



John 3:5-6

5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

(NIV)

Zech 12:10

10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a first-born son.

(NIV)

ACTS

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

Volume 2 of the writings of Luke

The Acts of the Apostles was attached to this book later as it began to circulate alone instead of volume 2 of the writings of Luke in the second century. Both books are addressed to Theophilus who was probably a gentile Christian. Acts 1:1 and Luke 1:3. The primary message of the book of Acts is to reassure believers by telling of first hand source the work of the Holy Spirit. Taken together, the writings of Luke are the ministry of Jesus in his flesh and the ministry through the Holy Spirit. Jesus gave birth to the church and founded it. The Holy Spirit anointed it with power for her ministry and mission beginning at Pentecost.

The gospels gave a continuous report dealing with the things which Jesus began to do and teach until the day when He ascended. After the time that He ascended into heaven, He through the Holy Ghost had instructed and commanded the apostles whom He had chosen. He had showed himself alive after his suffering in the garden and on the cross by a series of many unmistakable, infallible, unquestionable convincing demonstrations giving evidence for forty days and talking to them about the things of the kingdom of God. While in their company, he commanded them that they should wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father that as John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with and placed in and introduced to the Holy Ghost. They wanted to know the time of restoration of the kingdom to Israel but He said unto them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."

Forty days Jesus spent instructing His disciples, He ascended up on high and is seated at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 10:12). As he was taken up, so shall He return. He is coming to take his church I Thess 4. He is coming to judge the nations Matt. 25. He is coming to save Israel Rom. 11. He is coming to sit upon the throne of David Luke 1, Isa. 9. He is coming to bring righteous government to this earth Heb. 1.

THE CHURCH IN FULL POWER

Acts 1:8

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

A Holy Spirit powered Church will Evangelize when they share their faith the lost shall be saved. The church that does not is void of power.

A Holy Spirit power Church will Reproduce when souls are born into the family of God by the seed which is the word of God . The Spirit filled believer sows the seed (evangelism) the Holy Spirit watches over the seed, convicting, converting and leading the lost to repentance which is spiritual birth.

A Holy Spirit powered Church changes people, places and things to align with God's will.

A Holy Spirit powered Church will turn the world upside down.

The same power that filled the room in the upper room on the day with the believer today in the presence of the Holy Spirit who is the power of the



Church will turn the congregation of Pentecost inside out. The church of the Holy Spirit is the power of the church.

Acts 1:9-14

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

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

13 When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (NIV)

Zech 4:1-7
CHAPTER 4

1 Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from his sleep.

2 He asked me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights.

3 Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."

4 I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"

5 He answered, "Do you not know what these are?" "No, my lord," I replied.

6 So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.

7 "What are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'" (NIV)

THE DAY THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME

Isa 44:3

3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. (NIV)

Isa 59:21

21 "As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever," says the LORD. (NIV)

Ezek 36:27

27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. (NIV)

Joel 2:28-29

28 'And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. (NIV)

Acts 2:1-21 CHAPTER 2

1 And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 And **there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.**

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven.

6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language.

7 And they were amazed and marveled, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"

8 "And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?"

12 And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

13 But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine."

14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words.

15 "For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day;

16 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

17 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

18 Even upon My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy.

19 'And I will grant wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth beneath, Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke.

20 'The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come.

21 **'And it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'** (NAS)

THE GOOD NEWS THAT SALVATION HAS COME

Acts 2:21-41

21 'And it shall be, that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

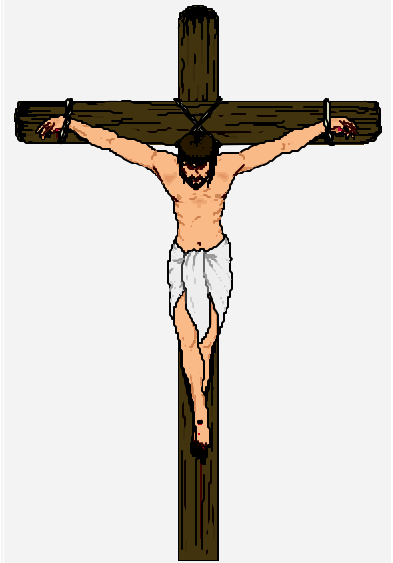
"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. "And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

25 "For David says of Him, 'I was always beholding the Lord in my presence; for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 'Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; moreover my flesh also will abide in hope; Because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to hades, nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. 'Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou wilt make me full of gladness with Thy presence.'

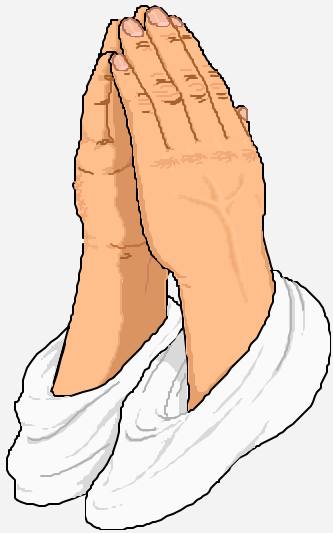
"Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. "And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.'" "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

38 And Peter said to them, "**Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.**" And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about **three thousand souls.**

(NAS)



HOW NEW BELIEVERS SHOULD GROW IN THE FAITH



Acts 2:42-47

And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. **And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,**

47 praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.
(NAS)

The new converts devoted themselves constantly to the instruction of the apostles, the fellowship of the apostles, the breaking of bread and prayers with the apostles. A sense of awe came upon every soul and many signs and wonders were performed. Everyone who believed was united and had everything in common. They sold their possessions and gave the price among all as any had need. Day after day they regularly came together in the temple with united purpose and in their homes they broke bread including the Lord's supper. They ate together with gladness and simplicity and generous hearts constantly praising God and being in favor and goodwill with all the people and the Lord added to their number daily (every day) those who were being saved. This is so simple, how can the church miss it?



VICTORY IN JESUS

I GIVE YOU WHAT I HAVE

1. GOD ALWAYS EQUIPS YOU TO DO THE WORK HE HAS FOR YOU
2. WHEN YOU GIVE YOU GET & YOU CAN'T OUTGIVE GOD

Acts 3:1-12

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. And a certain man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. And when he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms.

And Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze upon him and said, "Look at us!" And the lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting to receive a gift from them.

But Peter said, "I don't have any money silver and gold for you, but what I do have I give to you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene-- get up and walk!" And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. And with a leap, he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God; and they were absolutely astounded knowing of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

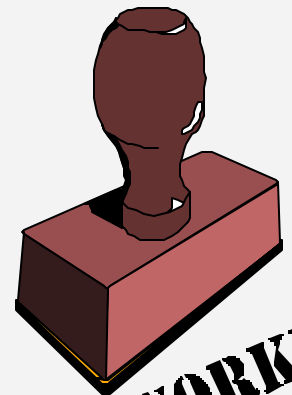
And while he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement. But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?"

(NAS)



THE BELIEVER HAS AUTHORITY TO USE THE NAME OF JESUS!

BEING ADOPTED INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD ALLOWS THE BELIEVER TO USE THE NAME OF JESUS TO GLORIFY IT!



**YOU WORKED
MIRACLES**

**PETER PREACHES IN THE TEMPLE:
YOU KILLED CHRIST THE ANOINTED ONE
BUT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD
REPENT AND BELIEVE FOR FORGIVENESS OF SINS**

Acts 3:12-26

But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered up, and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. "But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses. "And **it is the name of Jesus** which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled. "**Repent** therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

"Moses said, 'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. 'And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' "And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days. "It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' "For you first, God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways." (NAS)

DEUT. 18:19

LEV. 23:29

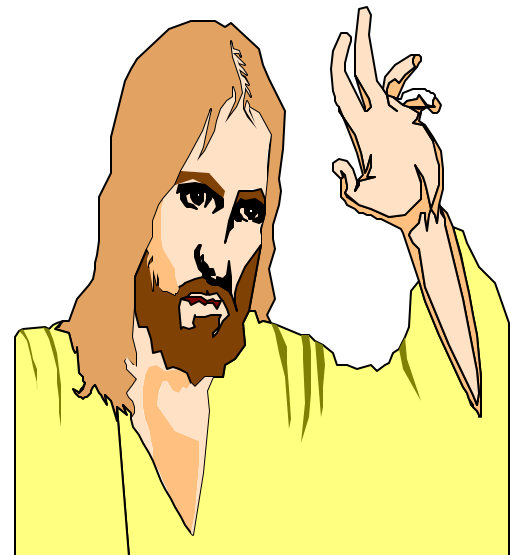
GEN. 22:18

A good sermon outline from Peter:

1. You are a bad sinner.
2. Jesus can fix that!
3. Repent and believe.

Sermon 2:

1. You are lame and or sick.
2. Jesus can fix that!
3. Repent and believe.



WHEN YOU PREACH JESUS RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WILL TRY TO PUT YOU IN PRISON

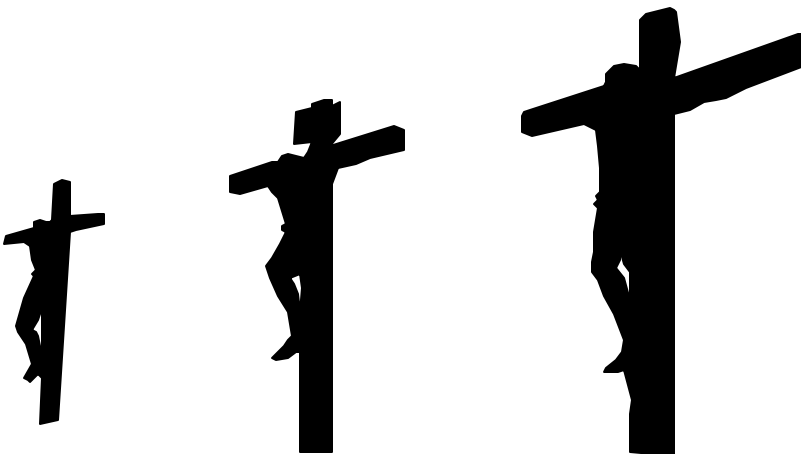
Acts 4:1-22

And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard, and the **Sadducees**, came upon them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid **hands on them, and put them in jail** until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

And it came about on the next day, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. And when they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health. "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the very corner stone. "And there is salvation in no one else; for **there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved or by which people can call on and be saved.**" Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply. But when they had ordered them to go aside out of the Council, they began to confer with one another, saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. "But in order that it may not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any man in this name." And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "**Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.**" And when they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which they might punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.



How to share Jesus with people as Peter did.

Share your personal experience.

Share facts:

God loves you.

You are a sinner.

You are dead in sin.

Christ died for you.

The grave could not hold him down!

You can be saved by faith.

Believe in Jesus.

Satan tries to intimidate the believer, but the correct response is to rise up boldly knowing that no weapon formed against you shall prosper! If God is for you, it doesn't matter who else is against you.

WHEN IT GETS TOUGH
IT'S TIME TO PRAY

Acts 4:23-37

O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, you spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David saying,

“ Why did the nations rage? Why did the people waste their time with futile plans? The kings of earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.”

That is what happened here in this city. And now oh Lord hear their threats and give your servants great boldness in their preaching and send your healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

When we pray this prayer in one accord, we will experience the power of the Holy Spirit filling us and shaking the earth and giving us the boldness to minister Jesus to others even in the evil world of these last days.

And when they had been released, they went to their own companions, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard this, **they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said**, "O Lord, it is Thou who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Thy servant, didst say, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples devise futile things? 'The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ.' "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur. "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Thy bond-servants may speak Thy word with all confidence, while Thou dost extend Thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy holy servant Jesus."

And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness. And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales, and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need. And Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means, Son of Encouragement), and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. (NAS)

Note: When people are seeking God and in His will and following Him, there is less thought of “me and my” and more concern with the needs of others being taken care of. The closer one is to God, the more generous one is toward the needs of others. In getting bigger and better houses, cars, things, and savings accounts, have we stored up treasure on earth to be poor in the kingdom of God? The fact is that God supplies your needs every day and without His help and protection, you would have nothing anyway. I thank God that He has allowed me to plant seeds with those in need for it is better to please God than to have a few dollars in savings.



ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA
IF YOU DON'T HAVE FAITH THAT GOD WILL SUPPLY YOUR NEEDS,
DON'T LIE ABOUT IT

Acts 5:1-11

But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land? "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God." And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came upon all who heard of it. And the young men arose and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they shall carry you out as well." And she fell immediately at his feet, and breathed her last; and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things.

