

# Acts

Sunday 3/20/2011

Well, if you have your Bibles this morning, I want you to turn back to the Book of Acts. I told you last week the absolute importance of getting the Book of Acts down. I also told you that I have probably spent more time than any other book of the Bible trying to get you to grasp it, and probably no other book have I taught more in more different ways than the Book of Acts. Acts has a lot of dimensions to it. My goal last week, and I told you that I taught it to you in a way that I have never taught it to you before. I am constantly looking at where you guys are at and where our church is at. I am constantly trying to look at ways to get more complicated things about the Bible to you in an easier format. The Bible has its own format; there is no question about that. But even within that format, breaking it down is a better way for you to understand it. That is what I had to do for myself with the Bible. There is no shortage of the Spirit of God here, of people who are wanting to learn the Bible. My job as a teacher of the Bible is to help you get that down in a way, in a fashion, that you can really grasp it. My job is to save you as much time. It probably took me twenty-five years to get a grasp on the Bible. I will not kid you and tell you I understand all of the Bible; I certainly do not. In fact, the more I study it, the more I learn about it, the less I know about it. But I am talking about getting a working knowledge with the Bible, getting an ability to be able to know where you are at in the Bible ninety-eight percent of the time, doctorally, inspirationally, historically. That is what I am looking for; that is my job here. I have basically turned all ministries over in the last two or three years to you folks who handle it and do a wonderful job of it, because my job is just onefold: and that is to help you understand the Bible and break it down for you.

As I approach the Book of Acts and the way we are coming through the New Testament right now, I just thought for a moment, "You know what, I am going to do this in such a way that for those that are willing to apply themselves, for those that are willing to grasp it and do the work, that they can get this book down and pretty much have this book under their belt." So last week, I came at it from a completely different angle, did I not? I came at it from the aspect that I talked about the Book of Acts being a defining book, how it defines everything that we would need to know. I explained why. Then, for the first time we have ever done it, I actually went through and laid out the things that were defined in the Book of Acts. Today, I want to put the structure to it. You have heard me say that when God writes a book, He writes it to us. I have said it many, many times: the key to the Bible is not your knowledge, it is not where you went to school, or how many years you spent in higher realms of education. The Bible is different than any other book, because the Bible is a book that the only thing that you need to have when you come to it is the right attitude of heart in approaching that book.

The Bible says that when we receive the word of God, we receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God that effectually worketh also in you that believe. You want the book to work in you; it is based on what you believe about it. It is just that simple. That is why people who spend, really, the reality of it is, people who spend years and years and years in the higher halls of education are readily pretty ignorant when it comes to the basic things of the Bible. I like to call it "educated beyond their intelligence," and that becomes an issue for them. I have said this many, many times: the Bible is the only book in the world that when you open that

book up and you begin to read it, it begins to read you. What it does is it is always searching your attitude of heart of why you are in this book. That is the background that you need to have. If you come to the Bible with a preconceived idea that you got from somebody else or somewhere else, then that is going to be a problem for you. Because what God will do, you see, God has built a fail-safe system into His own Bible. He wrote the Bible to you and to me. The key to getting that Bible is our attitude of heart as we come to that book. For anybody that does not have the right attitude of heart or has preconceived ideas, and there are millions of those out there, God just simply slams the door. You get nothing. Then God closes that book to you, and you get absolutely nothing from it or from the Holy Spirit of God. Hence, this is the mess that we have today in American Christianity. This is why we have the bad teaching we have today, the bad preaching that we have today, and just about all of the churches that you will try to go to.

## I. The Jewish Apostasy and the Loss of Truth

Hundreds of years ago, in the Jewish faith, long after Christ died, the rabbis, basically, they were already in trouble with God. God took the kingdom of heaven from them in 606 BC. Of course, a lot of events took place that put the nation of Israel really in apostasy. But then the rabbis did something that ensured God slamming the door of revelation on the nation of Israel, that they could never find the truth. This is why, what I am about to tell you, this is why the nation of Israel will have to go through the Tribulation Period. This is why God is going to send into that time where the Bible says that no time on Earth was ever like it before. It is because of not only what they did in the Old Testament that took them into the captivity of 606 BC, that was bad enough. Then when God sent them His own Son in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, it was not bad enough that they crucified Him there. They did something else that ensured that the door would be slammed of revelation from God. This is why the Jewish faith today is in total apostasy.

Someone asked me Thursday night when we were talking about some of the things, I forget who it was, asked me afterwards about the Orthodox Jew. If you were to get in one place on this planet today all of the true remnant of the nation of Israel, it would be a very small number. I would be safe to say that the Jews in America, wherever you go, are out. They are just completely out of the realm of it. In Europe, you are completely out of the realm of it. You might find that remnant today somewhere tucked away in Jerusalem, or in the Middle East, or in the nation of Israel, but it would be a very small number. Here is why, and you need to understand this because there is a great parallel here. They had lost all that God had done for them, temporarily. They have to go through the Tribulation now. Then they had to rely on themselves to come up with the teachings and the material for their people. What the rabbis did is they wrote three main books. These three main books had nothing to do with God. These three main books had nothing to do with the Bible. These three books had nothing to do with God or anything God ever did or anything God ever said. What they did was, when they lost God and they lost the power of God, and this always happens, they had to come up then with a system that would give the appearance of still being right, even though it is a million light years from where God wanted it to be.

You begin to see the reality of this when Christ was crucified. Back there in Mark chapter 15, verse 38, I believe it is. When Christ was crucified on the cross, when He died, and the Bible says the Earth quaked and all the things were taking place. The Bible tells you very clearly that the veil at the temple was ripped. Now that veil at the temple was absolutely necessary when Israel was at their height, because that Holy of Holies was something that only the high priest could ever enter into. In the typology of our knowing our Bible in the Old Testament parallels to the New Testament, we know that the high priest represents Christ, the Holy of Holies represents the presence of God, and God lived and sat on the mercy seat that was in the Ark of the Covenant that was in that Holy of Holies. No man in human form other than a high priest could see that. He could only go in once a year on the Day of Atonement. If you would go through the particulars of that back there, it is incredible. He had to wear special underwear that absorbed sweat because all of the earthly things that we would do or be in the presence of a Holy God were impermeable. If he did not do everything exactly, he died. And yet we find in Mark that the veil in the temple and all this stuff is still in place. Of course, we also know that God had long departed the nation of Israel and the veil, the Holy of Holies, and all of the things that the nation of Israel was pretending that was okay to keep their structure intact even though God was far from it. God finally finished it at the crucifixion. He ripped that veil from top to bottom. When He ripped that veil, that first time the priest went in there or the people went in there, they saw that the game was up. The Holy of Holies was not the Holy of Holies anymore. It had not been for 400 years. You could have had a picnic, you could have had a ball game, you could have had an orgy in that Holy of Holies and God would not have thought a thing about it because the glory of God had departed the nation of Israel a long time ago. Ah yes, but the nation of Israel, they have to play the game. They have to pretend. They have to keep control of the people when they know how important their religion is with God. So somebody showed that veil back up. In 70 AD when Titus came down some thirty years later and destroyed Jerusalem, that veil was still intact and they were still doing it even though God had ripped it.

