

July 15-21
Acts 10-15
“The Word of God Grew and Multiplied”

OVERVIEW:

Read Acts 10–15 carefully, allowing time for the Spirit to prompt you with thoughts and feelings. What is there for you to learn in these chapters?

Record your impressions:

SCRIPTURES:

Acts 10

In Mark 16:15 Jesus told His Apostles “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” The book of Acts shows the Apostles fulfilling this divine assignment.

An angel ministers to Cornelius—Peter in a vision is commanded to take the gospel to the Gentiles—Gospel taught by witnesses—Holy Ghost falls upon Gentiles. Cornelius sends for Peter. King Herod kills James and imprisons Peter. Peter is released from prison by an angel. Paul and Barnabas go on their first missionary journey. Gentiles in the Church.

In our day it is difficult to think that we wouldn’t preach the gospel to everyone. Joseph Smith said: “Our missionaries are going forth to different nations, and in Germany, Palestine, New Holland, Australia, the East Indies, and other places, the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.” Wentworth Letter, CH, 4:450.

In the days of the early Christian church, their mindset was such as to not fully understand that the message was to go to the entire world, including non Jews. 3 Nephi 15:22 says - ...for they understood not that the Gentiles should be converted through their preaching. Jewish identity had been established through the centuries in three areas: 1) genealogy; 2) belief and ritual; and 3) circumcision.

When the Greek armies conquered the Mediterranean and Mesopotamian world around 320 BC, Greek culture soon became a dominate if not highly appealing way to live life. Some Jews who did not care for the intrusions of foreign Greek culture strongly believed that rejecting circumcision was a total betrayal of the covenants God had made to the Jews, covenants which had been signed in the flesh since the days of Abraham. Eventually, this debate solidified the idea among many Jews that only those who have been marked in the flesh through circumcision were the true inheritors of the blessings and promises of God. With this in mind, we can now begin to understand why some of the Jewish Christians were so upset at

the thought of including Gentiles into the covenants and promises of the Lord without also requiring that these Gentiles wear the sign of the covenant – circumcision. (Taylor Halverson, lesson 30)

Consider as an example what happened on the 8th of June, 1978. It was on that day that the blessings of the priesthood were extended to all worthy males. The record of this wonderful event is found in Official Declaration 2 in the Doctrine and Covenants. Can you see the parallels between these events and the landmark experience of June 1978? Note the following from President Kimball speaking to saints in South Africa.

"As you know, on the ninth of June a policy was changed that affects great numbers of people throughout the world. Millions and millions of people will be affected by the revelation which came. I remember very vividly that day after day I walked to the temple and ascended to the fourth floor where we have our solemn assemblies and where we have our meetings of the Twelve and the First Presidency. After everybody had gone out of the temple, I knelt and prayed. I prayed with much fervency. I knew that something was before us that was extremely important to many of the children of God. I knew that we could receive the revelations of the Lord only by being worthy and ready for them and ready to accept them and put them into place. Day after day I went alone and with great solemnity and seriousness in the upper rooms of the temple, and there I offered my soul and offered my efforts to go forward with the program. I wanted to do what he wanted. I talked about it to him and said, "Lord, I want only what is right. We are not making any plans to be spectacularly moving. We want only the thing that thou dost want, and we want it when you want it and not until."

We met with the Council of the Twelve Apostles, time after time in the holy room where there is a picture of the Savior in many different moods and also pictures of all the Presidents of the Church. Finally we had the feeling and the impression from the Lord, who made it very clear to us, that this was the thing to do to make the gospel universal to all worthy people. You will meet this situation undoubtedly as you bring the gospel to them on condition that their lives can be changed.

I anticipate the day when the gospel, that has come to you and your families and has transformed your lives, will begin to transform their lives and make new people out of them. They become people who will love the Lord and who will make the same sacrifices that you make (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, pp. 450-451).

An angel ministers to Cornelius—Peter in a vision is commanded to take the gospel to the Gentiles—Gospel taught by witnesses—Holy Ghost falls upon Gentiles.

