

How Apostasy Starts IV How the World and Christianity Were Deceived #3

(Survey of Acts 8-14)

Understanding the entrances into false doctrine

Fred R. Coulter—December 22, 2018

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to Sabbath services!

Advertisement: We have another new booklet for you, which is a very interesting booklet: *New Testament Scripture Comparisons* by Joseph Ackerman. It took him seven years to do this (probably off and on). But it takes 26 different versions and shows where they leave out major portions of Scripture.

If you just open it to the middle section, it says, ‘I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.’ **Look at how many ‘x’ that out;** that’s all the modern translations! He compares it with the *Faithful Version* at the top, and the *King James Version* is almost as accurate. We have this available and this will be a very interesting study for you.

What do most of the churches use today?
Two versions:

1. *The English Standard Version*
2. *The New International Version* (NIV)

You will be surprised how much is missing!

Book: *Judaism: A Revelation of Moses or a Religion of Men?* by Philip Neal

This will help you understand more of the problems what happened in the first century and a half up to the third century. Very important! You will understand why God started with those who had the Law of God *first*, and the promise was given to them.

There’s another book you need between now and Passover: *The Christian Passover: Which Day? This is so important, the 14th or 15th*, because every time they come against doing away with things of God, it always involves the Passover if not the first thing.

I have another book: *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi. He shows that the first thing they went after to change the Sabbath to Sunday was to change the 14th Passover.

- What follows?
 - What replaces the 14th Passover? *Easter!*
 - What day is that on? *Sunday!*
1. What day did Jesus ascend to heaven? *Sunday!* (Wave Sheaf Offering Day)

How did apostasy begin? Remember, that when the New Testament Church began—and that’s why we should never get ‘hung up’ on numbers, large or small, either one—how many apostles did Jesus have? *12!* How many were in the upper room right after Jesus ascended? He had two ascensions:

2. right after He was resurrected on a Sunday (Wave Sheaf Offering Day)
3. then 40 days later on a Thursday

How many believers were there in the meeting after He ascended the second time and before Pentecost? *120!* Here’s the God of the universe coming down and being a man, and He didn’t have very many. Look at the problems He had in confronting the religious leaders who should have known that He was the Messiah, because all the prophecies were there.

We have seen, through the book of Acts where Stephen gives a tremendous and final witness to the religious leaders there, the whole Sanhedrin. They were going nuts trying to figure out what to do, because so many people were following and joining the apostles. They were losing

- people
- money
- power
- prestige

After that witness and they killed Stephen! In Acts 8 we will see our first encounter with a false prophet, and one who was a Gentile, a Samaritan.

Acts 8:1: “Now, Saul... [the one who later became Paul] ...had consented to killing him.... [Stephen] ...And that day a great persecution arose against the Church that *was* in Jerusalem; and all *the believers* were scattered throughout the countries of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.”

Think about this from the point of view of the apostles, the way they started out. This must have been a tremendous shock to them that this occurred.

Verse 2: “And devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the Church, *going* from house to house, entering in and dragging *out* men and women, *and* delivering *them* up to prison” (vs 2-3).

What is it going to be in the future for us? *We're promised the same thing—aren't we? Yes, indeed!*

Verse 4: “Therefore, those who were scattered passed through *everywhere*, preaching the Word of the Gospel. Then Philip... [there are two Philips: one was an apostle and one was a deacon] ...went down to a city of Samaria *and* proclaimed Christ to them; and the multitudes listened intently with one accord to the things spoken by Philip when they heard and saw the signs that he did, for unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many of those who had *them*; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city” (vs 4-8).

