

## HHoeh\_and\_WDickinson-Acts\_21-28\_1977

Well, we as human beings in the church are going through a time in the church when we're faced with some very serious ideas and thoughts that are flowing around that we have to contend with.

We have to contend with the fact that we have seen some of the very friends and brethren that we have in the church have difficulties.

I wanted especially this evening to look at it from that point of view and compare how we are as individuals with how Paul was because, you know, he faced some of the very same things in the church in that day as we'll see as we go along through these last eight chapters of Acts.

And I think that we should recognize that for a human being there are two very terminal things that a person does when they come to really attach themselves to something, whether it be in a family or a marriage or whether it be in a church such as we're in.

The number one is that we have to look over all the facts and then make a decision and a commitment as to what we're going to do and what we're going to follow.

Now, for example, in my case, my wife began to search for something that would protect her children and our family far beyond anything we had a feeling of protection of at that time back in the late fifties.

And she began searching around and she began first in the church that we belong to which was the Episcopal Church.

Then when she was frustrated there because they wouldn't hold Bible studies and wouldn't give her additional understanding, she began searching outside.

Until finally I know we, I heard various voices coming into the kitchen over the radio and finally they're wound down to being just one dynamic voice that you heard in the background.

And then a little later on why I saw the plain truth, what I learned was the plain truth magazine coming into the house.

And then eventually why I became acquainted with it because I was foolish enough, I was on the board of the vestry of Episcopal Church and I made the mistake of offering my services to help the minister in the Sunday school because they couldn't get any teachers.

And I knew nothing whatsoever about teaching a Sunday school.

So one of the things that the minister would tell us once a month seemed so inadequate while my wife very helping that began to feed me with these articles out of this magazine that seemed to make very good sense.

And so I became acquainted again with those ideas and began to understand and see things and to read things in the Bible that just absolutely astounded me that I never had understood or realized before.

And so in that case as the time went along and I began to see and understand these things and came along with her and eventually we came to the point where we were talking about baptism, she said, well now are you really sure about this? And I said, well I'll tell you this, as long as what I am told and

what I read is the truth and I can prove it with the Bible and that Mr. Armstrong never tells me anything that is not the truth, you don't have anything to worry about.

I'll be in this church as long as it's there and I'm still here.

But that's the kind of a personal commitment that you have to make and then you have to stand with that commitment because if you ever start to pull back from it, that's when you begin to unhinge the foundation on which you've laid the superstructure of your spiritual life.

And when you pull back from that commitment, any time you see somebody having a problem in this church, it's because they've pulled back from that commitment, they've begun to look in other directions and to find reasons and excuses for giving up what they at one time were very determined and very committed to.

And so therefore we have to have a commitment to something and we have to stay with that commitment.

You can't ever find a marriage that will go sour if the two people that are committed to each other remain so and are determined they're going to give to each other 100%.

You can't ever have anything go wrong that has that kind of a commitment attached to it.

And then the other thing that we have to remember is that the strongest thing that pulls us in one direction or the other is the physical example of those whom we know well, those whom we respect, those whom may be our superiors over us, those who may be our loved ones who are right next to us.

The physical example that you see is the strongest pull you have to pull you in one direction or the other.

And so therefore if you find the physical example being said in front of you is not right, then you want to be sure you remove yourself from it or you're going to be pulled along with it if you're not careful.

So keeping those two ideas in mind, let's look at Paul.

Now notice in the ninth chapter just for one moment, the ninth chapter of Acts in verses one and two, and thinking in terms of determination, of commitment to something, of deep personal zeal for accomplishment, and notice what it says in the first sentence there.

It says, and Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter.

Can you imagine how zealous a person is, is breathing out threatenings and slaughter after what he's going after? And he was going after the people in the church that he soon became a part of.

And then dropping back again to the 20th chapter and going into verse 17.

And from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church.

Now he was doing this for a purpose.

And when they were come to him, he said unto them, you know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind.

He never thought of himself as being anything great.

All humility of mind and with many tears and temptations which befell me by the lying and weight of the Jews.

And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you.

I gave my whole self to you.

I counseled with you.

I gave you every thought, every understanding, every bit of wisdom that I had and was profitable unto you and have showed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

We do two very important points.

We always repent toward God and then our faith is exhibited toward Jesus Christ because he's the head of this church and we're his within its bounds.

And now behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there.

Save that the Holy Spirit witnesses in every city saying that bonds and afflictions abide by me.

Paul wasn't exactly sure what was going to happen.

But he knew that he was facing something that was going to be a very, very great trial for him and he was determined that he was going to face it with a kind of strength, the kind of energy and the kind of total commitment that would enable him to handle it under whatever circumstance because God, you know, never will allow us to be tempted beyond what we're able to bear.

So he wasn't afraid of it.

But none of these things moved me, neither count I, myself, my wife, dear unto myself.

You see how total his commitment was? He'd already bought these things out in his mind.

I don't even count my life, dear.

I'm willing to give up everything if necessary if that's what God requires, if that's what the Lord demands of me.

So that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God shall see my face no more.

He realized this was the last time he was talking to them.

Therefore, I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men.

I've never done anything that would cause any man's blood to be laid upon me.

I've never, ever done anything that would hurt one of the brethren.

I've always been very careful to be just and honest and forthright in what I accomplished.

I've never, ever reneged on keeping secret those things which you people have revealed to me as your minister.

I have never, ever gone behind your back and tried to tear you apart.

