

W152_Review_Of_Acts.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book, and it is number four of a series entitled Christian Fundamentals. It is our habit at this meeting to read a portion of scripture together. And those of you who are listening to this recording, if you care to join us, will you turn with us and read the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles? At our last meeting we had before us two of the four gospels. The gospel, according to Matthew, stressing the king and being limited almost to the end of the gospel, to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. With all nations. The gospel, according to Matthew. As I've just said. Stressing the king and the kingdom and addressing itself, particularly to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. But in the concluding chapters, beginning to visualize all nations that were in view all the time. Then we looked at John's gospel. Which deals with the same earthly ministry. Abaxial. It's a different series of. Sign and a different set of teachings because now the time could be the time had come when it was obvious that the people of Israel were not going to become at that time, a kingdom. They had. Been set aside. And the first chapter of John's gospel actually starts with the recognition that they failed. He came to his own and his own received him not. Now, you don't read that in Matthew. You have to wait halfway through before you begin begin to suspect that they will not receive him.

[00:01:52] And then there was another feature that I omitted last time in John's gospel that I would like to introduce here. That is to say in the first chapter you will find in verse 38. John one verse 38. And verse 41. And verse 42. The writer of John's gospel goes out of his way to interpret the word rabbi. To interpret the word messiah and to interpret the word Cephas. Well, if you found that in any other book except the Bible, you would immediately know that the man was writing to people who didn't know Hebrew. But of course, if you're reading the Bible, you put your witness somewhere else and you make up your mind, as some have done, that John's gospel is on exactly the same level as Matthew, and they give you a structure of all the four epistles as one, and Israel are dominant all the way through. Again, you see how strange it is that we do that here. The man in his very first verse chapter is making it obvious that he was writing to people who didn't even know the meaning of the word rabbi. That shows you that he had a Gentile audience in view. And in this gospel of John, the word world comes more than any other book. In fact, I think it contains more references to the word cosmos than the rest of the New Testament put together.

[00:03:22] Well, now I thought I'd move from that John's gospel to the one book. Which links the earthly Ministry of Christ. Where we have the extension. Whether it be in Matthew or in Mark or in various phases. The Ascension of Christ. And the. Consequences of the ministry that was started. If we hadn't got the acts of the apostles and all we had were the epistles, we shouldn't know how they started and where they been and why things took the course they did. So that although we wouldn't go to the acts of the Apostles, perhaps when we wanted a devotional chapter and read it to somebody who was up to their neck in trouble. A Yet it's a most essential part of the scriptures and must be given a patient hearing. Now, in the first case, I think we must look at the preface to the Acts of the apostles. You say, Where's that? Oh, that's the first 14 or 15 verses. You see, the acts of the apostles doesn't start until Peter, in verse 15, stands up and makes his statement. The first 14 verses are a resumé of the earlier writing of Luke. Because Luke's gospel starts with an address to a nobleman. Most excellent Theophilus. And the Acts of the Apostles addresses the same man and tells us that this is a second treatise. The former treaties have I made O Theophilus of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.

[00:05:09] And if it was never going to write another one. It's a rather funny thing to say. The former one, I did this and then leave it suspended in the air. But you know that, he says. But now I'm going on to tell you what he continued to do and teach. And Mark's gospel, you may remember, ends with the words the Lord working with them. Christ didn't give up his work when he ascended, but he only used different instruments to carry it on. And here they are. And there were going to be equipped with power from on high to represent him. Well, now, in this first 14 verses, there's a little summary of the last chapter of Luke's gospel. In the last chapter, you discover that the risen Christ. He took Moses, the prophets, the Psalms. In other words, he took the whole of the Old Testament scriptures as we know them. And during the period of 40 days, he expounded unto them in the Scriptures, all those things that pertain to himself. Now, you know, I have a feeling that if even I had been privileged to have had a 40 day instruction by the risen Christ, I would have known something of what he was trying to teach. I'm not pretending I know much, but you see, there is quite a school of thought, and it's represented by some very godly men who tell you the first thing that these men did after they had a 40 day Bible study by Christ himself, was to ask him an idiotic and silly question.