What the rabbis had done in the last three or four hundred years of our own history, the Jews do not have a Bible anymore. The rabbis rewrote a number of books.

- The first book they wrote was a book called the Midrash.
- Then the second book that the rabbis wrote was a book that you probably have heard, maybe not know what it means, but you have heard the name, the Talmud.
- And the reason why you find them today is because simply put, God had been finished with the nation of Israel in 606 BC.

Now these Jews came up with all of this because they had kept the religious structure, the shell. But as the Bible says, the glory of the Lord had departed. But they lost the main ingredient, and that ingredient was God and His word. Therefore, they have their own self-belief system, and because of their own rejection of first God and then the word of God. You see, they rejected God

in 606 BC and His kingdom, and then as time went on, they rejected what His word said. Now they stand in a complete state of apostasy today.

## II. Modern Christian Apostasy

You know, that is just the beginning of our issues today because my point in telling you all of that is the fact that New Testament Bible Christianity today has done exactly the same thing. We do not have a Bible anymore. Next week, I am going to teach you. I am going to take a week off from the books, and I think it is probably the time to do it. When you lose your Bible, you lose seven things. There are seven things that you lose when you lose your Bible. Those seven things that you lose will devastate you as far as a Christian. Just like Israel lost some things when they dumped the word of God and they dumped God, when Bible Christianity dumped the word of God, by design. When they left the book, they lost seven things. Next week, I am going to preach to you what those seven things are.

Now, I am going to tell you right now, next week would be a good week to have Aunt Edna come in town because it is going to get rough next week. I do not do well with messages about messing with my Bible. I am just telling you right up front. I am just being honest with you. I am just telling you, nothing infuriates me more than men who have been called to preach the word of God, who get rid of the word of God. Then they do the exact same thing that the Jews did in the Old Testament because churches today have no Bible. That is why they have no power. That is why they have no direction. That is why the people mean nothing to pastors anymore; they are just a number on a giving record. We have refashioned today the church to be a glittering, worldly city. But as some old preacher said many, many years ago in warning to young Christians, not everything that glitters is gold. My dear friend, this is why the churches have done today exactly what the nation of Israel has done today, because when you get rid of the Bible, whether it is a Jew in the Old Testament or a Christian in the New Testament, when you dump the Bible, you lose some things. This is why they wrote their books to keep their structure intact. This is why churches today do all of the things that they do to keep their structure intact. They have music now that sounds just like the world's music to appease you. They have preaching now that will not offend anybody. They have teaching. They have silly little messages that are preached by little preacher rats that never do anything for anybody that you can go buy on little cassettes. The Bible has been replaced by the multimedia presentations, all the bells and whistles, because they have lost the understanding of worship. Now they have got to bring in worship singers because we lost the Bible, we lost the concept of praise. Now we have got to have a praise service. We are just the same way as the nation of Israel is. This is where it is all geared in both cases to the flesh, to the flesh, to the flesh.

I have watched these, I have watched, we do not have a choir. We probably will not ever have a choir because I hate to split the church, have to buy choir robes, and fight over what color we are going to be. If you think churches have not split over that in the past, you do not know very much about anything going on in the Baptist world. You ought to be the choir. We will not have any special, I mean, we have specials and I appreciate that. But have you ever noticed how our specials are different from many specials, and some of you have been around churches? Have

you really ever noticed that when these people sing up here, and I have not taught them this, I just have not. I have never said this, what I am about to say, in the history of my life in this church anyhow. But you notice how that they sing, when they do sing, everybody, everybody does it. I have never seen one case that is different. When somebody sings up here, they sing, even though they are singing it, they sing it to get out of the way that all you see is what they are trying to portray with the Lord. There is no swaying back and forth. I have been in churches where the praise singers are up there, and they want, and it is obvious that they want to be the focus. Everybody gets a microphone. As old Mel Sabaka said, "Looks like a serpent holding in your hand." That is going a little bit too far for me, but I understand, it will work today for me. You stand up there and you are leading the church in praise. You are leading the church in worship. In reality, it is nothing more than feeding your flesh. Because all the church is not focusing on worship. They are listening to the beautiful song and watching how you are caught up in the moment.

I am doing my best to finish this sermon today and not fast forward into the seven things that you lose when you lose your Bible. But I must move on here, because I am in trouble if I do not. In churches today, you hear sermons about the Bible, but you do not hear sermons from the Bible. There is no depth. There is no reason behind what they are trying to do. It is much like the rabbis. The reason for that is, and we are going to talk about this more next week, but in your Bible, there are two great contrasts of two churches. They are found in Revelation chapter three. What God does is He contrasts the church of the open door over there in Revelation 3:8 with the church of the closed door in Revelation 3:20. We are in the Laodicean church, the church of the closed door. I will talk about that more next week. But you see, what God has done is God has shut down, God has shut the door. When God slams the door in Revelation chapter three, it stays shut. Then He shuts down some books that you do not get them on God's terms. Now I need to talk to you about this. When it comes to the Book of Acts, you might as well get it set in your mind that you are not going to get it on your terms; you are going to get it on God's terms. Because God has built a fail-safe system into His word that it is like a minefield. If you do not have the key to the minefield, you are going to blow your legs off. The minefield that God has put in His Bible is Matthew, Acts, and Hebrews. These books will break your back, and more importantly, they will expose your inability to understand the scriptures. That is where we are at today.

### III. The Book of Acts: Our Trip Ticket and Structural Outline

I told you last week that Acts is our book of definitions, is it not? Years ago, I was a member of the AAA. I do not even know if they are around anymore today, but they were the great automobile association that if you had a flat tire, you would call the AAA. Now it is all on your cell phone for a dollar a month, so they call it AAA. But they offered something that I got a couple of times when I was moving around, driving back and forth to Ohio, that they offered, it was called a trip ticket. You would call them up and you would say, "Hey, I am going to here and I need a trip ticket." They miraculously would print out page by page, it was on one of those things up there, you just flipped open and it shows you every 100 miles where you were going. Every key on there was just, and it made it go on wherever you were going. This is before they

had GPSs. It made everything a lot easier to go where you are going. Well, I told you last week, the Book of Acts is your trip ticket through the Bible, through church history. It is the book that clearly shows you the New Testament landmarks that we are to follow as the New Testament church. Last Thursday night, I guess it was a good deal because now I made a statement last week about being a Baptist and how a Baptist was not a denomination. Someone asked that question Thursday night, so we took the rest of the night. Now if you were there that night, you completely understand a bigger part of what we were talking about in the Book of Acts to get this thing together. Because now you should know why we as Baptists are not a denomination. These are the things that you have to learn. Last week I gave you eight or nine major areas that the Book of Acts defines for us so we do not get lost in the years that follow.

