

Title: **REHEARSING WHAT GOD HAS DONE**

Text: Acts 14:21-27

Subject: *Meetings in Ireland and England*

Date: Sunday Evening — April 13, 2008

Tape # Z-48a

Readings: *Lindsay Campbell and Merle Hart*

Introduction:

In Acts 13 Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the church at Antioch to preach the gospel among the Gentiles. After preaching the gospel at Antioch, Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas came to Iconium and preached Christ there. They went on to preach the gospel in Lycaonia and Lystra. Then, they went to Derbe, back to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch, Pisidia again, preaching the gospel of Christ, confirming the brethren, and ordaining elders in every church. After that they passed through Pisidia and preached the Word in Pamphylia, Perga, and Attalia (vv. 27-28; Acts 13:1-3). Then they returned to Antioch in Syria to give a report of all that had taken place on their first missionary journey. Then, we read in Acts 14:27, — “*When they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.*”

Following the example of Paul and Barnabas, I want to share with you the things our God has done in the places in Ireland and England to which you sent your pastor.

THE REASON

But before giving the facts, let me remind you of the reason. This congregation is exemplary in the work of evangelism.

- Missionaries
- Establishing Gospel Churches
- Television Broadcasts
- The Grace Bulletin
- Our Books (13 Published — One at Press)
- Web Pages
- Audio Video Messages
- FreeGraceRadio.com

Almost every week, you send you pastor somewhere to preach the gospel. Many wonder why you do so. Others wonder why I strive to give myself

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relentlessly to this business of preaching the gospel. Why would a group of hard working men and women give so generously to proclaim the gospel everywhere God opens a door? We do so for the same reason John the Baptist came, “*to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe*” (John 1:7).

We devote ourselves to the blessed work of preaching the gospel for the salvation of God’s elect, that sinners might believe on and trust the Lord Jesus Christ, that sinners might have that great salvation that God freely gives to all who trust his darling Son.

MY REPORT

Now, in the time that remains, I will follow the example of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14 and rehearse that which the Lord has done in the places we visited in the United Kingdom. I had planned to give this report last Sunday night, but the Lord had other plans.

The Apostle Paul asked the saints at Colosse to pray for him, “*that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ*” (Colossians 4:3), just as I asked you to pray for me, as Shelby and I left for Ireland and England three weeks ago. And I am happy to report to you, as he did, “*a great door and effectual was opened to me*” (1 Corinthians 16:9).

Sunday — March 23rd

After our morning worship service here on March 23rd, Shelby and I left home at 1:00 PM, had a quick lunch and headed to the airport. Our plane left Lexington at 4:30 to Atlanta. At 7:30 we left Atlanta and headed across the water to England.

Monday — March 24th

After flying all night, we landed safely at Gatwick Airport in London about 7:30 AM Monday morning. The next 6 ½ hours were spent in the airport waiting for our plane to leave for Northern Ireland. Finally at 2:00 PM we boarded our plane and were on our way.

We arrived in Belfast at 3:30 PM. After a rather frustrating day of travel, it was delightful to see the familiar faces of **Nigel and Elizabeth Newell**, who

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warmly greeted us at the airport. Nigel and Elizabeth drove us from Belfast to Ballymoney, Northern Ireland to the home of **Russell and Sharon Smyth**, and their son, **Johnnie**. We met the Smyths and Newells when we were in Ireland last year and it was wonderful to fellowship with these dear friends again. Sharon had prepared a delicious meal for us and had everything ready for our arrival. Needless to say, we didn't object when the suggestion was made about 9:30 PM that perhaps we would like to get some sleep. We were off to bed and out like a light for the next few hours.

Tuesday — March 25th

After a relaxing morning, we went to meet our friends, **Stewart and Harriet Boyd**, who had requested to take us all out to lunch. The place they chose was a restaurant that served a marvelous buffet. If we had not known better, one may have thought we were back in the states eating down home southern cooking.

Last year when we first had the privilege of meeting Bro. Boyd, he was very weak and in extremely poor health. He still has a very serious heart condition, but it was a special blessing to see him looking and feeling so much stronger than he did last year. He was very sick and had to be hospitalized for several days in December, but was much improved by the time we arrived. We were thankful he was able to attend both the meetings in Ballymoney this time.

