

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

We are going to take a walk through the Book of Acts. Now, the Book of Acts can be called the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, or the Book of the Acts of the Church. However, I would like to call it the Book of the Acts of the Holy Spirit. We could say that the Old Testament focuses on God the Father, the Gospels focus on God the Son, Jesus and the Book of Acts focuses on the Third Person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit. He is, of course, mentioned throughout the Bible, as we can see from Genesis 1:1-2

**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless, and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.**

And we know that He was with certain people in the Old Testament in a specific way, as Joseph in Genesis 41:38

**So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man (Joseph) in whom is the spirit of God?”**

Moses and the 70 elders, in Numbers 11:16-17

**The Lord said to Moses, “Bring me seventy of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.”**

Joshua, in Numbers 27:18

**So the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit.”**

Gideon, in Judges 6:34

**Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him.**

Samson, in Judges 13:25

**And the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him while he (Samson) was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zoraha and Eshtaol.**

Saul, in I Samuel 10:9-10

**As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul’s heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying.**

David, in II Samuel 23:2

**The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; His word was on my tongue.**

Elijah and Elisha, in II Kings 2:9

**When they had crossed Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?” “Let me inherit as double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied.**

Isaiah, in Isaiah 48:16

**Come near me and listen to this: From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret, at the time it happens, I am there. And now the Sovereign Lord has sent me, with His Spirit.**

Ezekiel, in Ezekiel 2:1-2

**He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.” As he spoke the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard Him speaking to me.**

Daniel, in Daniel 4:8

**Finally, Daniel came into my (Nebuchadnezzar’s) presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him).**

We can see from these examples that the Holy Spirit would come upon certain people such as leaders, judges, kings and prophets for a particular reason. But He did not come upon everyone.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. What is the title I like to give to the Book of Acts?
2. Who is the focus in the Old Testament?
3. Who is the focus in the Gospels?
4. Who is the focus in the Book of Acts?
5. In which Bible passages in the Old Testament is the Holy Spirit mentioned?
6. Based on these examples, who did the Holy Spirit come upon at the time of the Old Testament?

## CHAPTER TWO

### A TASTE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

However, Jesus promised that things would change, as we can read in John 14:16-17 **And I (Jesus) will ask the Father and He will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever - the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you.**

Jesus promised that all His followers, and not just some of them, would have the Spirit of God in them. These followers would not only include the disciples who were with Jesus at the time He was on earth, but would include all the believers from that time on, including us as believers. At the time that Jesus was on earth, He sent out His disciples and empowered them to do the work to which He had called them, as we can read in Luke 9:1-2

**When Jesus had called the Twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.**

After initially sending out the Twelve disciples closest to Him, He sent out a larger group of disciples, as we can read in Luke 10:1

**After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every place where He was about to go.**

And so the disciples saw many miraculous things happen. However, after the crucifixion of Jesus they had become very disheartened and had locked themselves up in a room. But Jesus who, after three days, had been raised from the dead, appeared to them and once again told them that He was sending them out, as we can read in John 20:19-22

**On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After He said this, He showed them His hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you." And with that He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."**

So far, the disciples had been able to do the work of God because Jesus had empowered them for the task. However, He was about to go back to heaven and would therefore no longer be with them. That is why they were in need of Someone to take His place in their lives to enable them to fulfil their God-given task. Initially, He breathed on them so they would receive the One who would replace Him, the Holy Spirit. We could compare their experience with our born-again experience, for when we are born again we receive the Holy Spirit too. And Jesus told them that he was sending them out, just as He had been sent by His Father. However, this did not mean they could go out right away. No, for

Jesus told them at another time that they were to wait. The question is: What were they to wait for? Let's read Acts 1:4-5

**On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit."**

And Jesus explained why they needed to be baptised with the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8  
**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**

They needed to be empowered so they could go out and preach the gospel not just in Jerusalem, but in Judea, Samaria and, in fact, to the very ends of the earth!

After Jesus had spoken these words, He went up to heaven, as we can read in Acts 1:9-11

**After He (Jesus) had said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven will come back in the same way that you have seen Him go into heaven."**

The disciples decided they better do what He had told them to do and go to Jerusalem to wait for this gift from the Father, as we can read in Acts 1:12-14

**Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.**

## QUESTIONS

1. According to John 14:16-17, what was Jesus' promise to His Followers?
2. Does His promise include believers today?
3. According to Luke 9:1-2, what did Jesus enable His twelve disciples to do?
4. Did Jesus send out more disciples?
5. According to Luke 10:1, how many more disciples did Jesus send out?
6. What was the response of His disciples after Jesus had been crucified?
- 7a. According to John 20:19-22, did Jesus meet with His disciples after He had been raised to life?

- 7b.** According to John 20:19-22, what did Jesus tell His disciples they were to do?
- 7c.** According to John 20:19-22, how did Jesus initially prepare His disciples for their task?
- 8.** So far, how had Jesus' disciples been able to do the work of God?
- 9.** Was Jesus going to be able to continue empowering His disciples for their task?
- 10.** How would Jesus' disciples be able to fulfil their God-given task?
- 11.** What can the experience of Jesus breathing on His disciples to receive the Holy Spirit be compared to?
- 12a.** According to Acts 1:4-5, did Jesus tell His disciples to go out to minister right away?
- 12b.** According to Acts 1:4-5, why did Jesus not want His disciples to go out right away?
- 13.** According to Acts 1:8, why did Jesus find it necessary for His disciples to wait before going out to minister?
- 14.** Why did Jesus' disciples need to receive power?
- 15a.** According to Acts 1:9-11 did Jesus remain on earth after He had told His disciples to wait?
- 15b.** According to Acts 1:9-11 who spoke to Jesus' disciples after He had gone up to heaven?
- 16a.** According to Acts 1:12-14 where did Jesus' disciples go after He had gone up to heaven?
- 16b.** According to Acts 1:12-14 can you name some of the people who met together?

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE ARRIVAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

And so they waited and waited, and then the Day of Pentecost arrived and something very special happened, as we can read in Acts 2:1-4

**When the day of Pentecost came they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.**

These disciples were baptised with the Holy Spirit on that day. There were about 120 of them, as we know from Acts 1:15

**In those days Peter stood up among the believers, a group numbering about a hundred and twenty.**

And a change came over them, for no longer were they a fearful group of people, as they had been before, when they had met together behind locked doors, for fear of the authorities. No, they became a bold people who were no longer afraid of what the authorities might do to them. Peter confirmed that sudden boldness by standing up and preaching to the people a most powerful sermon about the Lord Jesus, starting off with a prophecy of the prophet Joel, as we can read in Acts 2:17-21

**"In the last days, "God says, "I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious Day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved."**

This is a reference to Joel 2:28-32

**And afterward, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls.**

Peter continued by explaining that Jesus had been crucified with God's foreknowledge, that He had been raised to life by Him, and was now seated at the right hand of the Father. He finished by inviting the people to respond to his message in Acts 2:38

**Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised, everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**

Many people became believers that day, as we can read in Acts 2:41

**Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.**

## **QUESTIONS**

1. According to Acts 2:1-4, what happened at the Day of Pentecost?
2. According to Acts 2:1-4, what did the believers see?
3. According to Acts 2:1-4, what happened to the believers?
4. According to Acts 1:15, how many believers were together at that day?
5. Did the Baptism with the Holy Spirit cause a change to come over these believers?
6. Can you give an example of someone changing from a fearful person into a bold person on that day?
- 7a. What Old Testament passage is Peter referring to in Acts 2:17-21?
- 7b. According to Acts 2:17-21, what has God promised His sons and daughters will do?
- 7c. According to Acts 2:17-21, what has God promised young men will do?
- 7d. According to Acts 2:17-21, what has God promised old men will do?
- 7e. According to Acts 2:17:21, on whom will God our out His Spirit?
- 7f. According to Acts 2:17-21, what wonder and signs will God show?
- 7g. According to Acts 2:17-21, what will happen before the great and glorious Day of the Lord?
- 7h. According to Acts 2:17-21, who will be saved?
8. Did Peter explain that Jesus had been crucified with God's foreknowledge?
9. Did Peter, furthermore, explain Who raised Jesus back to life?
10. Did Peter explain as well where Jesus is now seated?

- 11a.** According to Acts 2:38, what did Peter ask people to do after he had preached his message?
- 11b.** According to Acts 2:38, what did Peter promise the people would receive?
- 12.** What was the response of many of the people to Peter's message?
- 13a.** According to Acts 2:41, who were baptised after Peter's preaching?
- 13b.** According to Acts 2:41, how many people became believers that day?

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERS

In Acts chapter three, we read of a miracle that took place after the disciples had been baptised with the Holy Spirit, as we can read in Acts 3:1-6

**One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer – at three in the afternoon. Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us.” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk”**

Peter and John were not only empowered to preach, they were empowered to heal, as the healing of this crippled man demonstrates. Not everyone was happy with their actions and their preaching, and consequently they found themselves in prison, as we can read in Acts 4:1-3

**The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.**

However, those who had thrown them in prison had no case against them so they had to free them. As soon as Peter and John were released, they joined the other believers to tell them what had happened to them. We can well imagine that the believers decided it was necessary to stay out of sight for a while, since they would all be in danger of prison. But is that what they decided to do? Let's read Acts 4:23-31

**On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “You made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His Anointed One.\***

**Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed. They did what Your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak Your word with great boldness. Stretch out Your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the Name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.**

\*See Psalm 2:1-2

**Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His Anointed One.**

These believers, too, had become bold people, as we can see from the prayer they prayed. The imprisonment of Peter and John did not stop them from stepping out and continuing their bold preaching. On the contrary, enabled by the Holy Spirit, they became even bolder in their teaching and preaching.

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1a.** According to Acts 3:1-6, where were Peter and John going?
- 1b.** According to Acts 3:1-6, at what time of the day did Peter and John go to the temple?
- 1c.** According to Acts 3:1-6, who was begging at the temple gate called Beautiful?
- 1d.** According to Acts 3:1-6, what did Peter say to the crippled man?
- 2.** Were Peter and John empowered to preach as well as to heal?
- 3a.** According to Acts 4:1-3, was everyone happy with their actions?
- 3b.** According to Acts 4:1-3, why were the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees disturbed?
- 3c.** According to Acts 4:1-3 where did Peter and John find themselves because of their actions?
- 4.** Did those who had put Peter and John in prison have a case against them?
- 5.** What happened to Peter and John next?
- 6a.** According to Acts 4:23-31, where did Peter and John go after their release from prison?
- 6b.** According to Acts 4:23-31, how did these believers respond to the words of Peter and John?
- 6c.** According to Acts 4:23-31, did these believers decide to go into hiding for a while or did they decide to continue to preach the Gospel and heal people?
- 6d.** According to Acts 4:23-31, what happened to the place of meeting after these believers had prayed?

