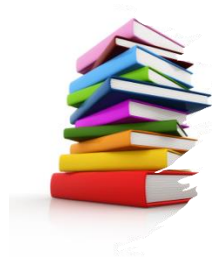


Acts 16-21 CFM Ep 212



In this outline are a few links to some of my favorite books that have really helped me understand the context and content of the scriptures. [Click here to see all of my favorite books on Amazon](#). As an Amazon Affiliate, I do earn a small commission from qualifying purchases (at no extra cost to you).

Overview

1. The Macedonian Vision (Acts 16.1-13).
2. The First Convert in Europe (Acts 16.14-21).
3. Paul and Silas put in prison (Acts 16.22-30).
4. The Jailer is Converted (Acts 16.31-40).
5. Paul in Thessalonica (Acts 17.1-9).
6. Paul in Berea (Acts 17.10).
7. Paul in Athens (Acts 17.16-21).
8. The Mars Hill Sermon (Acts 17.22-34).
9. Paul in Corinth (Acts 18-1-22).
10. Paul's Third Missionary Journey Begins (Acts 18.23-28).
11. Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19.1-10).
12. Miracles in Ephesus (Acts 19.11-41).
13. Paul in Macedonia and Greece (Acts 20.1-12).
14. Troas to Miletus (Acts 20.13-16).
15. His Farewell to Ephesus (Acts 20.17-38).
16. Paul sails from Miletus (Acts 21.1-14).
17. Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 21.15-26).
18. Paul is arrested at the Jerusalem Temple (Acts 21.27-40).

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Paul's second missionary journey, as recorded in the New Testament, took place around 49-52 AD. The basic outline of the places he visited during this journey is as follows:

1. Antioch: Paul and his companions, including Silas and Timothy, started their journey from Antioch, where they had spent some time after returning from their first journey.
2. Syria and Cilicia: They traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches that had been established during their first journey.
3. Derbe and Lystra: They revisited Derbe and Lystra, where they met a young disciple named Timothy and took him with them on their journey.
4. Phrygia and Galatia: They traveled through Phrygia and Galatia, where they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia.

5. Troas: They traveled to Troas, where Paul received a vision of a man from Macedonia calling him to come and help them.
6. Philippi: They sailed to Philippi, a leading city of Macedonia, where they met Lydia, a seller of purple, and other women who believed in Jesus. Paul and Silas were also imprisoned for casting out a spirit of divination and later released.
7. Thessalonica: From Philippi, they traveled to Thessalonica, where they preached in the synagogue and many Jews and Greeks believed in Jesus. However, the Jews stirred up trouble, and Paul and Silas had to flee the city.
8. Berea: They traveled to Berea, where they preached in the synagogue, and many people believed in Jesus. However, the Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea and caused trouble, forcing Paul to leave again.
9. Athens: From Berea, Paul traveled to Athens, where he preached to the intellectuals at the Areopagus.
10. Corinth: Paul then traveled to Corinth, where he met Aquila and Priscilla, tentmakers like himself, and worked with them. He preached in the synagogue, but when the Jews opposed him, he turned to the Gentiles, and many believed in Jesus.
11. Caesarea: After spending some time in Corinth, Paul sailed to Caesarea and took a vow before departing for Syria.
12. Return Journey: Paul and his companions sailed to Ephesus, where Paul left Aquila and Priscilla, and he returned to Antioch (Acts 18.22), completing his second missionary journey.

Acts 16-21

1. The Macedonian Vision (Acts 16.1-13).

μαθητής τις ἦν ἐκεῖ ὀνόματι Τιμόθεος "A certain disciple was there named Timotheus" (Acts 16.1).

"Timothy may have been about eighteen when Paul...added him to the missionary group on its way west to Greek lands. Perhaps Paul earlier converted his family on the first mission as he visited Lystra, Timothy's home (Acts 16:1) ... Whenever he was baptized, Timothy was well respected by the priesthood leaders in the area when Paul added him to the second mission (Acts 16:2). Nothing is known of Timothy's father beyond his being Greek. But Paul remembered Timothy's first 'sincere faith' (2 Tim. 1:5, RSV), which he received from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5). His mother was Jewish and an early convert (Acts 16:1). Thus, Paul protected him against Jewish hostility by having him circumcised (Acts 16:3). "Honoring God" is a free translation of Timothy's name, which no doubt expressed the devotion of his parents. He clearly grew through spiritual as well as physical nourishment. The King James "from a child" is probably not strong enough; Paul says literally, "From infancy you have known the holy scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15, NIV)...

Paul could not do his work without delegation and assignment. And no one was more constantly used and trusted than Timothy, whom he called his 'true child in the faith' (1 Tim. 1:2, RSV) or his 'beloved child' (2 Tim. 1:2, RSV). Paul also used these affectionate phrases earlier when he sent his trusted Timothy to settle troubles at Corinth: "I sent to you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to

remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17, RSV). Paul warned the Corinthians not to despise Timothy, but this is less an evidence of Timothy's tentativeness than of their strong opposition to all priesthood authority (1 Cor. 16:10-11). Timothy's worth is proved by his continued labors with Paul, for Timothy's history is virtually the history of Paul's missions. Paul added Timothy's name to the opening of seven letters and mentioned his trustworthiness in two others. Paul had many powerful companions, but not one continued to be closer to him."¹

Timothy had a Jewish mother and a Greek father (Acts 16.3).

Palestinian Jews considered intermarriage between Jews and pagans a horrible sin (Tobit 4:12; 1 Esdras 8:68-96; 9:7-9), ***but views were no doubt more lenient in places like Lystra, where the Jewish community was smaller.*** Under Jewish law at least as early as the second century, ***a person was presumed Jewish if his or her mother was Jewish.*** But even if that ruling was in effect in Paul's day (which is questionable), Timothy would not have been accepted as fully Jewish, because he had not been circumcised. (Wives were expected to submit to their husband's religion, and Timothy's father had probably refused to let him be circumcised.) ***Paul makes him a full Jew for the sake of his witness to the Jewish community*** (cf. the different situation addressed in Gal 2:3-4, where the issue is not witness but coercion). Paul opposed forcing circumcision on Gentiles (Acts 15:1-2), but not someone Jewish or partly Jewish identifying with their Jewish heritage for witness to their community. The Gentile community already recognized Christians as proclaimers of a form of Judaism; thus, offended as many of them were by the idea of circumcision, they would not be more offended by a circumcised Jewish Christian than by an uncircumcised Christian.²

καὶ ὄραμα διὰ τῆς νυκτὸς ὠφθη τῷ Παύλῳ **"A vision appeared to Paul in the night" (Acts 16.9).**

They assayed to go to Bithynia, but went to Macedonia (Acts 16.7-9).

"Here the Lord commands his missionaries not to preach the gospel in Asia or Bithynia, but instead to go to Macedonia. Why? It is simply a matter of sending missionaries where there are more receptive people. Of course those in Asia and elsewhere were entitled to hear the truth; all men are; but every man in his day and time and season. The Lord establishes his own system of priorities and since the laborers are few and cannot be everywhere, they are sent, by revelation, to those peoples who in God's wisdom deserve to hear the truth first."³

"We endeavored to go into Macedonia" (Acts 16.10).

Most people believed in divine guidance through dreams, or at least through some dreams. In contrast to the views of some scholars (who regard "we" as a fictitious literary device because it appears in some novels as well as in historical works), "we" in ancient historical texts nearly always *meant* "we." (A fictive eyewitness claim might have also made the narrator more central to the narrative or emphasized his presence on more dramatic occasions such as Pentecost; Luke instead indicates his presence in passing here, leaving off at Philippi, then picking up at Philippi years later [20:6] until the end of the book.) ***Luke is writing a historical work*** (novels did not have historical prologues or address very recent historical characters), ***so he is no doubt reporting that he was with Paul as an eyewitness on this and subsequent***

¹ Richard Lloyd Anderson, [Understanding Paul](#), Deseret Book, 1983, 316.

² Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#), IVP Academic, 2014, p. 368, emphasis added.

³ Bruce R. McConkie, [Doctrinal New Testament Commentary](#), 2: 147.

occasions when he uses the term. Personal eyewitness experience was considered the most dependable source for history. Historians sometimes mentioned their own presence or activity in either the first person or the third person (or both).⁴

2. The First Convert in Europe – Paul in Philippi (Acts 16.14-21).

Philippi

On Paul's second missionary journey, he and his companions, Timothy, Silas, and Luke (see [Acts 16:1–25](#)), were directed by revelation to cross the Aegean Sea and take the gospel to Macedonia—northern Greece. Their first major stop in Macedonia was at Philippi. While there, Paul drove an evil spirit out of a young woman whose masters had profited from her fortune-telling. When they saw that Paul had ruined their business, they took him and Silas to court and charged them as troublemakers. The two missionaries were whipped and imprisoned. At night an earthquake opened the prison door and loosed their bands, but rather than escaping, Paul and Silas taught the gospel to their jailer, converting him and his family. The next morning they were released.