I've never, ever gossiped about you.

I can say that I am pure and free from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.

And now we're coming to the part which really we need to think about very carefully, for I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock, and also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I cease not to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Now you know that means exactly what it says.

Here is an example of how this book of Acts, being the history of everything that's happened in the church, being the history of how the Spirit came into the church and what it accomplished through the people.

This is an example of that we're not living in unusual times.

These things have already happened before and we have warnings right here in the Bible showing us what can happen if we back away from that commitment that we've individually made personally.

And each one of you have to make it personally.

It's just as hard for Dr. Hayer, it's just as hard for Mr. Armstrong as it is for you sitting there, because we have no special gifts, we have no special strength, we have no special anything that is given to us that is not also liberally given to you by the same God who has no respect to persons.

So therefore it's a requirement of what you have in your mind and how you're approaching things and the determination with which you're sticking with whatever you've committed yourself to.

Only be sure of one thing.

Be sure that, as Mr. Armstrong always said and still does, prove it.

And once you've proven it and once you've made a commitment to it, you don't ever have to go back and look at it.

It's there, it's viable, it's living, it's exciting, it will live all the way through as long as you remain firm to that commitment.

So then acts, being also this kind of a living history, we can go on now into the next chapter which is 21 and I just have a couple of things to touch on in there, one of which Dr. Hayer will comment on and that's in the 11th verse.

Because Paul mentions back here in the 23rd verse of the 20th chapter he says, save that the Holy Spirit witnesses in every city saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

Paul was trying to figure out exactly what was facing him and where he was going and what he had to live up to.

And here in the 11th verse of chapter 21 we find that Agabus has given a very definite prophecy as to what's going to occur.

And he says, and when he was come unto us, Agabus that is, he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said, thus saith the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

And so here Paul began then to see as he arrived at Jerusalem exactly what was in store for him.

And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

And then Paul answered, what mean you to weep and to break my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when he would not be persuaded, we see, saying, the will of the Lord be done.

So you see there's Paul's total commitment, his total determination that no matter what is required of him, that's what he's going to fulfill as long as he knows that it's God's will.

And I think Dr. Hay, you had something you wanted to add at that point.

Question is the wisdom of Paul's decision or, to put it another way, the wisdom of a decision in circumstances such as that.

When Jesus elsewhere said, if they persecute you in one place, go to another.

I think we have to read sometimes between the lines as the story develops.

First of all, we should remember that when Paul was initially called, Jesus Christ said to him that he would bear witness.

Among the Gentiles, and he always went to the Jews first in any community of the Gentiles, and to kings and to the children of Israel.

Now, at this point in his work, he was planning to complete the offerings that had been gathered and to deliver them to Jerusalem.

This was all a part of the program, and you can fill it in by reading parts of 1 Corinthians.

They gathered material, Paul writes to the Romans that he is planning to go into Spain by way of Rome, and he is going to deliver the things gathered out of the fields of the Gentile brethren there in the Greek world and give that as an offering to the Jewish community before setting out for the Western half of the Mediterranean.

He spent, of course, the bulk of his work thus far in the Eastern half.

What would you think if you knew you were going to speak to kings and ultimately to reach the house of Israel? Because that's what Jesus meant.

He would have used the term Jew, and that would have made no sense that he first goes to the Gentiles, then to kings, and finally to Jews.

When he said to the children of Israel, he meant the ten tribes.

Paul therefore knew that up to this point he had neither spoken to the ten tribes as a group, and most certainly not to kings.

How are you going to do this? Now you see in the world of Asia Minor, in the world of Syria, Cyprus, in the world of Greece, it was possible to use public schools and forums.

The Greeks as a whole had all the opportunity to be reached as individuals.

There were many synagogues.

The Greeks constantly flocked to them to try to figure out what this was that made the Jews tick, so to speak, and you reached the Greeks by reaching individuals just as we reached the people in America and in Britain and in France as an illustration by reaching the common people.

But what steps do you take to reach kings and to reach the house of Israel that as a whole at this time still lay outside the realm of the Roman Empire or at most outside of Gaul in recently subdued areas as in Britain? Paul must have wondered how he would do it.

How do you attract the attention of kings and rulers? Now he is told here that when he goes to Jerusalem he shall be bound and he would be delivered to the hands of the Gentiles.

Now the obvious reference to kings would hardly exclude the Gentiles because he surely would have realized that once you leave the Greek world within the Roman Empire the only real way to reach the bulk of the people is to reach those who are leaders.

And remember, Rome had an emperor and under the emperors were kings.

To do so would mean that something would have to bring you to the attention of those leaders.

Now Paul didn't know how to plan it.

For obvious reasons he had no plan in mind or he might have avoided this problem.

But I think it's possible to conceive of a possibility.

If he were told that in the work he had dedicated himself to do and bringing the offering of all the Gentiles to try to bring more peace between the two groups he was to be captured and bound and delivered to the Gentiles it just might have occurred to him that God would work something out if he were delivered to the Gentiles to do what he had, what Christ had initially promised, that he would be drawn to the attention of kings and rulers.

Now there was a reason for this.

You know Jesus was brought to the attention of kings and rulers when he was dumped on the lap, so to speak, of Pilate.

Jesus, however, was not a Roman citizen.

He had none of the rights and at most he couldn't go beyond Governor Pilate because whatever Pilate decided for someone who wasn't a Roman citizen was sufficient.

