

We're now continuing with *Part Five* of the series *The Beginning of God's Church*. We left off last Sabbath in Acts, chapter 9, and we're going to continue on right from there, going on to Acts, chapter 10, verse 1 today. In going through this and thinking about how God, how Christ, worked in starting the Church, how it began, it has become a lot more obvious that a lot more started from the very get-go than what we'd really ever comprehended, in that respect, as to what we were led to think or believe in times past, as there were thousands of people who were called at that beginning stage. Then it continued to grow as Paul went out in different areas as well.

So, we're going to continue on with some of the story flow and then once we're through, I think we have one more sermon in the series, next Sabbath, and after that, we're going to go on into more of the life of Paul, what he went through, because it's really quite astounding how much he was used, how much God used him in the Church, in that respect, as far as all of his writing and the things that motivated a lot of that, and of course God's Spirit leading and guiding and directing in all that. But it's quite an incredible story and a very difficult life that some of these people lived.

Acts 10:1 - There was a certain man of Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of the unit called the Italian, devout, and one who feared God with all his household, who gave large contributions to the people, and prayed to God continually. So again here, unique in what it's covering here, what it's telling us about him. **Clearly at the ninth hour of the day,** which is, in this case 3 p.m. or 15:00 overseas, **he saw a vision of an angel of God entering and calling to him "Cornelius." So when he looked at him, he was afraid and said "What is it Lord?" Then he said to him, "Your prayers and your contributions have come up for remembrance before God."** So, again here, whether he had been called as a proselyte before, I think that's the proper term, of the Jews, and was going through that process, because it talks about God here and his understanding of the God of Abraham. Anyway, this shows his attitude in his mind and his giving to people and so forth and not as a normal centurion, if you will, obviously.

Then it says in **verse 5 – "Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon, whose surname is Peter."** So he's given this instruction and it says here, **"He is lodging with Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do."** **And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier, from among those who waited on him continually. So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa. The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up to the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.** So right around noon, he was up there praying, and this is what takes place then. **Then he began to be very hungry and wanted to eat, but as they were making preparations, he fell into a trance.** So again, being around noon, being hungry, whatever, time to eat, and so this is what he went through and experienced. **He went into a trance and saw heaven open and a vessel like a great**

sheet, bound at the four corners descending before him, and being let down to the earth: In it were all kinds of four-legged animals of the earth, wild animals, living things that moved, and birds of the air. Then a voice came to him, "Rise Peter; kill and eat."

So, amazing how God reveals things at different times, in different ways, and this here is an interesting one in what He was bringing out and the point of it all, and what he was to learn from this, which He told him, as time went on here. But again here, that which was communicated through the power of God's Spirit. It says, **But Peter said, "Not so, Lord."** So, you have to hand it to him. He told right. This particular response here was that, "This is being shown to you, you're supposed to rise up and eat," and being hungry, this is in his mind, and he says, **"Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything common or unclean." Then the voice to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed, you are not to call common."**

Now, some in the Protestant world have tried to use this at times to say, "Clean and unclean foods have been done away with. You can eat anything you want; this is what God was showing." It has nothing to do with that whatsoever. But that's the Protestant mind, that's the mind of scholars and so forth who want to push their ideas, their concepts, their traditions of doctrine on others, and obviously, Judaism wasn't one of those. So, anything they can do to clean that part up and be away from it and say that "the law has been done away with," including this, then they try to do it. So, you have to read the whole thing to know what was being said, so people don't try very hard sometimes.

It says, **This was done three times**, so he saw this three times; each time responding the same way. **...then the vessel was taken up into heaven again. Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision meant**, which he had seen, **then appeared the men who had been sent from Cornelius.** Now, again here, these things don't happen. They're not a normal occurrence. He knows it's not a normal occurrence, so he's trying to understand what it is that God is showing him, that he's to learn from this, because there was something very real there that was in his mind, and something that he could see. So, again, things we've never experienced and when you do like he did, naturally, he's going to wonder, "What on earth?"

So again here, **At the same time he was wondering about this, the men who had been sent from Cornelius making inquiry for Simon's house, and standing before the gate, then they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. And while Peter thought upon the vision, the Spirit said to him...**

So again here, I don't think this is something that we've really understood very well in the Church in times past. It's a power of God's Spirit to communicate to us. He does that when He calls us; He begins to communicate His Word to us within the mind. It gives us the ability to see and understand things we have never understood before, that we can't understand without His Holy Spirit; things about His plan, His purpose, the law, the spirit of the law, and the things that we are able to read or hear for the first

time, and we know it's true. I made the comments many a time, first time being called, I knew that the Sabbath, I knew that the Holy Days, I knew the migration of Israel, when I heard about it, was true. It's just in the mind. That's how God's spirit works; He communicates those things to you.

But there are other situations that happen from time to time, like with the apostles here, as they began and, as time has gone on, that God communicates to the mind to give a knowing in the mind, perhaps about a certain truth or whatever it might be, if it's to be given to the Church and the means that God does that and how He accomplishes that, that there is that which is in the mind that is a matter of knowing. **"Behold, three men are looking for you."** So this is communicated to him, he knew it. It just becomes a normal pattern as it did for him. **"Arise therefore, go down and go with them, questioning nothing..."** So, "Don't ask questions, don't question this. Just do it, okay?" **"...for I have sent them."** All the more so; answer, "Okay!"

Verse 21 - Then Peter went down to the man who had been sent to him from Cornelius and said, "Look I am he of whom you are looking; for what reason have you come?" So again, a surprise to them as well, he comes down there and says, "I'm the one you're looking for and what is it you want?" and they have to be moved by that on a certain plane. **So they said, "Cornelius the Centurion, a just man, one who fears God, and has a good reputation among all the nations of the Jews,** so again, this matter of Judaism and the reputation he had, being unique in that respect, favoring that and wanting to live by that, by what he understood, **was instructed by a holy angel to send for you into his house and to hear words from you."** So, "We've been sent by him, one of authority, one of power, and he has sent us to you to request that you be there, that you come." **So then he invited them in to lodge. Now the next day, Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa together with him.**

So again, they went where they were supposed to. He wasn't supposed to question. He was to discuss this with them and so he knew what he was supposed to do. **Then the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends.** What an incredible thing here. Here you're wanting someone to come to you, you have questions, you've heard things, there are things that, as we've already read here, that are happening, and now he wants to hear more. He wants to hear from the one that he's been told to send for, and so he invites his relatives, friends, whatever, as it says here, close friends, to be there. So, they responded to that because he's a person of authority, and power, and influence, and so they wanted to know what was going on, what was to be said. What's incredible in all this is God's working in this. God's working through him to family members and others. So often, especially in the beginning of something, I think of various areas in the Church where God began to raise up areas for the Church, He would oftentimes work through families; that's the way He worked. And so, in many cases, we see God working through families and the like, and calling others and so forth, and it's a process whereby He chooses to do so.

