

Let's turn in our Bibles to Acts, the twenty sixth chapter, as we continue our journey through the Word of God. Paul has been arrested in Jerusalem. He's actually been taken into protective custody by the Roman government to spare him from being killed by the Jews. He was taken for his own protection down to Caesarea where the Romans had a stronger fortification and where the Jews had a smaller presence, where Paul's life would not be threatened as much as in Jerusalem. There he appeared before Felix who was the Roman governor at the time. The charges that were made against Paul were inconsequential. They were not substantiated. Felix however, being the crook that he was, wanted to have Paul give to him a bribe, which Paul refused. So he kept Paul in prison for two years until he was finally recalled by Rome and Festus was made governor in his place. Festus went first to Jerusalem to present himself to the leaders of the Jews as he was to be the new Roman governor of that province. And as he presented himself to the leaders, they informed him concerning Paul who was in prison in Caesarea. And they were desiring that he would bring Paul to Jerusalem to stand trial before their religious counsel. Festus said that they should come down to Caesarea. That he would hear the case against Paul. So they came on down and again made their same charges, which were not substantiated. They could not stick. Festus realized that the issue he thought that Paul was some horrible kind of a rebel or whatever. He realized that it was just a matter of religious issues. It was Paul's belief that Jesus was alive, whom they had killed. And so he said to Paul, would you go to Jerusalem to face these charges? It was at that point that Paul exercised his prerogative as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar when you felt that the courts were doing an injustice. And so Paul being a Roman citizen, appealed to Caesar and of course Festus was obligated then to send him to Caesar under Roman protection. But Festus had a problem. He really didn't have any charges to send along. To send Paul to Caesar with just these charges that he believes that Jesus is alive and that the Jews want to kill him for that, just wouldn't hold before Caesar. He realized that to send him to Caesar without charges would be a mark against him, because as a judge, he should have released Paul. That was the Roman thing that justice should do. Continuing to hold Paul as a prisoner was a violation of Roman justice. And so when Paul appealed to Caesar, it was taken out of his hands. King Agrippa II with his wife and sister, or sister Bernice, they were living together. They came to greet Festus the new Roman governor. Festus explained his problems to them. This prisoner that he had that was a carry over from Felix. And how that when they brought their charges, he said, they didn't have anything like I thought. It was just religious issues. Paul was affirming that Jesus was alive, whom they said was dead. He said I have to send him to Caesar because he made his appeal, but it doesn't seem right to send him unless I send charges. Would you mind hearing his case so that we can form some charges when we send him to Caesar? And Agrippa agreed to hear his case. So that brings us to chapter twenty six.

Then Agrippa said to Paul, They've gathered there together in the amphitheater, or in the place of justice. Agrippa with Bernice and all the royal court, Festus in his crimson robe of Roman justice, the electors and all of them are there. And Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: He began by addressing King Agrippa. He said, ²"I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, ³especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently. And so his courteous address of King Agrippa. Now it is true that King Agrippa was a student of the Jewish scriptures as Paul was a student of the Jewish scriptures. Paul was pleased to present his case to Agrippa. To present it unto Festus, Festus doesn't know the Scriptures. He doesn't know the promises of the Messiah. He was not familiar with the Scriptures and the customs of the Jews. But we are told that Agrippa was a Jew, not by nationality, he was an Idumean, he was a descendant of King Herod. But he was a Jew by religious practice. He had proselytized and religiously was a Jew, but really a very avid student of the Scriptures. The writers of his day, the rabbis acknowledged his knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. And this is why Paul was excited for the opportunity of sharing with Agrippa, the Scriptures and his own personal faith in Jesus Christ. King Agrippa, it is interesting that Jesus said to His disciples that they were

going to be brought before the magistrates and before kings. Now here is Paul, standing before King Agrippa, giving his defense of the gospel. But, I think, more than that. I think that Paul was praying and hoping that he could open the eyes of King Agrippa to that which he had come to know and to believe. And that is that Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the Messiah and that it was proved by His resurrection. And I believe that Paul was set upon Agrippa's conversion to Christianity.

So Paul begins by his own personal testimony. And often times that is one of the strongest witnesses that we can give. What God has done in our lives. How God has revealed Himself to us. And that becomes a very powerful, indisputable, testimony to people. How can they deny what God had done in your life? So he begins by his own life, he said, ⁴*My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. (They all know me.)* ⁵*They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.* ⁶*And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers.* So Paul is declaring his early life as a Jew, after the strictest sect of the Pharisees. And he declares it is because I believe in the hope of God that was given to our fathers. That is the hope of the Messiah, under which promises, he said, ⁷*To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain.* The whole Jewish nation, of course, was hoping, praying, looking for the Messiah. So Paul is just affirming his belief in that hope.