Paul was a Roman citizen.

Let us suppose Paul saw that he would be delivered to the Gentiles but he knew that God wasn't finished.

Just maybe he would have to appeal over the governors to whom the Jews would deliver him all the way up to Caesar, which any Roman citizen had a right to do.

I'm just planting the thought in your mind because after all we don't know how things work out in advance but we might anticipate and with a bit of hindsight after reading the book of Acts it's just possible that Paul was thinking that through this means of falling into the hands of the Gentiles, who knows, instead of being released, he may have to appeal all the way to Rome and he was planning to go to Rome anyway and God would work it out that he could be resolved there, absolved of any crime so that he could continue the work and ultimately reach the children of Israel.

So what we'll do now is follow Paul's life and his character but we bear in mind that Paul is in a work we call the ministry and that he knew also not only what would immediately be falling but what in the long run still had to be done and it's a question of analyzing do you want to try to reach kings on your own or would you possibly think that circumstances such as this might be a means and since Paul was willing to go through this to achieve an end he could have said well I'll try to figure out a way to reach kings or he could have said well since I want to go up to Jerusalem and willing to give my life suppose God works out a solution while I'm in the hands of the Gentiles to fulfill his will.

He seems to have accepted the latter because he clearly knew of no way to draw himself to the attention of the great leaders in Rome and in the West in any other way.

Now this is a little problematic but I think you have to ask yourself what does Mr. Armstrong think about when he analyzes opportunities that come his way wonders how he is going to meet certain people and discovers that the people of apparent little consequence along the way are the very individuals who open the doors all the way.

Now we go on into around the twenty first chapter we find that Paul is taking a ship and determined to get on his way to Jerusalem he goes through Cyprus lands in Syria at Tyre then goes on down until he finally arrives at Jerusalem and goes to see James they settle the question once again of circumcision and talk about it and we go on then and find that the people of the city are there and that Paul is in the temple because he is following their direction and they asked him to go and purify himself because he hadn't been there for so long and there are so many stories that come back and while he was in the temple worshiping and fasting he was spotted by some Jews from Asia who immediately began to stir up the people of the city and so then Paul was brought before the people and there was terrible skirmish turmoil ruckus if we want to call it that we used to say that out in the country terrible ruckus and this came to the attention of the chief captain who sent his men down to find out what the problem was and they found the Jews beating Paul and rescued Paul and were carrying him back into the fortress when Paul asked the chief captain if he could speak to the people and so we find in the beginning of chapter twenty two that Paul now is standing on the stairs and he begins to talk to them and tell them that he is a Jew he talks to them in the Hebrew tongue he doesn't talk to them in the Greek tongue which the centurion thought that he would so that he could understand instead of that Paul talks to them in their own Hebrew tongue and this makes a greater impression on them he tells them who he is he tells them that they know him that he as we read there in chapter nine with the threatenings and slaughterings took care of the church and then he goes on to talk about the high priest that he received letters from him and was on his way and then tells a story of what happened to him on the way to Damascus and let's pick it up now in the twelfth verse where we find that he's been struck down by the light and been carried by the hand or led by the hand into Damascus and we see Ananias and one Ananias a devout man according to the law having a good report of all the Jews was dealt there came unto me and stood and said unto me brother Saul receive your sight the same hour I looked up upon him and he said the God of our

fathers has chosen you that you should know his will and see that just one and should hear the voice of his mouth now this made a very powerful impression upon Paul because here Luke has him recounting what was said but if we look back in the ninth chapter once again just for a moment and see the original that Luke wrote regarding that same experience starting there in verse ten of Acts the ninth chapter it talks again about a disciple in Damascus Ananias and the God called him or the Lord did and he said behold Lord I am here now verse eleven the Lord said unto him arise and go into the street which is called straight and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus for behold he prays and has seen in the vision a man named Ananias coming in notice verse thirteen then Ananias answered Lord I've heard of by many that this man how much evil he's done to your saints in Jerusalem he was concerned he was worried and then he was he received an answer and that he has authority from the chief priest to bind all that call on your name but the Lord said unto him go your way Ananias for Paul is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles notice that and kings and the children of Israel as Dr. Hay was saying and I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name sake now Paul reiterated this story once more in the twenty six chapter that I'll just touched on before I go back to twenty two again in verse fifteen where we see that Paul here is relating this to a grippa speaking at himself and and Luke is giving a writing of what Paul actually said and Paul's describing what Jesus Christ himself said verse fifteen he says and I said who are you Lord and he said I am Jesus whom you persecute but rise and stand upon your feet for I have appeared unto you for this purpose to make you a minister and a witness both of these things which you have seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto you therefore delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles unto whom now I send you so he said right there that Christ told him he was going to send him the Gentiles to open their eyes to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me whereupon O King a grippa I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision but showed first unto them of Damascus and a Jerusalem and threw out all the coasts of Judea and then to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God and do work meet for repentance and so you see in each one of those areas it gives us a little different insight into exactly what was said and what was intended to be heard by that various and sundry meeting there upon the road to Damascus and when we get all through it we find that we have a vision then of a man of tremendous character who has now been given a commission that's going to take him into areas that he could not even imagine to meet Gentiles to seek kings and finally to work with the children of Israel and with that in mind we then look at the 21st verse of the 22nd chapter and see again that here at the very end of his speech to those people who had been trying to kill him earlier and now he's standing on the steps talking to them he says and I said unto me and he said unto me depart for I will send you far hence unto the Gentiles and at that point the people couldn't stand it because Jews just couldn't tolerate the idea that somebody other than themselves could be a chosen people and receive such a benefit or a direction or inspiration from God and naturally they began to cry out in such a fashion that it caused the chief captain to take Paul and to bring him back for fear that they might do something that would harm him and we see then that as Paul has gone along this far that there never is any trace in his mind of any doubt about what he's trying to do. I'm sure that there was much doubt as to what he would ultimately work out and the way in which it would happen but there was no doubt that from the very beginning when he heard the voice of Christ from that cloud and shining down with that great light that even blinded him that he was to be the one who would eventually be the source for taking the knowledge that he was being given at a later date by Christ himself and take it out and spread it throughout the Gentile nations as well as someday be able to take it into the very uppermost chambers of the kings and those who were the rulers over the Gentiles and over the people other than the Israelites and finally wind up working with and administering to the children of Israel themselves that he may have not