1 **THERE was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,** (A Roman legionary officer commanding a century, - from 50 to 100 men – and occupying the social position of a modern sergeant or non-commissioned officer. DNTC, 2:97)

2 A devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much ^aalms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

3 He saw in a ^avision ^bevidently (clearly, distinctly) about the ninth hour (3 pm) of the day an ^cangel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. **(What made Cornelius and his household unique is that the earlier Gentiles were all proselytes to Judaism; Cornelius and his group were apparently the first nonproselytes and uncircumcised Gentiles to be baptized into the church (without first being converted as Jews). Robert Matthews, Studies in the Scriptures, 6:35. Previous to Cornelius, Gentiles were first converted to be Jews, then Christians.)**

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter:

6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. (No wonder the angel told good old Cornelius that he must send for Peter to learn how to be saved. Peter could baptize, and angels could not, so long as there were legal officers in the flesh holding the keys of the kingdom, or the authority of the priesthood. Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible, p. 150. It is not the order of the priesthood for a heavenly being to preach to mortals when there is a qualified mortal with a priesthood commission able to do it. Studies in the Scriptures, 6:36.)

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

8 And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa. (It was about 34 miles from Caesarea to Joppa. It would have taken about 11 hours to walk the distance.)

9 ¶ On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the ^ahousetop to pray about the sixth hour: (noon) (This revelation which pertains to the entire Church comes to Peter because he is the President of the Church.)

10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a ^atrance, (Sometimes prophets go into trances in connection with the receipt of visions. That is, they are so completely overshadowed by the Spirit that to all outward appearances normal bodily functions are suspended. A similar experience happened to the Prophet Joseph Smith in connection with the First Vision; he was not in control of all his bodily powers when the Father and the Son appeared to him. DNTC, 2: 99)

11 And saw ^aheaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet ^bknit (bound) at the four corners, (four corners of the earth) and let down to the earth: (The "great sheet knit at the four corners" probably resembled a large prayer shawl of the kind worn by Jewish men during their religious devotions. Non-kosher animals wrapped in a holy prayer shawl would have made a doubly significant impression on Peter. Verse by Verse, Acts through Revelation, p. 57. Peter is having this dream because he is the President of the Church and a major change in Church policy is about to happen. Just as the time when President Kimball received the revelation that all worthy men could now hold the Priesthood, the procedure was to take this matter to the rest of the apostles and receive their sustaining vote.)

12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. (The animals represent every nation, kindred, tongue and people. Before Jesus ascended he commanded them to preach to every creature.)

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or ^aunclean. (As a Jew of his time he had been raised to believe that ritual purity was of great importance so eating ritually unclean animals was unacceptable.)

15 And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath ^acleansed, *that* call not thou ^bcommon. (Realizing that the animals of his vision were symbols of the Gentiles pronounced clean by God, Peter heartily agreed to visit Cornelius. Verse 28.)

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 ¶ While Peter thought on the vision, the ^aSpirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and ^ago with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what *is* the cause wherefore ye are come?

22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was ^awarned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his

house, and to hear words of thee.

23 Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*.

26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a ^aman.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man ^acommon or ^bunclean.

29 Therefore came I *unto you* without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was ^afasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a ^bman stood before me in bright clothing,

31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34 ¶ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no ^arespecter of persons:

35 But in every ^anation he that ^bfeareth him, and ^cworketh ^drighteousness, is ^eaccepted with him. (God favors the righteous.)

36 The ^aword which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

37 That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

38 How God ^aanointed Jesus of Nazareth with the ^bHoly Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were ^coppressed of the devil; for ^dGod was with him.

39 And *we* are ^awitnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

40 Him God ^araised up the third day, and ^bshewed him openly;

41 ^aNot to all the people, but *unto witnesses* chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And he commanded us to ^apreach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ^bordained of God *to be* the ^cJudge of quick and dead.

43 *To him* give all the prophets ^awitness, that through his ^bname whosoever ^cbelieveth in him shall receive ^dremission of sins. (The role of a true prophet is to testify of Christ.)

44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the ^aGentiles also was poured out the ^bgift of the Holy Ghost. (Joseph Smith explained: Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost, which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him. Until he obeyed these ordinances and received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, according to the order of God, he could not have healed the sick or commanded an evil spirit to come out of a man and it obey him. TPJS, 199.)

46 For they heard them speak with ^atongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the ^aHoly Ghost as well as we?

48 **And he commanded them to be ^abaptized in the name of the Lord** (Men are commanded to be baptized, and those who remain unbaptized are breaking the commandment and are in rebellion against God. DNTC, 2:107). Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Acts 11

God grants the gift of repentance to Gentiles—Disciples first called Christians at Antioch—Church guided by revelation.

