

Acts 1 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 1 bridges the Gospels and the Church Age, transitioning from Christ's earthly ministry to the Spirit's indwelling work through the apostles. It presents the forty days after the resurrection, Christ's ascension, the promise of the Holy Spirit, and the replacement of Judas. The chapter underscores divine preparation for global witness, establishing the foundation for the spread of grace apart from law or ritual.

1–3. "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach."

Luke's introduction links Acts to his Gospel. "Began" indicates that Christ's ministry continues through His body, the Church, empowered by the Spirit. During forty days, He presents "many infallible proofs" (tekmeriois pollois, Gk.) of His resurrection, confirming the factual and bodily nature of His victory over death.

4–8. "Wait for the promise of the Father... ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Jesus commands them not to act until empowered by the Spirit. Spirit baptism (baptisthēse the en pneumatī hagiō, Gk.) refers to the Spirit placing believers into union with Christ—initiating the Church. "Ye shall receive power" (dynamis, Gk.) denotes divine enablement for witness, not political authority. The geographical pattern "Jerusalem... Judea... Samaria... unto the uttermost part of the earth" outlines the book's progression and God's universal plan of grace.

9–11. "While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

The ascension marks the completion of Christ's earthly mission and His exaltation to the Father's right hand. The "cloud" represents divine glory, not mere weather. The angels'

message, “This same Jesus... shall so come in like manner,” confirms the literal, bodily, and visible return of Christ—establishing the doctrine of the Second Coming.

12–14. “Then returned they unto Jerusalem... and continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.”

Obedience precedes empowerment. The disciples’ unity (homothymadon, Gk.) reveals spiritual harmony rooted in expectation. Women, including Mary, join in prayer—showing equality in spiritual participation though roles differ. The early church begins with humility and dependence, not organization or ritual.

15–20. “Peter stood up... and said, Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled.”

Peter cites Psalms 69 and 109 to explain Judas’s betrayal and death. Scripture’s fulfillment proves divine sovereignty even in human failure. Judas’s fall illustrates rejection of grace, not loss of salvation—he was never a believer (John 6:64). “Must needs have been fulfilled” (dei plērōthēnai, Gk.) underscores the necessity of prophecy.

21–26. “That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship.”

Matthias is chosen by lot after prayer. This act, pre-Pentecost, occurs before the Spirit’s indwelling guidance begins. The criteria—witness to the resurrection—ensures apostolic authenticity. The lot signifies trust in God’s providence, not chance. Matthias’s inclusion completes the symbolic twelve, representing God’s faithfulness to Israel’s covenant structure even as the Church Age dawns.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Tekmeriois pollois (Gk., v.3): “many convincing proofs,” empirical demonstrations of resurrection reality.

Baptisthēsesthe en pneumati hagiō (Gk., v.5): “be baptized with the Holy Spirit,” placing into union with Christ.

Dynamin (Gk., v.8): “power,” divine enablement for spiritual service.

Homothymadon (Gk., v.14): “with one accord,” unity of purpose through shared faith.

Dei plērōthēnai (Gk., v.16): “it must be fulfilled,” expressing divine necessity.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 1 establishes the Church’s divine mission and power source. The Spirit’s baptism unites all believers in one body (1 Corinthians 12:13). Christ’s ascension guarantees intercession and future return. The apostles’ obedience and prayer reflect readiness for Spirit-led ministry. Salvation is already complete; empowerment for service now begins. God’s plan moves from Israel’s covenant structure toward universal proclamation of grace.

Free Grace Summary

The risen Christ continues His work through the Spirit, not through law.

Spirit baptism identifies believers eternally with Christ, not as a reward but as a gift.

Empowerment follows salvation; the Spirit enables witness, not proof of salvation.

The ascension ensures intercession and future return, confirming eternal security.

The early believers waited in faith, not striving in fleshly energy.

Judas’s fall displays unbelief, not the loss of salvation.

Acts 1 introduces a new era of grace—salvation complete, mission commencing, and power supplied by the indwelling Spirit.

Acts 2 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 2 marks the birth of the Church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. It fulfills Christ's promise of the Spirit's coming and inaugurates a new dispensation of grace where believers are permanently indwelt and united in one body. Peter's sermon explains the event as fulfillment of prophecy and proclaims salvation by faith in the risen Christ. The chapter concludes with the formation of a Spirit-filled community centered on the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, and worship.

1–4. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come... they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

"Pentecost" (fiftieth) occurred fifty days after Passover, symbolizing harvest—the beginning of a spiritual harvest of souls. "Sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind" symbolizes divine power. "Cloven tongues like as of fire" represent purification and the Spirit's presence. "Filled with the Holy Ghost" refers to empowerment for witness, not a second salvation experience. The speaking in other languages (glōssais heterais, Gk.) were real, intelligible human tongues, not ecstatic speech.

5–13. "Every man heard them speak in his own language."

The miracle reversed Babel's confusion, emphasizing the universality of the gospel. Jews from all nations understood the apostles in their native dialects. The diverse list of regions underscores the gospel's global reach. Some mocked, accusing them of drunkenness—revealing human blindness to divine power.

14–21. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."

Peter interprets the event as a partial fulfillment of Joel 2:28–32—a preview of the Spirit's outpouring that will reach full expression in the future kingdom. The "last days" began with the Church Age. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" declares salvation by faith alone, open to all, Jew and Gentile alike.

22–24. “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles...”

Peter traces Christ’s ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection, showing divine purpose behind human evil. “Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified” exposes guilt, yet verse 24 triumphs: “Whom God hath raised up.” Resurrection power validates His person and message.

25–32. “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

Quoting Psalm 16, Peter applies David’s prophecy to Christ. “Hell” (Hades, Gk.) refers to the realm of the dead, not eternal torment. Christ’s body did not decay; resurrection fulfilled Scripture. Peter and the apostles serve as eyewitnesses, confirming historical and physical resurrection—the foundation of the gospel.

33–36. “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted...”

The exalted Christ now pours out the Spirit. Peter’s conclusion is climactic: “God hath made that same Jesus... both Lord and Christ.” This declaration calls for recognition of His authority, not meritorious commitment. Salvation is by believing in this risen, exalted Savior.

37–41. “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

Conviction follows belief in the message. Peter’s answer: “Repent, and be baptized... for the remission of sins.” The Greek phrase *eis aphesin hamartiōn* can mean “because of remission of sins,” not “in order to obtain.” Repentance (*metanoēsate*, Gk.) means a change of mind—specifically about Jesus as Messiah. Baptism publicly identifies with faith already exercised. Three thousand believed and were added—Spirit baptism into the body of Christ occurred simultaneously with their faith.

42–47. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship...”

The early Church grew through doctrine, fellowship (koinōnia, Gk.), breaking of bread, and prayers. Unity and generosity flowed from gratitude, not compulsion. “The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”—salvation is the Lord’s work; the Church receives those already redeemed by faith.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Glōssais heterais (Gk., v.4): “other tongues,” real human languages for divine testimony.

Metanoēsate (Gk., v.38): “repent,” meaning to change one’s mind, not to reform one’s life.

Eis aphesin hamartiōn (Gk., v.38): “because of remission of sins,” indicating baptism follows forgiveness.

Koinōnia (Gk., v.42): “fellowship,” shared participation in divine life.

Sōzomenous (Gk., v.47): “those being saved,” denoting God’s continuing work of grace.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 2 reveals the permanent indwelling and empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit inaugurated at Pentecost. The Church is born, not through law or ritual, but through faith in Christ and Spirit baptism. Water baptism serves as public testimony, not as the means of salvation. The believer’s new identity rests in union with Christ. God’s purpose expands from Israel to the world, offering salvation by grace through faith alone.

Free Grace Summary

Spirit baptism begins at faith, not by works or ceremony.

Tongues were a sign for unbelieving Israel, not proof of spirituality.

Repentance in context is a change of mind about Jesus, not turning from sin.

Baptism publicly identifies believers with their new life already received.

The early believers grew in doctrine and fellowship, not in rituals or law.

Salvation is God's work; the Church merely receives those who believe.

Acts 2 inaugurates the age of grace—salvation complete, Spirit given, and eternal life secure.

Acts 3 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 3 records the healing of the lame man at the temple gate and Peter's second sermon to the people of Jerusalem. The miracle confirms the continuing ministry of the risen Christ through His apostles and opens the door for gospel proclamation to Israel. Peter calls the nation to change their mind about Jesus—the One they rejected and crucified—so that times of refreshing might come. This chapter emphasizes grace over ritual, divine power over human merit, and the call to faith apart from works.

1–3. "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer."

Though the Church Age has begun, the apostles still minister among Jews in familiar places. A man lame from birth is carried daily to the temple gate called Beautiful. His helplessness symbolizes humanity's spiritual inability—law and religion can carry him near the temple but cannot heal.

4–8. "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."

The command is issued in Christ's authority, not by mystical formula. "Immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength"—instant and total healing. The miracle demonstrates the living power of the risen Savior working through His servants. The man's leaping fulfills Isaiah 35:6, a messianic sign verifying that Jesus is the promised One.

9–11. “All the people saw him walking and praising God.”

The healed man’s praise draws a crowd to Solomon’s Porch. His joy testifies to grace received freely. The attention provides Peter an opportunity to proclaim Christ—not to elevate himself. Miracles authenticate the message but never replace it.

12–16. “Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?”

Peter redirects all credit to Jesus. The miracle’s purpose is evangelistic, not self-exalting. “The God of Abraham... hath glorified his Son Jesus.” Israel denied and killed the Prince of Life, but God raised Him from the dead. “His name through faith in his name hath made this man strong”—faith in Christ’s person and authority, not in the apostles’ faith, produces results.

17–21. “And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.”

Peter appeals to grace by acknowledging ignorance in their rejection. “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” *Metanoēsate* (Gk.) again means “change your mind.” Conversion (*epistrepsate*, Gk.) means “turn” or “return,” referring to turning toward God through faith in Christ. “Times of refreshing” points to national restoration in the kingdom when Israel receives her Messiah.

22–26. “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me.”

Peter cites Deuteronomy 18:15, identifying Jesus as the ultimate prophet like Moses—one who mediates God’s covenant of grace. “Every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed” warns of temporal judgment, not eternal loss, for those rejecting His message. Verse 26 closes with grace: “God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” The blessing comes through faith, not reformation.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

En tō onomati Iēsou Christou (Gk., v.6): “in the name of Jesus Christ,” denotes authority, not incantation.

Pistei tou onomatos autou (Gk., v.16): “through faith in His name,” highlights belief as the instrument of healing.

Metanoēsate (Gk., v.19): “repent,” meaning to change one’s mind or perspective about Christ.

Epistrepsate (Gk., v.19): “be converted,” to turn toward God by faith.

Anapsyxeōs (Gk., v.19): “refreshing,” literal sense of revival or relief, prophetically referring to kingdom blessing.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 3 illustrates salvation’s principle of grace through faith. The healed man represents humanity restored by Christ’s power, not by ritual or wealth. Peter’s sermon clarifies that repentance means changing one’s mind about Jesus, leading to forgiveness and restoration. The promise of “times of refreshing” points to future fulfillment for Israel but also reflects personal spiritual renewal for those who believe. Salvation and healing both flow from the same source—Christ’s finished work, not human merit.

Free Grace Summary

The lame man’s healing pictures salvation—grace meets helplessness.

The miracle validates Christ’s resurrection and authority.

Repentance means a change of mind about Jesus, not turning from sin.

Conversion is faith’s turning toward God, resulting in forgiveness.

The apostles heal in Christ’s name, proving dependence on His power alone.

Israel is invited to receive the Messiah and experience national blessing.

Acts 3 reaffirms salvation as entirely by grace—freely offered, fully secured, and forever resting on faith in the risen Christ.

Acts 4 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 4 records the first persecution of the early Church following the healing of the lame man. Peter and John boldly testify before the Sanhedrin that salvation is found only in Jesus Christ. The apostles' courage contrasts with the religious leaders' fear of losing control. The chapter concludes with the believers' unified prayer for boldness and a demonstration of Spirit-led generosity—grace motivating voluntary sharing, not legal compulsion. The emphasis remains on the power of Christ's name, the authority of Scripture, and the believer's assurance in the face of opposition.

1–4. “As they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple... came upon them.”

The religious authorities interrupt Peter's sermon, disturbed by the doctrine of resurrection. “Being grieved that they taught the people” reveals hostility to grace. Yet persecution cannot hinder truth—many who heard the word believed; about five thousand men now make up the growing Church. Salvation spreads in spite of opposition because faith, not ritual, unites men to God.

5–12. “By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?”

Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks with divine authority. He attributes the healing entirely to “the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead.” The name signifies His person and power. Verse 12 declares the exclusive gospel: “Neither is there salvation in any other... no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” The Greek *sōthēnai* (“to be saved”) denotes deliverance from sin's penalty through faith alone—no other condition attached.

13–18. “They saw the boldness of Peter and John... and took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.”

The apostles’ courage stems from fellowship with Christ, not education or status. The healed man’s presence silences their accusers. Unable to deny the miracle, the council commands them to stop speaking in Jesus’ name. Religious authority, devoid of truth, fears spiritual power it cannot control.

19–22. “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.”

Peter and John refuse silence. Obedience to God’s commission overrides human threats. “We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” Their testimony models faithfulness grounded in conviction. The man healed—over forty years old—stands as undeniable proof of divine grace.

23–31. “They lifted up their voice to God with one accord.”

Upon release, the believers pray—not for safety, but for boldness. They quote Psalm 2, recognizing that persecution fulfills Scripture. “Grant unto thy servants... that with all boldness they may speak thy word.” The building shakes—a symbol of divine approval and empowerment. “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (eplēsthēsan, Gk.)—an enablement for witness, distinct from indwelling, which all believers already possess.