understood how that would happen but he had no doubt that it would and he kept himself deeply committed to it. He kept himself with a one purpose in mind that that was what he was going to accomplish and no matter what kind of an obstacle came in his road he always managed to surmount it in a fashion that would enable him to continue.

We will take a quick look at a thought. There was a time in our world that to be an American that is in this basic generation was a very important right in terms of the responsibility that others would show and world travels and the same way Paul used his Roman citizenship. I would emphasize this because there were many, many people in the Roman world at this time who were slaves, many who were not slaves but who were not Roman citizens. There might have been allies or there might have been subdued peoples but to have Roman citizenship was a very important factor. It would be unthinkable that someone other than a Roman citizen such as Paul would have been sent to reach Caesar or those who governed at Rome. For a Jew who was not a Roman citizen and many Jews were not, one would have to conclude that unless all of the 12 apostles had been Roman citizens which none of them were as far as we know at least at the time of which we read of their experience then none of them would have been sent.

I think this is important in terms of looking at the training of an individual as to why God uses an individual.

Now we'll move along quickly and in the 23rd chapter which we have already had some reference I wanted to pick out one thought but some of you are aware of not very important in the long run but it does illustrate how often God calls one of a city and two of a family. We read just in passing and when Paul's sister's son heard of the attempt to try to trick the Romans to get Paul into their hands and kill him then he went and entered the castle disgusted with Paul and Paul told him to reach the Roman chief captain. Here we discover that Paul is not just some lone heroic figure but Paul apparently had a sister in all likelihood who was converted and the sister had a son or Paul's nephew so there were other members of Paul's own family who were converted.

This does illustrate how often God does work through families when one is called several are.

On the other hand sometimes there's just only one maybe only one even of a town.

As we move along we are given here the background of the time that Paul was imprisoned and a period of two years elapses after two years verse 27 in chapter 24. Porcius Festus came into Felix's room that is his office of government and Felix willing to show the Jews a pleasure had of course in the meantime and up to this point not done anything but left Paul bound. He had hoped in the meantime which Paul never did is to give him money.

What we discover here is something very interesting. The Bible gives us many examples. James and Peter were put in prison.

James was beheaded and Peter was delivered by night. Paul on another occasion you remember and Silas if I remember the names right at this point were in prison and God at night intervened with a Philippian jailer brought him and his family to repentance and so we discover that interestingly God could have delivered Paul earlier.

There was a reason that God didn't because God is able. Now there is a reason that he didn't deliver John the Baptist for instance when he was beheaded. I've told you the story of John Weidner of the period of the Second World War who was in prison and knew he was to be executed the next morning. He lives in Pasadena.

He's a friend of mine, a man of spiritual mind. He said he prayed to God and he remembered what God had done to Peter to deliver him and before that thought left his mind he remembered the story of John the Baptist.

And at this point he did not know what the will of God was. The story of course is in the book *Flea the Captor* and I will get back now to the life of Paul but Paul must have wondered why on this occasion seemingly he was rotting in jail for two long years when God intervened at another time but he had the chance to do something during this period that had never been done before. He had spoken to the Roman leaders in the eastern Roman world and do those around without any question. As it says here clearly he hoped that money should have been given him of Paul that he might loose him wherefore he sent for him the oftener and commune with him and he was always hoping for some box-shape, you know The fact remains that the more often he talked to Paul and others around him were there to listen, the more often they heard and the love of money of this man brought him to the knowledge of the truth for which he is held accountable because he had such a privilege to hear and when a man such as a Roman leader here Felix had listened to Paul he didn't do it in the privacy of a closet he normally gathered those who were responsible in government to listen. This was the way it was done so things were accomplished. Paul during this period wrote letters he probably never would have gotten time to write the quick letters he wrote initially of the length of first and second Thessalonians give you an idea of the little time Paul had to write while in the early days he was only beginning a work and had a small amount to tend to in essentially Macedonian parts of Greece but now he had much more to tend to in the care of the churches and he writes much longer letters furthermore Paul said to the Thessalonians that there will come a time when one who now restrains will be taken out of the way both the reference to his authority and the reference to the individual and that the mystery of iniquity already works and the extent to which Paul was imprisoned and not able to put his finger on the pulse of problems was a degree to which a mystery of iniquity that is iniquity that doesn't appear to be at first what it is working in people invisibly until there becomes in the church an explosion it occurred because Paul was imprisoned now it didn't develop all of a sudden it took some years in the same way that many individuals in this generation of the church allowed a mystery of iniquity and iniquity is the violation of God's law to eat away at their hearts and minds because Mr. Armstrong was gone one third one half of the time and those who should have been tending the house were concerned at his departure instead of preventing iniquity from rising in the hearts of individuals an explosion did occur in 1974 when individuals thought they could do what it turned out they were at that point unable to do but I think the lesson here is very important that there is a responsibility that comes on any group of people when leadership focuses not on the group itself that has been raised up but on some other area and those who are left become responsible both in terms of those who have office and those who are individuals who have no direct office we're all responsible for seeing that our conduct measures up to the law of God now as we move along we already had some comments and I won't repeat here what has been commented upon Paul's giving one speech after the other they even seem a bit repetitious Mr. Armstrong speaks at Pasadena headquarter he often speaks from the same thing we can call it a bit repetitious but maybe there's a reason that's what his mind is on there is a reason why Paul explains his life work and it isn't something new at all points but it conveys something of the significance of the responsibility he had bearing a witness of a messenger who had been sent with the good news of the government of God that required people sooner or later to measure up to the character of God as expressed in his law which is what ultimately will govern the kingdom of God and so Paul points this up here what is required where he discusses judgment and righteousness so Paul went into the question of character and responsibility now there came a time when Agrippa who was discussed here in chapter 26 had decided in words here to fast us this man