Paul loved his Philippian converts deeply. Years later he wrote to them, expressing his affection and his desire that they remain faithful in the gospel.⁵

“Lydia, a seller of purple” (Acts 16.14).⁶

Lydia, An Influential Businesswoman

Lydia came from Thyatira, a city in the western province of Lydia in Asia Minor. Her name originally might have been the designation of her home, “a woman of Lydia.” At the time Lydia met Paul, she lived at Philippi, a leading city of Macedonia on the European continent.

As a wealthy and influential businesswoman, Lydia sold articles dyed purple, a prized color made from certain mollusks—a respectable and lucrative trade. She had a spacious home that could accommodate many guests and servants to meet their needs. This had to be a rare achievement in her day. She surely must have been a hard-working, bold, intelligent woman to achieve the success she enjoyed.

One Sabbath day, Lydia went to the river's shore that had been designated by the Roman authorities of Philippi as a place of prayer and worship for the Jews. There she met Paul and Silas, who had been in Philippi only a short time. While others along the river may have rejected Paul's words about Jesus, Lydia accepted them and became a believer. Once she believed, she made a confession of her faith to her whole world through baptism, and then she assembled her entire household, told them what had happened to her, and asked them to believe. After her entire household accepted Christ as Savior and was baptized, Lydia invited Paul and Silas to stay in her home. When Paul and Silas were thrown into a Philippian prison, Lydia visited them and attended to their needs. Her house became the meeting place of the first European church.

⁴ Keener, p. 369.

⁵ Kent P. Jackson, "[Scenes from Paul's Missionary Journeys](#)," *Ensign*, Sept. 1991.

⁶ Λυδία, a woman of Thyatira, a seller of purple, the first European convert of Paul, and afterward his hostess during his first stay at Philippi.

Lydia was quick to perceive that what had been hers before her conversion—home, business and possessions—now belonged to the Lord. She had a new partner, the Lord Jesus; a new purpose, to serve him; and a new satisfaction in seeking to be effective and successful in order to glorify the Lord. Her career aspirations did not hinder her sharing the gospel with family and friends. She was not too busy to take time for hospitality (Ac 16:15).

Lydia's name appears in Scripture only twice. She was seemingly the first Gentile convert in Europe, the ***first Christian businesswoman and the first believer to open her home as a worship center for European Christians***. Not only to Paul and the early church but also to the generations to come, Lydia proved the importance and influence of a woman of determination, foresight and generosity.⁷

Conservative Roman writers often complained that women pursued religions from the eastern Mediterranean, and both Josephus and inscriptions attest that tremendous numbers of women (far more than men) were attracted to Judaism. The sphere of religion was the one sphere in Greek culture where women were given some public responsibility, and the Diana cult in Philippi may have made women more prominent than in other Greek centers. Macedonian women traditionally exercised more freedom than Greek women, and Roman women also had more freedom than Greeks (relevant for Philippi as a Roman colony heavily influenced by Roman custom). But Greek religion consisted of ritual, not teaching, and without a local synagogue there would be little study of the law. Thus these women would have had little training in Scripture and would welcome Paul's teaching. Many men looked down on preachers who catered to women, especially when they felt that these speakers undermined women's loyalty to their family religion.

The name "Lydia," though common, would be especially natural for a woman from Thyatira, which was in the region of ancient Lydia. Thyatira was known for its dyers' guilds and textiles, and inscriptions show that other Thyatiran business agents also sold purple dye in Macedonia, becoming prosperous. (Although Macedonians, like inhabitants of most of the empire, were generally poor, Macedonia had historically been one of the more prosperous provinces.) Some plausibly suggest that her name and trade may indicate that she was a freedwoman (former slave); many traders in purple dye were freedwomen who continued to work as agents of their former masters' businesses. Other traders, however, were free born. The most expensive purple was dye that Tyrians, in Phoenicia, extracted by crushing shellfish. Some estimate that it took 10,000 shellfish to produce a little of the costly dye; despite the foul odor associated with the dye, its rareness made it a symbol of wealth and power. Some suggest that Thyatira used a cheaper form of purple from the madder plant.⁸

"A certain damsel... spirit of divination... soothsaying... Paul, being grieved" (Acts 16:16-18).

The gospel must be taught with a dignity and decorum appropriate to the kingdom of heaven. To teach it in any other way, as this revelation states, is "not of God." In like manner, an understanding of the gospel must be obtained according to that same Spirit. The testimony of the truths of heaven cannot be obtained nor nourished by any means other than the spirit of truth.⁹

⁷ "Lydia," [NIV, The Woman's Study Bible](#), Thomas Nelson, 2018.

⁸ Keener, p. 370.

⁹ Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig Ostler, [Revelations of the Restoration](#), Deseret Book, 2000, p. 383. On another occasion Joseph McConkie taught, "Why, we ask, would a woman possessed with an evil spirit bear a positive testimony of the gospel message and the servants commissioned to bear it? Because that testimony would

Verily I say unto you, he that is ordained of me and sent forth to preach the word of truth by the Comforter, in the Spirit of truth, doth he preach it by the Spirit of truth or some other way? And if it be by some other way it is not of God. And again, he that receiveth the word of truth, doth he receive it by the Spirit of truth or some other way? If it be some other way it is not of God. (D&C 50.17-20).

Compare this to Acts 16.16-18 and Mark 1.22-25, 3.11-12. In all of these references, the devils recognize Jesus and his disciples, and Jesus and his disciples tell them to cease speaking.

Joseph Smith explained, "They detected the spirit. And although she spake favorably of them, Paul commanded the spirit to come out of her and saved themselves from the opprobrium that might have been heaped upon their head through an affiance with her in the development of her wicked principles, which they certainly would have been charged with if they had not rebuked the evil spirit."¹⁰

3. Paul and Silas put in prison (Acts 16.22-30).

πολλάς τε ἐπιθέντες αὐτοῖς **πληγάς** "They laid many **stripes** upon them" (Acts 16.23).¹¹

Prisons were typically filthy, risking infection for the men's wounds. **Jailers were often known for, and sometimes chosen for, their brutality.** Women did not have separate facilities, but men were the majority of prisoners. The jailer guards them "securely" (16:23)—far more than needed for those who have just been beaten with rods. A prison's "inner cell" was usually its harshest, least ventilated, and most degrading part; jailers sometimes secured all prisoners there for the night for security reasons, here undoubtedly producing crowding. (Such conditions led to excess heat and dehydration, as well as spreading sickness.) **Wooden stocks, anchored to the floor, were often used for torture as well as detention, with extra holes so the legs could be forced into painful positions.** They were normally reserved for prisoners of low social status; prisoners in stocks could barely shift position.¹²

"There was a great earthquake... everyone's bands were loosed" (Acts 16.26).

The jailer pulls out his sword to kill himself when the prisoners escape (Acts 16.27).

Paul urges the jailor to not harm himself (Acts 16.28).

4. The Jailer is Converted (Acts 16.31-40).

Πίστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν "**Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16.31).¹³

The jailor is converted, washes Paul's stripes and believes in God (Acts 16.33-34).¹⁴

eventually give her credibility among believers, thus placing her in a position to do much harm. Her testimony was not rooted in the revelations of heaven, and no other source for the testimony of Christ is acceptable." Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Watch and Be Ready: Preparing for the Second Coming of the Lord*, Deseret Book, 1994, p. 60.

¹⁰ Kent P. Jackson, comp. and ed., *Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible*, Deseret Book, 1994, p. 153.

¹¹ πληγή = a blow, stripe, a wound. A public calamity, heavy affliction, plague, a death stroke.

¹² Keener, p. 372, emphasis added.

¹³ The Greek *pisteuein* (to trust) and *peithein* (to persuade) survive in the noun root form *pistis*. The Latin *Fidelia*, *fides* and *fiscus* (faithfulness, trust, confidence). All connote the binding influences of knowledge, persuasion, faithfulness, and trust as reciprocal aspects of relationships with things or individuals. Brent Schmidt, [Faith-pistis \(πίστις\) | \(BYU New Testament Commentary Conference 2019\)](#). This is all about developing and cultivating a trusting relationship with the Savior.

¹⁴ πανοικὶ **πεπιστευκῶς** τῷ θεῷ "**believing/trusting** in God with all his house" (Acts 16.34b).

But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out (Acts 16.37).

Because public stripping and beatings involved shame, that shame would follow the new church unless Paul and Silas can receive a measure of public vindication. Even Paul's name probably indicates his citizenship; usually only Roman citizens bore this cognomen, and Jewish people rarely if ever bore it if they were not citizens. (Silas' Roman name is "Silvanus," e.g., 2 Cor 1:19.) Roman citizenship in the provinces in this period was a mark of high status. (Paul's ancestors may have been among Jewish captives taken by the Roman general Pompey; these slaves received Roman citizenship when they were freed. The Julian law forbade binding or beating Roman citizens without trial; sometimes ancient officials ignored these rules, but Philippi, proud of its Roman heritage, did not. No one would lie about Roman citizenship once they had nothing to gain from it except to recoup their honor; falsely claiming citizenship was a capital offense, and, given enough time, documentation could be checked.

