

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

ACTS 11-12

It's called **"the turning point."** *A football player picks up a fumble and returns it for a TD... a political candidate makes a fatal gaffe in a debate... a salesman lands a mammoth account...* The situation takes a sudden 180. The prospects are radically altered.

This is what happened in Acts 10...

God gave Peter a vision that altered the whole scope of Christianity. Prior to this moment, the ancient world viewed Christianity as a sect of Judaism.

The first Christians were Jews, living in Jerusalem, under Jewish Law. But in Acts 10, God opened the door to His family to Gentiles. **He showed Peter that His grace is for every race** - both Jews and Gentiles.

At the time, God's people ate from God's menu in Leviticus 11. *Jews kept kosher. Gentiles didn't bother.*

What was eaten and not eaten was a source of Jewish pride. Diet set Jews apart from everyone else.

But it was lunchtime in **Joppa, and God shows Peter a picnic blanket full of unclean entrees - all off-limits to Jews.** As a friend told me last week, it was the first **"pigs in a blanket."** God told Peter to **"pig out."**

And after some hesitancy, an initial reluctance, Peter steps over his religious prejudices to obey God's will.

For Peter could see that what God was doing with diet He was also doing with humans. In light of the work of Jesus,

religion had become obsolete. Keeping the Law, and its dietary code no longer mattered.

Salvation was by God's grace through faith in Jesus.

This meant folks didn't have to become Jewish to know God's favor. *Salvation was now open to all men!*

God no longer divided humans into special and common, or clean and unclean. **After the cross, the only line of demarcation among men is whether we're "in Christ" or not. The cross was the new crossroads.**

And Peter was immediately called on to act on what he'd been shown. This religiously devout Jew gets a knock on the door. He goes with a delegation of Gentiles - to a Gentile city - to the house of a Gentile named **Cornelius** - to speak to a Gentile audience...

Peter tells Cornelius' crowd about Jesus and before he finishes his sermon the Spirit falls on believing hearts. *Without a single person getting circumcised, or hearing a lesson on Sabbath-keeping, or conducting a reading of the Law, or offering a single sacrifice, perhaps over a plate of smoked ham and hog jowls God saved Gentiles just as He had the Jews - by faith.*

Salvation was by Christ alone and faith alone.

Acts 10 forever altered the direction of Christianity and the composition of the Church. **And as Gentiles, we should be glad! Because of Peter's vision, we can follow Jesus and enjoy pork BBQ all at the same time!**

Peter's vision was good news for Gentiles, but there were Jews who thought his actions were blasphemous.

What was Peter doing ignoring 1500 years of tradition, and running roughshod over the Jewish Law?

Not everyone was happy with Peter. There were angry Jews in Jerusalem who called him into headquarters to provide an answer for what he'd done.

That's where we pick up the story in Acts 11... "Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!"

Recall in Acts 6 Luke tells us that a large number of Jewish priests had become believers in Jesus. Obviously, they carried a deep affinity for the principles of Judaism. They were staunch traditionalists.

For centuries, you had to be a *child of Abraham* to be a *child of God*. Gentiles who wanted to know God had to join the Jewish community. So *what is Peter doing now swinging the door wide open to Gentiles?*

Bigwigs in Jerusalem thought the Gentiles should have to jump through a few Jewish hoops to be saved.

Remember the game we played as kids... Two lines formed facing each other. Everyone locked hands.

Then one group shouted, "Red Rover, Red Rover, send Sandy right over." Little Sandy would muster a head of steam and race toward the other line to try and break through the wall of interlocked arms and hands.

Imagine, Jesus standing behind the Church in Jerusalem. He's calling, "Red Rover, Red Rover, send the Gentiles right over." And here come the Gentiles, led by Peter and Cornelius, racing toward the church.

Yet the Jews clench their teeth and lock their arms. They put up a wall. They were determined to maintain the status quo, and keep the Gentiles out. *And we need to take heed...* Whenever a church tries to keep people *out* whom God has taken *in*, they are opposing the Gospel. People of another color, or from a different background, need to be included, not resisted.

These Jews had questioned Peter's actions, but they weren't privy to his vision. So he recounts what he had seen on the rooftop. Verse 4, "But Peter explained *it* to them in order from the beginning, saying: "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me.