might have been sent at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar now at this point we're jumping over because we have much more yet to cover in reality and there'll be things here that Mr. Dickinson will pick out undoubtedly that I have purposefully skipped Paul appeals to Caesar now he appealed to Caesar because in this discussion it had been suggested that Paul could ultimately perhaps present his logical case back again at Jerusalem where the Jews could come to a sound conclusion because these leaders saw no problem with Paul and they didn't see why Jews of the acumen that they had shouldn't come to similar conclusions to be set at liberty Paul knew them and his conclusion therefore was instead of being turned back to those who were his accusers he must have as we say seen the light if they had merely made a decision and released him on the basis of the evidence nothing might have come of all this but because they wanted to send him back to the Jews in Jerusalem he grasped the possibility he had in a sense now no alternative he decided to appeal to Caesar he was not concerned with being in prison he was concerned with the fact that suddenly it appeared that he had either no choice ahead or the other alternative would lead him to the highest level of government anywhere in the world and he made use of that as a Roman citizen and said I appeal to Caesar and therefore they concluded that to Caesar he would go and so we see again here that because of the fact here you say that well God had given Paul this commission God had given him this direction and so naturally he was going to be with him and he saved him out of everything no he didn't it always takes a determination it always takes work on our part in order to be able to allow God to do that because it can only be because God's Holy Spirit is working through us and working through our minds and using our minds and stretching our minds enabling us to understand far greater things that these things can be accomplished through us to do these things you know Christ always said it's out of my belly will flow rivers of living water when he was talking about the Holy Spirit well you know a river can have a lot of different contexts it can be a very tiny river that flows in a very tiny trickle it can be a little larger river that flows in a little larger trickle it can be a medium sized river that flows with a great current in it and it can be a gigantic river that has a tremendously strong and torrential current and that explains the spirit that flows through our mind and flows on out to be allowed to accomplish things because it allows us to have more of God's thought and spirit and purpose within our minds so that when we work in context with the other people around us we demean ourselves in a way so that God can accomplish more you don't ever accomplish much with a person that you can't like a person that is always so feisty that they cause your hair to stand on in by the way they treat you and talk to you but you see if God's spirit is flowing through you that isn't the way you talk then you're showing the fruits of the spirit which are the love and the joy and the peace and the gentleness and the kindness and the long suffering and the faith and patience and meekness that's when you find that that river of living spirit flowing through you can accomplish gigantic things and that's what we find here in Paul's life only because he never quenched the spirit he was always one who was faithful he was one who had made a commitment and stayed with it he was one who believed totally in God and never had one single penetrating doubt in the totality of his mind and so then we see as Dr. Hay will show you that as we go into this journey then and we begin to work in this area of seeing where this journey led him and how because Festus forced them into this ship at a late time of the year and where the difficulties could come from that you see a very interesting side to how the Book of Acts concludes I'll pick it up in the 27th chapter I would suggest that if you have a Bible without a map you get a map sometime and take a look at the story here we have an entire chapter and more in the sense that it deals with a famous voyage there isn't any like it in all of the Bible many things have been written it is unusual that Luke should have spent this much time as a medical doctor but presumably he was also a man who traveled in his profession by sea rather knowledgeable in sailing first of all a point in time we'll go all the way back for those who might not have remembered where the story should start but where we left off in fact last week in chapter 20 verse 16 Paul was hastening if it were possible to be

