

## Acts Bible Study

### Objectives and guidelines

- The objective of this study is to give you a foundation of understanding and a desire to return to this book. Remember that this is an overview and not an exhaustive study.
- To help you grasp the message of the book as a whole.
- To teach you by example how to study a book of the Bible. This is primarily done by learning to ask good questions.
- The questions are to be used as a guideline for studying the selected passage. The purpose of the questions is to stimulate your thinking. Remember that simply answering the questions does not mean that you have finished the study. Rather, your study is complete when you feel that you have a good understanding of what the passage says and what it means for your life. This may involve asking and answering your own questions as well.
  
- You will notice 3 types of questions. What does it say (observation), what does it mean (interpretation), and how does this truth affect my life (application).
  - Observation
    - Setting – who what where when why
    - Terms
    - Structure – emphasized, repeated, related, alike, unlike, true
  - Interpretation – is the process of recreating God's original meaning when it was written down. The primary purpose of interpretation is to discover what the author meant, to recover the one meaning God intended to communicate through His inspired author.
    - what does It mean? Why we needs. Time and distance, language
    - What type of literature?
    - Context
    - Original meeting
    - Other verses – cross references
  - Application – how does it apply to my life? The Bible is meant to change our lives not simply increase our knowledge.
  
- As you work through the passage remember to pray and ask God to answer your questions. Ask God to show you, “Lord, what do you want me to see here, why is this true, how does this apply to my life?” Try to keep it from becoming just another assignment to complete.
  
- Be sure to write down your answers. Writing will help you to clarify your thinking and help you to remember what you have learned.
  
- The purpose of the group meeting is to share what you have discovered about the passage and how it applies to your life and circumstances. Please come prepared to do this.
  
- Memorizing a key verse from the passage will help you to remember what you have learned in that lesson

## Lesson 1 Acts Overview and Chapter 1:1-7

### Overview - What is Acts?

Acts is unique among the NT writings, in that its main purpose is to record a selective history of the early church following the resurrection of Christ. It is the second part of a two-volume work, with the Gospel of Luke being the first volume. Both books are dedicated to a person named Theophilus, and [Acts 1:1](#) explicitly refers back to Luke's Gospel. It seeks to explain how this new religion, Christianity is really old, a fulfillment of the promises made to the Patriarchs. It is built on the foundation of Judaism (with mostly Jews in the beginning) but distinctly different in that it focuses on faith in Jesus Christ (and increasingly more Gentiles come into the church) Luke is trying to explain how God orchestrated the expansion of the gospel from its Jewish roots to include people of all sorts of backgrounds. The Gospels and Acts (The Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible)

While God has given 4 accounts of the life of Jesus, we only have one book of the early years of the church. It is called the Acts of the Apostles but in fact it tells us only selected things about a few of the apostles. If Acts is not a complete history of the Church's first 3 decades, then what is it?

### Date

Most scholars date the book as written between 62-70 AD. Some scholars date Acts c. a.d. 70. This assumes that Acts was written *after* the Gospel of Luke ([Acts 1:1](#)) and that Luke used the Gospel of Mark as one of his sources ([Luke 1:1-2](#)). It seems most likely, then, that the abrupt ending is an indication that Luke wrote Acts c. a.d. 62, before these events occurred. The last event Luke discusses is Paul's imprisonment in Rome. This took place in the early 60s, prior to the destruction. The Gospels and Acts (The Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible)

### Authorship

1. Read Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-2. What can you learn about this book and who wrote it? If the gospel of Luke is about "all that Jesus began to do and to teach", what is Acts probably about?
  - What Jesus continued to do after His resurrection, through His apostles who are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Both the Gospel of Luke and Acts are anonymous, but the earliest discussions attribute them to Luke. The name "Luke" appears only three times in the NT: [Colossians 4:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:11](#); [Philemon 24](#). All three references are in epistles written by Paul from prison, and all three mention Luke's presence with Paul.

The earliest discussion of the authorship of Luke and Acts is from Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons in Gaul, writing in the late second century. He attributes the books to Luke, the coworker of Paul, and notes that the occurrence of the first-person narrative ("we") throughout the later chapters of Acts (starting at [16:10](#)) indicates that the author of Acts was a companion of Paul and present with him on these occasions. These "we" passages in Acts are the key to the authorship of both Acts and the Gospel of Luke.

2. What do these verses have in common, and what progression do you see? Acts 1:8, 2:41, 4:4, 5:14, 6:7, 9:31, 12:24, 16:5, 19:20 and 28:31. What does this pattern tell you about Acts?

Note: Acts does not record all that Jesus did through the apostles. Luke focuses on one line of geographical expansion: from Jerusalem to Rome. Luke is not concerned with the apostle's biographies. He begins with the apostles in Jerusalem, then ignores them to focus on Peter and two 'newcomers'. Luke does not focus on the organization, structure, lifestyle or worship practices of the early church. While these are mentioned, they are not the main theme. So what is the main theme? Maybe you will be able to answer this by the end of this study!

### Main Themes

In Acts, believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ among both Jews and Gentiles, and in doing this they establish the church. In addition to this, Acts explains how Christianity, although it is new, is in reality the one true religion, rooted in God's promises from the beginning of time. In the ancient world it was important that a religion be shown to have stood the test of time. Thus Luke presents the church as the fulfillment and extension of God's promises. Acts is the link between the Gospels and the letters of Paul. This is important because by this time Paul's letters and the four Gospels were likewise well established as authorities. The Gospels and Acts (The Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible)

3. One main character dominates the whole of Acts. Who is it and what are some of his effects? See 1:8, 2:4, 4:8,31, 8:39, 9:31, 13:4, 15:28, 16:6-10, 20:22-24, 21:10,11.
4. From your observations so far, what seem to be the central themes, messages or purposes of Acts?
5. From what you know about Acts at this point, what title would you give the book and why? Would you pick any of these? Which one and why?
  - Acts of the Apostles
  - Expansion of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome
  - The reluctance of the Apostles to obey the great commission.
  - The first 30 years of the church
  - Acts of the Holy Spirit
  - The work of Jesus after His resurrection

