

The Acts of the Apostles

[Wed. Dec. 10, 2014] Acts Series, Acts 16.1-15 - Craig A. Thurman

The Gentiles have come to faith in Christ, and churches originated as quickly as there were 2-3 baptized believers to gather together,

The Bogomils of Bulgaria and Bosnia, 'That during their greatest persecutions the ordinance was administered secretly, and perhaps at night, is very probably, but there is no evidence that it was ever omitted, much less that any other mode was substituted for it. That would have been impossible in an Oriental church. (c. A.D. 1240, present day Turkey)

from Caesarea all the way over to Antioch Pisidia. It was not long afterward that some brethren of the sect of the Pharisees which had believed came down from the Jerusalem church and taught that except they be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses they could not be saved. As a result of this heresy the Antioch church sent men of their company, apostle Paul, Barnabas, and some others to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles, elders, and brethren in Jerusalem. The consensus of the whole church (15.22, 23) was that the churches among the nations should abstain from four things: from pollutions of idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood.

A reason why only these four points were necessary issues to be imposed upon the Gentiles appears to be given in 15.21. The prevalence of the knowledge of the Law in all places of the then known habitable world. This knowledge made it unnecessary for the church to enter into the work of social reform. The Scriptures show (15.29) that if they accomplished this they *shall do well*.

What are those four things? Best I can tell is, they have to do with the use our bodies. Do not give the perception that we condone idolatrous practices (by eating meats sacrificed to idols); not defile through sexual promiscuity; and not to eat or drink that which has blood.

These four things predate the giving of the Law at Sinai.

- There is only One God, (Ge.1.1); Abel sacrificed to God (Ge.4.3, 4); Enoch walked with God (Ge.5.24); Noah walked with God (Ge. 6.9); not gods.

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- The marriage relationship is between one man and one woman for life. (Ge.2.24) And,
- Do not ingest blood. (Ge.9.4)

Our conclusion concerning the relationship of the Gentiles to the Law of Moses is clear. They are not subject to the Sabbath, sacrifices, not participants in a land grant, need no circumcision, not bound to tithing, observance of holy days or Sabbaths, and to any dietary law.

In the closing of chapter 15 we read that Paul and Barnabas could not walk together in this evangelistic work.

Am 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Their disagreement was sharp over whether or not John Mark should accompany them on their next missionary excursion. Paul chooses Silas to go with him to the work. The Biblical pattern is to go forth two by two. Silas was ready, able, willing, and called of God to go with Paul. Silas is also called Silvanus. (1Thes.1.1; 1Pe.5.12)

Chapter 16

1 ¶ Then came

Remember their purpose: confirm the churches:

15.36 ... Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they do.

...

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

(Via the land route this time ... working their way through Paul's very early evangelistic work when he was in Tarsus. (9.30)

Do we recall when Barnabas had gone to bring Paul to Antioch? (11.25) Do we suppose that Paul was doing nothing in light of the fact that the Lord had revealed to him that he

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was to go unto the gentiles? (9.15; 26.17) I think he was busy about his Father's business.

he (obviously with Silas) to Derbe and Lystra:

Derbe was the furthest city that Paul and Barnabas had come to as they traveled eastward on the first missionary journey, before beginning their return home. Lystra, was the place where Paul had been stoned, drug out of the city, and left for dead. (14.19; 2Co.11.24)

14.19; 16.36 presents the *mob mentality*; 19.40 government offers legitimate protections to all of its citizens against such actions.)

and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed;

πιστῆς; gen, sing, fem of πιστός; Or, *and faithful*; cf. vs. 15 *faithful*, πιστήν.

A little more information we have in the Word of God concerning Timothy's family and their coming to the faith of Jesus Christ. His grandmother was the first in their family to believe in Christ, then his mother.

2Ti.1.3 I thank God ...

5 (The second of two parallel purpose clauses ...) When I call to remembrance the unfeigned

unpretentious, ἀνυπόκριτος, ἄ negative particle + ὑπό of, under, beneath + κριτής to judge; KJV Ro.12.9 *without dissimulation*; 2Co.6.6 *unfeigned*; Ja.3.17 *without hypocrisy*.

***faith that is in thee**, which dwelt (root ἐνοικέω, indwelt) first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

but his father was a Greek:

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Here the contrast between a Jewess and Greek allows us to conclude that Timothy's father was an uncircumcised Gentile. (*vs. 3 ... for they all knew that he was a Greek.*)

At least both Timothy and his mother had received the gospel concerning Jesus Christ. They formed a part of the church where they were.