**6e.** According to Acts 4:23-31, what happened to these believers after they had prayed?

**7.** Had the imprisonment of Peter and John stopped these believers from preaching the gospel?

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE HOLY SPIRIT PURIFIES

There was great unity among the believers and they shared with each other their possessions. One day, a certain believer named Ananias did so as well. However, the Holy Spirit knew what was in the heart of this man and his wife, and revealed it to Peter, as we can read in Acts 5:1-11

**Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge, he kept back part of the money for himself, but he brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?" Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God." When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body and carried him out and buried him. About three hours later, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door and they will carry you out also." At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.**

These two believers did not have to sell their property. Moreover they did not have to give everything they had sold the property for. The land as well as the money they had received for the land was theirs and they could do with it as they wished. But they lied, trying to look better in the eyes of the other believers than they were. As Peter said, they lied not just to the other believers but they lied to the Holy Spirit of God. God is a holy God and He considers lying an evil act for which these two people had to pay a high price; their very lives. Of course, what happened to them became known to many others. And yet, many more people became believers, despite the fact that the Holy Spirit had high standards for those who wished to become believers. These standards remain today, for God is still a holy God, which means that even today we need to live by God's standards, and not by the standards of the world around us.

### QUESTIONS

- 1a. According to Acts 5:1-11, who sold a piece of property?
- 1b. According to Acts 5:1-11, what was the name of Ananias' wife?
- 1c. According to Acts 5:1-11, did Ananias give the full amount to the Apostles?

- 1d.** According to Acts 5:1-11, Who spoke to Peter about the money they had received from Ananias?
- 1e.** According to Acts 5:1-11, was Peter pleased with the money they had received from Ananias?
- 1f.** According to Acts 5:1-11, Who had Ananias lied to?
- 1g.** According to Acts 5:1-11, what happened to Ananias after Peter confronted him?
- 1h.** According to Acts 5:1-11, did Ananias' wife Saphira know what had happened to her husband?
- 1i.** According to Acts 5:1-11, did Saphira tell the truth?
- 1j.** According to Acts 5:1-11, was Peter pleased with Saphira's answer?
- 1k.** According to Acts 5:1-11, what happened to Saphira after Peter confronted her?
- 2.** Did these two believers have to sell their property?
- 3.** Did these two believers have to give everything they had sold the property for?
- 4.** What was the sin of these two believers?
- 5.** Why did these two believers lie?
- 6.** To whom did these two believers lie?
- 7.** Have God's standards changed today?

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY CHALLENGED

As the church continued to grow, some problems began to arise and a plan was developed to deal with these challenges, as we can read in Acts 6:1-4

**In those days when the numbers of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."**

A group of deacons was selected to oversee the distribution of food. Their requirement was that they were full of wisdom and full of the Holy Spirit. Among the men chosen was a man named Stephen, as we can read in Acts 6:5

**This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.**

Stephen, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, did much more than taking care of the administration of food, for he preached the gospel and performed miracles among the people, as we can read in Acts 6:8

**Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.**

We would expect everyone to be very appreciative of the ministry of Stephen but that was not the case. In fact, false accusations were made against him and he was eventually brought before the religious court, the Sanhedrin to prove his innocence as we can read in Acts 6:9-12

**Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue, of the Freedmen (as it was called)- Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria, as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke. Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God." So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin.**

Stephen used that opportunity to speak boldly, proving to them from their history that they were a stiff-necked people, just like their fathers had been, for they too resisted the Holy Spirit and as a consequence had murdered the Righteous One, the Lord Jesus Christ, as we can read in Acts Chapter 7:2-53. The final words of his speech are recorded for us in Acts 7:51-53

**"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your**

**fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered Him – you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.”**

The religious leaders got so angry with Stephen that they stoned him to death, as we can read in Acts 7:54 – Acts 8:1a

**When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was there, giving approval to his death....**

One of the people present at this stoning was a young man named Saul. We will come back to him later on.

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1a.** According to Acts 6:1-4, which group of widows was being overlooked?
- 1b.** According to Acts 6:1-4, what was the solution to the problem?
- 1c.** According to Acts 6:1-4, what was the requirement for these seven men?
- 2.** According to Acts 6:5, who were chosen?
- 3.** According to Acts 6:8, what ministries did Stephen fulfil?
- 4.** Was everyone pleased with Stephen’s ministry?
- 5.** Before which court was Stephen eventually brought?
- 6a.** According to Acts 6:9-12, who began to argue with Stephen?
- 6b.** According to Acts 6:9-12, what did these Jews do next?
- 6c.** According to Acts 6:9-12, who seized Stephen and brought him before the religious court, the Sanhedrin?
- 7.** What did Stephen prove from their history these Jewish people were?

- 8a.** According to Acts 7:51-53, Who did these Jewish people always resist?
- 8b.** According to Acts 7:51-53, who had their forefathers persecuted?
- 8c.** According to Acts 7:51-53, for Whose betrayal and death were these Jewish people responsible?
- 9a.** According to Acts 7:54-8:1a, how did the religious leaders respond to Stephen's words?
- 9b.** According to Acts 7:54-8:1a, what did Stephen see when he looked up?
- 9c.** According to Acts 7:54-8:1a, what was the reaction of the religious leaders after they heard Stephen speak?
- 9d.** According to Acts 7:54-8:1a, which you man was present at the stoning of Stephen?
- 9e.** According to Acts 7:54-8:1a, what did Stephen pray while he was being stoned?
- 9f.** According to Acts 7:54-8:1a, how did Saul view the stoning of Stephen?

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY BEYOND JERUSALEM

That day, things changed for the believers, for on that day persecution broke out, and the believers fled, except the twelve apostles who stayed in Jerusalem, as we can read in Acts 8:1b

**.... On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.**

Someone named Philip ended up in a city in Samaria. Philip is first mentioned among the deacons, in Acts 6:5

**This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.**

Just as Stephen had gone beyond taking care of the distribution of food, so Philip had begun to minister in other ways when he arrived in Samaria, as we can read in Acts 8:5-8

**Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and crippled were healed. So there was great joy in that city.**

The apostles heard that many people in Samaria had become believers in Jesus because of the preaching of Philip, so they sent Peter and John to confirm what was happening, as we can read in Acts 8:14-17

**When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptised into the Name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.**

These believers had been born again and the Holy Spirit was residing on the inside of them. But they had not yet been empowered by the Holy Spirit through the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. That was necessary in order for them to fulfil the task that God had for them, just as it had been necessary for all the other believers to be baptised with the Holy Spirit, so they could fulfil their God-given task. Therefore, Peter and John prayed over them, so that these believers in Samaria would receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit as well.

### QUESTIONS

**1a.** According to Acts 1:8b, what happened to the Church in Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen?

**1b.** According to Acts 1:8b, where did the believers flee to?

- 2.** Who ended up in a city in Samaria?
- 3.** In which bible passage is Philip mentioned first of all?
- 4a.** According to Acts 8:5-8, what did Philip do when he was in Samaria?
- 4b.** According to Acts 8:5-8, what else did Philip do?
- 4c.** According to Acts 8:5-8, what happened to the people Philip ministered to?
- 4d.** According to Acts 8:5-8, were the people pleased with Philip's ministry?
- 5a.** According to Acts 8:14-17, who did the Apostles send to Samaria?
- 5b.** According to Acts 8:14-17, when Peter and John arrived in Samaria what did they do?
- 6.** Were these people in Samaria born again after Philip had preached to them?
- 7.** Was the Holy Spirit residing on the inside of these believers in Samaria after they had believed?
- 8.** Had these believers in Samaria already been empowered by the Holy Spirit through the Baptism with the Holy Spirit?
- 9.** Why did these believers in Samaria need to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit?

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY TO INDIVIDUALS

It is very clear that Philip had a very successful ministry in that particular town in Samaria. Therefore, we can expect the Holy Spirit wanting him to stay on, so that even more people can become believers. However, that is not what happened, as we can read in Acts 8:28-29

**Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road – the desert road – that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."**

Philip, in obedience to the word of the angel, did leave the place where he was ministering, not knowing what he was to do. As he walked on the road to which he had been directed, the Holy Spirit spoke to him to go to the chariot, which was on that road, and Philip did so. He did not question the Holy Spirit as to why he had to leave his successful place of ministry, where he had ministered to the many, now to minister to just one person. Philip simply obeyed. When he got close to the chariot, he heard a man reading from the book of Isaiah, as we know from Acts 8:32-33

**The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: He was led like a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.**

This passage can be found in Isaiah 53:7-8

**He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgement he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living....**

It is clear that this man did not understand what he was reading, so Philip explained the passage to him and shared with him the gospel. The man believed, and asked to be baptised, as we can read in Acts 8:36-38

**As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptised?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him.**

However, after the man was baptised, Philip did not stay with him to disciple him further in the truths of God's word. Instead he was taken away by the Holy Spirit, as we can read in Acts 8:39

**When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.**

Philip's task was done and the Holy Spirit had other work for him to do as we can read in Acts 8:40

**However, Philip appeared at Azotus, and travelled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.**

Going back to the man Philip shared the gospel with at the road, Philip did not know who this man was, for the Holy Spirit had not revealed to Philip to whom He was leading him to speak. Philip just obeyed the leading of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit knew how important it was for this man to hear the gospel, for he would be the key to bringing the gospel to his nation. So he made sure Philip left the city in Samaria at the right time, and that he was at the right road to meet this chariot with this person in it, just at the time this man was reading a certain portion of the book of Isaiah. Talk about perfect timing..... Co-incidence? I don't think so. It was more likely a God-incidence.

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1a.** According to Acts 8:28-29, who appeared to Philip?
- 1b.** According to Acts 8:28-29, what did the angel say to Philip?
- 1c.** According to Acts 8:28-29, did Philip obey the angel?
- 1d.** According to Acts 8:28-29, who did Philip meet?
- 1e.** According to Acts 8:28-29, was the Ethiopian eunuch an important person?
- 1f.** According to Acts 8:28-29, where had the Ethiopian eunuch been?
- 1g.** According to Acts 8:28-29, why had the Ethiopian eunuch been to Jerusalem?
- 1h.** According to Acts 8:28-29, what book of the Bible was the Ethiopian eunuch reading?
- 1i.** According to Acts 8:28-29, where did the Holy Spirit tell Philip to go to?
- 2.** Did Philip know who he was going to meet?
- 3.** Did Philip question the direction of the Holy Spirit?
- 4.** According to Acts 8:32-33, what particular passage from the Book of Isaiah was the Ethiopian eunuch reading?
- 5.** Did the Ethiopian eunuch understand this passage?