### Distinctive Features

- Only book that deals with the apostles after Jesus' resurrection. Peter and Paul.
  - Frequent summaries
  - The most distinctive feature in Acts is the speeches or sermons, constituting nearly a third of the total text of Acts. Ten of these are major: three by Peter ([2:14-36](#); [3:11-26](#); [10:34-43](#)), one by Stephen ([7:1-53](#)), and six by Paul.
  - Another distinctive feature of Acts is its *journey narratives*. Often these are only lists of stopping places or ports that are passed by (e.g., [16:6-8](#); [20:14-15](#); [21:2-3](#)).
6. What do you think was the purpose of the 40 days Jesus spent with His disciples after the resurrection? 1:2-5
  7. Why is the fact of Jesus' physical resurrection so important at this time? Is it just as important today? Why?
  8. What did the apostles expect would happen with the arrival of the Holy Spirit? 1:4-6
  9. What is your current understanding of the kingdom of God? What is it, where is it, who, when ...?
  10. What does Jesus say we need to know and not know about His return? 1:7 (also see Luke [21:8-9, 34-36](#) and Acts 1:11)

Familiarize yourself with the time line and map before you continue.

How many years does the book of Acts cover?

Where in Acts do the following events take place. Give as many references as you can find.

## Time line of Acts

	A.D.	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
Death, resurrection of Christ (A.D. 33 [or 30])†		█										
Pentecost (30/33)		█										
Stephen stoned (31/33)		█										
Paul converted (33/34*)		●										
Paul meets with Peter in Jerusalem (36/37*)			█									
Paul ministers in Syria/Cilicia (37–45)			█	█	█							
Peter witnesses to Cornelius (38*)				●								
James, brother of John, martyred (41–44)				█	█							
Peter rescued from prison, leaves Jerusalem (44)				●								
Paul's second Jerusalem visit (famine relief) (44–47*)				█	█							
Paul's first missionary journey (46–47)					█							
Peter and Paul at Jerusalem council (48–49*)					█							
Paul's second missionary journey (48/49–51*)					█	█						
Claudius expels Jews from Rome (49)						●						
Paul's third missionary journey (52–57*)						█	█					
Paul ministers in Ephesus (52–55)						█	█					
Claudius dies; Jews allowed back to Rome (54)							●					
Nero's reign (54–68)							█	█	█			
Paul arrested in Jerusalem (57*)							●					
Paul imprisoned in Caesarea (57–59)							█	█				
James, brother of the Lord, martyred (62)								●				
Paul under house arrest in Rome (62*)								█				
Luke writes Gospel of Luke and Acts (62*)								●				
Paul released, resumes ministry, rearrested (62–64)								█	█			
Paul and Peter martyred in Rome (64–67*)									█	█		

\* denotes approximate date; / signifies either/or; † see *The Date of Jesus' Crucifixion*, pp. 1809–1810

# Map of the Roman Empire



## **Lesson 2 The Coming of the Spirit Acts 1:8 - 2:13**

1. What does Jesus say will be the results of the Holy Spirit's coming? 1:8
  - a. What evidences are commonly used today as proof of the Holy Spirit's presence? Is there a problem or discrepancy with this in your opinion?
  - b. Who is the Holy Spirit? John 14:15-17, 25-26, 16:5-16
2. Does 1:8 apply to you? If not, why not? Have you received the Holy Spirit? If so, how should this shape how you live your life?
  - a. How do you know if you have received the Holy Spirit or not? Who has the Holy Spirit?
3. 120 disciples are given the task of being witnesses to 4 million Jews in Palestine (1 in 30,000 were Christians) and told to evangelize (tell people about Jesus) the whole world. How do you think you would feel?
  - a. What promise does Jesus give them? How is it similar to the one in Mt 28:20? How would this encourage them? How does it affect or encourage you?
  - b. What role has Jesus' Great commission played in the lives of the apostles to this point? Had they forgotten about it or were they just powerless to fulfill it?
4. In verse 11 what do the two angels tell the men regarding Jesus? Has this happened yet?

**Note: Application in Acts.** Because Acts is a narrative (a true story) it teaches us mainly by example, not directly as the Gospels and Epistles do. Because this is a unique period in history, not everything in Acts sets an example that we should imitate. Acts records what did happen, not necessarily what should have happened or what always should happen. To apply Acts to our lives sensibly, we need to distinguish when Luke is describing an example we should follow; when he is describing an example we may follow; and when he is giving details to portray the overall message rather than exact models for us. One clue to this distinction is that primary patterns recur whereas specific details vary. As you study watch for examples of this. Keep this question in mind: When is a practice in Acts a norm we should follow, when is it an option we should consider, and when is it unique to the time?

Note: Who are the women mentioned in Verse :14? the **women** in the upper room likely included those who ministered to Jesus' followers ([Luke 8:2-3](#)), accompanied them from Galilee ([Luke 23:55](#)), and witnessed the crucifixion and empty tomb ([Luke 23:49, 55-56; 24:2-11](#)). **Brothers** – Mark 6:3

5. What does Peter mean in 1:16 that the Scripture had to be fulfilled?
  - a. What is his understanding of where the Scriptures came from?
6. How did Peter describe the chief function of an apostle? 1:22 What are the qualifications of such a person? 1:21-22
7. How did they decide who to choose to replace Judas? Should we use this same method today?

Note: **apostle** Literally “one who is sent” - a messenger, ambassador. “A person acting with full authority for another” in a business or legal transaction. The early church eventually recognized other believers as apostles in some senses: Paul 14:14, Barnabas, James the brother of Jesus Gal 1:19, and perhaps Andronicus and Junias Rom 16:7.

Note: **Pentecost** - the fiftieth day after the Sabbath of Passover week. Same as Feast of Weeks or Harvest or Firstfruits. In Jesus' time, Pentecost “was associated with the renewal of the covenant made with Noah and then with Moses...” Forty days after the Resurrection, Jesus left His disciples with a mission and a promise. For 10 more days the believers prayed together and prepared. Then came the Jewish feast of Pentecost.