in Jerusalem the day of Pentecost this means we are somewhere in spring now there were two years in which he was imprisoned and even after we passed the reign of Felix and come to Festus there were a number of days or many days that he spent and now we are told that the journey was about to occur commentators are most certainly correct to draw the conclusion that there is a passing reference to the feast rather the fast of atonement because the word festival or feast in the Hebrew is a kind of celebration of holy time and has no reference directly to whether one eats or does not and this is of course what has already been read to you this evening in chapter 27 verse 9 what we learn as we go through the book of Acts is the fact that time is measured even as Luke writes from the point of view of the holy days which God gave we now have nearly two years and six months in which Paul has been imprisoned and a journey is to begin we should take the story on the basis of what we know of the geography of verse 12 they well up to verse 12 you begin with verse 8 they hope to find a haven along the way after the day of atonement they would have no problem there Paul admonished them not to go any further stay in the fair havens which is a community bearing that name to this day the southern or belly side of Crete now when the haven was not thought to be commodious to winter in which was coming up they did decide that they would try the next port west which would have better entries two of which are defined in the last part of verse 12 that is there were two entries to this haven one that lies or is entered from the southwest and the other the northwest that is they were about 30 degrees away from the due west at the part of Finife which is the way the King James translates the word you will find a map a little map will only give you a generalized idea where it lies along the southern coast about two thirds to three quarters of the way across the southern part of Crete and the south wind blew gently and suddenly after they started to sail and thought they would arrive there safely a tremendous wind a tempestuous one at the early autumn Eurokledon blew up and the ship was now caught the problem was that it could be driven against the land and they couldn't enter into the port safely so they hoped instead of entering the port that perhaps they could go westward along the southern shore and they came below a very small island that on most small Bible maps doesn't appear the little island of Cloude and they still found no solution they were afraid of being driven on to the quicksands of that island there and so they are proceeding in a sense westward being driven by a wind note that in the first place didn't allow them safe entry into the one port on the southern part of Crete and in this other case could have driven them on the quicksands along the shore and so the implication is that you had a wind that was coming here in such a way as to drive them on to the land if they were not careful so they had to try to stay away and move westward and hopefully not be hit by the winds and driven aground so they are moving along now in a terrible condition the description is given in some detail upwards of two weeks of a storm had occurred in verse 27 and when the 14th night was come as we were driven up and down in Adria or the Adriatic about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country and sounded and found it twenty fathoms now if the normal route as most Bible maps seem to indicate would take you do westward look on your maps if you have it you go from Cyprus to Crete and then you go from Crete to Malta where the landing of Paul and the others assumed to have occurred it would not be very difficult to grasp a story entirely different than the one we have but what we discover is that up to this time in history the term Adriatic is normally related to an area that lies between modern Italy and modern Yugoslavia that we call to this day the Adriatic it first started in the far north and expanded to the upper part of this great body of water and the lower was called the Ionian Sea later on the whole thing might have been called the Adriatic by the New Testament time but there is no indication in the literature of the time that the Adriatic extended all the way into the Mediterranean to include as a part of it the oceanic waters bordering on Malta now I introduce Malta for the reason that there is the story of the island they met called Melita in chapter 28 verse 1 it appears here that they were driven off course and for two weeks they didn't know what would happen to them Paul of course had knowledge of what would happen and

then they grasped that they must be approaching land some country now the interesting term some country if they were on the direct route westward to Malta it would hardly be otherwise but what the first place they would have come to was Malta which had been occupied by the Romans since 261 BC and had been incorporated into the government of Sicily and many many ships stopped at Malta and route across the Mediterranean from Italy to North Africa but it is as if they were coming to a region they did not know where except that they had been driven first in one direction and then another by the storm in the Adriatic now, lest they should have fallen on some rocks the story is given here they tried to keep the ship from crashing they decided to get off the ship after they had eaten as has already been discussed and they were able to beach the ship kept it off the rocks and they were able to beach the ship now when it was day they knew not the land now logically, just speaking plainly men who handled the ships in the Mediterranean would most certainly have been aware of one of the most important islands called Malta but here the individuals after discovering the land what they could see, S-W-E they knew not the land but they did discover a certain creek with a shore into which they were minded if it were possible to thrust in the ship and when they had taken up the anchor which kept them off the rocks they committed themselves to the sea and loosed the rudder bands hoisted up the main sail to the wind and made towards shore, verse 40 and falling into a place where two seas meet that is, it's kind of an end of an island you know, as if it's a narrow island and shores from either side met at this area then they ran the ship aground the four parts stuck fast and remained unmovable and the hindered part was broken and so it was at this point, of course, that they all escaped that has already been read now, and when they had escaped, verse 1 of the 28th and last chapter of Acts then they knew, now they were on the island it says, then they knew that the island was called Melata that's the translation out of the Greek now, when they came to Crete, they call it Crete, it just says and they came to Crete and they come to Cyprus or they come to Snidus or they come somewhere else and logically, if this were Malta which is a modern word for the island of Melata they would have said that they came to Malta or Melata but when it says that it was an island that is called Melata it implies that they discovered this island had a name that is called Melata but it was not the famous one that most shipmen knew now, there are only two islands in the whole history of the Mediterranean world that in the Roman world went by the same name one is the island of Melata, south of Sicily the other is the island of Melata using the old word, off the coast of Dalmatia in the Adriatic it was centuries later, not until the 6th century that the word Adriatic commonly applied to a much larger area of the Mediterranean to take in Malta and the literature of the New Testament time clearly indicates that the Adriatic was limited to an area sufficiently north that the only Melata related to the Adriatic was off the coast of Dalmatia now, the Phoenicians are referred to by Herodotus, the Romans, the Greeks and Luke speaks of a woman who is a syrophoenician it would never have occurred to Luke in speaking of the Phoenicians who settled on Malta and who to this day speak a language related to ancient Punic as well as Italian among the educated it would never have occurred to Luke to speak of the Phoenicians as barbarians Luke spoke of the woman and the other Gospel writers as a syrophoenician woman you remember where Jesus spoke to the Gentile woman now it says these people on this island that's called Melata as if it were an unusual place to land but it had the name Melata like the famous one and here were a barbarous people hardly the Roman way to describe Phoenicians who had been under their jurisdiction and a part of the government of Sicily for over 300 years and he gathered sticks and a viper came out of the heat and fastened on his hand and Paul slung this venomous snake into the fire there are no venomous snakes on Malta there are no venomous snakes on Melata off the coast of Dalmatia that is there are none now only within the last century where Mongoose is introduced to Melata off the coast of Dalmatia who got rid of or which got rid of the snakes before that time the island of Melata off the coast of Dalmatia was infested with snakes poisonous ones so there is now more evidence one that they were in the Adriatic further north than expected they reached the land they hadn't