- 6.** What was Philip able to do?
- 7.** Did the Ethiopian eunuch accept Philip's words?
- 8a.** According to Acts 8:36-38, what did the Ethiopian eunuch ask Philip to do?
- 8b.** According to Acts 8:36-38, did Philip baptise the Ethiopian eunuch?
- 9a.** According to Acts 8:39, did Philip afterwards stay with the Ethiopian eunuch?
- 9b.** According to Acts 8:39, was the Ethiopian eunuch sad that Philip had been taken away?
- 10.** Why did the Holy Spirit take Philip away afterwards?
- 11a.** According to Acts 8:40, where did the Holy Spirit take Philip?
- 11b.** According to Acts 8:40, what did Philip do while there?
- 11c.** According to Acts 8:40, what was Philip's final destination?
- 12.** Was Philip's meeting with the Ethiopian eunuch a coincidence or a God-incidence?

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S LIFE CHANGING MINISTRY

In the meantime, other things were happening related to a man named Saul. He is first mentioned in Acts chapter seven, at the time of the stoning of Stephen.

Let's read Acts 7:59 – Acts 8:1a

**While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.**

Saul was part of the religious leaders and was very opposed to believers, as we can read in Acts 9:1-2

**Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.**

Saul travelled from Jerusalem to Damascus with some others, with the intent of finding believers and taking them to Jerusalem to be imprisoned. However, just before he arrived in Damascus, the Lord Jesus appeared to him and told him to stop persecuting Him, since by persecuting the believers, he was, in fact, persecuting the Lord as we can read in Acts 9:3-6

**As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," He replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."**

Saul was so blinded by the appearance of the Lord that the men travelling with him had to take him into the city. His experience so overwhelmed him that for three days he did not eat or drink, as we can read in Acts 9:9

**For three days he was blind and did not eat or drink anything.**

Saul had been a very zealous man, believing that persecuting these believers was pleasing to God, but he had just learned that the opposite was true. While Saul was dealing with the fact that he had been on a wrong path, God spoke to a man named Ananias as we can read in Acts 9:10-16

**In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias." "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." "Lord," Ananias answered. "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your**

**name.” But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is My chosen instrument to carry My name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for My name.”**

Ananias was a believer living in Damascus. And God told him to go to Saul to pray for him. Ananias could not believe the Lord would ask such a thing of him, for he knew the reason Saul had come to Damascus was to find believers and have them thrown in prison. However, the Lord explained to Ananias that he had chosen Saul for a specific task and that Ananias was to go and find him, to lay hands on him. In obedience, Ananias did so, as we can read in Acts 9:17-19

**Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord – Jesus, who appeared to you as you were coming here - has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptised, and after taking some food, he regained strength.**

Saul, having been born again and baptised with the Holy Spirit, began to boldly preach the gospel, as we can read in Acts 9:20

**At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.**

It was a good time for the church led by the Holy Spirit, as we can read in Acts 9:31

**Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.**

## **QUESTIONS**

1. In what Bible passage is Saul mentioned first of all?
2. What was Saul a part of?
3. Was Saul in favour of believers?
- 4a. According to Acts 9:1-2, who did Saul go to see?
- 4b. According to Acts 9:1-2, what did Saul ask the high priest for?
- 4c. According to Acts 9:1-2, why did Saul ask for these letters?
5. What did Saul do next?
6. Did Saul reach Damascus?
- 7a. According to Acts 9:3-6, what happened to Saul just before he reached Damascus?
- 7b. According to Acts 9:3-6, what did the voice say to Saul?

- 7c.** According to Acts 9:3-6, Who spoke to Saul?
- 7d.** According to Acts 9:3-6, did Saul know who the Lord was?
- 7e.** According to Acts 9:3-6, who did the Lord tell Saul He was?
- 7f.** According to Acts 9:3-6, what did Jesus say Saul was doing to Him?
- 7g.** According to Acts 9:3-6, what did Jesus command Saul to do?
- 8.** Was Saul able to travel into the city of Damascus by himself?
- 9.** Who had to take Saul into the city of Damascus?
- 10a.** According to Acts 9:9, for how long was Saul blind?
- 10b.** According to Acts 9:9, did Saul eat and drink during these three days?
- 11.** Had Saul believed that persecuting believers had been pleasing to God?
- 12.** Was it true that God was pleased with Saul persecuting believers?
- 13a.** According to Acts 9:10-16, to which person in Damascus did God speak about Saul?
- 13b.** According to Acts 9:10-16, which house did God tell Ananias to go?
- 13c.** According to Acts 9:10-16, who did God tell Ananias to pray for?
- 13d.** According to Acts 9:10-16, did God tell Ananias that He had prepared Saul to receive Ananias?
- 13e.** According to Acts 9:10-16, did Ananias initially agree to go?
- 13f.** According to Acts 9:10-16, what reasons did Anaias give to God for not wanting to go and see Saul?
- 13g.** According to Acts 9:10-16, what did God say to Ananias to make him willing to pray for Saul?
- 13h.** According to Acts 9:10-16, what specific detail did God disclose to Ananias about Saul's future?
- 14.** Was Ananias shocked that God would ask him to pray for Saul?
- 15.** Was it helpful for Ananias to have God explain to him why He wanted Ananias to pray for Saul?

- 16a.** According to Acts 9:17-19, how did Ananias address Saul when he met him?
- 16b.** According to Acts 9:17-19, what else did Ananias do in obedience to God's words to him?
- 16c.** According to Acts 9:17-19, what happened immediately after Ananias' prayer?
- 16d.** According to Acts 9:17-19, what happened next to Saul?
- 16e.** According to Acts 9:17-19 how did Saul regain his strength after not having eaten for three days?
- 17.** How do we know that Saul had an immediate change of heart?
- 18.** According to Acts 19:20, where did Saul begin to preach the gospel?
- 19.** According to Acts 9:31, how did Saul's conversion affect the church in Judea, Galilee and Samaria?

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY TO GENTILES

At that time, the apostle Peter was travelling throughout the country. One day he was staying at the home of a Jewish believer in a place called Joppa, as we can read in Acts 9:43

**Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.**

In another city, called Caesarea, lived a man named Cornelius, as we can read in Acts 10:1-2

**At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing, he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.**

This man was a centurion in the Roman army and he followed the Jewish religious practices by praying to the Jewish God and giving to the poor. One day this man had a vision, and in this vision an angel told him to have some of his men go to Joppa to look for a man named Peter, and to bring him back, as we can read in Acts 10:3-6

**One day, at about three in the afternoon, he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius." Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."**

So Cornelius had some of his men go to the house where Peter stayed. While these men were travelling, Peter had an open vision in which he saw a sheet come down from heaven with all kinds of animals in it, some considered clean and others unclean, according to Jewish religious traditions, as we can read in Acts 10:9-16

**About noon the following day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat." "Surely not, Lord," Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.**

Three times the sheet came down and each time it happened, Peter was told to eat these animals. However, Peter was a good Jew and good Jews did not eat unclean animals, so Peter did not think he could do so, and he made that clear to the One who spoke to him from heaven. However, the voice from heaven corrected him by telling him that he was

not to call anything unclean that God had made clean. Peter was greatly puzzled by this experience, as we can read in Acts 10:19-20

**While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."**

In fact, the vision had nothing to do with clean and unclean animals, it was related to so-called clean and unclean people, or Jews and Gentiles, for the Lord wanted Peter, a Jew, to minister to Gentile people. So the Holy Spirit spoke to Peter and told him to invite these three Gentile men into the home he was staying in, as we can read in Acts 10:23a  
**Then Peter invited the men into his house to be his guests.**

That would have been quite a challenge for Peter, since Jews never entered a Gentile home, and neither did they invite Gentiles into their Jewish home. To do so would have made them unclean. But here the Holy Spirit is directing Peter to do what he has never done before. This truly was a new day and was in fulfillment of what Jesus had told them they were to do, according to Acts 1:8

**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**

These Jewish believers had just taken some time to be obedient to the words of Jesus, for the church has been in existence for quite some time by now. The Lord must have decided He better do something about them going to the Gentiles, for if He left it to them it might never happen. Anyway, the three men from Cornelius' household explained why they had come. Peter recognised that this was obviously arranged by the Lord, so the next day he and some other Jewish believers from Joppa set out for Caesarea with the men from Cornelius' household, as we can read in Acts 10:23b

**The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along.**

When they got there, a large gathering of people was waiting for them, as we can read in Acts 10:24-27

**The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.**

Cornelius then shared with Peter his vision in Acts 10:30-33

**Cornelius answered, "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, "Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the house of Simon the tanner and lives by the sea." So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."**

Consequently, Peter began to preach the gospel, as we can read in Acts 10:34-35  
**Then Peter began to speak, "I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right."**

While he was still speaking the Holy Spirit came upon the people present, as we can read in Acts 10:44-47

**While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptised with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."**

As Peter was preaching the gospel to Cornelius and those he had invited, the Lord baptised the people with the Holy Spirit. The reason the other believers could recognise that this was so was because the evidence was the same as it had been for them; the people there began to speak in tongues and praise God. These people obviously believed the gospel message as it had been presented to them by Peter. At that moment, they were born again, and the Lord then baptised them with the Holy Spirit to empower them for the task that He had for them.

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1.** According to Acts 9:43, where was Peter staying?
- 2a.** According to Acts 10:1-2, who lived in Caesarea?
- 2b.** According to Acts 10:1-2, what was the position of Cornelius?
- 2c.** According to Acts 10:1-2, what was special about Cornelius?
- 2d.** According to Acts 10:1-2, in what way did Cornelius show his love for God?
- 3a.** According to Acts 10:3-6, what happened to Cornelius one day at about three in the afternoon?
- 3b.** According to Acts 10:3-6, who did Cornelius see in this vision?
- 3c.** According to Acts 10:3-6, what did the angel say to Cornelius?
- 3d.** According to Acts 10:3-6, how did Cornelius initially respond to the angel?
- 3e.** According to Acts 10:3-6, what did Cornelius say to the angel?
- 3f.** According to Acts 10:3-6, how did the angel reply to Cornelius?