For this hope's sake, In other words, Paul is saying, this is the basic issue of the whole debacle, here. For this hope's sake, *King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.* I mean they all are hoping for the Messiah. I was hoping for the Messiah. And it is for this hope, that I am now accused by the Jews.

⁸*Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?* The heart of the issue is the resurrection of Jesus. That is the heart of the gospel. Everywhere in the New Testament where the gospel is preached, the recognition of His death according to the Scriptures, and the predetermined counsel of God, but also His resurrection. And that resurrection was the whole key issue. So Paul gets right into it. Why should you think it a thing incredible, that God should raise the dead?

Difficulties must also be measured by the capacity of the agent that is doing the work. Is it difficult to remodel Murietta Hot Springs? Well if we had a bunch of trained French Poodles, it would probably be impossible. Even though they could jump through hoops and turn somersaults in the air, they just don't have that type of skill. But when you get knowledgeable, skilled men, down there. It's not difficult. It's fun. But it just takes time. And in time it can be accomplished. Difficulty must be measured by the capacity of the agent doing the work. When God is the agent that is doing the work, talk of difficulty is absurd. Why should you think it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? Can God raise the dead? Of course! It's often said, if you can believe the first verse in the Bible, you should have no problem with the rest of the Book! If you believe in a God that is big enough to create the heavens and the earth, then surely He can raise the dead! He can create all kinds of life forms. He can create a great fish that can swallow a man and accommodate him for three days. He can do all of the things that the Bible has said that He has done if He is God, who created the heavens and the earth.

So it is man's limited concept of God that gives him difficulty with the stories in the Bible. Why should you think it a thing incredible that God? So Paul is putting it in the right perspective, bringing God into the equation. The mistake that we so often make as we are facing the issues of life, and looking at things which we think are totally impossible, the mistake that we make, is that we don't bring God into the equation. And that's why we so often faint because we don't take God into consideration. Why should you think it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?

So Paul now begins his personal testimony. ⁹*Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.* ¹⁰*This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.* Paul voted for Stephen's death. Paul voted for other believer's deaths. He was a member of the religious counsel, the Sanhedrin. And he was guilty of persecuting the church as he felt that it was his religious duty to do so.

¹¹*And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.* So Paul is no stranger to the Jewish animosity against the Christian faith. I was of them. I felt this animosity.

¹²"While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,
¹³at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. ¹⁴And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, '*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*' Here on the road to Damascus, Paul was personally apprehended by Jesus Christ. The Lord spoke to him, he said in the Hebrew tongue. It is interesting that in another place, Paul said that they that were with him heard the voice. In another place it says they didn't. There are different Greek words employed. They heard the sound of the voice. They did not hear the articulation. They, probably, did not understand Hebrew. Only the scholars knew the Hebrew language. And the fact that the Lord spoke to him in Hebrew. They heard the sound of the voice, but they didn't understand what the Lord was saying unto Paul. Why are you persecuting Me? It is interesting that Jesus so identifies with you and with me. That if we are reproached for His sake, He considers Himself reproached. If the church is persecuted, He looks at it as a persecution against Him. That is why we read (Acts 6:40-41), that the disciples rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer persecution for Christ's sake. Why are you persecuting Me? And He said it is hard for you to kick against the goads.

When they would take a young ox and put the yoke upon him so he could pull a plow, that young ox usually rebelled against the yoke. And so if the ox was yoked to a single yoke, the farmer would have a stick that was sharpened to a point. He would hold it right behind the flank of the ox. So that when he would kick the goad would stick him. The ox would soon learn that to kick against that goad was only hurting himself. And that's the way they were trained not to kick or to rebel against the yoke. When they were yoked in two then they would have a board behind them with these sharpened point. And again to kick is only to hurt yourself. So the Lord is saying to Paul, you have been kicking against the goads. No doubt, in Paul's mind there was deep conviction. He was fighting it. This belief in Christ was opposed to his traditional background. And yet to see the way Stephen died, calling upon the Lord to forgive them and commending himself into the hands of God, no doubt, left a very deep impression upon Paul's young mind. Could it be that Jesus indeed is the Messiah?

