Barnabas were back from their first missionary trip and Peter pays them a visit. When Peter, an orthodox Jew, saw the evidence of the grace of God among these Gentile Christians, he cast off all his legal restraints, recognized the genuineness of Paul's message of grace, and entered fully and completely into fellowship with these Gentile believers. He ate with them, visited and fellowshipped with them as though there had never been any ancient or legal prejudices to separate them. He rejoiced with them in the liberty of grace.

However, when the legalistic sabbatarian teachers from Jerusalem came to Antioch, Peter withdrew himself from the group, because he was afraid of the criticism of these legalistic, Judaistic law-teachers. This so incensed Paul that he publicly rebukes and dresses Peter down for his inconsistent conduct. Paul tells this in his own words in Galatians 2:11-14. This silenced Peter and we hear no more from him until they meet for the general council in Jerusalem.

Paul and Barnabas with others made plans to go to Jerusalem to have these issues settled once for all. True to their calling, they preached in churches along the way.

Peter speaks first, and makes a moving point by saying they had no right to add circumcision and rabbinical traditions, when God Himself had required none—His way was to save and by grace alone! Peter also adds that not one of them, nor their fathers, could keep the law (the law only condemned them), and therefore it could not be the means of salvation for the Gentiles. Jesus had said when He walked among them, —Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, and He was contrasting His loving way of grace to the harshness of the Law.

Barnabas and Paul spoke, telling of the miracles and wonders that God had performed among the Gentiles by them.

This new program was hard to accept, but in receiving it, there was still an all-important question unanswered. If God is now building the Church, then what about all the promises of the kingdom of David—would these be applied to the Church instead? If the Church is the new Kingdom, then the requirements of the Kingdom must be met, and the Gentiles must be circumcised and brought under the law of the Kingdom. After a long significant silence, God gives the answer to this question. James, the brother of Jesus, and the head of this meeting gives his answer in vv. 13-18, and he quotes from Amos 9:11, 12.. Here the Holy Spirit once and for all settles the question of the reason for the Church Age intervening between the First and Second Coming of Christ; and establishes the certainty of the setting up of the Messianic Kingdom at the return of the Messiah.

In v. 16 of our text, James says of Christ, —After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down ...

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan-parphrased)

Notice the words after this I will return to set up the Kingdom. And we ask, after what? And the answer is after God has taken out from among the Gentiles a people for His Name, which is the program of God. When Jesus came the first time to offer the Kingdom to Israel it was rejected, the nation was set aside, and God revealed a new thing—the Church, the Body of Christ which would fill the interim between our Lord’s rejection and His coming to set up the Throne of David. And this is what He is doing today, —calling out the Church, the Bride of the King, and then after that He will return and fulfill all the Kingdom promises. To the question, Has the Lord forgotten Israel? Is the Church the Kingdom?—to this James says no! When the last member is added to the Body of Christ the Lord will return, restore Israel, and bring in the glorious millennial age of peace.

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan)

The above section is not only historical; it gives us the great purposes of God for all mankind in a nutshell. Here we ask you to do one of two things: 1) If you feel you understand fairly well the program of God as set forth above, write it in your own words in one paragraph. 2) If you do not feel you have grasped this, then jot down your questions concerning it, for further teaching.

Acts 15:19-41

Since none of the N. T. had been written as yet, the assembled apostles and elders wrote what is known as the Jerusalem Decree, setting forth the results of the council meeting, and laying down a few restrictions in v. 29. This would help to allay

some of the differences between the freedom the Gentiles enjoyed and the stricter codes by which the Jews were regulated.

Judas and Silas, now prophets, accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, carrying this letter, which brought great rejoicing and encouragement to the people there.

Now Paul proposes a second missionary tour with Barnabas. However, a dispute arose between the two of them over John Mark, the deserter who had left them on the first trip, and this caused a separation between them. Paul now takes Silas and starts on his second tour. From here (Acts 16 to 28), we have an account of Paul's second and third missionary journeys, and his final trip as a prisoner to Rome. The book closes with Paul in jail (Acts 28:31).

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan- paraphrased)

We have read of Peter's humanity earlier in Acts, which caused him to fear the strict Jews enough that he turned away from the Gentiles—and now we see Paul and Barnabas differing so much that it caused them to part from each other. Was Paul correct in his attitude or not—can you give Scripture to back your claim?

Matt. 5:9 Matt. 5:43-45 Matt. 6:14, 15 Matt. 7:1-5

Acts 16:1-5

Paul had a wonderful influence over young men. Timothy, Titus and Mark bore his impress. When circumcision was insisted upon, as in the previous chapter, no one opposed it more stoutly than Paul; when it

conciliated Jewish prejudice, he was quite willing to concede it, since in itself it was a matter of perfect indifference. As the stoning of Stephen was the first step toward winning Paul, so his own stoning at Lystra on the former occasion, as we have noted, probably gave him Timothy.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

We know that later on Paul writes the books of 1 and 2 Timothy to his —son in the faith. Timothy is well taught by Paul and becomes his disciple. Later on following Paul's first Roman imprisonment, he left Timothy in charge of the church in Ephesus. Tell us in your own words how Paul describes himself to Timothy in 1 Tim. 1:12-16. Do you feel that his many experiences as a preacher of the Gospel had mellowed him a great deal by this time?

Acts 16:6-10

Our path through life will often be indicated by the fact that the doors which lead off the straight track are barred and bolted, so that we have no option save to go on.

Paul was blocked first on the left, that he should not go into the province of Asia; then on the right, that he should not go into Bithynia. Finally he reached Troas, and stood face to face with the ocean that lay between him and Europe.

Here he had a vision which made a deep impression upon him. He saw a man of Macedonia standing in an attitude of entreaty and saying, —Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Luke indicates somewhat how the Holy Spirit communicated His will to these missionaries. It could have been through prompting, prophetic utterance or outward circumstances (which we often denote as the opening or closing of doors). For our information, Macedonia is northern Greece, including the cities of Philippi and Thessalonica, to which later Paul addressed three of his epistles. Can you give an example in your own life of how you believe you were led by the Holy Spirit in a certain situation?

Acts 16:11-34

Keeping his custom of preaching on the Sabbath and in the synagogues, Paul traveled to Philippi, one of the four districts of Macedonia to begin his ministry there, but he found no synagogue. It appeared that there were not enough male Jews in this Roman colony to have a synagogue, for Jewish custom required a minimum of 10 men to form a congregation for the reading of the Torah. However, outside the city was a place of prayer where Jewish women and God-fearing Gentiles gathered to carry out the Jewish prayer service.