- 3g.** According to Acts 10:3-6, what instructions did the angel give to Cornelius?
- 4.** Did Cornelius obey the instructions given to him by the angel?
- 5a.** According to Acts 10:9-16, what had Peter begun to do?
- 5b.** According to Acts 10:9-16 what time of the day was it?
- 5c.** According to Acts 10:9-16 what did Peter want while he was praying?
- 5d.** According to Acts 10:9-16, what happened to Peter when he was praying?
- 5e.** According to Acts 10:9-16, what did Peter see when he was in a trance?
- 5f.** According to Acts 10:9-16, what was in the sheet that had been let down to earth by its four corners?
- 5g.** According to Acts 10:9-16, what did the voice from heaven tell Peter to do?
- 5h.** According to Acts 10:9-16, did Peter obey the voice from heaven?
- 5i.** According to Acts 10:9-16, why did Peter not obey the voice from heaven?
- 5j.** According to Acts 10:9-16, what did the voice from heaven say next?
- 5k.** According to Acts 10:9-16, how often was the vision repeated?
- 6.** Why would Peter not eat the animals offered to him in the sheet from heaven?
- 7.** Was Peter greatly puzzled about his experience?
- 8a.** According to Acts 10:19-20, Who spoke to Peter next?
- 8b.** According to Acts 10:19-20, what did the Holy Spirit tell Peter?
- 8c.** According to Acts 10:19-20, did the Holy Spirit want Peter to go with these three men from Caesarea?
- 8d.** According to Acts 10:19-20, why did the Holy Spirit want Peter to go with these three men from Caesarea?
- 9.** Was the vision related to clean and unclean animals?
- 10.** What was the vision related to?
- 11.** Who did God want Peter to begin to minister to?

- 12.** According to Acts 10:23a, who did Peter invite into his house to be his guests in obedience to the Holy Spirit?
- 13.** Would inviting these three men from Caesarea into his house have been easy for Peter to do?
- 14.** Why would inviting these three men from Caesarea into his house not have been easy for Peter to do?
- 15.** According to Acts 1:8, where had Jesus told the disciples to go?
- 16a.** According to Acts 10:23b, did Peter go to Caesarea the next day with these three men?
- 16b.** According to Acts 10:23b, who else went with Peter to Caesarea?
- 17a.** According to Acts 10:24-27, whose home did Peter enter in Caesarea?
- 17b.** According to Acts 10:24-27, who else had Cornelius invited to his home in Caesarea?
- 17c.** According to Acts 10:24-27, when Cornelius met Peter what did he do?
- 17d.** According to Acts 10:24-27, did Peter accept the reverence of Cornelius?
- 18a.** According to Acts 10:30-33, what did Cornelius share with Peter?
- 18b.** According to Acts 10:30-33, who had Cornelius seen in this vision?
- 18c.** According to Acts 10:30-33, what did Cornelius tell Peter the man in shining clothes had said to him?
- 18d.** According to Acts 10:30-33, what did Cornelius tell Peter the man in shining clothes had told him to do?
- 18e.** According to Acts 10:30-33, what did Cornelius then say to Peter?
- 19.** According to Acts 10:34-35, how did Peter respond to the words of Cornelius?
- 20a.** According to Acts 10:44-47, what happened to those who were listening to Peter's message?
- 20b.** According to Acts 10:44-47, what was the response of the circumcised believers who had come with Peter?

- 20c.** According to Acts 10:44-47, what was the evidence that the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the people in the home of Cornelius?
- 20d.** According to Acts 10:44-47, what was Peter's response to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the people in the home of Cornelius?
- 21.** How did Peter and the other circumcised believers know Cornelius and those with him were baptised with the Holy Spirit?
- 22.** What had happened before Cornelius and those with him were baptised with the Holy Spirit?
- 23.** Why did the Lord baptise Cornelius and those with him with the Holy Spirit?

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S UNIFYING MINISTRY

Other Jewish believers learned what had happened at the home of Cornelius and they were not happy with what had taken place. So, when they met with Peter, they began to question him on that event, as we can read in Acts 11:1-3

**The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticised him and said , “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”**

Peter then told them about the vision the Lord had given him, and how God had used that vision to help him understand that he was to go to the home of a Gentile and preach the gospel to him, and those with him, as we can read in Acts 11:4-14

**Peter began and explained everything to him precisely as it had happened. “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. I looked into it and saw four footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air. Then I heard a voice telling me, “Get up, Peter, kill and eat.” I replied, “Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.” The voice spoke from heaven a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again. Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. He told us how he has seen an angel appear in his house and say, “Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.”**

Peter also explained that the Holy Spirit had come on the people in that home in the same way that He had come on them, as we can read in Acts 11:15-16

**As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as He had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: "John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit."**

Peter’s recollection of events of that day helped the Jewish believers to understand that God loved these Gentiles as much as He loved them, and they praised God for it.

Believers continued to share the gospel with other Jews in places such as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, but some of the believers began to share the gospel with Gentiles in Antioch, as we can read in Acts 11:20

**Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.**

So the believers in Jerusalem sent a man named Barnabas to Antioch to make sure that the work was blessed of the Lord, as we can read in Acts 11:22

**News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.**

Barnabas was very encouraged by what he saw happening in Antioch, as we can read in Acts 11:23

**When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord, with all their hearts.**

The Holy Spirit made the church aware of future issues so that she could prepare for it in advance, as we can read in Acts 11:28-30

**One of them, named Agabus, stood up, and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) The disciples, each according to his own ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.**

So we can clearly see how the Holy Spirit was leading the believers on an individual basis, as well as leading the church corporately in various ways.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. What was the response of the Jewish believers to Peter's visit to the home of Cornelius in Caesarea?
2. According to Acts 11:3, why did the circumcised believers criticise Peter about his visit to the house of Cornelius in Caesarea?
3. What did Peter tell the circumcised believers?
4. How had God used that vision in Peter's life?
- 5a. According to Acts 11:4-14, how did Peter begin to help the circumcised believers why had he done so?
- 5b. According to Acts 11:4-14, did Peter give exact details of his vision?
- 5c. According to Acts 11:4-14, did Peter share with the circumcised believers what he had heard a voice say to him?
- 5d. According to Acts 11:4-14, did Peter share with the circumcised believers what his answer was?
- 5e. According to Acts 11:4-14, did Peter share with the circumcised believers that the voice from heaven spoke to him a second time?

- 5f.** According to Acts 11:4-14, did Peter tell the circumcised believers how many times he had seen the vision?
- 5g.** According to Acts 11:4-14, did Peter tell the circumcised believers how many men stopped at the house where he was staying?
- 5h.** According to Acts 11:4-14, did Peter tell the circumcised believers where these three men had come from?
- 5i.** According to Acts 11:4-14, what did Peter say to the circumcised believers the Holy Spirit told him to do?
- 5j.** According to Acts 11:4-14, did Peter tell the circumcised believers how many brothers came with him to Cornelius house in Caesarea?
- 5k.** According to Acts 11:4-14, did Peter tell the circumcised believers that the man named Cornelius had seen an angel in his house in Caesarea?
- 5l.** According to Acts 11:4-14, did Peter tell the circumcised believers what the angel had said to Cornelius, the man whose house Peter had entered?
- 6a.** According to Acts 11:15-16, what did Peter tell the circumcised believers had happened to those in Cornelius' home in Caesarea after he had preached to them?
- 6b.** According to Acts 11:15-16, what did Peter tell the circumcised believers he had remembered after he had seen the Holy Spirit come on the people in Cornelius' home in Caesarea?
- 7.** What was the reaction of the circumcised believers after they heard Peter share with them about the events at Cornelius' home in Caesarea?
- 8.** Which cities did believers go to share the gospel with other Jews?
- 9.** Which city did believers go to share the gospel with Greeks or Gentiles as well?
- 10.** According to Acts 11:20, who went to Antioch to tell the good news about the Lord Jesus to Greek or Gentile people?
- 11a.** According to Acts 11:22, who had heard that Greeks or Gentiles in Antioch had heard the good news about the Lord Jesus?
- 11b.** According to Acts 11:22, who did the church at Jerusalem send to Antioch?
- 12.** According to Acts 11:23, was Barnabas glad with what had happened in Antioch?

- 13a.** According to Acts 11:28-30, who did the Holy Spirit use to give a word of warning about an event that would take place?
- 12b.** According to Acts 11:28-30, what event did the prophet Agabus predict?
- 12c.** According to Acts 11:28-30, how did the believers respond to the message of the prophet Agabus?
- 13.** Who was leading believers on an individual basis as well as leading the church corporately?

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MIRACULOUS MINISTRY

At the same time, the church did face some real challenges, for the apostle James was imprisoned and put to death, as we can read in Acts 12:1-2

**It was about this time that king Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.**

The next person to be put in prison was Peter, as we can read in Acts 12:3-4

**When he (king Herod) saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.**

While in prison, an angel appeared to him and released him, as we can read in Acts 12:7-9

**Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up," he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision.**

However, eventually the angel left and Peter realised this was really happening so he quickly went to the house where the believers were gathered, to tell them their prayers for his release had been answered, as we can read in Acts 12:11-12

**Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating." When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.**

They had difficulty believing that Peter had actually been released, as we can read in Acts 12:13-16.

**Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door." "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel." But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.**

In fact, it was easier for them to believe that Peter's angel was at the door rather than Peter. However, God had answered their prayers and it was Peter himself who had been released.

## QUESTIONS

- 1.** According to Acts 12:1-2, who was put to death by king Herod?
- 2a.** According to Acts 12:3-4, who did king Herod put in prison after the death of James?
- 2b.** According to Acts 12:3-4, when was Peter put in prison?
- 2c.** According to Acts 12:3-4, how many soldiers guarded Peter?
- 2d.** According to Acts 12:3-4, when did king Herod intend to bring Peter out for public trial?
- 3a.** According to Acts 12:7-9, who appeared to Peter in his cell?
- 3b.** According to Acts 12:7-9, was Peter awake when the angel came to him?
- 3c.** According to Acts 12:7-9, what did the angel have to do?
- 3d.** According to Acts 12:7-9, what did the angel tell Peter to do?
- 3e.** According to Acts 12:7-9, did Peter think he was actually leaving prison?
- 4.** When did Peter realise he really was no longer in his prison cell?
- 5a.** According to Acts 12:11-12, who had the angel rescued Peter from?
- 5b.** According to Acts 12:11-12, where did Peter go?
- 5c.** According to Acts 12:11-12, why did Peter go to the house of Mary, the mother of John, also called Mark?
- 6a.** According to Acts 12:13-16, who came to the door when Peter knocked on it?
- 6b.** According to Acts 12:13-16, did Rhoda open the door?
- 6c.** According to Acts 12:13-16, what did Rhoda tell the believers who were praying for Peter?
- 6d.** According to Acts 12:13-16, how did the believers respond to the words of Rhoda that Peter was at the door?
- 6e.** According to Acts 12:13-16, who did the believers think was at the door?
- 6f.** According to Acts 12:13-16, did these believers eventually open the door?