32–37. “The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.”

Unity arises from grace, not coercion. They shared possessions voluntarily; “neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own.” The Greek idiom (“one’s own”) underscores personal ownership still recognized under grace. “Great grace was upon them all” denotes divine favor empowering generosity. Barnabas, introduced here, exemplifies selfless service by selling land and giving the proceeds. His name means “son of encouragement,” reflecting Spirit-led compassion.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Sōthēnai (Gk., v.12): “to be saved,” passive infinitive—salvation accomplished by God, not man.

Parrēsia (Gk., v.13): “boldness,” freedom and confidence in speaking truth.

Eplēsthēsan (Gk., v.31): “they were filled,” temporary empowerment for specific witness.

Homothymadon (Gk., v.24): “with one accord,” harmony of purpose under the Spirit.

Charis megale (Gk., v.33): “great grace,” abundant favor resting on all believers.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 4 demonstrates that the gospel’s power lies in Christ’s name and resurrection, not in religious institutions. Salvation is exclusive to Christ and secure for all who believe. The Spirit empowers bold testimony; persecution only amplifies grace. Generosity and unity flow from gratitude, not obligation. The Church’s strength comes from prayer and dependence on the indwelling Spirit, not external structure.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is through Christ alone—faith in His name, apart from works.

Boldness arises from assurance, not from personal courage.

The Spirit’s filling empowers witness, not spiritual hierarchy.

Unity and generosity come from grace, not communal compulsion.

The apostles model obedience to God over man without fear of loss.

Barnabas’s giving is an act of grace, not a test of faith.

Acts 4 confirms that grace, once received, empowers both courage and compassion—proof that salvation freely given produces gratitude freely expressed.

Acts 5 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 5 presents both purity and power within the early Church. It opens with the sobering account of Ananias and Sapphira, whose hypocrisy brings divine discipline—not loss of salvation, but physical judgment. The remainder of the chapter displays apostolic miracles, growing persecution, and steadfast obedience to God’s command to preach Christ. The emphasis remains clear: the Spirit safeguards the Church’s integrity while grace sustains its mission.

1–6. “But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession...”

Their sin was not withholding money but pretending full generosity for self-glory. Peter exposes the deceit: “Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?” The sin is against the Spirit, revealing that He is a divine Person. Ananias falls dead under divine judgment, illustrating temporal discipline for believers—not condemnation (cf. 1 Cor. 11:30). Fear grips the Church, teaching reverence for God’s holiness.

7–11. “Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost.”

Sapphira repeats her husband’s lie and meets the same fate. “Great fear came upon all the church.” This “fear” (*phobos megas*, Gk.) means reverent awe, not terror of damnation. The episode establishes integrity in the newly born Church and reveals God’s concern for sincerity in service.

12–16. “By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.”

The apostles perform miracles publicly, confirming divine authority and validating the gospel message. “They were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch”—unity under grace. Believers were increasingly added to the Lord, showing that judgment within the Church did not hinder its growth. Even Peter’s shadow became a symbol of healing—emphasizing God’s power, not superstition.

17–21. “Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him... were filled with indignation.”

Religious jealousy sparks renewed persecution. The apostles are imprisoned, yet an angel releases them, commanding, “Go, stand and speak... all the words of this life.” The phrase “this life” (tēs zōēs tautēs, Gk.) refers to the new life in Christ—eternal and indestructible. They obey immediately, preaching in the temple at dawn.

22–28. “Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name?”

The council confronts the apostles again, accusing them of spreading their doctrine throughout Jerusalem. Their fear of guilt—“ye intend to bring this man’s blood upon us”—recalls their earlier cry, “His blood be on us” (Matt. 27:25). The gospel, however, brings opportunity for forgiveness even to those who rejected Him.

29–32. “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

Peter’s response anchors the believer’s duty in divine authority. “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.” This connects the gospel to Israel’s heritage while affirming Christ’s exaltation. “Him hath God exalted... to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Repentance (metanoia, Gk.) is a gift of grace—a change of mind produced through the message, not a work of merit.

33–40. “Refrain from these men, and let them alone.”

Gamaliel, a respected Pharisee, counsels caution. His logic: if this work is of men, it will fail; if of God, it cannot be stopped. This moment of common grace preserves the apostles from execution. God uses even unbelievers to protect His servants.

41–42. “They departed... rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”

Instead of despair, they rejoice in persecution—proof of spiritual maturity and assurance. They continue “daily in the temple, and in every house” teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. The word “daily” (kath’ hēmeran, Gk.) reflects consistent perseverance, not conditional faith. Their boldness springs from the certainty of salvation, not fear of loss.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Phobos megas (Gk., v.11): “great fear,” reverential awe recognizing divine holiness.

Tēs zōēs tautēs (Gk., v.20): “this life,” referring to eternal life found in Christ.

Metanoia (Gk., v.31): “repentance,” change of mind produced by grace.

Kath’ hēmeran (Gk., v.42): “daily,” continuous steadfast activity.

Onoma Iēsou (Gk., v.41): “name of Jesus,” His person and authority representing salvation.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 5 highlights divine discipline within the Church and divine empowerment for its mission. Ananias and Sapphira’s deaths warn of sin’s seriousness but never suggest loss of salvation. The Spirit’s presence ensures both holiness and courage. Miracles authenticate apostolic authority, and persecution reveals that opposition cannot extinguish the gospel. Grace preserves purity without legalism and produces endurance without fear.

Free Grace Summary

Believers remain eternally secure even when disciplined for sin.

God desires integrity, not perfection, in service.

Miracles and growth flow from divine power, not human prestige.

Repentance and forgiveness are gifts granted through faith, not works.

Persecution strengthens assurance rather than diminishes it.

The apostles obey God, not to earn favor, but because they already possess it.

Acts 5 affirms the balance of grace and holiness—eternal security under divine sovereignty, producing grateful obedience and fearless testimony.

Acts 6 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 6 introduces the early Church's first internal challenge—administrative imbalance in caring for widows. The apostles resolve it by delegating responsibility, leading to the appointment of seven Spirit-filled men, including Stephen. The chapter demonstrates the importance of spiritual and practical balance in ministry: Word-centered leadership supported by servant-minded believers. It concludes with Stephen's arrest, setting the stage for the Church's first martyrdom. The chapter emphasizes service, grace, and divine wisdom amid opposition.

1–4. "When the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring..."

Growth brings logistical strain. The Hellenistic (Greek-speaking) widows feel neglected compared to the Hebrew widows in daily distribution. The apostles prioritize the ministry of the Word and prayer, not neglecting compassion but maintaining focus. They instruct the church to select qualified men to handle physical needs, modeling Spirit-led organization.

5–7. “Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.”

The qualifications—character, spiritual fullness, and discernment—show that even practical service is sacred work. Stephen and Philip later emerge as powerful preachers, illustrating that servanthood precedes leadership. The selection pleases the whole church, reflecting harmony through delegation. Verse 7 marks renewed expansion: “The word of God increased... and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Faith replaces ritual; even many Jewish priests believe.

8–10. “Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.”

Stephen’s ministry extends beyond administration to proclamation. His spiritual fullness (plērēs pisteōs kai dynamēs, Gk.) produces visible impact. Opposition arises from the “synagogue of the Libertines”—freed Jews from various regions. Unable to resist his wisdom and the Spirit’s power, they resort to slander.

11–14. “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.”

False witnesses accuse Stephen of disrespecting the Law and the temple—the same charges brought against Jesus. The accusation misrepresents grace as rebellion. Their claim that he taught Jesus would destroy the temple and alter Mosaic customs partially echoes truth: Christ’s finished work did end the old system, but through fulfillment, not defiance.

15. “And all that sat in the council... saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.”

Stephen’s calm radiance reflects inner peace and divine presence. Like Moses’ shining countenance (Exodus 34:29), his face mirrors fellowship with God. Divine assurance enables composure under accusation. Grace preserves dignity when truth is under fire.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Diakonein trapezais (Gk., v.2): “to serve tables,” describing practical ministry and stewardship.

Plērēs pisteōs kai dynamēs (Gk., v.8): “full of faith and power,” marking Spirit-enabled service.

Pneumatōs hagiou kai sophias (Gk., v.3): “of the Holy Spirit and wisdom,” qualifications for trustworthy service.

Logos tou Theou (Gk., v.7): “word of God,” denoting apostolic teaching and gospel truth.

Prosōpon angelou (Gk., v.15): “face of an angel,” idiom for serene divine reflection.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 6 teaches that spiritual vitality requires both organization and devotion. The Spirit equips believers for diverse roles without dividing sacred and secular duties. Delegation allows the Word to advance while compassion is administered faithfully. Stephen embodies Spirit-led courage and grace, foreshadowing the bold witness of the Church under persecution. Service within the body is ministry when done in faith and truth.

Free Grace Summary

Growth introduces needs that grace, not control, must address.

Leadership involves focus on prayer and Scripture, supported by Spirit-filled servants.

Service roles are spiritual callings, not lesser ministries.

Stephen’s life proves grace equips believers for both service and suffering.

The accusations against him mirror legalism’s hostility toward grace.

His radiant face testifies to unbroken fellowship and eternal assurance.

Acts 6 highlights how grace organizes, energizes, and defends the Church without compromising its message—salvation secure, service empowered, and witness unstoppable.

Acts 7 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 7 records Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin—the longest sermon in Acts and a masterful survey of Israel's history. It demonstrates God's grace through covenants, the people's repeated resistance, and their ultimate rejection of the Messiah. Stephen's message exposes religious hypocrisy and highlights that God's presence is not confined to the temple. His martyrdom closes Israel's national testimony of rejection and opens the door for the gospel to expand beyond Jerusalem.

1–8. "Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken."

Stephen begins with Abraham, the father of faith. God called him out of Mesopotamia, showing that divine revelation predates temple or law. Abraham believed God before circumcision, proving that faith—not ritual—has always been the means of righteousness. The covenant promise anticipated Christ, through whom all nations would be blessed.

9–16. "The patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him."

Joseph's story prefigures Christ: rejected by his brothers, exalted among Gentiles, and later reconciling his people. The pattern reveals Israel's consistent unbelief and God's redemptive plan through rejection leading to blessing. Grace triumphs where envy and sin abound.

17–36. "The same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer... this is that Moses."

Stephen moves to Moses, another rejected deliverer. Despite divine calling, Israel refused him, saying, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge?" This typifies their later rejection of Christ. The "church in the wilderness" (v.38) refers to Israel's assembly, not the New Testament Church. Moses foretold Christ's coming (Deut. 18:15), showing that rejection of Jesus equals rejection of Moses' own prophecy.

37–43. “Our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them.”

Israel’s idolatry in the wilderness—turning to the golden calf and to the “host of heaven”—demonstrates spiritual rebellion. Stephen quotes Amos 5:25–27 to show that outward worship cannot substitute for heart obedience. The temple could not contain God’s glory, nor could ceremonies secure His favor.

44–50. “Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”

Stephen quotes Isaiah 66:1–2: “Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool.” God’s presence is transcendent. True worship depends on spiritual relationship, not ritual location. This strikes at the Sanhedrin’s pride in the temple system, showing that grace transcends physical structures.

51–53. “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears...”

Stephen concludes boldly, accusing the leaders of resisting the Holy Spirit as their fathers did. The phrase “uncircumcised in heart” denotes unbelief and rebellion, not loss of salvation. They persecuted the prophets and betrayed “the Just One.” Law-keepers outwardly, they were lawbreakers inwardly.

54–60. “They gnashed on him with their teeth... but he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven.”

Stephen’s vision of the “Son of man standing on the right hand of God” reveals Christ’s active advocacy for His witness. Standing—not seated—suggests divine attention and readiness to receive him. As stones strike, Stephen prays for his killers, echoing Christ’s words, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” His death exemplifies grace, forgiveness, and assurance. His spirit’s reception (“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”) confirms immediate entrance into Christ’s presence—no purgatory or delay.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Ekklēsia en tē erēmō (Gk., v.38): “assembly in the wilderness,” referring to Israel’s congregation.

Apeitheō (Gk., v.39): “to refuse to believe,” describing willful rejection.

Skēnē tou martyriou (Gk., v.44): “tabernacle of witness,” God’s dwelling during Israel’s journey.

Stiffnecked translates sklērotrachēloi (Gk., v.51): metaphor for stubborn resistance.

Kurie Iēsou dechou to pneuma mou (Gk., v.59): “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” personal invocation of divine reception.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 7 reveals a pattern: divine initiative met by human rejection. Israel consistently resisted God’s grace—from Abraham’s descendants to Moses to Christ. Stephen’s sermon proves that salvation has always been by faith and that God’s presence is not bound to temple or law. His martyrdom demonstrates the believer’s eternal security—his spirit instantly welcomed by the Savior he proclaimed. The Church now stands ready to take the gospel beyond Israel, confirming God’s plan of universal grace.

Free Grace Summary

God’s promises to Abraham and Moses prefigure salvation by faith, not works.

Rejection of Christ parallels Israel’s rejection of past deliverers.

Grace transcends temple, ritual, and geography.

Stephen’s boldness flows from assurance, not self-righteousness.

His prayer for forgiveness exemplifies grace toward enemies.

The believer’s spirit goes immediately to Christ at death—security complete.

Acts 7 closes Israel's chapter of rejection and opens a new era of grace reaching to the Gentiles through the unstoppable gospel of Christ.

Acts 8 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 8 marks a major turning point in God's plan of redemption—the gospel expands beyond Jerusalem into Samaria and beyond. The chapter records persecution under Saul, Philip's evangelistic work in Samaria, the exposure of Simon the sorcerer's false faith, and the salvation of the Ethiopian eunuch. It highlights that salvation is received solely by faith in Christ, while baptism and the laying on of hands serve transitional, not saving, purposes during the Church's early development.