Ancient writers tell of a Roman citizen who cried out that he was a citizen during a scourging, thereby humiliating his oppressors, who had not properly recognized his high status. By waiting until after the beating (cf. 22:29) to inform the authorities that they were citizens, the missionaries had placed the magistrates themselves in an awkward legal position: now the magistrates, not the missionaries, are forced to negotiate. The *duoviri*¹⁵ could act without trial only against noncitizens, and had simply assumed without inquiry that Paul and Silas were not Roman citizens. Paul and Silas could bring a case against the magistrates; if found guilty of depriving Roman citizens of rights, the magistrates could be barred from office, and their city could (in principle, though it was rare) lose privileges. This strategy might help secure the future safety of the fledgling Christian community.¹⁶

5. Paul in Thessalonica (Acts 17.1-9).

Thessalonica was an important city in this period, Macedonia's largest port, capital of its old second district and now residence of the provincial governor. Although the real population must have been much lower, the highest estimates of Thessalonica's population place it at about two hundred thousand, roughly ten times the population of the average ancient city. While Rome did not grant Thessalonica "colony" status (unlike Philippi; see 16:12), it made it a "free" (mostly self-governing) city.¹⁷

Turmoil in Thessalonica

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people (Acts 17.5).

Jason

Jason of Thessalonica was a Jewish convert and early Christian believer mentioned in the New Testament in Acts 17:5–9 and Romans 16:21. Jason is venerated as a saint in Catholic and Orthodox traditions. In

¹⁵ Duoviri, also spelled Duumviri, singular Duovir, or Duumvir, in ancient Rome, a magistracy of two men. Duoviri perduellionis were two judges, selected by the chief magistrate, who tried cases of crime against the state. [Duoviri, Britannica](#). Accessed 3.20.23.

¹⁶ Keener, p. 373.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 374.

Acts 17 his house in Thessalonica was used as a refuge by the apostles Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Some Thessalonian Jews were annoyed with Paul's remarks in the synagogue and not finding him and Silas, hauled Jason before the city authorities, where he was fined and released.

Paul referred to Jason, Lucius and Sosipater as his "countrymen" (Greek: οἱ συγγενεῖς μου) in Romans 16.21, which has led some to call him "Jason of Tarsus" (since Paul was from Tarsus). However, most scholars understand Paul's use of "countryman" here and elsewhere to mean "fellow Jew." Both references to Jason point 'very probably' to the same person. Vlatades Monastery in Thessaloniki is believed to have been built on the former site of Jason's house.¹⁸

“They let them go” (Acts 17.9).

As their host (Acts 17.6), Jason is held responsible for their actions and required to post bond for them, as if they were members of his household. Nevertheless, the officials possibly recognized that Paul and Silas posed little real threat to order, and simply accommodate the mob to allow the situation to quiet down. Usual punishments for genuinely stirring unrest were serious. By contrast, a fine was a lenient penalty as far as Roman courts went, and a bond to curtail troublemakers would not have been unusual. But given the charge (v. 7), had Paul himself been caught, he might not have been so fortunate. The politarchs' decision would stand till they left office (cf. 1 Thess 2:18). Laws and rulings in Greek cities did not apply outside their area; ***so long as Paul and Silas keep moving, his antagonists must charge him anew in each city.***¹⁹

6. Paul in Berea (Acts 17.10-15).

The people in Berea were (εὐγενέστεροι) “more noble” than those in Thessalonica, in other words, they were more receptive to Paul's message (Acts 17.11).

Judaism regarded nobly those who checked everything against the Scriptures and diligently listened to teachers; Greek philosophers likewise praised those who listened attentively.²⁰

7. Paul in Athens (Acts 17.16-21).

“While Paul waited... at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him...” (Acts 17.16).

Athens was a spectacular, if temporary, stop. Modern translations add realism to Paul's visit to the center of classicism. The narrative breathes the spirit of Athenian life, as F. F. Bruce observes: "Classical students feel that they are on home ground, and the scene and the argument have all the appearance of authenticity." Paul was depressed to see a city overfilled with idols. The view is confirmed by other ancient travelers and by rich archaeological finds; there were temples, altars, public statues of the Olympians, and special images to lesser divinities at houses and roads. The ancient joke ran that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens. Paul began in the synagogue with Jews and "the devout persons" (Acts 17.17) and then moved to the "market" (*agora*), now the broad excavated area lying

¹⁸ [Jason of Thessalonica, Wikipedia](#). Accessed 3.20.23.

¹⁹ Keener, p. 375, emphasis added.

²⁰ Keener, p. 375.

below the Acropolis. It was then filled with buildings for government, commerce, entertainment, and worship.²¹

Philosophers ... Epicureans... Stoics (Acts 17.18).

Epicureans²² were influential only in the educated upper classes, and their views about God were similar to deism (he was uninvolved in the universe and irrelevant); if there were gods, they were only those known through sense knowledge, like stars or planets. Life's goal was pleasure, which they defined as the lack of physical pain and emotional disturbance. **Stoics**²³ were more popular, opposed pleasure, and criticized Epicureans (though not as much as they had in previous times). Here, as in 23:6, Paul practices the maxim "divide and conquer": 17:22-29 is calculated to gain a Stoic hearing, but Paul and the Epicureans have much less common ground.

Zeno the founder of the Stoic school of philosophy,²⁴ reacted to paganism in terms of the meaning of life and the question of immortality, the existence of the gods, and the moral duty of man. Zeno rationalized the gods into a system, seeing reason as the practical force behind all. Man's main duty was *duty*—putting himself into harmony with his intrinsic destiny. Since this was also a basic ideal of Roman religion and literature, Stoicism flourished to become the majority view of the governing classes of Paul's day.²⁵

²¹ Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Missionary Message in Acts," *Understanding Paul*, Deseret Book.

²² In a strict sense, these people adhered to the philosophy taught by Epicurus (341–270 BCE). In a broad sense, Epicureanism is a system of ethics embracing every conception or form of life that can be traced to the principles of his philosophy. In ancient polemics, as often since, the term was employed with an even more generic (and clearly erroneous) meaning as the equivalent of hedonism, the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the chief good. In popular parlance, Epicureanism thus means devotion to pleasure, comfort, and high living, with a certain nicety of style. [Epicureanism, Britannica](#). Accessed 3.20.23.

²³ Stoicism was one of the dominant philosophical systems of the Hellenistic period. The name derives from the porch (*stoa poikilê*) in the Agora at Athens decorated with mural paintings, where the first generation of Stoic philosophers congregated and lectured. In accord with their ontology, the Stoics make God a corporeal entity, identical with the active principle. God is further characterized as eternal reason (*logos*: Diogenes Laertius, 44B) or intelligent designing fire or breath (*pneuma*) which structures matter in accordance with its plan (Aetius, 46A). The Stoic God is thus immanent throughout the cosmos and directs its development down to the smallest detail. [Stoicism, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#). Accessed. 3.20.23.

²⁴ Zeno (334-262 BCE) was the founder of the Stoic school of philosophy, which he taught in Athens from about 300 BC. Based on the moral ideas of the [Cynics](#), Stoicism laid great emphasis on goodness and peace of mind gained from living a life of virtue in accordance with nature. It proved very popular, and flourished as one of the major schools of philosophy from the Hellenistic period through to the Roman era, and enjoyed revivals in the Renaissance as Neostoicism and in the current era as Modern Stoicism. [Zeno of Citium, Wikipedia](#). Accessed 3.20.23

²⁵ Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Two Restless Worlds," *Understanding Paul*, Deseret Book, 1983. The author continues, "Stoicism spoke of cycles and periodic destruction in cosmic fire, but Stoics from Paul's time strongly hinted at the survival of the soul. Popular religion included the practice of grave offerings to the souls of the dead, and surviving gravestones show widespread belief in some kind of survival of loved ones, though many inscriptions reject hope and bluntly admit the total termination of life in death. Epicurus also taught the latter, making personal obliteration a negative triumph over pain and infirmity. The Epicureans were a minority philosophy for the educated of Paul's time, **perpetuating the founder's theory that gods existed but paid no attention to mankind**. But both Stoicism and Epicureanism joined in upholding the Greek philosophy of the disciplined life, one dedicated to seek happiness (not cheap pleasure) through willpower and wise actions. Thus, when Paul stood before Stoics and Epicureans at Athens (as Acts 17 describes), he capitalized on their rejection of religion but declared a physical immortality unknown to their thought." See also: C.K. Barrett, [The New Testament Background: Selected Documents](#), Harper and Row, 1961, p. 61-75.

Stoicism emphasized the importance of self-control, rationality, and a sense of duty to others. These Greek Stoics believed that individuals should accept the things they cannot change and focus on what they can control. This included their own thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Stoicism also held that people should be indifferent to pleasure and pain, wealth and poverty, and success and failure. This was not because these things were inherently bad, but because they were external and ultimately outside of one's control.

Although Stoics still professed belief in the gods, many philosophers were considered impious, because they questioned the old traditions, although allowing them for the masses. The charge against Paul, "proclaimer of strange deities," would remind Greek readers of the charge of impiety against Socrates centuries earlier (cf. 17:19-20; e.g., Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.1.1; Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 43.9). Others had been prosecuted for the charge in earlier centuries, and it still violated the Athenian psyche in Paul's day.²⁶

They took him... unto Areopagus (Acts 17.19).