1 AND the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the ^aGentiles had also received the ^bword of God.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the ^acircumcision ^bcontended with him, (Peter was no autocrat who ruled over the apostles or whose decisions and views were accepted as infallible. They asked for and he gave a temperate and judicious report of his experiences, which they, guided by the same Spirit which had directed him, thereupon accepted with approving endorsement. DNTC, 2:110)

3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a ^atrance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath ^acleansed, *that* call not thou ^bcommon.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like ^agift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the ^aGentiles granted ^brepentance unto life. (Every man must repent or suffer. In the event of repentance, the law of mercy prevails, and the penitent person is saved from suffering. Where there is no repentance, the law of justice takes precedence and remission of sins is gained through suffering rather than as a gift of God through the blood of Christ. DNTC, 2:110)

19 ¶ Now they which were scattered abroad upon the ^apersecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, **preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.** (Even though the revelation that all worthy Gentiles could be admitted into the Gospel net, still missionary labors were most fruitful when they began in areas with established Jewish

communities. The brotherhood of Judaism was a worldwide phenomenon, which facilitated fraternity and missionary work in many areas. So, when Christian missionaries would set forth to share the message of the Gospel in new cities and lands, they would often begin among the Jewish communities, preaching first in their synagogues. This is much like what many of the early Mormon missionaries did when they spread the message abroad. They went first to their family, friends and religious associates, often meeting in churches and religious halls to share the message of the Restored Gospel. Taylor Halverson, lesson 30)

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians (a Jew who speaks Greek), preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 ¶ Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth ^aBarnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

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

27 ¶ And in these days came ^aprophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the ^aSpirit that there should be great ^bdearth (famine) throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send ^arelief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

30 Which also they did, and sent it to the ^aelders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Acts 12

Martyrdom of James—An angel frees Peter from prison—The Lord slays Herod by disease—The Church grows.

1 NOW about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church.

2 And he ^akilled ^bJames the brother of John with the sword. (44 AD)

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of ^aunleavened bread.)

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in ^aprison, (Peter is arrested by Herod and sentenced to be slain; he is imprisoned in a cell with guards at the locked doors; he lies chained to two soldiers; a great iron gate with more guards closes in the prison itself; a total of 16 soldiers have the lone apostle in their charge. DNTC, 2:116) and delivered *him* to four ^bquaternions (squads, i.e., detachments of four men each. 16 soldiers) of soldiers to keep him; intending after ^cEaster (Passover. There was as yet no such thing as an Easter festival DNTC, 2:117) to bring him forth to the people.

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

7 And, behold, the ^aangel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto

him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9 And he went out, and followed him; and ^awist (knew) not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward (guard), they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying. (The same house where the last supper was held.)

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, **It is his angel.** (It is his spirit, meaning he has already been killed. DNTC, 2:117)

16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

17 But he, ^abeckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, (Either to James the Lord's brother, now also an apostle, or James the son of Alphaeus, one of whom was in Jerusalem at the moment. DNTC, 2:117) and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

18 **Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.**

19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, **he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to ^adeath.** And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and *there* abode.

20 ¶ And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's *country*.

21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

22 And the people gave a shout, *saying*, *It is* the voice of a god, and not of a man.

23 And immediately the ^aangel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. (Herod died August 6, AD 44 at the age of 54.)

24 ¶ But the word of God grew and multiplied.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ^aministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark. (They must have gone to Mark's house upon their return. John Mark is probably a cousin of Barnabas.)

Acts 13

Saul and Barnabas called to missionary service—Saul, now Paul, curses a sorcerer—Christ came of the seed of David—Paul offers the gospel to Israel, then to the Gentiles. (There were two notable personal developments for Saul on this journey. The first is that while in Cyprus, Saul became known as Paul and is consistently called Paul thereafter. This renaming was probably because the Greek name Paulos would be more acceptable to Gentile audiences. The second development is that until the missionaries reached Cyprus, Barnabas seemed to be in charge. Beginning at Cyprus, Paul seemed to be the leader.

On their first visit to each place, the missionaries preached and baptized. On the return journey they ordained elders in every church. These actions give a clue to missionary procedures and show that the church was organized with local priesthood leaders. Studies in Scriptures, 6:38)

1 NOW there were in the church that was at Antioch certain ^aprophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and ^afasted, the ^bHoly Ghost said, ^cSeparate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have ^dcalled them. (Apparently they were being set apart as missionaries, for they immediately went forth to preach the gospel and administer its ordinances according to the pattern set by Jesus... From this time on Luke refers to them as apostles. Could this have been their ordination as such, or their setting apart as members of the Council of the Twelve? If so, and such is a distinct possibility, one or more of the other apostles would have been present to confer upon them the keys of the kingdom. DNTC, 2:120)

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and ^alaid *their* ^bhands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 ¶ So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. (Their travels take them about 1400 miles.)