[00:06:42] And it's labeled the first apostolic mistake. But you see, I've got something more I've got to say before I agree to that. Luke, 24, not only says he opened the Scriptures, but Luke, 24, said, Christ did that which I could never hope to do. He opened the understandings of his hearers that they should understand. Good thing I haven't got that ability. I might work some havoc, but here we have an all completed statement, an open Bible and open understanding. And then we are told those men with an open Bible like that and open understandings like that went to Christ and said when they therefore were come together, they asked him saying, Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel. And of course, they ought to have said, according to their critics, something about a church. If once you get an obsession in your mind that the church was the only thing that mattered, then of course you'll be putting all the apostles straight. But if you say to yourself, How is it humanly possible? For men who had been with Christ were going to be used by him. Left behind to represent him, to have 40 days instruction, have their understandings opened and then miss the way so badly. So perhaps with all modesty, we may say we may have missed the way instead.

[00:08:06] And as a result. I've done perhaps damage in our comments. The Lord, of course, didn't give them a straight answer. This was a question that was not possible to answer. Yes or no. Without going too far. If he had said to them, Well, no. The kingdom will not be restored immediately. Well, that would have paralyzed their armies. Or what's the good of us? Preaching and suffering and standing for it, knowing all the time it's a failure. So he said, Now you leave that with the Lord. You just do what the Lord tells you to do and leave consequences to Him. And He says that to you and me with regard to our private affairs or our ministry. And then after the attention. We realized we read the chapter. They were gathered in this upper room, and then Peter stood up. I don't know whether you noticed in the reading that when Mrs. Ellison got to verse 25, she lowered her voice. I hope you did, because it's such an obvious call for a parenthesis or brackets. Now in verse. Um, 20 and verse 15. The brackets have been put in because nobody needs to be told that. In those days Peter stood up among the disciples and said the number of names together were about 120. He didn't stand up and say that it's obvious it's put in brackets. But when you come to verse 25. Any amount of read it to mean that Judas.

[00:09:49] By transgression fell that he Judas might go to his own place and it rhymes with fell. But you see, that's not the teaching. It was the one who went to his own place was Matthias, on whom the lot had fallen. So we read it again that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place and he was numbered with the 11 Apostles. That's a straightforward statement. Now there's a certain amount of query as to whether there was prejudice. Manifested by the appointment of Matthias. Because you will remember. It says in verse 33 and they appointed to. Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus and Matthias. And they prayed and they said, Lord, thou knowest the hearts of all men. Show whether of these two, thou hast chosen. Had a lot fell upon Matthias and were still in Kingdom conditions. I don't see I don't believe, whether we should be right to cast lots and discover the will of God. But it was according to the law of Moses and the practice in the Old Testament. We are told that the lot is cast into the lap. But the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord. They cast lots when when Joshua led the children of Israel into the land of Palestine and each one had his portion as the lot fell. But it wasn't accident. The Lord's will was done. Well now.

[00:11:38] Why did I just say here? Two of them, Lord. There were 120 of them. Why not put 50 or 60? Was this prejudice? No. If you will turn to the Gospel, according to John 15th chapter, you will see that there was a condition to be observed. John 15, verse 26 and 27. But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father. So this is looking to the very day of Pentecost, which was now due. Even the spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father. He shall testify of me. And ye also shall bear witness. Because he had been with me from the beginning. Now, that was the qualification which our saviour himself gave him. And as I said in meetings before, when dealing with this. If there were some reason for us to appoint someone to an office in this chapel. And we said we can only ask. We can only invite those who were with us when we first started the ministry of a rightly divided word in London. Would you be offended if you were passed by? As far as I can see, there's only one person in this meeting who was at the first meeting we ever held in London for the testimony of the rightly divided world. And we couldn't appoint that person to a bishop because it happens to be Mrs. Welsh. So it's no good getting upset over it. None of us can conform, can we? What you see here is the conditions.