It says here, **As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet to worship. But Peter raised him up saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man."** So, in other words, "Don't do this; I'm a man

as you are. Nothing above that, nothing different than that." In other words, "This is something you're not supposed to be doing." I can't help but think of some, in times past, who probably would have liked that. A matter of fact, just before services here we were talking about something of the past in this area and how one individual liked to have people around him and if people didn't get around him, they were standing off afar or whatever, it was like, "They're rebellious," or whatever. They won't come and stand in the circle, a semi-circle, and be taught by him. You think, "That's the same, it's almost like a worship," and you think, "That was sick," it really was. There are things we're to learn from that. There are right ways of dealing with people, there are right ways to see oneself, and it's in humility always. And if humility isn't there, then God doesn't work through us. It's the way it works.

Verse 27 - So as he talked with them, he went in and found many who had gathered together. Then he said to them, "You know how it's unlawful for a Jewish man to keep company with or to meet with any of another nation..." Gentiles, it's not lawful. So, this was hard for those for those who were Jewish, those, the early apostles if you will, the first of them, the 12; that was difficult. This was a very difficult transition for them. It can only be likened to being somewhat akin to things in the Church when God has changed something, like Pentecost as an example, or God began to reveal even before that, that there's a spirit essence in mankind that gives us the ability to think and reason, and then there is that which God can give of Himself through an impregnation in the mind. That book that came out then, *The Incredible Human Potential*, and how some saw that and could see it and others in the Church, including the ministry, couldn't. The reason they couldn't is because they'd done something; they'd already turned against God in some different ways and the Spirit had been cut off.

Because with God's Spirit, and if we're striving to follow God, be faithful to God and wanting to learn and wanting to grow, and striving to be of a humble spirit, God will always work with us. He started to work with us, within us, and He completes it, He'll complete it. That's the promise, awesome! We just have to do our part, repenting, praying, and so forth, desiring God, wanting God. Again here, this was a difficult thing, but he's telling them something that he's beginning to learn and understand now, that he didn't understand before.

So we're told, "We're not even to keep company." Because later on, Peter, you know, he had a problem with part of this as we talked about at one point there. He had a difficult time there dealing with, or being together with, some of the others in the area, sitting down with them at the same table when you talk about gentiles and then got together with their own. So anyway, I think we've gone through that. It's kind of hard when I go through a series like this, and I'm going way ahead, and I've already covered things in my mind and then I get up here and I think, "Did I give that?" Just like last Sabbath. I started going through a part of it and I decided, "Yeah, I did want to go back through some of that again to set a better groundwork for that first, that one chapter we were in," and it's like, "Now is this something I have coming? Or is this something I've already given?!"

And the story of Paul's life as we're going to get into it, it's even harder. When you start talking about time periods and where he was and what he was doing, it gets tough. In even names sometimes, they have the same names! Give me a break, give some different names! Anyway. **Then he said to them, "You know how it's unlawful for a Jewish man to keep company with, or to meet with any of another nation..."** So right off, he's telling them, "This is not lawful for a Jewish man to do what I'm doing." But he's doing it. **"But God has shown me that I should not call anyone common or unclean."** That's what the cloth coming down three times was all about, with all the unclean things on it, "Rise up and eat," and he said, "Not so, for I've never done this." Then he now understands, God has given it to him in his mind to comprehend, to understand that this is about the Gentile world, and no one is to be looked upon or counted in that way, "common or unclean."

"So then, for this cause, I came without objection, as soon as I was requested to come." And on top of that, God already told him, "Don't question." So the instruction was already there, he saw these things, and because of that obedience, God continued to reveal things to him. **"Therefore I ask, for what reason have you sent for me?" Then Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house and see, a man stood before me in bright clothing saying, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your contributions are remembered in the sight of God.'"**

What an incredible thing. He's fasting, and it's not a fast day. He's fasting. He chooses to fast. He wants to draw closer to God, he wants to have a relationship with God, he believes things he was taught. And so, it isn't that hard to understand as the story goes on, he was being worked with my God. He was being drawn ahead of time, for this moment in time, so that he could continue on as well. I often times think about how God calls us and works with us, something we're never to forget. We're always to remember how God called us, how he opened up our minds to understand, and it's a process we go through, something we're never to forget. But when it's in the mind, when God gives it, awesome!

'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your contributions are remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon the Tanner by the sea, and when he comes, he will speak to you.' So all this foretold by the angel, "This is what's going to happen, this is what you're to do, and this is why we're here." **"So I sent for you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God to hear all the things commanded you by God."** So he understood well, because of this thing that he experienced, that this was of God, and again, remember, this is about God, the beginning of the Church, and how God was doing it.

God was allowing people to experience things that weren't being repeated later on in the same manner. This is the beginning; greater things had to be accomplished, greater things had to be done. And so this is what God was doing to impress upon people's minds, this is not normal, these things don't just happen. You don't just have an angel come around and reveal himself to you on a regular basis! And so, again here, he's humbled by that and he's confident then that Peter's there to tell him about God.

Then Peter opened his mouth and said, "In truth, I perceive that God shows no partiality," "not a respecter of people," basically, what he's talking about here. So, he's just learning this. He's just now learning this because of what he's experienced and that cloth coming down three times, his experience, and now this with Cornelius, that this is what he's to know and understand. God places it in his mind. God gave him the ability to see it, but he still had to choose to listen, to receive it because he still has struggles with it as time goes on. Sometimes it's not that easy to change certain things you've lived all your life. And so, he's seeing this, he's perceiving it, and he's striving to do what God has given him.

"But in every nation, whoever fears Him and works righteousness, is accepted by Him." So if you're able to work what is right, then there's that relationship that a person can have, in that respect, with God, and that's what he's saying here: "Who fears him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." You know, even in the world, there are certain things that for a long, long time within the Church, within Worldwide and other times, there was this kind of general feeling that God only works with us. I mean, that was kind of the attitude. It's kind of like, "God's not working with anyone else; He doesn't deal with anyone else." It's like "We, in that respect, have a relationship with God, but others in the world can't." Well, they can't have the relationship we have. They can't, they're not being called yet, they can't be in God's Church yet, because they haven't been called to that, but there are people in the world with whom God works.

You know, people are judged in a different respect in the world than we are. Judgment is upon us, a final judgment if you will, as to what we're going to do with what we've been given. But if people desire to learn, if they desire to apply something in their life, they would be blessed in that to that degree. Someone who wants to set aside the seventh day? They're going to be blessed in that in a certain degree. There are laws in motion; people who want to tithe and give, they're blessed in those things. They are, because it's like there are laws in motion and if someone responds to those kinds of things, there are things that God intervenes in people's lives when people cry out to Him in genuine desire, with what they know and what they understand. Just because people's minds are blinded, and they don't understand, doesn't mean that God doesn't hear them.