Note: **wind, fire** - are common biblical symbols for the presence of God 's Spirit. (2 Sam 22:16, Ez 37:9,14, Jn 3:8...Ex 3:2, 19:18, Lk 3:16) The Greek word pneuma and the Hebrew ruach mean both “wind” and “spirit.”

8. Acts 2:1-13 How did God sovereignly arrange the details surrounding the arrival of the Holy Spirit? What happened to prove the Spirit had finally come? Make some observations regarding the scene. Who, what, when, where, why?
  - a. What significance does this have in light of Acts 1:8?
9. Why was the crowd that gathered amazed? 2:7,12 How did the people in the crowd explain what they were seeing and hearing? (2 answers)

Note: **to speak in other tongues.** The word translated “tongues” (Gk. *glōssa*, plural) can also be translated “languages,” and that is the sense that it has in this verse.



10. Can you think of an account in the Bible from the Old Testament where by God's power almost the opposite thing happens? Describe that event. (if you don't know read Genesis 11:1-9) Do you think these two events are similar for a reason? What is it?

11. How do you know if you have been filled with the Spirit? Ephesians 1:13,14

b. What are some evidences of being Spirit filled? Acts 1:8, Galatians 5:22,23

12. Review the questions and answers in this lesson. Is there one specific truth that you can take to heart, a question you need to think more about, something to pray about or some action you would like to make during the coming week?

## Lesson 2 Peter Shares the Good News

### Acts 2:14 - 47

1. Summarize Peter's speech. One way to do that is to summarize the main parts by giving them a title. Outline Peter's speech by giving titles to each section.
  - :14-21
  - :22-24:25-32
  - :33-35
  - :36
  - :37-40
2. Peter says that the babble of languages is a sign of something greater than drunkenness. What does the sign demonstrate?
3. What was the crucial event of Jesus' career and what did it prove? 2:24,36 (pay special attention to the "therefore" in :36)

Note: **Christ** means Messiah promised by the Scriptures. **Lord...Lord** Acts 2:34 Hebrew uses 2 different words. The first Lord is YHWH, the name of God too holy to be pronounced by the Jews, the second Lord is Adoni which means "lord" or "master".

Note: **Old Testament Quotations** in Acts - why are they different from what is in my Bible? There are a couple of reasons; NT writers and speakers often give a "general sense" of a passage rather than quoting it word for word, they often quote from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT which was used by many Jews in Jesus' day, and the NT writers sometimes enlarged, abbreviated, adapted, or combined OT passages to make their point. The Holy Spirit has inspired these adaptations just as He has inspired the rest of the NT.

4. Why didn't Peter have to prove that Jesus had done miracles? 2:22 How can this fact help us to convince people today that Jesus did miracles?
5. Why does Peter mention God's plan and foreknowledge in 2:23? What does this mean? Why is it important for us to remember?

Note: **Repent** - "The word indicates a change of direction in a person's life rather than simply a mental change of attitude or a feeling of remorse." Since man is incapable of this alone, it is called a gift from God in Acts 5:31, 11:18. Repentance "is an essential part of conversion."

6. What does Peter say one must do in order to be saved? 2:38 What does God promise to do as a result?
  - a. According to this verse what is primary problem between God and man? How has this “problem” been removed? What is the penalty for our sins? Rom 6:23
  
7. Who is the promise of the Holy Spirit for? Verse 39 Which category are you?
  - a. What do you think it means that “God calls to himself”? Does it sound like becoming a Christian is God’s choice, a person’s choice or both?
  
8. Peter used the Scriptures which the Jews already accepted to support his claims. Would this approach work with your friends? Why? If not, what beliefs that you already hold in common could you use to draw them toward examining the Scriptures?
  
9. Summarize what Peter asks the Jews to believe, do and the reasons why.
  - truths to believe (2:22-24, 31, 36,39)
  - actions to do (2:21, 38)
  - reasons why (2:20-21, 38, 40)
  
10. Peter’s speech in 2:14-40 is an explanation of what it means to be a Christian? What does he say a person needs to believe and do in order to become a Christian?
  
11. What is baptism? What does it mean? What does it symbolize? Is it necessary for salvation?

#### 2:42-47 – The First Church

12. What did the new believers in Jesus do after they repented? What did they devote themselves to?
  - a. What does the word devote mean?
  
13. How can we devote ourselves to “the apostles’ teaching” today?
  - a. Why is it important that we do this together?
14. What other details of the early life of the church do you observe in 2:42-47? What other things were they “devoted” to?
  - How is this description like or unlike what you see in church today?

15. What were the results of this devotion that the early believer's had together? :43, 46-47

### **Acts 3**

1. Read Acts 3. In what ways is this chapter similar to what happens in Acts 2?
2. What purposes did the physical healing serve? Why do you think they didn't just give him money or tell him to believe in Jesus?
  - a. Was there any historical doubt that a miracle had occurred? 4:16
3. Even if you haven't performed any miracles like this, what other evidence can you show for the validity of your message and faith?
4. How does Peter describe God to these people? Who are the people he is talking to? 3:12
5. Where does Peter claim that the power to perform this miracle came from? Where did it clearly not come from? 3:12-16
  - a. Why does Peter emphasize this point, why is it important?

**Note:** At first glance, it looks as though this healing took place on the basis of the lame man's faith. But this was not the case. The lame man hadn't known anything about Jesus. In the Greek text, the definite article appears before the word "faith." This is not speaking of the lame man's faith. It is speaking about THE FAITH. The reference to "the name" of Jesus is a reference to His authority. This miracle took place via the authority and power of Jesus.

6. How did Peter describe Jesus? 3:13-15, 22 Make sure you know the meaning of the words used to describe Jesus. Which of these descriptions is most meaningful to you right now and why?
7. Who is the murderer Peter mentions that was released in place of Jesus? See Luke 23:13-25. Why is this so important that Peter mentions it?
8. What does Peter then tell the people that they need to do? 3:17-19
9. What does Peter say will be the result of a person repenting and turning to God? 3:19-21, 26
10. Who is the "Christ"? What does the word Christ mean? Where is the Christ now? Did Moses speak about the Messiah? 3:20-23

**Note:** Prophesied by Moses. Peter quoted [Deut. 18:15](#) to establish that Jesus was the **prophet like me** (i.e., like Moses, a comparison that points to a leader prophet) that God had promised to send. In [Acts 3:23](#) Peter quotes [Deut. 18:19](#) to point out the danger of rejecting the coming prophet (i.e., Jesus).

