

Astonishing Things

Acts 13:12

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** On his 1st preaching trip Paul and Barnabas left from Antioch of Syria (Acts 13:3).

A. Acts 13 reports their activities on the island of Cyprus.

(1) They land on the east side of the island in the city of Salamis (v. 5).

(2) Then they travel the length of the island (east to west) to the capital city of Paphos (v. 6).

(3) There they encounter Sergius Paulus, the deputy of the country (i.e., Roman proconsul; governor), “who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God” (v. 7).

(4) However, Sergius Paulus was under the influence of a sorcerer named Elymas who sought “to turn away the deputy from the faith” (v. 8). Luke then tells us:

Acts 13:9-12: “Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him (Elymas; cvt) 10 and said, ‘O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? I I And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.’ And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.”

B. How would you have reacted? Luke tells us (v. 12): “Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being **astonished** at the teaching of the Lord.”

2, ****** In our lesson of the hour I want to focus on a word Luke uses in v. 12; the word “astonished.”

A. Vine defines “astonished” as: “ekplesso from ek, ‘out of,’ plesso, ‘to strike,’ lit., ‘to strike out,’ signifies ‘to be exceedingly struck in mind, to be astonished’...”

B. Thus, to be astonished is to be amazed or thrown into wonderment.

C. In our vernacular we would say something that causes you to be “exceedingly struck in mind”; is something that “blows your mind.”

3. **3** There are several things the Bible describes as **astonishing**; *astonishing* things in the Bible can be quite instructive.

II. DISCUSSION:

One astonishing thing the Bible mentions is...

1. **4** The Lord’s doctrine:

A. The New Testament reveals a number of astonishing things said and taught by the Lord.

(1) When Jesus ended His Sermon on the Mount, Matthew tells us: “...the people were **astonished** at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matt. 7:28-29).

(2) Do you remember when the Sadducees thought they had painted Jesus into a philosophical corner? Matt. 22:23-33

(a) Recall their story of the woman who had seven husbands (relate Levirate law).

(b) Remember, the Sadducees “say there is no resurrection” (v. 23).

(c) They thought their little story proved their false position.

- (d) But it didn't! **Matt. 22:29-32:** *"Jesus answered and said to them, 'You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. 31 But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.'"*
- (3) The multitude couldn't believe their ears. Jesus totally stumped the vaunted Sadducees!
- (a) Nobody dared contradict what these religious elites said.
 - (b) But Jesus did! *"And when the multitude heard this, they were **astonished** at his doctrine" (v. 33).*
- (4) Again, when Jesus taught about riches in Mark 10:17-22 (relate story of rich young ruler).
- (a) The rich young ruler wanted to know what to do to *"inherit eternal life"* (v. 17).
 - (b) He claimed to keep all the commandments.
 - (c) But Jesus said more was needed: *"One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."* (v. 21)
 - (d) We see the crowd's reaction in vv. 24 and 26:
 - v. 24:** *"...the disciples were **astonished** at his words...."*
 - v. 26:** *"And they were greatly **astonished**, saying among themselves, 'Who then can be saved?'"*
- (5) In Mark 11 Jesus cleansed the temple during the last week of His life.
- (a) Mark tells us: **Mk. 11:15-17:** *"Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. 16 And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. 17 Then He taught, saying to them, 'Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"*
 - (b) The reaction is recorded in **v. 18:** *"...all the people were **astonished** at His teaching."*
- (6) Matthew 13 records:
- Matt. 13:54-57:** *"When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were **astonished** and said, 'Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? 55 Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?' 57 **So they were offended at Him.**"*
- B. Jesus' teaching astonished people because it broke with popular opinion, it defied accepted social conventions, it contradicted the teachings of the "experts."
- (1) His teaching shocked people. It "blew their minds"!
 - (2) As a result, many were not only *"astonished"*; but also found His teaching offensive.
 - (3) Recall **Matthew 13:57:** *"they took offense"* (NIV) at His teaching.
- C. ** How will we react to Jesus' teaching? Accept it or take offense?
- (1) **MDR: Matt. 19:10:** *"His disciples said to Him, 'If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.'"*

- (2) Necessity of baptism: Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 2:10; Gal. 3:27
- (3) Care for the needy: 1 Jn. 3:17; Matt. 25:31-46
- (4) Take up our cross: Lk. 9:23-24

Another astonishing thing the Bible mentions was the...