grasped and when they got there they discovered its name that they discovered a barbarous people and there were venomous serpents all of which in fact militate against the concept that it was the island of Malta itself now the name of the place is Melata, M-E-L-E-D-A that is the Germanic spelling that was common in all the works when the area of Dalmatia belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire it has a slightly different spelling today but most maps will show it Xerox in fact a map out of the Britannica the older edition excuse me a moment, pick up my slip here in which any of you if you'd like to see it later will find it the island of Melata lies off the southern coast of Dalmatia almost due west of Montenegro southwest of Herzegovina it is the southernmost island along the shore and it is in church history one of the two places where there is a tradition that Paul landed now since people have thought that Malta was one and since people have thought that the island of Melata lies off the southern coast of Dalmatia it is the southernmost island along the shore and it is in church history one of the two places where there is a tradition that Paul landed now since people have thought that Malta was one and since people have thought that Malta was one and since people have thought that the island of Melata lies off the southern coast of Dalmatia and since people have thought that Malta was one and since people have thought that Melata or Melata in the Adriatic was one both places have a site called Paul's Landing now that doesn't prove then that he landed at either one but it is interesting of course that when you see the picture there are some things that seem to militate logically against the more commonly modern accepted view the Greek view that was clearly outlined in the 11th century was the island off the coast of the Adriatic and it is interesting that Paul here for the first time reaches a people and influences an area that he would never again go to the coast of Dalmatia and it was not long after that, some years but in terms of time that we read in 2 Timothy 4-10 of the fact that the gospel had been brought to Dalmatia so there must have been an impact as a result of spending much of the late autumn and early winter in this area where the ruler of the island hears Paul and all the people see the miracles and this is undoubtedly how the truth came to enter the Illyrian world that has since become Slavic and where the work of the church later spread outside of the direct Greek world and interesting thought the coast of Dalmatia possesses many safe bays the principle being listed here on the other hand a string of islands extend along the coast which offer many safe and easily accessible places of anchorage to ships during the fierce winter gales which rage in the Adriatic the principle ones are north to south ending with Melida so says the Encyclopedia Britannica I happen to have chosen the 11th edition, the easiest access Melida has been regarded not as the only one but at least as the Melita on which Paul was shipwrecked and as on Malta a St. Paul's Bay is found I will stop with that in that part of it but I wanted to bring it up because it indicates that the gospel got its start in this part of the world of Dalmatia and what we call Yugoslavia today as a result of an event that happened on this journey furthermore it was not necessary to winter in Malta smaller ships might have found it better no ship had to winter in Malta they could have proceeded to Sicily and Italy but in the Adriatic the only safe thing to do would be to wait it out apparently the other ship, the Castor and Pollux verse 11 had to wait it out at the same place but was not so severely damaged and that's the one they took now when they left the Dalmatian coast they came down south because they were going to go on the west side of Italy where Rome ultimately lies and you go along that shore and landing at Syracuse they tarried their three days which must have been the original destination which is on the island of Sicily and from thence they fetched a compass now the logical meaning of this expression is that they took a circuitous route if they had gone logically westward to Malta and then up north to Sicily and up north to Regium they would have gone in a direct route from Malta but having come from the Adriatic in the east they came south westward to Sicily and then went up north from Sicily to Regium in the boot of Italy and that's the sense of the meaning of the words fetched a compass in the King James that is they took a circuitous route that is they went back up on the other side so that itself gives some indication of the journey now I dwell on this partly for the reason that Yugoslavia was one