11. What does Peter say about the present time they are living in? 3:24-26

- a. What is the connection between Jesus and what God promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3?

12. Application: What truths seem most significant to you from these chapters? What implications does it have for your life? How does it make you want to change or respond?

### **Lesson 3      Acts 4:1-6:7**

#### **Acts 4:1-31**

1. Why did the authorities arrest Peter and John? What upset them so much? 4:1-3
2. How does Peter answer their question, “By what power or what name did you do this?” Summarize the main points of his response. 4:8-12
  - a. What is the meaning of Peter’s last statement?
  - b. Why does He say that salvation is found only in Jesus?
3. What impressed the authorities about Peter and John? 4:13 What observation did they make about them?
4. What do the authorities decide to do about them? 4:14-22
5. How do Peter and John respond to their demand? 4:19-20
  - a. What principles for Christian behavior before authorities do they exemplify?
  - b. When is it OK for Christians to disobey human authorities? Have you ever faced any modern day equivalents to this? 5:29
6. How do the believers respond to the threats against them? 4:23-31
  - a. What do they confess about God in their prayer (write down as many observations as you can)?
  - b. What do they ask God to do? What don’t they ask God to do (why don’t they pray for protection)?
  - c. What happens after they pray?

**Community** 4:32-5:11 and 6:1-7 Between the landmark events in the growth of the Jerusalem church, Luke inserts bits of information concerning the inner life of the church.

#### **4:32-37**

1. These early believers expressed their devotion to God by taking responsibility for each other’s needs. How did they do this? Why did they do this? To what extent do you believe this is a model we should follow today in the church?
2. What was it that the apostles proclaimed was true? How do you think this generosity among the believers helped? 4:33

Note: The example of Barnabas (son of encouragement)

5:1-11

3. Exactly what was Ananias's sin?
4. What do you think might have motivated him to do this?
5. How is the Holy Spirit related to God in this passage?
6. What do you think God was trying to teach the early church through this tragedy?  
What do you think might have happened if God had not judged this sin?
7. What should they have done when Peter questioned them about the price?

Acts 6:1-7

8. What is the problem in this section within the church?
9. How do the apostles solve the problem?
10. What is the summary statement in 6:7? Anything surprising here?
11. In 6:7 what words or phrases are used to describe the people who become believers in Jesus? (2 of them). What do these titles mean or imply about a real Christian?

Read 5:11-16

12. What was the result of this event?
13. If you were a Jew living in Jerusalem at this time and had some friends who had become Christians, how do you think hearing this news would make you feel?
14. What is the "tension" regarding the followers of Jesus that is described in 5:13,14? Is there anything like this that is still happening today? Why or why not?

Apostles persecuted 5:17-42

15. Why were the apostles again arrested?

16. What does the angel tell them they must do?
  - a. How is the message they are to teach summarized by the angel?
  - b. How does this explain what it means to be a follower of Jesus?
17. The next day where are the apostles that had been arrested found? What is comical about this scene?
18. Why don't the soldiers arrest them by force?
19. How does Peter defend his actions? What answer does he give for his disobedience?
  - a. Who are the two witnesses Peter mentions in :32 and how do they prove the reality of Jesus' resurrection?
20. When is civil disobedience to governing authority OK?
21. Why didn't the Sanhedrin put them to death like they wanted to? :33
22. What did they do to the apostles instead of killing them?
23. How did the apostles respond to this treatment?
24. What was the primary message that the apostles taught? :42 What does this mean?
25. Review your study. What stands out to you? What do you think God may be trying to teach you?



## **Lesson 4 First martyr (6:8-8:3)**

1. What were the accusations brought against Stephen? Were they true? 6:11,13,14
2. Stephen answered the charges and gave his testimony in 7:2-53. What patterns in Jewish history did Stephen trace through Joseph, Moses, and Jesus? What was similar about these men and their experiences with the Jewish people? (see 7:9-10, 25-29, 35-39, 51-52)
  - a. Joseph 7:9-16 –
  - b. Moses 7:17-39 –
  - c. Jesus 7:51-52 -
3. What did Stephen imply was wrong with the Jews' attitude toward the Temple 7:48-50?
  - a. What was the purpose of the tabernacle (tent of meeting) :44-46 and the Temple that replaced it?
4. The Jews thought their Temple in Jerusalem was the holiest place on earth. How did Stephen's account of Israel's history subtly explode that myth? 7:2,9,30-34,36,38
  - a. Can you think of anything that we might idolize today the way the Jews idolized their interpretation of the Law and the Temple?
5. Stephen not only answered the charges against him, he responded with charges of his own. What were they? 7:51-53
6. Stephen's words in 7:55-56 moved his audience to riot and stone him for blasphemy. Why?
7. Why do you think God allowed Stephen to die when the charges brought against him in the first place were false?
  - a. How did the ensuing persecution of the Hellenistic Jewish Christians in Jerusalem serve God's purposes for the Church? 1:8, 8:1,4 (Also see 7:58,60; 8:1,3)
  - b. Sins of the Jews to avoid? (Any ways in which we take pride in God's Word but disobey it 7:53? Do we ever try to box God into our traditions?)
8. What lessons does 6:8-8:3 offer?

## Lesson 5

## The Gospel spreads out

## Acts 8:4-40

1. Who is Philip? 8:5, 6:5 Was he an apostle? Why is this important?
2. In 8:4-25 who is evangelized, convinced about Jesus' identity and baptized? Who are these people? Where did they come from? Study the notes below.

**Note: Samaritans:** the name given to the new and mixed inhabitants whom Esarhaddon (B.C. 677), the king of Assyria, brought from Babylon and other places and settled in the cities of Samaria, instead of the original inhabitants whom Sargon (B.C. 721) had removed into captivity ( [2 Kings 17:24](#) ; Compare [Ezra 4:2](#) [Ezra 4:9](#) [Ezra 4:10](#) ). These strangers (Compare [Luke 17:18](#) ) amalgamated with the Jews still remaining in the land, and gradually abandoned their old idolatry and adopted partly the Jewish religion.