(NAS)



SIGNS AND WONDERS

Acts 5:12-16

12 And at the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico.

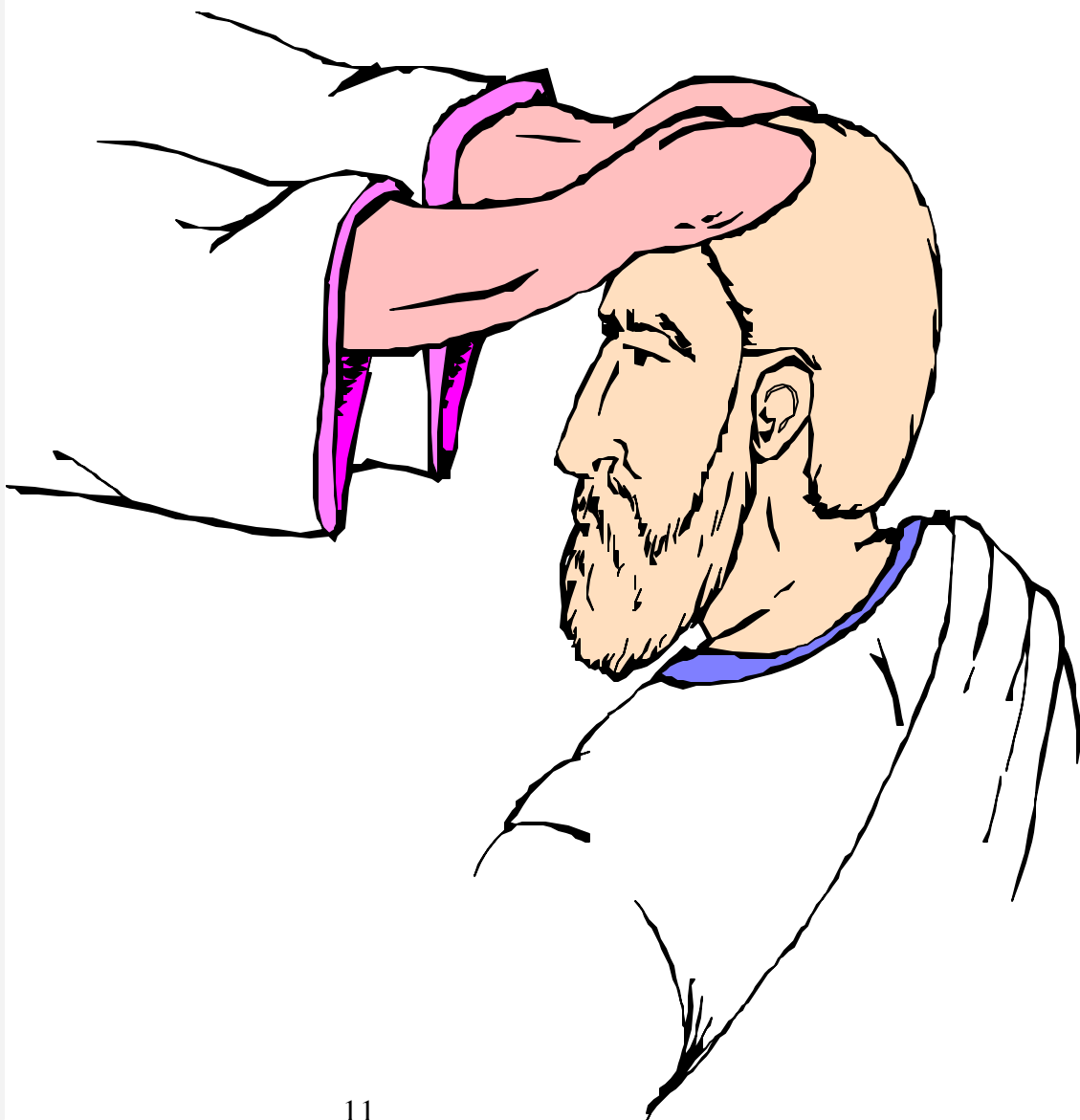
13 But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem.

14 And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number;

15 to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets, and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.

16 And also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits; and they were all being healed.

(NAS)



RELIGIOUS PEOPLE STILL UNHAPPY
PETER SAYS HOLY SPIRIT IS GIVEN TO THOSE WHO OBEY HIM

Acts 5:17-42

17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with violent jealousy.

18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.

19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out.

20 "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."

21 At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin-- the full assembly of the elders of Israel-- and sent to the jail for the apostles.

22 But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported,

23 "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside."

24 On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this.

25 Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people."

26 At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

27 Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest.

28 "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!

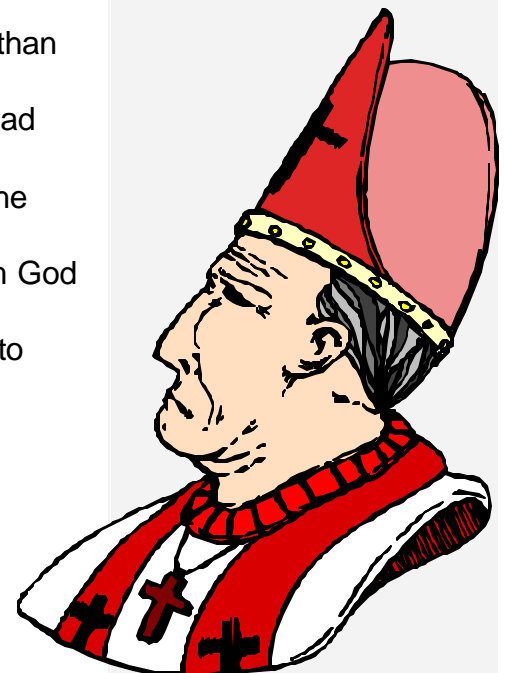
30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead-- whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.

31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

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

33 When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.

FACT: When the religious people walking in a way that is reasonable and logical to the flesh are confronted with the Word of God, the fruits of their spirit will exhibit jealousy, anger, violent reactions and cruel words. When one proclaims the message of life by the word of God, it will be in conflict with the traditions of man and men will either repent or turn against you. It was true in 60 A.D. and it is still true today and it shall be so until the Lord returns. We must say as Peter did that we are to obey God rather than human authority. Your salvation comes from God and not from man therefore we are not to even consider living under man's authority and rules for being "Christian" but obedient to the Living God with whom we have a loving relationship.



GOOD ADVICE:
DON'T FIGHT AGAINST GOD

ACTS 5

Is it not a sad day when the "church folks" have to decide to not kill the one who brings the true word of God and speaks as an ambassador of God to this world? Gamaliel gave some very wise advice to his religious group, do not kill the anointed of the Lord! Do not speak against God's anointed because in doing so, you have made yourself an adversary of almighty God. Fighting against God is the least wise thing that you can do. Count it an honor to be numbered in that group that endures opposition because they speak exactly what God has given them to speak, to the ones He sent them to, when He sent them.

34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while.

35 Then he addressed them: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men.

36 Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing.

37 After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered.

38 Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail.

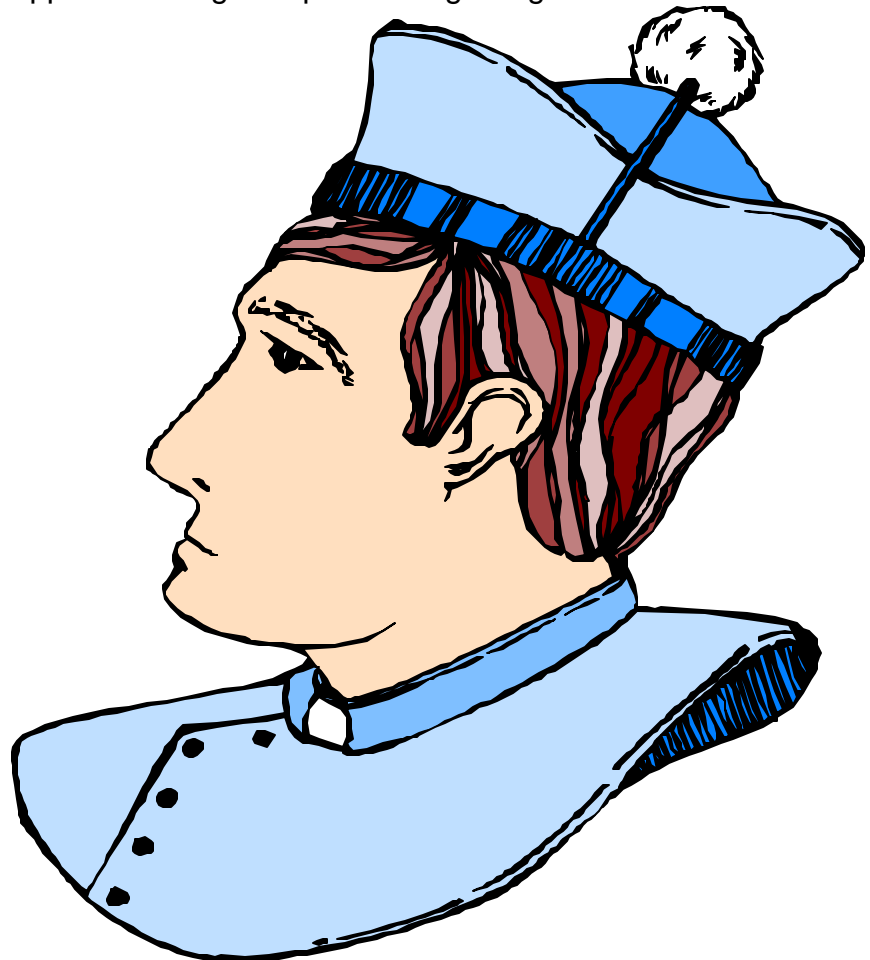
39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

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

41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

(NIV)



SEVEN SERVANTS CHOSEN TO SERVE TO MEET MINISTRY NEEDS

Acts 6:1-7

Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, **"It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.**" But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. "But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." And the statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

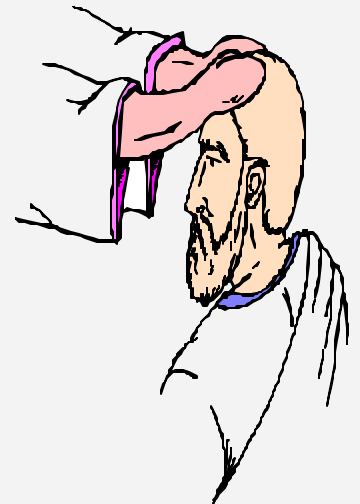
And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.
(NAS)

How ministers should use their time so that many will be saved:

1. Pray
2. Study the word
3. Teach
4. Preach
5. Trust God to be able to work through the Holy Spirit in the lives of men that there is no need for the minister to seek to control every activity in the church.

How ministers should not use their time:

1. They must not take care of every detail of everything that goes on in the church.
2. They must not assume that they are the only vessel in the church that can be used of God or that can hear from God.
3. They must learn to delegate authority and activities to various members of the body of Christ and not prevent the Holy Spirit from leading them in the carrying out of these activities.
4. The pastor must not forget that his calling is to minister to the church through preaching and teaching and being a shepherd to the flock, and doing well in this area requires that he spend time in the word and in prayer that he may hear from God. It is an abuse of the pulpit which he must answer to before God for a pastor to waste his time doing what others are called to do while neglecting his primary calling.
5. Pastor, if the believers in your church are not increasing in number and spiritual wisdom, repent before God while there is still time.



**STEPHEN THE DEACON IS ARRESTED
EVERY DEACON, ELDER AND BOARD MEMBER
SHOULD FOLLOW THE PATTERN ESTABLISHED BY STEPHEN**

Acts 6:8-15

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen. And yet they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and dragged him away, and brought him before the Council. And they put forward false witnesses who said, "This man incessantly speaks against this holy place, and the Law; for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us." And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.

(NAS)



When the anointing of God is on one, signs and wonders follow.

When the anointing of God is on one, the Spirit gives wisdom to speak the right words to touch the hearts of people which they cannot deny but it may cause them to want to kill the messenger.

When religious people see one full of God's grace and power and they are not, they will lie, gossip, and try to bring him down instead of seeking God to lift them up to that level.

**THE HIGH PRIEST ASKED STEPHEN
WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF
STEPHEN REPLIED,
I'M GLAD YOU ASKED THAT, AND HE SAID:**

Acts 7:2-36

2 And he said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,
3 and said to him, 'Depart from your country and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you.'
4 "Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and settled in Haran. And from there, after his father died, God removed him into this country in which you are now living.
5 "And He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground; and yet, even when he had no child, He promised that He would give it to him as a possession, and to his offspring after him.
6 "But God spoke to this effect, that his offspring would be aliens in a foreign land, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years.
7 "'And whatever nation to which they shall be in bondage I Myself will judge,' said God, 'and after that they will come out and serve Me in this place.'
8 "And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.
9 "And the patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. And yet God was with him,
10 and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household.
11 "Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it; and our fathers could find no food.
12 "But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there the first time.
13 "And on the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family was disclosed to Pharaoh.
14 "And Joseph sent word and invited Jacob his father and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five persons in all.
15 "And Jacob went down to Egypt and there passed away, he and our fathers.
16 "And from there they were removed to Shechem, and laid in the tomb which Abraham had purchased for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.
17 "But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt,
18 until there arose another king over Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph.
19 "It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race, and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive.
20 "And it was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God; and he was nurtured three months in his father's home.
21 "And after he had been exposed, Pharaoh's daughter took him away, and nurtured him as her own son.
22 "And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.
23 "But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel.
24 "And when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian.
25 "And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him; but they did not understand.
26 "And on the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, 'Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?'
27 "But the one who was injuring his neighbor pushed him away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and judge over us?
28 'You do not mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday, do you?'
29 "And at this remark Moses fled, and became an alien in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.
30 "And after forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning thorn bush.
31 "And when Moses saw it, he began to marvel at the sight; and as he approached to look more closely, there came the voice of the Lord:

**ALWAYS BE READY AS
STEPHEN WAS TO GIVE
AND ACCOUNT OF YOUR
HOPE AND SALVATION.**

**IF GOD LEADS YOU TO
STEP ON THE TOES OF THE
UNRIGHTEOUS, DO IT EVEN
IF THEY STONE YOU.**





**THIS IS A MESSAGE THAT
NEEDS TO BE PREACHED
TODAY.**

**NO ONE BUT JESUS DIED
WITH STYLE AS STEPHEN
DID. WHY DON'T WE HAVE
MORE DECONS LIKE
STEPHEN AND LESS LIKE
JUDAS?**

32 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.' And Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look.

33 "But the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'

34 'I have certainly seen the oppression of My people in Egypt, and have heard their groans, and I have come down to deliver them; come now, and I will send you to Egypt.'

35 "This Moses whom they disowned, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' is the one whom God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush.

36 "This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.

37 "This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren.'

38 "This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.

39 "And our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt,

40 saying to Aaron, 'Make for us gods who will go before us; for this Moses who led us out of the land of Egypt-- we do not know what happened to him.'

41 "And at that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.

42 "But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'It was not to Me that you offered victims and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, was it, O house of Israel?'

43 'You also took along the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of the god Rompha, the images which you made to worship them. I also will remove you beyond Babylon.'

44 "Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen.

45 "And having received it in their turn, our fathers brought it in with Joshua upon dispossessing the nations whom God drove out before our fathers, until the time of David.

46 "And David found favor in God's sight, and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.

47 "But it was Solomon who built a house for Him.

48 "However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says:

49 'Heaven is My throne, and earth is the footstool of My feet; what kind of house will you build for me?' says the Lord; 'or what place is there for My repose?'

50 'Was it not My hand which made all these things?'

51 **"You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.**

52 **"Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become;**

53 **you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."**

54 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.

55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;

56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears, and they rushed upon him with one impulse.

58 And when they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

60 And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And having said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 8:1-3 1 And Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 And some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him.

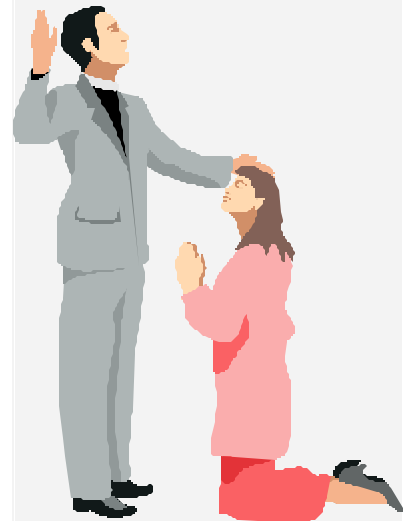
3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. (NAS)

BELIEVERS FLEE JERUSALEM GOD GIVES WHAT YOU CAN'T BUY

Acts 8:4-25 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was much rejoicing in that city.