7. Had God answered the prayers of the believers for Peter's release from prison?

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S SENDING MINISTRY

We continue to see the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the church in Antioch in Acts 13:1-2

**In the church in Antioch there were prophets and teachers; Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."**

In this situation the Holy Spirit told the church at Antioch that He had selected two people, Barnabas and Saul for a specific task. Afterwards, the Holy Spirit continued to give direction to them, and that is how these two men left Antioch and, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, set sail for Cyprus, as we can read in Acts 13:4

**The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.**

Once at the island of Cyprus, they travelled throughout the island until they came to a place called Paphos. The Holy Spirit led them to meet a man named Bar-Jesus. He was a Jewish sorcerer and a false prophet. This man had great influence over the pro-consul, a man named Sergius Paulus, as we can read in Acts 13:6-7

**They travelled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the pro-consul Sergius Paulus. The pro-consul, an intelligent man sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.**

Sergius Paulus had heard of Barnabas and Saul and invited them to share the gospel with him but that was not pleasing to the Jewish sorcerer Bar-Jesus. He knew that if Sergius Paulus would hear the gospel, he, Bar-Jesus would be exposed for who he was; a false prophet, and he would lose his good standing with the pro-consul. That must not happen, so he tried to turn the pro-consul from believing in the gospel message. But Saul or Paul (the name with which we are more familiar), empowered by the Holy Spirit, spoke boldly to this false prophet, as we can read in Acts 13:9-10

**Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun."**

The Holy Spirit enabled Paul to prophesy a word of judgement over this man, and it happened exactly as Paul had said. This caused the pro-consul to come to faith in Christ Jesus, as we can read in Acts 13:12

**When the pro-consul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.**

From Paphos, Paul and Barnabas continued their travels as led by the Holy Spirit. They would usually enter a synagogue whenever that was possible, to preach about the Lord Jesus. Some people believed, while others opposed their message. Nevertheless, whatever the circumstances, the disciples were glad as enabled by the Holy Spirit, as we can read in Acts 13:52

**And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.**

## QUESTIONS

- 1a. According to Acts 13:1-2, who had come together in the church in Antioch to worship and fast?
- 1b. According to Acts 13:1-2, what were the names of these prophets and teachers in the church in Antioch?
- 1c. According to Acts 13:1-2, Who spoke to these prophets and teachers in the church in Antioch?
- 1d. According to Acts 13:1-2, what did the Holy Spirit say to these prophets and teachers in the church in Antioch?
2. According to Acts 13:4, where did the Holy Spirit lead Barnabas and Saul to go?
- 3a. According to Acts 13:6-7, which city in Cyprus did Barnabas and Saul go to?
- 3b. According to Acts 13:6-7, who did Barnabas and Saul meet in Paphos?
- 3c. According to Acts 13:6-7, what was Bar-Jesus' or Elymas' connection with the pro-consul Sergius Paulus?
- 3d. According to Acts 13:6-7, did Sergius Paulus want to hear the word of God as taught by Barnabas and Saul?
4. Was Bar-Jesus or Elymas pleased that the pro-consul Sergius Paulus wanted to hear the gospel?
5. Why did Bar-Jesus or Elymas not want the pro-consul Sergius Paulus to hear the gospel?
- 6a. According to Acts 13:9-10, what is another name for Saul?
- 6b. According to Acts 13:9-10, was Paul (Saul) in agreement with Bar-Jesus or Elymas that the pro-consul Sergius Paulus should not hear the gospel?
- 6c. According to Acts 13:9-10, Who led Paul (Saul) to say these words to Bar-Jesus or Elymas?

- 6d.** According to Acts 13:9-10, what was the judgement Paul (Saul) pronounced on Bar-Jesus or Elymas?
- 7.** Did the word of judgement that Paul (Saul) prophesied over Bar-Jesus or Elymas come true?
- 8.** According to Acts 13:12, how did the pro-consul respond when he saw what happened to Bar-Jesus or Elymas?
- 9.** Did Paul (Saul) and Barnabas remain in Paphos after that event?
- 10.** What did Paul (Saul) and Barnabas usually do when they came to a town they had not been before?
- 11.** Did everyone believe the message of Paul (Saul) and Barnabas?
- 12.** According to Acts 13:52, what did the Holy Spirit enable the disciples or believers to feel regardless of their circumstances?

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S CLARIFYING MINISTRY

Paul and Barnabas continued their travels and eventually ended up back in Jerusalem, where they met with the believers, the elders, as well as the apostles. A discussion followed whether or not Gentile believers were required to obey the law of Moses, as we can read in Acts 15:4-6

**When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses." The apostles and elders met to consider their question.**

Peter spoke up and shared with them his experience at the house of Cornelius, where he had learned that God accepted Jewish believers as well Gentile believers, as we can read in Acts 15:7-11

**Peter got up and addressed them, "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the Gospel and believe. God who knows the heart, showed that He accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as He did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for He purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."**

Based on Peter's words the church decided not to make it difficult for Gentiles to become believers. Led by the Holy Spirit they proposed the following guidelines, which we can read in Acts 15:20

**Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.**

A letter was prepared with these guidelines in mind, and this letter was sent to the church at Antioch, as we can read in Acts 15:30

**The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter.**

### QUESTIONS

1. Where did Paul and Barnabas eventually end up?
- 2a. According to Acts 15:4-6, who welcomed Paul and Barnabas?
- 2b. According to Acts 15:4-6, what did some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees say?

- 2c.** According to Acts 15:4-6, what did the apostles and elders do in response to the words of some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees?
- 3.** Who spoke up to share his experience in the house of Cornelius?
- 4.** What had Peter learned when he was in the house of Cornelius?
- 5a.** According to Acts 15:7-11, what did Peter say to the church, the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem?
- 5b.** According to Acts 15:7-11, Who did Peter say these Jewish believers were trying to test?
- 5c.** According to Acts 15:7-11, in what way were these Jewish believers trying to test God?
- 5d.** According to Acts 15:7-11, what did Peter say as to how Jewish believers as well as Gentile believers are saved?
- 6.** What was the church's decision based on Peter's words?
- 7.** Who led the church to put together some guidelines?
- 8.** According to Acts 15:20, what were these guidelines?
- 9.** According to Acts 15:30, to which city were men sent to deliver the letter with these guidelines?

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S CONTINUING MINISTRY

Sometime later, Paul and Barnabas planned to go on another trip, to visit believers in the various places. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along, but Paul was reluctant to do so, for John Mark had left them half way on a previous trip, as we can read in Acts 15:36-41

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

Paul and Barnabas could not come to an agreement as to what to do with Mark, so they separated. This disagreement may have happened, in part, because of their particular personalities and giftings. Paul was very focused on ministry, and he could not afford to have someone on his team on whom he could not rely. Barnabas was an encourager, as we know from the fact that he sought Paul out when he was a very new believer, as we can read in Acts 9:23-27

**After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, but Saul (or Paul) learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul (or Paul) on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the Name of Jesus.**

And Acts 11:25

**Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul (or Paul), and when he found him he brought him to Antioch.**

Barnabas' special gift was that of encouraging others. Very likely that is why he wanted to give Mark another chance, but Paul did not want to risk it. However, Barnabas did the right thing by taking Mark with him, for eventually he proved very helpful to Paul, as we can read in II Timothy 4:11

**..... Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.**

And Mark is the author of the Gospel of Mark.

Thankfully, God continued to bless the ministries of these two men, and they both chose their partners with which to minister. Paul took with him Silas, and later on a young disciple named Timothy joined them. They tried to enter certain regions, but the Holy

Spirit stopped them, as we can read in Acts 16:6-7

**Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.**

We don't know why the Holy Spirit did not allow them to go these areas at that time, for He did not tell them why this was so. It seems Paul did not question the Holy Spirit as to why they were not allowed to go to these places; they simply obeyed by not going. However, they knew they should not just go home, for they were called to preach the gospel. It did not take too long before they discovered which place they were to go, as we can read in Acts 16:9-10

**During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.**

This time, God showed them the place they were to go, Macedonia. Having been given direction, Paul set off for his destination, Philippi, which was the leading city of Macedonia. While there, he met a group of women who had gathered for prayer. One of them was a business woman named Lydia, as we can read in Acts 16:13-15

**On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptised, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.**

She accepted the gospel message and invited Paul to stay in her home.

## QUESTIONS

1. Why did Paul and Barnabas plan to go on another trip?
- 2a. According to Acts 15:36-41, why did Paul and Barnabas want to visit the believers?
- 2b. According to Acts 15:36-41, who did Barnabas want to bring with them?
- 2c. According to Acts 15:36-41, why did Paul not think it was wise to bring John, who was also called Mark with them?
- 2d. According to Acts 15:36-41, what happened next?
- 2e. According to Acts 15:36-41, what happened as a consequence of the sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas?

- 2f.** According to Acts 15:36-41, who did Barnabas take with him?
- 2g.** According to Acts 15:36-41, where did Barnabas and Mark sail to?
- 2h.** According to Acts 15:36-41, who did Paul take with him?
- 2i.** According to Acts 15:36-41, where did Paul go?
- 3.** Can you give me possible reasons as to why this disagreement between Paul and Barnabas had happened?
- 4.** Why do you think Paul did not want to have Mark on his team?
- 5.** What kind of person was Barnabas?
- 6.** How do we know that Barnabas was an encourager?
- 7a.** According to Acts 9:23-27, who did Barnabas bring Paul (Saul) to?
- 7b.** According to Acts 9:23-27, what did Barnabas say to the apostles about Paul (Saul)?
- 8.** According to Acts 11:25, where did Barnabas bring Paul (Saul)?
- 9.** Do passages such as Acts 9:23-27, and Acts 11:25 prove that Barnabas' special gift was that of encouraging others?
- 10.** Was the fact that Barnabas wanted to give Mark another change proof that his gift was that of an encourager?
- 11.** Was Barnabas right by taking Mark with him?
- 12.** According to I Timothy 4:11, what did Paul say about Mark?
- 13.** Who wrote the Gospel of Mark?
- 14.** Who joined Paul and Silas later on?
- 15a.** According to Acts 16:6-7, which region did Paul and his companions travel through?
- 15b.** According to Acts 16:6-7, which province were Paul and his companions forbidden to enter?
- 15c.** According to Acts 16:6-7, what were Paul and his companions kept from doing in the province of Asia?