Our Scripture tells us that —the Lord moved on her heart and Lydia, a merchant-lady, possibly a widow, responded to Paul's message. It is always thus—the Lord touches people's hearts, not merely the words of His servants, and this is the way in which He builds His church. Lydia perhaps became the first European convert, and years later Paul will send a letter to the church at Philippi. It is remarkable to see how the Gospel honors women, and it reassures us that each and every one on earth is —special to Him!

In the Greek text Luke indicates that the slave girl was considered as a voice (or oracle) of Apollo, the god of divination. The people of Philippi believed that she was inspired by Apollo and they would pay large sums to have her tell their fortunes. Demons are able to reveal some kinds of information, and her shrewd masters played upon the credulity of the people. The spirit within her truthfully identified Paul and his companions (Mk. 1:24; Luke 4:41) Her disturbing crying out and Paul's

knowledge of this Satanic demon finally caused him to confront that demon, and he did so in the name of Jesus, casting it out. This kind of power comes only from the Lord Himself! Immediately, her behavior was peaceful. We are not told that she became a Christian (which was certainly likely), but if so, she perhaps became the second convert in Europe—also another woman. Now, however, these wicked masters knew that their well-paying business was gone, and they manage to have Paul and Silas arrested and charged—not for destroying their profits—but for disturbing the peace with illegal Jewish religious activities. At this time in Philippi the Jews were in special disgrace, having been banished from Rome. They were also forbidden by strict Roman law (this was a Roman colony) to propagate their religion among Romans. In their company Luke, being a Gentile, and Timothy, a half-Jew, were not arrested.

One might wonder at this point, where is that call through the Spirit of the Macedonian man? Here Paul and Silas were considered as wandering Jews doing serious damage to two Roman citizens! Following the whippings they were thrown into the inner prison which was probably underground, dark and unventilated, with their feet secured in stocks.

Our Scripture teaches us that Paul and Silas, in spite of their pain and bleeding, had hearts to do only as God would have them do—pray and sing praises to God—and at midnight! God responded with an earthquake that cancelled the work of the devil, and they were set free.

The jailer, knowing the discipline of the Roman army, fearfully decided to take his life at this point, but Paul's shouting to him stopped him in time, and after leading them out, he begged of them to know how he could be saved. He would be the third person in Philippi reached by the power of Christ!

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

When considering the completeness of this amazing story of God's supernatural deliverance upon the faith of the missionaries, and then the unbelievable turn-about from darkness to light of the Roman jailer, we must then ask ourselves the questions: If we too were faced with serious trial, would our faith be equal to the test, and would we believe for God's deliverance and for His salvation of those involved? Here, write as you feel led regarding this question, or choose Scriptures that pertain to such a situation.

2 Cor. 5:7 Heb. 11:24-26 Isa. 41:10 Ps. 34:6 Ps. 37:5, 6, 17

Acts 16:35-40

The magistrates offer them release the next day, but Paul insists that they come to escort them out, since they are Roman citizens themselves. This makes their trial and imprisonment illegal, so the magistrates go to the prison, apologize and beg them to leave town. It is difficult to understand why Paul insists on his civil rights, for these are not the criteria to stand upon as servants of Christ.

They do not leave Philippi, but go to Lydia's home which has become the meeting place for the church. Perhaps the jailer and his household participated with them there. Then Paul and Silas leave Philippi taking Timothy with them. Luke does not accompany them.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

This lesson gives us a great deal to learn about leaning on God for His strength, wisdom and guidance. In today's society, most people lean on their own judgment due in great part to much knowledge being advanced and available, and it is difficult for individuals to realize the foolishness of human reasoning. Below are some verses regarding this—please add yours.

Rom. 8:14 Rom. 14:7-12 Rom. 15:3 1 Cor. 1:26-29 1 Cor. 2:5, 11, 14-16

Acts 17:1-9

Paul's group passed through two cities, where there was no synagogue and came to Thessalonica, the largest city in Macedonia, where there were many Jews. It was a wealthy, heavily populated center of commerce. He preached Christ for three Sabbaths in this important synagogue. He endeavored to teach them from the O.T. proving that Jesus was the Messiah. The thrust of his message was that the Scriptures foretold the sufferings and resurrection of the Messiah, and that Jesus was the only One who fulfilled these requirements. Some Jews believed, but most of his converts were God-fearing Gentiles. Also, a large number of leading women came to Christ.

The majority of the Jews would not believe their message and became envious of Paul's success with the Greeks. These Jews rounded up some —undesirables to spread vicious and untrue talk about the missionaries throughout the city. Eventually an ugly mob descended on the house of Jason—he was one whom Paul and Silas had converted and who hosted them. Jason's Hebrew name was Joshua or Jesus, but for some reason he used his Greek name. Jason and other believers there were charged with keeping political and religious agitators in his home, and they were also accused of introducing a king to rival the claim of Caesar!

Yes, Jesus was a king, but not One who sought Caesar's throne—He had one of His own. This very partial truth caused serious charges to be brought.

Jason and his friends were brought before the magistrates. Paul realizes the need to leave, for staying longer could jeopardize the new church, and possibly bring hardship upon new believers. Later, we learn that this church became an —on-fire center for Christ (1 Thess. 1:6-10).

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

It is easily recognized that the more penetrating and exhaustive the work of these missionaries, the more evidence there is of Satan's opposition through unbelievers. Can you name a more recent missionary who seemingly started out well, and then progressively met more and more opposition and persecution? If you have the call of God upon you to give the Gospel to the lost in other places, what Holy Spirit preparation is imperative for you to have?

Acts 17:10-15

Scripture tells us that the brethren hurriedly sent Paul and Silas to Berea, where they again go to the Jewish synagogue. Quite a surprise awaited them here for these Berean Jews were open-minded and welcomed new ideas. They eagerly listened to the message, and then checked the Scriptures to make sure that their statements were true. It appears that in Thessalonica most of the believers were Greeks, but here in Berea most were Jews. Leading Greek women also believed. Many Bible groups take the name —Berean— even today, for these believers' diligent learning habits have followed throughout the years. This should be every Christian's habit today as well—checking all teaching against that of the Word—and many pitfalls could be avoided in so doing.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Acts 17:16-17

Verses 13-15 tell of the difficulties caused by the Thessalonian Jews, and the travel that followed for these missionaries. The Berean brethren were wise in moving Paul out quickly since he was the city's personal target. Then verse 16 tells us of his agony on seeing Athens so full of idols. This fact outweighed the beauty and majesty of their architectural achievements. He knew Athens was the leading center of culture and philosophy of the ancient world, yet none of it was dedicated to the true God. For all of its wisdom and workmanship, the city was as pagan as could be, and none of this extreme idolatry could enlighten the human soul. It grieved Paul's heart to see all that magnificence dedicated to gods that were demon inspired (1 Cor. 10:20). Also, the cultured and refined were more inclined to idolatry than the others.

While waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him, Paul went daily into the marketplace (Agora) where the intellectuals gathered each day to speculate about new ideas. Paul might not have been a match for their classic style, but he definitely was not ashamed of the Gospel! He was ready to submit its claims to the keenest minds and brightest intellects of the city, and here he learned first-hand how the wisdom of this world is at odds with the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:21).

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Today's society may not have man-made carvings of idols, but they have substituted the true worship of God with all sorts of idolatrous practices and desires. Are wealth and power some of our greatest idols today?

As we desire to witness to people, should we face them with the fact that their perceptions are wrong, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only way? Or, would you say that by subtle addressing of their philosophy, endeavoring to show them what part of it might be considered good, and then moving on into the obvious —cracks in their ways of thinking, showing them that our Lord has a great answer for that need, for each individual,—that this might be the wiser way of —reaching them? Here give us your views, and go on to see what Paul did to win them.

Acts 17:18-22

The Epicureans were atheists in that they believed the world was an accident. They believed you were here today and gone tomorrow, so why not enjoy life as much as you can. To them, seeking pleasure was the main purpose of life. They did not deny the existence of any gods, but maintained they were totally indifferent to the affairs of men who were left to find their pleasure as they could. Consequently they were given to gross sensualism. This teaching was founded by Epicurus, who died in Athens 270 years before Christ. He left his home and garden to be used as a headquarters for the Epicureans. It was still maintained at the time Paul visited the city.

The Stoics were the opposite of the Epicureans. They were pantheists, claiming God was in everything and everyone. To them, pleasure was not good and pain was not evil. Virtue was its own reward and vice its own punishment. They denied the immortality of the soul, claiming people were swallowed up in the Deity after physical death. Both Epicureanism and Stoicism were attempts to come to terms with life before the advent of Christianity. Modern pagans haven't been able to come up with anything any better. The Stoics were founded by Zeno, in Athens, at the same time Epicurus was founding his school. While these two rival schools of thought were

opposed to each other, they did agree that the preaching of this itinerant Jew was probably worthless, but there was something in his words that raised their curiosity.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett)

When Paul spoke of —Jesus and —the resurrection, they thought he was speaking of a new god and goddess. This is why they wanted him examined by the council, which was the ancient court of Athens. This council met out in the open on seats of rock on a hill named after the Roman god of war, —Mars. This, indeed, was the finest place in all of Athens for Paul to speak.

These Athenians had a passion for philosophy and new ideas—not that they would do anything about the ideas—they just wanted to hear them! And to these people an idea became old the moment they heard it—they were —hooked on news and ideas!

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Should these Greeks be commended for their actions even though some called Paul a —babbler, while others said he was bringing forth strange gods?

Acts 17:22-34

The men of Athens had made an altar to the —unknown god in order that they would not offend any god that they did not yet know. This basic instinct of worship is inherent in all people, and Paul made use of it, to let them know that this unknown one was the REAL and ONLY God. As Paul teaches them that this true God is God over all, in heaven and in earth, and man is unable to worship Him with their hands, they are completely amazed, for they had a god for every realm of life! Paul's approach to them is not from the Scriptures, for they had no knowledge of these, but he quoted one of their own poets in saying that —in Him we live and move and have our very being.

Paul skillfully leads them on to an understanding that all people on earth were created by this God; that they needed to seek Him spiritually, and not through material things. He is now bringing them from the things that they knew on to the unknown—the true Gospel, in which this God has appointed a Man who will one day judge them for their sin. This was totally unknown to their Greek philosophy. Paul is careful to show them that God's Man not only reveals God to mankind, but He came to die for their sin. And this almighty God then raised the God-Man from the dead!

At this point their worldly wisdom clashed with the divine wisdom of God, and the people laughed and scoffed at the idea. However, some did believe—one of whom was Dionysius, a member of the 12-man panel making up the Areopagus (also known

as —Hill of Ares —Roman —Mars —the open forum for philosophical debate). Also a woman named Damaris heard and believed. Paul tells the Corinthian church later that —the preaching of the cross is foolishness to the Greeks (1 Cor. 1:18).

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Do you agree with Paul's method of bringing the salvation message to these people of Athens who had no knowledge of the Bible? As Christians, what part of reaching others for Christ belongs to us? If they don't believe, what responsibility is left to us?

Matt. 10:14 John 8:18 Acts 4:12 Rom. 5:8 1 Cor. 1:18 Eph. 2:5, 8 Titus 3:5

Acts 18:1-17

Leaving Athens, Paul proceeded 45 miles southwest to a town known for its large commerce, as it had two seaports, one facing Europe and one facing

Asia. This was the town of Corinth, a wide open city, also known for its wealth and vice. As a world merchandise center, it had a large Jewish colony. Also, a temple was erected to worship Aphrodite, a goddess of sensuousness, and there one would see thousands of priestess-prostitutes offering their fare.

This place pleased Paul for it offered great evangelistic opportunities. Here we are told that Paul was a tentmaker, and he thereby met other Jewish tentmakers, Aquila and his wife Priscilla. In 1 Thess. 2:9 we are also told of his tentmaking in order to earn a living.

Aquila and Priscilla, as Jews, were expelled along with other Jews, from Rome by Emperor Claudius in A.D. 49. Scripture does not tell us whether they were saved before they met Paul, but they do become his friends for life.

On each Sabbath Paul again went into the synagogues to reach the Jews and God-fearing Greeks. His words in 1 Cor. 2:1 surely apply to his methods here: —When I came to you, it was not with the excellency of speech or wisdom ... for I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. Human wisdom had surely not availed in Athens, so he chose to preach the simple Gospel of Jesus by using O.T. Scriptures teaching about the Messiah, and placing Jesus' name there.

Silas and Timothy now join him after concluding their work in Macedonia and they bring a monetary gift to him from the church at Philippi. This gave him more time to preach to the Jews, but their hatred for him (and Christ) only became the more intense, causing him finally to make a clean break with them. He now would preach

only to the Gentiles. He then moves his ministry to a Gentile's house next door to the synagogue! But as though that weren't enough, he then manages to lead the leader of the synagogue, Crispus, to the Lord!