It is interesting that oftentimes the person who is kicking the hardest against the goads is the one who is closest to conversion. It is so often true when God is dealing with an individual, they begin to really resist and fight against it. And our evaluation is usually, wow, they're so far, they'll never be saved. Look at the way they are fighting. But often times it's really their last struggle before giving up. And they really get mean. And they really get miserable. Sometimes a wife will call and say my husband is getting so miserable, I don't think I can live with him any longer. It's horrible, you know. He just rants and raves against my faith in Jesus Christ. We often say, praise the Lord, he is getting close! Kicking against the goads. God is working! It is hard for you, Paul, to kick against those goads.

¹⁵So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?(1 Corinthians 12:3)' And He said, '*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.*
¹⁶*But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.* So Paul is going to have his own personal tutoring by Jesus, in preparation for his ministry unto the Gentiles. Now it should be noted that God began early in Paul's life. In fact he makes mention that he was separated unto the gospel from his mother's womb (Galatians 1:15). Though Paul did not know it, God was preparing him from his birth for his ministry. His background in the Grecian culture, growing up in Tarsus. But his parents' desire to get him steeped into the Hebrew culture, sending him, when he was just a young boy to Jerusalem to study at the feet of Gamaliel. So he has the knowledge and understanding of the Greek culture. He is a free born Roman citizen. He is now well educated in the Hebrew Scriptures. He understands and can see that Jesus is the promised Messiah. He is putting things together. He has been fit by God for this ministry unto the Gentiles. So God was at work in his life, long before he ever realized it. And it is interesting as time goes on and we find our place of ministry and service, as God begins to use us in the work of His kingdom, as we look back, we can see how God's hand was on each of the circumstances and situations that we faced as He was preparing us for that work that He had in mind for us to accomplish. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians (Ephesians 2:10), "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." God has already prepared or foreordained the ministry and the service of your life. He has been preparing you. Sometimes

preparation takes awhile. And many times it's just for maybe one particular event and you have accomplished your life's purpose.

You remember when Esther (Esther 4:10) called upon by Mordecai to go into her husband, the king, in order to countermand this decree under the guise of Haman. Mordecai said how do you know but God has brought you into the kingdom for such a time as this? This is what it's all about, Esther. This is why you were chosen to be the queen. This is all a part of the purpose of God. It's all come to this point now. For such a time as this. And it is interesting how that in just a few days, Esther accomplished her purpose in life, her ministry! I've been at it for almost fifty years and haven't accomplished it yet, but she was able to in just a few days to accomplish the purposes of God for her life. The Lord has brought you to the kingdom for such a time as this. God is preparing you for something great and something wonderful! And sometimes we wonder, well, God when are You going to do it? So the Lord said to Paul that even that waiting patiently is a part of God's preparation for such a time as this. The Lord said to Paul, I am going to make you a minister and a witness both of these things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.

¹⁷I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, It is interesting that the word, apostle, means to be sent or one who is sent forth. When Paul went to Damascus, he was an apostle of the Sanhedrin or the chief priests. He had been sent by the chief priests to imprison those that called upon the name of the Lord in Damascus. So he was an apostle of the chief priests. Before he came to Damascus, he became an apostle of Jesus Christ. The gentiles to whom I send thee. He was being sent to the Gentiles and thus an apostle, one who has been sent, until the Gentiles.

Now his ministry to the Gentiles was first of all *¹⁸to open their eyes,* Paul spoke about those of whom the God of this world has blinded their eyes that they cannot see the truth. How tragic when a person's life is bound by Satan, because Satan blinds people to the reality of their condition. Their lives are being destroyed by their sin but they are unaware of it. They're unconscious of the fact that they are going down hill fast. Satan has blinded their eyes to the truth of Jesus Christ. You know when you really look at the gospel, it is the most reasonable offer that man could ever have.

In fact God said (Isaiah 1:18), "Come let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." But in that context in Isaiah 1, it talked about how the people did not consider. They weren't thinking. God was calling them into reason. But the god of this world has blinded their eyes and thus they are incapable of reasoning because of Satan's work of blinding their eyes.

So our prayer for our unsaved loved ones, it to deliver them from the power of Satan who has blinded their eyes to the truth. That their eyes might be opened that they can actually consider the claims of the Gospel without this heavy prejudicial pressure that Satan has put upon their thinking and their mind. Blinded them! Paul wrote to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:24-26) and he said that we might take them from the captivity of the enemy who is holding them against their will.

So the second thing that the Lord told Paul was to (to open their eyes), *in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God,* Satan is holding them as captive. Paul you are to deliver them from that power of Satan that they might become servants of God.