Now I want to give you a great verse. This has been a great source of information for me for many, many, many years in Isaiah 42:9. It simply says this:

*Isaiah 42:9*

*Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.*

Now that is a great verse. That is a great verse because it tells you and me that there will be no surprises for us as Christians. The only reason why there are surprises is because we are not in our Bible the way we should be. When you get into your Bible and you approach the Bible the way God intended it to be approached, and you get into the book the way God wants you to have it, then there are no surprises. That is what the Book of Acts does. It is the Book of Acts that God uses to declare and to define the things that we need to be careful of so we do not wind up just like the nation of Israel. Brother, that is exactly what has happened.

Today I want to give you the structural outline of the Book of Acts. This is the second greatest aspect of this book that you need to learn. You want to do this. You take the definitions of last week and put them into the structure that I am going to give you this week, and you have got the Book of Acts. Then the rest of your time here, you just keep adding to what you already know as you continue to grow and learn.

The real name of the Acts is, as I told you this last week, the real complete name is the Acts of the Apostles. It is important to know that because those apostles are mainly two apostles. Our book naturally is divided around two men. Even this structure is going to be different than what I gave in Institutes, it is going to be different than what I gave in Bible Basics. I really thought this thing through and thought to myself to do this on a Sunday morning with all of the new people, some of them just newly saved, "How can I do this?" And I came up with what I think will work for you, make this real easy. The Book of Acts first of all is built around two men. Hence the title, Acts of the Apostles. These two men are key in your Bible and the New Testament anyhow. As I said, in fact, your whole New Testament is built around these two men.

Our first man will be Peter. Peter will, as I have said before, be found in the Book of Acts in the first twelve chapters of the Book of Acts. You will find that Peter is the predominant character in the first seven chapters in a great way. Then in chapter eight through twelve, you still find him,

but he is working his way out. But the first thing that you want to know, and the first character you want to get down and get into your brain and mark this in your Bible, that the first guy we are going to look at is Peter, and he is the predominant apostle for the first twelve chapters of Acts. Peter's key in ministry will always be, and you want to know this, Peter's ministry, that is so key, is the fact that his ministry will always be to the nation of Israel. You will find this in Acts chapter 15, where they all kind of get together and they talk it through and they declare what Peter's ministry is going to be. It is clearly laid out for you in Galatians 2:8, which is talking about the meeting in Acts chapter 15, where it clearly tells you that Peter's ministry is going to be with the circumcision, the nation of Israel. Absolutely important. Absolutely important that you get those two pieces of information. You are going to find in Matthew chapter 16, and I have told you this before, in Matthew chapter 16, Peter is given the key to the kingdom of heaven. Now you begin to see how important it was why I took so much time in the beginning with so many of you to drill into your head the difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. Yet probably some of you have been here since we started the church, you still do not know what that is. Of course that shows now in trying to put all this stuff together. Peter is given a key to the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven, simply put, will always be to the nation of Israel. It will never be to you and me, for you new folks. So Peter, as the apostle to the nation of Israel, gets the key to the kingdom to the nation of Israel in Matthew chapter 16. This is why he is the one who is using these keys to give the nation of Israel in Acts chapter one through seven the kingdom of heaven.

Now I want to explain something to you here and I want you to try to get this down here. I am just going to do this for illustration purposes. Let us take a, put a twelve-inch line in your Bible. Do not, but let us just say what you would. At that twelve-inch line, I want to show you how the Book of Acts kind of breaks down. We are going to put on this twelve-inch line, twelve inches, we are going to put a slash at the three-inch mark right there. Then we are going to put a slash at the eight-inch mark right there. Now that basically in a very basic format is going to help you what I am talking about today. This is no great chart that you, we are going to print off and send around the world. This is just an illustration to help you grasp what I am saying today. Because there are two major splits in the Book of Acts that breaks the Book of Acts into three sections. Your first one is going to be at the three-inch mark, it is going to be Acts chapter seven. Your next one is going to be Acts chapter 21. You are going to find that these two sections break your Bible down in the Book of Acts into three components. You are going to find obviously that these here will be chapter one through seven. This one here will be chapter eight through chapter 20. This one here will be 21 through 28. That is how basically it is going to work. But that is what I want you to get in your brain this morning. You are going to, and we are going to add talk about this, but I want this as a visual. Nothing spectacular, no stick men, no nothing. Just visual understanding.

#### IV. Acts 1-7: Peter's Ministry to Israel

Now let me explain Acts chapter one through Acts chapter seven. In your Bible, the nation of Israel gets three chances to get the Lord Jesus Christ and the kingdom of heaven. The first one was with John the Baptist. We know what they did to John the Baptist: they rejected him and

they killed him. The second one was Jesus Christ Himself. We know what they did with Him: they rejected Him, scribes, Pharisees, turned Him over to the Roman Empire and they killed Him. But remember, when Jesus Christ is on the cross, He cries out right before He dies, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." A strange verse which every preacher tries to put into a practical application that is used for the basis of forgiveness, which I do not really have a problem with, but there is obviously more to it than that. He is talking about the nation of Israel, asking His Father to forgive them because they did not know what they were doing to the extent that they were losing now the opportunity to get that kingdom of heaven back through Him as their Messiah. God honors that prayer. Then God gives them their third chance in the Book of Acts in the first seven chapters of the Book of Acts. This is where you begin to see how this thing unfolds itself and this is why this is absolutely crucial to get in your mind. I am not saying you have got to put it in your Bible, but you have got to get it in here. When you think of the Book of Acts, you think on this outline. You think the Book of Acts around two men, and then we will just divide the material up and you are good to go, it is real easy.

I want you to look now in Acts chapter one, verses six and seven here. In Acts chapter one and two, we now know that the Lord has out of the tomb, He has been around for forty days, He is getting ready to go back. But the apostles come to Him and they ask Him a question. I must tell you that this is the key question in the Book of Acts and everything in the Book of Acts goes back to this question. If you ever want to put a pastor to the test or anybody to the test that complains that they know the Book of Acts, ask them what the key verse in Acts is that everything goes back to. They will not get it, I promise you.

Now look at what it says here in Acts chapter one, verse six and seven.

*Acts 1:6-7*

*When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*

*And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

He does not give them a clear answer. He did not give them a clear answer because He is going to take the first seven chapters of Acts and He is going to take Peter and He is going to use Peter to give the Jews one last chance to get this kingdom of heaven. This will be their final time. This is what the whole Book of Acts is built on.