This is becoming a very explosive situation, but when it seemed the worst, the risen Christ appeared to him in a vision, reassuring and comforting him, and giving him divine protection. He now teaches in Corinth 18 months, which was possibly from the Fall of 50 to the Spring of 52. It was also during this time that Paul wrote his two letters to the Thessalonians. From now on for the next five years, rather than establishing more new churches, he now spends time endeavoring to strengthen and enlarge the work at Ephesus and Corinth. While in Ephesus he wrote also to the Corinthians.

Now a new governor comes to the province, and the angry Jews thought he might give them favor, so they had Paul brought before him for judgment, and hopefully silence him. However, this backfired, for they had misjudged this governor, who was more interested in the Roman law than theirs. Had he been charged, word would have spread to the other Roman provinces and Paul's ministry would have been in jeopardy. But his Lord had promised divine protection!

Following this, the Greeks took Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, (who had been Paul's persecutor) and beat him. But as Scripture says, the governor Gallio took no notice of these things. Finally, one who had hated Paul was now persecuted himself!

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

For those, who in obedience to the Word, choose to be faithful witnesses of the Gospel, the walk is not easy—God teaches us that there will be tests and trials, and only a strong, enduring faith in the Lord can see that one through. We know that God has a purpose for all things He brings into a person's life. Here give your reasons, backed up with Scripture, why tests and trials are allowed.

Acts 18:18-23

After staying somewhat longer in Corinth, Paul had a great desire to return to Antioch in Syria. He arranged to take Aquila and Priscilla with him, and left from the eastern seaport of Corinth to go to Syria, which would also take him through Ephesus. While he was in Cenchrea he had his hair cut because he took a Jewish vow.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

This vow is difficult to identify. A Nazarite vow could not be undertaken outside of Judea, so this was probably some private vow of thanksgiving for the fulfillment of God's promise to him in vv. 9, 10 and his protection in Corinth.

(NKJV New Spirit Filled Life Bible, footnote on Acts 18:18)

Acts 18:24-28

Apollos combined the eloquence of the Greek with the religious instinct of the Jew. A student from the great university at Alexandria, a convert to the Gospel, deeply conversant with the Old Testament, gifted with marvelous eloquence, he was a strong ally of the Christian forces of his age. But he needed to know of the death, resurrection, and ascended power of Christ, and to experience the Pentecostal gift. How wonderful is that holy wisdom which the Spirit of God gives to simple and humble believers, so that they can become teachers of men who are intellectually their superiors!

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

This reading is an excellent description of Apollos' abilities in the Lord. He was eloquent and knew the O.T. Scriptures well; he was fervent in spirit, taught what he knew accurately, found favor with other Christians, refuted the Jews skillfully, and firmly believed in Jesus Christ. Can a humble person today accomplish what an Apollos did? Should this inspire us as Christians to be our utmost for the Lord?

Ex. 32:26-29 Num. 13:30 Num. 25:1-9 Prov. 3:9 Rom. 12:1, 2 1 Cor. 6:20 Acts 27:22-26

Acts 19:1-10

Upon arriving in Ephesus, Paul finds a group of disciples, whose knowledge about the Holy Spirit is defective. Their teachers knew some basics of Christianity from contact with John the Baptist, but they were apparently unaware of the developments of Pentecost. Therefore, these disciples had only been baptized into John's baptism. This indicates that their conversion experience with the Holy Spirit would come (Matt. 3:11), but without the realization that it had come (Acts 2:1-4). Paul remedies this by rebaptizing them in water (the only such account in the N.T.), and by leading them into a fuller experience with the Holy Spirit (v. 6). An obvious parallel to the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit's fullness is displayed by their speaking in tongues and prophesying.

(NKJV New Spirit Filled Life Bible, footnote for Acts 19:1-7)

Luke has placed this lesson at length in the Word for our understanding, as well as for those of Paul's day. When John baptized, he preached only to the Jews who

truly needed to repent for rejecting Christ. For these Jews, John's baptisms were outward tokens of turning from evil, but he also told the people they were to turn to the Person who was coming after him—that is, they were to place their trust in Jesus.

For the disciples above, that baptism did not prepare them to receive Christ and was therefore insufficient. Peter had made it plain in Acts 2:38 that they would have to be rebaptized before they could receive the Spirit, and so these new disciples needed it also for the same reason. Do you understand that the Jewish baptism of John was done before salvation, as repentance from sin (Acts 2:38)? And that Christian baptism by the Apostle Paul was after salvation, as the receiving of the new life (Rom. 6:4)?

Acts 19:11-20

Where God's Spirit is mightily at work, Satan is not far away. Here the enemy's emissaries were mean enough to use the name of Jesus to get themselves a few more shekels. But the name is useless apart from the living power of the Spirit. It is terrible when the very demons flout those who profess religion. —Who are ye? meant, —You do not count. The demons knew Christ as the Holy One of God and Paul as his representative, but these exorcist Jews were hollow as sounding brass. Cast into the balances, they were altogether lighter than vanity (Ps. 62:9)

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Following on after the exorcist drama, it is wise here to state that the authority of the name of Jesus has been granted only to believers (Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17-20). Any prayer offered, or ministry attempted in the name of Jesus must be in accord with His nature and purpose.

(NKJV New Spirit Filled Life Bible, footnote for Acts 19:13-17)

Scripture shows us that the end result of the deeds of the evil seven sons of Sceva not only caused them to flee, but many other people came believing and confessing their own evil, and the name of the Lord Jesus was glorified.

Also, the Word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. Realizing the great power of the Word, briefly study the following:

Jesus is the living logos (or Word) - John 1:1

The Bible is the written logos – Heb. 4:12

The Holy Spirit utters the spoken logos - 1 Cor. 2:13

Acts 19:21-41

The religious life of Ephesus centered around the worship of the fertility goddess Artemis (Roman name) or Diana (Greek name)—the Great Mother—worshiped in a

temple that was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Paul's success at Ephesus was so great that the cult of Artemis and its mighty temple were seriously affected. Demetrius, apparently head of the silversmith guild or union, manufactured miniatures of the temple and the goddess. The rioters rushed to the theater, well-known from archaeology and inscriptional reference. The crowd's yell, —Great is Diana of the Ephesians, is archaeologically corroborated. The title —great for a deity was common in antiquity. Many images and other objects of Artemis have been found and references to them occur in inscriptions.