[00:13:32] Men and brethren. I'm reading verse 16. Maiden brethren. This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David Spake. This man believes the Word of God. Anyhow, who standing up to speak. He believes that it was given by inspiration and the East faith before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus for He was numbered with us and obtained part of this ministry. And I won't read the rest because we've already read it. But it said now, verse 21. The way have all of these men which have companied with us all the time, that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up. There's the qualification being stated. This man, whoever he is, is a witness. He can say, I was there. I saw it. But you might say to me, Well, I've never heard about Matthias in the Gospels. Well, that may be so, but there were 70 of them. Don't forget who accompanied the Lord and were sent out by him sometimes. And their names are not given. Judas was there, but our saviour said, Have I not chosen you? 12 or 1 of you is a devil. He knew and Matthias evidently was there all the time. And when the moment came for the number to be made up, then God made it evident that that was the man who had been chosen all the time and waiting.

[00:15:02] Whether there was a prejudice on the part of the company to put barsabbas. Who was surnamed Justus and had another name, Joseph means son. In some congregations, if you've got a hyphenated name, they get the chance of being made chairman or something, but I don't think so. There they were, those two men, and the lot fell upon Matthias. Well, now, in John's gospel, the Savior says that when the spirit of truth is come. Well, the spirit of truth came in chapter two. And if Matthias had been wrongly appointed, this is the outcome of this teaching. The spirit of truth had to baptize a man who was wrongly appointed. I've begun to say that. And Matthias would have been immediately exposed as an error, wouldn't he? So we now complicate the spirit of God himself. So one evil was produces another. And then I think that the man, Peter, who is supposed to have engineered this apostolic mistake in a few days time is going to strike a man and his wife dead because they told a lie against the Holy Ghost. So the ball goes on and grows bigger. There are no apostolic mistakes here. These men were equipped for their work and they had scripture for it. They had the Lord's and statement and the fires was there. And you said, Why all this worry? Well, they were on tiptoe of expectation that the Lord would return.

[00:16:25] Chapter three tells you what was in their mind. Verse 19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you. What if he was coming? He told them in the regeneration you which have followed me shall sit upon 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. It is absolutely necessary that the vacant throne should be occupied. That they could say, like the parable says, Come for all things are now ready. They couldn't have said All things are now ready If they said, Well, we've got one throne, but nobody ever sit on it. So it all hangs together as a perfect peace as we generally find if we let the Word of God be our teacher. Well, now this Acts of the Apostles is a mighty subject to consider. The only way in which we can hope to get it into this one meeting is to step through it in large strides. That's all we're hoping to do in this series. And then you go back to it and fill in all the intervals as time and opportunity permits. Now there's a geographic geographical index. It moves in the first chapter. Our savior said, You shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem and Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.

[00:17:55] And there's every probability that the uttermost part of the earth there meant the uttermost part of the land of Israel for the same word d g e, which we have in geography and geometry and geology. The same word at about the same number of times is translated earth and translated limited land. And that was the they were to start at Jerusalem and then to go forward. Well, the movement in the book is up to about the 12th chapter, roughly. Jerusalem is the center. And then the 13th chapter strikes a new note. There was a church at Antioch and the Spirit of God said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul. And after that a long a period and a great deal of ministry. We find the apostle at Rome. So the movement in the acts of the apostles geographically is Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome. Now we come back again and think of the people. Not really the place, but the people. Now, on the day of Pentecost, we are told in verse five, chapter two, that there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. The stresses that they were Jews because they came from other nations. It didn't make them gentiles. In fact, you're told the nations that contributed the Jews. Verse nine, Parthians, Medes and Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia and Pontus and Asia. Look at them. These contributed. They all came from these parts, but they were nevertheless Jews.