- 15d.** According to Acts 16:6-7, Who kept them from going to the province of Asia?
- 15e.** According to Acts 16:6-7, when Paul and his companions came to the border of Mysia which city did they try to enter?
- 15f.** According to Acts 16:6-7, Who did not allow Paul and his companions to enter Bithynia?
- 16.** Do we know why Paul and his companions were not allowed to go there?
- 17.** Did Paul question the leading of the Holy Spirit?
- 18.** Did Paul and his companions go back home?
- 19a.** According to Acts 16:9-10, who did Paul see in a vision?
- 19b.** According to Acts 16:9-10, what did this man in Paul's vision say?
- 19c.** According to Acts 16:9-10, what was Paul's response to the words of this man in the vision?
- 19d.** According to Acts 16:9-10, Who did Paul believe had called him and his companions to go to Macedonia?
- 19e.** According to Acts 16:9-10, what did Paul believe he was to do there?
- 20.** What city in Macedonia did Paul and his companions go to?
- 21a.** According to Acts 16:13-15, after his arrival in Philippi where did Paul and his companions go?
- 21b.** According to Acts 16:13-15, on what day of the week did Paul and his companions go outside the city gate to the river?
- 21c.** According to Acts 16:13-15, what did Paul and his companions expect to find at the river?
- 21d.** According to Acts 16:13-15, who were gathered at that place of prayer?
- 21e.** According to Acts 16:13-15, what did Paul do while at the river?
- 21f.** According to Acts 16:13-15, what is the name of one of the women who had gathered at the river?
- 21g.** According to Acts 16:13-15, who was Lydia?

- 21h.** According to Acts 16:13-15, Who opened Lydia's heart to respond to the gospel message as brought by Paul?
- 21i.** According to Acts 16:13-15, what happened to Lydia and the members of her household after she had accepted the gospel message as preached by Paul?
- 21j.** According to Acts 16:13-15, who did Lydia invite to stay at her home?
- 21k.** According to Acts 16:13-15, on what basis did Lydia invite Paul and his companions to stay at her home?
- 21l.** According to Acts 16:13-15, did Paul and his companions recognise Lydia as a believer?
- 21m.** According to Acts 16:13-15, how do we know that Paul and his companions recognised Lydia as a genuine believer?

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S DELIVERANCE MINISTRY

Paul continued his preaching ministry in that town, Philippi, but his ministry was hindered by a slave girl with a demonic spirit, as we can read in Acts 16:16-17

**Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by her fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."**

Though this young girl brought a seemingly very encouraging message, Paul was very disturbed by her words. We wonder how that can be. After all, was she not telling people to listen to him and Silas? Yes, she was. However, Paul discerned that this young girl was not led by the Holy Spirit, but by a demonic spirit and therefore her words would not produce good fruit. Likewise, today we need to know the spirit behind the word of anyone bringing us a message they claim to be from the Lord. In the case of Paul, he cast the spirit out of the slave girl, and his action so enraged her owners that they had him thrown in prison, as we can read in Acts 16:19

**When the owners of the slave girl realised that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.**

Paul and Silas ended up being thrown in prison, and we would expect them to be very discouraged. After all, they had been doing the Lord's will and should be able to rely on the Lord's protection of them. However, that did not happen. Instead, He allowed them to be beaten and thrown in prison. What happened next was truly amazing, for these two men, no doubt with their backs still bleeding because of the many lashes they had received, began to worship the Lord, as we can read in Acts 16:25

**At about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.**

In response to their prayers and worship an earthquake took place, as we can read in Acts 16:26

**Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once, all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.**

The jailer was convinced that all the prisoners had fled and knowing that he would be made responsible for this he was about to kill himself, as we can read in Acts 16:27

**The jailer woke up and, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.**

But Paul was able to prevent him from doing so for no-one had escaped, and he and was given the opportunity to share the gospel with this man and his entire household. As a

result, the jailer and his family came to faith in Christ Jesus, as we can read in Acts 16:29-34

**The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds, then immediately he and all his family were baptised. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God –he and his whole family.**

The Holy Spirit had led Paul to Philippi knowing full well that it would mean imprisonment for Paul and Silas. However, He knew too that it would mean the jailer and his family would hear the truth about Jesus. Just like the Holy Spirit allowed Paul and Silas to suffer so that a jailer and his family would hear the gospel. Likewise, He may allow us to go through difficulties and hardships in order that we may have an opportunity to share the gospel with others.

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1a.** According to Acts 16:16-17 who followed Paul?
- 1b.** According to Acts 16:16-17 did someone benefit from the slave girl’s predictions?
- 1c.** According to Acts 16:16-17 what did the slave girl say about Paul and the others of his team?
- 2.** Was Paul encouraged by the words of this young girl?
- 3.** Why was Paul disturbed by the words of this young girl?
- 4.** Is it important for us to know the spirit behind the words of anyone bringing us a message they claim to be from the Lord?
- 5.** What did Paul do next?
- 6.** Who became enraged by Paul’s action?
- 7a.** According to Acts 16:19 what action did the owners of the slave girl take?
- 7b.** According to Acts 16:19 why were Paul and Silas dragged into the marketplace by the owners of the slave girl?
- 8.** Where did Paul and Silas find themselves afterwards?
- 9.** Did the Lord protect Paul and Silas?

- 10.** Were Paul and Silas very discouraged and upset with the treatment they had received?
- 11.** According to Acts 16:25 who were listening to the singing and praying of Paul and Silas?
- 12a.** According to Acts 16:26 what happened next?
- 12b.** According to Acts 16:26 what happened as a consequence of the earthquake?
- 12c.** According to Acts 16:26 what happened to the chains of the prisoners?
- 13.** Who would be made responsible if the prisoners had fled?
- 14a.** According to Acts 16:27 what did the jailer want to do?
- 14b.** According to Acts 16:27 why did the jailer want to kill himself?
- 15.** Was the jailer right in believing that all the prisoners had escaped?
- 16.** Who told the jailer that no-one had escaped?
- 17.** What was Paul able to do next?
- 18a.** According to Acts 16:29-34 what did the jailer do next?
- 18b.** According to Acts 16:29-34 what question did the jailer ask Paul and Silas?
- 18c.** According to Acts 16:29-34 what was the answer of Paul and Silas?
- 18d.** According to Acts 16:29-34 where did the jailer take Paul and Silas?
- 18e.** According to Acts 16:29-34 while at his home what kind act did the jailer perform?
- 18f.** According to Acts 16:29-34 who did Paul and Silas baptise after they had preached?
- 18g.** According to Acts 16:29-34 what emotion did the jailer experience after he and his family had been baptised?
- 18h.** According to Acts 16:29-34 why did the jailer experience joy after he and his family had been baptised?
- 19.** Who had led Paul to Philippi?
- 20.** Did the Holy Spirit know that going to Philippi would mean imprisonment for Paul and Silas?

**21.** Why did the Holy Spirit allow the imprisonment of Paul and Silas?

**22.** Will the Holy Spirit allow us to go through difficulties?

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S DISCERNING MINISTRY

Sometime later, Paul and Silas carried on their journey. One of the places they visited was Athens. While walking through the city, Paul was greatly disturbed by the many temples, as we can read in Acts 17:16

**While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.**

How did Paul deal with these idols? Did he go into the temples and physically try to destroy them? No, for that would have been of no use. Paul knew that in order for people to give up their idols, they would need a change of heart, and that could only happen if they heard the gospel, so Paul went among the people and preached the good news of Jesus Christ to them, as we can read in Acts 17:17

**So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.**

And Acts 17:22-31

**Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown God. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built with by hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said, "We are his offspring." Therefore, since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the Divine Being is like silver or gold or stone – an image made by man's design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent. For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead."**

And some people did accept his gospel message, as we can read in Acts 17:34

**A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.**

### QUESTIONS

1. Which other city did Paul and Silas visit?

- 2.** What did Paul see when visiting that city?
- 3.** According to Acts 17:16, how did Paul feel about seeing all these temples in Athens with idols in them?
- 4.** Did Paul physically try to destroy these idols in Athens?
- 5.** Why did Paul not physically try to destroy these idols in Athens?
- 6.** What did Paul begin to do in Athens?
- 7a.** According to Acts 17:17, where did Paul go to preach in Athens?
- 7b.** According to Acts 17:17, who did Paul speak with in Athens?
- 8a.** According to Acts 17:22-31, who did Paul speak with as well in Athens?
- 8b.** According to Acts 17:22-31, what had Paul observed about these people in Athens?
- 8c.** According to Acts 17:22-31, in what way had Paul noticed that these people in Athens were very religious?
- 8d.** According to Acts 17:22-31, did Paul proclaim to these people in Athens who this unknown God is?
- 8e.** According to Acts 17:22-31, did Paul tell these people in Athens that this God lives in temples built by human hands?
- 8f.** According to Acts 17:22-31, did Paul tell these people in Athens that this God needs anything?
- 8g.** According to Acts 17:22-31, why did Paul tell these people in Athens that God does not need anything?
- 8h.** According to Acts 17:22-31, what did Paul tell these people in Athens about how God had made every nation of men?
- 8i.** According to Acts 17:22-31, what did Paul tell these people in Athens God had determined for men?
- 8j.** According to Acts 17:22-31, what did Paul tell these people in Athens God had determined for men who were to inhabit the whole earth?
- 8k.** According to Acts 17:22-31, what did Paul tell these people in Athens as to why God determined the times set for men and the places where they should live?

- 8l.** According to Acts 17:22-31, why did Paul tell these people in Athens that they should not think that the Divine Being is like silver or gold?
- 8m.** According to Acts 17:22-31, what did Paul tell these people in Athens God commands all people to do?
- 8n.** According to Acts 17:22-31, did Paul tell these people in Athens that God has set a day when he will judge the world with justice?
- 8o.** According to Acts 17:22-31, did Paul tell these people in Athens by Whom the world will be judged?
- 8p.** According to Acts 17:22-31, did Paul tell these people in Athens what kind of proof God has given that this Man is the One He has appointed as the Man who will judge the world?
- 9.** Did anyone in Athens accept Paul's gospel message?
- 10.** According to Acts 17:34, who were some of the people in Athens who believed?