2 Which (who)

Not referring to the near antecedent *father*, but back to the subject *Timothy*.

was well reported

ἐμαρτυρεῖτο; 3rd p sing, imperf, pass of μαρτυρέω; cf. vs. 5 imperfect *established and increased*, 7 *assayed*, 13 *was wont*; 14 *heard*.

A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, by H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, Copyright 1955 Tommie P. Dana and Julius Mantey, p. 186, 187, 'The aorist tells the simple story. The imperfect draws the picture. It helps you to see the course of the act. It passes before the eye the coursing stream of history. (R. 883)

...

'Webster quotes from Donaldson the following definition of the imperfect: "The imperfect denotes an incomplete action, one that is in its course, and is not yet brought to its intended accomplishment. It implies that a certain thing was going on at a specified time, but excludes the assertion that the end of the action was attained" (*Syntax and Synon. Of the Gr. Test.*, p. 87).'

of ἀπὸ by ἐν the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

Timothy's profession of faith in Christ was essential to initiate fellowship with other, likeminded brethren, but the testimony of the brethren spake volumes about the reality of that profession. So it so for us.

1Jo 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

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Gill says, '... the testimony of the latter is preferable to that of the former.'

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with σὺν him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in ἐν those quarters:

τόποις, dat pl of τόπος; τόπος is translated with the English word *place*, but τόποις itself is only used twice in the N.T. and is in both instances translated *quarters*. (cf. Mk. 1.45)

for they (that is, the unbelieving Jews) knew all that his father was a Greek. (Which in this case means that they knew he was an uncircumcised Gentile.)

The mention of circumcision, following on the heels of the Jerusalem conference clarifies for us beyond any question that Timothy was not compelled to become so because of the Law of Moses. He did this voluntarily so that he could minister to unbelieving Jews that would be assembled in the many synagogues that they would visit as they traveled.

A man without compulsion *to do* in order to reach out to others has more influence than those who are otherwise. Though Silas was with Paul, Silas was circumcised because he was a Jew. Timothy fell under no such obligation and had an advantage in this service that neither Paul nor Silas had among their own countrymen. He can show the liberty and constraints of the love of Christ for others.

1Co.9.19 ¶ For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

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23 *And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be **partaker** thereof **with** you. συγκοινωνὸς*

4 *And as they went through the cities, they delivered (παρεδίδουν, gave by) them the decrees*

δόγματα; acc pl of the root δόγμα; these are always specific instructions; only used five times in the N.T. (cf. Lk.2.1 the decree of Caesar to tax the then known civilized world; Acts 16.4 the four 'specifics' of the Gentiles abstinence; Acts 17.7 Caesar's decrees against against insurrection; Eph.2.15 *ordinances*; Col. 2.14 *ordinances*: issues of the law, such as *meat, drink, holy day, new moon, and sabbaths*.)

*for **to** keep,*

φυλάσσειν; pres **infin** act of φυλάσσω; KJV *keep, observe, beware.*

that were ordained (the judgment, decision is settled and final)

κεκριμένα; acc, pl, neut, part, **perf**, pass of κρίνω; to judge, determine, decide. **cf. vs.15 have judged.**

A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, by H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, Copyright 1955 Tommie P. Dana and Julius Mantey, p. 200, 'The perfect is the tense of complete action. Its basal significance is the progress of an act or state to a point of culmination and the existence of its finished results. That is, it views action as a finished product.'

of ὑπὸ the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

What were those decrees established in Jerusalem but those specific judgments from the Word of God giving instruction **to the Gentile saints** about things needing to be abstained from in the world. Other than these prohibitions, we know nothing of what else these could have been.

5 *And so **were** the churches established* (Or, And so the churches were strengthening)

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ἐστερεοῦντο; 3rd p sing, imperf, **pass** of στερεόω; imperfects are used in vs. 2 *was well reported*; vs. 7 *assayed*; below *increased*; vs 13 *was wont*; 14 *heard*; Only other place where this is used is:

*Ac 3:7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones **received strength** (ἐστερεώθησαν 3rd per pl, aor 1, ind, pass: they were strengthened).*

The noun, στερεός, KJV strong, sure, stedfast. The churches weren't established to the fullest extent, but they were being established in the truth of the gospel. They, like us, were learning the things of God and becoming strengthened and stedfast in them.

in the faith,

The faith of the saints, in light of the *decrees* was being strengthened because they were learning to live grace through faith, not by compulsory law!

and increased

ἐπερίσσειον; 3rd p, pl, imperf of περισσεύω; KJV *exceed, abundant, enough*. Again we notice the imperfect tense. Their numbers had not reached their totality, but that they kept increasing ...

in number

ἀριθμῶ; root ἀριθμός; KJV always *number*.

daily.