So there are certain things, to a certain degree, that God may choose to intervene in people's lives. We're not the only ones with whom God is working, especially now at this end time, because there have to be tens of thousands, I believe hundreds and hundreds of thousands, with whom God is working right now, to draw them into a new age that he's going to work with. And candidly, it has to be that way. And if we follow the process here by what God did, in working with John the Baptist in the time of Christ and then the time of the disciples, to prepare for his first coming, the same thing is happening in preparation for His second coming.

So, whatever that is and ever how God is doing it, we don't have to have knowledge of it, as they didn't know with whom God was working and what was taking place in the world. But there can be people in the world, with whom God is working, to prepare them for when this time does occur. Look at Paul, or

Saul, what an incredible thing! He wasn't drawn like most are drawn, most everyone who has ever been drawn. It was one day; he was struck down with blindness and a voice talking to him, "Why are you fighting against me?" is basically what Christ asked, incredible! But God knew him. Well how did He know him? Even though he was fighting against, and desirous of finding and imprisoning and even killing, if need be, some in the Church, with what he knew before that, he was being judged by. God knew his mind, and God chose to work with him, and his conversion was quick when it happened.

God knew what he was going to do. It wasn't an accident that all of a sudden he's going to respond. You think everybody, if they've been worked with or struck down with blindness is going to start doing what is right and yield to God? That doesn't bring about conversion. That doesn't bring about a change in the mind, but there was something in him that was unique. And when the time was right, God knew what he would do, that he would repent, and that he would seek to do the right thing, and that he would repent of all the things quickly.

It's like when we are first called, and God reveals to you about Christmas; you know you're never going to do it again. You're never going to be associated with Easter again. You know, if that's your choice, you know the Sabbath is there and if that's what you choose and you want to do what's right, you know that that's what you're going to do. And, if Sunday was an issue, you're not going to do it anymore. You're going to do what God has given you to see. Well, Paul, in the same manner, but in a powerful, profound way, the change that took place in him. So, when we get to him and start talking about him, we need to keep those things in mind that God knows the mind. God knows the mind and what He can work with. He knows us inside and out, those before they're ever called, and those of us once we are called, and He gives us a lot of grace and a lot of latitude in life once we're called and go through a process. Within the world, God still knows the mind, that's why it came to a certain point in time, during the time of Noah, that minds of people were so messed up. I truly believe with all my being that we live in that world today! That people's minds are so messed up! There are some that are so set in their ways they will never choose God, truly! And those who are resurrected at that point in time, so it comes to a point like it did then, it's better to get rid of all, and then start anew.

God had a purpose for that as well, with Noah and his family, and things we're to learn from all those things, and the changing of the timespan of mankind. To learn how evil, how ugly mankind can become in a short period of time if they live hundreds of years. It'll develop into what we're experiencing today, but we're experiencing it today in a world because of technology and much, much faster, this perversion of communication and all the technology that's out there that's being misused and what it does to the mind when people yield to that. There are people out there that are just bonkers. What do you do? Give them a new mind? Is that God's purpose? Somehow rip out what they have and put something different in there? That's not God's way.

It's the mind that we already have, and that's what God is going to deal with. And when someone corrupts their own mind, and it can't be worked with anymore, you feel for them, but they've done it to

themselves in this world. You think of what drugs are doing in the world and how people live, and no control, and people without it, how they think. It hurts! That's why it says, "Lot vexed his righteous soul from day to day," when he saw those things that were going on in Sodom and Gomorra. That's the kind of world we live in today, with that same kind of perversion, where they try to push their ways on others. Look at this thing they're all screaming and hollering about, the AID thing. Whatever the initials are, I don't even know; they ripped them off the buildings, so I already forgot! No, just kidding! Maybe that was the educational building they ripped the letters off of. Anyway, whatever it is. That too needs to be ripped off. You think, "You've got to be kidding." I love it that things needing addressed are being addressed.

The Department of Education is the lowest on the totem pole of 40. I think of the 40 they give, of countries mentioned, the US is the lowest, but the highest among those same nations of the amount being spent per child. What a horrible testament to how this nation is, how we're living as human beings, it's atrocious. But you think of all these countries with this AID thing that was being sent out and some of the most perverted things it was trying to push: Sodom and Gomorrah. It's that mindset and how people think when they get to that point and they try to push and they cheat and they lie and they steal in order to give more to somebody else to do perverted things, and try to influence other countries to do the same thing. You talk about a sickness and the height of sickness, we're living in it! We're living in a cesspool, truly.

The sooner the better to get this over with and get on into a new age. Well, that's what we had to come to, "As in the days of Noah." God knew what this world would be like with the kind of technology, when mankind had it available to them, how it would be used. It's like new inventions that come along, AI or whatever. The number one place that they all want it to be used in is in the military. It's in the military! They talk about the good thing for health. Well, yes, it has potential in incredible ways to be used to improve things for finding out what's wrong with people and all the things that can be there as far as discovering new things. But the number one thing is not that, it's not about our welfare and our health, it's about military, power. Because that's exactly what Russia, that's exactly what China is doing with it. They don't care about helping the millions, or billion whatever, that they have, it's about the military. It's about coming, becoming more powerful, taking over. So, anyway.

So it says in **verse 35** again here, **"But in every nation, whoever fears Him, and works righteousness is accepted by Him."** So in other words, there are those things God will take note of. If it's genuine in heart, and he was, and he's practicing what he's been shown, because rarely is that done, even in a Protestant world as a whole, **"The Word which was sent forth to the children of Israel preaching peace, through Joshua the Christ, this one is Lord of all."** Peace, how to have peace. The world doesn't know that. All it knows is drama. It doesn't understand the way of peace, even when they're told certain things about how to have peace. The world thinks differently, like between nations and you have to live that way in a

carnal nation, in a carnal world. Power speaks. The more powerful you are, the more it can deter war. If you become weak, what's the nature of mankind? Conquer you. Sick world.

So speaking of Joshua the Christ, peace was taught, in other words, **“through Joshua the Christ, this one is Lord of all. The word you know, which was proclaimed through all Judea.”** So this thing of what happened in Jerusalem, it wasn't a secret, people knew about it. This was noised abroad, it went out, Lazarus raised from the dead, different ones who had been healed; those stories went out all over Judea and into other nations as well because a lot of people traveled to Jerusalem and traveled back out to their own areas. And what do they do? They tell these stories of what they've seen, what they've heard. Then Joshua coming in and then being put to death and the stories then about him being resurrected.

