

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

1) 6 March 2016.....	Acts 1	Entrusted
2) 13 March.....	Acts 2	Empowered and Unified
3) 20 March.....	Acts 3	Benevolent
4) 27 March.....	Luke 24	Resurrected!
5) 3 April.....	Acts 4	Courageous
6) 10 April.....	Acts 5	Integrity & Faithful
7) 17 April.....	Acts 6	Selfless
8) 24 April.....	Acts 7	Forgiving
9) 1 May.....	Acts 8	Obedient
10) 8 May.....	Acts 9.....	Converted & Bold
11) 15 May.....	Acts 10	Accepting
12) 22 May.....	Acts 11	Engaging
13) 29 May.....	Acts 12	Extraordinary

INTRODUCTION

- Saul gets saved and healed of blindness; Bedridden Aeneas gets healed; and Tabitha is raised from the dead. These episodes beg some questions: Do such miracles still occur today? If not, why not? And if so, why are they so rare and subjective as compared to the numerous & provable 100% healings of the 1st century apostolic era?

Passage	Comments
9:1-9	<p>Saul's First Encounter with Jesus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was Paul unique in receiving this manifestation of Christ? Can we expect God to appear to others in similar fashion? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple Answer is Yes & No. Yes, Paul was unique, as he was specifically called to be an Apostle of Christ; and NO, we shouldn't expect others to receive similar visitations Possible Exceptions. The 144,000 witnesses (Rev 7 & 14) and/or the 2 witnesses in Rev 11 who are specifically chosen – but that is pure speculation at best For others who give testimony of Paul-like visitations from Christ, please put your spiritual antennas up, and consider what God said of such prophets and proclaimers: <i>"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied"</i> Jeremiah 23:21
9:10-19	<p>Ananias Gives Paul The Holy Spirit, Sight, and Food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ananias also receives a unique vision from God. Was this disciple special to receive this vision and direction? How so? Or could God have chosen almost anyone for this task? Note. Ananias was the only non-Apostle recorded to have given the Holy Spirit to someone, but it was to an Apostle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there doctrinal implications to this? Was this giving of the Holy Spirit to someone unique or normative? Why? For more on this, see lesson on Acts 8. From this point forward, Paul, after being blinded, looked at weaknesses as a means to more fully rely on the Lord The Irony of God. Saul, the persecutor, would soon become Paul, the persecuted, as he would spend the rest of his adult life either in jail, in chains, in beatings, or escaping crowds
9:20-31	<p>Saul "Straightway" Proclaims the Gospel Boldly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With Saul changing his beliefs so suddenly, this would possibly be on par with Pres. Obama becoming a Republican v22. Saul increased in strength and confounded the Jews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we increase in strength & confound unbelievers? Paul's words, not miracles, saved many (see next page) v27. Barnabas – a man like few others. His faith was bold (recall Acts 4 where he sold & gave his possessions away), and he took chances with people. How can we do the same? v31. The church can experience growth even when they have peace from persecution – assuming we remain diligent
9:32-35	<p>Peter Heals Aeneas, Who was Paralyzed for 8 Years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was another supernatural healing of the unhealable since the healing was spontaneous and instantaneous. v35. And ALL who saw this healed man "turned to the Lord." So, why doesn't God heal the unhealable today – the amputees, the mentally handicapped – so that more would turn? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider this. Healings are temporary. Even raising someone from the dead doesn't convert the eyewitnesses. It is sound doctrine (God's word) that saves 1Tim 4:16

Passage	Comments
9:36-43	<p>Peter Raises Tabitha (Aramaic) / Dorcas (Greek) → "Gazelle"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note. Those who got a 2nd chance at life were all believers, & Scripture never reveals what they experienced while dead Female disciple (μαθητριά mathetria) – The only time this feminine form is used in Scripture. For her to be specifically tagged as a disciple on par with her male counterparts signified she was something special Her handmade garments were indispensable gifts of love to the widows in her community. Like James, she demonstrated genuine faith is seen in one's works It is very unusual in days before embalming to delay a burial beyond 24 hours, but her church leaders knew Peter was in the vicinity, and he could easily work the "signs of an apostle", which included bringing someone back from the dead Why did Peter clear the room of all people? Was it to show compassion? Did he need to concentrate or possibly not reveal something to others? We can only speculate.
Purpose of Shock and Awe Miracles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To validate the message and the messenger – for a season To grab the attention of the onlookers Miraculous or seemingly miraculous wonders make people form a decision and act accordingly (e.g., It's either of God, of man, of the Devil, or of natural causes?) Miracles do not convince anyone to believe. In fact, they may enrage some against the miracle worker.