Remember that Jesus talked to the woman at the well, and then He spent two extra days in Samaria talking to all the people there, *so they had a good witness right there!*

Verse 9: “But *there was* a certain man... [a particular man] ...named Simon...” *In history he's known as Simon Magus!* Look up Simon Magus in *McClintock and Strong Biblical Cyclopedia* and you will find that even the Catholics write later that they were against Simon Magus, *who came a little later in 42_{A.D.} to Rome!*

What's another name for Simon? *Peter!* A Peter did go to Rome, **but it was not the apostle!** On Church at Home {churchathome.org} there are nine segments on *Was Peter Ever in Rome? Was Peter the first Pope?*

“...who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city... (v 9). Some people think this is just making medications, but that's not true. ***Sorcery is using demonic things to give signs and wonders and keep people deceived and believing in doctrines of demon!***

“...and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one” (v 9)—*a religious leader!*

Matt. 20—here the mother of James and John came to Jesus and said, ‘Lord, can You put one of my sons on Your right hand, and one on Your left hand in Your Kingdom?’ *Whoa! You don't know what you're asking for!* So, He asked James and John, ‘Are you able to drink the cup that I drink of, and the baptism I'm going to be baptized with?’ *Oh, yes we are!*

They didn't have clue what that was, because the cup He had to drink of was His crucifixion and scourging, and His baptism was His own blood.

Matthew 20:25: “But Jesus called them to

Him and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the nations exercise lordship over them... [ruler from the top down] ...and the great ones... [the religious leaders] ...exercise authority over them”—***from the top down!***

Here we have a first encounter for the New Testament Church, beginning with Stephen, a deacon, who went down there and did tremendous things. It would be fantastic if deacons today could do things like that, but that's then and this is now.

Acts 8:10: “To him they had all given heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘**This man is the great power of God.**’”

So, right away we have someone who comes in and wants to be part of the Church, but the apostles deny him.

Verse 11: “Now, they were giving heed to him because *he* had for a long time bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip, who was preaching the Gospel—the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ—they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself also believed; and after being baptized...” (vs 11-13).

That's why God did not give the Holy Spirit to any of them, because was an intrusion by Satan and a mistake by Philip. He probably thought it was great that he'll be converted. ***NO! You can't trust that!***

Verse 14: “Now, when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; Who, after coming down *to Samaria*, prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid *their* hands on them, and they received *the* Holy Spirit” (vs 14-17). ***That's why that didn't occur at the point of baptism!***

Verse 18: “Now when Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give this authority to me also, so that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive *the* Holy Spirit’” (vs 18-19).

Now, here's Peter's answer, and ***why you cannot combine the Truth of God with the demonic doctrines of this world!*** All the religions of this world have demonic doctrine, from the most satanic to those who are marginally or maybe a good deal ‘Christian-like.’

Verse 20: “But Peter said to him, ‘May your money be destroyed with you because you thought

that the gift of God might be purchased with money.”

Isn't that how a lot of bishops and cardinals got their promotions in the Catholic Church? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 21: “You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent, therefore, of this your wickedness, and beseech God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you; for I perceive *that* you are in *the* gall of bitterness and *the* bondage of unrighteousness.’ **But Simon answered and said, ‘You beseech the Lord on my behalf...’** (vs 21-24).

Can anyone repent and pray for someone who won't repent and pray? *No!* It's an individual thing!

“...so that none of *those* things which you have spoken may come upon me” (v 24). What were some of the other things? *We don't know! This is just a summary of the conversation!*

Verse 25: “So then, after they had earnestly testified and preached the Word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem; *and* they preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans *as they went.*”

Then we have the baptism of the Ethiopian man by Philip. We're just doing this as a survey of Acts, looking at the different areas where apostasy can come in. Remember that there was no New Testament available.

So, Simon could go out and say, ‘I was baptized; I even spoke to Peter and John, and I've come over here to Rome to bring you the latest on the new thing of Jesus.’ There's the prototype of the confessional when you have someone else pray for you, but you do some ‘hail Marys’ and ‘our fathers.’

Also, on the Ethiopian eunuch, what happened in Ethiopia? *There was a strange mix of Christianity.* They even claim that in this ugly looking building that they have in a remote area of Ethiopia that the Ark of the Covenant is there. Do you think that God would let them have it and take it away?