That's why sometimes in these prisons and so forth of what took place, this is why they guarded them so well, because of these stories that went along. They didn't want this to happen again, that someone's going to come along and say, “Well God did this, or God did that, so we want to make sure that there are guards everywhere and chains, and this is sealed up, locked tight.” That's why some lost their life because of some of those kinds of things, incredible! When they were guarding, but when God's involved and angelic beings are involved, you're no match!

“That word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached.” So he's saying, “This is when it started.” What John was doing, and it was going throughout Judea and clear up in some of these other areas. And so, people were even aware of some of these stories, of what was going on, about this need for repentance. They didn't understand the rest of it about baptism and coming up out of the water and being able to be impregnated, they didn't have that yet. You don't have that until you come into the Church. But they knew about John. This wasn't some kind of secret that was being done, just a few in Jerusalem or whatever. This is why the leaders in Jerusalem constantly sent people out to where John was, and later on to Joshua, to see what was going on, see what was happening, bring back reports.

“And began from Galilee, after the baptism, which John preached, how God anointed Joshua of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with him. Powerful. Even we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem, whom they killed and hung on a tree: him, God raised up on the third day and, not a matter of showed him openly...” It means made him to be given manifest. In other words, made it manifest. This is what he fulfilled, this is what he did. There's witness of those things that were to happen.

“Not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen beforehand by God...” See, hear that even? “Witnesses chosen beforehand by God.” God is so much more powerful sometimes than we think or we think about. And to realize, He has a plan that He works out and it's succinct. It's exact, everything is exact. **“...even to**

us, who ate and drank with Him after he arose from the dead.” So, making it clear, “He rose from the dead, He ate and drank with us. He was with us 40 days; we experienced it.”

Verse 42 – “Then he instructed us to preach to the people, and to testify that it was He who was ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead.” So this goes way beyond things that they've ever understood because they didn't know a lot about judgment, they didn't know a lot about God's purpose and God's plan. And even now, at this point, they still don't know a lot, in the sense of looking into the future and when resurrections take place, and how they're going to take place, and God's plan for 144,000, and the next thousand years, and then the final hundred. They didn't understand all those things. It wasn't given until Philadelphia, fully and completely.

“Then he instructed us to preach to the people and to testify that it was he who was ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead.” That's saying a lot, that's powerful, “The judge of the living and the dead.” So, they didn't understand about those hundred years, but they knew that there's a time of judgement, they could grasp that. They could grasp that there's going to be a judgement upon all human beings as to how you live and what you choose in your life, and so he's just reiterating some of this.

“To him, all the prophets witness that through his name, whoever believes into him, will receive remission, or forgiveness or release, of sins.” Meaning the death penalty. That's what it's about. They could understand that there is a need. They understand certain things here, to a point. Not again, like is given as they grow and mature. It's saying here, “The Prophets have taught this.” You think about so many things written in the Old Testament, but they couldn't understand all those things. There are things that Christ said that he said fulfills something in the Old Testament and you wouldn't know it by reading it in the Old Testament, except that he said, “This is what it applies to.” It might be a little blurb in the Psalm, just a certain portion in the Psalm, where the Psalm is covering a broad scope of something, but there's a portion in there about him, and it's fulfilled.

And so it is, in other writings as you go along, and some of the things the disciples wrote, and what Paul wrote, what Peter wrote and the like, John and so forth. James, you know, they mentioned something, and it's referring to something in the Old Testament that wasn't known before that that's what it was. But it had to be shown by the spirit, “This is what this is about.” It's all there, 4,000 years before. Things began to be spoken from the very beginning, even to Adam and Eve. They didn't comprehend it, they didn't understand it that things were given from the very beginning and on that had to do with Christ, a seed. **“To him all the prophets witness that through his name, whoever believes into him, will receive remission, or forgiveness, release, of sins.”**

Verse 44 - As Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the Word. Can you imagine? Everyone sitting there, family members, close friends. And God's Holy Spirit, why? Because of what God was doing, His purpose. **Then those of the circumcision who believed were astonished...** See, the Jews, those who witnessed some of this take place, they were astonished at what

was taking place. It shows the power of God and what God was doing. ...**as many as came with Peter**, so those who came with him because it talks about earlier, those who went down with him, and they witnessed these things taking place and now they see gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit, "How can this be?" Because their minds are still in this Old Testament part, this Old Testament frame of mind, that God isn't working with them, He's working with the Jews. Then Peter just said what he did, and they didn't quite get it all yet, but they're learning!

So, they were astonished, "**as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the gentiles**. Now they have to deal with it. You know, you can't argue against God. It's kind of like the Apostasy. A lot of people have the question, "If this is really God's Church," questions, doubt. "If this is really God's Church, how could this happen in God's Church, that there could be an apostasy?" "How?" So, doubt, "Maybe it isn't God's Church." There are people, a third of the Church went by the wayside who didn't have anything anymore. They didn't care anymore about any religion because they were so decimated in their minds and their thinking that something like this could have happened and what they had believed, ever how long they were in the Church: 10, 20, 30, 40 years? That this could have happened in God's Church? So, "Where's God?" Like it's God's fault. Rather than looking at the situation and saying, "Why did this happen in God's Church?" Because then you have to come to certain conclusions in time. You have to look to God. You have to cry out to God, "How? Why? Why are we experiencing this?" Incredible!

For they even heard them speak in other languages, also magnifying God. Whew! Now this is something that some of them had experienced in the very beginning on Pentecost, and they knew full well that some of those who had witnessed that, of the disciples when they were speaking in other languages, and they were able then to talk about the plan of God, what God was doing, what Christ had done, what He had fulfilled, and now in other languages. They themselves were able to talk and discuss about these things because God was giving it to them. It was like now their minds are open to things they had heard and now it made sense, it all came together. How? By the power of God's Spirit; He helped them to see it. So now they could discuss it, even with other languages, which wasn't of them because they didn't know other languages, but they were speaking other languages. Incredible!

So that's a powerful witness because the only way that happened is if God is doing it. So it's always a matter of looking to God and asking, if you don't understand something, "Why? What am I to learn? What are we to see from this?" And it doesn't matter whether it's one year, ten years, or twenty, you wait on God to show you. That's what we do, that's what you have to do. And if you know you're in God's Church, you know the answer will come in God's time.

It goes on to say, **Then Peter answered, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who receive the Holy Spirit just as we did?"** Still have to go through the ceremony, still have to do it, they still have to fulfill that, even though they've already received the Holy Spirit; they still need to experience this. They still need to go through, acknowledge their desire to repent and change, and to be

baptized. So, who's going to deny them? That says a lot right there. It's like, "If God has already done this, who are you to say something about a gentile, who God has already given His Holy Spirit to? Are we greater than God that we can decide what God can do and can't do?" Sadly, in the past, that's the way some people's thinking has been, though they don't comprehend it that that's what they've done.