When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.' Peter admits he was initially reluctant. He had the same reservations as the Jews.

Verse 9, "But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.'" Ignoring the dietary laws wasn't Peter's idea, it was God's command. God had changed the rules. *God said it was OK to*

eat bacon and put sausage on your pizza. And He said it three times to hammer home the point! Verse 10, “Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven.”

The OT Law conditioned the Jews to view all of life as either *clean* or *unclean*. It was a grid that governed food, people, days, houses, times of the month, skin conditions. Everything in life was either *holy* or *unholy*.

But the cross of Jesus cleared away this distinction.

The Law proved that all men are unclean. The only holy one is Jesus. A new dividing line was drawn. What decides our status now is our relationship with Jesus.

Peter continues his story, “At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house.” It was Peter, six other Jews, along with the three Gentiles from Cornelius who came to fetch him. In one sense, they went just a few miles up the coast from Joppa to Caesarea, but in another sense, they crossed a 1500-year-old ocean of precedent...

“And he (the Roman centurion, Cornelius) told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’

God had sent an angel to Cornelius. God wanted to save Gentiles. “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon

them, as upon us at the beginning.” Just like at Pentecost, it was a sovereign move of God.

Peter and his Jewish pals had done nothing special to warrant God’s salvation. It was all about grace. *And that’s exactly the way it had come to Cornelius!*

Verse 16, “Then I remembered the word of the Lord, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ The power of the Holy Spirit is God’s gift. and Jesus gives it to whomever He chooses. Thus, “If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?”

And notice, “When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.” It was obvious to the church, as well as to Peter, that the salvation of the Gentiles was God’s work...

For the moment, the opposition was muted.

Yet before we leave this story, please note that Luke saw fit to include it twice in the record for emphasis.

Both Acts 10 and 11 describe this colossal moment.

And Luke wasn’t writing on a 500 gigabyte hard drive, but on a parchment scroll with limited space. Yet he knew what occurred at Cornelius’ was no triviality. It was a major breakthrough in the history of redemption. And its record would be needed for future reference.

Verse 19, “Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.” This makes us appreciate Peter’s step of faith. He went where no Jew had gone before. Peter cut a trail where there wasn’t one.

It takes special men to pioneer new works and blaze new trails - it takes clear vision, and decisive action, and unwavering conviction, and courageous faith.

Once the trail seems safe, other people jump on the bandwagon, but in the beginning, the pioneers are few.

And such was the case here. There were few Jews willing to follow Peter to take the Gospel to Gentiles. For the most part, the Gospel was spreading from Jew to Jew. Other men needed to climb on the bandwagon.

And there were some branching out. “But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus.” Remember, Hellenists were Jews who had adopted Greek culture and language. They were secular Jews, who lived as Gentiles.

And these unnamed Cyprian evangelists began to target these non-law-observant Jews with the Gospel.

“And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.” Antioch was the capital of Syria. It was a city near the Mediterranean coast, 300 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

After Rome and Alexandria, it was the third largest city in the Roman empire. Antioch's population topped half-a-million people.

Realize Antioch was an architectural wonder. Its main street was paved with marble and lined with marble columns. Historians say it was the only road in the ancient world with street lamps. Its splendor earned it the name, "Antioch the Golden, Queen of the East."

Antioch of Syria was situated on the Orontes River, 20 miles upstream from the ocean. It was known as the gateway from the eastern Roman Empire to the west.

Antioch was a key hub for ancient travel. And the perfect place to launch an outreach to the Gentile world. As we move on in Acts, we'll find that the church that started in Antioch became the beachhead for Christianity's invasion into the Gentile nations.

Obviously, Jerusalem saw the strategic significance of a Christian community in Antioch. That's why they sent Barnabas to encourage this start-up church.

Verse 23 speaks of Barnabas' arrival, "When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." If you're looking for a name to name your son, here's a good one, "*Barnabas*." It means "son of consolation or son of encouragement." Barnabas had befriended Saul when the other disciples in Jerusalem were afraid of him.

And under Barnabas' leadership, we're told, "And a great many people were added to the Lord." Antioch was dedicated to the Greek goddess Daphne - who in Greek mythology was violated by Apollos. In keeping with its founders, sexual perversion ran rampant.