1–4. “And Saul was consenting unto his death... at that time there was a great persecution against the church.”

Stephen's martyrdom triggers dispersion, scattering believers into Judea and Samaria—fulfilling Acts 1:8. Persecution becomes providence, spreading the gospel outward. “They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.” The term *euangelizomenoi* (Gk.) means “proclaiming good news”—ordinary believers becoming witnesses of grace.

5–8. “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.”

Philip, one of the seven, becomes the first evangelist to cross cultural barriers. Samaria—once despised by Jews—receives the message gladly. Miracles confirm the gospel's authority during this transitional phase. “There was great joy in that city” reflects the immediate peace of salvation received by faith.

9–13. “There was a certain man, called Simon... giving out that himself was some great one.”

Simon the sorcerer had long deceived the people with occult influence. When he “believed,” his profession was intellectual, not saving—later revealed by his desire to purchase apostolic power. His story warns against equating outward profession with inward faith. Miracles can impress, but only the gospel regenerates.

14–17. “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

This unique sequence—faith, then apostolic laying on of hands—was transitional, uniting Jewish and Samaritan believers in one body. Normally, the Spirit is received immediately upon faith (Eph. 1:13). Here, delay prevented a divided church by showing that Samaritans were equally accepted. The event demonstrates unity, not a repeatable formula for receiving the Spirit.

18–24. “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.”

Simon’s request reveals unregenerate motives. Peter’s rebuke exposes his bondage to sin, not the loss of salvation—he never possessed it. “Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter... thy heart is not right in the sight of God.” Peter calls him to “repent” (metanoēson, Gk.)—to change his mind about God’s grace, abandoning self-glory. True repentance acknowledges dependence on divine mercy.

25. “They returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.”

Peter and John confirm the Samaritan mission’s success and continue evangelizing. The gospel now moves unhindered by cultural barriers, proving grace’s inclusiveness.

26–31. “The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip... go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza.”

Divine direction sends Philip to meet one seeking truth. The Ethiopian eunuch, a royal official, reads Isaiah 53—a providential setup demonstrating that God pursues seekers with revelation. “Understandest thou what thou readest?” opens a Spirit-led conversation centered on Christ.

32–35. “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter...”

Philip explains that Isaiah 53 speaks of Jesus, the suffering Servant. The gospel message is substitutionary: Christ died in the sinner’s place. Verse 35: “Then Philip opened his mouth... and preached unto him Jesus.” The focus is always on Christ’s person and work, not religious ceremony.

36–38. “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”

Verse 37 (included in traditional manuscripts) records Philip’s response: “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” The eunuch confesses, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” Faith precedes baptism, confirming salvation by belief alone. Baptism follows as testimony, not as a condition for forgiveness.

39–40. “The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip... but Philip was found at Azotus.”

The Spirit’s miraculous transport signifies divine approval and transition. The eunuch continues rejoicing—joy being the evidence of faith, not outward sign or experience. Philip keeps preaching up the coast to Caesarea, establishing the pattern of grace extending outward to the Gentiles.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Euangelizomenoi (Gk., v.4): “proclaiming good news,” sharing salvation by faith.

Metanoēson (Gk., v.22): “repent,” change of mind toward divine grace.

Pisteuō (Gk., v.37): “believe,” trust or rely upon Christ as Savior.

Baptisthēnai (Gk., v.36): “to be baptized,” outward identification after faith.

Harpazō (Gk., v.39): “caught away,” sudden divine removal or transport.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 8 reveals the gospel’s unstoppable expansion by divine orchestration. Persecution disperses believers for greater witness. The Spirit bridges racial and cultural divides. Salvation remains by faith alone; signs and ceremonies accompany the transition but do not confer salvation. Simon’s error warns that religion without regeneration is powerless. The Ethiopian eunuch’s faith testifies that a single believer’s trust in Christ secures eternal life.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is by faith alone, confirmed by belief, not baptism.

Spirit baptism normally occurs at belief; transitional exceptions affirm unity.

Simon’s failure shows outward faith without inward trust.

The eunuch’s confession models genuine faith and immediate joy.

Grace crosses all barriers—Jew, Samaritan, and Gentile alike.

Philip’s obedience displays Spirit-led evangelism and assurance of results.

Acts 8 declares: no persecution, ritual, or failure can hinder the gospel—salvation by grace through faith remains God’s unbreakable promise.

Acts 9 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 9 records the miraculous conversion of Saul of Tarsus, the fierce persecutor who becomes the Apostle Paul. The chapter highlights God’s sovereign grace in calling the unworthy, the immediate spiritual transformation that follows faith, and the beginnings of Paul’s ministry. It also

shows Peter's ongoing miracles, confirming apostolic authority and God's expanding grace from Israel to the Gentiles. Above all, Acts 9 demonstrates that salvation is a gift of grace received by faith alone, independent of works or religious merit.

1–6. "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord..."

Saul's hostility reveals legalistic zeal without truth. On the road to Damascus, he encounters the risen Christ: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"—identifying believers with Himself. This marks the doctrine of the Body of Christ in seed form: persecution of the Church is persecution of the Savior. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" establishes His deity and resurrection. Saul's conversion begins not by reformation but by revelation.

7–9. "He was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink."

Blindness symbolizes spiritual illumination dawning through humility. Saul's encounter leaves him physically weak but spiritually awakened. His fasting reflects repentance—change of mind toward Christ, not a work for acceptance.

10–18. "Ananias... said, Brother Saul."

Ananias, a believer in Damascus, receives divine instruction to restore Saul's sight. He calls him "brother," recognizing him as already regenerated. This confirms that Saul's salvation preceded baptism. "Receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" refers to empowerment, not initial regeneration. His subsequent baptism is a public testimony of faith, not the means of forgiveness (cf. Acts 26:18).

19–22. "Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

Instantly transformed, Saul proclaims the same Christ he once opposed. "Increased the more in strength" (enedynamouto mallon, Gk.) denotes spiritual growth through the Spirit's power. The persecutor becomes preacher—proof that grace changes destiny, not through effort but divine calling.

23–25. “They watched the gates day and night to kill him.”

Persecution begins immediately. Saul’s escape in a basket shows God’s preservation of His messenger. Deliverance follows divine plan, not human power.

26–30. “They were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.”

Jerusalem believers doubt Saul’s conversion until Barnabas testifies on his behalf. Grace finds advocates when fear prevails. Barnabas’s introduction establishes him as a bridge-builder in early Church unity. Paul’s bold preaching provokes hostility from Greek-speaking Jews, but divine protection continues.

31. “Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria.”

The gospel’s spread produces both growth and stability. “Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost” expresses balance between reverence and assurance. The word *paraklēsei* (Gk., “comfort”) links to the Spirit’s sustaining ministry—security amid persecution.

32–35. “Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.”

Peter heals a paralytic in Lydda, demonstrating Christ’s continuing power. The miracle parallels salvation—instant, complete, and by divine grace. “All that dwelt at Lydda and Saron turned to the Lord,” showing that faith spreads through testimony, not compulsion.

36–43. “Tabitha... this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds.”

Tabitha (Dorcas) exemplifies grace expressed in service. Peter raises her from the dead, foreshadowing resurrection power available to all believers. “Many believed in the Lord”

underscores that miracles serve evangelism's purpose, not spectacle. Peter remains in Joppa with Simon the tanner—a symbolic step toward Gentile ministry (Acts 10).

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Enedynamouto mallon (Gk., v.22): “increased in strength,” denoting Spirit-empowered growth.

Metanoia (Gk., implicit v.6–9): “change of mind,” Saul’s repentance toward Christ.

Paraklēsei (Gk., v.31): “comfort, encouragement,” ministry of the Holy Spirit to believers.

Egeire kai peripatei (Gk., v.34): “arise and walk,” command of divine authority.

Pisteusan (Gk., v.42): “believed,” faith response to the gospel message.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 9 confirms that salvation is entirely by grace through faith. Saul’s conversion illustrates that no one is beyond reach. His regeneration precedes baptism or works, proving justification by faith alone. The Holy Spirit indwells and empowers immediately upon belief. Peter’s miracles reaffirm the unity of the apostolic message—salvation through Christ alone. Divine comfort and security accompany those who trust in Him.

Free Grace Summary

Saul’s encounter with Christ exemplifies salvation by revelation, not religion.

“Brother Saul” shows regeneration precedes ritual.

Baptism follows faith as a testimony, not a means of cleansing.

The persecutor’s transformation demonstrates grace’s power and permanence.

The Church’s peace reflects assurance, not fear-based restraint.

Miracles through Peter validate the same message of grace Paul now preaches.

Acts 9 stands as the great conversion chapter: salvation by faith alone, divine calling unearned, and eternal security forever sealed in the risen Christ.

Acts 10 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 10 records the opening of the gospel to the Gentiles through Cornelius, a Roman centurion. God orchestrates a dual revelation—one to Cornelius in Caesarea and one to Peter in Joppa—to demonstrate that salvation is by faith in Christ alone, without racial, ritual, or ceremonial distinction. This chapter marks a pivotal moment in redemptive history: the wall between Jew and Gentile begins to crumble, revealing that God accepts all who believe, not those who merely conform to law or custom.

1–8. “There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius... a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house.”

Cornelius represents a class of Gentiles known as “God-fearers”—reverent toward Israel’s God but not proselytes. His prayers and almsgiving reflect sincerity, not salvation. An angel’s vision instructs him to send for Peter. God honors Cornelius’s seeking heart by granting further revelation leading to the gospel. Grace always meets those who respond to light with openness.

9–16. “Peter went up upon the housetop to pray... and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him.”

Peter’s vision of clean and unclean animals challenges his Jewish exclusivism. The voice says, “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.” This prepares him to receive Gentiles as equals in salvation. The vision abolishes ceremonial barriers, not moral standards. God’s cleansing applies to people through faith, not dietary reform.

17–23. “While Peter doubted in himself... the men which were sent from Cornelius stood before the gate.”

The Spirit commands Peter to go “doubting nothing.” Divine timing unites revelation and obedience. Grace works through divine initiative, not human planning. Peter lodges the Gentile messengers—an act unthinkable for a strict Jew—showing the early softening of prejudice through truth.

24–33. “Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.”

Cornelius’s reverence exceeds propriety; Peter corrects him: “Stand up; I myself also am a man.” The scene displays humility and equality—no hierarchy in grace. Peter declares, “God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Cornelius recounts his vision, emphasizing divine initiative and Peter’s role as messenger, not mediator.

34–43. “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.”

Peter’s sermon centers on Christ’s death and resurrection. God accepts those who believe in Him from every nation. The summary gospel appears in verse 43: “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” This universal invitation is grounded in faith, not works or ceremony.

44–48. “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.”

Before baptism, the Spirit indwells Cornelius and his household—proof that faith alone saves. This parallels Acts 2 but without Jewish ritual or apostolic laying on of hands. The outward sign of tongues confirms to Jewish witnesses that Gentiles are equally accepted. Peter then commands baptism—not for salvation but as identification with the faith already possessed.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Eusebēs (Gk., v.2): “devout,” reverent but not necessarily regenerate.

Phoboumenos ton Theon (Gk., v.2): “one fearing God,” Gentile sympathizer with Judaism.

Koinos (Gk., v.14): “common, profane,” used in the vision to challenge ritual distinctions.

Aphesis hamartiōn (Gk., v.43): “remission of sins,” full release granted through faith.

Epipiptō (Gk., v.44): “fell upon,” describing the Spirit’s sudden bestowal upon believing Gentiles.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 10 affirms that salvation is by grace through faith alone, apart from ritual or ethnicity. God responds to Cornelius’s faith response to light by revealing the gospel. Peter learns that divine cleansing comes through faith in Christ’s name, not law or tradition. The Spirit’s immediate indwelling upon belief validates this truth beyond dispute. The Church now transitions toward universal inclusion, built not on nationality but on the cross.

Free Grace Summary

Cornelius’s devout life did not save him; only belief in Christ did.

God’s grace responds to sincere seekers with further revelation of truth.

The Spirit’s descent before baptism proves faith alone saves.

Peter’s vision abolishes ritual distinctions—grace unites all believers equally.

“Remission of sins” is promised to all who believe, not to those who perform.

Baptism follows belief as testimony, not as a condition of salvation.

Acts 10 stands as the Gentile Pentecost—affirming that eternal life is given freely to anyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 11 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 11 records the Church's acknowledgment that salvation through Christ is open to Gentiles without circumcision or law-keeping. Peter recounts the events at Cornelius's house, validating Gentile conversion as the work of the Holy Spirit. The chapter also introduces the church at Antioch—God's new missionary hub and the place where believers are first called "Christians." This marks the gospel's steady expansion and the unity of Jews and Gentiles under grace.

1–3. "The apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God."

News of Gentile salvation sparks controversy. Jewish believers question Peter for entering and eating with uncircumcised men. Their concern is ceremonial, not theological, showing how tradition can obscure grace. Peter's defense demonstrates that salvation's basis is God's initiative, not human approval.

4–10. "Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning."

Peter's repetition of the vision underscores divine confirmation. The descending sheet symbolized God's cleansing of those once considered unclean. The triple command "What God hath cleansed, call not thou common" (v.9) reflects God's insistence on grace over ritual. Peter obeyed without hesitation—a lesson in submission to divine revelation over religious comfort.

11–14. "He shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."

Peter recounts how Cornelius's angelic vision prepared him to hear the gospel. Salvation always comes through hearing and believing the Word, not through visions themselves. Faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). The angel pointed to the messenger; the messenger pointed to Christ.