(Unger's Bible Handbook, M. F. Unger)

Demetrius' only true concern was the loss of money in selling his images, but he made his charge against Paul by pretending to crusade for the worship of Artemis (Diana). Paul really had not come against their Artemis worship or their magic—no, he just set forth Christ! And in today's culture, does the Word of God teach us to fight the anti-God systems, or is it enough that we set forth the Lord Jesus Christ—crucified, risen again and soon coming—who has come to bring new life and hope to all who believe? In your opinion, should any form of attack be avoided? Is there enough of the positive in the message of Christ's Gospel that makes offensive confrontation completely unnecessary? Please give Scripture verses to back your statements.

Gal. 5:13, 14

Acts 20:1-31

If you will read carefully Acts 20 and 21, you will be impressed with Paul's determination to reach Jerusalem, and as a result he stayed only a short while in each place, and spent less and less time in preaching.

After departing from Greece he stopped at Troas, where he waited for his companions to join him. Here he seems to have preached only one sermon (a long one lasting till midnight). From here Paul goes to Assos, then on to Mitylene, then to Samos, on to Trogyllium, and finally comes to Miletus. He had hoped to stop for a visit to Ephesus but instead he called the elders from Ephesus to Miletus. It is a scene of hurry, hurry, hurry. In only one of the various places he stopped did he take time to preach. And now at Miletus he finds no time to visit Ephesus, less than forty miles away. Why all the hurry, Paul? What is causing this unrest and haste? We have the answer in Acts 20:16, For Paul had determined to sail by [past] Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hastened, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost (Acts 20:16).

The important word in this verse is determined. Paul determined to pass up his work in Asia, in order that he might go where God had strictly forbidden him to go. Paul was commissioned to go to the Gentiles, and to stay away from the city of Jerusalem. As long as Paul stuck to his job of evangelizing the Gentiles all was well, but when Paul became obsessed with the desire to step out of the will of God, and go to the city of Jerusalem, his ministry to the Gentiles comes to an abrupt end, and the apostle of grace is to find out that grace does not justify disobedience to the will of the Lord.

In our next message we shall trace the rest of Paul's experience in the closing chapters of Acts, which are occupied almost entirely with Paul's arrest, trial and final imprisonment in Rome.

In closing this message we want to make one practical application. Grace does not give license to disobey God. No matter how sincere we may be, it does not excuse disregard for the clear will of God. And Paul was no exception. Why should the Lord permit the apostle of grace to fall into the trap of legalism after his uncompromising declaration of the unconditional grace of God? Why did the Holy Spirit permit Dr. Luke to record for us the tragic end to Paul's public ministry after his wonderful missionary activities? Why must we be told about this man, who had been so faithful, that he spent his closing days in prison, and was executed for his faith? It is written for our admonition. It is a warning that even the godliest of men (even Paul) is not immune to yielding to the temptation of the flesh, when he takes liberties with the clear and unmistakable warnings of God. Paul knew better, for he himself tells us that the experience of Israel in the wilderness was to teach us that we cannot disobey God and escape God's judgment (1 Corinthians 10:1-10) and says,

Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [ages] are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:11, 12).

(Pentecost and After, M. R. DeHaan)

Luke, the physician, tells us that —he was dead (Acts 20:9); and Paul, by the power of the indwelling Lord, restored him to life. Paul's statement to the gathered group was, —... for his life is in him (Acts 20:10), and he took no glory for himself in this miracle, for his purpose was only to glorify Jesus as Lord, and to continue ministering to his brethren there at Troas. After a whole night of Paul's teaching they closed with the breaking of bread, or communion.

The name of the young man who fell was Eutychus, which means —fortunate! Indeed, this tells us more of God’s ways, for He, of course, knew ahead of time that this incident would happen, causing his death, but also giving opportunity for Paul to wondrously demonstrate the awesome power of God through His Son Jesus. Whatever problems or trials you may now be experiencing, can you definitely see God’s hand not necessarily bringing these upon you—but certainly allowing it? And can you also know without doubt in your heart that God will see you through, and also show you much of His grace in so doing?

Deut. 31:8 Isa. 26:3 Ps. 27:1-5 Ps. 27:14 Ps. 28:7 Ps. 46:1-3 Ps. 91:2 Ps. 121 (all)
2 Cor. 4:8, 9 John 14:27

In this Chapter 20 we come face to face with the real man of God, Paul, and our hearts cannot fail to be touched with his love and zeal, first for the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word, and second for people everywhere, both Jew and Gentile, that they might be saved. Why do you believe he so persistently desires to go to Jerusalem? Could it be that he feels the gift of money will help bring Jews and Gentiles together? Is it his love for the Jerusalem disciples, which included James, the brother of Jesus? Here give your thoughts, using Scripture if possible.

Acts 20:32-38

Paul closes by speaking of the fact that he earned his living by his work, and kept nothing for himself above that. In his writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:13, 14) he makes it clear that all those who preach the Gospel should be able to receive for their needs from those whom they teach. By his working at his trade he could be independent of course, and thereby keep the Gospel blameless.

(Lovett’s Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

By what other verses in Scripture (including the one above) are we shown God’s will for us as to how we should support those who do the work of the Gospel? And how freely are we to give?

Acts 21:1-14

As we trace Paul and his companions’ journey by seafaring ship to Palestine, Scripture strongly indicates the warm Christian welcomes they received in the many places where the Gospel had gone forth due to their earlier efforts. It has been 20 years since we last heard of Philip the Evangelist in chapter 8, but now we see his continued faithfulness, along with his four daughters whom God had blessed with the gift of prophecy. Here also we see Agabus once more, for he was the one who had predicted the famine while they were in Antioch. But this time his dramatic prophecy

was meant to be strong warning to Paul not to continue on to Jerusalem. In spite of the persistence of his friends, however, Paul ruggedly determined to go, for he knew that God's hand was strongly upon him and that the Lord was building His church through him.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

This passage contains several warnings given by the Spirit that Paul would encounter trouble during his visit to Jerusalem. But the apostle persisted, later being arrested and sent to Rome under guard. Arguments as to whether or not Paul was in the perfect will of God are pointless. What is useful is to note 1) prophecies do not have to dictate the decisions, or manipulate the will of a godly person; 2) even though they may be true, God's purpose may yet be realized, as was the case in God's will ultimately bringing Paul to Rome.

(NKJV New Spirit Filled Life Bible, footnote for Acts 21:4-12)

We are now coming very close to the end of Paul's life as it has been recorded for us. From this study and any of your reading of Paul's epistles which cover almost two-thirds of the New Testament, please make a few statements as to how you consider Paul's life overall. Do you have any desire to be like him? If you were in his place, would you have changed anything?