It was a city full of temptation *yet in desperate need of Jesus*. Barnabas' message to the church was hang tough, be tenacious, strengthen your grip on Jesus.

Today, we live in similar surroundings. Our culture worships sex. Perversion is commonplace. Ours is an "anything goes" society. It's "people gone wild." We too need "purpose of heart... to continue with the Lord."

"Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul." The church in Antioch was growing quickly, and Barnabas needed help, so he sought out a man perfectly equipped to reach Gentiles - *his buddy Saul*.

In fact, Saul would end up proving more gifted than Barnabas, but rather than being threatened by Saul, Barnabas knew he was needed. Barnabas humbly put the cause above himself and recruited his old friend.

"And when he had found (Saul), he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." Before Antioch, followers of Jesus went by different names, "believers," "disciples," "receivers of the Word," "servants," "people of the way," to list a few. But they were first called "*Christians*" at Antioch.

Recently, I ran across a list of famous people who earlier in their life or career changed their name for a more sophisticated, stylish sounding name...

Robert Zimmerman became "*Bob Dylan.*"

Marion Morrison went by the name "*John Wayne.*"

Issur Danielovitch became "*Kirk Douglas.*"

Peter Hernandez is now "*Bruno Mars.*"

Eric Bishop is the comedian "*Jamie Foxx.*"

And finally, *Betty Perski* became "*Lauren Bacall.*"

But the believers in Antioch stuck with their uncouth, embarrassing name. "*Christian*" was originally intended as a derogatory term. The suffix "*-ian*" means "the party of" - "*Christian*" meant "*the party of Christ.*"

And this was how the Romans referred to their slaves. Claudius' slaves were known as the "*Claudians.*" Anthony's slaves were the "*Antonians.*"

Thus, for believers in Jesus to be labeled "*Christians*" it was meant as an insult, a mockery.

Yet Christians were honored to be slaves of Jesus. Paul gloried in being a "*fool for Christ's sake.*" Peter later wrote, "*Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God.*" We should consider it a privilege to bear shame for Jesus' sake.

Verse 27, "*And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch.*" Prophets uttered impromptu, extemporaneous messages from God. They would deliver a *specific message for a specific circumstance.* And prophecy is a spiritual gift still available today.

“Then one of (the prophets), named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar.” The gift of prophecy is a direct word from God’s Spirit often addressing a situation contemporary to its hearers.

Here Agabus’ prophecy was a dire warning. Through him, God foretold of a global famine. The Jewish historian Josephus mentions this famine in his “*Antiquities of the Jews.*” During the first century AD, all across the empire famine produced high prices and food shortages. **People starved to death except for Christians.** The church was somewhat insulated.

Believers shared and cared for each other. And not just *person to person...* but from *church to church...*

“Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.” The church in Antioch wanted to send help to Jerusalem. *A daughter church helps the mother-ship.*

Often CalvaryCSM has helped out other pastors and churches when they’ve fallen on hard times. It’s best to be generous - *who knows when we might need help?*

So the believers at Antioch took an offering for those in Jerusalem. Verse 30, “This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

Galatians 6:6 teaches us, “Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.”

Gentile delivers in Antioch understood their debt to the Jewish Christians in Judea. The Jerusalem Church sent them Barnabas. Now it was time for them to return the favor. They send Barnabas back with a few bucks.

Chapter 12, “Now about that time Herod the king stretched out *his* hand to harass some from the church.” When it rains it pours... On top of the famine, a wave of persecution also struck the Jerusalem Church.

And the Jewish King Herod was the culprit.

The NT is full of men called “Herod.” The first was *Herod the Great*. His rule ended shortly after Jesus’ birth. And his kingdom was divided among three sons.

One of the sons was named Aristobulus, who had a son named “Agrippa” - who is the Herod here in Acts 12. Herod Agrippa was Herod the Great’s grandson.

This Agrippa was a haughty man. He had friends in high places. Schooled in Rome, he became pals with an aristocrat named Caligula. Later Caligula became the emperor and promoted Agrippa to the king of Judea.

Agrippa was a shrewd politician who tried to win over the Jews. He knew how much they hated Christians, so to rack up political points with the Jews he mounted a crusade of persecution against the Church.

Verse 2, “Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.” This was the Apostle James, one of the original twelve. Tradition says he was beheaded.