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ONGOING MINISTRY

After having spent some time in Athens, Paul went to a city called Corinth. There too, opposition arose against him, and that may have caused him to wonder whether or not he should stay on in that city. The Lord must have been aware of his anxiety as we can learn from Acts 18:9-10

**One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.”**

Even the mighty apostle Paul could sometimes be taken over by fear, as might have happened in this situation, so God came to reassure him to not be afraid, and to continue his ministry in that city, for God was going to protect him. These words so strengthened Paul that he continued his teaching and preaching ministry in Corinth for another one-and-a-half years. However, he eventually left and travelled to various other places. One of these places was Ephesus. While there he met some believers as we can read in Acts 19:1-6

**While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?” “John’s baptism,” they replied. Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the One coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.**

Paul asked these believers a very interesting question; he asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. Why would he ask such a question? No doubt his was because he sensed something was lacking, and wanted to find out what exactly that was. His question had been the right one, for it revealed that they had never even heard of the Holy Spirit. As Paul continued questioning them, he learned that they had only received John’s Baptism, which was a baptism performed by John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. We can read of John’s baptism in Matthew 3:11

**I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me will come One who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.**

These believers did not yet know that the One John had spoken of, the Lord Jesus, had already come, had already died on the cross for their sins, had already been raised back to life and had gone back to heaven, from where He had sent the Holy Spirit to earth to reside within believers, and to empower them for their God-given task. No doubt Paul then explained the gospel message in all its fullness to them, whereafter he baptised them in the name of the Lord. Furthermore, he prayed for them to receive the Baptism with the

Holy Spirit and consequently they spoke in tongues and prophesied, as a sign that Jesus had indeed baptised them with the Holy Spirit. Paul would have recognised that this baptism was a genuine baptism, for their experience would have been like his own experience when a believer named Ananias had come to pray for him in Damascus some years ago, as we can read in Acts 9:17

**Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul (or Paul), he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord – Jesus who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here – has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”**

Paul stayed on at Ephesus for another two years preaching and teaching. His ministry had a very powerful effect on the people, but not everyone was pleased with this so, consequently, great opposition arose as well.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. After having spent some time in Athens, what other city did Paul go to?
2. Did opposition arise against Paul when he was in Corinth?
3. May the opposition have caused Paul to wonder whether or not he should stay in Corinth?
4. Would the Lord have been aware of Paul’s anxiety in Corinth?
  - 4a. According to Acts 18:9-10, how did the Lord speak to Paul in Corinth?
  - 4b. According to Acts 18:9-10, did the Lord want Paul to stop speaking in Corinth?
  - 4c. According to Acts 18:9-10, what did the Lord promise Paul in Corinth?
  - 4d. According to Acts 18:9-10, why did the Lord want Paul to continue speaking in Corinth?
5. Why did the Lord come to reassure Paul in Corinth?
6. Did the words that God spoke to Paul in Corinth strengthen him?
7. Which other city did Paul eventually travel to?
  - 8a. According to Acts 19:1-6, who did Paul find in Ephesus?
  - 8b. According to Acts 19:1-6, what question did Paul ask these disciples in Ephesus?
  - 8c. According to Acts 19:1-6, had these disciples in Ephesus heard of the Holy Spirit?

- 8d.** According to Acts 19:1-6, what question did Paul ask these disciples in Ephesus next?
- 8e.** According to Acts 19:1-6, what was the reply of these disciples in Ephesus?
- 8f.** According to Acts 19:1-6, what did Paul explain to these disciples in Ephesus about John's baptism?
- 8g.** According to Acts 19:1-6, what happened next to these disciples in Ephesus?
- 8h.** According to Acts 19:1-6, what did Paul do after these disciples in Ephesus had been baptised in the name of Jesus?
- 8i.** According to Acts 19:1-6, Who came on these disciples in Ephesus after Paul had laid his hands on these disciples?
- 8j.** According to Acts 19:1-6, what were the signs that the Holy Spirit had come on these disciples in Ephesus?
- 9.** Why did Paul ask these disciples in Ephesus if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed?
- 10.** Was Paul's question to these disciples in Ephesus the right one?
- 11.** Where can we read of John's Baptism?
- 12.** Did these disciples in Ephesus know what the Lord Jesus had already done for them?
- 13.** What would Paul have done to help these disciples in Ephesus?
- 14.** How would Paul have recognised that the Baptism with the Holy Spirit of these disciples in Ephesus had been a genuine experience?
- 15.** According to Acts 9:17, who had laid his hands on Paul (Saul) for Paul (Saul) to be filled with the Spirit or to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit?
- 16.** How long did Paul stay in Ephesus?
- 17.** What did Paul do during that time in Ephesus?
- 18.** Was everyone in Ephesus pleased with Paul's ministry there?

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S RESURRECTION MINISTRY

It was time for Paul to move on once again, and so he set off for other places, one of which being Troas. While there, he met with believers in a home. Paul had much to say to these believers, as we can read in Acts 20:7-11

**On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day he kept on talking until midnight. There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said, "He's alive!" Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.**

So, even the apostle Paul could talk so long that believers could no longer stay awake. Unfortunately for this young man, he was not seated in a very safe place so he ended up falling out of the window! Can you imagine how shocked the believers must have been when this happened. Paul stayed very calm in the midst of this commotion and, no doubt, led by the Holy Spirit, he lay on the young man's body in a way that resembles the story of the prophet Elisha, when he laid on the body of the son of the Shunammite woman, which we can read in II Kings 4:8-37

**One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do-woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever, he came by, he stopped there to eat. She said to her husband, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. Let's make a small room on the roof and put in a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us." One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call the Shunammite." So he called her, and she stood before him. Elisha said to him, "Tell her, "You have gone through all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?" She replied, "I have a home among my own people." "What can be done for her?" Elisha asked. Gehazi said, "Well, she has no son and her husband is old." Then Elisha said, "Call her." So he called her, and she stood in the doorway. "About this time next year," Elisha said, "you will hold a son in your arms." "No, my lord," she objected "Don't mislead your servant, O man of God." But the woman became pregnant and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her. The child grew, and one day he went out to his father, who was with the reapers. "My head! My head!" he said to his father. His father told a servant, "Carry him to his mother," After the servant had lifted him up and carried him to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon, and then he died. She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and went out. She called her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and a donkey so I can go to the man of God quickly and return." "Why go to him today?" he asked.**

**“It’s not the New Moon or the Sabbath.” “It’s all right,” she said. She saddled the donkey and said to her servant, “Lead on; don’t slow down for me unless I tell you.” So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When he saw her in the distance, the man of God said to his servant Gehazi, “Look, there is the Shunammite! Run to meet her and ask her. “Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right? “Everything is all right,” she said. When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, “Leave her alone! She is in bitter distress, but the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me why.” “Did I ask you for a son, my lord?” she said. “Didn’t I tell you, Don’t raise my hopes?” Elisha said to Gehazi, “Tuck your cloak into your belt, take my staff in your hand and run. If you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not answer. Lay my staff on the boy’s face.” But the child’s mother said, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So he got up and followed her. Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the boy’s face, but there was no sound or response. So Gehazi went back to meet Elisha and told him, “The boy has not awakened.” When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the Lord. Then he got on the bed and lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out upon him, the boy’s body grew warm. Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and stretched out upon him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunammite,” And he did. When she came, he said. “Take your son.” She came in, fell at his feet and bowed to the ground. Then she took her son and went out.**

Just as the boy in the story of the Shunammite woman came back to life, so this young man who was prayed over by Paul, came back to life and the meeting continued, for Paul was determined to teach them all they needed to know.

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1.** What other city did Paul visit?
- 2a.** According to Acts 20:7-11, what was Paul doing while in Troas?
- 2b.** According to Acts 20:7-11, until what time did Paul speak to the people in Troas?
- 2c.** According to Acts 20:7-11, why did Paul speak to the people in Troas until midnight?
- 2d.** According to Acts 20:7-11, which you man in Troas was listening to Paul?
- 2e.** According to Acts 20:7-11, where was this young Eutychus seated?
- 2f.** According to Acts 20:7-11, what happened to this young man Eutychus while Paul was talking?

- 2g.** According to Acts 20:7-11, what happened to this young man Eutychus when he was sound asleep?
- 2h.** According to Acts 20:7-11, did this young man Eutychus survive the fall?
- 2i.** According to Acts 20:7-11, what did Paul do after this young man Eutychus had fallen?
- 2j.** According to Acts 20:7-11, what did Paul say after he had placed himself on this young man Eutychus?
- 2k.** According to Acts 20:7-11, did Paul continue with his ministry afterwards?
- 3.** Would the believers have been shocked when Eutychus fell to the ground?
- 4.** Why did Paul stay calm in the midst of this commotion?
- 5.** Which story does the story of this young man Eutychus remind us of?
- 6a.** According to II Kings 4:8-37, who had a room made for Elisha?
- 6b.** According to II Kings 4:8-37, what is the name of Elisha's servant?
- 6c.** According to II Kings 4:8-37, what did Elisha promise the Shunnamite woman she would have?
- 6d.** According to II Kings 4:8-37, did Elisha's words to the Shunnamite woman come true?
- 6e.** According to II Kings 4:8-37, what happened to the son of the Shunnamite woman?
- 6f.** According to II Kings 4:8-37, who did the Shunnamite woman go to?
- 6g.** According to II Kings 4:8-37, what did Elisha do when he saw the dead boy?
- 6h.** According to II Kings 4:8-37, what did Elisha do after he had prayed to the Lord?
- 6i.** According to II Kings 4:8-37, did the boy open his eyes after Elisha had laid upon him once?
- 6j.** According to II Kings 4:8-37, who did Elisha give the boy to after he came back to life?
- 7.** Can you see a similarity between the story of the son of the Shunnamite woman and the story of this young man Eutychus who was prayed over by Paul?