Does God Still Perform Supernatural Healings & Miracles Today

Key Continuationist' Viewpoints

- YES, God still works supernatural healings and miracles today since Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever; and we are healed by His stripes.
- But, they acknowledge, healings are not of the same frequency or magnitude; & they are performed more in 3rd world countries where the Gospel is not prevalent (No scripture evidence to support this)
- Note.** If God only works small miracles and partial healings (less than 100% healed), then we have contradictions in Scripture, for there are things too hard for God to do, and God fails to give to everyone who asks in faith and for their joy to be made full.
- How do Continuationists respond to less than 100% healings and God only working small wonders?
 - It is no longer God's will to heal all, and God does what He pleases, when He pleases

Key Cessationist' Viewpoints

- NO, God has ceased working supernaturally until the two witnesses in Revelation 11 arrive.
- Else, God is a respecter of persons as He willy-nilly heals only a few but not ALL; and, God only works small miracles, since He doesn't restore amputated limbs or heals Downs Syndrome kids, or other organic ailments.
- We must be like the Israelites once they marched across the Jordan and God's supernatural wonders ceased (e.g. daily meals & their clothes not wearing out); Yet, they were to convey to the next generation that God was still the same God as He met their daily needs providentially.
- How do Cessationists respond to healings and miracles today?
 - God worked providentially (through time and/or medicine), or it was of man, of the Devil, of nature, or coincidental

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS

- We need not fret if we do not see the assumed signs, healings, and miracles experienced by some. God is still the same God, and more blessed are those who have not seen, yet still believe [John 20:29](#)

NEXT WEEK: Acts 10. An angel of God told Cornelius his prayers & money giving reached God's throne, so God wanted him to hear a special message so he could draw even closer to his Creator.



Look at this...you kill the leader & you nip the whole movement in the bud.

HOW PAUL, SILAS, AND BARNABAS SPOKE IN ACTS

ACTS 9:20 Paul **IMMEDIATELY PROCLAIMED** Jesus
 9:22 He continually increased in strength and **CONFOUNDED** the Jews
 9:27-28 He **SPOKE OUT BOLDLY** in the name of Jesus.
 9:29 He **TALKED AND ARGUED** with the Hellenistic Jews;
 11:26 Paul & Barnabas met with the church & **TAUGHT** large numbers;
 13:5, 15 They **PROCLAIMED** God's word in the synagogues of the Jews;
 13:43 He **SPOKE & URGED** believers
 13:46 Paul & Barnabas **SPOKE OUT BOLDLY**
 14:1 Paul & Barnabas **SPOKE IN SUCH A MANNER** that a great multitude believed
 14:3 Paul & Barnabas **SPOKE BOLDLY** w/ **RELIANCE** on the Lord
 14:21 They **PREACHED** the Gospel and made many disciples
 14:22 They **STRENGTHENED** the Disciples & **ENCOURAGED** them to continue in the faith because tribulation was coming
 15:2 Paul & Barnabas **DEBATED** with believers
 15:3 Paul & Barnabas **DESCRIBED IN DETAIL** Gentile conversions & which brought great joy to believers
 15:35 Paul & Barnabas **TAUGHT & PREACHED** the word of God
 16:10 God called Paul & Barnabas to **PREACH** the Gospel
 16:13 Paul & Silas **SPOKE TO WOMEN**
 16:4,21 Paul & Silas **DELIVERED DECREES** to be observed & **PROCLAIMED CUSTOMS**
 16:25 Paul & Silas **PRAYED & SANG** hymns of praise
 17:2-3 Paul **REASONED** with them from the Scriptures, ...**EXPLAINING & GIVING EVIDENCE**
 17:18 Paul **PREACHED** Jesus Christ & the resurrection
 18:5 Paul **DEVOTED HIMSELF COMPLETELY** to the word and **SOLEMNLY TESTIFIED**
 18:9 Paul was **NOT SILENT**
 19:8 Paul **CONTINUED TO SPEAK OUT BOLDLY, REASONING & PERSUADING** about the Kingdom of God
 19:37 Paul was **NOT A BLASPHEMER** of other religions
 20:11 Paul **TALKED THROUGH THE NIGHT**, if needed
 20:18-20,27 Paul **SERVED WITH ALL HUMILITY**, and **DID NOT SHRINK FROM DECLARING WHOLE PURPOSE OF GOD**
 20:24 Paul was called by God **TO TESTIFY SOLEMNLY**
 20:31 Paul **DID NOT CEASE TO ADMONISH WITH TEARS**
 22:2 Paul **ADDRESSED THE JEWS** in their own Hebrew dialect
 24:21 Paul **SHOUTED OUT** to the Jews "For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial"
 24:24-25 Paul **SPOKE ABOUT FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, DISCUSSING RIGHTEOUSNESS, SELF-CONTROL, & JUDGMENT TO COME**, and Felix became frightened
 25:11 Paul **APPEALED TO CAESAR**
 25:19 Paul **ASSERTED JESUS CHRIST WAS ALIVE**
 26:1 Paul **DEFENDED HIMSELF**
 26:16-18 He was appointed to minister & witness **TO** things seen & to be revealed, He **OPENED THEIR EYES, & CONVERTED THEM**
 26:20 Paul **KEPT DECLARING EVERYWHERE** people's need to repent & turn to God, and for them to perform deeds appropriate to repentance
 26:22-23 Paul **TESTIFIED STATING NOTHING BUT WHAT THE PROPHETS & MOSES SAID** – that Jesus Christ was to suffer, die, & rise to proclaim "Light" to Jews and Gentiles
 26:25-26 Paul **UTTERED WORDS OF SOBER TRUTH, SPEAKING WITH CONFIDENCE**
 26:27 Paul **ASKED RHETORICAL QUESTIONS** – "Do you believe the Prophets?"
 28:23 Paul **EXPLAINED BY SOLEMNLY TESTIFYING** about the Kingdom of God & **TRIED TO PERSUADE** them concerning Jesus Christ from the Law & Prophets **FROM MORNING TO EVENING** – Some believed, others did not
 28:25-26 Paul **SPOKE A PARTING WORD** to the unbelieving Jews
 28:31 Paul **PREACHED THE KINGDOM OF GOD & TAUGHT ABOUT JESUS CHRIST UNHINDERED**