And the result is *that they may receive forgiveness of sins* Man's greatest need. Forgiveness of sin. Without that we are lost. Our sins will either be forgiven by God or judged by God. If you are not forgiven by God, then you will be judged by God. God desires to forgive you your sins. God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. And thus God has provided the means whereby your sins can be forgiven through the redemption purchased by Jesus Christ in dying in your place. So Paul's message to the Gentiles, the effect of it was that they might receive the forgiveness of sins. And as David in Psalm thirty two, said, Oh how happy is the man whose transgression is forgiven. Oh what a blessing! The forgiveness of sins.

and an inheritance Beloved, now are we the sons of God! It doesn't yet appear what we are going to be but we know that when He appears, we are going to be like Him. (I John 3:2) We are children of God (Romans 8:16-17), and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. This glorious inheritance of the saints in light, that Paul refers to in Ephesians.

among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' As you believe in Jesus Christ, God sets you apart, as His. Paul said (I Corinthians 6:19-20), know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is His? You are not your own. You have been bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and spirit, which are His. The emphasis, you belong to God! He has sanctified you. He has set you apart from the world. Distinct and separate from the world. That your life might be lived for Him.

That which was sanctified in the Old Testament. That which was set apart for God's use. It wasn't to be used for anything else. Used for God's purposes. Used in the worship of God. And God has set you apart that you might worship Him. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me, He said. He wants your worship. He wants your love. He wants it exclusively. Loving the Lord thy God with all thy heart, strength and mind. And then, your neighbor as yourself.

¹⁹"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, (I had this vision on the road to Damascus. The call of God and the commission of Jesus Christ. To take to the heathen this glorious message of God's love and forgiveness of sins.)

But Paul said ²⁰*but declared first to those in Damascus* (When Paul came to Damascus, he began to preach Jesus Christ. They were all amazed. They said isn't this the one who has come down to persecute the church? How is it that he is preaching?) *and in Jerusalem*, (He wasn't long in Jerusalem. They were uncomfortable with him. They weren't really certain of his conversion.) *and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.* They should do the works that demonstrate repentance. They should change, but they manifest the change by their lives. A lot of times people profess that they have changed. Paul said let them bring forth the fruits of repentance. Let's see the evidences of repentance.

Many times in marriages, the fellow will be just a horrible tyrant, filled with anger, just a horrible tyrant, until she is fed up and says, I've had it. I don't have to live like this. I don't have to take this anymore. And she either orders him out or she moves out. And then he'll come. He'll say oh, would you please call my wife and tell her I've changed. Oh my! You know, would you intercede for me? Tell her that I've really changed. You call her up and say, he's changed. Oh yeah, I've heard that one before, you know. And what they want to see is some evidence of the change. Let's see some evidence. I know God can change a person's life. But Paul is asking for the evidence that shows that there is a change. And though you may say, I've changed. I'm different, but if you are still doing the same thing, there is no real evidence of repentance. And thus there is real reason to question the genuineness of the repentance, if there is no change. So Paul was preaching to the Gentiles to repent from their pagan practices. Turn to God and then do the works that demonstrate the repentance.

²¹*For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.* ²²*Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come* (I'm only preaching out of their Scriptures. I am only saying the things that Moses and the rest of the prophets said were going to come. That is, that God would send the Messiah, the Anointed One into the world. And that the Messiah would suffer. (Isaiah 53, Psalm 22.) That the Messiah would suffer. -- ²³*that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.*" He would be the first to rise from the dead! Now that is unto everlasting life, not to die again.

At this point, now you remember Festus is a Roman judge, now Agrippa understands a lot of what Paul is saying because of his background in the Scriptures. But Festus is a Roman judge. This stuff is all new to him. Visions, resurrection from the dead, this is all new stuff to Festus. So he interrupts Paul at this point.

²⁴*Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"* He probably saw Paul pouring over the manuscripts, over the Scriptures, studying them constantly. And he figured his mind flipped. Visions. Resurrection from the dead. Oh come on Paul. You are crazy! You've studied too hard. Your much learning has made you mad.

²⁵*But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.* Now Paul being interrupted knows that things are probably closing in on him, so he zeroes in on Agrippa. He now is going to put the pressure on.

Turning back to Agrippa, Paul said, ²⁶*For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner.* The death of Jesus was something that they all knew about. The report of His resurrection was broadly broadcast. So Paul is saying, concerning Agrippa, I know that he believes the Scriptures and I know that he knows about this. It wasn't done in a corner.