Now let me show you what the problem becomes. I think this is quite hilarious. Before we look at these seven chapters in some kind of detail, let us look and see, first of all, get it defined for us what these first seven chapters are not. First of all, the first seven chapters, you do not find the model church. Now I will show you where the problem starts here. I think it is easy, you need to learn these things because you are going to come up against it. If you believe the Bible the way we are teaching it to you today, I can guarantee you one thing, you are going to be on the outside looking in when it comes to the Christian world. But that is a good place to be, a good place to be. Every pastor in this city, and every Bible college in the country will teach you that the church

in the first seven chapters of the Book of Acts is the model church and is the New Testament church. Now let me tell you why that is. Look at Acts 2:47. You want to put a verse by this verse, put SP. Stupidity personified.

*Acts 2:47*

*And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

Now pastors and teachers today are so absolutely inept when it comes to the Bible. When they read this verse and they see the word "church," they automatically assume that it is their church. They automatically assume that that is the New Testament church. I would like to take time this morning to tell you what my drill sergeant, how he defined the word "assumes." But I cannot. It would be offensive to everybody here. I enjoy it, I say it to myself many, many times. But then you have to plead 1 John 1:9 after you say it to yourself. Those of you who have been in the military know exactly what I am talking about. You never assume. Acts 2:47 says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." When the average Baptist pastor, and I am not picking on anybody but Baptist this morning, because we are Baptist. So we are fair game. I am going to leave everybody else out of it today, and we are just going to go after the Baptist. That is a big enough stooge pot that you can just deal with that the rest of your life anyhow. When the average Baptist pastor reads that verse, he thinks that is his church. The reason he does, because in his Bible college, when he was educated out of his intelligence, and they took his Bible from him, he was taught that. I had a guy one time tell me that there were lots of mistakes in the Bible. I asked him where he learned that. I said, "Well, I learned that in Bible college from my professor." I said, "Well, that is pretty good." I said, "You know what, your mistakes in the Bible will be a lot more credible to me if you show me the mistakes God showed you in it." Do you think anybody God ever sat down and said, "Now read this, but that is a mistake right there. I did not mean that. And you have got to get a better translation here. And whoops, I did not mean to put that in there. Either that scribe screwed that up a long time ago." Well, I look at God after about fifteen minutes, and I say, "Are you really God? Yep, yep. What is the matter with you? You just got that white suit on because you want to pretend you are God?" I mean, how dare you be God enough to inspire but you are not God enough to preserve it? You see how it goes? I said to that old bird, I said, "Do not show me what they told you in Bible college. Show me one mistake God showed you in that Bible." He did not have any. Every mistake he had, some man showed him. You are hanging out with a raw crowd, bugwit. I mean, I am just telling you where it is at. That is why I told you, do not get me going on this thing, man. I am telling you, no, no, no. You do not want me to go there. No, no, no, I am unprepared this morning. I will cuss this morning. I have got to temper it down a little bit. Yeah, right. I will be living in your house with you.

Now here is what happens. They read the word "church," and they think that that means their church. A couple of nights ago, and I do not remember where it was, but a couple of nights ago somebody asked a question. What did I show you? I first of all explained the word "church," what it means. Then I showed you that there were seven distinct different churches in the Bible. From the Old Testament, right up to our church, right up through the end. But you have got to believe the Bible to get that. That is not something God throws out there. He does not cast His

pearls before swine. You have got to believe the book to get that. So when I read that, I am already against it because I already know that there are seven distinct. First of all, I know what the word "church" means. And I know secondly that there are seven called out assemblies throughout the Bible. Ours is just one of them. So already I am looking differently at it than he is. You do not ever feel, and I have people tell me this all the time, "Well, I am really dumb when it comes to the Bible." That is the best scenario you can have in your life. Amen. That ought to be a badge of honor for you. I mean it may not work with your wife when she wants you to do something at home, but it will work with God when you come to the Bible. That is a good place to be.

Now let us do a dastardly thing here with the Bible. Let us do something absolutely terrible before God. God forbid what we are about to do. Let us get a context. Now I want you to look at Acts 2:42. We are going to stay in chapter two for a moment and we will kind of move through here. Now this is the church, okay? This is our church. Let us pretend a minute we are all stupid in this, I mean we are all smart and we dump the Bible. And so this is our church, okay? Let me show you how another great thing about the Bible you want to learn. When you teach the Bible, you do not want to have, I watched a lady one time who had gotten married. She had one of those long flowing white dress gowns which I think are very beautiful. But the problem was that they were in such a hurry to leave the church. They had the cans tied to the car and everything. She had this tremendous train. Well the problem was they did not get it all stuffed in the car door. So it is hanging out about six feet. She is driving down the road and everybody is honking and people, and other people at the church are trying to get their attention. They think they are waving and sending them off, you know? No, no, no, no, no. No, if you put a string on your car, it is going to become a kite. We can fly it for a while, because you have got a long tail hanging out at the end of that. That is probably a thousand dollar dress. Dragging through the mud and all the dirt and all the streets. I mean it was slipping, flapping all over the place, you know? I thought to myself, "You know what? When you teach the Bible, when you teach the Bible and you are finished and you shut the door, you do not want anything hanging out. You do not want anything left over." That is the key to know you are teaching the Bible right. Is that when you are done teaching what you taught, you do not have to go back with a pair of scissors and trim off what is hanging out that you did not know what to explain. See? Now I am going to show you a hangout here. "Okay, doctor, it is my church." "Yeah, it is our church." "Yeah, oh, it is our church." "This is the model church." "Yes, it is." Well, explain Acts 2:42 for me. Same chapter.

*Acts 2:42*

*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Not Paul's doctrine, the apostles' doctrine. Now I have got news for you. This church does not follow the apostles' doctrine. If you think we do, then you need to back up and get in the elementary division again, let them teach you about Samson and Goliath and some of those stories back there. We do not follow the apostles' doctrine. You would not find anybody who understood what the apostles' doctrine was. It is defined for you in Matthew chapter 10. Let us look at what the apostles' doctrine is so we can get a context here.

*Matthew 10:5-8*

*These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:*

*But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

*And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*

Now Matthew 10:5 says, "These twelve Jesus sent forth the apostles." And here is the doctrine He gives them. "And He commanded them saying, go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans, that is half Jew, half Gentile, enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And as you go preach saying, "Christ has died. He hung on the cross. Your sins are paid for." No, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." I am not preaching that today. I am not preaching you any second at all that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. What I am preaching is the kingdom of God is at hand. If you do not know the difference, you are lost, man. You are lost. Then He goes on and He says, "And as you preach, preach saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand, oh, here it comes. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, freely you have received, freely give." Oh, I guess we have got to give all the money back today. We just took up an offering, huh? Do not bet on it. That is your dispensation, pal, it is not mine. But you see how dishonest people are? They would read that verse, they have to model church, they keep your money. I will put it in the right context and have a good conscience about keeping your money, see, that is how it works.