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to *their* minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain ^asorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name *was* Bar-jesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a ^aprudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the ^aHoly Ghost, set his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, *thou* ^achild of the devil, *thou* ^benemy of all ^crighteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou ^ashalt be ^bblind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. (Joseph F. Smith said: ...men are not called upon to curse mankind; that is not our mission; it is our mission to preach righteousness to them. It is our business to love and to bless them, and to redeem them from the fall and from the wickedness of the world. This is our mission and our special calling. God will curse and will exercise his judgment in those matters. We are perfectly willing to leave vengeance in the hands of God and let him judge between us and our enemies, and let him reward them according to his own wisdom and mercy. MD, 9. 175-6, DNTC, 2:123)

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and ^aJohn departing from them returned to Jerusalem. (John Mark may have looked ahead at the huge mountains that lay in their way and with the dangers involved in the travel said, I'm going home.)

14 ¶ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye* men *and* brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that ^afear God, give audience. (The technique of preaching the gospel was to recount the history of Israel showing that all the prophets and laws pointed to Jesus Christ. Nephi in the Book of Mormon used this same technique in 1 Nephi 17:23-55. Moroni also would have used it in connection with his promise in Moroni 10:3-5, but he didn't have room on the plates to do so. Taylor Halverson, lesson 30)

17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as ^astrangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And about the time of ^(for) forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 And when he had ^adestroyed seven nations in the ^bland of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

20 And after that he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own ^aheart, which shall fulfil all my will.

23 Of this man's ^aseed hath God according to *his* ^bpromise raised unto Israel a ^cSaviour, Jesus:

24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose.

26 Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of ^aAbraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.

28 And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be ^aslain.

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.

30 But God raised him from the dead:

31 And he was ^aseen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his ^bwitnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the ^afathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my ^aSon, this day have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the ^asure mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

37 But he, whom God ^araised again, saw no ^bcorruption.

38 ¶ Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the ^aforgiveness of sins:

39 And by him all that believe are ^ajustified from all things, from which ye could not be ^bjustified by the ^claw of Moses. (The Law of Christ supercedes the law of Moses.)

40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a ^awork which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next ^asabbath.

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious ^aproselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 ¶ And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with ^aenvy, and spake ^bagainst those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and ^cblaspheming. (These are two sins of which those who

actively oppose the truth are always guilty. In the very nature of things, active opposition to the gospel cause consists of contradicting the truth and of blaspheming sacred things, whether the opposition is against Paul and Barnabas, or Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. Blasphemy consists in either or both of the following: 1) Speaking irreverently, evilly, abusively, or scurrilously against God or sacred things; or 2) Speaking profanely or falsely about Deity. DNTC, 2:128)

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the ^aGentiles. (The Church will always have opposition against it. Sometimes it will be strong and sometimes subtle.)

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a ^alight of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for ^bsalvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: ^aand as many as (believed) were ordained (un)to eternal life believed. (After this chosen family had rejected Christ and his proposals, the heralds of salvation said to them, “Lo, we turn unto the Gentiles.” And the Gentiles received the covenant and were grafted in from whence the chosen family were broken off. But the Gentiles have not continued in the goodness of God but have departed from the faith that was once delivered to the Saints, and have broken the covenant in which their fathers were established, and have become high-minded, and have not feared. Therefore, but few of them will be gathered with the chosen family. Joseph Smith’s Commentary on the Bible, p. 150)

49 And the word of the Lord was ^apublished throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews ^astirred up the devout and honourable ^bwomen, and the chief men of the city, and raised ^cpersecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

51 But they shook off the ^adust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. (D&C 24:15, And in whatsoever place ye shall ^aenter, and they receive you not in my name, ye shall leave a cursing instead of a blessing, by casting off the ^bdust of your feet against them as a testimony, and cleansing your feet by the wayside. 60:15; And shake off the ^adust of thy feet against those who receive thee not, not in their presence, lest thou ^bprovoke them, but in secret; and ^cwash thy feet, as a testimony against them in the day of judgment. 75:20 And in whatsoever house ye enter, and they receive you not, ye shall depart speedily from that house, and ^ashake off the dust of your feet as a testimony against them.) (The shaking off of the dust of the feet is an action of disapproval and condemnation and is to be performed only by the Lord’s authorized servants. It is initiated as a testimony against those who willfully and maliciously oppose the truth when it is authoritatively presented. It is not invoked against those who simply reject the message of the gospel. As Elder James E. Talmage wrote, “The responsibility of testifying before the Lord by this accusing symbol is so great that the means may be employed only under unusual and extreme conditions.” Jesus the Christ, p. 345. Verse by Verse, Acts through Revelation, p. 69)

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Acts 14

Persecution attends spread of gospel—Paul heals a cripple; he and Barnabas hailed as gods—Paul stoned, revived, preaches—Elders ordained.