2. 5 Raising Jairus' daughter:

- A. This account is recorded in all 3 synoptic gospels: Matt. 9:23-26; Mk. 5:35-42 and Lk. 8:49-56
- B. Let's start the account by noting a few verses in Mark's gospel:

Mk. 5:21-24: "Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. 22 And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet 23 and begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.' 24 So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him."

- (1) On the way Jesus is sidetracked by the woman with "issue of blood for twelve years" (Mk. 5:25-34).

- (2) Perhaps Jesus has delayed His coming to help Jairus too long?

Lk. 8:49: "While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, 'Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher.'"

- (3) But Jesus doesn't think so!

Lk. 8:50-55: "But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, 'Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.' 51 And when He came into the house, He suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. 52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but He said, 'Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.' 53 **And they laughed Him to scorn**, knowing that she was dead. 54 And He put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, 'Maid, arise.' 55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat." (KJV)

- (4) ** Now notice the two reactions:

Lk. 8:53: "And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead."

Lk. 8:56: "And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done." (KJV)

- C. ** Death is man's greatest enemy:

- (1) The Hebrew writer describes the human race as "those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. 2:15).

"It is possible to provide security against other ills, but as far as death is concerned, we men live in a city without walls." —Epicurus, ancient Greek philosopher (Epicureans)

- (2) We all know death is coming! Heb. 9:27

"Death is a friend of ours; and he that is not ready to entertain him is not at home." — Sir Francis Bacon

- D. In the raising of Jairus' daughter, Jesus demonstrated He has the power over death: **Heb. 2:14-16:** "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is,

the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.”

E. ** One day Jesus will totally destroy death:

Rev. 1:18: “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.”

1 Cor. 15:25-26: “For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”

Jn. 5:28-29: “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

Rev. 20:12-15: “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

F. ** How do you react to that? Remember how the crowd reacted to Jesus when He was about to raise Jairus’ daughter?

Lk. 8:53: “And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.”

G. Life gives us a choice:

- (1) We can laugh Jesus “to scorn” and deny His power over death (explain ways to scorn).
- (2) Or, even though astonished like the girl’s parents, we can accept Jesus’ power over death by believing and obeying Him (Jn. 10:10; Heb. 5:8-9).
- (3) Whether we believe it or not; we will live forever somewhere: Jn. 5:28-29

Matt. 25:41, 46: “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels... 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’”

Another astonishing thing the Bible mentions is the...

3. **6** The deaf hearing and the dumb speaking:

A. Do you remember the messianic prophecy:

Isa. 35:5-6a: “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing.”

(1) ** We find fulfillment of this prophecy, e.g., in Mark 7:

Mk. 7:31-36: “Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, ‘Ephphatha,’ that is, ‘Be opened.’ 35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it.”

- (2) And, how did the crowd respond? **Mk. 7:37:** “And they were **astonished** beyond measure, saying, ‘He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’”
- (3) ****** Such miracles were proof of Jesus’ messiahship:

Matt. 11:2-5: “And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples 3 and said to Him, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’ 4 Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 5 The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.’”

B. ****** We should still be impressed with Jesus’ ability to heal us!

- (1) Remember the man in John 5:1-15 who “had an infirmity thirty-eight years” (v. 5).
- (2) But before Jesus healed him, Jesus said to him: “Do you want to be made well?” (v. 3)
- (3) Jesus proved over and over again He could heal people; too many to fully catalog.