Who was being established in the faith and increased number? The churches. How we need to comprehend this truth! These were not missions or chapels, but 100% churches.

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6 ¶ *Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region χώραν, country) of Galatia,*

This covers most of central Turkey. The sequence of these regions probably indicated that their route was dictated by the mountainous terrain. After leaving Antioch Pisidia, then they could proceed into Phrygia, then backtrack into parts of Galatia. They traveled through the very heart of Turkey.

and were forbidden

κωλυθέντες; nom, pl, masc, part, aor 1, pass of κωλύω; KJV *forbid* (Mt. 19.14), *not suffer* (He.7.23), *withstand* (Acts 11.17), *hinder* (Lk.11.52);

of ὑπὸ the Holy Ghost to preach (λαλήσαι, speak) the word in ἐν Asia,

Not referring to the continent of Asia, but Asia Minor, the capitol of which is Ephesus on the central western coast of Turkey on the Aegean Sea. Here we have the cities of Miletus, Colossae, Laodicia, Philadelphia, Smyrna and Thyatira. But for Ephesus and Miletus it is doubtful whether Paul ever visited any of these cities. (Col.2.1)

7 *After they were come to Mysia, they assayed*

ἐπειράζον; 3rd p pl, imperf act of πειράζω; They tried without accomplishment, without success.

Imperfect in verses 2 *was well reported*; 5 *established, increased*; 13 *was wont*; 14 *heard*.

to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered

εἶασε, 3rd p s, aor 1, ind of εἶάω; KJV *suffer* 9, *let ... alone* 1, *let* 1, *let alone* 1, *left* 1, *committed* 1; This particular verb is found in Mt.24.43; Acts 14.16; 16.7; 28.4.

them not.

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The Spirit of God would not leave them alone in their attempts to enter into Bithynia. He would not commit them to this work. How the Lord revealed to them that they were not to proceed into these northern coastal areas is not revealed in Scripture.

All of the questions that we might ask ourselves concerning why these brethren were *forbidden to preach* Christ in these particular places constitute a part of the mystery and infinite wisdom of God. John Gill wrote, 'it seems, that at that instant, there were no chosen ones to be called by grace, and there was work for the apostles and his companions to do elsewhere, namely, in Macedonia.

When we can't do anything else, keep doing what we have been until the time when the Lord might open another door.

8 And they passing by Mysia came down

κατέβησαν; 3rd p pl, aor 2, ind of καταβαίνω; κατα down + βαίνω **LXX** Deu.28.56 βαίνειν, to go; this verb is used 5 times in the N.T. (*Jn.6.16; Acts 8.38 went down; Acts 14.11 come down; Acts 14.25 went down; Acts 16.8 came down*)

to Troas.

Their course went from Cilicia, then into the heart of Turkey (Phrygia and Galatia), then northwest to Mysia and Troas.

These brethren have come to a *bottle-neck* situation. Two options are before them: either go home, or cross the sea ... What do they do? The only things that any of us can do; wait for an answer from the Lord.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man

ἀνὴρ τις; This is used two other times and is translated **a certain man**. (Lk.8.27; Acts 25.14)

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of Macedonia, and prayed (exhorted, called near, encouraged)

παρακαλῶν; Nine times παρακαλῶν, (nom, sing, masc, part, pres, act of παρακαλέω) is used in the N.T.; Mt. 8.5; Mk.1.40 *beseeching*; Lk.3.18 *exhortation*; Acts 16.9 *prayed*; Ro.12.8 *exhorteth*; 2Co.1.4; 2Co.7.6 *comforteth*; 1Pe.5.12 *exhorting*; Jude 3 *exhort*. παρακαλέω is a Greek compound word meaning *to call near*. **This would be to call near one to comfort or in order to be comforted.** Another form of the same word παρακαλέω is used in verse 15 *besought*.

him, saying, Come over

διαβὰς; nom sing, masc, part, aor 2 of διαβαίνω; δια through, by + βαίνω down.

Kind of reminds me of hearing Bob Barker on the game show *The Price is Right* saying, 'Come on down!' Leaving from Jerusalem everything is *down*. Down into the nations these men went to preach the gospel of their salvation.

into εἰς Macedonia, and help (Come by us, come by our way, to help!)