15–18. “The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.”

Peter compares the Gentiles’ experience to Pentecost, validating that faith alone secured the Spirit’s gift. “God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.” The conclusion is decisive: “What was I, that I could withstand God?” The Jerusalem believers glorify God, saying, “Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” Metanoia (Gk.) here means a change of mind—accepting God’s provision through faith, not a work of penance.

19–21. “They which were scattered abroad... preached the word to none but unto the Jews only.”

Persecution from Stephen’s death spreads believers into Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. Some men of Cyprus and Cyrene begin preaching to Greeks also—an unplanned step of evangelism directed by the Spirit. The hand of the Lord was with them, and “a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.” This turning describes faith’s response, not reformation for acceptance.

22–26. “Then tidings of these things came unto the church which was in Jerusalem.”

Barnabas is sent to investigate the Gentile conversions. Seeing “the grace of God,” he rejoices, encouraging them to “cleave unto the Lord.” Barnabas embodies grace-oriented leadership—gladness over growth rather than suspicion. He brings Saul from Tarsus to help teach, and for a full year they assemble and instruct the believers. Antioch becomes a center of sound doctrine and missionary expansion. “The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch”—a name reflecting identification with Christ, not institutional religion.

27–30. “And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.”

Agabus predicts a coming famine. The Gentile believers respond generously, sending relief to the brethren in Judea. Grace produces gratitude and compassion, not obligation. Their giving is voluntary and Spirit-led, foreshadowing Paul’s later teaching on cheerful generosity (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Metanoia (Gk., v.18): “change of mind,” repentance unto life through faith.

Episteusan (Gk., v.21): “believed,” placing trust in Christ’s person and promise.

Proskarterein (Gk., v.23): “to cleave unto,” meaning steadfast devotion to Christ.

Christianous (Gk., v.26): “Christians,” followers or adherents of Christ.

Charis tou Theou (Gk., v.23): “grace of God,” evidence of divine favor and regeneration.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 11 establishes that salvation transcends ethnicity and ritual. God Himself verifies Gentile inclusion by granting the Spirit upon belief. Repentance is redefined as faith’s change of mind, not meritorious sorrow. The Antioch church becomes the new missionary base, signaling the Church’s shift from Jerusalem to the Gentile world. Grace governs both fellowship and generosity, uniting all believers in one body through faith alone.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation comes by faith alone, confirmed by the Spirit’s gift.

Repentance means a change of mind toward Christ, not penance.

Grace, not law, governs entry into and growth within the Church.

Antioch models a grace-filled community—teaching, fellowship, and generosity.

The title “Christian” reflects identification with Christ’s person, not performance.

God’s impartial acceptance of Gentiles fulfills His promise to bless all nations.

Acts 11 demonstrates that grace expands freely where law would restrict, confirming the believer's eternal security and universal equality in Christ.

Acts 12 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 12 contrasts human power with divine sovereignty. Herod Agrippa I persecutes the Church, executing James and imprisoning Peter. Yet God intervenes supernaturally, freeing Peter and judging Herod. The chapter shows that while earthly rulers may attempt to hinder the gospel, God's Word continues to grow unhindered. The believer's confidence rests not in circumstances but in God's unchanging control.

1–4. "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church."

Herod Agrippa I, seeking to please the Jews, executes James (the brother of John) and imprisons Peter during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Political motive drives religious persecution. Sixteen soldiers guard Peter—a futile effort against divine will. Man's control cannot override God's plan.

5–11. "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."

Persistent prayer reflects faith amid helplessness. God sends an angel, who awakens Peter, looses his chains, and leads him out unnoticed by the guards. Peter at first thinks it a vision, but realizes, "Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel." The episode illustrates that divine deliverance depends on God's mercy, not human merit.

12–17. "He came to the house of Mary... where many were gathered together praying."

Peter's arrival shocks the praying believers—proof that faith sometimes falters even in prayer. Rhoda's recognition and the group's disbelief highlight human weakness against divine

faithfulness. Peter explains his escape, instructs them to inform James (the Lord's brother), and departs to another place, safeguarding the gospel's advance.

18–19. "There was no small stir among the soldiers."

Human authority reacts with fear and violence. Herod executes the guards, revealing tyranny's futility before divine sovereignty. The event underscores that God's purposes continue despite earthly injustice.

20–23. "And upon a set day Herod... arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them."

Herod receives flattery as though he were divine: "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." Immediately the angel of the Lord strikes him down "because he gave not God the glory." Josephus records this same event, noting Herod's shimmering silver robes and sudden agony. God's judgment falls swiftly on pride that exalts itself against divine glory.

24–25. "But the word of God grew and multiplied."

Despite persecution and politics, the gospel flourishes. The contrast is complete: Herod dies; the Word lives. Barnabas and Saul return from Jerusalem, completing their mission of relief and preparing for the first missionary journey. Grace moves forward, untouched by opposition.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Ekteinō tas cheiras (Gk., v.1): "stretched forth the hands," idiom for exerting power or initiating persecution.

Proseuchē ginomenē (Gk., v.5): "prayer was being made," continuous intercession.

Aggeleos kyriou (Gk., v.7): "angel of the Lord," agent of divine intervention.

Doxa (Gk., v.23): “glory,” honor due to God alone.

Auxanō kai plēthunō (Gk., v.24): “grew and multiplied,” describing unstoppable gospel expansion.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 12 demonstrates the futility of opposing God’s purpose. The death of James, deliverance of Peter, and judgment of Herod each reveal distinct aspects of divine sovereignty. God allows suffering but limits evil. The Church’s prayerful dependence shows faith under fire, while God’s response affirms His control over life and death. Herod’s downfall warns that glory belongs to God alone.

Free Grace Summary

God’s sovereignty secures His people despite persecution.

Deliverance or death—both serve His plan and glorify His grace.

Prayer is effective not by volume but by God’s faithfulness.

Herod’s pride contrasts the believer’s humility before grace.

The Word of God continues to grow where human power ends.

Acts 12 reassures believers that divine purposes never fail—salvation remains secure, grace continues to advance, and God’s glory stands forever unchallenged.

Acts 13 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 13 marks the beginning of Paul’s first missionary journey and the clear transition from Jewish-centered ministry to global Gentile outreach. The Holy Spirit commissions Barnabas and

Saul from Antioch, signaling divine direction in missions. The gospel's power is displayed in the conversion of Sergius Paulus and the judgment of Elymas the sorcerer. Paul's sermon in Pisidian Antioch outlines Israel's history and the fulfillment of God's promise through Jesus Christ, emphasizing justification by faith apart from the law.

1–3. “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work.”

The church at Antioch models spiritual leadership—prophets and teachers worshiping and fasting when the Spirit calls. “Separate” (aphorise, Gk.) denotes divine appointment, not human ambition. Ministry begins with God's initiative, not organizational strategy. The Spirit directs, the church confirms, and the mission begins with prayerful unity.

4–12. “They being sent forth by the Holy Ghost... preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.”

At Cyprus, they encounter Elymas the sorcerer, who opposes the gospel before Sergius Paulus, a Roman proconsul. Paul, “filled with the Holy Ghost,” rebukes him: “Thou child of the devil... wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” Elymas is struck blind, a picture of Israel's temporary blindness. Sergius Paulus believes, astonished at the doctrine, not the miracle—showing faith rests in truth, not spectacle.

13–15. “Paul and his company loosed from Paphos... came to Antioch in Pisidia.”

Paul emerges as the team's leader. John Mark's departure foreshadows later conflict but also reveals early ministry testing. In the synagogue, Paul is invited to speak after the reading of the Law and Prophets, setting the stage for his first recorded sermon.

16–25. “Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.”

Paul traces Israel's history—from Egypt to David—demonstrating God's faithfulness through covenant progression. He presents Jesus as the promised Savior from David's line. John the

Baptist prepared the way, but Jesus fulfilled the promise. History itself testifies that salvation is of grace, not merit.

26–31. “To you is the word of this salvation sent.”

Paul proclaims the resurrection as central to the gospel. “They found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.” God raised Him from the dead—confirming justification and victory over sin. The resurrection authenticates Christ’s identity as the Son of God and the basis of eternal life for all who believe.

32–37. “We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise... God hath fulfilled.”

The promises made to the fathers are fulfilled in Jesus’ resurrection. Quoting Psalm 2:7 (“Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee”) and Isaiah 55:3, Paul interprets the resurrection as proof of divine approval. Unlike David, whose body saw corruption, Jesus rose incorruptible—guaranteeing everlasting life to all who trust in Him.

38–39. “Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things.”

This is Paul’s first recorded declaration of justification by faith. The Greek *dikaioutai* (Gk., “are justified”) indicates legal acquittal granted to believers apart from works. The Law of Moses could never justify—it only condemned. The gospel liberates from guilt once for all.

40–43. “Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets.”

Paul warns his hearers not to reject grace as their fathers rejected God’s messengers. Some Jews oppose; others believe and urge him to speak further. Many Gentiles rejoice, glorifying the word of the Lord. Grace triumphs where religion resists.

44–52. “Almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.”

Jealous Jews stir persecution, but Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles: “Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Quoting Isaiah 49:6, Paul identifies their mission with God’s prophecy—light to the nations. The Gentiles rejoice, and “as many as were disposed to eternal life believed”—not because of decree, but because they willingly received the message. Despite opposition, the Word spreads, and the missionaries are filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Aphoristate (Gk., v.2): “set apart,” divine commissioning for ministry.

Dikaioutai (Gk., v.39): “are justified,” legal declaration of righteousness by faith.

Charis (Gk., v.43): “grace,” the sphere of divine favor.

Apothemanoi (Gk., v.46): “put from you,” deliberate rejection of offered grace.

Euphrainonto (Gk., v.48): “rejoiced,” inward delight in salvation freely given.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 13 formally introduces Paul’s message of justification apart from the Law. Grace, not nationality or works, defines access to God. The gospel message brings both opposition and fruitfulness. Salvation depends on faith in Christ’s finished work—resurrection confirming eternal security. The Spirit leads missions, empowers preaching, and sustains endurance amid persecution.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is freely given through faith in Christ’s death and resurrection.

Justification is complete and permanent—law cannot add to grace.

God's mission includes all nations without distinction.

Rejection of grace is willful, not decreed; acceptance is through belief.

Joy and the Holy Spirit accompany those who trust in Christ.

Acts 13 declares the unchangeable gospel: forgiveness and justification by faith alone, sealed by resurrection power, and sustained by divine grace forever.

Acts 14 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 14 continues Paul's first missionary journey, revealing both the triumphs and trials of gospel ministry. Paul and Barnabas travel through Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, preaching grace, confirming new believers, and enduring persecution. Miracles accompany the message, but the focus remains faith in Christ, not signs. The apostles reject human exaltation, urging people to turn from idolatry to the living God. The chapter closes with encouragement to persevere in grace and confirmation that believers must face tribulation, not for salvation, but in service.

1–7. "They so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed."

In Iconium, effective preaching brings both conversion and conflict. The gospel divides belief from unbelief, not because of its weakness, but its clarity. "So spake" (houtōs elalēsan, Gk.) implies persuasive, Spirit-filled communication. Unbelieving Jews stir hostility, yet the apostles remain "long time," teaching boldly in the Lord. Their endurance models grace under opposition—faithful proclamation despite danger.

8–10. "A certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet... heard Paul speak."

The lame man listens intently; Paul perceives his faith and commands, "Stand upright on thy feet." The man leaps immediately—a visible testimony of faith's response to divine power. Healing signifies God's compassion but points to spiritual restoration through faith. Miracles authenticate message, not merit.

11–15. “The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.”

The crowd, steeped in paganism, mistakes Paul and Barnabas for gods—Hermes and Zeus. The apostles tear their clothes in grief, rejecting worship. They redirect attention from creation to the Creator, saying, “We preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God.” Grace never seeks glory for man; it magnifies the Savior alone.

16–18. “Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.”

Paul’s message affirms God’s patience toward Gentiles. “Nevertheless he left not himself without witness”—creation and providence testify to His goodness. This general revelation holds men accountable but cannot save. Only faith in the revealed Christ brings justification.

19–20. “There came thither certain Jews... who persuaded the people.”

Opposition follows success. Paul is stoned and left for dead—perhaps even experiencing a near-death vision (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:2–4). Yet he rises and continues preaching. Grace sustains courage; eternal life is never at risk. The servant’s body may fall, but his calling stands secure.

21–23. “And when they had preached the gospel to that city... they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch.”

Paul and Barnabas strengthen disciples, teaching that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” This kingdom reference concerns reward and reign, not entrance to eternal life. Suffering accompanies service but cannot undo salvation. They appoint elders, committing each church to the Lord, showing spiritual maturity depends on divine care, not human hierarchy.

24–28. “They rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”

Returning to Antioch, they report the expansion of grace—“the door of faith” (thura pisteōs, Gk.)—symbolizing universal accessibility through belief. No ritual, culture, or lineage restricts entry. The missionaries rest among the church, rejoicing in God’s faithfulness, not their endurance.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Houtōs elalēsan (Gk., v.1): “so they spoke,” emphasizing Spirit-led persuasion.

Egeirou epi tous podas sou (Gk., v.10): “stand upright on thy feet,” divine command producing instant obedience.

Mataiois (Gk., v.15): “vanities,” referring to idols or false worship.

Thura pisteōs (Gk., v.27): “door of faith,” open access to salvation through belief.

Thlipsis (Gk., v.22): “tribulation, pressure,” referring to temporal suffering in discipleship.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 14 reveals the gospel’s universality and endurance under persecution. Faith alone saves; miracles only verify the message. The believer’s perseverance concerns reward and fellowship, not maintenance of salvation. Tribulations refine service but never threaten eternal security. God’s grace sustains His servants physically and spiritually, ensuring the continuation of His mission.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is entered by faith alone, not by endurance or works.