Both Stoics and Epicureans rejected the mythology of the gods, so they were confused by the apostle who rejected paganism but taught the strange physical resurrection. They brought him to "Areopagus" (Acts 17.19), which can be translated either the "hill of Ares" or as the proper name of the civic council that had met there in earlier centuries. In the King James translation, Paul stands "in the midst of Mars' hill" (Acts 17.22), but the Greek is still "Areopagus." So many modern translations add "council" or "meeting," since "in the midst of" prefacing the speech (Acts 17.22) is the same Greek construction for Paul leaving "from among them" at the end of the speech (Acts 17.33). Paul probably spoke to the Athenian governing body, which then met in the market and which would inquire into the possible harmfulness of the "new doctrine" that he taught (Acts 17.19).²⁷

Socrates had also been "led" or "brought" to the Areopagus many centuries before, as was well known. Socrates was the ideal philosopher, and Luke may portray Paul as a new Socrates for his Greek audience; given the outcome of Socrates's speech (which, like Stephen's, provoked his hearers to martyr him), this allusion builds suspense, although no one would expect the Areopagus to execute anyone for ideas in this period.

The Areopagus is here the council, not the site earlier used for this council (the literal hill of Ares). In this period the council may have met in the Stoa Basileios, in the Agora where Paul had already been ministering (v. 17). Because Rome had made Athens a "free" city, it had its own ruling bodies: another council, the city assembly, and, highest of all, the Areopagus. It was Athens's chief court, consisting in this period of probably roughly a hundred elite members. They had authority to evaluate new cults coming to town, and city officials would also evaluate potential lecturers who sought official platforms (though mere discussion in the market would require no accreditation).²⁸

8. The Mars Hill Sermon (Acts 17.22-34).

²⁶ Keener, p. 376.

²⁷ Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Missionary Message in Acts," *Understanding Paul*, Deseret Book, 1983

²⁸ Keener, p. 376.

This Athenian background is useful because Acts gives Paul's speech at length. Aside from Paul's later public defenses, Acts gives one long speech on each missionary journey, and their ideas and vocabulary have close relationships to Paul's letters. In addition to the typical Jewish speech in the Pisidian synagogue, the Athens speech adds Paul's typical words to educated Gentiles. Though delivered in Athens, it could be titled "Paul's Letter to the Stoic Philosophers," since he quoted their poets. When Strabo listed famous philosophers of Tarsus, most were Stoics, a pattern for the empire. Paul began with a local detail; in the city known for divine images, he discovered an altar dedicated to an "unknown god." A traveler in Paul's time also reported seeing "altars to the gods named unknown" in the Athenian harbor area. Paul used this theme as the cutting edge. Paganism was unsure of itself, realizing that there may be other deities still not placated. But Paul appealed to the sense of his educated audience. Temples symbolized pagan mythology, which was inherited from times of ignorance—times of "lack of knowledge," which God had "overlooked" (Acts 17:30, literal trans.). ***Stoicism and Epicureanism both denounced pagan superstition. But if they knew enough to criticize paganism, they were still ignorant of the true God and his revealed son.*** Paul appealed to the conscience of his audience as he warned of a coming day of accountability, proved by the mission of Christ and the reality that God had "raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Paul's reasoning cuts as sharply through confusion today: without revelation men do not know the true God and his wishes for them. Surprisingly, some commentators see the Athens speech as an experiment in intellectualism, one abandoned as Paul taught the simple gospel again at Corinth. But the opposite was the case, for Paul diagnosed the shortcomings of intellectualism and challenged the Athenians to leave speculation for scripture.²⁹

κατὰ πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ “I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious” (Acts 17.22).³⁰

διερχόμενος γὰρ καὶ ἀναθεωρῶν τὰ σεβάσματα ὑμῶν εὔρον καὶ βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπεγέγραπτο Ἄγνώστῳ θεῷ ὃν οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε **τοῦτον ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν** “For passing through and seeing your

²⁹ Anderson, [Understanding Paul](#), emphasis added.

³⁰ δεισιδαιμονεστέρους - The word "δεισιδαιμονεστέρους" (deisidaimonesterous), the compound of a derivative of the base of δειλός "fearful," and δαίμων "god/goddess, lesser divinity" (see our discussion in [Episode 195](#)), used by Paul in Acts 17.22 to describe the Athenians can be translated as "very religious" or "superstitious." The big at the end of this Greek word is a comparative suffix. This Greek word can be interpreted in different ways. There are a few ways to read Paul's statement:

1. Positive interpretation: It was customary to begin a speech by complimenting the hearers in the opening exordium, designed to secure their favor (Keener, p. 376). Paul may have been using the word "deisidaimonesterous" as a compliment to the Athenians for their piety and devotion to the gods. In this interpretation, Paul is acknowledging their religious fervor and using it as a starting point to introduce them to the true God.
2. Negative interpretation: Paul may have been using the word "deisidaimonesterous" as a criticism of the Athenians' excessive religiosity and superstition. In this interpretation, Paul is highlighting the fact that their religious practices are misguided and based on false beliefs.
3. Neutral interpretation: Paul may have been using the word "deisidaimonesterous" simply as a descriptive term to characterize the Athenians' religious beliefs and practices without necessarily passing judgment on them. In this interpretation, Paul is acknowledging the Athenians' religious worldview and using it as a way to connect with them and present his own message.
4. He was speaking in code. What if Paul meant to both compliment his listeners as well as to criticize them at the same time, thus communicating a nuanced message to those with ears to understand his message? By communicating this way, he could teach like Jesus, speaking in code and also avoid offending in certain ways at the same time.

pious worship, I discovered an altar that was engraved saying 'To an unknown God.' So then, **this**, who you unknowingly worship, **I am proclaiming to you all.**" (Acts 17.23, my translation)³¹

Epimenides of Crete, who lived around 7th-6th century B.C., went to Athens to stop a deadly disease. He sacrificed a sheep on altars that were not dedicated to any particular god, but instead were dedicated to an "unknown god." One of these altars was still around during Paul's time. When Paul visited Athens, he saw many different religious monuments and institutions in the city, and was struck by the altar dedicated to the "unknown god." This reminded him of a passage from a poem by Epimenides, which he later quoted to Titus.³²

When Paul was asked to speak to the Court of Areopagus, he used the inscription on this altar and Epimenides' poem as his starting point. He explained that the "unknown god" was a reflection of the Athenians' deep religious feeling, but also showed their ignorance of the true nature of God. Although their own poets had given some insight into God, it was only through the teachings of Jesus' authorized servants that the true nature of God could be fully understood. For Paul, the revelation of the nature of Jesus and his Divine Sonship was more vital than that of all the wisdom of the philosophers of his day. Truly God is revealed or forever remains unknown.

God has made us one blood all nations of men (Acts 17.26).

For Jews, creation from "one" meant from Adam; it contradicts an Athenian tradition of a special origin of Athenians from the soil. Jews and many Greeks agreed that God was creator and divider of the earth's boundaries and of seasons' boundaries; here, however, Paul probably has in mind especially human epochs and (as in Genesis 10) the boundaries of peoples.³³

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught:

"I think often of Longfellow's couplet: 'There is so much of bad in the best of us, and so much of good in the worst of us, that it ill becomes any of us to talk about the rest of us.' My heart has resonated with Paul's declaration to the men of Athens: 'And [God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth' (Acts 17:26).

Each of us [from various religious denominations] believes in the fatherhood of God, although we may differ in our interpretations of Him. Each of us is part of a great family, the human family, sons and daughters of God, and therefore brothers and sisters. We must work harder to build mutual respect, an

³¹ In the Greek text of Acts 17:23, the phrase "to an unknown God" is represented by the single word "Ἀγνώστῳ" (Agnōstōi), which is in the dative case. The dative case in Greek can be translated in several ways, including "to," "for," "by," or "with," depending on the context. In this case, the phrase "Ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ" is most often translated as "to an unknown God," where "Ἀγνώστῳ" (Agnōstōi) is the dative form of "ἄγνωστος" (agnōstos), meaning "unknown," and "θεῷ" (theō) is the dative form of "θεός" (theos), meaning "God."

³² See Titus 1.12 where Paul says that "One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." The saying Paul quotes here has been attributed to several sources, the earliest being the sixth-century B.C. teacher Epimenides of Knossos in Crete. By Paul's time Epimenides was reputed to have been a traveling wonderworker, teacher and prophet; as usual in Greek thought, the line between poetic and prophetic inspiration could be thin. Although the saying seems to have become proverbial (one commentator declares that "to cretize" became slang for "to lie"), it is not impossible that Paul knew the works of Epimenides; it seems much more likely, however, that he knew only the attributed saying or at most an anthology containing sayings attributed to Epimenides. Keener, p. 627.

³³ Keener, p. 377.

attitude of forbearance, with tolerance one for another regardless of the doctrines and philosophies which we may espouse. Concerning these you and I may disagree. But we can do so with respect and civility.

To those who are members of the church of which I am a member, I call attention to these words of Joseph Smith spoken in July of 1843: 'If it has been demonstrated that I have been willing to die for a 'Mormon,' I am bold enough to declare before heaven that I am just as ready to die in defending the rights of a Presbyterian, a Baptist, or a good man of any other denomination; for the same principle which would trample upon the rights of the Latter-day Saints would trample upon the rights of the Roman Catholics, or of any other denomination . . .' (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 498.) This, I hope, can be my standard. . . .