Now there was a certain man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city, and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God." And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. And even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip; and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! "You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God." Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. "For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity." But Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me." And so, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans. (NAS)



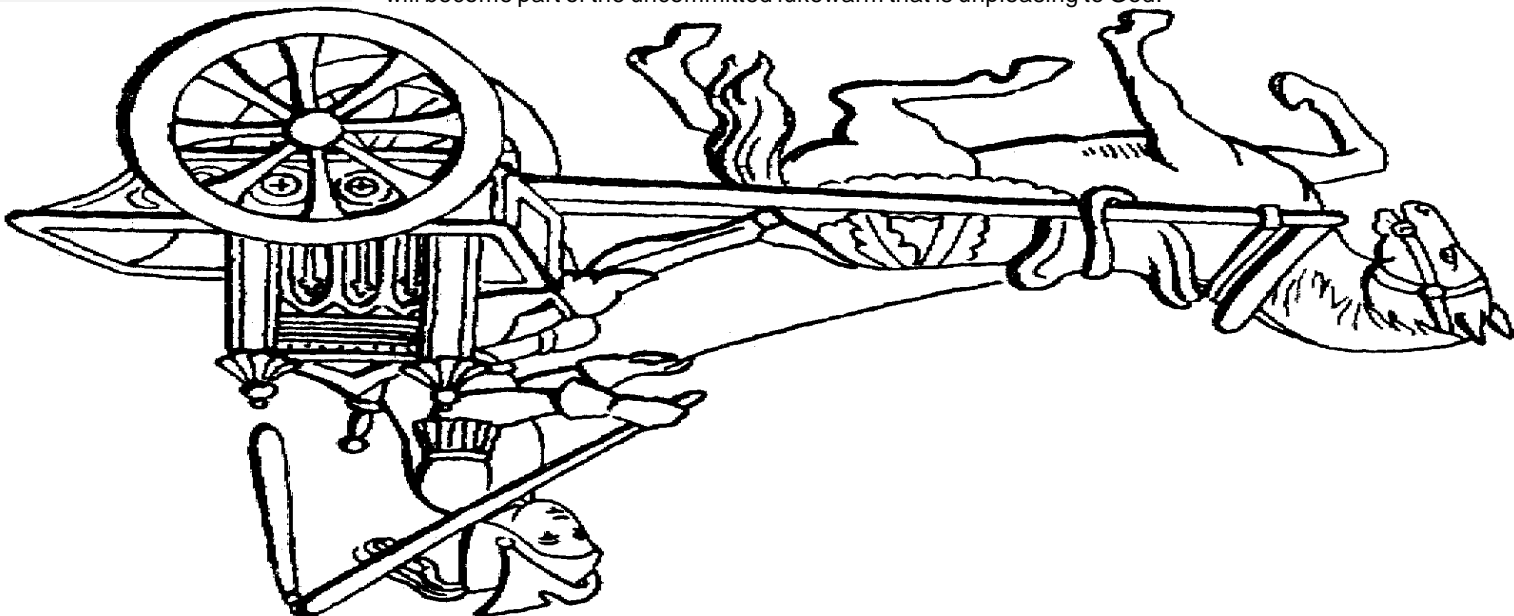
PHILLIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH IT IS AN EXCITING TRIP WHEN YOU ARE IN THE LORD

Acts 8:26-40

- 26 But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Arise and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.)
- 27 And he arose and went; and behold, there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship.
- 28 And he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.
- 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."
- 30 And when Philip had run up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"
- 31 And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.
- 32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth.
- 33 "In humiliation His judgment was taken away; who shall relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth."
- 34 And the eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?"
- 35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.
- 36 And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"
- 37 [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]
- 38 And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him.
- 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch saw him no more, but went on his way rejoicing.
- 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus; and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities, until he came to Caesarea. (NAS)

How can people think that salvation is boring? When one walks it the will of God and follows His will for your life, the journey is so exciting, even the evil people will want to walk with the authority that believers have as in the story of Simon . God has so much for us who believe and walk in faith towards him. How did churches get to be dead services and people act as if they were in funerals when there are so many things to do and say and see in the power of the Holy Spirit and it is so exciting to share Jesus as Philip did and see the power of God work in people's lives.

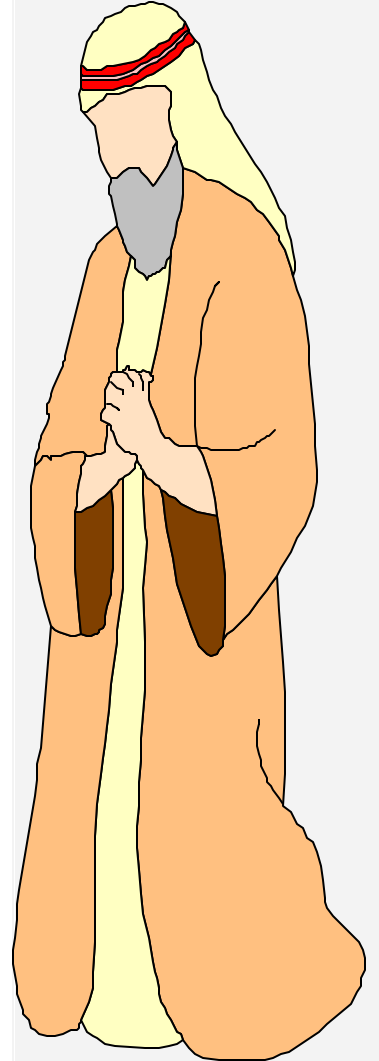
If you are in a dead church, bring it to life or find one that is alive. If you sit under the preaching of an unanointed preacher in the midst of an unconcerned congregation long enough, you will become part of the uncommitted lukewarm that is displeasing to God.



SAUL IS CONVERTED THE DAMASCUS ROAD EXPERIENCE

Acts 9:1-19

Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?**" And he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He said, "**I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do.**" And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one. And Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "**Ananias.**" And he said, "Behold, here am I, Lord." And the Lord said to him, "**Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.**" But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Thy name." But the Lord said to him, "**Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake.**" And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, (NAS)



**SAUL IN DAMASCUS
& SAUL TRAVELS TO JERUSALEM
FROM PERSECUTOR TO PREACHER IN ONE LIGHT BEAM**

Acts 9:20-31

and immediately he began to proclaim **Jesus** in the synagogues, saying, "**He is the Son of God.**" And all those hearing him continued to be amazed and were saying, "Is this not he who in Jerusalem destroyed those who called on this name, and who had come here for the purpose of bringing them before the chief priests?" But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ. And when many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, but their plot became known to Saul. And they were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death; but his disciples lowered him by night, and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket. *And when he had come to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.* But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles. He described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. And he was with them moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death. But when the brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus. So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.
(NAS)



ÆNEAS HEALED IN LYDDA BY PETER
TABITHA RAISED FROM THE DEAD BY PETER IN JOPPA
SINNERS BELIEVE AFTER SEEING SIGNS AND WONDERS

Acts 9:32-43

32 Now it came about that as Peter was traveling through all those parts, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda.

33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bed-ridden eight years, for he was paralyzed.

34 **And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; arise, and make your bed." And immediately he arose.**

35 And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

36 Now in Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did.

37 And it came about at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room.

38 And since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, entreating him, "Do not delay to come to us."

39 And Peter arose and went with them. And when he had come, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him weeping, and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them.

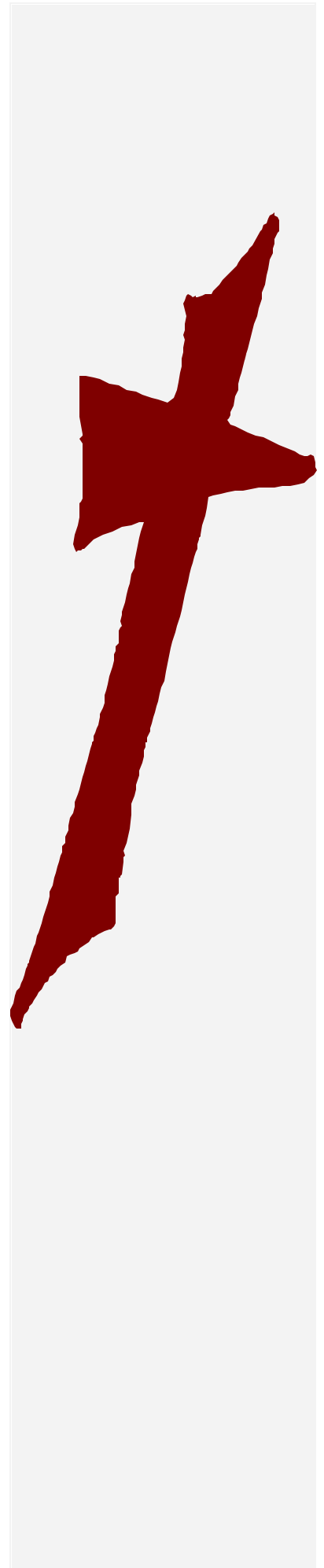
40 **But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up.**

41 **And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.**

42 **And it became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.**

43 And it came about that he stayed many days in Joppa with a certain tanner, Simon.

(NAS)



CORNELIUS SEES A VISION
SENDS FOR PETER

Acts 10:1-8

1 Now there was a certain man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort,

2 a devout man, and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people, and prayed to God continually.

3 About the ninth hour of the day *he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in to him, and said to him, "Cornelius!"*

4 *And fixing his gaze upon him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.*

5 "And now dispatch some men to Joppa, and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter;

6 he is staying with a certain tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea."

7 And when the angel who was speaking to him had departed, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were in constant attendance upon him,

8 and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.
(NAS)



PETER VISITS CORNELIUS IN CAESAREA

Acts 10:9-33

9 And on the next day, as they were on their way, and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

THE VISION OF PETER

10 And he became hungry, and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance;

11 and he beheld the sky opened up, and a certain object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground,

12 and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air.

13 And a voice came to him, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat!"

14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean."

15 And again a voice came to him a second time, **"What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."**

16 And this happened three times; and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.

17 Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate;

18 and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there.

19 And while Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, **"Behold, three men are looking for you."**

20 **"But arise, go downstairs, and accompany them without misgivings; for I have sent them Myself."**

21 And Peter went down to the men and said, "Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?"

22 And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you."

23 And so he invited them in and gave them lodging. And on the next day he arose and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And on the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends.

25 And when it came about that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him.

26 But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am just a man."

27 And as he talked with him, he entered, and found many people assembled.

28 **And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean."**

29 **"That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. And so I ask for what reason you have sent for me."**

THE VISION OF CORNELIUS

30 And Cornelius said, "Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments,

31 and he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.

32 'Send therefore to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea.'

33 "And so I sent to you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."

(NAS)

Joel:2:28: And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

AFTER PENTECOST AND BEFORE THE RAPTURE, GOD WILL POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT ON EVERYONE WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE OR SEX AND SPEAK TO THEM THROUGH THE WORD, PRAYER, AND DREAMS & VISIONS. NOW IS BETWEEN PENTECOST AND THE RAPTURE!

GOD SHOWS PETER THAT OBEDIENCE IS BETTER THAN TRADITION.

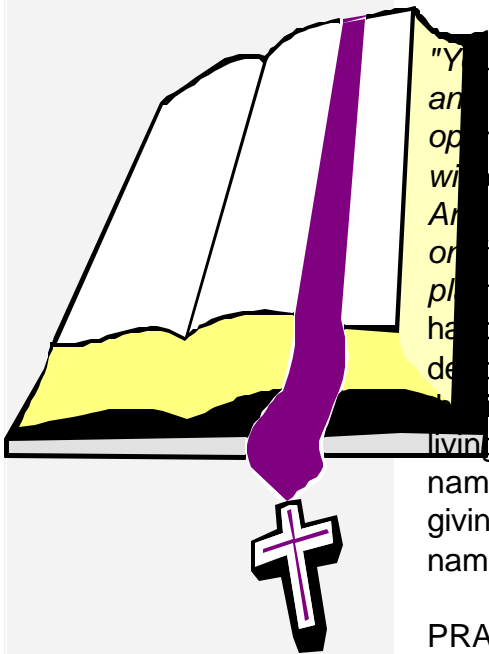
GOD HEARS THE PRAYER OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE AND HE SPEAKS TO THOSE BELIEVERS WHO LISTENS.

PETER PREACHES THE GOOD NEWS TO THE GENTILES

Acts 10:34-43

And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality nor is He a respecter of persons, but in every nation the man who has a reverential fear of Him and does what is right, is welcome and acceptable to Him. "The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)-- you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.

THE MESSAGE PREACHED IN THE FIRST CENTURY IS THE MESSAGE THAT WILL SAVE PEOPLE IN THE LAST CENTURY



"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him. "And we are both ear and eye witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And they also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. "God raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should become visible and manifest to be plainly seen, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us, who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed and ordained by God as Judge of the living and the dead. "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes (who adheres to, trusts in and relies on Him giving himself up to Jesus) in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins through His name." (NAS)

PRAISE GOD THAT THERE ARE STILL MINISTERS PREACHING THIS MESSAGE TODAY!

IF YOU WANT TO BE SAVED, YOU MUST BELIEVE IN JESUS THE ANOINTED ONE OF GOD THAT CAME TO GIVE YOU SALVATION. THERE IS NO OTHER NAME TO CALL UPON FOR SALVATION!



THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GIVEN TO THE GENTILES TOO

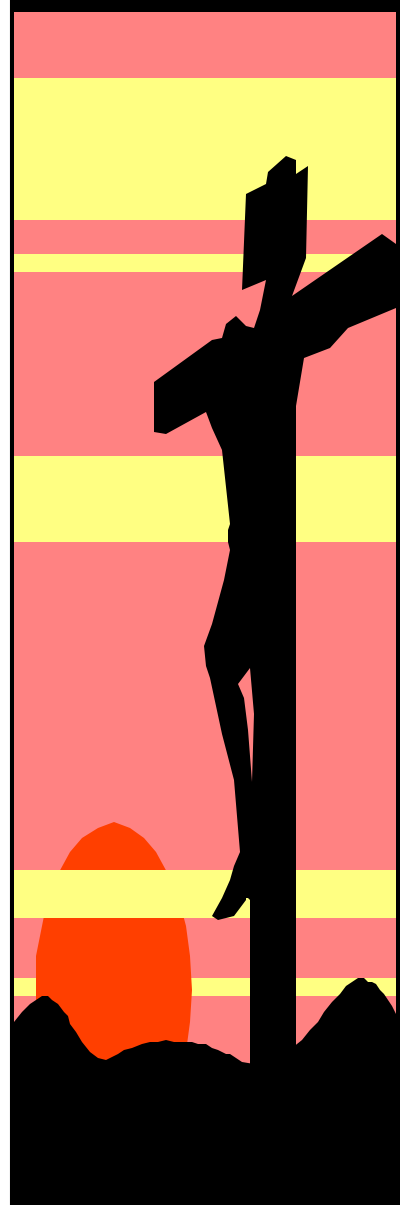
Acts 10:44-48

While Peter was still speaking these words, *the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message*. And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the **Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also**. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" And he ordered them to be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.
(NAS)



WHEN THE WORD IS PREACHED, PEOPLE ARE SAVED.
WHEN PEOPLE ARE SAVED, GOD POURS OUT THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THEM.
WHEN PEOPLE ARE IN OBEDIENCE.
THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT WILL OPERATE AND BRING GLORY TO GOD.

IN MY CHURCH:
IS THE WORD PREACHED CLEARLY AND BOLDLY?
DO PEOPLE GET SAVED?
DO PEOPLE GET BAPTIZED?
ARE PEOPLE GROWING IN THE LORD?
ARE BELIEVERS FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT?
ARE PEOPLE USING THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT TO GLORIFY GOD?
IF NOT, ARE YOU IN THE WRONG PEW?
A CHURCH IS ALIVE OR DEAD. IF GOD HAS NOT MOVED IN YOUR CHURCH IN MODERN TIMES, DO ONE OF TWO THINGS, 1. FAST AND PRAY UNTIL GREAT THINGS HAPPEN OR 2. CLOSE THE DOORS, SELL THE PROPERTY, GIVE THE MONEY TO MISSIONS, AND FIND A CHURCH THAT HAS THE ANOINTING OF GOD UPON IT, AND PRAY THAT YOU DO NOT CAUSE THIS CHURCH TO DIE BY YOUR LUKEWARM INDIFFERENCE.



FOR THE FIRST TIME
CHURCH MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW
“WHY DO YOU LET SINNERS IN THE CHURCH?”

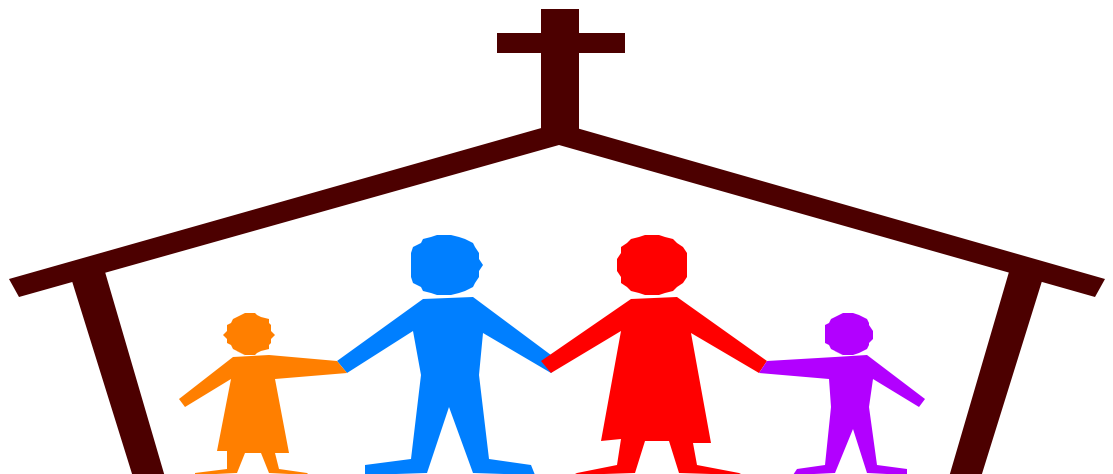
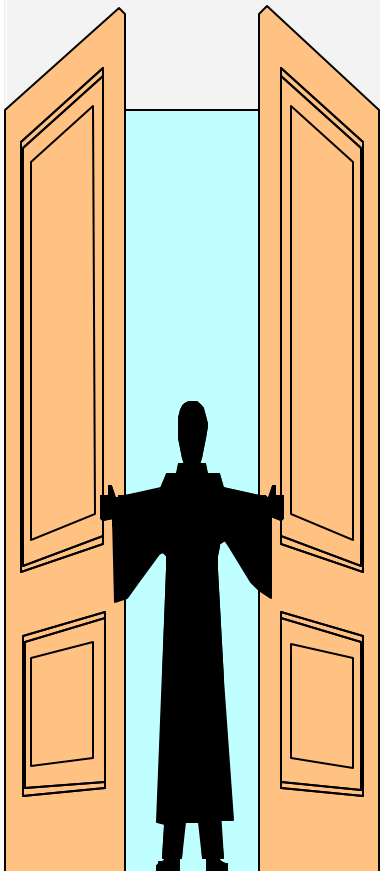
Acts 11:1-18

Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him, saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." But Peter began speaking and proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying, "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me, and when I had fixed my gaze upon it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air. "And I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Arise, Peter; kill and eat.' "But I said, 'By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' "But a voice from heaven answered a second time, 'What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.' "And this happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky. "And behold, at that moment three men appeared before the house in which we were staying, having been sent to me from Caesarea. "And the Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. And these six brethren also went with me, and we entered the man's house. "And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, 'Send to Joppa, and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; and he shall speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' "**And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as He did upon us at the beginning.**

"And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' "If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, **who was I that I could stand in God's way?**" And when they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."
(NAS)



THE DOOR IS OPENED TO
THE GENTILES
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT



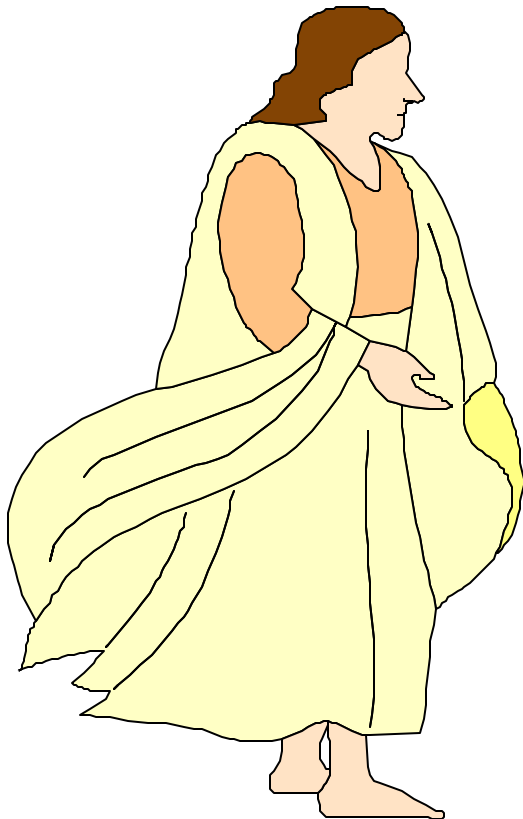
**MANY BELIEVE BECAUSE OF THE BELIEVERS
WHO FLED FROM JERUSALEM DURING THE PERSECUTION**

Acts 11:19-30

So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. **And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.**

And the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. Then when he had come and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord; for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and **the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.**

Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. *And one of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. (44 AD)* And **in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them** determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. And this they did, sending their contributions in the hands of Barnabas and Saul to the elders. (NAS)



**BELIEVERS FLED
AND TOLD OTHERS
OF THE SALVATION
OF JESUS**

HEROD KILLED JAMES THE BROTHER OF JOHN
PETER WAS PUT IN PRISON
THE CHURCH PRAYED
GOD ANSWERED!

Growth in Prayer Life

Acts 1:

13: And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

14: These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Acts 2:

42: And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

46: And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47: Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Acts 12: 5-19 ->

Acts 16:

25: And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

26: And suddenly there was ...

Matt.6:

6: But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

I Tim. 2:

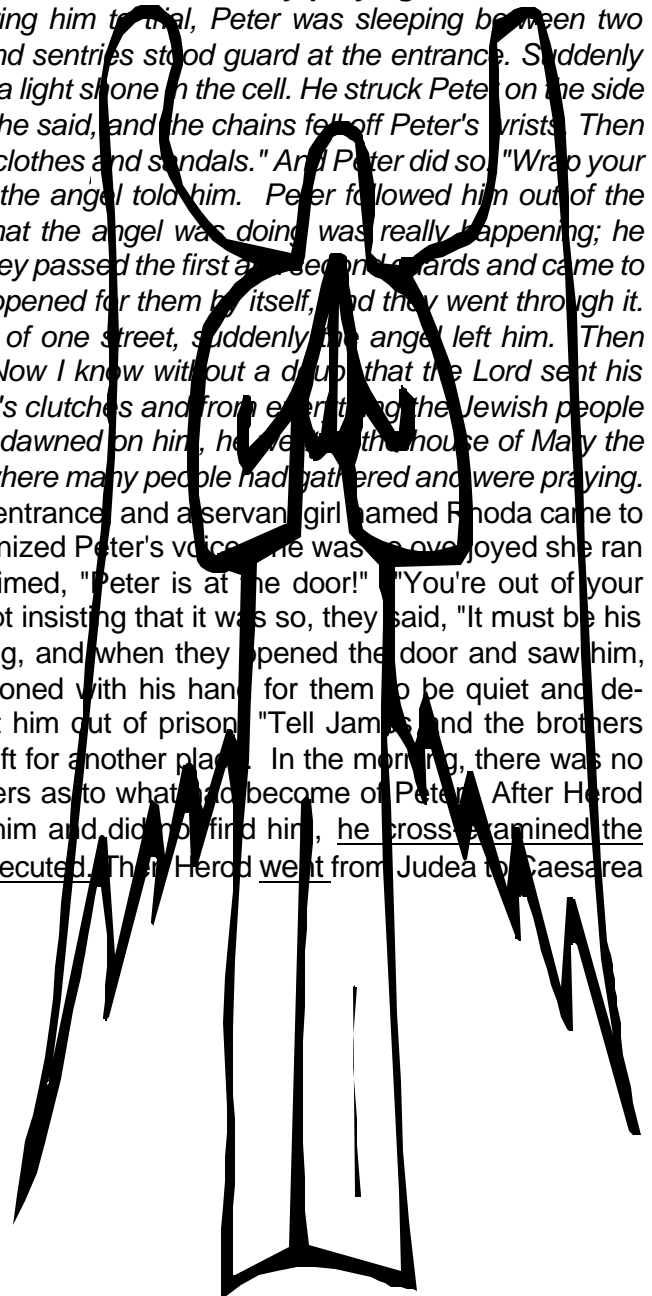
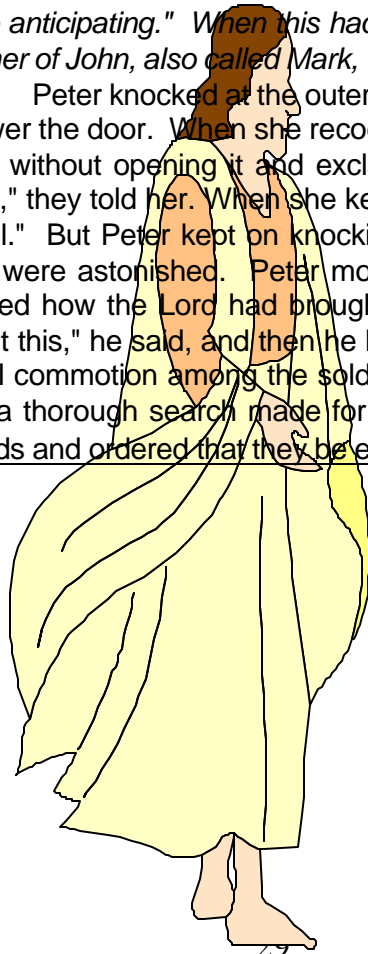
8: I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

Acts 12:1-19

It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had **James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword**. When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. So Peter was kept in prison, **but the church was earnestly praying to God for him**.

The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second wards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating." When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.

Peter knocked at the outer entrance and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel." But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the brothers about this," he said, and then he left for another place. In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed. Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea



DEATH OF HEROD

Acts 12:

20: And Herod was highly displeased and cherished bitter animosity and hostility with the people of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country and depended on them for food.

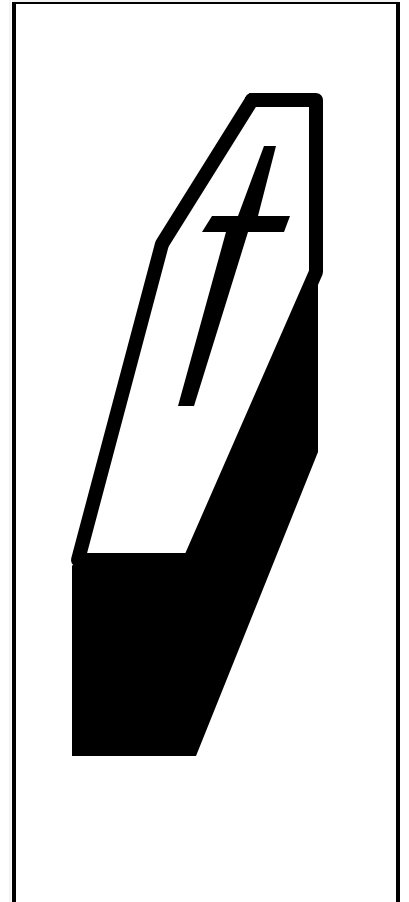
21: And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

22: And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

23: And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

24: But the word of God concerning the attainment through Christ of salvation in the kingdom of God grew and multiplied.