1 AND it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave ^atestimony unto the word of his ^bgrace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. (Only Barnabas, Paul, Matthias, James the Lord's brother, and the original Twelve are singled out to carry the apostolic appellation. The clear inference thus is that the name is being reserved for those who were ordained to the office of apostle in the Melchizedek Priesthood and therefore that Paul and Barnabas were members of the Council of the Twelve, having filled vacancies in the normal course of events. President Joseph Fielding Smith has written: "Paul was an ordained apostle, and without question he took the place of one of the other brethren in that Council." DNTC, 2:131)

5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the ^aJews with their rulers, to use *them* despitefully, and to stone them,

6 They were ware of *it*, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

7 And there they preached the gospel.

8 ¶ And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a ^acripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had ^afaith to be ^bhealed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. (Similar to the healing by Peter in Acts 3. Both men had never walked before being healed.)

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The ^agods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, ^aJupiter; (Zeus) and Paul, ^bMercurius, (Hermes) because he was the chief speaker. (Paul must have been doing most of the talking.)

13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

14 ~~Which~~ When the ^aapostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard *of* (this), they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are ^amen of like ^bpassions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these ^cvanities unto the living God, which ^dmade heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to ^awalk in their own ^bways.

17 Nevertheless he left not himself without ^awitness, in that he did good, and gave us ^brain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with ^cfood and gladness.

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

19 ¶ And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having ^astoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, (to give him a blessing?) he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. (Without question Paul's recovery was miraculous. The natural presumption is that Barnabas raised him from death or near death. But however the miracle occurred – stoned, bruised, and deemed dead – Paul would not have been ready to travel the next day without divine intervention. DNTC, 2: 130. Though left for dead, he was revived and continued on in his missionary efforts as before. In this regard, Paul was like Timothy, the brother of Nephi, who not many years before Christ's visit to the Americas was stoned to death only to later be miraculously revived by Nephi. Halverson, Lesson 30.)

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, (Timothy is baptized during this time.)

22 **Confirming** the souls of the disciples, (Just like today, shortly after a person is baptized, the person is **confirmed** a member of the Church and is given the gift of the Holy Ghost.) *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much ^atribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had ^aordained them ^belders (local priesthood leaders) in every church, and had prayed

with ^cfasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. (first preached then organized by the priesthood)

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

26 And thence sailed to ^aAntioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the ^adoor of faith unto the Gentiles.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

Acts 15

This is an account of an important Church council held in Jerusalem around 50AD just before Paul's second missionary journey. Many Gentiles had been baptized after hearing Paul and Barnabas preach. Some Jewish members of the Church in Jerusalem became concerned because the new male converts had not been circumcised. Church leaders convened the council at Jerusalem to consider whether or not gentile converts to the Church should be required to obey the law of Moses.

Great dissension arises at Antioch concerning circumcision—Apostles at Jerusalem decide the issue—Paul chooses Silas as his companion. (49AD)

1 AND certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be ^acircumcised (Circumcision is code word for law of Moses. Although the covenant is eternal, the sign of the covenant was discontinued. One of the provisions of this law of circumcision was that it should be practiced by the chosen seed, to identify and distinguish them until the day of the mortal ministry of Christ. From Abraham to the meridian of time, the gospel and such of the laws of salvation as were revealed in any period were reserved almost exclusively for the seed of Abraham in whose flesh the token of circumcision was found...But he sent his apostolic ministers to preach to all men, it being pointedly revealed to Peter that the gospel was for Gentiles as well as Jews. Accordingly, the need for the special token in the flesh no longer existed, and so circumcision as a gospel ordinance was done away in Christ. DNTC, 2:138) *after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.* (They came from the headquarters of the Church, probably had been sent by the apostles and were good and acceptable brethren, but on the issue of circumcision they erred, teaching false doctrine and not being led by the Spirit. Since the Lord often leaves his servants to struggle with and work out solutions for difficult problems, before they finally receive his mind and voice by revelation, similar situations arise in the Church today. DNTC, 2:139)

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and ^adisputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the ^bapostles and elders about this question.