[00:19:45] And they had come not to a church service. They'd come to an Israel festival. The day of Pentecost had been observed as a feast ever since the days of Moses. And it is it finds its place in Leviticus chapter 23. And there was no reason at all that any Gentile should ever attend a Jewish feast unless he were a proselyte. And then of course, he would not be reckoned as a gentile. And then they see that you get another idea with a Bible that on the day of Pentecost, the whole assembled company there in a great square outside in Jerusalem, were all baptized into one body. And that's where the church are the one body began. Where they get that from. Well, what shall we say? The only ones who were baptized were the 12 with a special gift. A gift of tongues. And when they stood up to speak, they spoke in the dialect as the actual word is in which their hearers were born, and that gave them their marching orders for a man would be the absolute fool if he had the gift of speaking Hindustani. And he said, Well, I'll go to Asia or I'll go to Rome. If a man had the gift of speech of a district, he would immediately know That's my equipment. And so we had the 12 dispersed in all those countries round about and the work began. When we come to Chapter 11, we find that this emphasis upon the Jew was still strong.

[00:21:17] Chapter 11 tells you that there was a dispersion that took place after the stoning of Stephen, and they went further afield. Verse 19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about, Stephen, traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. So right up to that point, these people who had been associated with Pentecost and its gifts and its teaching, they were preaching. But it was Jews only. So I suppose there's another apostolic mistake. Otherwise, where does the church come in? As we understand it. Well, the point is, it hasn't come in yet. The people were given a second opportunity, the very ones who had refused Christ instead of being refused by God. The disciples are now you at Jerusalem and start again and give them this final opportunity. And the epistle to the Romans has all day long have I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people. And the patience of God lasted for 35 years and comes to an end in chapter 28, as we know. Well, now when you turn the page to x 13. We have to use another term instead of saying to do only, we have to say now a movement has taken place. That unites and links together both Jew and Gentile. It wasn't a complete unity like the membership of a body because they had to have a meeting in the 15th chapter to decide whatever they were going to do because of the friction and the problem there was about Jewish customs and Gentile customs.

[00:23:06] Things strangled, eating, things that contain blood and all sorts of things. There was not one body yet. But here we have in Acts 13, the apostle going into the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, and he stood up and spoke to the people. And in verse 26, we read these words. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham and whosoever among you. Fear is God to you is the word of this salvation sent? So he widens his appeal. It's not men and brethren, children of the stock of Israel and stop there or children of the stock of Abraham and stop there or Ye House of Israel and stop there. That's what it's been like up till now. Now he adds the words. And whosoever among you fear if God and a glance at the later verses of this chapter shows that this refers to Gentiles. Verse 42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. So the Jew and the Gentile come in the middle. Now, at the end of the book of the acts, it goes the other extreme. It starts with Jew only. It ends with Gentile. Only 28. Verse 28, which follows a quotation of Isaiah six for the last time for the heart of this people is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes are they closed lest I should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and should be converted and I should heal them.

[00:24:41] Be it known, therefore, unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and that they will hear it. Well, there's a movement in Jerusalem, Antioch Road, Jew, Jew and gentile. Gentile. And the teaching keeps pace with that. The early epistles of the circumcision, James and Peter and Jude, they still envisage Israel as a royal priesthood and a holy nation. Then Paul's ministry comes along and begins to unite the believing Gentile with the believing remnant of Israel and likens it to a wild olive graft, contrary to nature, into an olive tree. And then finally, as the prisoner of Jesus Christ for US Gentiles, with Israel gone. Dismissed as they are in Chapter 28, God made him the channel of making known the dispensation of the mystery. Now, in this verse 27 of Acts 28, it says, And I should heal them lest I should heal them. And you may remember the first miracle that performed after the day of Pentecost was the healing of a man who was lying there, a beggar at the door of the temple. And when Peter explains that meaning, this is what he says, verse nine of chapter four, if we this day be examined, the good deed done to the impotent man by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him,

doth this man stand here before you whole? This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

[00:26:41] Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. The point I want to make is this that the word salvation here in verse 12 is the word healing. Had. It is prefaced by the article the what Peter is doing. He says, You see this man? He's been healed by that despised name, Jesus of Nazareth. And the whole healing of the nation, the healing of the nation, which is mentioned in the last chapter, will only come through that name that they despised. That was the symbolic meaning of that miracle. Now we'll get another miracle that we meet in chapter 13 that has a symbolism to. But this one is not wrought by Peter. But it's wrought by Paul. You know that in Acts 13. A Gentile named Sergius Paulus. He desired to hear the word of God, but a Jew named Bar-jesus or Elymas, which stood.