Miracles confirm grace but never produce it.

Idolatry exalts man; grace exalts Christ.

Tribulation refines discipleship but cannot affect salvation.

Leadership in the church rests on dependence upon the Lord.

“The door of faith” remains open to all—Jew and Gentile alike.

Acts 14 demonstrates that though service faces trials, eternal life is secure, and grace continually triumphs over opposition.

Acts 15 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 15 records the Jerusalem Council, one of the most defining moments in early Church history. A dispute arises over whether Gentile believers must keep the Mosaic Law—especially circumcision—to be saved. The apostles and elders, guided by the Holy Spirit, affirm that salvation is by grace through faith alone, apart from the works of the Law. The chapter concludes with the sending of a unifying letter to Gentile churches and the separation of Paul and Barnabas over John Mark. It underscores both doctrinal clarity and the reality of human imperfection within God’s perfect plan.

1–5. “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.”

Certain men from Judea insist on law-keeping for salvation, sparking sharp contention with Paul and Barnabas. Their claim directly contradicts the gospel of grace. The debate reflects the persistent struggle between legalism and liberty. The early Church convenes to resolve this question, showing that true doctrine must be settled by revelation, not tradition.

6–11. “We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.”

Peter recalls Cornelius's conversion, emphasizing that the Holy Spirit came upon Gentiles through faith—not ritual. He rebukes those testing God by adding burdens He never commanded. Salvation, he declares, is equally by grace for Jew and Gentile. Peter's statement—"We shall be saved, even as they"—reverses Jewish expectation, exalting grace over law.

12–18. "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul."

Barnabas and Paul recount miracles and conversions among Gentiles, confirming divine approval. James then cites Amos 9:11–12, affirming that God's plan always included Gentile inclusion. The rebuilding of "the tabernacle of David" anticipates Christ's future kingdom, while presently, God calls out a people for His name from all nations. Scripture, not experience alone, validates this truth.

19–21. "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God."

James proposes a practical resolution: Gentiles should abstain from practices offensive to Jewish believers (idolatry, immorality, strangled meat, and blood), not as salvation conditions but as fellowship considerations. Grace produces sensitivity, not bondage. The decree upholds liberty while promoting unity.

22–29. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden."

The council's letter, carried by Judas and Silas, communicates the Spirit's decision—salvation is through faith alone. The repeated phrase "seemed good to the Holy Ghost" shows divine agreement. The moral instructions relate to harmony within the mixed Jewish-Gentile context, not prerequisites for eternal life. This is the Church's first formal defense of Free Grace theology: justification by faith apart from works.

30–35. "They rejoiced for the consolation."

The Antioch believers receive the letter with joy, relieved from legalistic anxiety. Grace brings peace where law produces fear. Judas and Silas encourage the church, confirming the Spirit's unity. Harmony replaces division when grace governs fellowship.

36–41. “The contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder.”

Paul and Barnabas disagree over John Mark's inclusion on their next journey. Though separation occurs, God overrules for good—creating two missionary teams. Human disagreement never nullifies divine mission. Grace continues to work through imperfect vessels, showing that security and calling rest on God's faithfulness, not flawless cooperation.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Sōthēnai (Gk., v.1): “to be saved,” deliverance from sin's penalty—by faith, not ritual.

Chariti tou kyriou Iēsou (Gk., v.11): “by the grace of the Lord Jesus,” basis of all salvation.

Epistrepousin epi ton Theon (Gk., v.19): “turning to God,” descriptive of faith's response.

Eudokēsen tō Pneumati tō Hagiō (Gk., v.28): “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit,” divine approval of doctrinal decision.

Paraklēsei (Gk., v.31): “encouragement, comfort,” the effect of grace on believers.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 15 settles the gospel question once for all: salvation is by grace through faith alone, without the Law. The decision affirms eternal security because grace depends solely on Christ's finished work. The Law cannot improve or preserve salvation—it only exposes sin. Grace unites believers across backgrounds while upholding moral sensitivity in fellowship. Even the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas reveals that God's purposes proceed despite human friction.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is by grace through faith alone—circumcision and law-keeping add nothing.

The Spirit confirms salvation apart from ritual.

The council's unity reflects submission to Scripture and grace.

Fellowship considerations, not conditions of salvation, govern the Gentile instructions.

Grace rejoices where law burdens.

Disagreements may divide people but never divide God's purpose.

Acts 15 stands as the Church's first formal declaration of eternal security and justification by faith alone—anchored in Christ's grace, sealed by the Spirit, and free from the Law forever.

Acts 16 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 16 inaugurates Paul's second missionary journey and displays God's providence in directing His servants toward Europe. Timothy joins the team, the Spirit redirects them to Macedonia, and the gospel first enters Philippi. There, Lydia believes, a demon-possessed girl is delivered, and a Roman jailer finds eternal life through faith alone. This chapter demonstrates that salvation transcends cultural, economic, and social boundaries — it is a free gift to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1–5. “Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus.”

Timothy, already a believer, joins Paul and Silas. His mixed heritage (Jewish mother, Greek father) symbolizes the Church's unity in diversity. Paul circumcises him — not for salvation, but to remove barriers among Jews. The churches “were established in the faith,” growing numerically and spiritually by grace, not legal observance.

6–10. “They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.”

The Spirit restrains and redirects Paul’s team. Divine guidance sometimes closes doors to open greater ones. In Troas, Paul receives the Macedonian vision: “Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” The phrase “assuredly gathering” (symbibazontes, Gk.) shows rational discernment of divine will. God sovereignly guides His servants without violating human responsibility.

11–15. “A certain woman named Lydia... heard us: whose heart the Lord opened.”

Lydia, a merchant from Thyatira, becomes the first European convert. Her faith arises from hearing the Word, not an emotional experience. “The Lord opened her heart” (dianoixen, Gk.) means illumination, not compulsion. She believes and is baptized as a testimony, not a means, of salvation. Her hospitality reflects gratitude born of grace.

16–18. “A certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us.”

The Greek term *pneuma pythōna* refers to a demonic fortune-telling spirit. Paul commands the spirit to depart in Jesus’ name, affirming divine authority over the demonic. Deliverance leads to persecution, as greed-driven men lose profit. The gospel liberates souls but disrupts systems of exploitation.

19–24. “These men do exceedingly trouble our city.”

Paul and Silas are beaten and imprisoned under false accusation. The magistrates act in haste, ignorant of their Roman citizenship. Yet imprisonment becomes the stage for grace’s power. The gospel thrives even behind bars.

25–28. “At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God.”

Their worship amid suffering illustrates faith resting on assurance. The earthquake that follows opens every door, yet they flee not — demonstrating freedom in spirit, not rebellion. The jailer's attempt at suicide shows despair under guilt, which grace alone can relieve.

29–34. “Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

This is the clearest proclamation of Free Grace salvation in Acts. The verb *pisteuson* (Gk.) — “believe” — means trust, rely, or place confidence in. No works, rituals, or conditions are added. The jailer and his household believe and are baptized as a testimony. Joy immediately follows belief, confirming that assurance accompanies faith.

35–40. “They went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia.”

The magistrates release Paul and Silas secretly, but Paul demands public acknowledgment of injustice to protect the church's witness. They leave Philippi honoring God's sovereignty, with a new congregation established.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Symbibazontes (Gk., v.10): “concluding together,” discerning divine will by reason and revelation.

Dianoixen (Gk., v.14): “opened,” illumination or understanding granted by God.

Pneuma pythōna (Gk., v.16): “spirit of divination,” demonic counterfeit inspiration.

Pisteuson (Gk., v.31): “believe,” to rely or trust upon the Lord for salvation.

Sōthēsē (Gk., v.31): “thou shalt be saved,” future passive — certainty of divine action upon belief.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 16 defines salvation as belief in Christ alone. Faith is personal reliance, not behavioral proof. Baptism follows salvation as identification, never as a condition. God's providence governs missionary direction, using persecution to advance the gospel. Praise in suffering evidences assurance, not striving. From Lydia's faith to the jailer's conversion, every event displays the sufficiency of grace and the immediacy of salvation through belief.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation occurs the moment one believes — no works, confession, or baptism required.

The Spirit directs and empowers all ministry according to divine wisdom.

God's grace reaches every class — merchant, slave, and soldier alike.

Deliverance from bondage, both spiritual and emotional, rests in Christ's authority.

Praise amid persecution confirms eternal assurance.

Acts 16's central message: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" — the timeless declaration of Free Grace and eternal security.

Acts 17 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 17 chronicles Paul's ministry in three key cities—Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens—each representing a different response to truth: resistance, receptivity, and ridicule. Paul reasons from Scripture in the synagogues, demonstrates the nobility of examining the Word, and engages Greek philosophers with the gospel of the risen Christ. The chapter reveals that faith is rooted in revealed truth, not in superstition or human wisdom. Salvation remains the same everywhere—by faith in the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ alone.

1–9. “They came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews.”

Paul reasons (dielegeto, Gk.) from the Scriptures for three Sabbaths, explaining that the Messiah “must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead.” His message centers on Christ’s substitutionary death and resurrection. Some Jews and many devout Greeks believe, but jealous leaders stir up opposition, accusing Paul of defying Caesar. The believers are protected, and the gospel continues. Faith, not political allegiance, defines true loyalty to God.

10–12. “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind.”

In Berea, the audience exemplifies proper response: open hearts combined with critical examination. They “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” This anakrino (Gk.) spirit—testing and confirming truth—produces faith grounded in evidence. Many believe, demonstrating that genuine faith never fears investigation.

13–15. “When the Jews of Thessalonica... came thither also, and stirred up the people.”

Opposition follows success once again. Paul departs to Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy behind to strengthen the believers. Persecution becomes providence; every disruption advances the gospel’s reach.

16–21. “His spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.”

Athens, the cultural and philosophical center of the ancient world, is full of idols. Paul’s heart is provoked (parōxynetō, Gk.) not by anger but by compassion for lost souls. He engages both Stoics (rationalists) and Epicureans (pleasure-seekers), bringing the gospel into the world’s intellectual capital. Grace confronts human pride with divine simplicity.

22–29. “Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.”

Paul's address on Mars' Hill (the Areopagus) demonstrates masterful contextual evangelism. He begins with an altar "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD," declaring the One they ignorantly worship. God is Creator and Sustainer—independent of temples, sacrifices, or human service. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." All nations descend from one blood, proving human unity and divine purpose. Idolatry, therefore, is irrational and offensive to the true God who desires relationship, not ritual.

30–31. "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."

Repent (metanoein, Gk.) means "to change the mind." God now calls all to abandon false conceptions and believe in Christ. Judgment is assured because God "hath appointed a day" and "given assurance unto all men" by raising Jesus from the dead. Resurrection validates both His identity and His authority to save and judge.

32–34. "When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked... howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed."

The responses mirror humanity's divisions: mockery, curiosity, and faith. Among believers is Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris. The message's power lies not in persuasion but in truth. Grace reaches individuals even in skeptical cultures.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Dielegeto (Gk., v.2): "reasoned," to dialogue or discuss by explanation from Scripture.

Anakrino (Gk., v.11): "to examine or investigate," describing Berean discernment.

Parōxynetō (Gk., v.16): "provoked, stirred," emotional distress from zeal for truth.

Metanoein (Gk., v.30): "to change one's mind," repentance unto belief in Christ.

Pisteusantes (Gk., v.34): "having believed," marking completed, decisive faith.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 17 demonstrates the universality of the gospel: it appeals to the religious, the rational, and the rebellious alike. Faith is intellectual assent grounded in revelation, not mystical experience. The call to repentance is a summons to change one's understanding about God and believe in His risen Son. The resurrection authenticates salvation's certainty and guarantees eternal life to all who believe.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is received through faith alone—whether in a synagogue, a home, or on Mars' Hill.

Repentance is a change of mind leading to faith, not a demand for moral reform.

Reasoning from Scripture proves that truth persuades by revelation, not rhetoric.

God's sovereignty directs the gospel even through persecution and opposition.

Resurrection stands as the universal assurance of eternal life for all believers.

Acts 17 presents the global gospel: faith in the risen Christ brings salvation to Jew and Greek alike, forever securing the believer in God's unchanging grace.

Acts 18 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 18 records Paul's ministry in Corinth and the beginning of his third missionary journey. It introduces key figures like Aquila and Priscilla, highlights divine encouragement amid opposition, and emphasizes God's sustaining grace. The chapter concludes with Apollos' arrival in Ephesus—an eloquent teacher instructed more perfectly in the gospel by Priscilla and Aquila. The theme throughout is divine faithfulness: God secures, strengthens, and expands His Church through grace, not human might.

1–4. “After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth.”

Corinth, a wealthy but immoral city, becomes the site of Paul’s longest stay thus far. He meets Aquila and Priscilla, Jewish tentmakers recently expelled from Rome. Working together demonstrates that ministry and labor coexist under grace. Paul preaches every Sabbath, reasoning (dielegeto, Gk.) that Jesus is the Christ. His tentmaking illustrates practical faith: ministry depends on God’s provision, not worldly support.

5–8. “When Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit.”

Reinforced by his companions, Paul intensifies his preaching. When opposed, he declares, “Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean.” He then turns to the Gentiles, moving next door to the house of Justus, a God-fearing man. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, believes on the Lord with all his house, and “many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.” The order is critical—belief precedes baptism. Salvation is complete at the moment of faith, baptism following as testimony.

9–11. “Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee.”