Acts 21:15-30

Paul and his companions receives another warm reception from James and the elders, who were indeed thankful for the offering. Paul told them of his last five years of ministry—that now great Christian centers were established on both sides of the Aegean Sea, one at Corinth and the other at Ephesus. But the problem was Paul himself there in Jerusalem, for the Judaizers had come to believe that Paul was teaching the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that they should no longer circumcise or keep the Law.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Of course, this was not true. He did, however, teach that circumcision and Law keeping had nothing to do with salvation (Gal. 2:15, 16). But he never once said they were displeasing to God. As a result, Paul was pictured as an enemy of the Law.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett)

The action here described (the vow and the four men), which was strongly recommended by the leaders of the Church, seems at variance with what Paul so clearly states in his Epistle to the Galatians, 2:3-5. Perhaps it would have been a wiser and stronger policy for him to have remained in quiet obscurity till the feast was over.

But we must remember the deep coloring which the proximity of the Temple gave to church life at Jerusalem, and Paul was willing to be guided by men like James, in whose judgment he had full confidence. In addition, he was always willing to yield in cases which did not concern principle. He acquiesced in such matters for the sake of charity, so that he gladly became as a Jew to Jews, that he might save the Jews, (1 Cor. 9:20).

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

We understand that James' suggestion of the vow to Paul was given only for his good, and for the possibility of quieting the Judaizers' anger against him. And Paul was willing to do whatever was conciliatory, but not destructive of his principles. Give in your own words what happened, instead of what was planned. In doing so, answer these questions:

1) Since none but Jews could enter the temple, did his accusers believe Paul had brought Trophimus, an Ephesian Gentile, into the temple with him, thus defiling it?

2) Were these Judaizers the least bit impressed with this appearance of piety on Paul's part?

3) What was James' plan of God? Is there any record they fasted and prayed to know His will?

4) What is your feeling now regarding Paul's determination to go to Jerusalem, instead of Rome?

Acts 21:31-40

In spite of this manipulation by man—and for the best of intentions—when it appears that Paul will be taken by the mob and executed outside the city so as not to defile the holy temple, God intervenes by bringing the Roman commander of the garrison in response to the violence of the mob. Paul's background of being a Jew gives him the right to ask for permission to defend himself.

Acts 22:1-16

What a sermon Paul preached! His pulpit—the steps that ascended from the Temple level to the Castle of Antonia. His audience—the frenzied crowds who filled the court below him, but who were calmed to silence as they heard the venerable Hebrew speech, which was unintelligible to the Romans around them. His text—the real and personal interposition of the living Christ to arrest his course of persecution and convert him. Here was a fact which to the apostle was the greatest of all facts; namely, that he had seen Jesus Christ, and had been transformed by what he had seen and heard. No light thing could have revolutionized his life. His zeal for the old

covenant and his persecution of the Christian sect were guarantees of his anti-Christian bias. He was not shallow or fickle, or likely to be moved by anything less than an imperative revelation.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

No doubt by now, you will concede that Paul had great zeal for the Lord like no other of his time, which was demonstrated by: his desire to reach the Jews; his determination to evangelize all people; his willingness to lose all things for Christ; his plan to occupy unreached places, and his support of himself. Nevertheless, if zeal is not wholly within the will of God continually, it can bring some sad results. Moses too, had great zeal (Ex. 32:19-32) and

also David (1 Sam. 17:26). As you know these lives, speak briefly as to how their lives matched up to God's calling for them.

Acts 22:17-30

To the story of his conversion, as given in Acts 9, the apostle here adds a detailed account of that memorable interview in the temple, when he questioned the advisability of the Lord's command that he should leave Jerusalem and received his final and irrevocable commission to go to the Gentiles. It is a great privilege to be permitted to overhear this dialogue! How close and intimate is the disciple's relationship with his Lord! God allowed Abraham, Moses and Jeremiah to reason with Him. He does not crush down our intelligence. It is His own word: —Come, let us reason together. But there is a point beyond which we may not go, when we must accept without question the final instructions of our Captain.

A freeborn Roman was Paul. More than once he had asserted his rights as a Roman citizen, as at Philippi. There are various social and political advantages which we can turn to account in our service of the Gospel, but they cannot carry us very far, and ultimately we are better off if we step out upon the waters simply because Jesus says, —Come.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

In the 21st verse of our Scripture, Paul tells this crowd that God has sent him to the Gentiles, and with this their anger explodes. From their knowledge of the Old Testament, and especially from the promises given to their first father in the faith, Abraham, God intended that through them —all nations should be blessed. In other words, the whole world should have the true Gospel. Why, in your thinking, are they so adamant at this time (and angry) about the Gentiles receiving the good news?

Gen. 12:1-3 Ps. 2:1-9 Isa. 9::1-7 Isa. 42:1-4 Isa. 52:13-15 Rom. 1:1, 2 Gal. 3:6-9
Isa. 53:11, 12

Acts 23:1-5

The Roman commander's summoning of the high council of the Jews, the Sanhedrin, shows us how much authority Rome had over the Jews. In his defense to them, Paul spoke of his conscience being perfectly clear before God. Then suddenly the high priest Ananias ordered that Paul be struck on his mouth. The historian Josephus informs us that this Ananias was a greedy and violent man, who had once been taken from office for stirring up trouble between the Galileans and the Samaritans. However, the emperor Claudius restored him for political reasons.

In his hasty response, Paul in turn called him a —whitewashed wall which was the Jewish way of saying —hypocrite. Indeed, Ananias was known for taking money that should go to the lower priests. His striking Paul was illegal, for according to Jewish law, Paul was innocent until found guilty. So this priest violated the very Law he should have upheld.

Upon being reproved, Paul was quick to apologize to these authorities. Paul was not above the Jewish Law and always carried a clean conscience regarding it.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Acts 23:6-10

Paul, being divinely inspired, saw an ingenious way of diverting the attention of his evil accusers from himself to the differences that lay within their own group—that of Pharisees and Sadducees, and get them to pit themselves against each other.

The Pharisees believed that the hope of Israel was tied up in the resurrection. But the Sadducees denied not only the resurrection, but any existence of people as spirit beings or angels. They did believe in the Spirit of God, however.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett)

This time Paul spoke of himself as a Pharisee (he had been), for he hoped to at least get this group to start siding with him. Also, in proving his points, he might be able to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ, for he would show Him as resurrected and the true hope of Israel. Please read 1 Peter 2:13-18 in connection with the above and prayerfully let these truths be applied to your own lives as well.