Sidebar: Where do you think the Ark of the Covenant is?

1. buried in the subterranean area under the temple by Jeremiah, because he was a priest
2. God took it up to His Throne Room

Revelation 11:19: “And the temple of God in heaven was opened, and the Ark of His Covenant was seen in His temple; and there

were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake and great hail.”

Acts 9—this is like taking someone straight out of prison, who is in there for life for torturing and killing innocent Christians. Can God take someone and completely convert them. Why did God call Saul to become Paul the apostle? *Paul will tell us!* One of the greatest sins of the translation of the *King James Version* and most other translations is that they make it appear that Paul abolished the commandments. Whereas, in Cor. 7 Paul says that ‘circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing, but what is essential is *keeping the commandments of God!*’

Galatians 1:6—you can see the apostasy sitting in right here: “I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel.” Just imagine how many could say, ‘I was an eyewitness, I was there and saw many healed in Jerusalem.’ Remember, a whole company of priests believed (Acts 6)!

What did they do after the destruction of the temple? *They could no longer go offer the sacrifices, but they could say that they believed in Jesus, I was baptized!* However, with nothing written down yet, they could add to, take away from, move things around. How faithful were the Levites? *Very unfaithful down through history!*

Verse 7: “Which *in reality* is not another Gospel; but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ.” *That means to change it!*

We will see from a book by Samuele Bacchiocchi *Anti-Judaism and the Origin of Sunday-Keeping.* The Jews were so hated because of what the Romans did, what they did to the Romans and fulfilling the prophecy of Jesus that you will be hated of all nations and scattered.

All the customs of the Jews and all of their traditional laws, Jesus rejected. Here you have a problem. Someone comes along and says, ‘We still have to keep some of these things’; *that is the traditions of the Jews!* That's the whole problem with the book of Galatians.

Verse 8: “But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! **Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a**

servant of Christ" (vs 8-10)

Verse 13: "For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism... [that the correct translation] ...how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it; and I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many of my contemporaries in my *own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, Who selected me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by His grace, to reveal His own Son in me..." (vs 13-16).

God called Paul because he knew all the ins and outs of the thousands of Jewish traditional laws: *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin. *It's an amazing book!*

We've had that, too, in the Church. They come into the Church and they wear their hat and a tassel, and they had their prayer shawls. Can a prayer shawl increase your belief? If you think your prayers are better because you put a prayer shawl over you, *you're quite mistaken, because it's what you believe and the faith that you have in God!* Can a prayer shawl give you more faith? *No, it can't!*

Acts 9—here's the calling of Paul; here's why God called him. He was so high-ranked up there in Judaism, and God wanted an expert in Judaism. Also remember that there were Jewish Alexandrian pagan Jews who kept pagan holidays and believed in circumcision (Gal. 4).

Not many people know that! You'll find that in the book about Judaism, and we have Sermon Series: Scripturalism vs Judaism (with Transcript Book and CD). There's a lot of background and material when we go through this. We need to use these things today to know and understand how we can be faithful today in light of every attack that comes in. We have one advantage over all the other churches that they did not have until the translation of the Bible in their language. ***We have the whole Bible!*** We can look to the Word of God.

It's not *who* you are, ***it's what you believe!*** It's not *if you're a part of this or that family*, it's **do you love God and keep His commandments?** When something comes along like the thing with Gerald Flurry, which is crazy!

Sidebar on Gerald Flurry: He says that the rock on which the kings of Israel and Judah were anointed on, has shifted to him. He found it in Eugene, Oregon, where HWA prayed at this rock. I'm sure that he didn't pray there every day at the rock, if he did pray there, because it rains all the time! Delores and I know, because we lived there for a while.

Flurry is now the big 'mucky-muck' in the world to make it come to pass, even greater than the royal family in Britain.

So, there's a lot of stuff to go with this. That's why we need the Word of God, because someone like him comes in and twists it around. It's quite amazing; you get dizzy reading it.