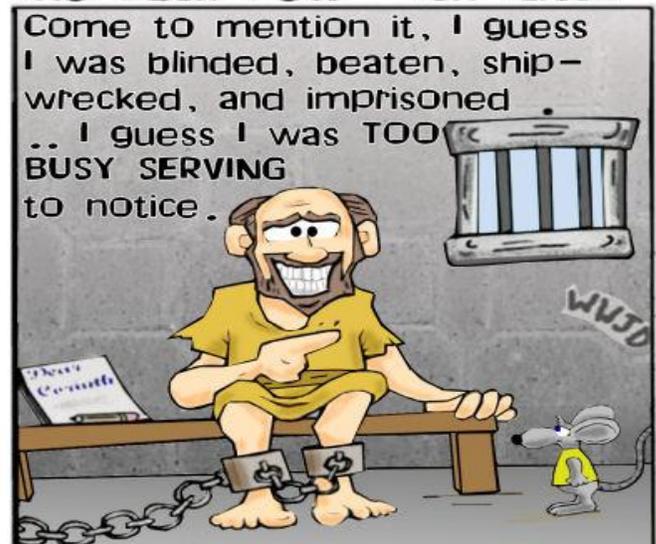
RESULTS OF THEIR SPEAKING

Acts 9:31 The church enjoyed peace, was built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, continued to increase
 12:24 The word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied
 13:33 The whole city assembled to hear
 13:48 Many as had been appointed received eternal life
 13:52 Disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit
 14:1 A great multitude believed
 14:21 Many disciples were made
 15:3 They brought great joy to believers
 16:5 Churches were strengthened and were increasing in numbers daily
 19:10 All who lived in Asia heard the Gospel
 19:20 Word of God was growing mightily & prevailing
 19:26 Paul was successful in turning many away from false gods
 24:24-25 Government official (Felix) became frightened
 26:16-18 Paul opened people's eyes, and converted them (by words)
 28:23 Some believed, some did not

Paul's ability to speak in such away so as to convince and convert many was not by accident, but was a result of practice and prayers, especially having others praying for him and his entourage to have opportunities to speak and to do so with boldness and clarity.

Eph 6:19-20 Paul asked for prayer, that utterance (the right message) may be given to him, and that he may speak boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel
Col 4:3-4 Paul asked for prayers that God may open a door for God's word to declare the mystery of Christ clearly
Col 4:6 Let our speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that we will know how we should respond to each person.
2Tim 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and DOCTRINE.

- Paul and his entourage did not ask for prayers to do more miracles, though they performed many themselves. Paul healed everyone on the island of Malta (**Acts 28:2-9**); Paul & Barnabas worked wonders in Iconium (**14:3**); He healed many with his handkerchief (**19:11-12**); and He raised the dead (**20:9-10**); and casted out demons (**16:18**)
- They were more concerned about what they needed to say and how to say it, where to speak the Gospel, and who to speak it to, and when should they do it (from morning to evening, and even through the night).
- Shouldn't we have the same concern about sharing our faith?

The Back Pew – Jeff Larson

The Apostle Paul, too wrapped up in his love for God to notice his own problems. THAT'S A NICE PROBLEM FOR LIFE.