Acts 23:11-15

How timely and precious was the Savior's revelation on the following night! As Paul's heart was sinking amid the solitude of his cell, and he was beginning to think that perhaps the predictions of Agabus and others were about to be fulfilled, he

suddenly became aware of the presence of the Lord. Do not trust in your own understanding; let your Master steer your course. Remember that in the darkest hour, as in the brightest, He is beside you. There will be made to you, at —the fourth watch of the night, revelations which will reassure your weary and despairing soul that you are not alone.

The Lord had told His servant that he was needed in Rome, but the conspirators said that he should not leave Jerusalem. There is only one conclusion when such a collision occurs—God’s Word must stand, to the discomfiture of those who have sworn that they will neither eat nor drink till they have perpetrated their plan to the contrary.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Like all of us, Paul had his moments of discouragement. We read in Acts 18:9 that he despaired at Corinth and the Lord lifted him up. Another incident will happen on his voyage to Rome (27:23)—but the Lord lifts him from each depression and places him on top again! The Lord would not allow him to bear more than he could take (1 Cor. 10:13). What lesson do you derive

from this for your own situation, especially if it looks bleak? And what verses of comfort and strength can you pass on to others?

Acts 23:16-35

Scripture never tells us about Paul’s family, except now the Lord arranges somehow for Paul’s sister’s son to find out about the plot against Paul to take his life, warning the commander in time to save him. With many soldiers and horsemen, they depart at 9:00 at night for Caesarea where he will appear before Felix the governor. Paul is out of the hands of the Jews, and eventually will go on to Rome.

(Lovett’s Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

Acts 24:1-27

Paul was always on the lookout for the one ray of light in murky skies. He found a reason for counting himself happy in this dark hour, v. 10. He held himself with great dignity. He remembered that he was always God’s ambassador, representing the court of Heaven amid the perverse courts of human government. As for the charge of sedition, he challenged his adversaries to prove it. He pointed out that as the nation was already divided into Pharisees and Sadducees, they could hardly find fault with him for belonging to a third sect—that of the Nazarenes. After the way which they called a sect or —heresy, v. 14, he worshiped God, but he had never stirred up

strife in temple or synagogue. He protested that it had been the aim of his life to keep a conscience void of offense toward God and man.

At first the governor was prepossessed in Paul's favor. He had some intimate knowledge concerning the tenets of the early Church, v. 22. He had studied it as an intellectual system, and enjoyed having opportunity for conversation with its foremost exponent. But his illicit union with Drusilla, whose husband was living, and his hope to receive a bribe from Paul's friends made him obtuse and dead to the claims of Christ. Paul, on the other hand, seemed oblivious to any thought of himself or of his dependence on the governor's whim, and used his one opportunity in seeking the salvation of this weak and sordid soul. It was in vain. Felix was anchored to a mudbank and would not avail himself of the rising tides of life about him.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Most people, when coming before governors and kings, believe they should give high honor and recognition to these rulers. However, many times this verbal honor has a false note to it, for they know that the ruler is not above sinning. Paul, on the other hand, is polite and recognizes position, but he never places them in the false height that the world does. Give your reasons for Paul's being different from the rest.

Acts 25:1-12

Little is known about Porcius Festus, except he was more honorable in his administration than his predecessor, Felix, who had killed many of the leaders of the Jews. Festus had little true knowledge of the Jews and their plots, and he died early in office, according to the historian Josephus. Festus visits Jerusalem in order to bring about peace in his province, and is confronted by the continuing persistence of the Jewish leaders to take Paul's life. Once again, they followed Festus back to Caesarea, in order to accuse Paul with serious complaints, but they had no proof.

In trying to please these Jews, Festus asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem to be tried there, but this time Paul had complete recognition that it would only mean his death, and it would not accomplish God's purposes for his life. Therefore, as a Roman citizen, he demanded that he be brought before Caesar, who was the young emperor Nero.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

While Jesus was still on earth, he gave His disciples full instructions on what they should do and say. When brought before kings and governors, they are to be a testimony. Read Matthew 10:16-33 and Luke 12:1b-12, and then jot down a few sentences covering the strength of His teachings in this regard.

Acts 25:13-27

Festus, being unskilled, especially with regard to the Jews, did not know how to draft a letter about Paul to Caesar, while at the same time keeping his own record clear. Then King Agrippa II and his sister (wife) Bernice come to pay him a visit and congratulate him as governor of Palestine. This secular king of the Jewish Church would be able to give him counsel and advice, especially with regard to the Jews and their religion.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett-paraphrased)

This is Herod Agrippa II, the son of Herod Agrippa I who beheaded James (brother of John) and imprisoned Peter. He was only 17 when his father was struck down by God that day when he was giving his speech (Acts 12:20-23). When he came of age, after being educated at Rome, emperor Claudius gave him the tiny kingdom of Chalcis (north of Damascus) and the title of king to go with it. But as he grew in prominence, he was later given the tetrarchy of Philip, the area east and N.E. of the sea of Galilee. Thus his kingdom joined the land governed by Festus. He was, for the most part, of Jewish blood. He was descended from Maccabean priest-kings. He had a palace at Jerusalem and frequently made generous gifts to the temple. His personal life was another matter; he paid no attention to the Law. He was an adulterer, every bit as sensuous and pleasure loving as his sister Drusilla, who was married to the deposed governor Felix.

Festus, ignorant as he was of Jewish affairs, was astute enough to pick up the central issue in the Jews' charges. It seemed to focus on —one Jesus. The remark which Festus makes is one of disrespect. He is ignorant of the Lord. From this we gather that Jesus Himself was the real issue amidst the angry charges made by the Jews. Festus was too ignorant to catch the real significance. But this is not the case with Agrippa. His ears perked up at the mention of Jesus and Paul. The king was known to be a zealous Jew, regardless of his way of life. He had often heard of both of these men. And to think that the outstanding leader of the Christian movement was right there in the palace whets his interest. What may have seemed trivial to Festus, appears as a unique opportunity to Agrippa. He is thrilled to have Festus arrange an audience for the next day.

(Lovett's Lights on Acts, C.S. Lovett)

As we look at the lives of these rulers who had been given earthly authority to judge this man, Paul, whose life had been drastically changed by God—who was then empowered and called to a life of service preaching His Gospel—what comes quickly

to your mind regarding the conflict that always exists between those of the natural, flesh realm, and those who live according to the Spirit?