Acts 9:1: "Now Saul, still breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, asking him *for* letters *to take* to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who were of that way, he might bring *them* bound, both men and women, to Jerusalem. But it came to pass while he was journeying, as he drew near to Damascus, **that suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him.** And after falling to the ground..." (vs 1-4).

We used to say that he may have been on a donkey and fell off. Maybe now, maybe he was walking and knocked to the ground.

"...he heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?' And he said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting. *It is* hard for you to kick against the pricks.'" (vs 4-5)—***sharp barbs!***

You've seen the facsimile of the crown of thorns that was on Jesus' head, and the spikes were about 6" long; that's what Jesus is referring to. If you're barefooted and you kick against them, that's a very desperate situation!

Another thing to understand: ***You can never go against God and succeed! Never happen!***

Verse 6: "Then, trembling and astonished, he said, 'Lord, what will You have me to do?' And the Lord *said* to him, 'Get up and go into the city, and you shall be told what you must do.'"

The rest of story is that Ananias came because the Lord appeared to him in a vision and told him to go to Saul at this place and lay hands on him and pray for him, and Saul was baptized.

Then Paul astonished everyone that he was preaching Christ, and he even came back to Jerusalem and it got so bad that they wanted to take him out and kill him there, because he was preaching Christ. Barnabas took him and sent him off to Tarsus where he originally came from and Paul stayed there until the raising up of the Church in Antioch.

Acts 10 is a very interesting chapter. Here again you see that God had to intervene to do this. Could Peter have gone in—or any of the apostles—to any of the Gentiles and preach to them? And that those in Jerusalem would have believe and accepted

that that was Truth? The Jews had strict laws about being in company with anyone who was of another nation.

- you couldn't be in their house
- you couldn't converse with them
- you couldn't stay with them
- you couldn't intermarry with them

It was really something!

Anti-Judaism and the Origin of Sunday-Keeping by Samuele Bacchiocchi:

{citing the example from Tacitus}: "All their customs..."

This is the way that the Jews interacted with people! Strict segregation!

...which were once perverse and disgusting," out of other races scorning their national beliefs, brought to them their contributions and precepts. This augmented the wealth of the Jews as also did the fact that among themselves they were inflexibly honest, even ready to show compassion, though "they regarded the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies."

This sets up a reason for people to say they don't want to be like the Jews. *But they confuse the commandments of God with the traditions of the Jews.*

"They sit apart at meals, they sleep apart, and though as a nation they are particularly prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women." Among themselves, nothing is unlawful.

The whole history of the Jews at that point was really something!

Acts 10:1: "Now, *there* was in Caesarea a certain man named Cornelius, a centurion of a band that is called *the Italian band*."

A centurion means that *he had a hundred troops under his command!* He had support troops and a big villa where he lived and it was in the area where all the soldiers and slaves were. It was a big thing going on.

Verse 2: "A devout man who also feared God with all his house, both in giving many alms to the people and *in beseeching God continually in prayer.*" *This has to be of God;* could not be of man!

Verse 3: "He clearly saw in a vision, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming to him and saying to him, 'Cornelius.'" *Then the angel told him go find Peter who was with Simon the tanner.* While they were coming, just before they got

there Peter had a dream: all these unclean animals were dropping down in sheet and commanding, 'Rise and eat.' They came down three times. What did Peter say?

Verse 14: "But Peter said, 'In no way, Lord; for I have never eaten anything *that is common or unclean.*'" *He understood the vision!*

Imagine this tremendous thing happening when the Jews thought that the Messiah was going to come and raise up the Jews to rule the world! This is astonishing! It had to be of God, and it had to be by Peter, because Peter was the one who was a leading apostle with James and John.

Look what happened when Philip went out and did what he did; the apostles had to come down and correct the situation!

Verse 24: "And on the next day, they came to Caesarea...." *Peter went with the soldiers and those who came with him,* six other Jewish brethren went with him.