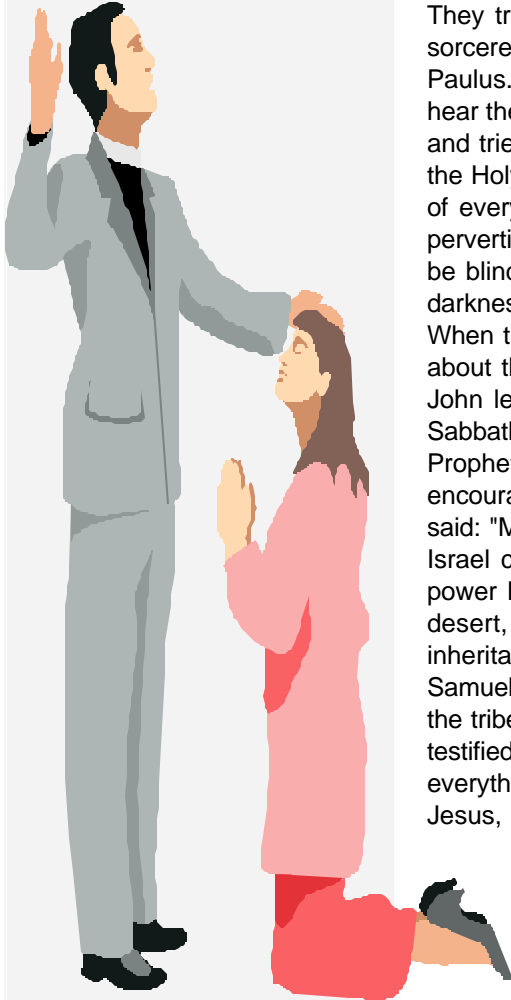
25: And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.



BARNABAS AND SAUL ARE SENT OUT PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

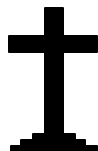
Acts 13:1-23

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper. They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord. From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak." Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt, with mighty power he led them out of that country, he endured their conduct for about forty years in the desert, he overthrew seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to his people as their inheritance. All this took about 450 years. "After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.' "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. (NIV)



PAUL PREACHES CHRIST

"they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues"



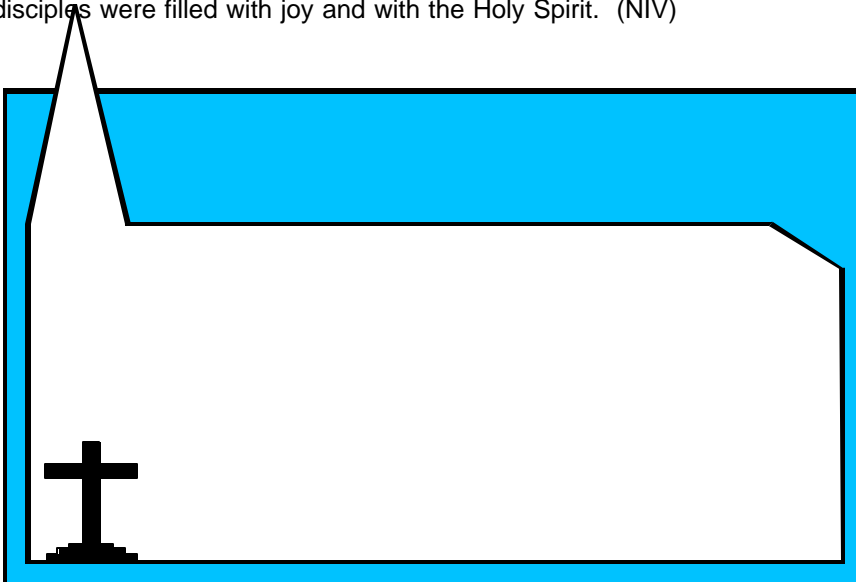
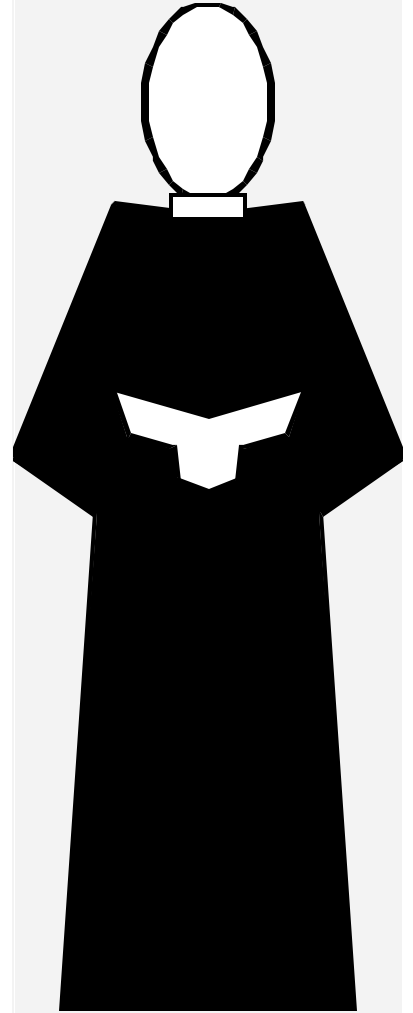
PAUL PREACHES IN ANTIOCH CONTINUED

Acts 13:24-52

Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you think I am? I am not that one. No, but he is coming after me, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.' "Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

"We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: "'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.' The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: "'I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.' So it is stated elsewhere: "'You will not let your Holy One see decay.' "For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay. "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses. Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you: "'Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you.'" As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (NIV)



PAUL AND BARNABAS IN ICONIUM LYSTRA AND DERBE

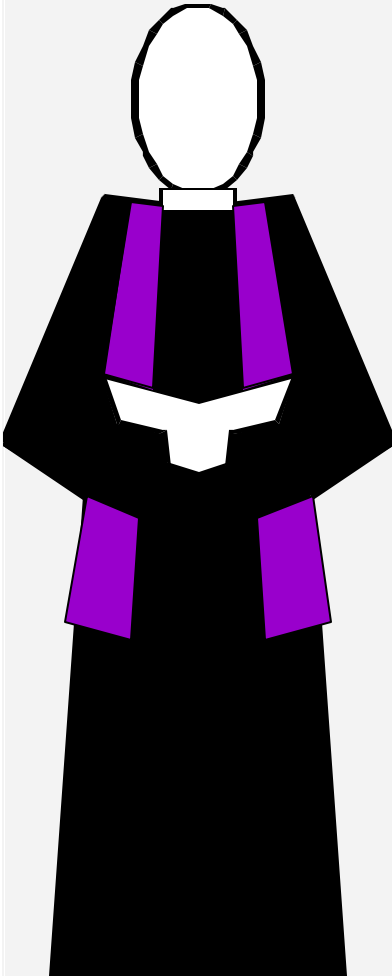
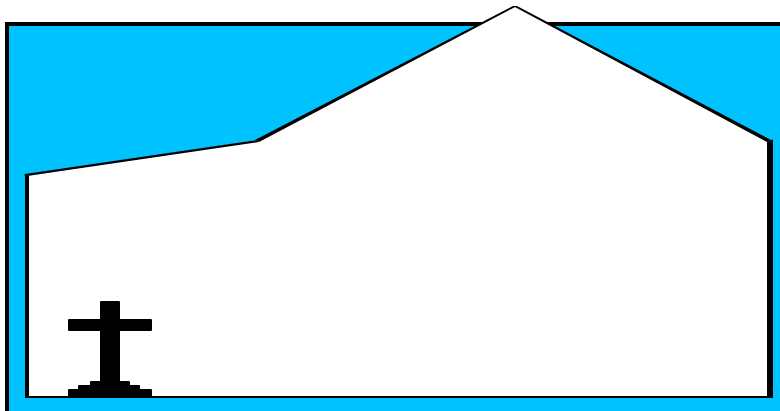
Acts 14:1-23

At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.

So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, where they continued to preach the good news. In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk. When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them. Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe. They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Acts 14:24-28

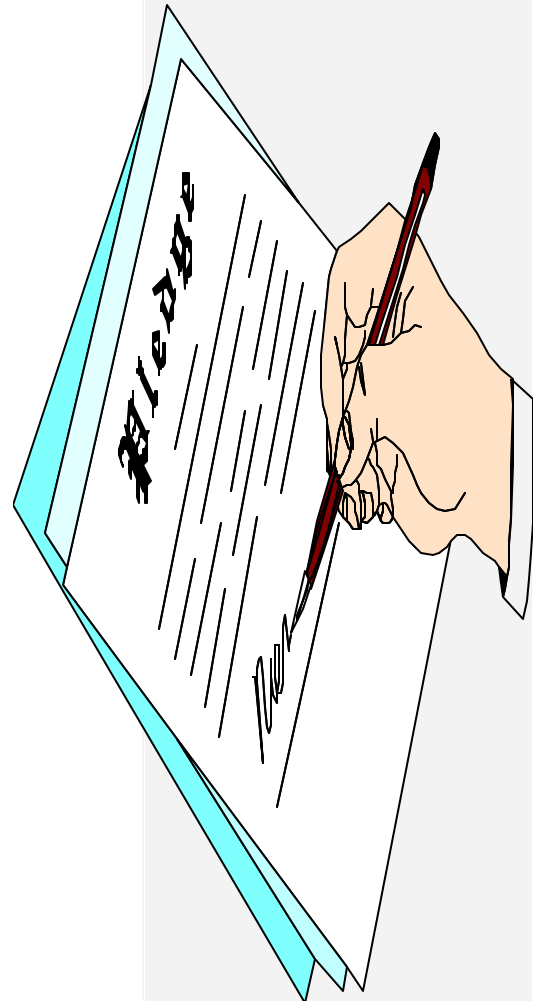
After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples. (NIV)



END OF PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY
COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM TO CORRECT THEOLOGY

Acts 15:1-21

Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses." The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. When they finished, James spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me. Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: "'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things' that have been known for ages. "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath." (NIV)



THE LETTER FROM THE APOSTLES
TO THE GENTILE BELIEVERS
DELIVERED BY BARSABBAS AND SILAS

Acts 15:21-35

From ancient generations Moses has had in every town his preachers, for he is read aloud every Sabbath." Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers.

With them they sent the following letter:



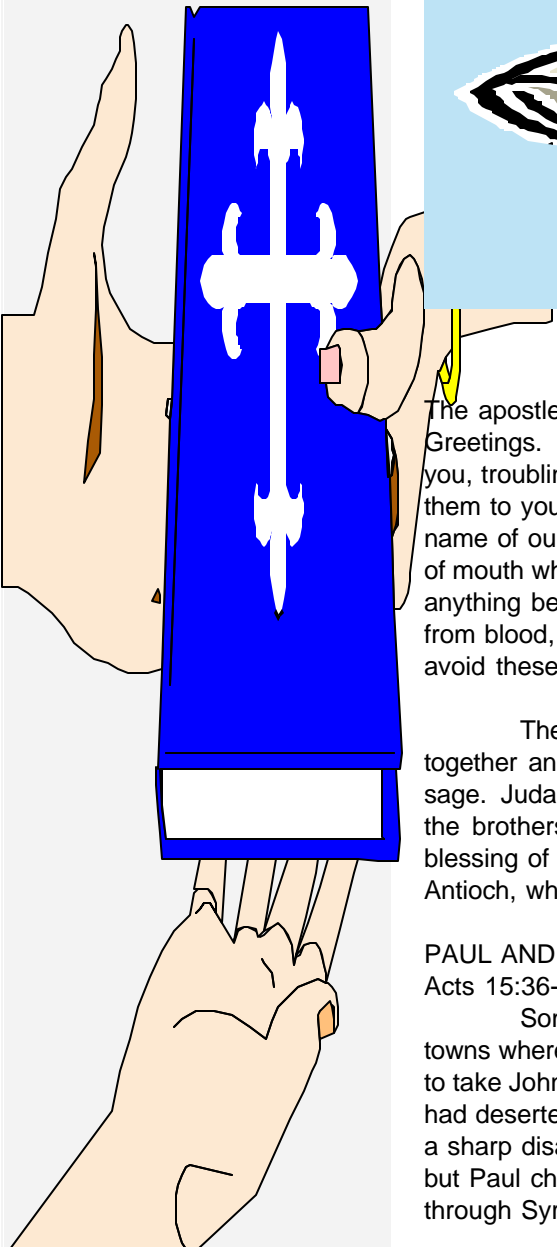
The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings. We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear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

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

PAUL AND BARNABAS SEPARATE

Acts 15:36-41

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

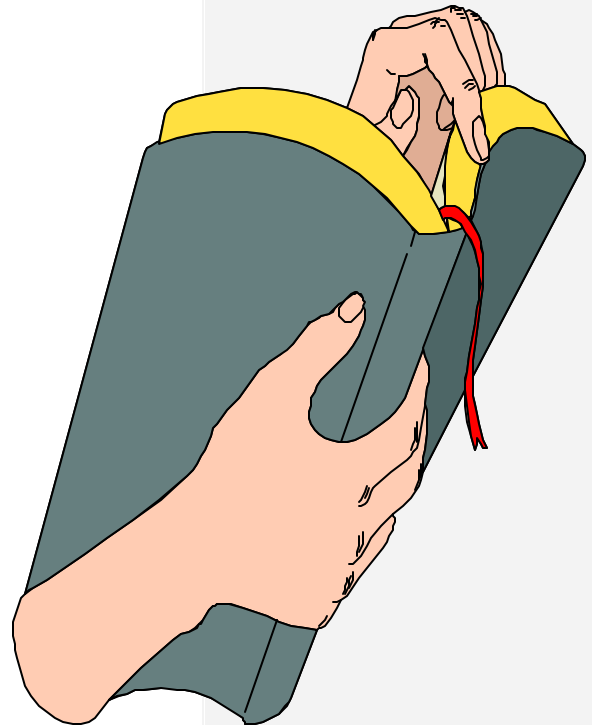


PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY
SILAS TRAVELS WITH PAUL
TIMOTHY OF LYSTRA
PAUL'S VISION
LYDIA OF PHILIPPI IS SAVED

Acts 16:1-15

And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. **So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.** And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And **a vision** appeared to Paul in the night: a certain man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Therefore putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis; and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony; and we were staying in this city for some days. And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us. (NAS)



PAUL AND SILAS IN PRISON FOR DOING GOOD

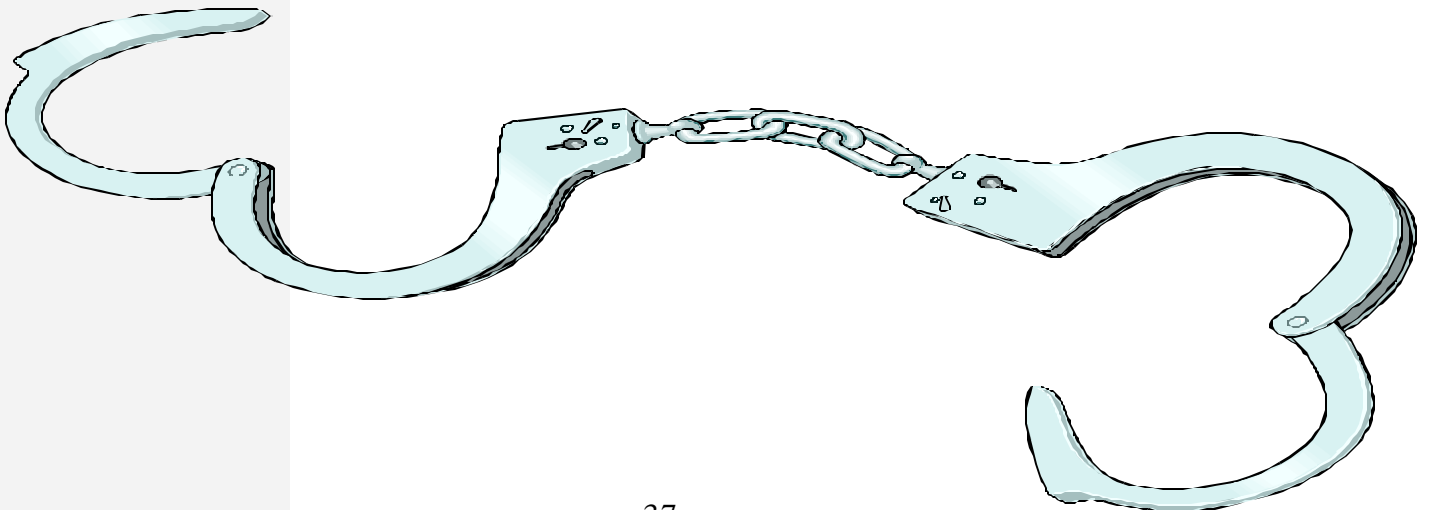
Acts 16:16-40

And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." And she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities, and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans." And the crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them, and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks.