βοήθησον; 2nd p, sing, aor 1, imper, act of βοηθέω; KJV *help* (Acts 21.28), *succour*.

us.

Isa 43:20 The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.

10 *And after he had seen the vision, immediately εὐθέως **we** endeavoured*

ἐζητήσαμεν; 1st p pl, aor 1, ind, act of ζητέω; KJV *to seek, go; we sought*, based on Lk.20.19; 2Ti.1.17.

to go into εἰς Macedonia,

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This is the place where we should mark a change in the narrative of the history of Acts. Until now, the narrative has been in the third person singulars and plurals ... *he* and *they* or *him* and *them*. Now the narrative changes to the first person, plural *we*, *us*. The text reads that *we endeavored to go into Macedonia*. Luke has joined with them now in their travels. He will be inspired of the Lord to write with ink and pen all of his recollections; all of the testimonies of the apostles and witnesses that have to do with the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ unto the imprisonment of Paul in Rome.

Luke wrote the two largest books in the New Testament. The gospel that bears his name has 25,944 words, and Acts contains 24,250 words. Closest to him is Matthew with 23,684 words. (cf. *The Making of the Bible*, by Geddes MacGregor, Copyright 1959, p.429) These two books are larger than all of Paul's writings combined, including Hebrews, when we remove the post scripts; which The Gideons counted as part of the Word of God.

assuredly gathering

συμβιβάζοντες; nom, pl, masc, part, pres, act of συμβιβάζω; σύν together, with + βιβάζω, root βία KJV *violence*; συμβιβάζω is used in Acts 9.22 *proved*; 1Co.2.16 *instruct*; Eph.4.16 *compacted*; Col.2.2 *being knit together*, 19 *knit together*.

that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

There was no doubt about the direction that they should now take in preaching the gospel. We can't go north and we can't go south. Retreat doesn't appear to be an option. FORWARD, HO!

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, (via ship) we came with a straight course

εὐθυδρομήσαμεν; 1st p pl, aor 1, ind of εὐθυδρομέω; εὐθύς KJV *straight*, right + δρομός *course* 3.

to εἰς Samothracia,

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An island located midway along their seaward route.

and the next day to Neapolis;

12 And from thence to εἰς Philippi, which is the chief (πρώτη, first) city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony κολωνία: and we were in ἐν that city abiding

διατρίβοντες, nom, pl, masc, part, pres of διατρίβω; διά through, by + τρίβω to rub, wear, like a path; **settled in**; the root is translated *tarried, continued, abode, abiding, had been*. Aside from two times used in the gospel of John, it is only found in the book of Acts. (12.19; 14.3, 28; 15.35; **16.12**; 20.6; 25.6, 14)

certain days.

They weren't there so long that they lost track of time. It was a specific time.

13 And on the sabbath

σαββάτων (gen. pl) ἡμέρα (dat. sing.), Or, day of the Sabbaths

σαββάτων; gen pl of σάββατον; σαββάτων is used 12 times in the N.T.

*we went out of the city **by** a river **side** (παρά, beside), where prayer was wont*

ἐνομίζετο; 3rd p sing, imperf, pass of νομίζω; root νόμος, law, rule; νομίζω could be translated as *assume/assumed*. It is used seven times in the book of Acts: 7.25; 8.20; 14.19; 16.13, 27; 17.29; 21.29. It was a place where it was assumed, understood that some resorted to prayer here.

Imperfects: see v.2 *was well reported*; vs.5 *established, increased*; vs.7 *assayed*; 14 *heard*.

to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

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*Resorted thither, συναλθούσαις; dat, pl, fem, part, aor 2 of συνέρχομαι; συν with, together, fellow + ἔρχομαι I come; KJV come together, assembled (Mk.14.53); came with; resort; accompanied with (Acts 1.21); went with. ('Where **was thought** to be a place for prayer.' Gill)*

In Acts συνέρχομαι is used 16 times: 1.6, 21; 2.6; 5.16; 9.39; 10.23, 27, 45; 11.12; 15.38; 16.13; 19.32; 21.16, 22; 25.17; 28.17)

Interesting. It is a place where the women resorted to prayer. There is no mention of a synagogue. (Gill notes the same. 17.1 @ Thessalonica they go to the synagogue.) No mention of preaching to the Jews. But it is on the Sabbath day that prayer is made. We gather from this that they were Jews without a synagogue.