Verse 48 - So he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days. I love that! Yeah, you'd want to hear too. "I want to hear more. Tell us more. Give us more." It's like, in the beginning, you want to receive as much as you can. I remember when we used to write off for stuff, we'd write off to headquarters with a question, and you'd have to wait several weeks sometimes for some literature to come. Then finally you pour over it because we don't have what we have today where you can get on the internet. There it is right in front of you. We had to wait. That's why a lot of people, like myself and some others out there, when we wrote in to headquarters, we thought that's where the Church was, and we didn't know that they had Churches all over the country and ministers all over the country. We didn't know.

Acts 11:1. So all this in the context, "Look at what God is doing, look at what Christ is doing," because Christ was doing it, and Christ was communicating these things, and God gave him to do this. Nevertheless, it comes from the power of God by the authority of God and God's Spirit. But Christ is the one that does it. We are the Body of Christ. We are the Church of God, yes. And yet Christ is the one who molds and fashions and works with us. Powerful! And God, through the power of His Spirit, because it's just a matter of how it works; it goes through Christ, works through Christ to the Church. **Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the gentiles had also received the Word of God.** This is a good learning experience, and it has to spread out. So this is big news. This story was big: "The Gentiles received the Holy Spirit. We heard them speaking in different languages like what happened on Pentecost. They're talking about, with knowledge, insight and understanding, what we know and understand." It comes from God.

And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision were at odds with him, meaning they weren't all in agreement with what happened. You think people would stop and think, "Well, wait a minute, how is this possible?" But so often human beings don't think that way. They don't think about God first. It's their gut reaction. It's how we think, how we see it. That's the way it's always been in the Church. That's generally the first reaction, "How I see it, what I believe." Well, how do you believe what you believe is true? Well, it comes from God; it comes from God's spirit. Listen. But sometimes it's forgotten. That's why so many have gone by the wayside at different periods of time. They decide something else; they don't like it. Like in 2008, "Christ isn't returning on Trumpets, he's returning on a Pentecost." Here we go again.

So, here they were at odds saying, "**You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them.**" Basically, like a question, "You did this. You, raised a Jew, went in with gentiles?" They were offended by it. That Peter had done this. **But Peter explained to them by order from the beginning...** So, he took them

through the entire story and told them what had happened, making it very clear, in essence, this is from God. ...saying, **"I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners, and it came to me: and when I gazed upon it intently and considered it, I saw four legged animals of the earth and wild animals, living things that moved, and birds of the air. Then I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter, kill and eat.' But I said, 'Not so, Lord, for nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth,' but the voice answered me again from heaven. 'What God has cleansed, you must not call common.' Now this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven."**

He's taking them through the same story we just read because you have to go back to the beginning and show, he had to show what he had learned and how he learned it, what God had revealed to him, so that they can have by the power of God's Spirit the ability to see it, because right now they're not receiving it. All they can see is an ability to judge something by what they think they see, and that is, "Peter's done something that he should not have done." They're judging him. **"Then the Spirit told me to go up with them, questioning nothing."** In other words, "If you get this, you'll do the same."
"Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house, then he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.'"

Now a little more in it than what we heard before. The entire household, all the people. What an incredible thing that God was doing and calling so many in just one household to begin something in that particular region, through a gentile, so they could learn these lessons as well. Awesome! **"Then as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, and upon us at the beginning, then I remembered the Word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized immersed in,'"** basically is what it's saying here, **"the Holy Spirit.' If therefore God gave them the same gift as us,"** it's like, "You get it?" **"If He gave us the same gift as us, when we believed on the Lord, Joshua the Christ, who was I that I could forbid God?"** That's what they had to come to see that this is of God. This isn't Peter doing whatever he just wants to do, whatever hits his fancy. This is something that God has made very clear that's coming from Him and being given to him and something he's supposed to do that they're to learn from.

Verse 18 - When they heard these things, they became silent... smart move. "It's time to listen," as it talks about in James, "slow to speak," slow to talk back and answer, give an answer without, you know, getting it in the mind and listening to what God is doing, **and they glorified God saying, "Then God has also granted to the gentiles repentance to life."** Awesome! So here, their understanding is beginning to be dealt with and changed, but it doesn't mean it's an easy transition. **Verse 19 - Now those who had scattered abroad from the persecution that came to pass on Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the Word to no one but to Jews only.**

So, after that had happened, because of Saul, nodding, giving his approval to put Stephen to death, people scattered. Before that some were being brought, in prison and so forth, and put in chains, but now it's getting worse. This is God's process and method, scattering. And people had learned, had been there long enough, they had had things in common with each other, in the sense of sharing like they did, had that system set up, and now it's time to disperse, and for the gospel then, the good news to be going into other areas. As these people would then return to those areas where they were from in the first place, because they stayed in Jerusalem after Pentecost, and they were worked with, and the Church began to grow there, and they continued there for quite some time, and then finally, it's time. God: "This is it, now it's time." They had enough under their belt, and knowledge, insight, and understanding of things taught to them, that they could go out and share. They were grounded enough that this could begin, so that's what's happening. But they still went to the Jews only, all these, because they didn't have any knowledge of what had taken place with, in this situation here, they still had to learn it, but they're out there.

But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, Greek-speaking Jews, teaching the Lord Joshua. Even the hand of the Lord was upon them; and a large number believed, and turned to the Lord. Now news of these things came to the ears of the Church in Jerusalem: and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. So, now they're getting a little more organized within the ministry. There's a need for different ones to be sent out, who have more experience with whom God's spirit is working. And here's Barnabas, and so they sent him 500 kilometers away, 310 miles in a straight line from Jerusalem, that's how far this is. They sent him to Antioch.

And when he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, in other words, he saw what God had been doing and working with and giving this way of life to others. ...he was glad, and encouraged them all, that with purpose of heart they should continue in the Lord. For he was an upright man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, even many people were added to the Lord.

So constantly here in the story flow throughout Acts, it just keeps talking about more and more just kept being added to the Church. **Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus, to seek Saul.** So again, another 235 miles away, another 100 kilometers, that's 145 miles farther than they'd already traveled. **Then when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the Church and taught a great many people. Now the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch,** those who followed Christ. So again, here all this is being recorded, this is about 46 AD. It took that long, finally they're bearing this name, the Body of Christ, or maybe they didn't have it in that regard yet until a little bit later when Paul was preaching some of those things and showing what they were part of.