"...Now, Cornelius was expecting them *and* had called together his kinsmen and *his* intimate friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him *and* fell at *his* feet, worshipping *him*. But Peter raised him up, saying, 'Stand up, for I myself am also a man.' And as he was talking with him, he went in and found many gathered together. And he said to them..." (vs 24-28)—*all of them!* They all knew this because they were the occupying forces in the area of Judea.

"... 'You know that it is unlawful for a man who is **a Jew**...' (v 28)—*one who is practicing Judaism!* So, the category of Jews come in two ways:

1. you're a physical descendant from Judah
2. you keep the customs, regulations and laws of the Jews

Here in this instance it is that Peter was not keeping the traditions of the Jews. He was a Jewish man coming into contact with Gentiles, unlawful according to the Jews.

"...to associate with or come near to **anyone** of another race..." (v 28). *If you're walking down the street, you cross!*

"...But God has shown me *that* no man should be called common or unclean. For this reason, I also came without objection when I was sent for. I ask, therefore, for what purpose did you send for me?" (vs 28-29). *Then Cornelius told him what happened and that his prayer was answered!*

Verse 33: "Therefore, I sent for you at once; and you did well to come. So then, we are all present

before God to hear all things that have been commanded you by God.”

Think about everything that took place with Jesus, all His ministry and everything, then the raising up of the Church and Jesus’ resurrection.

(go to the next track)

The reason that I’m going through this is so you can understand that without the New Testament, and at best very few writings at this time, how easy it is to do add-ons and subtractions to what you’ve learned.

- we know that there’s Satan the devil there to bring false doctrines
- we know there’s human nature, good and bad
- a lot of the good of human nature turns out to be *not so good*

Different things can come up; that’s how Judaism got started. When they came back out of the Babylonian captivity:

- What happened? *They started intermarrying with the people within the land!*
- Who were they? *They were the ones who were leftover after the Babylonians and Assyrians brought in the Gentiles into the area of Israel and Judea!*

That’s how things got so messed up!

The priests were even intermarrying with some of the Gentiles, which they shouldn’t have done. That’s how they became so strict and started saying that they had to have lots of laws to keep people from breaking the Laws of God. So, they put all these traditions around the Laws of God to keep them from breaking it, **but it kept them from keeping it!**

We see that there are many opportunities for strange things to start to happen. If you have the Chronology of New Testament (in the back of *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*) you will see we’re quite a ways into—by the time we get to Cornelius and so forth—the chronology, at least 12 years!

Verse 44: “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening to the message. And the believers from the circumcision were astonished...” (vs 44-45).

Think about this: there were six that went with Peter, and the attitude that they had toward the Gentiles was exactly like I read out of this book *Anti-Judaism and the Origin of Sunday-Keeping*.

Here God gave them the Holy Spirit, and the key was that *none of them were circumcised!* That became the big issue!

“...as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out” (v 45). *God had to do it! It couldn’t have been done by any man and been accepted even cursory with the Jews in Jerusalem if it had not been by the act of God to do it.*

Verse 46: “For they heard them speak in other languages and magnify God. A little bit of Hebrew, Greek and Latin; then Peter responded *by saying*”—*that Peter was forced to do it!*

- Would he have done it otherwise?
- Would they have been much like in the synagogue?

In the synagogue the Jews had the main area of worship. Then there were those who were proselytes, who had to be circumcised regardless of age. They had to be second-class citizens in a different area of the synagogue.

Acts 13:26—Paul says: “**Men, brethren, sons of the race of Abraham, and those among you who fear God**”—*proselyte Gentiles who were in the synagogue!*

Acts 10:47: “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized...”

One of the false doctrines of Protestantism is that *if you believe you don’t have to be baptized!* **False doctrine!** It cuts people off from God and never receive the Spirit of God, because they don’t understand the necessary elements of why there is water baptism.

“...who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did?*” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord...” (vs 47-48).