Now the thing I want you to see here is first Matthew 10:5, "not the way of the Gentiles." Matthew 10:5, "no Samaritans, half Jews, half Gentiles." Matthew 10:6 says, "you are only going to the lost house of Israel." Matthew 10:7, it says down there, "preach Christ, not on the cross, but you preach the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And then Matthew 10:8 says you have signs following. I already told you last week or a couple of weeks ago about those sign gifts, did I not? I gave you 1 Corinthians 14:22, 1 Corinthians 1:22, Isaiah 28:11, and Joel 2:28, showing you that the sign gifts were to the nation of Israel.

Now turn back just a couple of books and come back to Mark chapter 16. Let us put a context to the context to the context.

*Mark 16:17-20*

*And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;*

*They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

*So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

*And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.*

Matthew, Mark chapter 16, verse 17. "And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall cast out devils. They shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents." Paul did that in Acts when he got bit by the snake. "And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Watch it, here it comes. Context. "So then after the Lord has spoken unto them, the twelve, He was received up into heaven and stood on the right hand of God." And the context is Acts chapter one and Acts chapter two, right where we are at. "And they, who? The church? No, no, no, no. The twelve with the apostles' doctrine. And they went forth and preached everywhere with the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following." Now this is to Israel. This is not to the church.

Now the second thing you want to see this thing is not, is this is, just stop. This thing is not the Gentiles at all. "I mean, you know Greek, you know Hebrew?" Oh yes I do, but you cannot read sixth-grade English. You are no help to me. "Well, I will quote to you what Jesus said to Nicodemus in John chapter three, verse ten."

*John 3:10*

*Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?*

You are a master of Greek and Hebrew, you do not know these things? You spent all your life in Bible colleges and seminaries and got the Greek and Hebrew out. And you do not understand the basic keywords of the Bible? What is your deal, pal?

Now I want you to look back to Acts here and just get back to our context here. Let us look at Acts 2:5. It says the day of Pentecost, does it not? Now for some reason, and I do not know why they say it, we just think that Pentecost has something to do with us. We have already established that through the apostles' doctrine and what they are preaching that the concept here is not anything to do in the church age, it has to do with the nation of Israel getting the kingdom. So why would you think this day of Pentecost had anything to do with the church? Pentecost was an Old Testament feast, a who? The Jew. Somebody said, "Well, I am a Pentecostal." I would not tell anybody. A guy says, "I am a charismatic." The word charismatic means extra nowhere. Someone is gifted in knowledge. Boy, if that is not an oxymoron. It is like being the secret service, "I am the secret service." I looked them up in the phone book one time, they have got a phone number, secret service. How are you so secret and put your phone number in the Bible? It is like military intelligence. Ha ha, yeah, yeah, we know how that goes.

Acts 2:5 said, "the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit of God came." But look what the Bible says in Acts 2:5.

*Acts 2:5*

*And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*

There are no Gentiles here. Look at Acts 2:14.

*Acts 2:14*

*But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:*

"But Peter, there is my boy, there is the guy. We know who he is now, not Paul, Peter. Standing up with the eleven. Ye men of Judea and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem." Hello, there are no Gentiles here. Look at Acts 2:22.

*Acts 2:22*

*Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:*

Now he is preaching and he says, "Ye men of Israel." And Acts 2:29, he says, "Men and brethren." That is in a national sense, he is Jews. Acts 2:36, it says, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know us surely."

*Acts 2:36*

*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

"The house of Israel, no Gentiles, no church. The house of Israel know us surely that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ." Look at Acts 2:37.

*Acts 2:37*

*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

"And when they heard this, they said, Men and brethren, what do we do?" You know what they are told to do? They are told that, Acts 2:38, "Repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the mission of sin and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

*Acts 2:38*

*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

We had a bunch of idiots back here that came out here a while back from the church of Christ that they are hanging on that verse. You know what their problem is? They cannot read sixth grade English. Not only is there not a Gentile in there, you could not find a church of Christ with a laser beam and a flashlight. It is not there. Right. Now look at Acts 2:42. What are they supposed to do? Acts 2:42 in the same chapter, apostles' doctrine back to Matthew chapter 10.

Now let us jump into chapter three here for a moment. Look at Acts 3:12.

*Acts 3:12*

*And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?*

"Now we and Peter saw it. He said unto the people, Ye men of Israel." Look at Acts 3:13, "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers."

*Acts 3:13*

*The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.*

Look at Acts 3:25, "Ye children of the prophets."

*Acts 3:25*

*Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.*

I do not know Gentiles here. There is no New Testament church here. They are not within 600 million light years, Acts chapter one, two, three, four, five, six and seven. See, you have got to get this thing down here. Your Book of Acts is a twelve-inch ruler. At the three-inch mark, you put one split. At the eight-inch mark, you put a split right here. The first thing here will be Acts chapter one through Acts chapter seven, where God is dealing with the question that they ask in Acts 1:6, "Are you going to restore the kingdom to the nation of Israel?" No church yet, no Gentiles yet, nobody of Christ yet, no nothing yet.

Now basically, let us break these seven chapters down. You need to put these, what I am about to give you in your Bible. You break chapter one through seven down in which you have got is Peter, good old Peter. Remember him now, apostle to the nation of Israel, the circumcision. You have got him preaching five sermons, mark them in your Bible.

1. Sermon one is Acts 1:15.
2. Message two is Acts 2:14.
3. Message three is Acts 3:12.
4. Message four is Acts 4:19.
5. Message five is Acts 5:29.

Five sermons he preaches. You will not find the Jew, you will not find the Gentiles in any of them. Everything he is preaching, he is preaching to them, the apostles' doctrine in relationship to Christ coming back and giving the kingdom of heaven to the nation of Israel. You cannot miss it, unless you are educated.

Now there are really six messages. The sixth message is preached in Acts chapter six and seven, but Peter did not preach that one. Stephen does, he is one of the original deacons. Stephen preaches in Acts chapter six and seven, it is a long message, but he is preaching to the nation of Israel. He is bringing up, if you read the sermon, he is bringing up their national heritage under

Moses. He is mentioning David, Joseph, and just about everybody else he can throw in there. He is bringing them back to a national message to bring them back to a national Messiah. If you come down through that thing, in Acts 7:56-60, they reject his message and they kill him, hence the last chance they get.