But again here, they begin to call themselves, as it were, Christians. Again here, its 31 AD up to 46, not that long, but it's a great start in the Church in that respect. Things just continue to spread out as far as

the truth is concerned, for the good news. **Verse 27**, it says, **Now in those days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch.**

I think it's always good to go back here and grasp what it's talking about within the ministry, and what this is speaking of here. In the Old Testament, it was a matter of being inspired by the Holy Spirit to give prophetic things as far as the future was concerned that were going to be fulfilled, and they're written in the books of the prophets and the minor prophets and so forth. But when it came to the Church, it's used in a totally different context. That was so ingrained, even within the Church, even within Philadelphia. I read it here recently again, when Herbert Armstrong said he was not a prophet, but he was. If you understand, every apostle is a prophet as well. Because it's the interpretation of those things that is given by God. It's the interpretation which is that spirit of prophecy that we're able to have as well, to talk about things, we're able to discuss those things because God has given us that spirit, His spirit.

And when it's given to the ministry to preach it, then that's another matter. It's still an interpretation of what was said in the Old Testament, to understand it on a spiritual plane, and sometimes the fulfillment of various things, just as was given to Herbert Armstrong. There were a lot of things, like in the book of Daniel. He understood much of that, obviously, as God began to reveal to him things that were going to happen; that great big statue and what they all represented, that interpretation of that, the understanding of that. It's not a matter of prophesying something, it's a matter of interpreting what's already there.

That's how it's used in the New Testament, over and over and over again. So, that's what's taking place here, people were given that ability. And so it says here, **Then one of them named Agabus stood up and gave a sign by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the land...** Now here's something that is going to take place that God did give, but it's not a matter of something off into the future, it's something that's needful right now that God gave them understanding of because of what they needed to prepare for. **...which also came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea: this they also did and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.**

So again here, those in areas that weren't hit by it, and again God working something here, so that it would have an impact on the Church in Judea, especially in Jerusalem, and to those who were there, to the Jews, who were being called into the Church to hear the gentiles helping them, being used to help save them on a physical plane. **Acts 12:1 - Now at about this time, I'll tell you, even if we had a little more understanding of some of the things in history, of the different leaders there and what they did, the Roman Empire was a mess. People being killed, different leaders of things that happen out of jealousies and a struggle for power and why they're sent out, and so this is happening throughout the Roman Empire constantly here. All the way up to the point in Nero when some of those stories we get into later on, because of Paul, are really quite incredible.**

It's hard to go through some of those stories without having a little bit of that history to know what the Roman world was like because it came to a point where it got a lot harder for the Church, where they were out to kill and destroy, truly, people in the God's Church. Incredible times they had to go through. So, anytime you think you have it bad, it's good to go back and think about some of those things, and think about what they suffered through, because many had to do it to the point of death, truly.

Verse 1 - Now at about that time, Herod the king, this is Herod Agrippa I, who was a nephew of Herod at the time of Joshua. So again here, it is his nephew, when it talks about this Herod, Herod the king, **stretched out his hand to oppress some from the Church**. It's already starting; didn't take long, and even these rulers started going after people in the Church more directly. In the beginning, it happened more around Jerusalem, more because of the jealousies of the religious leaders there than it was the Romans, in that respect, but anyway. It goes on to say, **Now he killed James, the brother of John**, so here's the first death of an apostle, **the brother of John with the sword**, so he's the first apostle to be killed. This was about 44 A.D. So, it didn't take long. 31 A.D., 13 years later, incredible, already the first one's killed. **Now he saw that it pleased the Jews...** So, power. No problems if you have people that are enjoying what you're doing in the sense of a leader. You don't have opposition to your rule, and this is pleasing, so that affects how they think. It's done all the time in politics.

So, it says, **now he saw that it pleased the Jews, so he proceeded further to seize Peter also**. They liked that he killed James, "Let's go after Peter." So he went after Peter. **Now it was the days of Unleavened Bread**. Or better, the time of Unleavened Bread. I'll tell you, there are things in translation we understand because we read it, and we understand what it's discussing. Some things are translated. We have Unleavened Bread, the period of Unleavened Bread coming on us. We know that Passover's first, anybody in God's Church knows the order of these things. But the world doesn't, and the Protestant world definitely doesn't, and so-called scholars, religious scholars and so forth, they don't understand. Well, they can't, because it's the truth. They can't comprehend Leviticus 23. They don't even try because, "It's done away, why bother?" So you don't need to go into it too much.

So anyway, now he proceeded to go after Peter, and this was during the time of Unleavened Bread because you could easily translate it that way. The days don't necessarily mean days. It's that period of time, whatever. **So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers**, so each squad has four soldiers, so 16, being guarded by 16. Why so many? **...to keep him, intending to bring him before the people with Passover**. Not the word "after," but with Passover. So again here, a repeat, same period of time, coming up to the same sort of thing because of what's happening in Jerusalem, what's happening in the region, what took place in that part of the world. And here it is, they understood things about Judaism, and so here it is Passover, the same day that Christ was brought there and tried, supposedly and put to death. He's wanting to do this with Peter at this period of time. **Peter indeed was therefore kept in prison, but prayer without ceasing was offered to God for him by the Church**.

So here is the main one of the Church and you bet people in the Church were praying about this and fervently, and continuing on until this is taken care of, because James has already been put to death and now this. **So when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping bound with two chains between two soldiers,** they weren't messing around, two soldiers bound with chains, **and the guards before the door kept watch in the prison. Now look, an angel of the Lord stood by and a light shined in the prison and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up saying, "Rise up quickly." Then his chains fell off his hands and the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals." And he did so. Then he said to him, "Put on your garments, and follow me."** "Let's get out of here," another way of saying it. **So he went out and followed him and did not know if what was done by the angel was truly happening.** "Is this a vision? Is this something?" He wasn't sure this is all for real because, again, things like this don't just happen. **But thought he was seeing a vision.** As it says here, he's already had one before this of the cloth and maybe this is another one. **And when they were past the first and second guarded positions, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city; which opened to them of its own accord.** So, getting Peter's attention. You know, you're kind of groggy, you had an angel tell you to do this, the light shining there, you do it, and you're heading out, and the gate opens up in front of you. Anyway.

And they continued forward down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. Then Peter reflected in himself thinking, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod, and all the expectation of the Jewish people." So, he knew that this was taking place, this thing that was being repeated again now, on Passover, and the expectation of the Jews when they gather together and do the things they do, and they let someone go, and they had the one that they had released from the prison. And anyway, it wasn't Joshua, and, incredible some of the things because it pleased the Jewish people, because it pleased the leaders of the Jewish people especially, with perverted minds.