Catholics, Protestants, Mormons, Greek Orthodox, Muslims, and people of various racial backgrounds and ethnic origins: Thank you for the respect you exemplify and cultivate, for the tolerance you nourish, for the spirit of forbearance and civility which you demonstrate. We must continue, even more vigorously, to work unitedly for the common good, teaching our children to do likewise, so that the world, at least in some small measure, may be healed of its wounds and spared the scars of further conflict. (National Conference of Christians and Jews Banquet, February 21, 1995.)

"I plead with our people everywhere to live with respect and appreciation for those not of our faith. There is so great a need for civility and mutual respect among those of differing beliefs and philosophies. We must not be partisans of any doctrine of ethnic superiority. We live in a world of diversity. We can and must be respectful toward those with whose teachings we may not agree. We must be willing to defend the rights of others who may become the victims of bigotry."³⁴

Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν “For we are even his offspring” (Acts 17.28).

Jewish people usually spoke of God as a father to his people (in the Old Testament, e.g., Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 63:16; 64:8; Jeremiah 3:4). But Greeks (including some Stoic thinkers), Diaspora Jews and some second-century Christian writers spoke of God as the world's father in the sense of creator, as here. Stoics believed that deity pervaded all things, though Hellenistic Jews applied such language to God's omnipresence, not (as in many early Stoics) to pantheism. "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28) has long been attributed to the Greek poet Epimenides (from the same poem as Tit 1:12), who in one tradition was the person who advised building altars to the unknown gods (cf. 17:23). The other quotation, "we are his offspring," is likeliest from the third century B.C. Greek poet [Aratus](#), who was from Paul's region, Cilicia (a similar line appears in the Stoic Cleanthes). It appears in Jewish anthologies of proof texts useful for showing pagans the truth about God, and Paul may have learned it from such a text. (Greeks cited Homer and other poets as proof texts in a manner similar to how Jewish people cited Scripture; they also exhibited their education by their array of quotations.)³⁵

President Hinckley taught:

Every man or woman who ever walked the earth, even the Lord Jesus, was once a boy or girl like you. They grew according to the pattern they followed. If that pattern was good, then they became good men

³⁴ Gordon B. Hinckley, "[This Is the Work of the Master](#)," *Ensign*, April 1995 Conference. See also: *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, Deseret Book, 1997, p. 665.

³⁵ Keener, p. 377-378.

and women. Never forget, my dear young friends, that you really are a child of God who has inherited something of His divine nature, one whom He loves and desires to help and bless. I pray that our Heavenly Father will bless you. May He smile with favor upon you. May you walk in His paths and follow His teachings. May you never speak the evil language that boys and girls are inclined to speak at school. May you ever be prayerful unto Him, praying always in the name of His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. May each of us resolve to always follow Him in faith. May life be kind to you, for you are indeed a child of God, worthy and deserving of His love and blessing.³⁶

Elder M. Russell Ballard taught:

"Before the world was created, we all lived as the spirit children of our Heavenly Father. Through a natural process of inheritance we received in embryo the traits and attributes of our Heavenly Father. We are His spirit children. Some of what our Eternal Father is, we have inherited. What he has become we may become."³⁷

Most Christians Disagree with the Idea that God is our Father

From my conversations with many Christians of different denominations over the years, I have been told by nearly all of them that they do not accept the idea the God is our Father in a literal sense. They mainly see this as a metaphor for God as creator, sustainer, and protector of good things and the upholder of life.³⁸ How was the identity of our Heavenly Father lost? This was something that took many years to unfold, but it started with the reforms of the Deuteronomistic reforms of the 7th century B.C. and continued through the ages into the time of the Creeds.³⁹

One scholar explains, "It is the idea of God as Father which is most characteristic of NT teaching in general and especially of the teaching of Jesus. Whereas the contemporary pagan world held its gods in fear or uncertainty, the Christian view of God's parenthood brings an unparalleled element of intimacy into human relationship with God. Nevertheless, while there are striking aspects in Jesus' concept of God as Father carried forward into the letters, the idea is not absent from the OT or from Jewish usage. God is conceived of as Father of his people. The Israelite king could be conceived of as an individual son of God (Ps 2). Israel could be called "my son" (Hosea 11:1). ***But this tended to be a nationalistic idea rather than an individual relationship***, though there is a development in the direction of a personal relationship with God as parent in Sirach 4:10, *Psalms of Solomon* 17:30 and *Jubilees* 1:24–25.⁴⁰

Paul saved the hard part for the end of his speech (Acts 17.30).

³⁶ Gordon B. Hinckley, "[You are a child of God,](#)" April 2003 Conference.

³⁷ M. Russell Ballard, *Our Search for Happiness: An Invitation to Understand The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints*, Deseret Book, 1993, p. 70.

³⁸ See: Mark J. Kelly, "[The Fatherhood of God,](#)" Catholicism. Accessed 3.21.23. Kelly writes, "In the Old Testament, God is often referred to in a metaphorical way as a father. Sometimes God is referred to with the use of a maternal metaphor (for example, Ex 19:4); it is important to note that most if not all the Old Testament references are metaphors."

³⁹ For an introduction on the loss of truths relating to God, his fatherhood and nature, after the time period of Christ and his apostles, see: Joseph Fielding McConkie, [Sons and Daughters of God: The Loss and Restoration of our Divine Inheritance](#), Bookcraft, 1994.

⁴⁰ [Dictionary of Paul and his Letters](#), edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid, IVP Academic, 1993, p. 357, emphasis added.

τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπερίδων ὁ θεὸς τὰ νῦν παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάσιν πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν “Certainly then of these times this not knowing God, he has overlooked these things, now God commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17.30, my translation).

Speakers often saved their most contentious points for the conclusion of their speeches, initially attempting to establish common ground. Throughout his speech, Paul cultivated a rapport with some of his listeners, only to challenge their beliefs in the end. While philosophers typically emphasized a conversion to philosophy through a shift in thinking, Paul articulated the Jewish concept of "repentance toward God." His declaration of their lack of knowledge regarding God, both here and in verse 23, would hardly be viewed as complimentary by many philosophers.

Joseph Smith taught, "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance." (*Teachings*, p. 301) Yet, God is merciful to those who never received the law. This mercy is available through Christ's atonement, as taught in the Law of Moses, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord... [the priest] shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering...the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them (Lev 4:2,20).

The people of Athens mocked Paul’s teaching of the Resurrection (Acts 17.32).

Although Paul’s message to the intellectual elite of his day does not produce massive immediate results, his ministry to the Areopagus is effective, apparently reaching even some of the elite.

Unlike many philosophers, Epicureans (17:18) denied the soul’s immortality: they believed that the soul was material, like the body, and died with it. Greeks traditionally believed in a shadowy afterlife in the underworld (perhaps similar to the *Old Testament *refa'im*); some no longer believed in afterlife; some now accepted reincarnation (found in some philosophers); under Plato’s influence some Greeks sought to free the immortal soul from worldly existence so it could escape back to the pure heavens from which it was created. Stoics believed that the soul lived on after death (although, like everything else, it was cyclically resolved back into primeval fire), but like other Greeks they could not conceive of a resurrection of the body. Many Greeks believed in ghosts (disembodied souls) on the earth, but physical “resurrection” would conjure images of reconstituting corpses.⁴¹

9. Paul in Corinth (Acts 18.1-22).

Corinth



Corinth was fifty-three miles west of Athens, so the next natural stop for Paul; but it was also strategic. Rome destroyed Corinth in 146 B.C.; some Greeks continued to live on the site, but it was revived as a city again only when Julius Caesar refounded it as a Roman colony in 44 B.C. Although one of Athens’s ancient rivals, after being revived it had long since surpassed Athens. Its citizens were citizens of Rome, and official inscriptions emphasize its Roman character, but many Greeks (and others) continued to live there, with an apparent influx

⁴¹ Keener, p. 378.

of more non-Romans in this period. ***Roman Corinth was the political and economic center of Greece***, the capital of the Roman province of Achaia and the transit point for all maritime trade between Rome and the prosperous Roman province of Asia. It was dominated by its acropolis (upper city) on a mountain next to the city and by the ancient temple of Apollo in the city's center. Paul came to Corinth on his second missionary journey and stayed there for one and one-half years. The book of Acts records that some of Paul's Jewish opponents brought him to the judgment seat to have him tried as a civic menace. The Roman governor had no interest in the matter and dismissed the case. Archaeologists have discovered a public podium at the agora, and some have suggested that this site may be the location where Paul's trial took place. After leaving his converts in Corinth, Paul stayed in touch with them. The New Testament preserves two letters he wrote to them during his third missionary journey.⁴²

Aquila and Priscilla ... because Claudius commanded all Jews to depart from Rome (Acts 18.2).

Like Tiberius, an earlier emperor, Claudius officially expelled the Jewish community from Rome (probably around A.D. 49); probably only some of the Jewish community actually left, but those who left undoubtedly included leading figures in the controversy that precipitated the expulsion. (Jews who were Roman citizens probably would not have been forced to leave.) Suetonius, a Roman historian, is often understood as indicating that the Jewish community was expelled because of disturbances about the Messiah, perhaps caused by opposition to Jewish Christians. ***Given Luke's emphasis on legal precedents in favor of Christianity (18:14-16), it is easy to see why Luke would omit that detail.*** Corinth was a major conduit for trade with Rome and a primary destination of Roman ships; it was heavily Romanized and a natural destination for someone leaving Rome for the East.⁴³

ἦσαν γὰρ σκηνοποιοὶ “For they were tentmakers” (Acts 18.3).