But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were unfastened. And when the jailer had been roused out of sleep and had seen the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here!" And he called for lights and rushed in and, trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas, and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household.

And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household. Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men." And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Now therefore, come out and go in peace." But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out." And the policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. And they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city. And they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed. (NAS)



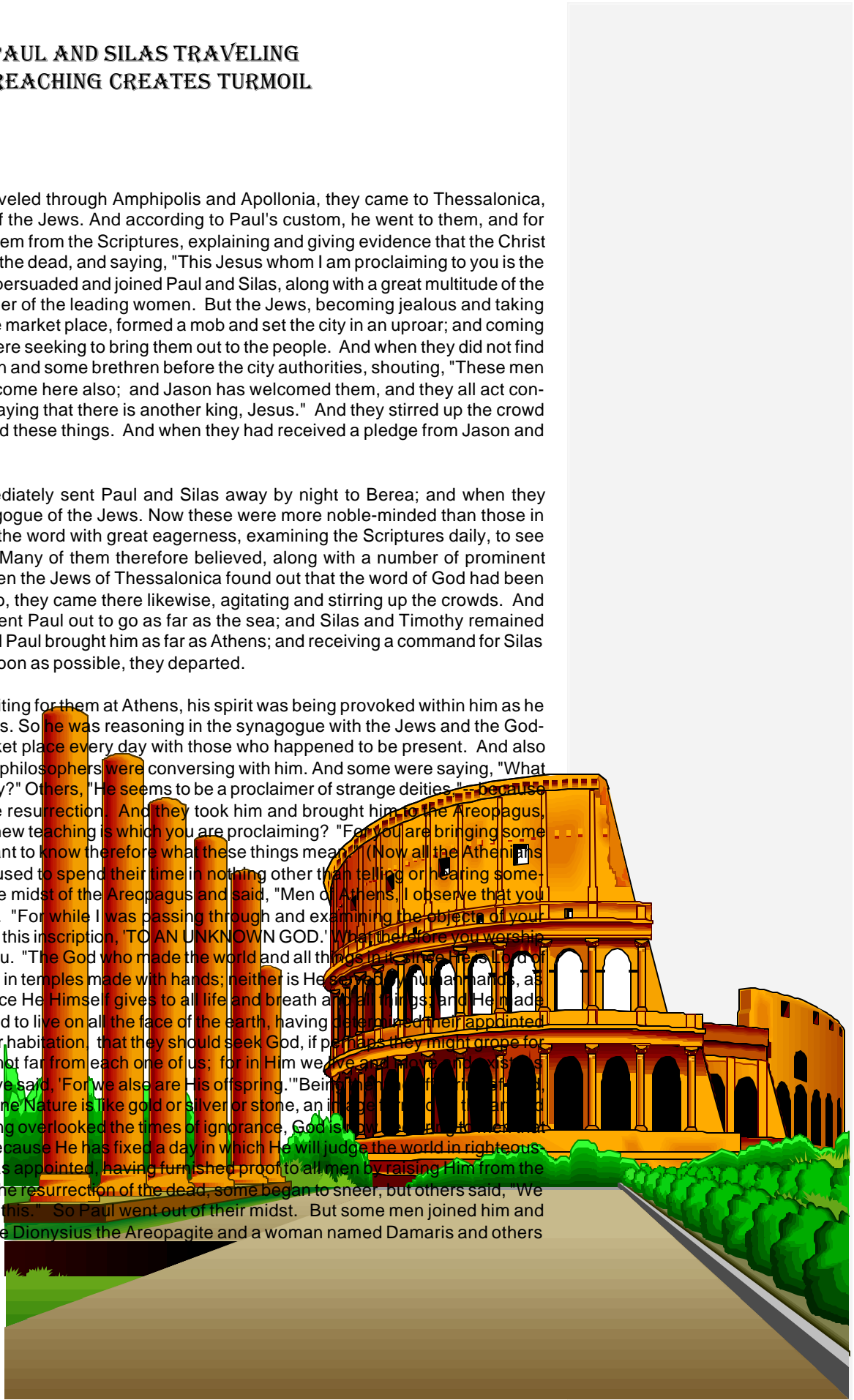
PAUL AND SILAS TRAVELING PREACHING CREATES TURMOIL

Acts 17:1-34

1 Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a great multitude of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women. But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and coming upon the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. And when they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also; and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." And they stirred up the crowd and the city authorities who heard these things. And when they had received a pledge from Jason and the others, they released them.

10 And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men. But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there likewise, agitating and stirring up the crowds. And then immediately the brethren sent Paul out to go as far as the sea; and Silas and Timothy remained there. Now those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.

16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols. So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. And some were saying, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" Others, "He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities," - because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; we want to know therefore what these things mean." (Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.) And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all things in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.'" Being ignorant of His office, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image of human thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now calling all everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this." So Paul went out of their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.
(NAS)



PAUL MEETS PRISCILLA AND AQUILA IN CORINTH

Acts 18:1-28

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

2 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

3 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

4 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

5 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

6 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

7 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

8 **Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:**

9 **For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.**

10 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

11 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat.

12 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

13 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, I reason would that I should bear with you:

14 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.

15 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

16 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things.

17 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence unto Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

18 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

19 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not:

20 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

21 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

22 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

APOLLOS FROM EPHESUS

23 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

24 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

25 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

26 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

27 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

(KJV)

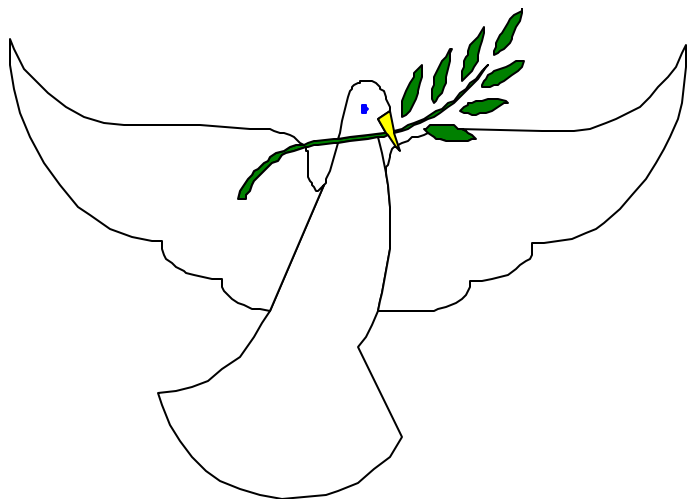
PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY
PAUL MINISTERS AT EPHESUS
SEVEN SONS OF SCEVA & A RELIGIOUS MAN
I KNOW JESUS, I KNOW PAUL, WHO ARE YOU?

Acts 19:1-20

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "**No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.**" So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all. Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

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

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



RIOT IN EPHESUS

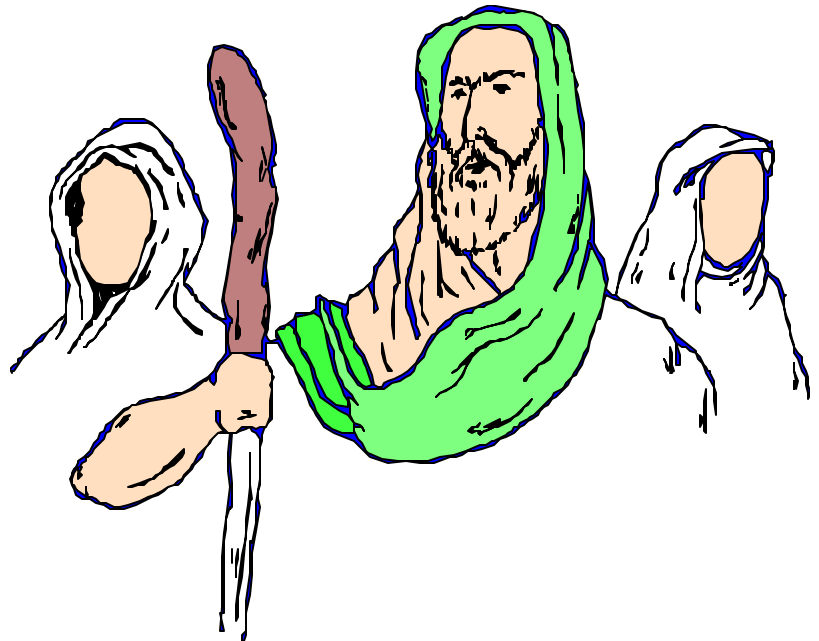
Acts 19:21-41

Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. And about that time there arose no small disturbance concerning the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen; these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business. "And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all. "And not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship should even be dethroned from her magnificence." And when they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

And the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia. And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him. And also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater. So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and the majority did not know for what cause they had come together. And some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly. But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" And after quieting the multitude, the town clerk said, "Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis, and of the image which fell down from heaven? "Since then these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash.

"For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. "So then, if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against any man, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available; let them bring charges against one another. "But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly. "For indeed we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today's affair, since there is no real cause for it; and in this connection we shall be unable to account for this disorderly gathering."

And after saying this he dismissed the assembly. (NAS)



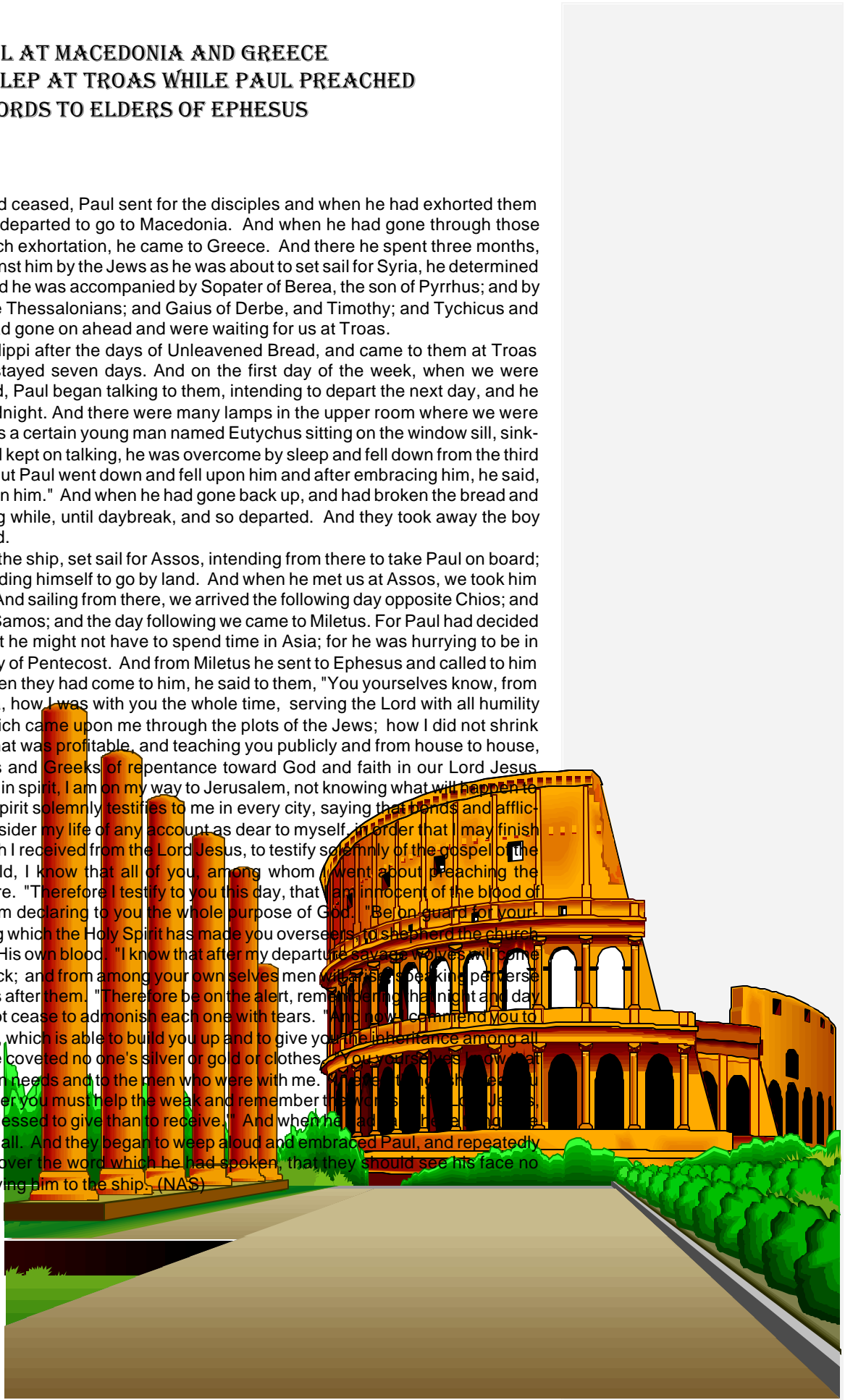
PAUL AT MACEDONIA AND GREECE
EUTYCHUS SLEP AT TROAS WHILE PAUL PREACHED
WORDS TO ELDERS OF EPHESUS

Acts 20:1-38

1 And after the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he departed to go to Macedonia. And when he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece. And there he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia. And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus; and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas.