Then when he had perceived this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark... So even here, sometimes some of these get a little confusing as to John. This is John Mark, **where many were gathered together praying. So as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. Then she recognized Peter's voice, she did not open up the gate out of excitement and delight...** She was excited; she was delighted. So as soon as she heard his voice and knew that it was him, she turned around. She didn't even let Peter in **but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. But they said to her, "You're out of your mind."** Basically, that's what they said, in English, "You're out of your mind." Because they knew he was being guarded, he was imprisoned. **Yet she confidently declared that it was so. So they said, "It has to be his angel."** Isn't that amazing? It is so unbelievable that Peter could be out there at the gate that it has to be his angel. That they had this concept that there's angels assigned and this has to be him, or it.

Now Peter continued knocking, and when they opened and saw him they were astonished. But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. So he didn't want a whole lot of noise going on at the gate and waking people up around there, and here he had already been let out: "Let's keep this down and let me in." **Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, about what had become of Peter. But when Herod had him searched for, and couldn't find him, he examined the guards and commanded that they be put to death.** Hasn't messing around. It was like, "This is being repeated, someone is gone, he's not there; something's happened," talking about guarding the tomb and so forth and setting guard there. It's like, "Here they came and stole the body." Now they have this big uproar, and they can say anything they want to, and now Peter's gone, so they just killed the guards.

Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea, to abide. Now Herod was highly displeased with the people of Tyre and Sidon; however, they came to him with one accord and having made Blastus the king's personal aid, their friend, they asked for peace because their country was being given food by the kings. So on a set day, Herod, so again this is politics in the region there and this is a part of what they're bringing up and how it affected what was taking place. **So on a set day Herod, arrayed in a royal apparel, sat on his throne and publicly addressed them. Now the people cried out saying, "The voice of a God, and not of a man."** Because they knew where their bread was buttered because it says, they knew, he's the one that, "This is where the food comes from. I want to keep him happy."

Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God and he was consumed by worms and died. Killed on the spot. But the word of God grew and multiplied. Then Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark. So again, John Mark goes with them, so the three of them go back, go out.

Chapter 13:1 - Now in the Church that was at Antioch, there were certain prophets, again even in Greek writings an interpreter of oracles is what it means, an interpreter, of hidden things. So that's primarily the use of this word, even in the Greek language. **...and teachers, even Barnabas, Simeon, who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manean, who had been brought up with the tetrarch,** taught with Herod in other words. So, it's companion, this word here is when being brought up with as a companion from one's childhood or youth. So they had been together since childhood. It's talking about this individual here **had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch,** the governor of a fourth of the country, **and Saul. They ministered to the Lord and fasted. The Holy Spirit said,** so again here, different ones were called, different ones were being worked with, and some who had different relatives that they weren't so keen about. **As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to me Barnabas and Saul."** So again, God's Spirit working to communicate to them, "This is something He wants done," so it says, **"separate for me, or to me, Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them."** So they were to go out together, they had already developed this friendship and so forth,

as it were, anyway. **...and then, having fasted and prayed, and having laid hands on them, sent them away. So they, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. Now when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.** So, he was with them, and so the two went, John Mark was with him.

Now when they had gone through the island of Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bard-Joshua, or son of Joshua, who with the pro-counsel, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man; this man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. So again here, an incredible thing, God is still working through different ones. They have to request, it's unique for them in that respect, but it's clear for them what they're to do then. **But Elymas, the sorcerer, or so his name is translated, withstood them, seeking to turn the pro-counsel away from the faith.** So the demonic world worked in many different ways, trying to quelch, squelch if you will, trying to keep God from working through the Church and so forth. There are different battles at different times that God allows, and it's all for the purpose of learning through it as well, just as here. **Then Saul, so again now his Jewish name, who also was Paul, so this is the first account of now Paul being used, in this respect, of being changed, which was Roman, the Roman name he used.**

So again here, good for him, good for where he went as well. But again here, primarily going by Paul, as it grows here and begins to take place. **...filled with the Holy Spirit, looks steadfastly upon him and said, "Oh, full of all deceit and all perversity, son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness..."** God gave him to know who he was, what was taking place here, that which was working through him, and so by the power of God's spirit, he called a spade of spade. **"...enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? Even now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind, not seeing the sun for a time. Then suddenly a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.** Incredible!

So again here, God doing these things in the beginning in a way. The reason I'm saying these things here, that they happen in the beginning, just like speaking in different languages, is because there are people within the Church at different times, and times past, who thought these kinds of gifts, this kind of ability should be in God's Church. They will be if God intends them to be, if there's a purpose for it; but if not, then it won't be. The problem with some of these kinds of things is that it goes to the head and people misuse it. And even within the ministry, this has happened over and over again. God can give an ability to people, and they don't recognize and give credit to the fact, "This is from God." And if it's from God, you won't take credit for it. Those who don't give God the credit, they take it upon themselves. They want to be seen, they want to be in the forefront of everything. That's not of God.

God makes a distinction and we have to go through things sometimes to learn that. Everyone has to learn that you're not to promote yourself! This is one of the worst things that's happened in God's Church, in many ways, when it comes to preaching and teaching God's way of life, or people desiring

certain things that they don't understand. If God gives something, God gives something, and if He doesn't, then there's something else being done. We should be thankful for anything and everything God gives to us no matter what. And the structure, it is from God.

And we can't all be, Paul even had to explain this, we can't all be a certain part of the Body that we want to be: "I want to be the brain, or I want to be the eyes. I don't want to be the rear end," you know. But to be in a body? I would hate to be without it. I hope you get that. So who wants to be without an arm? You know, who? So, the Body has to be complete, and God is the one who makes the Body complete, Christ does, the Body of Christ. He makes it complete and we're all we're supposed to be if we yield to the process. And we're going to do things in the future, and we have no grasp or comprehension how great that's going to be! But it's so far beyond anything we could even imagine! It's not healthy to try to imagine it, but it's so far beyond that it makes this life look a little puny, and it is a little puny.

Our physical, temporary lives are here for a moment, and then they're gone! It's just the way it is. But it's in this puny little life that we're in the womb, and we're able to grow, and we're able to have this mind changed and one day be born into God's Family because that's what it's all about. This is a means to an end, it truly is. We have to go through this first, and it's not a picnic to be in this human body. The more we understand about this human body and the mind of the human body, the more we recognize that, the more we don't want to be in it, but we're not in a hurry to get out of it either. We're not in a race to get out of it. We want to use it to the extent we can to transform the mind and to grow spiritually. And then in God's time, so be it. We're in God's hands. God knows how to take care of it.

Then the pro-counsel believed. Verse 12 - When he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. So, this was for the purpose of the Church. This is for the purpose of why he's there and the teaching that's to take place and how it's to grow, and it's starting right there. They see what was said and done to an individual whose mouth was going off against God, against the prophet of God, and so he was given blindness because of what Paul told him. And so the pro-counsel saw this and was like, "I want to hear more." Because he knew this wasn't normal. Things like that don't happen. Human beings don't have that kind of power and ability.