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped (Or, who revered)

*σεβομένη; nom, sing, fem, part, pres of σέβομαι; we find this word used eight times in Acts. Only twice outside of it, Mt.15.9; Mk.7.7; Acts 13.43 religious, 50 devout; 16.14 worshipped; 17.4 devout, 17 devout; 18.7 worshipped, 13 worship; 19.27 worshippeth. **Has to do with devoted, devotion.***

Remember that Cornelius was one that *worshipped* God εὐσεβής. (We could call him well-devoted to God.) In both of these instances these persons were devoted to the God that was acknowledged to be the God of the nation of Israel. But they certainly did not know Him by Jesus Christ as yet.

God, heard

ἤκουεν; 3rd p sing, imperf, act of ἀκούω I heard; synonymous with obeyed.

Imperfect vs 2 was well reported; 5 established, increased; 7 assayed; 13 was wont.

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Her hearing had not been accomplished to the fullest extent. There would be a continual *hearing* of the Word of God, necessary for a proper growth in grace.

us: whose heart the Lord opened,

διήνοιξε; 3rd p sing, aor 1, ind, act of διανοίγω; διά by, through + ἀνοίγω KJV always *open*, 77 times; **cf. 17.3** *opening*.

that she attended unto

προσέχειν; pres infin of προσέχω; to hold to, possess; προσέχειν is used five times in the N.T.: Mt.16.11, 12 *beware*; Acts 16.14 *attended unto*; 1Ti.1.4 *give heed to*; He. 2.1 *to give ... heed*.

the things which were spoken of Paul.

Paul, it is clear, was the usual spokesman.

15 *And when she **was** baptized,*

ἐβαπτίσθη; 3rd p, sing, aor 1, **pass** of βαπτίζω which is all but once translated with the English word *baptize*; ἐβαπτίσθη is once translated *washed* (Lk.11.38);

and her household,

οἶκος; Or simply *house*. Proper exegesis requires that those baptized that were of her house had come to faith in Christ and could make a personal profession of Him to others. Nowhere is there any notion that others are baptized because of the faith of another.

Not sprinkled, poured, bathed, or christened, but baptized for her faith in Christ. Lydia was of age to understand the message she heard in the gospel. She was of age and intelligence to manifest her own faith in Jesus Christ by her own words. And no less of a profession came of each soul that came to Christ in saving faith that day.

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Baptism; so simple, so necessary, so offensive, so misunderstood, so abused. Without this proper administration there cannot be a single church established. You may have a group of believers; but that makes no church. They might appoint a treasurer and a spokesman, buy real estate and possess every other form and practice of a true N.T. church and yet for lacking this is never a church that belongs to Jesus Christ. There is no short cut, no imitations to the constitution of a true church. After faith in Jesus Christ, proper baptism, and then a commitment to walk together with those who have ordered their lives in the same manner. The Holy Spirit honors only those with His presence who have been properly constituted. Having the best band, the sweetest choir, a great orator, and great crowds doesn't make a single church. It is faith in Christ, baptism and a covenanted relationship: that's a church.

she besought us,

besought, παρεκάλεσε; 3rd p sing, aor1, ind, act of παρακελέω; cf. to vs. 9 *prayed*.

saying, If ye have judged

κεκρίκατε; 2nd p pl, perf, ind, act of κρίνω to judge. **Cf. vs.4 ordained, determined.**

me to be faithful

πιστήν; acc sing fem of πιστός; This is the only place the accusative singular is used;

*Ac 16:1 ¶ Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed (πιστης, nom, sing, fem. And **faithful**); but his father was a Greek ...*

1Ti 5:16 If any man or woman that believeth (lit. believing πιστός [man] or believing πιστή [woman]) have widows, let them relieve

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them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed. (Or, faithful man, faithful woman)

to the Lord, come into εἰς my house οἶκον, and abide there μείνατε.

She is saying that, if you believe that I have truly become one of the Lord's people please make my house your temporary dwelling place.

μείνατε; 2nd p pl, aor 1, imper of μένω; KJV abide, continue, remain.

*Mt.10.12 And when ye come **into an house**, salute it.*

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Lk.10.3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

*5 And **into whatsoever house ye enter**, first say, Peace be to this house.*

6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

*7 And **in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give**: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. (And the remaining text continues as Matthew's does above.)*

The invitation stood for each and every brother that accompanied Paul. She was a very gracious woman. She entertained strangers from the get-go.

And she constrained us.