After the return from the Captivity, the Jews in Jerusalem refused to allow them to take part with them in rebuilding the temple, and hence sprang up an open enmity between them. They erected a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, which was, however, destroyed by a Jewish king (B.C. 130). They then built another at Shechem. The bitter enmity between the Jews and Samaritans continued in the time of our Lord: the Jews had "no dealings with the Samaritans" ( [John 4:9](#) ; Compare [Luke 9:52](#) [Luke 9:53](#) ). Our Lord was in contempt called "a Samaritan" ( [John 8:48](#) ). Many of the Samaritans early embraced the gospel ( [John 4:5-42](#) ; [Acts 8:25](#) ; [9:31](#) ; [15:3](#) ).

3. What do the Jews think about these people? (see John 4:9, 22-26)
4. Look at 8:4. Where do you think "those who were scattered" got the idea to teach the Word of God wherever they went?
5. How is this group's conversion important to the advancement of the gospel? Acts 1:8
6. What convinces this group to become believers? 8:6-8,12
  - a. How can we convince people to believe today? What do we have to validate our message?
7. Why do Peter and John go to Samaria? 8:14-17
  - a. What do they do there?
  - b. Do you think this is a normative pattern for how people receive the Holy Spirit today? Why or why not?
  - c. Why do you think it was important for God to use the apostles to demonstrate officially that Samaritans were true participants in the Church? Why wasn't Philip's confirmation that they believed in Jesus enough?

8. Why do you think Luke recorded the episode with Simon? What does it add to the story of Acts?

a. Do you think that some people believe in Jesus today with wrong motives? What are some of these? How should we respond to someone like this?

9. Read 8:26-40 What did the angel tell Philip to do?

Note: The designation **eunuch** could have been a mere title (for a “treasurer” or trusted royal servant), or could refer to his having been emasculated. Since he had been **to Jerusalem to worship**, the eunuch was probably a “God-fearer,” a Gentile who worshiped Israel’s God but had not become a full convert (“proselyte”).

10. Who does Philip see when he gets there? Who is he? What are we told about him? Was he a Jew?

11. What/where specifically was the man reading from when Philip met him?

12. What do you think is the ‘good news about Jesus’ that Philip told him 8:35? What is the prophet talking about in :34? Read the entire chapter in Isaiah that the man was reading from when Philip met him in order to answer this question.

13. What did this man want to do after he came to understand what the good news was?

14. How is this person’s conversion significant to the progress of the gospel?



15. What role do the apostles take in this situation? Why is this important?

16. What can you learn about God’s will and how He guides us from this chapter? List all the things that happen by “chance” in this story? Why do you think God gave special guidance to Philip to speak to the eunuch?

17. How is this section relevant to your life? What sins to avoid, examples to follow, or truth about God does it offer you?

## **Lesson 6      Conversion of Saul      Acts 9:1-31   Acts 22:3-11   Acts 26:2-18**

### **Read all 3 accounts of Paul's Testimony**

Philip disappears from the stage of Acts except for a short appearance 25 years later in 21:8. Luke now shifts the focus to the young Pharisee Saul, whom we left in 8:3 arresting Christians on a house to house search. Read 9:1-30 and try to imagine that you are present at these events. In the following questions you will find references to Acts 22 and 26 where Paul retells the story of his conversion and includes other details.

- Paul's conversion is related in detail three times in Acts: here in narrative form, and twice subsequently in Paul's testimony before a Jewish mob ([22:3-11](#)) and before King Agrippa II ([26:2-18](#)). Luke does not record the date of Paul's conversion, but a reasonable estimate is c. a.d. 33-34.
- Damascus was 217 km northeast of Jerusalem, a six day journey.

1. What is Christianity called at this point in history? 9:1,2 Why do you think it is called this?
2. What did Paul learn about ... who Jesus is 9:4-5,20,22? How was this different from what he previously believed?
  - a. 22:14 -
3. What did Paul learn about... what his own mission in life was going to be
  - a. 9:15-16, 20-30 -
  - b. 22:14-16 -
  - c. 26:16-18 -
4. What roles did Stephen, Ananias, and Barnabas have in Saul's reconciliation with God and His people? What did they do, how did God use them?

Stephen 7:60-8:1 -

Ananias 9:10-17 ([Acts 9:11](#) **The street called Straight** is one of the world's oldest continually occupied streets, still existing today)

Barnabas 9:26-27 -
5. What does this teach you about how God uses people? How can we apply this to our own life?
6. Why are the Jews so angry with Paul that they try to kill him? 9:23

Saul in Jerusalem: According to [Gal. 1:18-19](#), this visit took place three years after his conversion (which could make this c. a.d. 37), and Paul met with Peter for 15 days but had no substantial interaction with the other apostles, except for meeting James, the brother of Jesus.

7. Do you think that the Jerusalem disciples' feelings in 9:26 were reasonable? What can we learn from the example of Barnabas? 9:27, 4:36, 11:25,26
8. Name at least 3 results of Stephen's death? 8:4,5; 8:3 and 9:1-30; 11:19,20

## Paul's (Saul's) Conversion and Early Travels a.d. 35-39

As Paul approached Damascus to arrest followers of the Way, Jesus appeared to him (1). [Galatians 1:17](#) makes it clear that soon after this Paul spent time in Arabia (2, 3) before going to meet church leaders in Jerusalem (4). When some believers learned of a plot to kill Paul in Jerusalem, they took him to Caesarea, and he returned to his hometown of Tarsus (5).

### Read 9:32-43

9. In 9:32-43, what two miracles does Peter do? What does he attribute the healing to?
10. What was the result of these miracles?