*Acts 7:56-60*

*And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.*

*Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,*

*And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.*

*And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*

*And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

But if you look at Acts 7:56, the Bible says that heaven opens like Revelation 19, and there is Jesus Christ standing on the right hand of God the Father. Now the other verse said He was sitting, now He is standing. Now the standard, idiotic, Baptist interpretation of that is simply this. And boy have I heard this many, many times. "There is Jesus standing up to welcome that martyr Stephen home." You are out of your mind. The Bible says that God has no respecter of persons. Eighty-six people a second die and step out into eternity, probably half of them are saved. A second, why would He be up and down so bad, He would not even know what He is doing. He would not be able to sit down. He is not standing up to welcome this martyr home. He is standing up, if you put it into the context of what is going on here, that if the Jews would have accepted the preaching of Stephen, He was going to come back and give them that kingdom of heaven. I do not know what to tell you. I have never found a cure for stupidity.

## V. Acts 8-20: Transition to Paul and the Church

Now at this point, here we are, right here. This is why this is such a big deal right here. Because to this point right here, everything starts to change and you want to see the change. Now at this point, we begin to see how that the Book of Acts begins what we call a transition. God has honored His word. The Jews got the final time, they rejected it. This is why you see the Book of Acts is laid out around two men in two critical places that put the Book of Acts in three natural divisions. Now we are going to go from Peter to Paul, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, to the nation of Israel to the church, to the kingdom of heaven to the kingdom of God. Just as slick as you could ever want it.

Now watch what happens. Immediately we come, you can flip around through it, just follow through with me here. Immediately in Acts chapter eight, what happens? A rabbi will break down in Samaria. Whoa, timeout. The apostles' doctrine clearly said, "Do not go to the Samaritans." What is going on here? Can you explain that, doctor? Let me answer for you, of

course you cannot. Now we have got a Jewish apostle heading down to the half Samaritan, half Jew city of Samaria. Plain and simple, God has given them their last chance. They have rejected it. Now we see a revival breaking out by a Jewish evangelist. God is doing something here. That was not enough. We want to break chapter eight down in two divisions. I will give you some of these, we will not do them all, but some of the ones you want to see.

- Your first division is Acts 8:1-25. That is where the gospel goes to Samaria, half Jews and half Gentiles.
- Your second division is Acts 8:26-40. That is where a Jewish evangelist again is sent to a Gentile sinner. This guy is not half and half. He is an African out of Ethiopia. He is down there in Kadamaland. Now we have got a Jewish evangelist going to a full blown Gentile. What happened to the apostles' doctrine here? What happened to the messages that Peter were preaching? Philip was not there that day. He said, "Ye men of Israel, ye house of Israel, men and brethren." He was told in Matthew 10, "Do not go to the Gentile. Do not go to the Samaria." What in the world is going on? I will tell you what is going on. The Book of Acts is transitioning its way through once you see this great important chapter seven, what takes place.

Staying with me, it is going to go like a house on fire now. Here we go. Acts chapter eight, we see him go to Samaria. Then we see him go to a Gentile. Lo and behold in chapter nine, Paul gets saved. Here comes our second guy. Who is Paul? Oh, who is he? Oh, he is nobody. He is just the apostle to the church. He is the apostle to the Gentiles. Galatians 2:8 tells you that. In Acts 9:15, God Himself told you that.

*Acts 9:15*

*But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

He is a chosen vessel unto me to give my name to the Gentiles. Something is going on here. We get into Acts chapter 10. Wow, Cornelius gets saved. Who is he? Oh, he is an Italian wop centurion. He is from an Italian band. He had a little polka band played at weddings on the weekends. He is a full blown Italian. That is a violation of the apostle's doctrine. Man, we are taking it to the Italy now.

In your Bible, the last time you find Peter here in the core logical thing we are going through here is Acts chapter 11 and 12. He is not of any significance any longer. Because when Paul gets saved, and I need to explain something to you here without getting it real confusing, Paul gets saved in Acts chapter nine. He does not show back up again in Acts chapter 13. Now the truth of the matter is in your chronology, your Bible, that is about ten to twelve to thirteen years. Nobody can put an exact time on it. So this thing, he gets saved in chapter nine. He, Paul disappears for about ten, twelve years. Then he shows back up at the end of chapter 12, beginning of chapter 13. What does he do for those twelve years? Well, Galatians tells us a little bit. Galatians says that he goes back to Mount Sinai where God met with Moses. Obviously he spent, the Bible says three and a half years there, three years there anyhow. What he does there is God is always consistent. You see, when God gave Moses the plan for the nation of Israel, He gave it in Sinai.

So when God is going to give His man the plan to the church, He takes him right back to the place He did Moses and takes him back to Sinai in Arabia and lays out the plan of the church. Then you know what Paul does? He heads down into Jerusalem and the Bible says that he looks for the Lord's brother, James, the literal physical brother of Jesus. He spends some time with him. You know why? I will tell you why. Because Paul never knew the Lord Jesus when He was on this Earth. Paul comes on this scene, he never followed Him. So he is called off the road to Damascus, he is given his tremendous task, but all he has ever done is persecuted people who were followed Christ and he never met Christ himself. So he goes and gets the word from the Lord himself, then he heads down there into Jerusalem, gets with James, the Lord's brother, and he asks him and finds out everything about the Lord that James can tell him so he can get an assimilation of all the material.

Then the next time you find him, the next time you find him, he is founded Antioch, where in Acts 11:26, we talked about this the other night, they are first called Christians.

*Acts 11:26*

*And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

Something has changed now. It is all changed. We are seeing the difference that God is no more interested in Jerusalem. Once you get past Acts chapter seven, there is not one thing God does in Jerusalem. You know why? He is done with Jerusalem. You know why He is done? He gave them the third chance, they rejected it, and now He is moving on, and that is why Peter phases out, Paul phases in, and we get into Acts chapter 11, they are first called Christians. We see this thing going to the Samaritans, and it goes to the Italians, and it goes to everybody, and here they are first called Christian Antioch, Acts 11:26, and now Paul shows back up in chapter 13, and guess where he shows up? In a model church of the New Testament, Antioch, just like I told you. It is not the church in Jerusalem, you idiot. It never was the church in Jerusalem. If you put your Bible together, you can never beat a church in Jerusalem, but that is what happens when you get educated beyond your intelligence, and you dump the book. You dump the book, God dumps you, real simple.

Now something happens then that never happened before, and this sets the stage for the next 2,000 years of church history, because when Paul shows up in Antioch at chapter 13, he begins now in here, our section here, he begins now the first missionary trips. You have been around here at any length of time at all, you know how significant that is. How many times have I told you that in the Old Testament, the temple was in a fixed spot in Jerusalem, and all the world was commanded to come to the temple. Now we see a change. God is finished with Jerusalem, and now Paul, the temple of God, is taking it to the world, so you have three missionary trips, which set the standard for where we are at today. The first one is, you want to put these missionary trips in your Bible, might as well get them, have them done, get them in there.