of the routes that the history of the church passes through when it was driven out of the Byzantine Greek world into Armenia and Asia Minor and later driven out of Armenia in the struggles between the Arabs in the last half of the 1st millennium AD and most of the church ended up in the Balkans and passed through this very region of Yugoslavia before ending up in the hills and mountains of northern Italy, southeastern France and Switzerland from which the work spread to England and then the New England states finally to the Midwest and then to Oregon and then to Southern California, now around the world we move along to Paul's account again of how God worked through him he briefly discusses this with Jews there are few Jews here who had any knowledge of what really occurred in the eastern Mediterranean except the sect was spoken against before I finish do you have some comments along the way we're near the end and I'll try to wrap it up Paul was there for two whole years before Nero sorry and Nero did not hear him now remember it was after the fast and we then passed by the winter if it was two and a half years before the voyage set in motion and it was at least another three to four or five months or the end of winter he must then have arrived about three years two years, slightly under three years in Rome and he was there two years in his own hired house and received all that came to him and you have to read the various letters to perceive the people whom he met and sometimes extends the greetings from the household of Caesar he therefore must have met those who were at the highest level in Caesar's household preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God I put the word gospel because that's what it's all about the kingdom of God is the gospel or the good news teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence and I raised my voice because actually Luke didn't really stop here but this is all that God intended us to have at this time here we discover that we don't know what happened to Paul at the end of two years we don't know what Paul did later God didn't intend us to have this direct information but we may discern from other scriptures what is here must have been very significant in terms of the work yet to be done when Paul would reach the house of Israel and in terms of how Christianity arose that is a counterfeit of the work of the church of God normally two years was a period of time which a prisoner was required to spend at the end of which he could be released if no formal charges were presented in this case apparently no Jews for all this time came to present any charge and so Paul spent all this time in Caesar's household and with others who could come and listen to what he had to say in the Roman government at the end of which Luke assumes that anyone who knows Roman law knew that two years were up he was released most likely Paul would have fulfilled and this would have been approximately 61 AD I'm not making a chronological issue at this moment of anything because it's beside the purpose of this study but it's at the time that Paul is writing to the Hebrews from Rome and it is about the time of the crisis of the brethren at the death of James the just the brother of Jesus as Josephus tells us if Paul went westward then into Spain and spent the same amount of time into Spain and he bypassed Gaul because Gaul was reached by others you can read the history of the founding of the church of Gaul elsewhere Gaul was not a Gentile world as a whole that's early France he went to Spain which was a Gentile world and he might have spent there two years or two and a half like he did in parts of Greece and in Ephesus and Asia Minor it took about two to three years and so I now read from a chronicle that is I translate that Luke who was the companion of Paul that came to Britain was not then called England and the interesting thing is that it occurs in the year what we call AD 64 and it was in the eighth year of the reign of King Moradab M-O-R-A-D-O-B and Luke arrived there and the reason Luke is introduced in this chronicle of Jean de Outremus written around 1300 AD is the fact that the king took the name of Luke because Luke being a physician had advised members of the family who had been ill and it was not uncommon to adopt a name of someone of the Bible and to give up the names that you might have been given in antiquity in your pagan background Paul also, when he was at Rome must have met in Caesar's household the daughter, the king of England or properly the king of Britain whose name was Claudia whether the Claudia who was the daughter of the king of Britain is the same

Claudia as mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:21 we cannot prove with the evidence we have but it is unlikely that we would be far off the mark to recognize in that Claudia the daughter of the king of Britain could be someone else let's ask Paul in the resurrection or let's ask Claudia herself now it is not illogical that since the British throne had members of the family there as hostages and since the revolution against Rome had terminated in 61 AD that we had about three years of peace for Romans to reestablish their authority that Paul should show up in 64 and it's about the best year he could have because Rome burned in 64 and you want to be far away from Rome then you remember Nero started to persecute the Christians but Paul was apparently now with Luke in Britain he could have easily had introduction to members of the royal family in Britain because he met members of the royal family in Rome the story begins to gel you see we don't have all the facts Luke purposefully kept them away we're only picking up bits and pieces but we know Paul was to reach kings and rulers and if he spends another two to two and a half years and finishes a work in Britain and the British church has always recognized that Peter and Paul both played a role in the founding of the church in Britain ask any Anglican Paul then journeyed east and along the shores of Asia Minor in 67 when Nero was doing his thing in Greece there were now nearly three years of two and a half to three years of persecution of Christians there was a civil war that was being waged in the Eastern Roman Empire by the Jews there was a persecution of Christians and it appears in this persecution that they laid hold of Peter who was writing in Asia Minor to members of some of the lost tribes in northern Asia Minor of the diaspora and that Paul was there that he had passed through Troas left some scrolls and a cloak that he had in fact been journeying in this area when he was seized and he was taken to Rome the traditional date is 67 AD I have no reason to doubt it the conflict between year 67 and 68 with respect to the death of Paul I think is simply resolved by the fact that Paul was seized in 67 and executed in 68 that he writes to Timothy at the end of the second epistle to Timothy by all means try to come before winter which would be 67 because he didn't know he'd last out the winter of 67 and 68 Nero is charged with the death of Paul Nero was in Greece in 67 toward the end of 66 he arrived and he spent an entire year and I'm just quickly glancing at something here to give you some of the facts he then returned to Italy and on the 19th of March in 68 he had news of revolution Nero died on the 9th of June in 68 the implication of early church history which has variations of course as it has come down is that Paul apparently died at the beginning of June in 68 might have died a bit earlier but that's not an unreasonable time and within days after that Nero himself at 31 years of age in the 14th year of his reign discovered a revolt of the palace he was declared an enemy of the state by the senate and as it says here if I can find it on the approach of the horsemen sent to drag him to execution he collected sufficient courage to save himself by suicide and that's what happened to the emperor of the Roman world who was responsible for the execution of Paul I think it is appropriate that we have at least a conclusion to the life of the man who's the major focus of two thirds of this remarkable book of the Bible I hope that though we have no time for questions in any of these sessions you will have a chance to go over the things that have been said and you should contact if you can to the individuals who have handled the different sections of the book of Acts if you want to see any of them about questions and we did not have a chance to cover you're certainly welcome to do so I'm speaking on behalf of all the rest because now they have no choice I've spoken feel free to contact them anytime or any of us in any section and we'll try to help because this indeed is the beginning of the history of God's church in a sense has been obscured from history till now where we come into view in the most remarkable way on the world seen again as Christianity then was I want to thank Mr. Dickinson for his very incisive insight into Paul's character it should be a lesson to all of us I hope you will all come back safely tomorrow to services