[00:27:42] And then Saul. Who was that at that time called Paul. Linking him with a Gentile. He looked at this Jew and he said in verse 11, And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon me and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And then the deputy believes and all his house. Well, there's another typical miracle. Peter's miracle heals a Jew. Peter Paul's miracle blinds a Jew and saves a Gentile. Well, that was foreshadowing Peter's ministry. That was foreshadowing Paul's. And what was foreshadowed in Acts 13 actually came to pass in Acts 28. Not merely one Jew blinded, but a whole nation going out into their blindness. Not merely one man's family being saved, but the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles and they will hear it. That's where we come in, friends. That's where the door opens for us. If we only would understand the movement of this great book. Well, now. We go back on our story. I was hoping to have included a survey of the epistle to the Galatians. What a hope. But we go back on our story just to pick up another feature. Chapter three. Verse 19 once more. The consequence drawn from this first miracle. Repent. Ye, therefore. See, The Call to Repent characterizes the publication of the terms of the Gospel of the Kingdom. John The Baptist used it. Christ used it. His apostles use it.

[00:29:26] But you never find the word repent once. In John's gospel because he's got beyond the period of his repentance and that word is very specifically used in making known the good news of the kingdom. Doesn't mean to say that you haven't got to be

sorry for your sins, but it was a term that was very much limited in that way. Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must reads, the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Now, coming down to the close of the chapter, he says in verse 25, You are the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers. So he's addressing Israel. No other people are the children of the prophets and the covenants. So he says to them in verse 26. And you first. God, having raised up his son, Jesus sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. And to you first he sent you. Notice that? So he's still endorsing the Jew first aspect. Now, if you'll come to the 13th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Again, we'll read that same verse, but we'll notice the stress that is there put upon.

[00:30:59] First the 13th chapter, verse 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 Gentiles. And then quotes Isaiah in consequence. So here he's endorsing the fact that the Jew had it first. Now, in the passage, which we had read just now, verse 26, I'll read it again. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham and whosoever among you feareth God to you is the word of this salvation sent. You see, in the first case, chapter three, it was to you first that the Jew only in Acts 13. It's to you. That's both of them together, it's said. And then I have no need to turn to x 28. But you know it so well. The 28th verse is and the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles independently of the Jew. And you can ransack the Bible, if you will, but you'll never find a Gentile. Blessed. Throughout the whole story. From the call of Abraham to the end of the Acts of the Apostles, never was a gentile blessed independently of Israel. We are living in a most peculiar period. Although we may not be conscious of it, we dare to come to God. We dare to believe His gospel.

[00:32:33] We dare to have a meeting. We dare to open his book. And there isn't an Israelite among us. Well, that would be an astounding thing before this happened. But of course, they say familiarity begets contempt. I hope it never will in our case, to take it lightly that we have this access that some of those who were our ancestors would have

never dreamed possible. So now let's gather up what we've seen so far. We've we've gone in three strides through the book. We gone from Jerusalem to Rome via Antioch. We stood where, first of all, it was Jews only. We then stood with a group of Jews and Gentiles, and then we heard the repudiation for the time being of Israel and Gentiles only coming into the story. You will observe that on this chart. I've got three words on this side. Restoration, reconciliation and rejection. And on the other side, I've got three ministries. Peter one, Paul, a free Man, two. Paul A Bond. Man three. Now I can only just touch upon those features and that will be as far as we can get, I suppose, in our use of this stairway through the Word of God. We're having a good long rest on the stairs this evening and we're not so out of breath as we have been some time now. Then the. The first word restoration. Of course, I go back to that passage we were dealing with in the first chapter.