6. You want to put the first one by Acts 13:1-14:28. That will be his first missionary trip. He goes to Cyprus in Acts 13:4-12. He goes to Perga in Acts 13:13. He goes to Derbe in Acts

14:20-21. He goes to Iconium in Acts 14:1-6. He goes to Lystra in Acts 14. Then he comes back to Antioch, Antioch is his base home, see.

7. He comes back to Antioch, and in Acts 16:1, he takes his second missionary trip. This is where he takes Timothy with him. Here they go to Philippi, Acts 16:6. They go to Thessalonica, Acts 17:1. Athens, Acts 17:26. Corinth, Acts 18:17. Then he comes back again.
8. Then he takes the third missionary trip, and this will be Acts 18:2-20. He goes there from Antioch, that is his base camp, Acts 18:28. He goes to Troas, Philippi, Achaia, winds up at Ephesus in Acts 19. That has never happened before.

Then in Acts chapter 20, Paul is in Ephesus. Now let me say something about Paul here that, so I can again give you another little dimension to this. Paul, even though Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul had a tremendous burden for his own national people, the nation of Israel. He had said on many occasions, laid that out. He said one time that it was possible he would be willing to go to hell if his folks, the Jews, would find Christ and get saved. Of course, God did not allow that to happen, but he had a tremendous burden. That burden got to the point where it got the best of him. It is another great lesson here that you can do the right thing at the wrong time. What happened was that he wound up disobeying God because he was burdened and going down to Jerusalem, and God told him three times in the book about not to go. So here is what you have in Acts chapter 20, you have a great chapter here because this is where he says goodbye to the church at Ephesus, the elders at Ephesus. It is a moving chapter. They are heartbroken because they know that he is doing wrong. Yet he preaches one of the greatest, tenderest sermons to the church at Ephesus here. He lays out six things that he leaves this church that they are to do. We will not go through them today, but they are incredible things. By the way, they are the same six things that we go through today because Acts is our model. It is our pattern.

This brings us up to our eight-inch mark now and we start the next change. So it is going to give us three sections. Understand these three sections. Sections one through seven is all to the Jew. Acts chapter eight and the second section at chapter 20 is all to the Gentile. Church. Now, technically speaking, so you get your Book of Acts into a concept, technically speaking, your Bible ends in Acts chapter 20. You say, "Well, Bob, I have got lots of books after that." Yeah, I know that. But all those books were written in here. The only books that are left to be written would be Matthew, the gospels, and of course, John's writings and the Book of Revelation. Acts chapter 20 starts what we would call church history proper because Paul is at Ephesus with the Ephesians. When you go over to Revelation chapter one, two, and three, which lays out the seven periods of church history, we find the church period of church history is what? What is it? Anybody? What is the first period of church history? Ephesus, right where Paul is at, in Acts chapter 20. So that ends it.

## VI. Acts 21-28: Paul's Imprisonment and Journey to Rome

So what we have in our last section then is something different. What we have in the last section is Paul's trip down to Rome. Church history is basically finished. Well, it is not finished, it started now. The Book of Acts is finished. What happens from this point on shifts from what the missionary trips, there are no more. He now was taken, he goes down to Jerusalem and he gets

into trouble down there and he spends the rest of his life in prison. Finally, he is killed by the Roman Empire at some point. But let me walk you through that and that is why you have got to see how this thing is. You have got to break the Book of Acts down into three sections, built around this and this, built around two guys. If you take this and then give you the defining stuff that I gave you last week and put this outline to it, you will have the Book of Acts.

All right, what follows now in the next eight chapters is Paul's last three years in the captivity. Then as I said, Rome kills him. Let us put a heading toward each one of these chapters. We will make some reference to it, but not a whole lot.

- Acts 21: He goes down to Jerusalem against God's will. He is not down there very long. He heads down into the synagogue and a riot breaks out. He is taken into custody.
- Acts 22: He makes a brilliant biblical defense of his biblical position. It is a great model. He really, really, really lays it out very well, but he is up against it at this point. It does not matter how well he lays it out.
- Acts 23: He is taken to Felix in Caesarea. Felix is the Roman governor. You want to also mark there that Felix does not last very long. He dies very shortly after Paul shows up there, but he is the Roman governor in Caesarea.
- Acts 24: Paul is still in Caesarea, and he takes on Tertullus. Tertullus was a great Jewish orator who was a great scholar of Jewish history and Jewish religion of his day. Paul just wipes the floor with him. But it is a great model and a great picture of what goes on.
- Acts 25: Paul goes before Festus. Festus is the Roman governor after Felix dies.
- Acts 25:13: Paul goes before King Agrippa. See, he is working his way up the chain here.
- Acts 26: He is still before King Agrippa, but he is permitted to speak for himself. In Acts 26:1-27, he preaches his last sermon that is recorded for us. But boy, boy, boy, what a sermon. Acts 26:28, old King Agrippa gets it put right between his eyes. I have read that sermon many, many times, and I know Paul is in prison, and I know that Rome has got him, but when you read that story, it is hard to see sometime who has got who. I mean, old Paul preaches and it is very obvious that he is the free man and they are the ones that are captive. Down in Acts 26:28, old King Agrippa says what all unsaved men say. He is faced with it right between the eyeballs and he is a political guy, he is a Roman guy, he is a Gentile guy, and he is faced with this thing, and old Paul put him right on the spot. He says the same thing that all unsaved men say, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

You know, the second sermon, I do not ever preach down the mission, but I gave you a while back a message that I had preached down there. I will tell you the second message I would preach down there. I would preach down there and I would preach this in many, many churches. There are two great types of unsaved men in the Bible, and they both give the answer that every unsaved man, every unsaved woman, on this planet gives. When they are faced with the gospel, when they are faced with the truth, they always crawfish and do the exact same thing because they are cowards. When they are faced with the truth of the word of God, like these guys were faced with, and when old Paul went before him and just put it to King Agrippa, and he would not even let King Agrippa answer. He told King Agrippa, he says, "You know yourself, what God is doing and what Christianity is doing is nothing hidden in the corner." Oh, he nailed it. He says,

"You believe the, he says, you believe the, I know you believe him." He nailed it. Just put it to him. Just like you witnessed the people down there at that mission, or you witnessed the people in your world, or you meet people here, just like every unsaved man across this planet. When they are faced with that thing and they are gutless and cowards inside, and they have not got the steel in their backbone, they will do exactly what Agrippa did. They will say, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." And you hear, though, there is a song that somebody wrote, "Almost Persuaded."

Then the second great man in the Bible is back in the Old Testament. That would be Pharaoh back in Exodus. He is faced with Moses. The Lord Moses comes in and just nails him between the eyeballs. When you start to deal with unsaved people, they do not want to get saved, they do not want to do anything with God, but they have not got enough guts to tell you to hit the road. They will always try to compromise and buy you off. They will always tell you one of two things. They will always take the King Agrippa approach and they will say, "Well, Bob, almost, almost. I am almost there, brother. I am almost there, I am almost there."