In a vision, the Lord encourages Paul: “I have much people in this city.” This assurance strengthens him to remain 18 months teaching the Word. God’s sovereignty guarantees gospel fruitfulness; His foreknowledge affirms possession of believers yet to believe. Security rests in God’s promise, not human response.

12–17. “Gallio cared for none of those things.”

The Jews accuse Paul before Gallio, the Roman proconsul, but Gallio dismisses the case as a religious dispute. His neutrality protects the Church legally, allowing continued evangelism. Sosthenes, the synagogue ruler, is beaten—a vivid reminder of the cost of opposing grace. Gallio’s indifference reflects the world’s apathy toward spiritual truth.

18–23. “Paul... having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.”

Paul’s vow, likely a personal act of gratitude, has no salvific meaning. He sails for Syria, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, leaving behind a thriving church. At Ephesus, he reasons briefly with the Jews, promising to return “if God will.” His words exemplify submission to divine timing. Returning to Antioch completes the second missionary journey, reaffirming accountability to the sending church.

24–28. “A certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures.”

Apollos is fervent and eloquent but incomplete in understanding—knowing only John’s baptism. Priscilla and Aquila take him aside privately, “expounding unto him the way of God more perfectly.” Their gentle correction illustrates discipleship by grace, not pride. Apollos then becomes a powerful defender of faith, showing that zeal combined with truth multiplies gospel impact.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Dielegeto (Gk., v.4): “reasoned,” to dialogue persuasively from Scripture.

Pisteusas (Gk., v.8): “having believed,” indicating completed faith prior to baptism.

Phobou mēden (Gk., v.9): “fear not,” divine reassurance amid persecution.

Echō polloyn laon (Gk., v.10): “I have much people,” foreknowledge of future believers.

Akribesteron (Gk., v.26): “more accurately,” describing fuller doctrinal instruction.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 18 teaches that God’s grace sustains both ministry and mission. Faith, not ritual, defines salvation. Encouragement in service arises from divine presence, not external success. The

Lord's words to Paul—"I am with thee"—guarantee protection and purpose. Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos demonstrate Spirit-led cooperation under grace. Doctrinal accuracy, combined with humility, preserves the gospel's clarity and unity.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is received by faith before baptism or vow.

God's sovereignty ensures fruitful witness despite opposition.

Grace strengthens weary servants with divine assurance.

Ministry partnerships model humility and doctrinal fidelity.

Apollos' growth illustrates that grace refines understanding without condemnation.

Acts 18 highlights the sustaining promise of Christ's presence—securing His servants, sanctifying His people, and spreading His Word through grace alone.

Acts 19 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 19 records Paul's powerful ministry in Ephesus — a city known for its wealth, philosophy, and occultism. The chapter emphasizes the superiority of Christ's power over false religion and magic, the importance of understanding Spirit baptism, and the triumph of the gospel despite fierce opposition. Through miracles, teaching, and bold witness, God establishes a strong church in Ephesus, demonstrating that salvation is by faith alone and that the Holy Spirit is received at the moment of belief, not through ritual or secondary experience.

1–7. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"

Paul encounters disciples of John the Baptist who had not yet heard of the Holy Spirit's coming. Their baptism was one of repentance, not regeneration. Upon hearing the gospel of Christ, they believe and receive the Spirit immediately (elabon to Pneuma to Hagion, Gk.). The laying on of

hands here, like in Acts 8, is transitional — confirming the unity of the Church as it spreads beyond Judaism. This passage does not establish a second blessing but marks a historical bridge from John's preparatory ministry to the full revelation of the gospel.

8–10. “He went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months.”

Paul reasons (*dialogomenos*, Gk.) daily concerning the kingdom of God — the spiritual realm of divine authority. When opposition arises, he withdraws and teaches in the school of Tyrannus. The Word spreads throughout Asia Minor, reaching both Jews and Greeks. Ministry fruitfulness stems from perseverance and focus on teaching, not on signs or emotion.

11–12. “God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.”

Extraordinary miracles confirm Paul's apostolic authority. Even handkerchiefs or aprons brought healing — not as relics of power but as signs authenticating his message. The emphasis is divine initiative (“God wrought”), not human ability. Miracles serve to validate revelation during a transitional era.

13–16. “We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.”

Jewish exorcists attempt to use Jesus' name as a formula without faith. The demonic spirit replies, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?” exposing counterfeit religion. Power without relationship is empty. The attackers are overpowered, proving that divine authority operates only through personal faith in Christ.

17–20. “Many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.”

Believers publicly renounce occult practices, burning their expensive magic scrolls — a testimony of repentance (*metanoia*, Gk.) and separation, not a condition of salvation. They were already believers; this act expresses growth and obedience. The Word of God “grew mightily and prevailed,” showing grace's supremacy over superstition.

21–27. “Demetrius... called together the craftsmen, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.”

The silversmiths, fearing loss of income, stir a riot. Their idol-making trade centered around the temple of Artemis (Diana). Economic interest often resists spiritual truth. Demetrius’s speech reveals self-interest disguised as religious zeal. Grace threatens every system built on deception and profit.

28–34. “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!”

The crowd’s blind chant demonstrates idolatry’s irrationality. Confusion reigns until the city clerk restores order, dismissing the assembly for lack of legal grounds. God uses civil authority to protect His servants, showing His sovereignty over human systems.

35–41. “Ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.”

The city clerk’s reasoning ends the uproar, preventing further persecution. Though pagan, he unwittingly serves God’s providence in preserving the Church. The gospel continues to advance despite opposition, proving that no earthly institution can hinder divine purpose.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Elabon to Pneuma to Hagion (Gk., v.2): “they received the Holy Spirit,” marking regeneration at belief.

Dialelogomenos (Gk., v.8): “reasoning, discoursing,” referring to teaching through discussion.

Metanoia (Gk., v.18): “change of mind,” expressing repentance in sanctification.

Dynamis (Gk., v.20): “power,” describing the Word’s prevailing strength.

Kataischynthēnai (Gk., v.16): “to shame or overpower,” describing the failed exorcists’ humiliation.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 19 affirms that the Holy Spirit is received at the moment of faith, not through subsequent rituals. Transitional events serve to unite believers of differing backgrounds under one faith. Repentance in believers reflects sanctification, not justification. The Church’s triumph over idolatry and magic reveals grace’s power to transform societies from within. God sovereignly preserves His servants and His message, even through human opposition.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation occurs at the moment of belief — Spirit reception is immediate and permanent.

The transitional nature of Acts explains delayed manifestations, not a second blessing.

Repentance expresses growth and obedience, not the condition for salvation.

God’s Word prevails over superstition, economy, and persecution alike.

Grace liberates both the deceived and the deceivers when they believe in Christ.

Acts 19 displays the supremacy of faith over works, truth over tradition, and grace over every counterfeit power — sealing the believer eternally in Christ by the Spirit’s indwelling presence.

Acts 20 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 20 traces Paul’s farewell journey through Macedonia and Greece, culminating in his emotional address to the Ephesian elders. It highlights pastoral care, endurance through trials, and confidence in eternal security. Paul’s ministry model emphasizes teaching “the whole counsel of God,” warning against false teachers, and committing believers to God’s grace. The

chapter is both a doctrinal defense of grace and a personal testimony of faithfulness in service, not for salvation but for reward.

1–6. “He departed... and gave them much exhortation.”

After the riot in Ephesus, Paul revisits Macedonia and Greece, encouraging believers with comfort (*parakleseis*, Gk.) and assurance. His focus remains strengthening the saints through doctrine, not emotionalism. Facing plots against his life, he adjusts travel plans, showing wisdom guided by trust in God’s sovereignty.

7–12. “Upon the first day of the week... Paul preached unto them.”

This passage provides one of the earliest references to Sunday gatherings. Paul’s long discourse demonstrates the centrality of teaching in Christian fellowship. When Eutychus falls asleep and dies, Paul restores him to life — symbolizing that grace revives what human weakness cannot sustain. This miracle affirms that spiritual vitality depends on God’s power, not human strength.

13–16. “Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus... for he hasted, if it were possible, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.”

Paul’s determination reveals strategic stewardship. His focus on completing his ministry before returning to Jerusalem shows commitment, not ritual observance. Grace uses discipline without legalism — serving from gratitude, not obligation.

17–24. “Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you.”

Paul’s farewell to the Ephesian elders begins with a testimony of humility and perseverance. He served “with many tears” and “temptations,” yet withheld nothing profitable. Verse 21 summarizes the gospel: “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” *Metanoia* (Gk.) means a change of mind about God and His grace; *pistis* (Gk.) denotes trust in

Christ's person and promise. Salvation rests on faith alone; repentance describes the mental turn that enables it.

25–27. “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”

Paul's teaching encompassed all divine truth—law, grace, prophecy, and Church doctrine. The “whole counsel” guards against imbalance. His ministry is complete and accountable before God. Grace calls ministers to faithfulness in teaching truth, not success in results.

28–31. “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock... to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

Elders are warned to shepherd with vigilance. The phrase “church of God, which he hath purchased” affirms Christ's deity—His blood securing eternal redemption. False teachers (“grievous wolves”) will arise, twisting truth for gain. The antidote to deception is continuous teaching and grace-based vigilance.

32. “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace.”

Paul's benediction defines spiritual growth: dependence on God and His Word of grace, “which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance.” This inheritance (klēronomian, Gk.) refers to reward, not salvation. Grace sustains the believer's security while motivating faithfulness for eternal reward.

33–35. “I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.”

Paul's financial integrity sets a pastoral example. He worked with his hands, showing that ministry is service, not self-enrichment. “It is more blessed to give than to receive” summarizes grace's generosity—freely received, freely shared.

36–38. “They all wept sore... sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.”

The farewell reflects deep spiritual bonds formed through shared truth. Love born of grace surpasses organizational ties. Though separated on earth, eternal fellowship remains secure in Christ.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Parakleseis (Gk., v.2): “encouragement or comfort,” source of strength through truth.

Metanoia (Gk., v.21): “change of mind,” intellectual repentance preceding faith.

Pistis (Gk., v.21): “faith,” trust or reliance upon Christ.

Klēronomia (Gk., v.32): “inheritance,” reward distinct from eternal life.

Poimainein (Gk., v.28): “to shepherd or feed,” describing pastoral oversight.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 20 affirms eternal security and responsibility within grace. Salvation is settled by Christ's blood; discipleship concerns stewardship and reward. Paul's ministry illustrates grace-driven service—truthful, transparent, and tender. The Word of grace remains sufficient for sanctification, preservation, and reward. No legal system can produce the fruit that grace sustains.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation rests solely on faith in Christ, not human perseverance.

Repentance is a change of mind that leads to faith, not turning from sin for salvation.

The “Word of grace” builds believers up for reward, not eternal life.

Pastors are stewards, not owners, of God’s flock—purchased forever by Christ’s blood.

Faithfulness in ministry earns inheritance; unfaithfulness forfeits reward, not salvation.

Acts 20 stands as a pastoral manifesto of Free Grace: secure salvation, responsible service, and reward through abiding in the Word of grace.

Acts 21 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 21 recounts Paul’s journey to Jerusalem despite repeated warnings of imprisonment. The chapter demonstrates his deep love for Israel, his willingness to suffer for Christ, and the tension between grace and Jewish tradition in the early Church. Paul’s arrest fulfills prophecy and begins his final series of defenses before Jewish and Roman authorities. The events reveal divine sovereignty in suffering and the believer’s eternal security even amid opposition.

1–6. “And we came with a straight course unto Coos... and finding disciples, we tarried there seven days.”

Paul’s voyage reflects divine purpose unfolding through human steps. The believers at Tyre, moved by the Spirit, urge him not to go to Jerusalem—yet Paul remains steadfast. Their farewell on the shore, praying together with their families, displays fellowship bound by grace, not fear. The Spirit’s warnings do not prohibit Paul’s journey but prepare him for it. God’s sovereignty and man’s obedience coexist without contradiction.

7–14. “Then Philip the evangelist... had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.”

Agabus prophesies that Paul will be bound and delivered to the Gentiles. When the believers plead for him to avoid danger, Paul replies, “I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” His statement reflects mature grace-driven resolve, not fatalism. Eternal security produces courage; the believer fears not death because destiny is secure in Christ.

15–20. “Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.”

Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Paul meets James and the elders. They rejoice in God’s work among the Gentiles but express concern about rumors that Paul teaches Jews to abandon Moses. Paul agrees to participate in a purification ritual to demonstrate goodwill—not to earn merit, but to maintain unity. This act is cultural accommodation, not compromise of the gospel.

21–26. “Then Paul took the men... purifying himself with them entered into the temple.”

Paul’s participation in the vow aims to quiet misunderstanding, yet it ultimately leads to his arrest. His actions show discernment within grace: he becomes “all things to all men” (1 Corinthians 9:22), but salvation remains unaltered—by faith alone. Legal customs may serve fellowship, never justification.

27–33. “The Jews which were of Asia... laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help.”

False accusations ignite the crowd. They claim Paul defiled the temple by bringing in Gentiles (specifically Trophimus). The mob drags him out, intending to kill him, but Roman soldiers intervene. God uses secular authority to preserve His servant’s life, ensuring fulfillment of divine purpose. Grace overrules chaos.

34–40. “As Paul was led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee?”

Paul’s calm composure under persecution reveals mastery of grace under pressure. Speaking Greek surprises the commander, who mistakes him for an Egyptian rebel. Paul identifies himself as a Jew from Tarsus and requests permission to address the people. His composure and courtesy contrast the crowd’s fury, exemplifying Christlike restraint.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Deo pneumati (Gk., v.4): “bound in the Spirit,” indicating inner compulsion, not prohibition.

Proseuchomenoi (Gk., v.5): “praying,” continuous action expressing fellowship dependence on God.