Bro. Russell Smyth, once again reserved a very nice room at the Town Hall in Ballymoney for the meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday evening. Several people drove great distances to attend the services. One gentlemen, Bro. George Davis, who called himself the wee Irishman, told us that he drove about 2 ½ to get there, but felt it was well worth the drive. Bro. Russell and the others involved did an outstanding job planning and organizing the meeting.

The Lord gave me liberty to preach from 1 Peter 1:2 — **Chosen, Sanctified, Redeemed and Blessed.**

Wednesday — March 26th

At Don's request, Sharon fixed us an outstanding Ulster fry breakfast on Wednesday morning consisting of sausage, bacon, eggs, mushrooms, grilled

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tomatoes, fried soda bread, and fried potato bread. After breakfast, Russell and Sharon took us for a drive to see some attractions around Northern Ireland. The weather was rainy and cold, so we were quite content to see the sights from inside the car most of the time.

Wednesday night I was able to bring a very important message from 2 Thessalonians 2 that I titled — **What can God's people do in a reprobate age?** The Word was well received with many people commenting how thankful they were to hear the true gospel preached with such boldness and clarity.

After the services in Ballymoney each night, we had a delightful time of fellowship at the home of Russell and Sharon.

Thursday — March 27th

Thursday morning, we left Ballymoney, along with Russell and Johnnie, to catch a ferry to go to England to the meeting at Teesdale. The 2 ½ hour ferry ride was most enjoyable. We went the remainder 4 ½ hours of our trip to Teesdale by car. It was a pleasant drive through Scotland and into England, with beautiful, wide open countryside stretching for miles and miles. There were very few houses and an abundance of sheep and little lambs everywhere.

Peter Meney met us in Eggleston and we followed him to our cottage, where we would spend the next four days of our trip. The cottage was several miles from town, out in the country, with horses and chickens in the field next door. We shared the 400 year old quaint little cottage with our friends, **Dr. George Ella** and **Ken and Sylvia Coty**. It was a special treat to get to spend time with Dr. Ella again and a joy to get to know Ken and Sylvia.

Friday — March 28th

Friday evening's service was at the *Eggleston Baptist Church* in Eggleston. The church building was built in 1872 and the congregation meets in the original building. The meeting was well attended. Several people came from great distances to attend the meeting Friday and stay for the **New Focus** conference on Saturday.

Pastor Peter Meney had requested that I preach on God's Salvation during the conference. So I brought three messages following that theme at Eggleston.

- **God's Salvation** (Ephesians 1:1-14)
- **The Day of Divine Visitation** (Isaiah 12:1-6)
- **Christ Our Kinsman Redeemer** (Ruth 1-4)

It was a great blessing to see many familiar faces of people we had met the year before. One couple who had traveled from place to place to be in the meetings last year was **Syd and Joan Buggins**. They were at Eggleston Friday night and stayed for the weekend. They returned home for one night and then traveled to the meeting at Sidmouth as well.

Saturday — March 29th

Saturday was an extremely busy day. We left the cottage at 11:00 AM and went into town, had lunch and went to the Mickleton Village Hall, where the New Focus Conference was scheduled to be held. The meeting got underway at 2:00 PM. Dr. George Ella was the first speaker. Dr. Ella brought a paper, entitled, "**Heroes of the North**". In his paper he gave a history of how in God's providence the gospel had first come to Britain.

At 3:15 Bro. Ken Coty brought a message on "**Salvation Future**," emphasizing the fact that for a believer the best is yet to come, a day when our vile bodies will be changed and we will have a glorious body like that of our Savior.

Dr. Ella spoke again at 4:45 PM. The main focus of his presentation at this time was on **John Wycliffe**, "**The Morning Star of the Reformation**". He explained how Wycliffe pioneered the English translation of the Bible, though he did not do all the work himself. The whole Bible translation was completed around 1332.

There was a question and answer time at 5:30 followed by an evening meal. At 7:00 we met for worship again. I preached on "**The Day of Divine Visitation**" from Isaiah 12:1-6.