Here are these six astonished Jews who came with Peter, and they’re doing the baptizing! What an experience that was!

“...Then they besought him to remain *for* a number of days” (v 48).

What happened was that those who came with Peter ran back to Jerusalem and said, ‘Guess what?’ *This was astonishing to those in Jerusalem!*

Acts 11:1: “Now, the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God; and when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of *the* circumcision...” (vs 1-2). First time division here, and there was a circumcision party. All of these are opportunities to begin apostasy; that’s why I’m covering this.

“...disputed with him, saying, ‘You went in to men who were uncircumcised and did eat with them’” (vs 2-3)—*and also slept in their house, ate their food*, and since they were devout, they were probably eating all clean food.

Verse 4: “But Peter related *the event* from the beginning and expounded *everything* in order to them...”—*and Peter says it there, going through the whole thing!*

Verse 16: “Then I remembered the word of *the Lord*, how He had said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the Holy Spirit*.’ Therefore, if God also gave them the same gift that *was given* to us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I *to dissent*? Do I have the power to forbid God?” (vs 16-17).

Did they accept these Gentiles as full-fledged equals?

Verse 18: “And after hearing these things, they were silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then to the Gentiles also has God indeed granted repentance unto life.’”

Since they were uncircumcised, and since all who were converted up to this point were Jews and were circumcised, *they would still be in the second-class category*.

Verse 19: “Now, those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose concerning Stephen went through Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews only.” *They weren’t going out to the Gentiles at that time!*

Peter went back and here were those other who were not apostles, and he didn’t say to them—after they attacked him and—‘Why did you do this? Why did you attack me like this? I’m an apostle.’ **NO!** He knew! What did Peter write in 1-Peter 5? *To the elders, I am also an elder!* He told them to be humble and serve.

Peter didn’t say, ‘Look, didn’t you remember that I was the first one whom Jesus called; I was first! You all sit down and shut up and listen to what I have to say, because this was done through me.’ Have we heard things like that? *Yes, indeed!* What was the old saying? *Pray, pay, stay and obey!*

There going to the Jews only at that time, v 20: But certain men among them who were Cypriots and Cyrenians came to Antioch *and spoke* to the Greeks, preaching the Gospel *of the Lord Jesus*. And *the hand of the Lord* was with them, and a great number believed *and turned* to the Lord. Now, the report concerning them was heard in the ears of the Church that *was in Jerusalem, and they sent out*

Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he arrived...” (vs 20-23)—*he needed help!*

Verse 25: “Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek Saul [Paul]”—and they were there for a long time.

I wonder how Peter felt after this second release from jail by an angel?

Acts 12:1—this is about 44_{A.D.}: “Now, about that time, Herod the king stretched forth *his hands* to persecute some of those of the Church; and he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take Peter also. (Now, those were *the Days of Unleavened Bread*.) And after arresting him, he put *him* in prison, delivering *him* to four sets of four soldiers to guard him... [16 to guard one man] ...with the intent of bringing him out to the people after the Passover *season*. As a result, Peter was securely held in the prison, but fervent prayer was made to God by the Church for him. Now, when Herod was about to bring him out, during that night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and guards *standing* before the door were keeping the prison. But suddenly an angel of *the Lord* stood by *him*, and a light shined in the building. And after striking Peter on the side, he roused him, saying, ‘Get up! Hurry!’ And the chains fell off *his hands*.” (vs 1-7).

That was quite an experience! This is the second time that happened!

Verse 8: “And the angel said to him, ‘Put on your clothes and fasten your sandals.’ And he did so. And he said to him, ‘Wrap your cloak around *you* and follow me.’ And he followed him...” (vs 8-9)—*Peter was free!*

He went to the house where they were praying (v 12). Mark became the secretary for Peter.

What happened? *He was knocking on the door, and one of the girls came and said, ‘Peter is out there knocking on the door!’* Finally, they opened it up and there was Peter, and he told them what happened.