Hetoimos (Gk., v.13): “ready, prepared,” denoting willful readiness through faith.

Katharizomenos (Gk., v.26): “purifying himself,” ceremonial action for cultural peace, not salvation.

Sōzesthai (Gk., v.31): “to save,” in context meaning rescue from physical death by divine intervention.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 21 teaches that grace motivates obedience even amid misunderstanding. Paul’s submission to the Spirit’s warnings shows faith’s maturity: readiness for suffering grounded in assurance of eternal life. His participation in the vow reflects wisdom in cultural sensitivity, not compromise. The arrest fulfills God’s plan to bring the gospel to rulers and kings. Grace preserves both message and messenger, demonstrating that divine purpose stands firm amid human hostility.

Free Grace Summary

The Spirit’s warnings prepare, not prohibit; grace empowers courage.

Paul’s vow serves unity, not justification—salvation remains by faith alone.

False accusation and suffering advance God’s mission.

Eternal security fuels boldness: the believer can face death without fear.

Grace harmonizes obedience, wisdom, and liberty without contradiction.

Acts 21 demonstrates that while circumstances bind the body, grace keeps the soul free — secure, purposeful, and steadfast in Christ.

Acts 22 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 22 presents Paul's defense before the hostile Jewish crowd in Jerusalem. Speaking in Hebrew, he recounts his conversion and divine commission to the Gentiles. The chapter reveals how God transforms a persecutor into an apostle, highlighting salvation by grace through faith alone. Paul's testimony exposes Israel's rejection of divine revelation, affirming that salvation is universal—offered freely to Jew and Gentile alike. The passage displays courage rooted in eternal security and the unstoppable advance of the gospel.

1–5. "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence."

Paul opens respectfully, appealing to shared heritage. His fluent Hebrew quiets the crowd, showing cultural sensitivity and wisdom. He recalls his upbringing "at the feet of Gamaliel," his zeal for the Law, and his persecution of believers. These details underscore that salvation is not earned by zeal or tradition. Paul's religious credentials serve to magnify grace—his righteousness in the Law could not save him.

6–11. "About noon suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me."

Paul recounts his encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" reveals Christ's identification with His Church. Salvation begins not with man's pursuit of God, but with God's pursuit of man. Paul's blindness symbolizes conviction; his physical helplessness mirrors spiritual need. Grace breaks human pride, leading to faith's submission.

12–16. "Brother Saul, receive thy sight... arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Ananias, described as “a devout man according to the law,” restores Paul’s sight and confirms his calling. The term “Brother Saul” proves regeneration preceded baptism (cf. Acts 9:17). The phrase “wash away thy sins” refers to symbolic cleansing—public identification with forgiveness already received by faith. “Calling on the name of the Lord” (epikalesamenos, Gk.) denotes faith’s appeal, not ritual performance.

17–21. “Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

Paul recounts his divine commission to evangelize Gentiles. The mention of Gentile inclusion provokes the crowd’s fury, revealing prejudice rather than zeal for truth. God’s grace reaches beyond ethnic boundaries; human pride resists it. Paul’s obedience illustrates surrender to calling despite rejection.

22–24. “Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.”

The mob erupts in rage, demanding Paul’s execution. The Roman commander intervenes, ordering him scourged for interrogation. Paul’s suffering fulfills Christ’s prophecy in Acts 9:16—“I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” Grace sustains courage when persecution rises.

25–29. “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?”

Paul asserts his Roman citizenship, instantly halting the abuse. His legal wisdom reveals prudence, not cowardice. Grace uses legitimate means of protection without compromising faith. The captain fears, realizing he violated Roman law. God’s sovereignty preserves His servant for future witness.

30. “The chief captain... commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear.”

Paul's defense now moves from the mob to the Sanhedrin, positioning him for successive testimonies before rulers and kings. What appears as captivity is actually divine appointment. Grace transforms persecution into platform.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Apologia (Gk., v.1): "defense," reasoned testimony of truth.

Epikalesamenos (Gk., v.16): "calling upon," invoking in faith, not ritual invocation.

Anablepson (Gk., v.13): "receive your sight," metaphor for spiritual illumination.

Exapostellō (Gk., v.21): "to send out," divine commissioning to mission.

Politeia (Gk., v.28): "citizenship," legal standing used providentially for gospel defense.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 22 affirms salvation by grace, not merit. Paul's testimony bridges Jewish tradition and gospel truth, showing that even the most religious person requires regeneration. His baptism signifies obedience following salvation, not its cause. The Spirit-led courage that accompanies assurance of eternal life empowers believers to stand firm before hostility. God's sovereignty orchestrates every trial for testimony.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is God's initiative—grace reaching the undeserving.

Paul's conversion confirms justification by faith apart from works.

Baptism follows faith as testimony, not as a saving act.

Eternal security enables bold witness under persecution.

Human systems may restrain the body but cannot silence grace.

Acts 22 demonstrates that grace transforms rebellion into mission—salvation is secure, the message unstoppable, and God’s purpose unchanging.

Acts 23 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 23 continues Paul’s defense before the Sanhedrin, revealing the corruption of Israel’s leadership and the sovereignty of God in preserving His messenger. Though falsely accused, Paul’s confidence rests on divine promise, not human protection. The chapter displays the collision between law and grace, religion and truth, and man’s plotting against God’s unbreakable purpose. Despite persecution, Paul’s eternal security and calling remain unshaken — demonstrating that divine grace overrules human hostility.

1–5. “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.”

Paul begins his defense by appealing to conscience (*suneidēsei*, Gk.), not self-righteousness. His integrity stems from sincerity before God, not perfection. When the high priest Ananias orders him struck, Paul rebukes him as a “whited wall,” exposing hypocrisy. On learning his identity, Paul retracts the insult, citing Exodus 22:28 — a model of humility even under injustice. Grace respects authority without excusing evil.

6–10. “I am a Pharisee... of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.”

Perceiving division between Pharisees and Sadducees, Paul strategically declares belief in resurrection, redirecting the conflict from himself to theological debate. The Sadducees denied angels and resurrection; the Pharisees affirmed both. The resulting uproar fulfills God’s plan to protect Paul. Grace uses wisdom as well as courage. Paul’s testimony to resurrection underscores that Christianity’s foundation is life through faith in a risen Savior.

11. “And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul.”

Christ’s personal appearance reaffirms Paul’s mission: “As thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.” The phrase “Be of good cheer” (tharsei, Gk.) means “take courage.” Divine assurance calms earthly fear. Eternal purpose guarantees divine preservation. Paul’s security in Christ extends beyond salvation—it includes God’s control of every circumstance until his task is complete.

12–15. “Certain of the Jews banded together... saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.”

A conspiracy of over forty men vows to kill Paul. Their oath (anathematizō, Gk.) displays blind fanaticism cloaked in religion. Such zeal apart from truth leads to destruction. God’s providence again exposes the plot before it unfolds, showing that no scheme can thwart His plan.

16–22. “When Paul’s sister’s son heard of their lying in wait...”

Paul’s nephew uncovers the assassination plot and reports it to the Roman commander. God uses an unnamed young man—ordinary, yet divinely positioned—to preserve His servant. This quiet act of providence demonstrates how grace operates through human channels to fulfill divine will.

23–30. “Make ready two hundred soldiers... and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.”

The Roman commander, Claudius Lysias, transfers Paul to Caesarea under heavy guard. His official letter acknowledges Paul’s innocence, a recurring theme in Luke’s narrative. Earthly authority unwittingly serves heavenly design. The protection of Roman law—secular and pagan—becomes a tool in God’s hand to advance the gospel.

31–35. “Then the soldiers... brought him by night to Antipatris.”

Paul's journey to Caesarea begins his transition from prisoner of men to ambassador of Christ before rulers. The text closes with Paul under Felix's jurisdiction, safely kept by the empire he once opposed. Grace turns captivity into commission.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Suneidēsei (Gk., v.1): "conscience," the moral awareness shaped by truth.

Tharsei (Gk., v.11): "take courage," divine encouragement in trial.

Anathematizō (Gk., v.12): "to bind under a curse or oath," emphasizing misguided zeal.

Apologoumai (Gk., v.1): "to defend oneself," highlighting reasoned testimony.

Sōzō (Gk., v.27): "to rescue," physical deliverance by providence, not spiritual salvation.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 23 reinforces the believer's eternal security and God's providence amid opposition. The resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of hope. Human plots, religious hatred, and political manipulation cannot override divine purpose. Grace governs through natural and supernatural means, ensuring that every promise of God stands fulfilled. The believer's conscience finds peace not in performance but in resting under Christ's finished work.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation by faith secures the believer's eternal destiny, regardless of persecution.

God's providence protects His servants until their mission is complete.

The conscience is cleansed by grace, not by works of law.

Christ's resurrection affirms the believer's justification and security.

Religious zeal apart from grace leads to bondage; faith leads to peace.

Acts 23 magnifies divine sovereignty in the details of human weakness—proving that no weapon, vow, or plot can undo what grace has eternally secured.

Acts 24 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 24 records Paul's defense before Felix, the Roman governor, after being falsely accused by Jewish leaders. The chapter contrasts external religion with genuine faith, showing Paul's calm confidence in the truth of the gospel. Though falsely charged, Paul stands unashamed, relying on the righteousness of Christ rather than human vindication. The narrative illustrates God's sovereign preservation of His servant and the enduring power of grace amid political corruption and hypocrisy.

1–9. "Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus..."

The prosecution begins with flattery rather than fact. Tertullus accuses Paul of sedition, heresy, and defiling the temple. These charges are political and religious distortions designed to manipulate Roman fear of unrest. False religion often allies with worldly power to suppress grace. Yet even in human courts, truth stands immutable — salvation and security rest not on man's approval, but on God's justification.

10–16. "Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem..."

Paul respectfully answers the charges. He neither stirs rebellion nor profanes the temple. Instead, he worships "the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." This confession unites continuity between Old and New Testament faith — one salvation plan by grace through faith. Verse 15 affirms resurrection hope: both just and unjust will rise, but the believer's destiny is secured in Christ. His conscience remains clear because his righteousness is positional, grounded in Christ's atonement.

17–21. “Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.”

Paul’s presence in Jerusalem was benevolent, not rebellious. He came to deliver charitable aid from Gentile believers — a fruit of grace uniting the Church across racial lines. His accusers, ironically absent, cannot substantiate any charge. The dispute centers on “the resurrection of the dead,” revealing that faith in Christ, not political disturbance, is the true issue. The gospel’s offense lies in grace, not in crime.

22–27. “And Felix, having more perfect knowledge of that way, deferred them...”

Felix postpones judgment, promising to hear Paul again. His curiosity is intellectual, not spiritual. Later, when Paul speaks of “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” Felix trembles — conviction without conversion. The phrase “Felix hoped also that money should have been given him” exposes corruption. His procrastination mirrors countless souls who know truth yet resist grace. God’s message convicts, but coercion never saves. Eternal life remains a gift received by belief, not by moral reform.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Airesis (Gk., v.5): “sect” or “party,” used by opponents to demean “the Way.”

Elpida anastaseōs (Gk., v.15): “hope of resurrection,” signifying confident assurance, not wishful thought.

Suneidēsis (Gk., v.16): “conscience,” moral awareness informed by grace.

Krisis mellousa (Gk., v.25): “the judgment to come,” divine evaluation for reward or loss.

Kairos (Gk., v.25): “convenient season,” representing opportunity resisted by unbelief.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 24 emphasizes the believer's calm assurance under false accusation. The conscience purified by faith stands firm before God and men. Felix's trembling illustrates conviction without faith — intellectual acknowledgment without reception. Grace must be received, not merely respected. Divine justice, not human bribery, determines the eternal outcome. For believers, the "judgment to come" refers not to condemnation but to the Bema Seat, where rewards, not salvation, are assessed.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is by belief alone; moral conviction without faith saves no one.

The believer's conscience rests in Christ's righteousness, not in self-defense.

The resurrection secures eternal destiny — the just unto reward, the unjust unto judgment.

Grace transforms charity into worship and unites Jew and Gentile in one body.

Felix's delay warns against postponing faith, yet proves that grace cannot be bribed, earned, or silenced.

Acts 24 portrays the triumph of secure faith amid corruption — the unchained soul testifying that grace remains sovereign when justice and power fail.

Acts 25 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 25 records Paul's trial before Festus and King Agrippa's arrival in Caesarea. The chapter showcases God's sovereignty in using political systems to advance His purpose. While Paul's accusers persist in hostility, God's servant remains calm and confident, knowing his eternal destiny is secure. This chapter emphasizes the difference between worldly manipulation and divine mission, between fear and faith, and between temporary imprisonment and eternal freedom in Christ.

1–5. “Now when Festus was come into the province... the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul.”

Three days after taking office, Festus faces pressure from the Jewish leaders to transfer Paul to Jerusalem — a trap to assassinate him en route. Political leaders often seek compromise to please men, but grace needs no political advantage. God’s sovereignty prevents Paul’s premature death, ensuring the gospel reaches Rome as promised (cf. Acts 23:11).

6–12. “While he tarried among them... Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul.”

Paul, aware of their murderous intent, appeals to Caesar — exercising his right as a Roman citizen. His statement, “I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat,” demonstrates both legal wisdom and faith in divine providence. The appeal fulfills Christ’s prophecy that Paul would bear witness before kings. Earthly courts become stages for heavenly testimony.

13–21. “And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus.”

Agrippa II, the great-grandson of Herod the Great, visits Festus. Their discussion about Paul reveals ignorance mixed with curiosity. Festus admits he found “nothing worthy of death” in Paul, yet still keeps him bound for political convenience. This shows the emptiness of worldly justice — truth known yet unacted upon. Grace uses even delay to fulfill divine purpose.