And his execution no doubt elated the Jews. They couldn't have been happier. The Jerusalem Post announced Agrippa's approval rating had climbed 20%. So he decides to go after the Christian's ringleader.

“And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also.” *This King Agrippa keeps trying to get ‘a head’... (Pun intended)*

“Now it was *during* the Days of Unleavened Bread.” Agrippa would've killed Peter immediately if it hadn't have been the week of the Passover. “So when he had arrested him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.” The Greek word translated “squads” is “*tetrads*,” a group of four soldiers.

Four squads of four soldiers each were dispatched to stand guard over Peter. This was maximum security.

Someone may've told Agrippa about the earlier time when the Sanhedrin had arrested Peter, and God sent an angel to bust him out. King Herod wanted to make sure that Peter wasn't going anywhere this time. So around the clock, there were two soldiers chained to Peter - and two more standing watch. As if four soldiers would be a match for a battle-angel sent from God!

“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”

Peter's head is on the chopping block, so *what does the Church do?* They pull out the big guns. Rather than write letters, or picket, or protest, or sue - they pray!

The Puritan preacher, Thomas Watson, once wrote, "The angel fetched Peter out of prison, but it was prayer that fetched the angel." Brothers and sisters, nothing is more powerful than a praying church!

"And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison." Now put yourself in Peter's sandals... You're awaiting execution on death row. You are under heavy guard with no possibility of escape...

What would be your disposition? The one certainty is *you wouldn't be sleeping peacefully!* Yet Peter is sawing logs! He's experiencing a supernatural peace!

Again Peter is in a storm surrounded by the wind and the waves, but this time he keeps his eyes on Jesus. He remains unshaken. He stays above the situation.

Realize, every miracle in the Bible started out as somebody's problem. *And it's when you stop focusing on your circumstances and fix your eyes on Jesus*, that God can stop working on your attitude and start working on the miracle. Hey, rather than *asking why*, Peter is *cutting z's*. He's walking on water again.

Peter is living supernaturally - *but don't forget he's not doing it alone*. A praying church is in his corner!

Verse 7, "Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by *him*, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" Peter is

snoozing so soundly the light doesn't bother him. The angel has to slap him to wake him up.

“And his chains fell off *his hands*.” Notice, the angel tells Peter to “*Arise quickly!*” One commentary I read noted that in the Bible angels are always in a hurry.

In contrast, only once is God in a hurry - that's when He rushes down the road to greet His prodigal son.

But angels seem to always be in a rush. *And we can guess why!* If heaven and the presence of God were your home, and you were dispatched to this wicked planet, don't you think you'd want to tie up business as quick as possible to get home? Angels don't dilly-dally!

“Then the angel said to him, “Gird yourself and tie on your sandals”; and so he did. And he said to him, “Put on your garment and follow me.” You'd think if the angel unlocked Peter's chains he could also dress him supernaturally. **But miracles always have two parts.** God shoulders the heavy lifting, but we have a smaller role to play. God usually involves our participation.

Verse 9, “*So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.*” Peter thought he was dreaming. He hasn't had his morning coffee. He's in a fog. He's pinching himself, asking, “*Is this real?*”

It reminds me of the lady who had a strange dream. She said afterward, “*I dreamed I was eating spaghetti. But when I woke up, my pajama string was gone!*”

Verse 10, “*When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city,*

which opened to them of its own accord.” It was like an electronic door before electricity.

“And they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter had come to himself, he said, “Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and *from all the expectation of the Jewish people.*” This was the second time an angel arranged Peter’s jailbreak! Peter keeps getting thrown into prison, and God keeps breaking him out. The Lord is faithful to His people, but remember what His people were doing - ***praying!***

“So, when he had considered *this*, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.” This was probably the same house that hosted the Last Supper, and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. It’s now the site of the prayer meeting where the church is asking God to save Peter.

“And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter’s voice, because of *her* gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate.” Rhoda was so excited at what God had done, she forgot Peter! Left him at the door. *But that’s the point of prayer - not the answer, but God.*

“But they said to her, “You are beside yourself!” They didn’t believe it was Peter knocking. They’d been praying for a jailbreak, *but evidently without much faith!*

“Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, “It is his angel.” Notice here, the early church believed in guardian

angels - that everyone has an angel assigned to them. We all have our own heavenly bodyguard. I'm not sure there's one specific angel for every believer, but the Bible teaches, and the early Church definitely believed in the reality of angelic activity in our lives.