The Salvation of Cornelius 10:1-47

1. Who is Cornelius? How is he described?
  - Cornelius was a **centurion**, a commander of 100 men, and a member of the **Italian Cohort**. (A “cohort” consisted of 600 men under the command of six centurions, but with auxiliary forces in remote areas such as Judea a “cohort” might have as many as 1,000 men.)” Centurions were paid very well (as much as five times the pay of an ordinary soldier), so Cornelius would have been socially prominent and wealthy. Cornelius as a “God-fearer” (cf. [v. 22](#); [13:16, 26](#)), a Gentile who worshiped Israel’s God and was in some way attached to a synagogue but who had not submitted to Jewish conversion rites (esp. circumcision). He followed two of the primary expressions of Jewish piety—prayer and almsgiving.
2. What does the angel tell Cornelius to do?
3. When does Peter experience his vision? 10:9
4. Describe the vision that he has?
5. Does Peter immediately understand the meaning of the vision? :17
6. After the messengers from Cornelius came, what further application of the vision was apparent to Peter? 10:28-29 What was still confusing to Peter? 10:29
7. When Peter observed Cornelius’ manner and heard the account of the angel’s message, what did Peter then realize? 10:34,35
8. What key points does Peter tell them regarding Jesus. 10:36-43
9. Who does Peter say needs and receives forgiveness of sins? :35, 43
10. What various means did God use to teach Peter something that he could have already known from the Old Testament Scriptures concerning God’s acceptance of people from all nations? What does this tell you about how God may want to teach you?
11. Why do you think God went through all this trouble for Cornelius to hear the gospel (a vision, an angel, 4 days)? Why didn’t the angel just tell Cornelius the gospel? What can we learn from this?
12. Peter’s speech to this Gentile household differed in several ways from what he said to Jewish audiences. What key points did he make and how was this different from what he told Jewish people?

13. What unprecedented (never happened before) thing happened in the middle of Peter's speech? What did this signify? Why were Peter's fellow Jewish believers so astonished? 10:45

14. Why does Peter conclude that these people should be baptized? :47-48

15. Does this passage teach that God accepts and will save any man who fears God? Or does this passage teach that only by faith in Jesus will any person be saved? Support your answer.

Peter explains His Actions 11:1-18

16. What was Peter criticized for when he returned to Jerusalem? 11:1-3

17. How does Peter defend his actions? What is the importance of the conclusion that they come to? 11:1

18. The early disciples culture and traditions blinded them to the truth of God's Word, that He shows no partiality. 10:34 In a similar way, do we ever show partiality in our own hearts toward people with certain ethnic, economic, social, political, or educational backgrounds?

19. How has God spoken to you?

## **Lesson 8**     **Acts 11:19 – Acts 13:52**

### **Acts 11:19-30** The church in Antioch

1. Who are the different people and places mentioned in this paragraph?
2. Why did the church in Jerusalem send Barnabas to Antioch?
  - What did he find when he got there?
3. Why did Barnabas go to look for Saul? Where was he? What did they then do together for one year?
4. What do you think it means to 'remain true to the Lord' 11:23
5. What does the word disciple mean?
6. What did the prophet predict and what did the people do as a response?

Note: The fact that **the disciples** were first called **Christians** in Antioch probably reflects a label applied by the unbelieving public in Antioch and shows that the disciples were beginning to have an identity of their own apart from other Jews.

### **Acts Chapter 12:1-23**

1. What do you think is the main theme of Chapter 12 and why do you think this?
2. What are the differences between the stories regarding James and Peter?
3. What can we learn about God's sovereignty over people's lives from this chapter?
4. What did Jesus warn his followers about regarding persecution (Mt 10:17-23, Mt 24:9, Jn 15:20, 16:2 and Mark 10:39 specifically to James) Why do you think God would allow His followers to suffer?
5. How do the believers respond when Peter is then arrested? What do they do? Do you think this really changes things? How does this work with God's sovereignty?
6. What does Peter do when he realizes he has been set free from the jail? How is this different from what happens in Acts 5:19,20 when an angel also sets the apostles free from jail? What is different this time? What principle can we learn from this?
7. Do you think that Herod's death and its aftermath teaches a lesson? If so, what is it?
8. What purpose does Acts 12:24 serve in this chapter? What does the word "but" refer to?