Then turning to Agrippa, he becomes aggressive in his witness, he said ²⁷*King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.*" (That's known as a presumptive close.) ²⁸*Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."* Now there have been more translations of that than there are Scriptures. I mean the Greek is the same but it has been translated in so many ways. With a little persuasion you would make me a Christian, is one of the translations. Or it will require more than this. Or almost you have persuaded me to be a Christian. It's impossible to know which is the correct translation. It is quite possible that Agrippa is on the verge of salvation. I am certain that that the Spirit of God is speaking through Paul in a very strong way to him. Jesus said, when you are brought before the kings, don't take any forethought of what you are going to say. In that hour the Holy Spirit will give to you the words that you should speak. And the Holy Spirit is speaking to Paul. Words of power and conviction. And I believe that Agrippa's heart is touched and he is close. Almost you have persuaded me to be a Christian.

It is tragic that many people have come close, but they haven't come in. There was that time when the Spirit of God was moving heavily in their hearts. When they were convicted of their sins. When they were drawn close to accepting Jesus Christ, but then Satan came and he plucked the Word of God out. And it was close but not close enough. Almost persuaded! But not quite! What a tragedy, when a person is brought close by the Holy Spirit but they refuse to take that step of entering in. That last step of accepting. I can see it. I can see it in the Scriptures. I can see that Jesus is the Messiah, the promised Messiah, the Son of God. I can see that He died and that He rose again. I can see that living for Jesus is a life that really counts! It makes sense! I know that I ought to change and give my life to the Lord. And they are just one step from entering in. That last step of just saying, Jesus, I receive You as the Lord of my life. I commit my life to You! That last step. Almost you persuade me. Close. Close. So near, yet so far. Because not to enter in, to walk away, to close the door often leads to personal tragedy and disaster. Dying without Christ and without hope. Almost you persuade me to be a Christian.

²⁹*And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, (All of the officials that were there.) might become both almost and altogether (That you would take that next step. Not just almost, but all together into the kingdom, you would be) such as I am, (A follower of Jesus. I wish you just like me, except I would not wish on you these bonds. So Paul was still in chains. He probably held up the chains. I wish you were, not almost, but all together just like me. But I wouldn't wish these on you, these bonds.) except for these chains."*

³⁰*When he had said these things, the king stood up, (He made his decision. Almost there, the king rose up, which indicated, end of session.) as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; ³¹and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains."* ³²*Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."* In other words, Festus, you've got a problem. I can't help you, man. You've got to send him, but I don't know what to charge him with. He hasn't done anything deserving of death or chains. And so had he not made the appeal, he might have been set free. Then you say, did Paul miss the Lord's calling when he made the appeal to Caesar? Well remember that Paul, before he ever started toward Jerusalem before where he was arrested. Before he ever started, he said I must see Jerusalem but then I must also see Rome. Paul felt the call of God to go to Rome. When Paul was in prison in Jerusalem, after that disastrous attempt to share the gospel with his compatriots, the Jews. The Lord came to him in his discouragement at night and said, Paul, be of good cheer. Even as you have borne witness of Me today in Jerusalem, so must you bear witness of Me in Rome. So the Lord confirmed that He was going to go to Rome and witness for the Lord. Little did Paul know that he was going to witness to the head of the Roman Empire. He would one day stand before Nero and have opportunity to give Nero his testimony of conversion. And seek to persuade Nero to become a Christian. Paul is going to go to Rome, one way or another. But God in His economy figured, let the Roman government pay for it. And so Paul

went to Rome by courtesy of the Roman government, where they sent him to Rome. But the interesting thing is that on the island of Maleta (Malta) there were many people who needed to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. So God sent a storm to divert Paul's path so he didn't go directly to Rome to the port of Puteoli and Rome, but he went by way of Maleta, where God gave him the opportunity to share Christ, leading many people to Jesus Christ. Oh it's unique the way God has His hand upon our lives. And what looks like many times, tragedies and all, God is using, getting us places where He wants us to be, opportune times. Opportunities to share His love and His truth.

So in our study next week, we'll go with Paul on the way to Rome and we'll see how God's hand continues to be upon him, guiding him and directing him. So read on to chapter twenty seven for our study next week.

Father, we thank You again for the riches of Your grace towards us in Christ. How we thank You for the Scriptures. Scriptures that lead us to a faith and a belief that Jesus is the Messiah, the promised Messiah of God. And that through our faith in Him, we've been set apart. Through our faith in Him, we've received the forgiveness of our sin. And we have been made heirs to the Kingdom of righteousness. Lord how blessed we are. And we thank You for those blessings. In Jesus' name. Amen.