Verse 16, “Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened *the door* and saw him, they were astonished.” The church prayed, but apparently, they prayed some puny prayers. **Their prayers weren't packed with a whole lot of faith, yet they prayed!**

Which teaches us a lesson... We don't have to pray big and bold prayers for God to answer. Jesus said faith, the size of a mustard seed, can move mountains.

Even frail, feeble prayers with a twinge of faith can move the hand of a willing God. **The only prayer God doesn't answer is the prayer that was never prayed!**

Verse 17, “But (Peter) motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, “Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren.”

This was another James - the brother of Jesus. He too was a leader in the Jerusalem church... “And he (*that is, Peter*) departed and went to another place.”

“Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter.

But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that *they* should be

put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed *there*.” Caesarea was the headquarters of the Roman occupation.

“Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king’s personal aide their friend, they asked for peace because their country was supplied with food by the king’s *country*.” Luke gives us the political background for what is about to happen.

The Phoenicians had bribed Herod’s aide, Blastus. The lobbyists greased his palm to gain political favor.

Israel was an agrarian society. Tyre and Sidon were sea merchants. Israel looked to their northern neighbors for trade. The Phoenicians needed Israel for food, so they bribed Blastus to win favors from Herod.

This proves that what goes on in Washington today is nothing new. *Herod also needed to drain the swamp*. The problem though is that Herod was the swamp.

“So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them.” This was a political rally held in the seaside theater at Caesarea.

Next time we tour Israel go with us, and we’ll stand in this exact spot. There was a perch for dignitaries.

And what a spectacular venue this theater was and is today! A hundred yards away waves slap the beach.

On that day the sky was clear. The sun was high in the sky. The seats in the theater rose upwards. Today, among the

ruins several upper decks are missing. The original theatre had a seating capacity of 4000 people.

Josephus records this incident and dates it 44 AD. He says Agrippa wore a robe made entirely of silver. He writes, "At which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those who looked intently upon him." It made their eyes hurt.

Agrippa's silver threads caused Elton John to look like a thrift store shopper. Agrippa was full of himself. He was pompous and arrogant. On this day, he tried to dazzle the crowd with beauty and eloquence. He wore an outfit he borrowed from "Dancing With the Stars."

Verse 22, "And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" Here, Josephus adds, "upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery." The crowd hailed him as a god and Agrippa did nothing to stop such rhetoric and set them straight! **Beware to never stand in God's place.**

As the ole saying goes, "Never take the bows for God!" When God is praised our place is the shadows!

And what's ironic, nobody took the praise seriously except Agrippa. All the crowd was up to was flattery. The visitors from Tyre and Sidon were manipulating the king's ego to get a favorable trade deal. Someone observed, "Flattery is like bubble gum - enjoy it for a moment, but don't swallow it." **Don't fall for flattery!**

“Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.” That's Luke's play-by-play, but listen to Josephus for the color commentary...

The Jewish historian is even more graphic! "A severe pain also arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner... He was carried into the palace... and rested in a high chamber... and when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age..."

How ironic, the crowd in theatre said he was divine, immortal; yet just five days later the man was dead.

Herod's plight is a commentary on Isaiah 42:8 where God declares, "I am the LORD, that is my name; and my glory I will not give to another." It should make us *sick to our stomach* for someone to steal God's glory!

Verse 24, "But the word of God grew and multiplied."

At the beginning of Acts 12 Agrippa was cutting down Christians and the Church was behind closed doors. Now at the end of the chapter, this same Agrippa is cut down himself, and the word of God has multiplied.

The Church of every era should look past whoever is sitting on the earthly throne to God's throne in heaven, for God is the one who ultimately calls the shots.

Years later Peter will write in 1 Peter 3:12, "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

I'm sure when he wrote his letter he was thinking back to his jailbreak and this day.

“And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.” Barnabas and Saul had delivered the famine relief to the church. Now they return to Antioch with Mark, *but not for long!*

In Acts 13 the outreach shifts from the Jews to the Gentiles, and Saul, *aka Paul*, will take center stage.

Read Chapters 13-14 for next Sunday...