## **Major Events in the Life of the Apostle Paul**

5-10?	Born in Tarsus as an Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin and a Roman citizen, raised in either Jerusalem ( <a href="#">Acts 22:3?</a> ) or Tarsus
15-20	Trained as a Pharisee by Gamaliel I ( <a href="#">Acts 22:3</a> ; <a href="#">26:5</a> ; <a href="#">Gal. 1:14</a> ; <a href="#">Phil. 3:5-6</a> )
30/33±	Death, resurrection of Christ
31-34	Present at Stephen's stoning; persecuted Christians
33/34*	<b>Converted, called, and commissioned on the way to Damascus</b> ( <a href="#">Acts 9:1-19</a> ; <a href="#">22:6-11</a> ; <a href="#">26:12-18</a> ; <a href="#">Gal. 1:15-16</a> )
33/34-36/37	Stays in Damascus a short time ( <a href="#">Acts 9:19b</a> ); leaves for "Arabia" ( <a href="#">2 Cor. 11:32</a> ; <a href="#">Gal. 1:17</a> ); returns to Damascus ( <a href="#">Gal. 1:17</a> ; <a href="#">Acts 9:20-22?</a> ); Jews and the governor under King Aretas try to arrest and kill him; Paul escapes through the city wall ( <a href="#">Acts 9:23-24</a> ; <a href="#">2 Cor. 11:32-33</a> )
36/37*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Meets with Peter (and sees James) in Jerusalem</b> (<a href="#">Acts 9:26-30</a>; <a href="#">Gal. 1:18</a>)</li><li>• Hellenists seek to kill him and he flees to Tarsus (<a href="#">Acts 9:28-30</a>; <a href="#">Gal. 1:21</a>)</li></ul>
37-45	Ministers in Syria/Cilicia ( <a href="#">2 Cor. 11:22-27?</a> )
42-44	Receives his "thorn in the flesh" ( <a href="#">2 Cor. 12:7-9</a> )
44	Herod Agrippa I dies ( <a href="#">Acts 12:20-23</a> )
44-47*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spends a year ministering with Barnabas in Antioch (<a href="#">Acts 11:25-26</a>)</li><li>• <b>Second Visit to Jerusalem</b>; time of famine (<a href="#">Acts 11:27-30</a>; <a href="#">Gal. 2:1-10</a>)</li></ul>
46-47	<b>First Missionary Journey</b> ( <a href="#">Acts 13:4-14:26</a> ): 1.5 years?
48*	Paul and Barnabas spend "no little time" in Antioch Paul writes letter to the <b>Galatians</b>
48-49*	<b>Returns to Jerusalem for the apostolic council</b> ( <a href="#">Acts 15</a> ); Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, but a dispute over John Mark causes them to part ways ( <a href="#">Acts 15:36-41</a> )
49-51*	<b>Second Missionary Journey</b> ( <a href="#">Acts 15:36-18:22</a> ): 2.5 years?
49	Paul and Silas travel to southern Galatia through Asia Minor, on to Macedonia (notably Philippi; Thessalonica; and Berea [ <a href="#">Acts 17:10-15</a> ]), and then Achaia (notably Athens and Corinth [ <a href="#">2 Cor. 11:7-9</a> ])
49-51*	Spends 1.5 years in Corinth ( <a href="#">Acts 18:11</a> ); appears before Gallio ( <a href="#">Acts 18:12-17</a> ); writes <b>1 and 2 Thessalonians</b>
51	Returns to Jerusalem? ( <a href="#">Acts 18:22</a> )
52-57*	<b>Third Missionary Journey</b> ( <a href="#">Acts 18:23-21:17</a> ): 5 years?
52	Travels to Antioch, where he spends "some time"; then travels through Galatia and Phrygia ( <a href="#">Acts 18:23</a> )
52-55	Arrives in Ephesus ( <a href="#">Acts 19:1</a> ; <a href="#">1 Cor. 16:8</a> ); ministers there for three years ( <a href="#">Acts 20:31</a> ) and writes <b>1 Corinthians</b> in the spring, near the end of his ministry there; makes brief, "painful visit" to Corinth ( <a href="#">2 Cor. 2:1</a> ), then returns to Ephesus and writes "tearful, severe letter" (now lost) to Corinth ( <a href="#">2 Cor. 2:3-4</a> ; <a href="#">7:8-16</a> )
55-56*	Travels north to Macedonia, where he meets Titus ( <a href="#">Acts 20:1</a> ; cf. <a href="#">2 Cor. 2:12-13</a> ); writes <b>2 Corinthians</b>
57*	Winters in Corinth ( <a href="#">Acts 20:2-3</a> ; cf. <a href="#">2 Cor. 9:4</a> ), writes letter to the Romans from Corinth; travels to Jerusalem and is arrested ( <a href="#">Acts 21:27-36</a> )
57-59	Imprisonment transferred to Caesarea, where he stays for two years ( <a href="#">Acts 24:27</a> )
60*	Voyage to Rome; shipwrecked for three months on the island of Malta ( <a href="#">Acts 28:11</a> ); finally arrives in Rome
62*	Under house-arrest in Rome, writes <b>Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon</b>
62-67	Released from house-arrest in Rome, extends his mission (Spain?), writes <b>1 Timothy</b> (from Macedonia?) and <b>Titus</b> (from Nicopolis); is rearrested, writes <b>2 Timothy</b> from Rome shortly before his execution
64-67*	Martyred in Rome

## Acts 12:24 - 13:52

7. What role did worship, fasting, and prayer play in the calling and sending of the first missionaries? 13:1-3
8. What is fasting? Why would somebody do this? How is it related to somebody's relationship with God?
9. What was Paul's strategy in proclaiming the gospel in these new places? Why did they go to the synagogues first? Were they showing favoritism toward the Jews? Look at Romans 1:16 which Paul wrote to help answer this question. Why go to Cyprus first?
10. What are some characteristics and tactics of Satan seen in this passage? How does Satan work in and through people? 13:4-12

11. Try outlining the major points of Paul's message in 13:16-41

- 13:16-19 -
- 13:20-22 -
- 13:23-25 -
- 13:26-31 -
- 13:32-37 -
- 13:38-39 -
- 13:40-41 -
- What does Paul seem to focus on the most during his message? Why do you think he does this?



12. Why were some of the Jews filled with jealousy? :45, 50

- What did some of the Jews do after hearing the message? :45-46
- In contrast, how did the Gentiles respond to the message? :48

13. In Acts 13:47, Paul quotes Isaiah 49:6, which was originally addressed to the Servant of the Lord or Messiah. Why can Paul apply the Servant's commission to himself and Barnabas? Is this a misuse of Scripture, quoting something out of context and applying it to oneself? Why or why not?

- **Acts 13:46** Why was it necessary that they speak to Jews first.
- **Acts 13:48** as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Throughout Acts, Luke affirms the sovereignty of God over all of life while at the same time affirming the significance of human activity, as evidenced by the remarkable human effort and sacrifice involved in proclaiming the gospel. Thus Luke, without contradiction, maintains a dual emphasis on divine election ("appointed") and on human response ("believed") (cf. notes on [2:23](#); [3:13-16](#); [3:17](#); [4:27](#); [4:28](#)). The emphasis here in [13:48](#) is on the way in which divine sovereignty (appointment) results in the belief of the Gentiles, demonstrating that their belief was due to God's grace alone.
- When do you think God gave Paul this job description for his life?

14. Write down one or more insights from this study that apply to your life. How can you begin to put one of these insights into practice with prayer and/or action this week?

## **Lesson 9** Acts 14 and 15

### **Acts 14            Gentile Christians**

1. What happens in Iconium? 14:1-7 What are the different reactions that people had to their message? Who believed their message? Who did not believe? What words are used to describe their unbelief?
2. How did God confirm or validate the message of the apostles?
3. The Lystrians reacted to the healing of the lame man like typical rural pagans of that time (14:8-13). What do you learn from this incident about the religious beliefs of those people - the false beliefs that Paul and Barnabas had to overcome? (List as many observations as you can.)
4. Acts 14:15-17 gives us our first example of what Paul and Barnabas preached to purely Gentile audiences, as opposed to Jews, proselytes, and God-fearers. In addition to proclaiming Jesus, what did the apostles have to explain to pagans that they didn't have to say to Jews and God-fearers?
5. How has God left Himself a testimony (evidence) in the world? :17 What evidence has God given to show He is real and cares about people?
6. What does 14:19-20 tell you about Paul's character? What happens to him and how does he respond? How would you respond?
7. What did Paul do when he returned to the cities he had previously visited? :21-23
8. Despite all the hardships on their trip, what was Paul and Barnabas' verdict when they reported back to the church in Antioch? 14:26,27
9. What is one thing you could apply from this chapter to your life?