Verse 17: “Then, motioning to them with his hands to be silent, he related to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, ‘Report these things to James... [the brother of Jesus] ...and the brethren.’ Then he departed and went to another place.”

- Where did Peter go?
- What is the story of the Catholics? *Peter came to Rome in 42_{A.D.}!*

This is 44_{A.D.} and he’s still in Jerusalem. He went to another place. Where did Peter go? *We have one*

clue!

1-Peter 5:12: “By Silvanus, a faithful brother to you, as I reckon, I have written *to you* briefly... [he was one of the secretaries] ...exhorting and testifying that this is *the* true grace of God in which you stand. **The Church in Babylon...**” (vs 12-13).

- Why would Peter go to Babylon? *Because he was an apostle to the circumcision, the Jews!*
- Where was the greatest number of Jews in the world at that time? *In Babylon!*

Only a few thousand came out after the 70-year captivity! The greatest number were in Babylon.

Verse 13: “The Church in Babylon, chosen together with *you*, greets you, *as does* Mark, my son.... [Mark was right with Peter all the time] ...Greet one another with a kiss of love....” (vs 13-14). *He did not go to Rome!*

Then we have Acts 13 where Barnabas and Saul were ordained as apostles. One of the requirements to be an apostle *is to have seen the Lord!* Did Barnabas see the Lord? *Yes, he was there in the ministry of the Lord!* And Saul did! Therefore, no man after this time could be an apostle. Anyone who appoints himself to that office is exalting himself, because all the apostles have already been.

Here we have them being ordained and separated (Acts 13:2).

Acts 13:4: “So then, after being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed away to Cyprus. And when they came to Salamis, they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they also had John *as* an assistant. And when they had gone through the island as far as Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer...” vs 4-6).

Where did we find a sorcerer before? *Acts 8! Demonic, pagan religion!*

“...a false prophet, a Jew whose name was **Bar-Jesus**” (v 6). What does that mean? *The son of Jesus!*

Verse 7: “He was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, who called Barnabas and Saul to *him*, desiring to hear the Word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so was his name interpreted) withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith” (vs 7-8).

What sort of strange, demonic Jewish religion did this Elymas, the false prophet, have? *Who knows!* If he calls himself the ‘son of Jesus’ you can almost imagine how weird it would be.

Verse 9: “But Saul, who *was* also *called* Paul, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him, *and* said, ‘O full of all guile and all craftiness, *you* son of the devil *and* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to **pervert the straight ways** of *the* Lord?’” (vs 9-10).

He was probably out there claiming to be some sort of disciple and follower, maybe even the son of Jesus (the Lord). This is quite a chapter; here we see encroachment of doctrine and teaching through this false prophet. How far did he go? How wide was his influence? *We don’t know!*

Then they came to Antioch of Pisidia, so there are two Antiochs: one in Pisidia, which on the southern border of what is today Turkey.

Verse 14: “Now, after passing through from Perga, they came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day *and* sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue said to them, ‘Men, brethren, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, speak.’.... [they didn’t know what they were getting into] ...Then Paul stood up and, after beckoning with his hand, said...” (vs 14-16).

This is what undid the Jews, v 37: “But the One Whom God raised up did not see corruption.... [even though David was still in his tomb] ...Therefore, be it known to you, men *and* brethren, that **through this Man the remission of sins is preached to you.** And in Him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from **which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses**” (vs 38-39). *That really got them all upset!*

What animal sacrifice did God command to be given for the evil thoughts in your mind? *Didn’t!* That’s the major thing! Where does evil start? *In the human mind!*

Verse 40: “Take heed, therefore, lest that which is spoken in the Prophets come upon you: ‘Behold, you despisers, and wonder and perish...’” (vs 40-41).