Rom. 8:5-8 Rom. 8:18-21 Gal. 5:16-26 Eph. 2:4-7

Acts 26:1-32

Paul was in his element. He was delivering to kings and governors the testimony which it was the constant object of his life to give, when suddenly he was stopped by Festus, who on hearing of the resurrection of the dead, accused Paul of madness. Paul addressed him with perfect respect, and then turned to King Agrippa for support. But Agrippa did not choose to be entrapped in the discussion of these deep religious truths. With the contempt of a man of the world he smiled at the enthusiastic earnestness of this man who fancied that a wearer of purple would embrace faith in a crucified Messiah. It was as if he said, —In a little while you'll be making me—a Christian!

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Agrippa faced a dilemma! If he said no, he would anger the Jews; if he said yes, he would lose face because Paul would ask him to believe the Gospel.

(New Geneva Study Bible, footnote for Acts 26:27)

Would you agree that the truths of the Bible always have the way of having the —last word? Another example would be Jonah who was angered by God's wanting to save Nineveh. Here you have a choice in options: 1) Give other examples in the Bible where the finality of God's Word accomplished His purposes in spite of the opposition of others; or 2) using your imagination, tell what you believe Agrippa would say and feel when he realized he had missed his chance for God's heaven as his destination. Almost—what a weighty word!

Acts 27:1-44

The travelers were fortunate enough to find at Myra a large vessel carrying wheat from Egypt to Rome. There was room for the centurion, his soldiers, and the prisoners, as well as such others as chose to accompany them. It was toward the close of September; and perhaps at Fair Havens the apostle and any Jewish Christians on board may have observed the great Day of Atonement, the one fast of the Jewish calendar. The season for navigation with sailing vessels was drawing to a close, and Paul counseled they delay, but his words were unheeded. The man who knew God was wiser than the men who knew the sea.

The crew, being greatly exhausted by severe exertion and want of food, were the more willing to listen to the apostle when he came to the front with his wise counsel

and good cheer. They had previously ignored his advice, but were glad and wise enough to take it on this second occasion.

How calm faith makes us! We can sleep soundly amid the roar of the storm, and dream of angels when our hearts are stayed on God. His messengers can cleave their way through the murkiest skies and most drenching storms, to succor those who need their help. What a beautiful confession that was: —Whose I am, and whom I serve!

Once more Paul encouraged them, and urged them to take food. He himself set the example, giving thanks to God in the presence of them all. How brave and how inspiring was his behavior! They all began to be of good cheer. Men may say what they will about the impracticability of Christ's teachings, but let a man once begin to live by them, obeying them absolutely and trusting Christ utterly, and he becomes like a lion in courage. Through God we can do valiantly, for He treads down our enemies, Ps. 60:12.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

This sailing trip was a tempestuous trial for all on board, and it could have been avoided had they heeded Paul's warnings. His heart was continually —tuned to any word or direction from God, but those who do not know Him can depend only upon their own instincts and strengths. And, finally when the ship went aground on an island, Paul's assurance from God that no lives would be lost, and his trusting demeanor caused all the others to look to him for leadership. In our hour of trial in the midst of our storms, to what may we cling for direction, comfort and peace? Give as many verses as you can besides the ones listed. Do we also need to do our part?

Isa. 40:1, 2 Isa. 41:10 1 Thess. 5:14 2 Cor. 2:7 2 Cor. 7:5-7

Acts 28:1-10

Through God's continual care in every situation, they found themselves on the tiny island of Malta (south of Sicily and Italy), formerly called —Melita meaning refuge, and this proved to be a haven for them as the natives showed them unusual kindness.

Accidents are not punishments. The clinging of the viper to Paul's hand was not an evidence of the anger of God, but was permitted in order to give these simple-hearted people an evidence which they would appreciate of God's care for his own.

Let us not judge by appearance but righteously. Because Paul cast off the viper, they accounted him divine; if he had died, they would have thought him a felon. Let

us also shake off temptation. We cannot prevent its attacking us, but we need not take the viper into our heart.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

In all of our lives, unusual circumstances happen, causing us to question—is this of God, or could it possibly be of Satan. We should be extremely careful not to make early judgments, for often God has something special to show us or teach us as the circumstances unfold. How very wise it is, as the following Scriptures teach us, to wait on the Lord! Then when true, solid peace comes following your waiting on Him at any time; you know you're on His right track! Watch for His revelation next!

Isa. 30:15, 18 Isa. 40:31 Ps. 103:1-5 2 Cor. 4:8-12, 16-18

Acts 28:11-31

Paul went toward Rome, as we have seen, under very different circumstances from those that he originally anticipated; but after all, they gave him the greatest opportunity of his life. The things that befell him were for the furtherance of the Gospel. In no other way could he have approached such men as the centurion, or the members of Caesar's household, or Publius, or Nero himself.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

Paul expounded the Scriptures to the Jews in Rome and at the end of the day realized that many Jews refused to adopt the messianic truths fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He knew that these people would continue to harden their hearts and cut themselves off from the living God. In his opinion, these Jews could be compared with natural olive branches that were broken off—the olive tree stands for the true Israel—because they had died a spiritual death. Paul says that because of unbelief they were broken off (Rom. 11:20). Persistent unbelief leads to hardening of the heart. Hardening of the heart leads to apostasy and the sin that leads to death (1 John 5:16).

(Acts, Simon J. Kistemaker)

Epaphras came to visit Paul while he was in Rome, bringing disturbing news about the Church in the area of Collossae. Paul responded by writing Colossians and following it with Ephesians, a letter intended for all the churches of Asia, not just Ephesus.

During these two years he leads a runaway slave, Onesimus, to Christ and sends him back to his master, Philemon, with a letter which we know as the book of Philemon.

Finally he does stand before Nero. While awaiting the verdict he wrote to the Philippians who had sent him a love gift and also Epaphroditus to minister to him.

After this Paul was released. According to Eusebius he preached not only in Spain but to the limits of the Roman Empire. During this time he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus. Then it appears from historians that he was again arrested and taken to Rome where, just before his martyrdom, he wrote 2 Timothy.

—I am now ready to be poured out as a libation; the time of my release is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing. 2 Timothy 4:6-8

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个人简介

1988年06月25日出生于山东省青岛市。

2007年9月考入青岛大学师范学院英语专业，2011年7月本科毕业并获得文学学士学位。

2011年9月考入中国海洋大学外国语学院英语笔译专业，攻读硕士学位至今。



中国海洋大学
OCEAN UNIVERSITY OF CHINA

硕士学位论文