By this period, the term translated “tentmaker” was also applied to leatherworking in general; scholars debate which is intended here. Leatherworkers were artisans; Paul could have also carried his leatherworking tools from city to city. Artisans were typically proud of their work, despite the long hours they had to invest to succeed, and were higher than peasants in status and income; but they were despised by higher classes, who thought most labor with one's hands degrading (see the conflicts described in the introduction to 1 Corinthians; comment on 1 Cor 4:12). Some sages worked (Cynics even begged), but the elite usually preferred to pay sages a salary or be their patrons. (Many Jewish teachers viewed labor more positively; boys learned trades as apprentices, often to their own fathers.) Artisans' long hours in their shops afforded them much time to talk while doing their work, but Paul apparently is able to discontinue the labor (1 Cor 4:12) when his companions bring a gift from the Macedonian church (v. 5; 2 Cor 11:8-9; 12:13; Phil 4:15).⁴⁴

Silas and Timotheus (Acts 18.5).

Crispus, the ἀρχισυνάγωγος chief ruler of the synagogue trusted the Lord (Acts 18.8).

Paul stays in Corinth 18 months (Acts 18.11).

⁴² Kent P. Jackson, "[Scenes from Paul's Missionary Journeys](#)," *Ensign*, Sept. 1991.

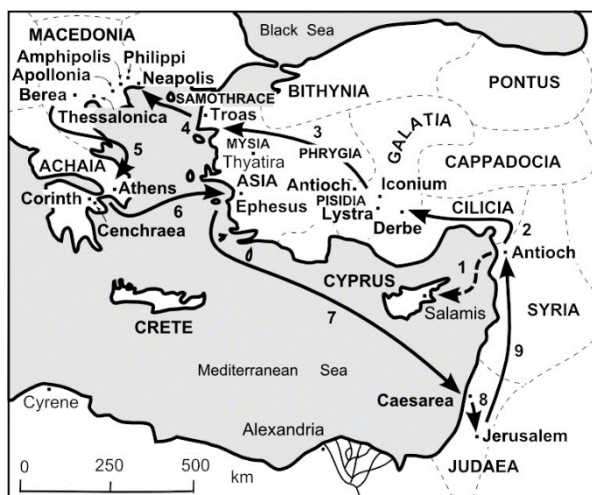
⁴³ Keener, p. 379, emphasis added.

⁴⁴ Keener, p. 379.

A disagreement between some Jews over Paul's teaching ensues. Gallio, the deputy of Achaia, throws out the case (Acts 18.12-17).

That Gallio "drove them away," perhaps with the force of his lictors' (attendants') rods, betrays more than a tinge of Roman impatience for Jewish religious disputes. Many upper-class Romans viewed Jews as uncultured troublemakers, classing them alongside other religions from Syria and Egypt (cf. 16:20-21).⁴⁵

Paul cuts his hair and heads over to Ephesus (Acts 18.18).



The act of shaving one's head served as a symbolic culmination of a vow in Paul's time. Such vows, according to the Biblical Dictionary, could either be perpetual, as in the case of individuals who were consecrated as Nazarites, or temporal, as was the case with Paul. Although the specifics of Paul's vow are unknown, it is plausible that it was a personal undertaking. During the duration of his vow, he observed the Nazarite practice of refraining from cutting his hair. As such, the shearing of his hair signified the release from his obligation to fulfill the vow.⁴⁶

Paul leaves Ephesus⁴⁷ and goes to Caesarea

Maritima⁴⁸ on the coast of Israel 425 miles south of Antioch and 75 miles north of Jerusalem (Acts 18.22).

⁴⁵ Keener, p. 381.

⁴⁶ Technically one shaved at the completion of the vow when offering sacrifice (Num 6:18), thus in Jerusalem. Paul may have shaved before a vow fulfilled later in Jerusalem in Acts 18:22 (if he stopped in Jerusalem) or two years later in 21:17-26. Keener, p. 381. "A specific example of a vow was the Nazarite consecration. The Nazarite, literally one 'separated' or 'set apart,' was a person (male or female) who took a vow of holiness, an oath of abstinence from the world. Such a vow could last anywhere from a short period to an entire lifetime. Abstinence from fruit of the vine (e.g., grapes, grape juice, wine, raisins) was enjoined on the initiate. In addition, he was not to cut his hair nor touch a dead person (even a family member) during the time of separation (Num. 6:1-18). Notable Nazarites include Samson (Judg. 13:5), Samuel (1 Sam. 1:11), and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15). It appears that Paul the Apostle also participated in vows of this sort (Acts 18:18)." Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet, editors, *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 3: Genesis to 2 Samuel*, Deseret Book, 2004.

⁴⁷ During Paul's era, Ephesus was the preeminent city in the Roman province of Asia, serving as the seat of the governor. With an extensive history that spanned numerous centuries, the population of the city is believed to have reached at least one hundred thousand individuals, although some estimates suggest it may have been twice that amount. As the fourth-ranked city within the empire, Ephesus attracted numerous foreigners, as well as an emerging economic elite that did not depend on ancestral nobility. The Jewish community had long enjoyed privileges within the city, as noted by Josephus in *Against Apion* 2.39.

⁴⁸ Herod the Great built this great seaport city, constructed on the coast of the Mediterranean, in honor of Caesar and named it "Caesarea Maritima." [Herod was a client king of Rome, who ruled his province with Rome's approval and authority and with the consent of his friend and patron, the Emperor Augustus. It is possible, even likely, that Jesus was born the same year that Herod the Great died - in 4 BCE.] Caesarea's strategic location placed it at the juncture of important trade routes. But the harbor itself offered no natural advantages; the currents were

Paul leaves Caesarea and heads north to Antioch (Acts 18.22).

10. Paul's Third Missionary Journey Begins (Acts 18.23-28).

After his time in Antioch, Paul departs on what is commonly called his third missionary journey (Acts 18.23).



Paul's third missionary journey began with his departure from Antioch, accompanied by Silas and Timothy. He revisited the churches he had established during his second journey in Galatia and Phrygia before arriving in Ephesus. In Ephesus, Paul preached in the synagogue and established a church, performing many miracles and facing opposition from those who feared his teachings would hurt their businesses. Paul then continued on to Macedonia and Achaia, strengthening the churches there before returning to Miletus to give a farewell address to the

elders of the Ephesian church. Paul then journeyed to Jerusalem, where he was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. He was transferred to Caesarea and tried before Felix and Festus, eventually appealing to Caesar. Paul survived a shipwreck on the way to Rome and arrived there, where he was allowed to live under house arrest. According to ancient sources such as Clement, Dionysius, Eusebius and Tertullian, Paul was executed by beheading, a death befitting a Roman citizen. Ancient records suggest that Nero knew Paul personally, so it's likely that he had Paul beheaded through order of the prefects of Rome.⁴⁹ Despite his imprisonment, Paul continued to preach and write letters to various churches, including the letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

11. Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19.1-10).

Ephesus

Ephesus was a prosperous center of commerce, culture, and religion. Much of its wealth came from its location on the Aegean coast at the end of major trade routes from the Near East. But Ephesus also achieved both fame and wealth because it was the center for the worship of the goddess Artemis (identified with the Roman Diana in the KJV). ***The temple of Artemis in Ephesus was considered the***

dangerous and there were problems with silting. Using ingenious technical advances, Herod's engineers constructed two huge breakwaters, lined with warehouses. At the end of the southern breakwater stood the lighthouse, whose fires burned 24 hours a day. Six enormous bronze statues marked treacherous sandbars. To ships coming in from sea, the sight must have been truly impressive. [Caesarea Maritima, PBS](#). Accessed 3.21.23.

⁴⁹ Eusebius records that Paul was beheaded in Rome in Eusebius, [The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine](#), Dorset Press, 1983, p. 104. (See: Book 2, 25). See also: [The Execution of Paul, Drive Thru History](#). Accessed 3.21.23. For Eusebius, and many other authors, Christian and non-Christian, the culmination of Nero's madness was his persecution of the Christians (which according to Tacitus commenced after the Great Fire of Rome in 64 CE). In II.25.1-5 Eusebius locates Paul's (and Peter's) martyrdom during this persecution, when Nero had firmly declared himself an "enemy of the divine religion" (II.25.3). See: [Eusebius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History II.22.1-8](#). Accessed 3.21.23.

most beautiful of the seven wonders of the ancient world. About 360 feet long and 170 feet wide, it was one of the largest and most well-known buildings in the Roman Empire.



Paul stayed in Ephesus for two years on his third missionary journey, preaching the gospel and directing the missionary activities of others throughout the province of Asia. Although he and his companions had tremendous success in Ephesus, they experienced opposition from silversmiths who made shrines for the worship of Artemis. The silversmiths started a large public demonstration against them, and the mob rushed into the city's theater, where they demonstrated for hours on behalf of their goddess and against Paul and his fellow workers.