[00:34:17] When verse six, when they therefore were come together. There was only one question they asked and they didn't say, Lord, are we right in believing that the Old Testament promises are to be taken literally? Or are we to understand that the word Israel means a gentile? Or they didn't say that. It never entered their head to say that. They only said, Will it take place now? They never dreamed that anyone would question that after having gone through all the scriptures up to that time, teeming with promises that Israel should be restored, that anyone would doubt that that's what meant what it said, or that they would think that Gentiles were Jews. Some of some of some people believe that they are they are Israel because they were Saxons. And they tell you the reason is because they were isaacsons see, Oh, you can play about with words and you can you can believe anything. And I know that there was one man irritated a speaker in Hyde Park who was emphasizing that British meant whatever it meant. He kept on going like that, sniffing. So the speaker said, What do you keep sniffing for? He says, Flemish. It was a way of saying, You see, you can play about with words and mean nothing. No, he said, I can't tell you the time restoration. And then in chapter three, Peter endorses it, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things spoken by the prophets.

[00:35:54] So restoration covers the first part. Is it possible that now this people will repent and the kingdom be set up? It was possible. Speaking humanly. But then when we come to. Paul's ministry, which starts in Acts 13. He is a man who is uniting together. These parties that were so separate, so separate, that Peter himself looked at

Cornelius and told him to his face that he would have classed him as common and unclean. Peter says, I'm a Jew. I can't have anything to do with you, according to my understanding. And yet it comes about. Well, now you don't find the word reconciliation in the acts of the apostles, but you find it in Paul's epistles. And this is a thing to remember, friends. You'll find it in Paul's epistles. Only you'll never find reconciliation in James or Peter or Jude or John. It wasn't a part of their ministry. They were already ministering to the people that were the covenant people of God. But Paul was ministering to a people who were outside of all covenant He ever bring them near. And so the Ministry of Reconciliation is they're stressed in Romans in Corinthians. And after the break. Even more wonderfully and deeply in regions and Colossians reconciliation. And then the word rejection sums up the tragedy of Acts 28. Shall we turn to that 28th chapter? We shan't be able to do much more than. Give some idea of the place that 28 occupies in the scheme of things.

[00:37:35] I'll see the red lights go on out. So that's a warning to me. You notice the first verses of X28. It tells us that they were shipwrecked on an island called Melita and the barbarous people. It doesn't mean to say that they were worse than others because the world was divided up. If you were a Jew, it was divided up between Jew and Gentile, and if you were a Greek, it was divided up between Greeks and barbarians. Even the Romans call themselves barbarians. Because they weren't Greeks. So these were just outsiders. They showed no little kindness because they were suffering. They kindled a fire and they were suffering because of the cold. Then Paul, he gathered a bundle of sticks. I always think it is a wonderful thought that the apostle had moved his halo, put it away so that no one could see it. And he was the only one who had common sense and gumption enough to go and get some wood to keep the fire burning. That's what I call sanctified service, don't you? Of course there are some people when there's firewood to be got, they have to have their quiet time, you know, And you get on with the firewood. As Kiplinger said, there's masters in the world today, as well as Mary's. As he said, the Masters cut the tunnels and sweat and then the Mary's go for their holidays through the tunnels afterwards.

[00:38:54] Well, I suppose there's a place for all. Well, now he said, this is what happens. A viper came out of the wood that was gathered. And you know what a tangle I got in when I tried to say a grass snake the other day. Well, I've got over that. I'm not so stammering, but I've got a splendid word. I forgot what I did say now, but he wasn't

mistaken. This was a viper. And those in the island knew all about it. They said, Oh, he's running away from judgment, but he's caught up with him. He'll drop down dead. But didn't. They expected it. Then they changed their tune and said, He's a god. And one of the things to remember is wherever miracles were wrought in the presence of Gentiles without the Jew there, it turned them into idolaters. It took place in Acts 14. It takes place here. And even today, the church which we associate most with so-called miracles, is one which has a good deal of idolatry about its teaching and ceremony. Well now as a consequence of this. He healed diseases to. It is an *n* a our version says in very plain Anglo-Saxon. He suffered from a bloody flux. Uh, but the Greek is a bit more refined, although it's just as evil and horrible. It's the word dysentery. That's not one of those undiagnosable disease where you don't quite know where the pain is and whether, you know, it was so obvious cured him at once and all the others flocked to him.