What happened? Verse 46: “But Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly, saying, ‘It was necessary for the Word of God to be spoken to you first; but since you reject it and do not judge yourselves worthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles’”—*that enraged the Jews beyond comprehension!*

Remember when Paul went to Jerusalem and the Jews were after him and were going to kill him, then the centurion and his soldiers saved him. He said, ‘Let me speak.’ So, Paul got up on one of the stairs and was speaking to the people, and he spoke to them in Hebrew.

When he mentioned Gentiles, they had a riot! This is really quite a thing that took place here. That's when we go along and see what happened to Paul, he was stoned, derided, both he and Barnabas.

Verse 47: "For so the Lord has enjoined upon us: 'I have set You for a light of *the* Gentiles... [prophecy from the book of Isaiah] ...that You should be for salvation unto *the* uttermost parts of the earth.'" *The Jews wanted to keep it all just to themselves!*

Verse 48: "And when the Gentiles heard *this*, they rejoiced; and they glorified the Word of the Lord, and believed, as many as were appointed to eternal life. And the Word of the Lord was carried throughout the entire country. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the principal men..." (vs 48-50)—*and those things that came along!*

Verse 43: "Now, after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the proselytes who worshiped *there* followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God."

This is a very important part of Scripture to understand concerning the Sabbath. Grace of God and Sabbath go hand-in-hand. Sabbath is not against the grace of God.

Verse 44: "And on the coming Sabbath..." Paul could have said here, ***IF*** it were destined to be Sunday-keeping, that the Sabbath was coming to an end. He was still talking to them; ***he could have said***, 'Hey, guys, you're in luck, tomorrow we begin the Sunday-keeping on the first day of the week, and you all come.'

I wonder if some of them would have said, 'What's the sun-god temple down the road going to do? *He didn't!* The grace of God and Sabbath-keeping go together.

"...almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God" (v 44). Imagine what happened here. They were chased out of town, came to Iconium and went into the synagogue of the Jews. All the fights and things going on, back and forth.

Read Acts 14-15; it's in that area that Paul was stoned. Yet, he left Iconium, Derbe and Lystra and came back and preached again, setting up elders and so forth. This is helpful to understand all of these areas are entrances into false doctrine.

Acts 14:13—the come to heal a man: "Then the priest of Zeus... [Sunday-keeping] ...who officiated before their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, desiring to sacrifice with the

multitudes. But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard *this*, they ripped their *own* garments *in disbelief*, and rushed into the multitude, shouting out and saying, 'Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, with the same nature as you, and we have been preaching the Gospel to you, *so that* you will turn from these vanities to the living God..." (vs 13-15)—*against Sunday-keeping!*

All of this is to bring the Gentiles out to keep the Sabbath.

"...Who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all the things in them" (v 15). They barely ceased from doing that and then came back to where they were.

Next time, we will go through Acts 15 and then what we will do is go through the different Epistles of Paul and the General Epistles and see the references to all of the apostasy that was taking place, coming in; even in Corinth. Some of them didn't even believe in the resurrection.

If you don't believe in the resurrection, but you want eternal life, what do you believe in? *The Greek substitute, the immortality of the soul!* That's how these things got started. Remember, every epistle has something in it about someone trying to do something to pervert the Gospel!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 8:1-9
- 2) Matthew 20:25
- 3) Acts 8:10-25
- 4) Revelation 11:19
- 5) Galatians 1:6-10, 13-16
- 6) Acts 9:1-6
- 7) Acts 10:1-4, 14, 24-29, 33, 44-46
- 8) Acts 13:26
- 9) Acts 10:47-48
- 10) Acts 11:1-4, 16-23, 25
- 11) Acts 12:1-9, 17
- 12) 1 Peter 5:12-14
- 13) Acts 13:4-10, 14-16, 37-41, 46-50, 43-44
- 14) Acts 14:13-15

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 7
- 1 Corinthians 7
- Acts 6
- Galatians 4
- 1 Peter 5
- Acts 12:12
- Acts 13:2

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- *Judaism: A Revelation of Moses or a Religion of Men?* by Philip Neal
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- *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi (amazon.com)
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