6 And we sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days. And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. And there were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together. And there was a certain young man named Eutyclus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor, and was picked up dead. But Paul went down and fell upon him and after embracing him, he said, "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him." And when he had gone back up, and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. And they took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.

13 But we, going ahead to the ship, set sail for Assos, intending from there to take Paul on board; for thus he had arranged it, intending himself to go by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. And sailing from there, we arrived the following day opposite Chios; and the next day we crossed over to Samos; and the day following we came to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus in order that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. "And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. "And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will see my face no more. "Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men. "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. "By your services I have done all these things, ministering to my own needs and to the men who were with me. "I have done all this so that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they were accompanying him to the ship. (NAS)

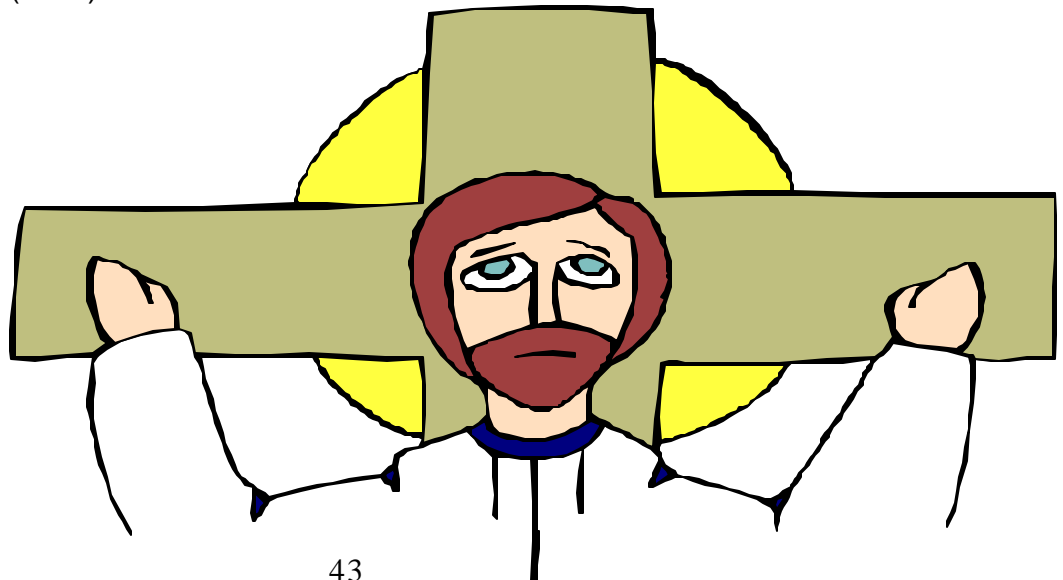


PAUL'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM
BELIEVERS AS SYRIA PROPHESED THAT PAUL SHOULD NOT GO TO
JERUSALEM
PROPHECY OF AGABUS TO PAUL

Acts 21:1-15

And when it came about that we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara; and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo. And after looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they PROPHESED AND kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem. And when it came about that our days there were ended, we departed and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. And after kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again. And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day. And on the next day we departed and came to Caesarea; and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.

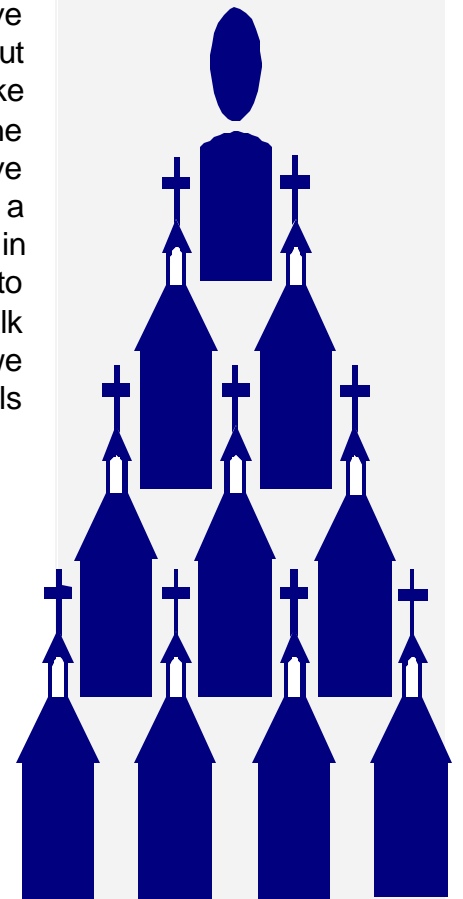
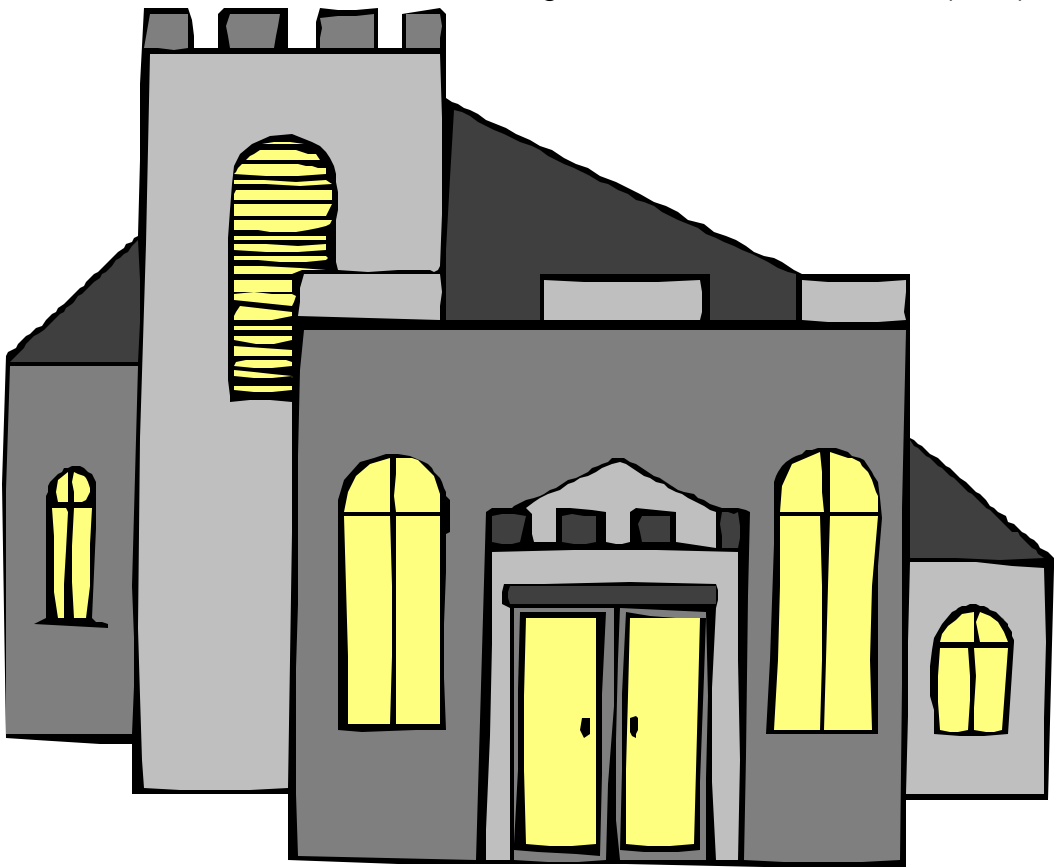
And as we were staying there for some days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, **"This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"** And when we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, **"What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."** And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, **"The will of the Lord be done!"** And after these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem. (NAS)



PAUL IN JERUSALEM
PAUL TELLS OF HIS MINISTRY

Acts 21:15-25

And after these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem. And some of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge. And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And now the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. And after he had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. "What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. "Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses in order that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law. "But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication." (NAS)



PAUL IS ARRESTED IN JERUSALEM
THE COMMANDER ALLOWS PAUL TO SPEAK TO THE CROUD

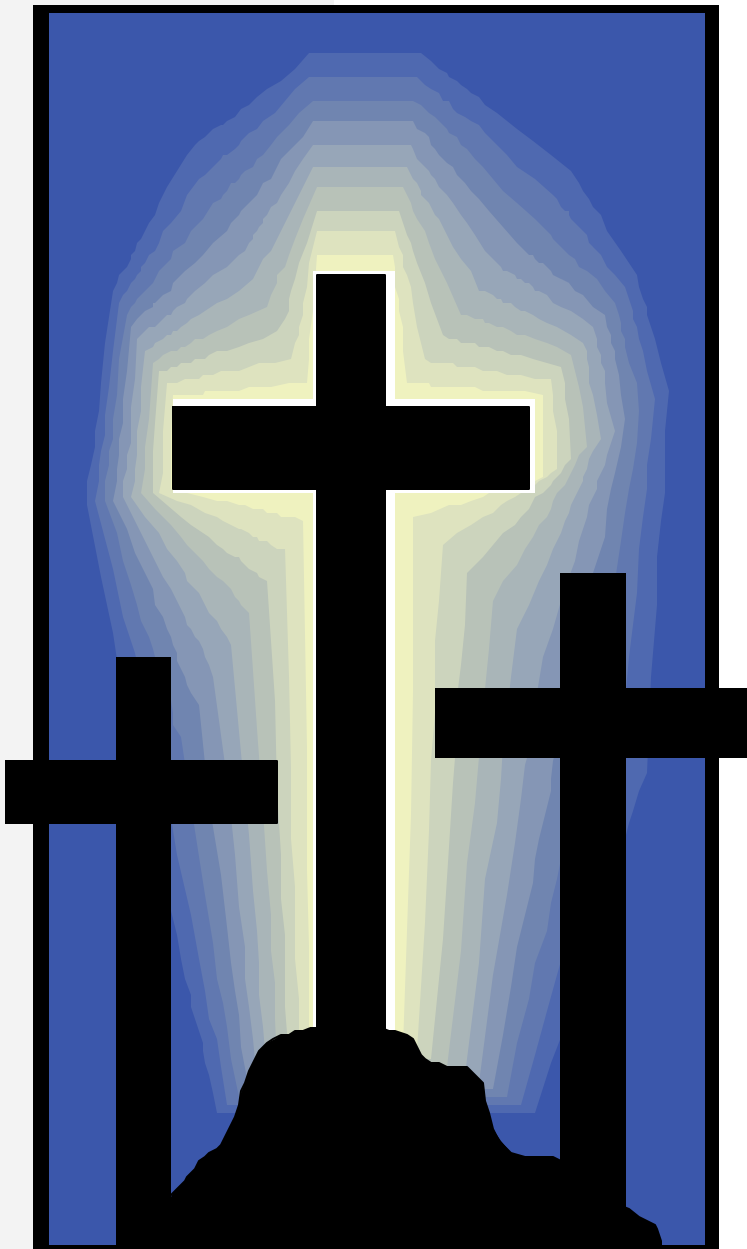
Acts 21:26-40

The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them. When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place." (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.) The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple,

and immediately the gates were shut. While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done.

Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers. The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Away with him!" As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?" "Do you speak Greek?" he replied. "Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?" Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people." Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic:

(NIV)



PAUL'S ARREST AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HIS TESTAMONY

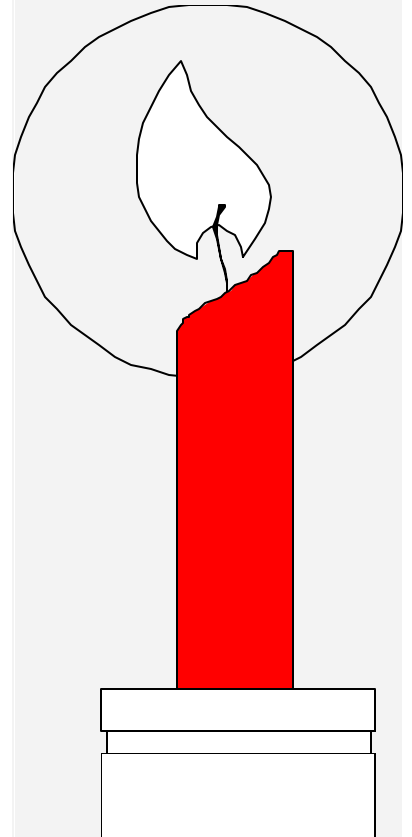
PAUL WAS A ROMAN CITIZEN

Acts 22:1-30

1 "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer to you." And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he said, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today. "And I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished. "And it came about that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' "And I answered, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.' "And those who were with me beheld the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me. "And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Arise and go on into Damascus; and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.' "But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

12 "And a certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing near said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very time I looked up at him. "And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear an utterance from His mouth. 'For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. 'And now why do and wash away your sins, call-when I returned to Jerusalem fell into a trance, and I saw Him out of Jerusalem quickly, be-mony about Me.' "And I said, that in one synagogue after those who believed in Thee. Stephen was being shed, I also watching out for the cloaks of He said to me, 'Go! For I will And they listened to him up to their voices and said, "Away he should not be allowed to and throwing off their cloaks commander ordered him to be he should be examined by the reason why they were when they stretched him out rion who was standing by, "Is it is a Roman and turion heard this, he went to the "What are you about to do? For

27 And the commander you a Roman?" And he said, swered, "I acquired this citizen-Paul said, "But I was actually were about to examine him im-mander also was afraid when and because he had put him ing to know for certain why he released him and ordered the assemble, and brought Paul down and set him before them. (NAS)



you delay? Arise, and be baptized, ing on His name.' "And it came about and was praying in the temple, that I saying to me, 'Make haste, and get cause they will not accept your testi-'Lord, they themselves understand another I used to imprison and beat 'And when the blood of Thy witness was standing by approving, and those who were slaying him.' "And send you far away to the Gentiles." this statement, and then they raised with such a fellow from the earth, for live!" And as they were crying out and tossing dust into the air, the brought into the barracks, stating that scourging so that he might find out shouting against him that way. And with thongs, Paul said to the centu-lawful for you to scourge a man who uncondemned?" And when the cen-commander and told him, saying, this man is a Roman."

came and said to him, "Tell me, are "Yes." And the commander an-ship with a large sum of money." And born a citizen." Therefore those who mediately let go of him; and the com-he found out that he was a Roman, in chains. But on the next day, wish-had been accused by the Jews, he chief priests and all the Council to

PAUL BEFORE THE HIGH COUNCIL
 JEWS WANT TO KILL PAUL
 PAUL SENT TO GOVERNOR FELIX

Acts 23:1-35

1 And Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, "Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day." And the high priest Ananias commanded those standing beside him to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! And do you sit to try me according to the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?" But the bystanders said, "Do you revile God's high priest?" And Paul said, "I was not aware, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

6 But perceiving that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!" And as he said this, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. And there arose a great uproar; and some of the scribes of the Pharisaic party stood up and began to argue heatedly, saying, "We find nothing wrong with this man; suppose a spirit of an angel has spoken to him?" And as a great dissension was developing, the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them and ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them the barracks. by them and ordered the by force, and bring him into

11 But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his side and said, "Take courage; for as nessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so also."