Now, when Paul and his party set sail for Paphos, they came to Perga and Pamphylia, and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. Speaking of John Mark. But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down. On the Sabbath day, because that's when they came together, which happened to be the same day they came together. I hate some of the stuff that comes out of the Protestant world and what they teach about some of these things. It's like, "Well, yeah, they had to because that's when the Jews came together, but that's not the day we're supposed to be together." Anyway. **Then after the reading of the law,** and isn't that amazing? Because they say that we have to follow the example of Joshua being resurrected on Sunday morning, Sunday was being shown to be the right day of worship, and so forth. It was changed from the seventh-day Sabbath to the first day of the week, and you think, "Well, if you

really understood your Bible and believed that he's your Messiah, you would understand he died, he was resurrected, if you will, at the end of the Sabbath day! Not on Sunday morning!"

Just because people came to the tomb that morning, they weren't running around at midnight. They didn't have street lights like we do today. They didn't have modern conveniences and ability like that. So, they came in the morning; that's why they came. They started even at dark, you know, as light was just barely coming into the sky. Then they came there, and he was already resurrected. And so, carnal physical human beings that don't want to believe God, and because they're motivated by the spirit world that's out there, this is what they believe, "This is when he was resurrected." That's something I don't think the Church really grasped real well, in times past, in that respect, to understand. It was there, it just wasn't focused upon. He was resurrected at the end of the Sabbath day. If you believe what God says about three days and three nights, you know that's when he was resurrected. It's a simple thing, but you can't prove it to the world.

Then after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying "Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, speak on." So this is just the beginning of it growing. They wanted it, they heard this, and they wanted a lot more. **Then Paul stood up,** at this point in time, **and motioning with his hand said,** you know, every time, there are times, especially to a new listener, someone who needs to have history told to them, because it's good that we have this in our minds, "Where did it all start? What took place?" So every time he goes back and he starts the story. ...**said, "Men of Israel, you who fear God, listen."** That's quite a statement, "If you fear God, listen." So, "We'd be fools not to listen, but we all fear God." **"The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an outstretched arm, He brought them out of it. Now for forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness, and when He had brought down seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment."** So again here, a history, and going back and repeating some of this history of what took place; they know it, but here they need to be reminded of it because they're going to be brought up to date.

Verse 20 – "After He gave judges for 450 years, until Samuel the prophet. Then afterward they asked for a king: so God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for 40 years. Then when he had removed him, He raised up for them David as king." So again, they're all aware of this, this respect and admiration, that respect they have in their history for King David, powerful! As it should be. They understood the one before that. They asked for a king and they got one, but look how that turned out.

"But then David, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart.'" What an incredible thing that, as a young man, that he has this mind that He's going to work with, very likely from the womb. You know, there are things about God we do not grasp and comprehend. God does the molding and fashioning. Here is a man who is going to be worked with,

not by accident. There weren't a thousand different ones that God was working with to be made king after this. But there was this one whom God intended all along, at this point in time, who would become the king, because He knew to whom He was going to give the promises.

Everything that he worked through David was powerful. The things David wrote about God gave to him to write in the Psalms. God knew the mind He was going to work with and that He had the ability to do so, the ability to mold and fashion him. His genes, whatever it is, God made him this man. We need to understand things like that. For a purpose. He had his own free mind, but He gave him an extra portion of that which He knew would respond in a certain way, by his own choices in time. He was a man after God's own heart; that's who He created, a free moral agency, a free mind.

He made a spirit realm out there and made them for a purpose and knew that one was going to rebel in time. That didn't happen by accident; it was by choice, but God knew what choice would do. It would create evil. Isn't that amazing to understand those things? God knows that, the power, the power to mold and fashion to bring about His Family awesome! And so here he's talking about David. It says here, **"He raised up for them David His king, to whom also He gave testimony and said 'I have found David the son of Jesse a man after my heart.'"** It wasn't like all of a sudden He just went out and found him somewhere. He found him all right; from the very beginning, He knew him. He had him experience certain things in life that could be worked with; to be a sheep herder for a purpose and a reason, to learn the things that he learned from that, to be the kind of personality that was small, but in his heart and mind, someone who looked to God to do the things that he did. To fight with animals in the fashion that he did, to be able to kill them. Incredible stories! **"...who will do my will."** "My own heart who will do my will." So important. We're able to see those kinds of things because that's what it's all about.

"From this man's seed, according to promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior, Joshua." Now we can take this a step further because we understand it. So for Israel, there would be this seed that we know that is beyond that, just like what Paul is being given here. It's for the whole world because everyone is to have the opportunity to become a part of spiritual Israel. That's not about physical Israel. That was to give lessons and to learn from, and all those examples aren't very good, in many cases, of what they did, but it's to learn from, and then to understand what God is creating, a spiritual Israel. Awesome!

"From this man's seed, according to the promise God raised up for Israel, the Savior, Joshua; After John had first preached before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel, then as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not him, in essence, that's what it's talking about here, But behold, there comes one after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to un-loosen.'" Awesome. So he wanted people to have no misunderstanding in what he was preaching, because people could begin to look to him, which took place, and he's making it clear here, "It's not me, there's one coming." He spoke of then the Messiah and the Old Testament and so forth.

"Men and brethren, sons of the descendants of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of the salvation has been sent. For those who dwell in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not know him; nor even the voice of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath." I was reading something this morning here about Paul and the world and how some people, when they read these things, how they take it, and they were taking it in a normal Protestant way. It's like, "God was showing to Paul that the Jews fail, and that the Jews were being rejected, totally in essence, and that God was giving this to the rest of the world, to the gentiles, and a change was made." It's like, "There's a change in the law," and the same old thing, "The law is done away with."

And it's like, to me, it was pretty nasty the way they were speaking of the Jews. Like anyone who is Jewish would read that, it's like, "Where's my hope?" But the reality is, no, they go together. Yes, on a physical plane, but on a spiritual one, God is working with them. He's going to work with the gentiles too. It's a simple thing, isn't it, when we see it, when you see it, when you know it? So again here, **"For those who dwell in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not know Him,"** and they didn't. The Jewish religion at that time, Judaism didn't know who He was. In many respects they were without excuse, **"...nor even the voice of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, they have fulfilled in condemning Him."**

So we're gonna stop there, but this is what it's showing here. He's bringing them up to this point in time, we'll continue on later here, next Sabbath, but he's making it very clear here, it's about Joshua the Christ. It's about this one who had been preached to be the Messiah. This one that these leaders have fulfilled because of what they did. In other words, rejecting and having been put on a pole to die. Anyway, we'll come back to this point next Sabbath.