C. ****** Jesus can heal us too!

- ☛ Personal problems
- ☛ Relationship problems
- ☛ Financial problems
- ☛ Faith problems

- (1) Jesus tenderly offers healing to all of us: **Matt. 11:28-30:** “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”
- (2) ****** His ability is not the issue (Eph. 3:20); our faith is what is in question! “Do you want to be made well?” (Jn. 5:3)

Another astonishing thing the Bible mentions was a...

4. **7** Great draught of fish: no ordinary “fish story”! Lk. 5:1-11

A. I’m sure you remember the account recorded by Luke in chapter five (1-11).

- (1) ****** After working hard all night I imagine Peter was a bit annoyed when Jesus said: “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” (Lk. 5:4).
- (2) I can imagine his body language and a heavy sigh when he responds: “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” (v. 5). Kind of like: “Whatever!”
- (3) ****** Now watch what happens! **Lk. 5:6-7:** “And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.”
- (4) Now our key word: **Lk. 5:8-10a:** “When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’ 9 For he and all who were with him were **astonished** at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.”

B. ****** Application:

- (1) This is not just another “fish story.”
- (2) Jesus’ point was: **Lk. 5:10-11:** “And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.’ 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.”

- (3) We too are “fishers of men”: Mk. 16:15-16; 1 Cor. 3:5ff
 - (a) We may toil “all night” without any visible success.
 - (b) But despite our weariness let us still “let down the net”; not give up, not quit!
 - (c) ** Our duty is two-fold:
 - ☛ Readiness: **1 Pet. 3:15**: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;”
 - ☛ Sow the seed: **1 Cor. 3:6-9**: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers...”
- (4) Don't ever doubt your effectiveness as a “seed sower”: **Isa. 55:11**: “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

Another astonishing thing the Bible mentions is the...

5. **8** The resurrection of Jesus:

- A. The 24th chapter of Luke contains an account of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.
 - (1) ** vv. 1-12: Discovery of the empty tomb.
 - (a) It was “on the first day of the week, very early in the morning” (v. 1).
 - (b) Ladies first: “came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared” (v. 1).
 - (c) Angels remind them of Jesus' own words: “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.” (v. 7)
 - (d) Report back: “their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them” (v. 11).
 - (e) Peter: “Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.” (v. 12)
 - (2) ** vv. 13-32: Road to Emmaus
 - (a) Note it is still Sunday: **v. 13**: “two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus”
 - (b) Three days in the tomb: **v. 21**: “today is the third day since these things happened.”
 - (c) Note **vv. 22-24**: “Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, **astonished** us. 23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.”
- B. Application:
 - (1) What astonished these two traveling on the road to Emmaus? Jesus was resurrected!
 - (2) ** It should have not come as a shock; recall what the angels said: **vv. 6-7**: “Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’”
 - (3) ** We should never be “astonished” when God keeps His Word!

Psa. 33:9: “For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”

2 Pet. 1:19-21: “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Psa. 111:7-8: “...all his commandments are sure. 8 They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.” (KJV)

(4) ** So many applications:

- (a) Religious non-believers: Matt. 7:21-23 (e.g., deny Mk. 16:16; Eph. 5:19)
- (b) Christian non-believers: some brethren act as if somehow, somehow God’s word really doesn’t apply to them.
 - (i) Many involve themselves in worldliness, unscriptural marriages, unfaithful attendance, etc. and act as if God’s Word really doesn’t apply or will somehow be suspended in their specific case. NOT SO!
 - (ii) ** Disobedience equals unbelief!

Heb. 3:12-19: “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said:

‘Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.’

16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those **who did not obey**? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of **unbelief**.”

- C. Many will be astonished at judgment! **Matt. 7:22-23:** “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

Another astonishing thing the Bible mentions is the...

6. 9 The Holy Spirit falling on the Gentiles:

A. Do you remember when the first Gentiles obeyed the gospel? Acts 10 & 11

- (1) One of the miracles associated with the conversion of the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius was the Holy Spirit falling on them.

Acts 11:13-14: “And he 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, 14 who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’”

- (2) They needed to hear the gospel: Rom. 1:16-17
- (3) ** While hearing the gospel:

Acts 11:15-16: “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”

(4) ** Result:

Acts 10:45-46: “And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.”