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the ^aconversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and *of* the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the ^alaw of Moses. (When Paul and the others debate whether circumcision is essential to salvation, what they are really considering is whether the law of Moses is still in force or has been fulfilled in Christ. DNTC, 2:140)

6 ¶ And the ^aapostles and ^belders came together for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much ^adisputing, (all the brethren were allowed to voice their opinions on

the matter) ^bPeter rose up, (Peter is the presiding authority and as such has the final word on the matter.) and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the ^cGentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the ^dgospel, and believe.

8 And God, which ^aknoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

9 And put no ^adifference between us and them, ^bpurifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why ^atempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? (No one kept the law of Moses perfectly.)

11 But we believe that through the ^agrace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. (It is not circumcision as such but rather: Can the gospel be offered to uncircumcised Gentiles or is it limited to circumcised Israel? Are people who do not keep the law of Moses eligible to inherit the blessings of salvation which Christ came to bring? Is salvation in Moses or in Christ? God has already spoken on the matter. Peter himself has received the revelation. The gospel is for all men and therefore circumcision – with all that it symbolizes – is not essential to salvation. DNTC, 2:143)

12 ¶ Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

13 ¶ And after they had held their peace, James (The Lord's brother, now one of the Twelve. DNTC, 2:143. James may have been in the First Presidency. Peter is presiding and James conducting the meeting.) answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me:

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the ^aGentiles, to take out of them a people for his ^bname.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the ^atabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

17 That the ^aresidue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 ^aKnown unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, (My proposal or recommendation is...James is simply proposing the detailed instructions to put in force the decision already announced by Peter. DNTC, 2: 143) that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

20 But that we write unto them, that they ^aabstain from ^bpollutions of idols, and *from* ^cfornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* ^dblood.

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being ^aread in the synagogues every sabbath day. (Gentiles will not need to live the law of Moses, but it didn't address whether the Jews need to circumcise their children. This was a step in the right direction.)

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

23 And they ^awrote ^bletters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: (The Church leaders send forth a letter to clarify the correct doctrine regarding the law of Moses and a word of wisdom for their day. This letter must have been the first proclamation of the Presidency and the Twelve. Even though the policy of the Church had been defined, this issue would continue to trouble the church for years to come. We might call this an Official Declaration.)

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain (men) which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be ^acircumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment:

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with ^aone accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 Men that have ^ahazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; (The Lord's agents struggled and labored with the problem, searched the scriptures, sought for possible conclusions, and did the best they could to solve the problem on the basis of the sound principles which they knew. Having arrived at what they considered to be an appropriate solution – that is adopting James' statements which were based on Peter's announcement of principle – they then asked the Lord if their conclusions were true and in accord with his mind. The answer coming by the power of the Spirit certified to the verity of their conclusion, and thus, in effect, this was receiving revelation by a course of spiritual confirmation. DNTC, 2:144-145)

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to ^aidols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

31 *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the ^aconsolation. (exhortation, solace)

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves (probably the equivalent of general or area authorities), exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*.

33 And after they had tarried *there* a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

34 Notwithstanding it pleased ^aSilas to abide there still.

35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36 ¶ And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and ^avisit our ^bbrethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do.

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them ^aJohn, whose surname was ^bMark.

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 And the ^acontention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; (Mark had abandoned them in Perga (Acts 13:13) Paul and Barnabas had a difference of opinion. Paul may have determined not to keep company with one less zealous than he was. (Barnabas, Paul's associate, wanted to take Mark along. But Paul "thought it not good" to take him, because Mark had abandoned them on a previous mission (Acts 15:37-39). Mark was apparently young and fearful of the challenge of missionary work (Acts 13:13), but he eventually matured in the faith (Col. 4:10, 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24) and wrote the Gospel that bears his name. According to tradition, he was martyred at Alexandria. Breck Englund, Lesson 31)

40 And Paul chose Silas, (Silas may be the same as Silvanus in Paul's letters. If so, he was the scribe who wrote 1 Peter and carried it to Asia Minor. He may have been a Roman citizen.) and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, ^aconfirming the churches.

Always follow the prophet, he will never lead us astray. Also, follow the majority of the Twelve, the majority will also never lead us astray.