*Proverbs 27:1*

*Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

"Almost" does not work. Then they are like Pharaoh back there with Moses. Old Moses said, "Let my people go. God is going to get down and clobber you." Moses says, faced with the power of God and the majesty of God in a type of the world situation is him as a type of an unsaved man, king of Egypt like some of you think you are king of the world. He says the same thing when faced with it. He says, "Let them go. I will let them go tomorrow." "You need to get saved." "I will do it later, Bob, I will do it later. I am just not ready. I do not have the right feeling." What kind of feeling do you have to have? You know you are a sinner? Yeah, you know you are going to hell? Yeah, what kind of feeling more do you need? You need a feeling of the flames? It is too late then. Oh yeah. I preach to unsaved people and unsaved men. I will take those two guys and put that thing right down the line and I will put it right in their lap. That is what unsaved men do when they are cowards. They do not have the courage to stand for God. You hit them right between the eyeballs, they will pull a King Agrippa and they will say, "Well almost, Bob, I am just almost there. Almost, you know, I am almost. Just not quite ready yet. Almost, I am almost there." Or it is, "No, I will do it tomorrow. I will do it later. I will do it later." Your tomorrows turn into yesterdays and they never come. That is a great sermon in there and a great model.

- Acts 27: We have him taken to Rome to stand before Caesar and he gets on a ship here. I told you this last week in Acts 27:56. I told you about the three cities, did I not? This ship here that they find to take him finally to his death, coming from Alexandria. Here is Paul's journey to Rome, finally, but he gets caught up in a shipwreck. That is a great story. He gets caught up in a shipwreck and then he spends a little time under house arrest. Finally, he makes his way to Rome. A great storm, Acts 27:14-44, and that is a great study, the Euroclydon, a great study.

- Acts 28: He goes to Rome and here is where our story ends. The last thing you find about Paul in there, it just kind of breaks off and it starts to put it all into a context for you and Paul is gone. We do know from the other books that Paul writes, he writes some of those books while he is in prison.

## VII. Conclusion: The Importance of the Bible and Discipleship

It has always been instructive to me when I understand the Book of Acts, and you should have this down now, you should have this little, simple, foolish outline up here, little twelve-inch line, mark it the eight-inch, mark it the three-inch. Put chapter seven there, chapter 21 here, that breaks, put Peter here, put Paul here, and that breaks it pretty much down for you that you have got the Book of Acts. Put the things that I gave you last week that are defined in the Book of Acts, I do not know what else I could give you, certainly do not know how much easier I could make it, but you have got one of the hardest books in the Bible. The reason why it is hard, because the key to getting this book is what you believe about the book you hold in your hands. The more education you get, the farther that book will flee from you. I am not saying you should not get education, I get clobbered all the time, because I am against education. I am not against education, I am not against higher education. I just think it does not take the place or mean anything to God when it comes to the Bible. If you are going to be a dentist, get all the education you can, I do not want you pulling the wrong tooth. If you are going to be a doctor, be a surgeon, get all the information and all the education you can, I do not want you cutting off the wrong leg. I want you to have everything you have got to have. When it comes to that Bible, stay as dumb as you can. That is good advice. One dummy to another. Stay as dumb as you can. Follow a natural outline of the book and put that thing into perspective and that is just simply how it works.

The first seven chapters, it is all the Jews. No Gentiles there, no church there. That church he is talking about is the church that was Israel's church, like the church in the wilderness that Moses had back there. He talks a little bit later on in the Book of Acts. It is dealing with the kingdom of heaven. When that thing happens in Acts chapter seven and Stephen gets killed, that thing immediately changes and it shifts to Paul. And it, three missionary trips. Then you get to chapter 20 and the thing Paul now is finished with the missionary trips. Your Book of Acts and church history begins, Acts ends and starts to go down through. You can pick it up now in history because everything has been defined for you. You have every model you need that when you get 500, 600, 800, how do you think those, what we talked about on Thursday night, how do you think those Waldensians, those Albigensians, those Novatians, how do you think they knew what to do and what not to do because they had the Book of Acts. They believed exactly what we believe. They approached it exactly like we approach it and that is why they are what we are claimed to be, a New Testament local church. That is why as I told you and explained to you and showed you Thursday night, most churches today are not New Testament local churches. They are just like the nation of Israel. They have dumped God, they have dumped the Bible and they put everything out and knocked out. Next week I am going to show you why that is. We are

going to put a little addendum on this and I am going to show you the seven things you lose when you lose your Bible. It will put everything in a crystal context of why we are who we are, why we will remain who we are, why we take the stands that we take and why we do not give a flying flip whether you like it or not. So that is what the book says to do.

Then the last thing. I think this is personally very moving for me. I cannot identify with Paul in a lot of things. I do not compare my life to his in any way, shape or form. But there is one similarity that we both have. Because when I come through the books that he writes, I note that the last book that he writes before he dies, and nobody really knows for sure how he died, but he obviously was killed by Rome. Tradition says, forget tradition. We do not know for sure. The bottom line is simply this, Rome killed him. But I look back there at the books that he writes and I see the last thing that Paul writes. The last thing that he does before he goes home to be with the Lord, and what a glorious day that will be, on this side of it, he was still thinking about the young man that God had put in his life to replace him. Because the last books he writes are 1 and 2 Timothy. When he is faced with stepping off this planet going home to his reward, on this side of it, he was still thinking about the young men that God had put in his world that it was his responsibility to train with what God had given him. I look at that and I think to myself, "You know what, there lies, there lies the difference today in churches and in pastors." They are not looking at the young men or the young ladies that God gives them. They are not looking to put their life into their life and to replace themselves. They think they are going to live forever. But that is not the way it works. The greatest thing, the greatest Christian on this planet ever taught me about a book that he wrote and I put it all together and finally saw the end of his life and 1 and 2 Timothy, how it put in there, is the last thing that guy was looking at and the last thing that guy was thinking of was the young men that God put in his life. He has spent his life training young men and young ladies in what God had given him. That is the job of every pastor on this planet, that the job of every Christian on this planet is to take somebody else and give to them what God has given to you. Do it right, do it well, but get it done. That is the job of this church. I am not interested in great crowds. I am not interested in all the great bells and whistles. I do not care about that. I look for one thing, quality young men and quality young ladies that will be willing to buy into what God has given us here and then let God open up their hearts, open up their minds and put the word of God in their life with the spirit of God in their life and open up the scriptures that they might understand the word of God. That is all it is about. It is all it ever was about and that is all it will ever be about. Let us pray. Father, we do thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We thank you, Father, for a book.