Today Ephesus, on the west coast of Turkey, is one of the most fabulous of all ancient ruins. The theater still remains. Enlarged somewhat after Paul's time, it seats more than twenty thousand people. Following centuries of economic decline, earthquakes, and plundering, the once-proud temple of Artemis is now a pile of rocks. But Paul's message remains and fills the earth with the testimony that he bore—that Jesus is the Christ and that His gospel is the way to salvation for all people.⁵⁰

“Unto what were you baptized? ... Unto John’s baptism” (Acts 19.3).

Joseph Smith taught:

When Paul came to certain disciples, he asked if they had received the Holy Ghost? They said, No. Who baptized you, then? We were baptized unto John's baptism. No, you were not baptized unto John's baptism, or you would have been baptized by John. And so Paul went and baptized them, for he knew what the true doctrine was, and he knew that John had not baptized them. And these principles are strange to me, that men who have read the Scriptures of the New Testament are so far from it.⁵¹

Divers were hardened... disputing (διαλεγόμενος = discoursing⁵²) daily in the school of one Tyrannus (Acts 19.9).

Established philosophers and other teachers often lectured in rented halls; this could have been a guild hall, but because it is named for a person it seems likelier a “lecture hall,” where Tyrannus is the landlord or (somewhat more probably) the customary lecturer. “Tyrannus” (a common name in Ephesus) might be a nickname, perhaps for a severe teacher. Public life in Ephesus, including philosophical lectures, ended by noon; most people in antiquity rested for one or two hours at midday, and advanced education lectures might finish by 11 a.m. Thus if Tyrannus lectured in the mornings Paul used it in the afternoons (perhaps doing manual labor in the mornings, cf. 20:34). In any case, residents of Ephesus would view Paul as a philosopher or sophist (professional public speaker). Many early Greco-Roman observers thought that Christians were a religious association or club (like other such associations in antiquity), or a philosophical school that took the form of a such an association. To outsiders, groups that taught ethics

⁵⁰ Kent P. Jackson, ["Scenes from Paul's Missionary Journeys,"](#) *Ensign*, Sept. 1991, emphasis added.

⁵¹ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 326.

⁵² διαλέγομαι = speaking, reasoning, preaching, disputing, discussing, discoursing.

and lacked the sacrifices and idols characteristic of most religious groups could appear like philosophic schools.⁵³

Paul stays and teaches in Ephesus two years (Acts 19.10).

13. Miracles in Ephesus (Acts 19.11-41).

The sick are brought handkerchiefs or aprons (Acts 19.12).

Elder McConkie wrote:

Healings come by the power of faith; there is no healing virtue or power in any item of clothing, or other object, whether owned by Paul or Jesus or anyone. But rites and objects may be used to help increase faith. 'When a man works by faith,' the Prophet said, 'he works by mental exertion instead of physical force.' (Lectures on Faith, p. 61.) ... In this connection there are occasions when ordinances or performances or objects may be used to help center the mental faculties of a person on those things which will cause faith to increase.

Similar miracles to those wrought through Paul have occurred in this dispensation. On that memorable July 22, 1839, at Montrose, Iowa, for instance, when the Prophet healed the sick in great numbers, he took a silk handkerchief from his pocket, gave it to Wilford Woodruff, and told him to go and use it in the healing of two children of a nonmember of the Church. Elder Woodruff, as instructed, used the handkerchief in wiping the faces of the sick children and they were healed. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, pp. 270-271.).⁵⁴

Paul exorcises evils spirits (Acts 19.13).

Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you? (Acts 19.15).

Spirits behind oracles could grant recognition to inquirers (cf. 16:17); these spirits instead insult the exorcists. Ancient literature reports that demons were typically unimpressed with orders from those who had no power over them, although they feared God and could be controlled by the manipulation of spirits more powerful than themselves (who may have appreciated the influence this gave them with the magicians).⁵⁵

Paul is recognized as an authority over the dark spirits and many are converted to Jesus and give up their divination (Acts 19.18-20).

Paul has more power than the magicians (cf. Gen 41:8, 39; Ex 7:11). When people recognize that Paul's Jesus cannot be manipulated like lower spirits, they understand that he is a servant of God and not a mere magician. Some translate "confessing practices" as "divulging spells," a possible meaning; divulging secret spells was believed to deprive them of their power. Magical papyri contained spells; Luke's term "books" or "scrolls" may refer to such papyri. Briefer charms were rolled up in small cylinders or locketts used as amulets around the neck. These magical incantations were so common in Ephesus that some concise magical terms used in charms and amulets were apparently called *Ephesia grammata*, or Ephesian writings. Books were commonly burned in antiquity to repudiate their contents (in the Old

⁵³ Keener, p. 383.

⁵⁴ Elder Bruce R. McConkie, [Doctrinal New Testament Commentary](#), 2:169.

⁵⁵ Keener, p. 383-384.

Testament, cf. analogously the destruction of idols in Deut 7:5, 25; 1 Chron 14:12). The total price of what is burned comes out to about fifty thousand days' wages for an average worker.⁵⁶

The Temple of Artemis and Economics

The most prominent and significant cult in Ephesus during the first three centuries of the Roman Empire was incontestably Artemis Ephesia (= Diana Ephesia)" (Oster, 1699). The people of Ephesus regarded the city's relationship to her in terms of a divinely directed covenant relationship. Her temple, called the Artemision, was originally constructed in the sixth century B.C. This Ionic temple (c. 550 B.C.) was the largest building in the Greek world and was made entirely of marble. It was destroyed c. 350 B.C. The temple was rebuilt with the same dimensions during the first half of the third century B.C. According to Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 36.96), the temple measured 220 x 425 feet (55.10 m. x 115 m.) and contained 127 columns, with some rising to a height of 60 feet (17.65 m.). ***The grandeur and beauty of the temple led Antipater (Anth. Pal. 9.58) to classify it as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The Greek historian Pausanias (Descr. 4.31.8) declared that the size of the temple surpassed all known buildings.*** The ancient site of the Artemision and its meager remains were discovered by J. T. Wood in 1869. In recent years Austrian archeologists have undertaken extensive excavations which have provided much information about the archaic temple and its predecessor.⁵⁷

When Jewish people could show that not they but their enemies started riots, they could appeal for the government's reaffirmation of their rights; Luke is emphatic that not Paul but his enemies started the riot. As often, religious piety becomes a thin cloak for personal economic interests. ***The temple of Artemis served as a bank as well as a temple, and people from all over the world deposited funds there. Amassing significant wealth, the temple apparently controlled more than seventy thousand acres of agricultural land, and some of the temple's wealth benefitted the city itself.*** About A.D. 44 (roughly a decade before Paul's arrival), inscriptions there show that the proconsul had to get involved in the temple treasury due to some serious financial irregularities: temple monies were being funneled to private individuals. In Ephesus, politics and religion were as heavily intertwined as religion and economics, and local civic pride was inseparable from the worship of the Ephesian Artemis.⁵⁸

Paul gets into it with powerful people in Ephesus (Acts 19.23-41).

Nowhere does the writer of Acts show greater familiarity with Roman provincial administration than he does in regard to the uproar at Ephesus (Acts 19.23–20.1). Paul had connections there with wealthy and powerful friends, the Asiarchs,⁵⁹ who were either civil or religious officials of the council of Asia. Their existence in the first century is well documented, although there is some confusion about the precise role they played in government. The authority of the *grammateus* ("the town clerk") over the informal

⁵⁶ Keener, p. 384.

⁵⁷ "Artemis Ephesia and Other Deities," *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*.

⁵⁸ Keener, p. 384.

⁵⁹ Asiarchs were the most prominent men of the province; former Asiarchs retained the title, and some filled the office more than once. Many lived in Ephesus; of more than two hundred Asiarchs known from over the course of antiquity, over half came from or were related to Ephesus alone. Because of their elite status, some of them had probably also presided in one-year terms over the cult of the emperor and the goddess Roma. Keener, p. 385.

assembly in the temple is appropriate (Acts 19.35), as is the distinction made in Acts 19.39 between unapproved mob action and an *ennomos ekklēsia* (“a regular assembly”).⁶⁰

Paul confronts the silversmith Demetrius in the city of Ephesus during his third missionary journey. At this time, Demetrius was a prominent figure in the city's trade industry, where he made and sold silver idols of the goddess Artemis (Diana). He was concerned that Paul's teachings were causing a decline in the demand for his idols, and as a result, he gathered together other silversmiths and incited a riot against Paul.

The rioters seized two of Paul's companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, and dragged them into the city's theater. Paul wanted to enter the theater to speak to the crowd, but his friends prevented him, fearing for his safety. Eventually, the city clerk managed to calm the crowd and persuade them to disperse.

This incident highlights the strong opposition that Paul faced in his efforts to spread the gospel, but it also shows the impact of his ministry in Ephesus and the surrounding regions. Despite the challenges, many people came to believe in Jesus Christ, and the church in Ephesus grew and flourished.

14. Paul in Macedonia and Greece (Acts 20.1-12).

Paul leaves Ephesus after the riot (Acts 20.1).

He spends three months in Greece (Acts 20.3).