We returned to the cottage around 11:00 PM. Everyone was ready to go to bed and call it a day.

Sunday — March 30th

The worship service Sunday morning was again held at Eggesburn Baptist Church, where Bro. Peter Meney is pastor. Once again the service was well attended and seemed to be blessed of God. After service we went back to the cottage for lunch. Bro. Russell Smyth and Johnnie had lunch with us before leaving to go back to Ballymoney. Russell and Sharon and Johnnie are making plans to come visit us this summer. We know you will be blessed to get to know them, as we have been.

Shelby and I were able to squeeze in a tiny Sunday afternoon nap. Bro. Coty had told us that when he was growing up his mother often made fried egg sandwiches. That sounded awful good to me. So, after we got up from our nap, I went next door and bought a dozen eggs. I scrambled eggs while Shelby toasted the buns. Those sandwiches disappeared in a hurry.

Monday — March 31st

Bro. Peter Meney graciously drove us to Darlington to the train station Monday morning to meet a train to take us to Exeter. The five hour train ride was a most enjoyable and comfortable one. **Peter had gotten us first class tickets** and we quickly realized that one could easily get spoiled to traveling in that manner. **Bro. Ian Potts** and his little boy, Joshua, met us at the train station in Exeter and drove us the rest of the way to his home in Honiton. It was delightful to see Ian and Rachel and their son 2 little boys again. **Rachel** had gone all out and prepared a scrumptious meal for us. After a brief visit with Rachel and Ian after supper, Ian drove us to where we would be staying for the next couple of days. He had arranged for us to stay about 30 minutes south of Honiton at the Sidholme Hotel in Sidmouth. Sidmouth is a lovely town situated on the beautiful East Devon coastline.

Tuesday - Wednesday — April 1st and 2nd

Ian rented a room at the Sidholme Hotel to host the meetings. The service began Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at 8:00 PM. Many, many people commented on what a blessing and encouragement the messages were to them. There was a good turnout for both services, with people coming from miles around to hear the gospel, some traveling for hours to get there. A number of people who were staying at the hotel on vacation and were not there because of the conference, attended the services.

Tuesday evening as Shelby was coming out of the service a couple named, Anne and Steve Jones, introduced themselves to her and told her they were there because they had been listened to Pastor Fortner's messages and when they saw the meeting advertised wanted to come and hear him in person. Another lady also stopped Shelby that evening and asked if the meeting was open to everyone. She said she and her husband would like to attend. Shelby told her certainly they would be most welcome. The next morning, Shelby saw this particular lady and her husband at breakfast. They introduced themselves as Steve and Pat Browne. Steve told Shelby they were there on vacation. They had seen the advertisement at the Hotel when they got there that Don Fortner was to be preaching. He said his brother in law sometime earlier had given them a DVD by Don Fortner and they had appreciated it very much.

There were several people who told us they were there because they had heard Don preach on Free Grace Radio. One dear elderly lady was there with her daughter. She told Shelby had been listening to Pastor Fortner for a long time on CD and had always pictured him as a short thin man. Now she said, "I will know what he looks like when I listen to him. I will know he is neither short nor thin." Another young man was there named, **Louis Gomez.** Louis was raised a staunch catholic. He had some trouble in his life and began seeking for something, but wasn't sure what. He began going to different churches, but knew there was still something missing. Finally, one day he found Free Grace Radio and began to listen to Pastor Henry Mahan and Don Fortner. Immediately, he knew this was what he had been looking for. God opened his heart to the gospel and I baptized him along with Bro. Ian Potts after the service Tuesday evening.

Thursday — April 3rd

After saying good-bye to Rachel and Ian Potts and Joshua, we boarded the train headed for London. The next three hours went by quickly and soon we arrived at the Waterloo train station in London, where we were greeted by Pastor John Graham and his wife, Anne. What a joy it was to once again see delightful, loving couple. After a cup of coffee, we left the train station and went by taxi to Westminster Baptist Church and unloaded our luggage. We had been so busy since arriving in England that we had had almost no time to shop. John and Anne graciously agreed to take us to some shops to let us buy some souvenirs for the grandchildren.