22–27. “I would also hear the man myself... tomorrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.”

Agrippa’s interest sets the stage for Paul’s powerful defense in the next chapter. Festus summarizes the charges as religious disputes “about one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.” The entire case centers on the resurrection — the foundation of Christianity and the proof of eternal security. Even unbelievers recognize that Paul’s gospel hinges on a living Savior.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Kategorein (Gk., v.7): “to accuse formally,” emphasizing hostility rooted in envy.

Apelomai Kaisara (Gk., v.11): “I appeal unto Caesar,” legal phrase invoking higher judgment.

Adikos thanatos (Gk., v.11): “unjust death,” showing Paul’s innocence under Roman law.

Anastasin Iēsou (Gk., v.19): “resurrection of Jesus,” central theological issue dividing belief and unbelief.

Diakrisis (Gk., v.26): “examination or inquiry,” showing the fairness expected in Roman procedure.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 25 demonstrates God’s meticulous providence in fulfilling His Word. Paul’s appeal to Caesar, though seemingly procedural, fulfills God’s promise that he would testify in Rome. Human politics cannot hinder divine purpose. The resurrection of Christ remains the dividing line of history — all human systems must ultimately confront that truth. Believers can rest in divine sovereignty, knowing that earthly delays, injustices, or imprisonments cannot undo God’s eternal plan or the security of His children.

Free Grace Summary

Eternal life is secure regardless of circumstance; grace stands beyond human authority.

Paul’s calm under pressure reveals assurance born of faith, not fear.

God turns political obstacles into opportunities for testimony.

The resurrection remains the central proof of the gospel and the basis of eternal security.

Earthly injustice cannot thwart divine justice; grace always prevails in the end.

Acts 25 teaches that even in captivity, the believer lives free — for no chain can bind a soul sealed by the risen Christ.

Acts 26 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 26 records Paul's defense before King Agrippa II, perhaps the most eloquent and personal of all his testimonies. Standing before royalty, Paul recounts his conversion, calling, and gospel message. His defense emphasizes faith in the risen Christ as the only condition for salvation. Agrippa's near response—"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"—reveals the tragedy of conviction without belief. The chapter radiates with Free Grace clarity: salvation is by faith alone, secured forever the moment one believes.

1–3. "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day."

Paul's respectful introduction reveals poise and gratitude even in chains. His calm tone shows that spiritual freedom transcends physical bondage. Agrippa's familiarity with Jewish customs provides a unique opportunity to hear the gospel clearly from Israel's own Scriptures. Grace speaks with reason and respect, not resentment.

4–8. "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

Paul describes his former life of strict legalism and devotion. Yet his confidence was misplaced in human righteousness. The true issue before the court is "the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers"—the resurrection. The phrase "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" affirms the rationality of resurrection faith. Grace fulfills, not contradicts, Israel's hope.

9–15. "I verily thought... I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus."

Paul recounts his zeal in persecuting believers until the Damascus encounter. "At midday... I saw in the way a light from heaven." The voice of Jesus—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"—reveals Christ's identification with His Church. Salvation begins with revelation, not

resolve. Paul's immediate submission, "What shall I do, Lord?" reflects faith's surrender to divine authority.

16–18. "To make thee a minister and a witness... to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light."

Christ commissions Paul as apostle to the Gentiles. The turning "from darkness to light" describes regeneration, not moral reform. The phrase "that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" defines salvation clearly: forgiveness and sanctification come by faith alone, not works. The perfect tense of *dedomenēn* (Gk., "given") stresses permanent possession.

19–23. "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Paul obeys his calling, preaching repentance (*metanoein*, Gk., "change of mind") and faith throughout the Gentile world. His message aligns with the prophets: that Christ should suffer, rise, and bring light to Jew and Gentile alike. Grace is consistent across all dispensations—faith in God's promise is the basis of justification.

24–29. "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

Festus interrupts, mocking Paul as insane. Paul replies calmly, affirming the reasonableness of truth. Agrippa, convicted but unconverted, says, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." His hesitation exposes the tragedy of intellect without faith. Salvation depends not on knowledge, but on belief in Christ's person and promise.

30–32. "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar."

Paul's appeal to Caesar fulfills divine prophecy, carrying him toward Rome. Agrippa's acknowledgment of Paul's innocence shows that God's servant is not a criminal but a messenger. Human rulers pass judgment, but divine grace has already declared the believer righteous.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Metanoein (Gk., v.20): “to change one’s mind,” repentance as mental shift toward truth, not moral reformation.

Dedomenēn (Gk., v.18): “having been given,” perfect passive participle denoting permanent possession of forgiveness.

Epistrephō (Gk., v.18): “to turn,” used for conversion from ignorance to illumination.

Anastasis (Gk., v.8): “resurrection,” foundation of Christian hope.

Sōtēria (Gk., v.29 implied): “salvation,” deliverance received through faith, not effort.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 26 is a masterpiece of grace-centered testimony. Paul’s message links Old Testament prophecy with New Testament fulfillment, showing that justification by faith is God’s consistent plan. Repentance is intellectual change leading to belief, not behavior. The gospel’s simplicity offends the proud but liberates the humble. Eternal forgiveness and inheritance are granted immediately upon faith in Christ.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is by faith alone, as seen in Paul’s commission (v.18).

Repentance is a change of mind toward God’s truth, not a condition of works.

Eternal forgiveness and inheritance are permanent gifts.

Unbelief, not sin, condemns (John 3:18).

Agrippa’s “almost” reveals the futility of near-faith; salvation requires belief, not admiration.

Acts 26 proves that the gospel of grace is rational, universal, and eternally secure—once believed, forever possessed.

Acts 27 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 27 recounts Paul's perilous voyage to Rome — one of the most detailed sea narratives in ancient literature. It portrays divine providence, steadfast faith, and the assurance of God's promises amid disaster. The shipwreck symbolizes the storms of life, yet Paul's confidence in God's Word demonstrates unshakable faith grounded in eternal security. The believer's life may face loss, but his destiny remains secure in Christ.

1–8. “And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy...”

Paul, now under Roman custody, sails with other prisoners toward Rome under the guard of Julius, a centurion. Luke's firsthand account (“we”) emphasizes historical detail and accuracy. Despite adverse winds, Paul remains calm and cooperative, trusting God's unseen hand. The voyage's early delays foreshadow trials to come. Grace teaches patience through divine timing.

9–12. “Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage.”

Paul warns the crew not to continue, perceiving danger through spiritual discernment. Yet the centurion trusts the ship's pilot instead. Human confidence in expertise over revelation leads to loss. The “Fair Havens” represent temporary comfort rejected for worldly convenience. Grace respects human freedom but allows consequence as teacher.

13–20. “A tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon, arose.”

The gentle south wind deceives them into false security, but a violent storm soon overtakes the ship. For days, neither sun nor stars appear. The crew loses hope, throwing cargo overboard to

survive. This section illustrates the futility of human effort apart from divine guidance. In spiritual terms, law and reason cannot save the soul once sin's storm rages — only grace provides deliverance.

21–26. “Be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship.”

After long silence, Paul speaks with authority and assurance. An angel of God confirms: “Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar.” Divine purpose ensures Paul’s safety. “God hath given thee all them that sail with thee” portrays temporal deliverance flowing from one believer’s intercession. “Be of good cheer” (euthymeite, Gk.) conveys confidence grounded in God’s promise. Faith rests not in circumstance but in the certainty of His Word.

27–32. “The shipmen were about to flee out of the ship...”

Fear drives some sailors to abandon ship, but Paul warns, “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.” Here *sōthēnai* (Gk.) refers to physical preservation, not eternal salvation. Obedience to God’s Word ensures temporal safety. The ropes are cut, committing all fully to divine care. Faith often requires forsaking human fallback plans.

33–38. “Paul besought them all to take meat...”

Paul encourages all 276 aboard to eat, assuring them that not a hair will perish. His calm confidence reflects deep fellowship with God. He gives thanks publicly, modeling gratitude amid crisis. The breaking of bread here is practical nourishment, not the Lord’s Supper, yet it mirrors grace shared in community.

39–44. “They ran the ship aground... and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship.”

The ship is destroyed, yet every person reaches land alive — exactly as God promised. Those who could swim did so; others floated on debris. The final verse triumphantly declares: “And so

it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.” God’s Word never fails. Physical wreckage cannot nullify divine preservation.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Euthymeite (Gk., v.22): “be of good courage,” assurance based on faith in divine promise.

Sōthēnai (Gk., v.31): “to be saved,” meaning physical rescue, not spiritual regeneration.

Pistis (Gk., v.25): “faith,” trustful reliance upon God’s Word despite evidence.

Katagōgē (Gk., v.8): “harbor or landing,” representing temporary safety in human planning.

Charis (Gk., implied): “grace,” the sustaining favor that preserves life and faith.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 27 demonstrates that divine faithfulness transcends disaster. God’s promise to Paul — “thou must stand before Caesar” — guarantees survival despite human error. The chapter illustrates the believer’s eternal security through temporal analogy: though the ship of life may shatter, the soul anchored in Christ cannot be lost. Grace governs both preservation and purpose.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation’s security rests on God’s promise, not human performance.

Physical trials mirror spiritual storms but cannot endanger eternal destiny.

Faith’s assurance speaks calmly when reason fails.

God’s Word ensures deliverance — “there shall be no loss of any man’s life.”

Even the faithless benefit from proximity to the faithful, reflecting temporal grace.

Acts 27 shows that while vessels may break, promises never do — the believer, safe in Christ, always reaches shore.

Acts 28 – Study Notes

Contextual Summary

Acts 28 concludes the book of Acts with Paul's arrival in Rome, demonstrating God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promise that Paul would testify before Caesar. The chapter opens with divine preservation after shipwreck on Malta and ends with Paul proclaiming the gospel freely in Rome. Every event—miraculous healing, divine protection, and bold preaching—underscores the triumph of grace and the believer's eternal security. Though Paul remains physically bound, the Word of God is not bound.

1–6. “And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.”

The survivors reach Malta, where the islanders show hospitality. As Paul gathers sticks, a viper fastens on his hand, but he shakes it off unharmed. The people first assume judgment, then deify him when no harm follows. God uses this miracle to validate His messenger and demonstrate His power over death. The bite symbolizes Satan's attack, yet grace nullifies its sting. Just as eternal life cannot be lost, divine purpose cannot be thwarted.

7–10. “The father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed.”

Paul heals Publius's father, and many others are cured. This ministry of mercy illustrates the continuation of Christ's compassion through His servant. These healings do not confer salvation but serve as signs confirming the gospel. Grace produces good works as gratitude, not requirement. The people honor Paul and provide provisions for his journey — temporal reward mirroring God's care for His faithful witnesses.

11–16. “And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria... and so we went toward Rome.”

After wintering on Malta, Paul sails again. At last, the long-awaited arrival in Rome fulfills God’s word from Acts 23:11. Along the way, believers from the “Appii forum and the Three Taverns” meet him, encouraging his spirit. Fellowship refreshes faith. Verse 15 declares, “he thanked God, and took courage” (tharsei, Gk.)—the courage of one who trusts divine sovereignty even in chains.

17–22. “Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers...”

Paul meets with local Jewish leaders, explaining that his imprisonment stems from Israel’s rejection of their own Messiah. He declares the hope of Israel — the resurrection. Their willingness to hear him shows grace’s persistence, even toward hardened hearts. Paul’s approach remains respectful, yet uncompromising. Grace extends invitation; rejection never cancels offer.

23–28. “Some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.”

Paul expounds “the kingdom of God” and persuades them concerning Jesus from Moses and the prophets “from morning till evening.” The result is division — belief and unbelief. He quotes Isaiah 6:9–10, showing that Israel’s blindness fulfills prophecy. Verse 28 shifts the focus: “The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it.” This is not replacement but expansion—grace widening its reach. Salvation remains by faith alone, to all who believe.

30–31. “And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house... preaching the kingdom of God.”

The book closes triumphantly. Paul, though under house arrest, welcomes all who come to hear “with all confidence, no man forbidding him.” The Greek word *akōlytōs* means “without hindrance.” The gospel moves forward unhindered because divine grace cannot be chained. Paul’s ministry ends not in defeat, but in victory through perseverance and faith.

Koine Greek Linguistic Notes

Tharsei (Gk., v.15): “take courage,” divine encouragement through fellowship and promise.

Akōlytōs (Gk., v.31): “without hindrance,” describing unstoppable gospel proclamation.

Charis (Gk., implied): “grace,” the underlying cause of every deliverance and opportunity.

Sōtēria tou Theou (Gk., v.28): “salvation of God,” emphasizing divine origin and universal availability.

Pistis (Gk., v.24): “faith,” the single condition for receiving eternal life.

Doctrinal Insight

Acts 28 affirms that divine purpose always prevails. The narrative begins with shipwreck and ends with triumph — proof that grace governs history. Miracles on Malta reveal temporal preservation; preaching in Rome proclaims eternal salvation. The shift from Israel’s resistance to Gentile reception fulfills God’s inclusive plan of redemption. The book closes with the gospel’s continuity, not Paul’s confinement. Grace remains unbound, securing every believer eternally and empowering ongoing witness.

Free Grace Summary

Salvation is received by faith alone in Christ, offered to Jew and Gentile alike.

Grace preserves through storms, serpents, and chains — proving eternal security.

Divine promises are certain; “it shall be even as it was told me” (cf. Acts 27:25).

Paul’s endurance exemplifies faith’s confidence in divine sovereignty.

The gospel advances unhindered because grace cannot be contained by circumstance.

Acts 28 ends where the gospel never ends — with an open door, a finished redemption, and eternal assurance in the risen Christ.