Eutychus falls asleep, dies, and is raised from the dead by Paul (Acts 20.7-12).

“The first day of the week... to break bread” (Acts 20.7).

The cited passage in the book of Acts serves as a preeminent scriptural reference within the New Testament to corroborate that the nascent Christian community routinely convened on the first day of the week, Sunday, to engage in acts of worship. Specifically, this passage affirms that on this day, they would partake in the sacrament by "breaking bread," which constituted the most sacred component of their religious observance. The veracity of this claim is further corroborated by other scriptural references, including John 20:19 and 26, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, and Acts 2:1-4, as well as accounts provided by historical authorities. Collectively, these accounts attest to the practice of early Christians gathering on the first day of the week to engage in religious ceremonies that centered on the partaking of the sacrament.

14. Troas to Miletus (Acts 20.13-16).

15. His Farewell to Ephesus (Acts 20.17-38).

The language of the speech is more like Paul's than Luke's. Although historians tended to rewrite speeches in their own words, regular rhetorical training included practice in imitating others' styles (prosopopoiia). Because Luke presumably had little access to most of Paul's letters (they were not collected from various churches till long after Paul's death), he must have learned Paul's style from direct contact with him. In this case the speech includes even Pauline phraseology and possibly undeveloped hints of the Scripture texts he used, supporting an eyewitness account (he alludes in 20:26 to Ezek 33, and probably in Acts 20:28-29 to Ezek 34:1-8). Ancient speakers were expected to avoid selfpraise except

⁶⁰ “Paul's Encounters with Roman Law,” *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*.

in special circumstances such as offering a positive example. The endearing language of the speech fits other intimate speeches (like philosophic discourse to disciples), and the emotional “pathos” was appropriate to farewell speeches.⁶¹

“Grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20.29).

This may be the most pointed and succinct description in all scripture of how the great apostasy of the early Church came about. It may also be the most important key to understanding how to recognize and avoid apostasy in modern times. Surely Paul knew that the apostasy that would significantly change the Lord's church was *not* going to be a gradual drift from divine truth or a waning interest in gospel principles. Nor would it be well-meaning but erroneous activity on the part of a few misguided souls. *Apostasy* is a Greek word—*apostasía*—and means literally 'to stand apart from,' 'to rebel against,' or 'to revolt.' Apostasy is a conscious act of rebellion against God by deliberately attempting to change divinely appointed doctrine and practice and by opposing God's chosen leaders. Paul foresaw that once the Apostles met their demise, the demise of the true Church would follow.

Paul used the analogy of wolves rending the flock of God to describe the thoroughly destructive nature of religious rebellion. Furthermore, he declared without equivocation that apostasy was an *internal* phenomenon. It was born of the desires of certain members to exalt themselves, to step into the limelight and gather their own group of followers: 'of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them' (Acts 20:30; emphasis added). Nephi of old may have labeled it something else (that is, priestcraft), but he outlined the same basic ingredient of apostasy—pride.

He [the Lord] commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion (2 Ne. 26:29).⁶²

The Saints in Ephesus “all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him” (Acts 20.36-38).

15. Paul sails from Miletus (Acts 21.1-14).

The “we” language continues in this passage (Acts 21.3-5, 12, 15).

“A certain prophet, named Agabus” (Acts 21.10).

Old Testament prophets often acted out their prophecies in ways similar to Agabus’s action here (e.g., Jer 13:1-11; 27:2). Some commentators point out that the details were not all fulfilled literally (it was the Gentiles who bound him, although his accusers were Jewish), but one need not study the Old Testament prophets long before it is clear that they were allowed a large measure of poetic license, even though the essential message had to be accurate (e.g., 2 Kings 19:7, 28, 33, 35). The girdle was a long cloth

⁶¹ Keener, p. 388-389.

⁶² Andrew C. Skinner, "[Apostasy, Restoration, and Lessons in Faith](#)," *Ensign*, December 1995. He brings out this important lesson:

Thus apostasy, by definition, occurs *within* the covenant community. John the Beloved provides verification of this fact. Writing his epistles after apostasy had set in, he witnessed the fulfillment of Paul's prophecy. He said: “They [anti-Christ] went out from us, but they were not of us” (1 Jn. 2:19). Such a message teaches modern Latter-day Saints a powerful truth about *where* one might see the signs of individual apostasy in our day.

wrapped around the waist several times and sometimes used as a pocket; not everyone wore them in this period.⁶³

16. Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 21.15-26).

The Jerusalem believers accept the Gentile work but in so doing are confronted by a conflict with their culture. Jerusalem is not what it had been in Acts 2; tensions are rising, and in the temple *sicarii*, or assassins, are murdering aristocrats suspected of collaborating with the Gentiles. Jewish nationalism has been on the rise since the brief reign of Agrippa I, and nationalism's exclusivity often makes it intolerant of supposedly faithful members of its people who have fellowship with members of other peoples. Thus it is incumbent on Paul to prove the integrity of his Jewishness; he cannot compromise the Gentile mission, but he will intentionally affirm his Jewish heritage at any cost short of unbiblical exclusivism.

The Jerusalem church is providing an effective indigenous witness within its culture, which is good; but most did not understand Paul's valuable mission to other cultures. James says literally that "many ten thousands" of Judeans believe (v. 20)—though Palestine's estimated Jewish population might be just half a million and the estimated number of Pharisees just six thousand. It could be hyperbole, but the estimated number of believers here is not implausible; Jerusalem alone may have had close to eighty thousand residents, and the surrounding Judean countryside would include far more people. James himself was martyred, along with some other law-observers, by the high priest a few years after this time, but his witness to his culture had been so effective that those diligent in the law (possibly Pharisees) demanded the removal of his killer from office. The rise of Judean nationalism, however, was also affecting Judean believers. Jews almost universally despised apostates from Judaism and those whose teaching was held to undermine the law. Rumors spread quickly, and those away from the centers of power (earlier, e.g., Caesar from Rome) could not readily defend their reputations.⁶⁴

Take them, and purify yourself with them... that they may shave their heads (Acts 21.23-24).

These precautions are to protect Paul from false accusations, especially if he is going to move about publicly in the temple courts. Paul pays the fees for the devout Jerusalem Christians who are completing a Nazirite vow. One shaved one's head on the seventh day if corpse impurity interrupted a vow and offered sacrifice in the temple on the eighth day (Num 6:1-21), but the minimum period of the vow according to widespread Jewish tradition in this period seems to have been thirty days, so scholars differ on the exact meaning here; that Paul is purified and helps them need not mean that he participated in their vow. Those (like Agrippa I) who used their own funds to pay the expenses of Nazirites were considered pious (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 19.293-294).⁶⁵

17. Paul is arrested at the Jerusalem Temple (Acts 21.27-40).

Riot in the Temple

Under Cumanus, the Roman governor immediately preceding Felix (23:24), a Roman soldier lewdly exposed himself in the temple area; Josephus estimated that ten thousand people were trampled to death in the ensuing riot (Jewish War 2.224-27; doubled in Antiquities). When another soldier burned a

⁶³ Keener, p. 391-392.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 392.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 392-393.

Jewish Law scroll, Cumanus acceded to the crowds' demands and executed him (Jewish War 2.229- 31). Hostility against *Gentiles and collaborators with Gentiles had been mounting, and in less than a decade would lead to a war that would produce massacres (reportedly over twenty thousand Jews slaughtered in Caesarea in an hour; Jewish War 2.457-58) and culminate in the temple's destruction.⁶⁶

The chief captain asks Paul if he can speak Greek (Acts 21.37).

The commanding officer, who had brought Paul to the Roman fortress Antonia adjacent to the temple, was impressed by Paul's fluency in the Greek language. However, it appears that he had mistaken Paul for an Egyptian troublemaker and expected him to speak Egyptian.

Paul was a skilled polyglot, proficient in at least four languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and possibly Latin. In verse 40, he addresses the Jews in what is referred to as 'the Hebrew tongue,' which likely denotes Aramaic, the common language spoken in Jerusalem during that period and the language of Jesus. Hebrew was an ancient language, but it was widely known as the language of the Torah. Paul's ability to communicate fluently in multiple languages facilitated his effectiveness in engaging with diverse groups of people.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 393.

⁶⁷ Although we do not know the Judaism of his age too well, it is probable that at about six years of age Saul was sent to an elementary school, in a room connected with the Jewish synagogue. Here, with other Jewish boys of his age, he would be instructed in the reading of Scripture. This may have been in the Greek version known to us as the Septuagint, because in later years he seems to have quoted extensively from it. It is difficult not to believe that he knew the Scriptures in their original Hebrew and Aramaic languages, because Aramaic would be the vernacular of his home, and for a would-be Rabbi not to know Hebrew would be unthinkable. It should be kept in mind that although Aramaic may have been the vernacular in his Jewish home, Saul would always be exposed to Greek on the street. His writings display a good knowledge of it. In after years, Paul found no difficulty in speaking Hebrew (possibly Aramaic is meant) to a Jewish mob that sought his life. (Acts 21:40) So well would the future Apostle learn the Scriptures...that they would be practically memorized by him and become an important part of his mental equipment. Sidney B. Sperry, [Paul's Life and Letters](#), Bookcraft, 1955, p. 5.