B. ** Point:

- (1) The astonishment of those who came with Peter shows such was an unusual, exceptional thing and not a regular, expected occurrence!
- (2) The purpose was to convince the circumcision, the Jews, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.” (Acts 11:18; 15:7-11)
- (3) ** Reception of a miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit is not the purpose and result of the “one baptism” (Eph. 4:5) “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38).
- (4) It should not be astonishing that the “one baptism” “in the name of Jesus Christ” is “for the remission of sins” ; not so we can speak in tongues, etc.
- (5) The “one baptism” will wash your sins and enable you to receive the “gift of the Holy Spirit” (i.e., salvation; Acts 2:21); in its own way that is quite astonishing!

Another astonishing thing the Bible mentions is...

7. 10 Peter knocking at the door: Acts 12:1-17

A. Do you remember when the disciples held a “prayer meeting” in Acts 12?

- (1) Herod had beheaded the apostle James: vv. 1-2
- (2) Herod put Peter in prison: vv. 3-4
- (3) ** Disciples prayed for Peter: v. 5: “but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”
- (4) Peter miraculously released: vv. 6-10
- (5) Peter knocks on the door in vain: **Acts 12:12-15:** “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. 13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14 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. 15 But they said to her, ‘You are beside yourself!’ Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, ‘It is his angel.’”
- (6) ** Finally, they let Peter in: **Acts 12:16:** “Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.”

B. Point:

- (1) If you went to a service to pray for rain, would you take your umbrella?
- (2) ** This account shows the astonishing power of prayer!
Jas. 5:16: “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”
- (3) Does it astonish you that God answers prayer? It shouldn't!

Jas. 5:17-18: *“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”*

- (4) ** Maybe you are astonished that God answers prayer, because you don't pray as often and as earnestly as you should. For our prayers to be heard by God, we must:
- ☛ Pray in faith: **Jas. 1:5-8:** *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”*
 - ☛ Pray often: **1 Thess. 5:17:** *“pray without ceasing”*
 - ☛ Pray with thanksgiving: **Phil. 4:6:** *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;”*
 - ☛ Pray with diligence: **Col. 4:2:** *“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;”*
- (5) So, don't be astonished that God will answer your prayers!

Another astonishing thing the Bible mentions is...

8. II The Lord appearing unto Saul:

A. Acts chapter 9 records the conversion of Saul of Tarsus:

- (1) He is on a mission: **Acts 9:1-2:** *“Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”*
- (2) He encounters the Lord: **Acts 9:3-5:** *“As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ 5 And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”*
- (3) ** Saul's reaction: **Acts 9:6:** *“So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’”*

B. ** Point:

- (1) The Lord made it possible for the “chief of sinners” to be saved (1 Tim. 1:15; Acts 22:16).
- (2) Recall what Saul had done to Christians: **Acts 9:1-2:** *“...breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord ...so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”*
- (3) What was in store for these brethren Saul was after? “murder”!
- (4) ** If God is willing to save the “chief of sinners”; it shouldn't be astonishing He is willing to save you and me! **Rev. 22:17:** *“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”*

III. CONCLUSION: 12

1. The Bible is an astonishing book!

2. ** We have not really mentioned the most astonishing thing in the Bible.

Rom. 5:6-8: *“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

A. ** I find it tremendously astonishing the vast majority of people reject God’s love with little to no thought or consideration. In fact, most scoff at and/or deny it!

2 Cor. 2:15-16: *“For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?”; Matt. 7:13-14*

B. ** Equally astonishing is the fact that so many brethren seemingly take God’s love for granted and offer Him half-hearted devotion and service (Heb. 10:24-31).

Heb. 10:26-31: *“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The LORD will judge His people.’ 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*

3. Invitation

—Adapted from an article (*Astonishing Things of the Bible*) by John Isaac Edwards in the *Terre Haute Speaker*, Vol. 8, No. 28; April 28, 2019.