We had forgotten that London is definitely a different world. Once again we were thankful we did not live there with its 8 million population.

I preached Wednesday night at the *Westminster Baptist Church* in London. It was good to see **Bro. Allan Jellett**, his wife Christine, and some of their family at the service. It was also a delight to see **Evelyn Clark** her daughter **Janine** and her granddaughter, **Rebecca**. They all came from Welwyn and fought the terrible London rush hour traffic to get there. God gave me liberty to preach and those in attendance seemed to truly appreciate and profit from the Word.

Friday — April 4th

We were up at 5:30 AM to prepare to meet our plane and leave for HOME. We were able to get our bags checked and get through security without too much hassle. It felt good to get in my truck and head home. We got home about 8:00 PM. We set our bags down, glanced through the mail and it was off to bed. It was good to be home and sleep in our own bed again. As we went off to sleep we thought of all the events of the past two weeks. How thankful we are for the privilege of making such a trip, of preaching the gospel to so many hungry souls, for God's apparent blessings on the Word to the hearts of his children, for journeying mercies every step of the way, for God's goodness in keeping us and strengthening us for the daily demands, for giving us many new friends in Christ, and allowing us to see many old friends.

Thank you, our dear friends, for your prayers on our behalf. Thank You, our blessed God, for hearing and answering the prayers of your people.

Since Then

Now, let me bring you up to date since then. Needless to say, by the time we got home on Friday, we were whipped. So we went to bed early. Shelby and I both woke up early Saturday morning, before six. Immediately after breakfast, I went to the office, working until about 1:30 AM. Sunday morning.

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I had been experiencing considerable and increasing chest pain all day. By the time we tried to go to bed, the pain was unbearable. Shelby drove me to the hospital at about 2:00 AM last Sunday, April 6th.

That which I am now experiencing was planted in me by our heavenly Father 58 years ago in natural heredity. It is a birth defect. There are no other contributing factors to the condition. Other than the aorta being defective from birth, causing severe arrhythmia and frequent pauses, my heart is really in very good health.

I had a pace maker put in on Wednesday. I am scheduled for an aorta replacement on Monday the 21st. The surgery should take about 4-5 hours. I will be in intensive care for 24 hours, or more, and in the hospital another 4-5 days after coming out of intensive care. I will probably be unable to do much for the next five or six weeks. I hope to preach to you again Tuesday night and next Sunday morning. After that, Bro. Todd Nibert will fill the pulpit during our mid-week worship services on Tuesday evenings, and our own preachers will take care of the Sunday services, until I am able to do so.

If you wish to read about my particular condition it is called “aortic stenosis.” We will try to keep everyone posted as things progress. If you do not get email, you can call Bro. Lindsay Campbell or Bro. Larry Brown for updates.

Shelby and I are fine. This, too is the Lord’s doing; and he does all things well. We greatly appreciate your love for us and your prayers on our behalf. Truly, our God is good to us, performing all things for us, and we will worship and give thanks to him (Job 23:10, 14, 16; Psalm 71).

(Job 23:10) “But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

(Job 23:14) “For he performeth *the thing that is* appointed for me: and many such *things are* with him.”

(Job 23:16) “For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:”

(Psalms 71) “In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. (2) Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me. (3) Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou *art* my rock and my fortress. (4) Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. (5) For thou *art* my hope, O Lord GOD: *thou art* my trust from my youth. (6) By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother’s bowels: my praise *shall be* continually of thee. (7) I am as a wonder unto many; but thou *art* my strong refuge. (8) Let my mouth be filled *with* thy praise *and with* thy honour all the day. (9) Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. (10) For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, (11) Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for *there is* none to deliver *him*. (12) O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. (13) Let them be confounded *and* consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt. (14) But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more. (15) My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness *and* thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers *thereof*. (16) I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only. (17) O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. (18) Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed thy strength unto *this* generation, *and* thy power to every one *that* is to come. (19) Thy righteousness also, O God, *is* very high, who hast done great things: O God, who *is* like unto thee! (20) *Thou*, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. (21) Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. (22) I will also praise thee with the psaltery, *even* thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. (23) My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed. (24) My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.”

Amen