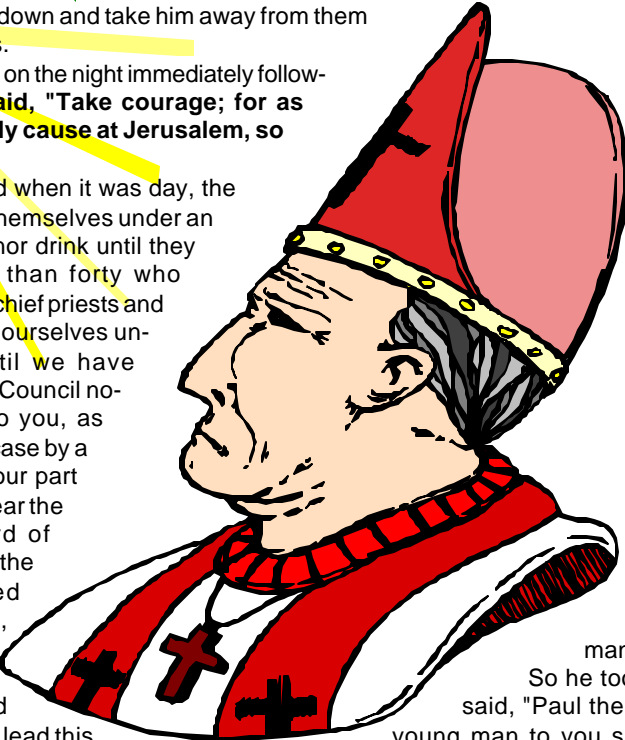
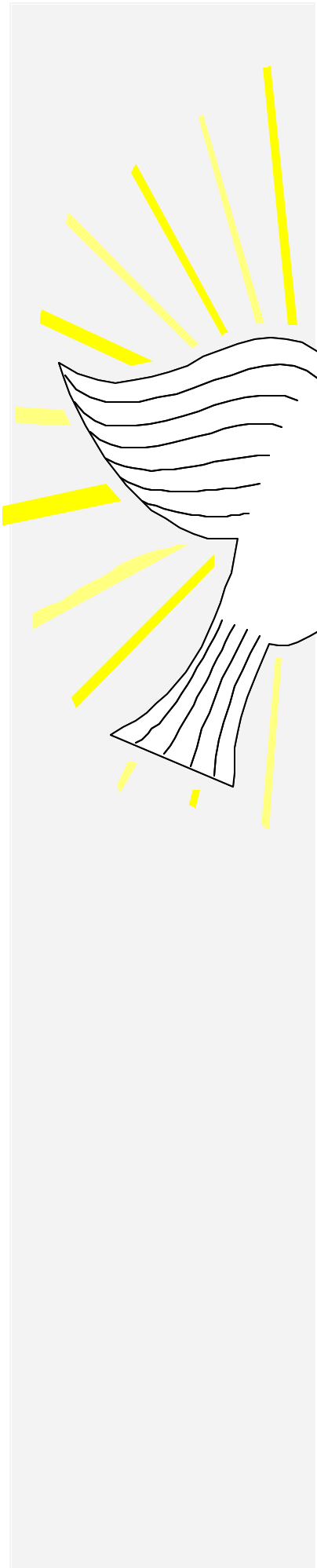
12 And when it was day, they and bound themselves under an oath, neither eat nor drink until they were more than forty who came to the chief priests and have bound ourselves nothing until we have you and the Council no-him down to you, as termine his case by a and we for our part he comes near the sister heard of and entered the Paul called and said, c o m - port to him."

And the commander asked me to lead this young man to you since he has something to tell you." And the commander took him by the hand and stepping aside, began to inquire of him privately, "What is it that you have to report to me?" And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down tomorrow to the Council, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more thoroughly about him. "So do not listen to them, for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him who have bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they slay him; and now they are ready and waiting for the promise from you." Therefore the commander let the young man go, instructing him, "Tell no one that you have notified me of these things." And he called to him two of the centurions, and said, "Get two hundred soldiers ready by the third hour of the night to proceed to Caesarea, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen." They were also to provide mounts to put Paul on and bring him safely to Felix the governor. And he wrote a letter having this form:

26 "Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings.

"When this man was arrested by the Jews and was about to be slain by them, I came upon them with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. "And wanting to ascertain the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their Council; and I found him to be accused over questions about their Law, but under no accusation deserving death or imprisonment. "And when I was informed that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, also instructing his accusers to bring charges against him before you."

31 So the soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. But the next day, leaving the horsemen to go on with him, they returned to the barracks. And when these had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. And when he had read it, he asked from what province he was; and when he learned that he was from Cilicia, he said, "I will give you a hearing after your accusers arrive also," giving orders for him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium. (NAS)



ing, the Lord stood at his you have solemnly wit-you must witness at Rome

Jews formed a conspiracy oath, saying that they would had killed Paul. And there formed this plot. And they the elders, and said, "We der a solemn oath to taste killed Paul. "Now, therefore, tify the commander to bring though you were going to demore thorough investigation; are ready to slay him before place." But the son of Paul's their ambush, and he came barracks and told Paul. And one of the centurions to him "Lead this young man to the mander, for he has something to re-

So he took him and led him to the com-said, "Paul the prisoner called me to him and

PAUL BEFORE FELIX

Acts 24:1-27

Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long

period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly. "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him." The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true. When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense. You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the

temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me. However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man. "After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. Or these who are

here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin-- unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'"

Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case." He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs. Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him. When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison. (NIV)



PAUL BEFORE FESTUS

Acts 25:1-22

Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, where the chief priests and Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul. They urgently requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon. Let some of your leaders come with me and press charges against the man there, if he has done anything wrong." After spending eight or ten days with them, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him.

When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove. Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar." Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?" Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!" After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!" A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. Since they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He said: "There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner. When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned. "I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over any man before he has faced his accusers and has had an opportunity to defend himself against their charges.

When they came here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in. When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. I was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges. When Paul made his appeal to be held over for the Emperor's decision, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar." Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself." He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him." (NIV)



PAUL SPEAKS TO AGRIPPA

Acts 25:23-26:32

23 The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high ranking officers and the leading men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. Festus said: "King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome. But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. For I think it is unreasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him."

CHAPTER 26

1 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently. "The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me. Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead? "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.

"On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' "'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen-- that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane." "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do." Then Agrippa said to Paul, "**Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?**" Paul replied, "Short time or long-- I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains." The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. They left the room, and while talking with one another, they said, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment."

Agrippa said to Festus, "**This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.**" (NIV)



PAUL GOES TO ROME NEVER EXPECT SMOTHE SAILING

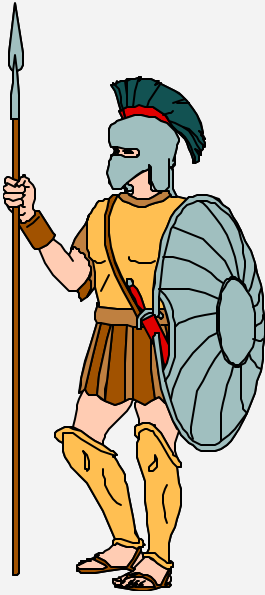
Acts 27:1-44

1 And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius. And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica. And the next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care. And from there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia.

And there the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it. And when we had sailed slowly for a good many days, and with difficulty had arrived off Cnidus, since the wind did not permit us to go farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone; and with difficulty sailing past it we came to a certain place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea. And when considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul began to admonish them, and said to them, "Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be attended with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives." But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship, than by what was being said by Paul. And because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to put out to sea from there, if somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there. And when a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had gained their purpose, they weighed anchor and began sailing along Crete, close inshore. But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo; and when the ship was caught in it, and could not face the wind, we gave way to it, and let ourselves be driven along. And running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were scarcely able to get the ship's boat under control.

And after they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship; and fearing that they might run aground on the shallows of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor, and so let themselves be driven along. The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo; and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. And since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned. And when they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete, and incurred this damage and loss. "And yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. "For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.' "Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God, that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. "But we must run aground on a certain island." But when the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven about in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors began to surmise that they were approaching some land. And they took soundings, and found it to be twenty fathoms; and a little farther on they took another sounding and found it to be fifteen fathoms. And fearing that we might run aground somewhere on the rocks, they cast four anchors from the stern and wished for daybreak. And as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship, and had let down the ship's boat into the sea, on the pretense of intending to lay out anchors from the bow,

Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved." Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat, and let it fall away. And until the day was about to dawn, Paul was encouraging them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have been constantly watching and going without eating, having taken nothing. "Therefore I encourage you to take some food, for this is for your preservation; for not a hair from the head of any of you shall perish." And having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all; and he broke it and began to eat. And all of them were encouraged, and they themselves also took food. And all of us in the ship were two hundred and seventy-six persons. And when they had eaten enough, they began to lighten the ship by throwing out the wheat into the sea. And when day came, they could not recognize the land; but they did observe a certain bay with a beach, and they resolved to drive the ship onto it if they could. And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea while at the same time they were loosening the ropes of the rudders, and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they were heading for the beach. But striking a reef where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern began to be broken up by the force of the waves. And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, that none of them should swim away and escape; but the centurion, wanting to bring Paul safely through, kept them from their intention, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, and the rest should follow, some on planks, and others on various things from the ship. And thus it happened that they all were brought safely to land. (NAS)



**PAUL ON THE ISLAND OF MALTA
A SNAKE CAN'T STOP A MAN OF GOD
IF THEY ARE OPEN, LAY ON HANDS AND PRAY FOR THEM**

Acts 28:1-10

1 And when they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta.

2 And the natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all.

3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, "Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live."

5 However he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm.

6 But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

7 Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us courteously three days.

8 And it came about that the father of Publius was lying in bed afflicted with recurrent fever and dysentery; and Paul went in to see him and after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him.

9 And after this had happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases were coming to him and getting cured.

10 And they also honored us with many marks of respect; and when we were setting sail, they supplied us with all we needed.

(NAS)



**PAUL IN ROME
PREACHER UNDER GUARD**

Acts 28:11-31

11 After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. There we found some brothers who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. The brothers there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged.

When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him. Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar-- not that I had any charge to bring against my own people. For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."

They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect." They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: * "Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!" For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

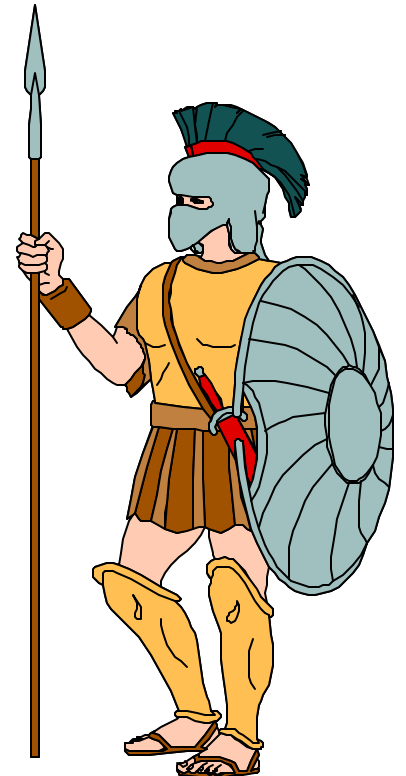
(NIV)

ISIAH 6:8: ALSO I HEARD
THE VOICE OF THE LORD,
SAYING, WHOM SHALL I
SEND, AND WHO WILL GO
FOR US? THEN SAID I, HERE
AM I; SEND ME.

9: AND HE SAID, GO, AND
TELL THIS PEOPLE, HEAR
YE INDEED, BUT UNDER-
STAND NOT; AND SEE YE
INDEED, BUT PERCEIVE
NOT.

10: MAKE THE HEART OF
THIS PEOPLE FAT, AND
MAKE THEIR EARS HEAVY,
AND SHUT THEIR EYES;
LEST THEY SEE WITH THEIR
EYES, AND HEAR WITH
THEIR EARS, AND UNDER-
STAND WITH THEIR HEART,
AND CONVERT, AND BE
HEALED.

11: THEN SAID I, LORD, HOW
LONG? AND HE ANSWERED,
UNTIL THE CITIES BE
WASTED WITHOUT INHAB-
ITANT, AND THE HOUSES
WITHOUT MAN, AND THE
LAND BE UTTERLY DESO-
LATE,



SO IT WAS
IN THE BEGINNING DAYS OF THE CHURCH.
GOD DIRECTED MEN TO
MINISTER TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE,
THE LOST WERE SAVED,
THE SAVED SAW SIGNS AND WONDERS
IN THEIR LOCAL CHURCH.
FELLOWSHIP MENT FELLOWSHIP
WITH BELIEVERS MEETING AND EATING
TOGETHER DAILY.
BELIEVERS WERE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE
NEEDS OF FELLOW BELIEVERS THAN
ABOUT LARGE BANK ACCOUNTS.
THERE WAS A SHARING
OF LOVE
OF FELLOWSHIP
OF CONCERN
OF THE GOOD NEWS TO THE LOST
THE CHURCH GREW IN
CHRISTLIKENESS
AND IN NUMBER
DAILY!

c 1998
Ministry of the Saviour
Wayne Deer