**8.** Why did Paul continue his meeting in Troas after this young man Eutychus had come back to life?

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GUIDING MINISTRY

Afterwards, Paul left for Jerusalem, for he knew the Holy Spirit was leading him to go there. On his way to Jerusalem, he arranged for a meeting with the elders from the church in Ephesus, and shared with them his urge to go to Jerusalem, as we can read in Acts 20:22-23

**And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.**

It was very hard for these believers to let Paul go, as we can read in Acts 20:37-38  
**They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. What grieved them most was the statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.**

The Holy Spirit had shown some of the believers in Tyre that Paul would have to face great challenges if he were to go to Jerusalem, so they tried to persuade him not to go there, as we can read in Acts 21:3-4

**After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.**

But Paul would not be persuaded. Even the words of a visiting prophet named Agabus could not stop him from going up to Jerusalem, as we can read in Acts 21:11-15  
**Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, "In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles." When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done." After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem.**

As predicted, once Paul arrived in Jerusalem, opposition followed very soon, including a plot to kill him, as we can read in Acts 23:12

**The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul.**

However, the plot was discovered and so Paul was taken to Caesarea, as we can read in Acts 23:31-33

**So the soldiers carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. The next day they let the cavalry go on with him,**

**while they returned to the barracks. When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him.**

While in Caesarea, Paul appeared before the governor Felix, and he used that opportunity to share the gospel with the governor, as we can read in Acts 24:24-25

**Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgement to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you."**

For two years, Paul shared the gospel with Felix. After that period another governor took the place of Felix, a man named Festus. He too had Paul appear before him. Paul asked to be sent to Rome to appear before Caesar. However, Festus had some important visitors, king Agrippa and his wife Bernice. Festus told king Agrippa about his prisoner Paul. King Agrippa became quite curious about this man Paul, and so it was arranged that Paul would appear before him, as we can read in Acts 25:23

**The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high ranking officers and the leading men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in.**

Paul used this opportunity to share the gospel, not just with Festus, but with king Agrippa and his wife Bernice as well, as we can read in Acts 26:1-3

**Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense. "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today, as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently."**

Paul ended his sermon to king Agrippa with the words in Acts 26:29

**.... I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am except for these chains.**

Paul would have known that these events had been arranged by the Holy Spirit for they were in fulfilment of what the Lord had told Ananias Paul had to do, as we can read in Acts 9:15

**But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry My name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel."**

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1. Where was the Holy Spirit leading Paul to go to next?**
- 2. Who did Paul arrange to meet while on his way to Jerusalem?**

- 3.** According to Acts 20:22-23, what did the Holy Spirit warn Paul about was going to happen to him in Jerusalem?
- 4.** According to Acts 20:37-38, did these believers from Ephesus find it easy to let go off Paul?
- 5.** Which believers did Paul meet next?
- 6.** Did these believers in Tyre know that Paul would be facing challenges if he were to go to Jerusalem?
- 7.** Did these believers in Tyre want Paul to go to Jerusalem?
- 8.** According to Acts 21:3-4, how long did Paul stay with these believers in Tyre?
- 9.** Were these believers in Tyre able to persuade Paul not to go to Jerusalem?
- 10.** Which prophet came to see Paul?
- 11a.** According to Acts 21:11-15, how did the prophet Agabus act out the difficulties Paul would be facing in Jerusalem?
- 11b.** According to Acts 21:11-15, what prophecy did the prophet Agabus speak over Paul?
- 11c.** According to Acts 21:11-15, Who had inspired the prophet Agabus to speak that prophecy over Paul?
- 11d.** According to Acts 21:11-15, what was the response of everyone present as a result of these words?
- 11e.** According to Acts 21:11-15, how did Paul answer these believers?
- 11f.** According to Acts 21:11-15, did these believers continue to try and dissuade Paul from going to Jerusalem?
- 12.** What happened to Paul as soon as he arrived in Jerusalem?
- 13a.** According to Acts 23:12, who formed a conspiracy to kill Paul?
- 13b.** How did the Jews show they were serious about killing Paul?
- 14.** Was the plot to kill Paul discovered?
- 15.** Where was Paul taken to?

- 16a.** According to Acts 23:31-33, who took Paul with them?
- 16b.** According to Acts 23:31-33, where did the soldiers take Paul?
- 16c.** According to Acts 23:31-33, who took Paul to Caesarea?
- 16d.** According to Acts 23:31-33, who did the cavalry go to in Caesarea?
- 16e.** According to Acts 23:31-33, what did the cavalry deliver to the governor in Caesarea?
- 16f.** According to Acts 23:31-33, who did the cavalry hand over to the governor of Caesarea?
- 17.** Who did Paul come before in Caesarea?
- 18a.** According to Acts 24:24-25, what was the name of the wife of governor Felix?
- 18b.** According to Acts 24:24-25, what was the nationality of Drusilla?
- 18c.** According to Acts 24:24-25, what did Paul speak about to governor Felix?
- 18d.** According to Acts 24:24-25, what particular subjects did Paul focus on in his preaching to governor Felix and his wife Drusilla?
- 18e.** According to Acts 24:24-25, was governor Felix pleased to hear the gospel message as preached by Paul?
- 18f.** According to Acts 24:24-25, how did governor Felix show that he was afraid to hear the gospel as preached by Paul?
- 19.** For how long did Paul share the gospel with governor Felix?
- 20.** Who took the place of governor Felix?
- 21.** Where did Paul request governor Festus send him to?
- 22.** Before whom did Paul want to appear in Rome?
- 23.** Why did governor Festus delay Paul's departure for Rome?
- 24.** What were the names of the visitors of governor Festus?
- 25.** Was king Agrippa interested in meeting Paul?
- 26.** According to Acts 25:23, who had gathered in the audience room to hear Paul speak?

- 27a.** According to Acts 26:1-3, did Paul consider himself fortunate to stand before king Agrippa?
- 27b.** According to Acts 26:1-3, why did Paul consider himself fortunate to stand before king Agrippa?
- 28a.** According to Acts 26:29, what was Paul's desire for king Agrippa as well as for all those listening to him that day?
- 28b.** According to Acts 26:29, what was the one thing Paul did not wish for king Agrippa as well as all those listening to him that day?
- 29.** Who would have arranged these events for Paul?
- 30.** Why would Paul have believed that these events would have been arranged by the Holy Spirit?
- 31.** According to Acts 9:15, what exactly had the Lord told Ananias Paul was to do?

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S TRAVELLING MINISTRY

Eventually, Paul was put on a ship for Rome, as we can read in Acts 27:1

**When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment.**

Unfortunately, he and those with him suffered a shipwreck as foretold by Paul in Acts 27:21-26

**After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood before them and said, "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, "Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you." So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."**

Thankfully, all the people on board, including Paul, were able to swim ashore when that eventually happened, as we can read in Acts 27:42-44

**The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety.**

While on the little island of Malta, Paul was bitten by a snake, as we can read in Acts 28:3-6

**Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.**

Initially, the people thought he must be a criminal, but when he did not die because of the bite they decided he must be a god, as we can read in Acts 28:4-6

**When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live." But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.**

Truly, there is nothing new under the sun; people were fickle then, and people are fickle today.... In the meantime, Paul began to minister to the people, and many people were healed, including the father of a man named Publius, as we can read in Acts 28:7-9

**There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. They honoured us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies needed.**

After three months, they found another ship that was able to take them to Rome, as we can read in Acts 28:11

**After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figure head of the twin gods Castor and Pollux.**

Eventually Paul arrived in Rome, as we can read in Acts 28:16

**When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.**

Here, too, he had opportunity to preach the gospel to Jews as well as to Gentiles, as we can read in Acts 28:30-31

**For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.**

He lived in Rome for two years before being released because of lack of evidence against him. Some years later Paul was once again imprisoned, and at that time he was beheaded.

## **Conclusion**

The Book of Acts is truly the Book of the Acts of the Holy Spirit who, either overtly or covertly, directed the believers. Wherever He was at work we have seen Him do a number of things:

- 1.** He convinced people of their sins and had them come to faith in Christ Jesus.
- 2.** He exposed the hardness of hearts of others.
- 3.** He healed people.
- 4.** He delivered people from demonic spirits.

The Holy Spirit is not less powerful today and will do the same work through us today, if we are willing and obedient.

## **QUESTIONS**

**1a.** According to Acts 27:1, where was Paul going to?

- 1b.** According to Acts 27:1, what is the name of the Centurion who was in charge of Paul and the other prisoners?
- 1c.** According to Acts 27:1, what Regiment did Julius belong to?
- 2a.** According to Acts 27:21-26, what did Paul predict would happen to the ship they were sailing on to Italy?
- 2b.** According to Acts 27:21-26, did Paul say that any of the people on board be lost?
- 2c.** According to Acts 27:21-26, who spoke to Paul in the night?
- 2d.** According to Acts 27:21-26, what did the angel of the God whose he was and whom he served say to Paul?
- 2e.** According to Acts 27:21-26, why was Paul not in danger of losing his life?
- 2f.** According to Acts 27:21-26, what was going to happen to the ship?
- 3.** What happened to the people on board the ship once it had run aground on some island?
- 4a.** According to Acts 27:42-44, what did the soldiers on board the ship plan to do?
- 4b.** According to Acts 27:42-44, why did the soldiers want to kill the prisoners?
- 4c.** According to Acts 27:42-44, why did the soldiers not kill the prisoners?
- 4d.** According to Acts 27:42-44, how did everyone reach land in safety?
- 5.** Which island did Paul and the other prisoners end up on?
- 6.** What happened to Paul while on the island of Malta?
- 7a.** According to Acts 28:3, how was Paul bitten by a snake while on the island of Malta?
- 8.** What did the inhabitants of the island of Malta initially think Paul was after his snake bite?
- 9.** What did the inhabitants of the island of Malta think Paul was afterwards?
- 10a.** According to Acts 28:4-6, why did the inhabitants of the island of Malta say to each other about Paul when they saw a snake hanging from his hand?
- 10b.** According to Acts 28:4-6, what exactly did the inhabitants of the island of Malta expect would happen to Paul?

- 10c.** According to Acts 28:4-6, after waiting a long time did the people of the island of Malta see anything unusual happen to Paul?
- 10d.** According to Acts 28:4-6, what did the inhabitants of the island of Malta say next about Paul?
- 11.** What does that prove the inhabitants of the island of Malta were?
- 12.** Can people be as fickle today?
- 13.** Did Paul begin to minister to the people of the island of Malta at that time?
- 14a.** According to Acts 28:7-9, what is the name of the chief official of the island of Malta?
- 14b.** According to Acts 28:7-9, for how many days did the chief official Publius entertain Paul?
- 14c.** According to Acts 28:7-9, which relative of the chief official Publius was sick?
- 14d.** According to Acts 28:7-9, did Paul show concern for the father of the chief official Publius?
- 14e.** According to Acts 28:7-9, what else did Paul do for the father of the chief official Publius after he had gone to see him?
- 14f.** According to Acts 28:7-9, what happened to the father of the chief official Publius after Paul prayed for him and laid hands on him?
- 14g.** According to Acts 28:7-9, who came to see Paul after the father of the chief official Publius had been healed?
- 14h.** According to Acts 28:7-9, how did the inhabitants of the island of Malta showed their gratitude to Paul?
- 15.** How long did it take for Paul to find another ship to take him to Italy?
- 16a.** According to Acts 28:11, what kind of ship did Paul go on?
- 17.** Did Paul manage to get to Rome this time?
- 18.** According to Acts 28:16, what were the living arrangements for Paul while in Rome?
- 19.** What did Paul do during his time in Rome?
- 20a.** According to Acts 28:30-31, for how long did Paul live in Rome?

**20b.** According to Acts 28:30-31, was Paul hindered in his gospel preaching while he lived in Rome?

**21.** What happened to Paul after living in Rome for two years?

**22.** What happened to Paul some years later?