[00:40:26] Now you say, why are you stressing this? Well, Mark's gospel says in chapter 16, these signs shall follow them that believe. They shall take up serpents. They shall drink deadly poison. They shall lay their hands on the sick. So right to the last chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, what we call Pentecostal conditions obtained poison wasn't there. The Viper was there. It's the same thing. And the healing. Well, now he gets to Rome. And in spite of the fact that he wanted to see the church, he called the elders of the Jews. And they spent a whole day. Verse 23, as he expounded and testified, The Kingdom of God. And you can't expound if you haven't got a book open. So he was going through the scriptures he was doing for these Jews in Rome what the Savior had done for the Jews when he left them in Luke 24. It's bringing it to a complete balance. And he spoke concerning Jesus. Not Christ Jesus out of the law of Moses and the prophets from morning to evening when there was no agreement among them. He quoted for the last time Isaiah six. And then it says verse 30 in balance with verse 23. Instead of saying his lodging, it says his own hired house. And I've been reading someone who is out to prove that Paul wasn't a prisoner.

[00:41:49] One of the things he does is to simply say that he translates the passage in Ephesians I am the bound one of Jesus Christ and then says to his hearers, and you are bound runs in Jesus Christ, and so am I. And gets away with it like that. Whereas if you put down every reference to the word *desmos* in the New Testament, every single one of them is a prisoner suffering actual physical bondage. You see, it's robbing us

again of the distinctive prison ministry of the Apostle Paul. That's what it's out for. So we make a protest and we say, at least be honest and give all the references and don't say I am a bound one. You are bound to be honest and true instead of teaching things like that. Well, another one has said all the hired house. Oh, that's not the same as a lodging. Will you go and tell your landlady that and see what she will say? If a man can be a prisoner and have his lodging and he cannot be a prisoner if he has a hired house. Would you say? It seems a distinction without much difference? It's only saying the same thing from two points of view. But anyhow, in verse 31, we have the echo. Preaching the kingdom of God because everything is within the kingdom of God. Everything isn't within the Kingdom of heaven. But the Kingdom of God includes the kingdom promised to Israel, includes the membership of the bride, includes the church of the one body.

[00:43:21] You can't be outside the Kingdom of God. But there's no reference to Moses and the prophets. And there is no mere state saying something about Jesus. Oh no, it's concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Full title and in the last words are Unforbidden. I'm forbidden. Now, instead of saying that means he wasn't in prison. That's what they said. Unforbidden means he wasn't in prison, and that means they've shut their eyes to the fact that Peter uses the word and Paul uses the word in this way. Peter says, How could we forbid baptism? Who was I that I should forbid God? It's the Jew forbidding the Gentile to hear the word like it says in Acts 13, you see. And then Paul says that this was the climax sin of Israel, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they filled up their measure and the wrath come upon them to the uttermost. So he says there's no forbidding us. Now, why? Because the people who forbade us are themselves dismissed. So the end of the acts means an unforbidden ministry to the poor outside Uncovenanted Gentile, the salvation of God sent without reference to Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. And that's the open door for making known the terms of the dispensation of the mystery. That's the marvelous calling that is in operation today. And we lead right on then. From the Acts of the Apostles last chapter into Paul's great epistle to the Ephesians, and we get the charter of this new church blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ, chosen in him before the foundation of the world, given an adoption and right the way on until you get to the climax that when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory? That, of course, is Colossians.

[00:45:23] Well, that's rather a scamper, as it were, through a mighty book, but I do hope that our threaded it enough for those who are not acquainted with it to see that it's got a definite plan, it's got a wonderful purpose and it leads on to a position and a condition of things that make it possible for God and Reservedly to go out to poorer outsiders, aliens and strangers like we are and give them access and acceptance beyond anything that we find embedded in the Gospel foreshadowed to the fathers or announced by Peter in the early chapters of this one book of the acts. Well, I think we must leave it there and pray that it may have been blessed, may be blessed and form a part of a scheme of understanding the scriptures. And we're just about, what, halfway? So, God willing, we must meet together again and go up the stairs. We've got the epistles now awaiting us, 2 or 3 of them Galatians, Hebrews and Ephesians, and then the book of the Revelation to bring this series of studies to a close.