**Note: Council at Jerusalem (15:1-35)** “Two key issues were at stake here: 1) Does God still require the Jewish background Christians to keep the Law of Moses (and the oral tradition)? and 2) should Gentile Christian converts be required to also keep it in order to keep peaceful fellowship between the two groups?

1. What is the conflict about? What is the question? 15:1
2. Why do you think Paul and Barnabas were so opposed to this requirement? What makes this so important? Hint; 15:11
3. How did the Church handle this major dispute between some Jewish believers and the Christians from Antioch? 15:2,6,12,22-30
4. Why did Peter support the Antiochene position? List his key reasons in 15:6-11.
5. What evidence did Paul and Barnabas offer to defend their view that Gentiles could be saved without becoming Jews? 15:4,12
6. James (the brother of Jesus) was by now a leader of the Jerusalem congregation and known for his conservative Jewish practices. (Gal 2:11-12) What convinced James that Paul was right about the Gentiles and the Law? Acts 15:13-19
7. What did the council decide was necessary for salvation? 15:19-21, 28-29 What restrictions were made? Are we still bound by these restrictions? Which ones? (Need help: see Rom 14:1-4, 13-23)
8. What lessons or principles can be made from this passage for how to resolve conflict among Christians?

## Lesson 10

### Acts 15:36-17:15 Paul and Silas Second Journey

1. Whose idea was the first missionary journey? 13:2 ...the second journey? 15:36
2. Why did Paul return to churches he had already founded? What did he do there, and why were those things important? 15:41, 16:4-5
3. Does disagreeing and parting company have to lead to anger and broken fellowship? Consider how Paul felt about Barnabas and Mark after parting from them. (See 1 Cor 9:1-7, Col 4:10, Philemon 24, 2 Tim 4:11) What do you learn about conflict and relationships?
4. Why do you think the missionaries traveled in teams? Why did they always seem to take along less experienced youths like Mark and Timothy? Consider 2 Tim 2:2. Is there a principle we can apply?

Paul's Second Missionary Journey ([Acts 15:36-18:22](#)) a.d. 49-51

**Note:** Paul circumcised Timothy to accommodate Jewish culture in order to make him more effective in ministering to fellow Jews. (Timothy was raised a Jew but had a Greek father so he had not been circumcised as a child)



5. In what ways does the Holy Spirit guide and direct people in this passage? What patterns do you see?

- Has God ever guided you by closing doors 16:6 or by direct leading 16:9? If so, name an example or two. If not, how does He guide you, if at all?
  - How did the missionaries make decisions when the Spirit did not give direct guidance? For example, they concluded that God had called them to Macedonia, but how did they decide which city to go to first in Macedonia? 16:11,12; 17:1, 10
  - Some Christians feel they would be more obedient to God if they had direct guidance from him, such as visions. In Acts, does God normally guide through visions? In what situations does He choose to use visions and in when does He prefer other methods?
  - What lessons can you learn about how to be more responsive to the Spirit as He guides and directs your life and decisions?
6. Why was it necessary for God to open Lydia's heart to respond to Paul's message? 16:14
7. Why were Paul and Silas put into jail? What were they accused of?
8. Bloody and battered in the stocks of a dark prison, what do Paul and Silas do as they sat in prison that night? 16:23-25. Why do you think they did this? (For instance, what attitudes toward self, God, circumstances, the other prisoners, or the jailer do these actions show?)
- What do you think your attitude would have been if it had been you in their place?
9. Why does the jailer want to kill himself after the earthquake? Why didn't Paul and Silas escape?
10. Why do you think the jailer then asks Paul and Silas such a direct, religious question?
- What is Paul's answer?
11. How did the jailer respond to Paul's answer? Did he believe in Jesus as Lord or not?
- Does it say? What did the jailer do to show that he had believed Paul's message?

12. Why do you think Paul and Silas did not just leave the city when the jailer told them they were free to go? :36
- What principles for dealing with authority do their actions suggest? 16:35-39 Were they really concerned about their legal rights as Roman citizens or was there a greater reason for their actions?
13. Why do you think they decided to go next to Thessalonica and pass over the other two places? 17:1
14. Who did Paul teach in this city, for how long, and what was the essence of the message he told them? :2-3
- What was the result of his teaching? 17:4-9 How did people respond?
15. How did Paul's opponents describe Jesus and Christians? 17:6-7
16. How did the Berean Jews respond differently to Paul's message than the Thessalonian Jews did? 17:11 What does the author commend them for? How can we imitate the Bereans today?
17. If you were Paul and Silas, would you consider this journey a success in light of all that they had to endure? Would you question at all whether or not your "Macedonian vision" was really from God or just a mistake? Why or why not?



## Lesson 11

Acts 17:16-18:23

### Athens and Corinth

**How do you view people that try to change your worldview, your religion? Should Christians proselytize?? Can you do this and also be tolerant?**

1. How did Paul end up in Athens? (Review from last week) Was this his original plan?
2. If you have a Bible dictionary, find out what you can about Epicurean and Stoic philosophies. Here is a short summary:

**Epicurean** - followers of Epicurus (341-270 BC) who taught:

- Everything that exists is made of particles of matter called "atoms."
- Therefore, there is no immortal soul; when you die, your atoms disintegrate and form other objects.
- Therefore you do not need to fear death or punishment after death.
- the gods, too, are made of matter and live undisturbed by concern for mankind or worldly affairs, therefore you don't need to fear or pray to the gods.
- the highest good for a person is "peace of mind, freedom from disturbing cares."

**Stoic** - this group was founded by Zeno (335-263 BC). Stoics believed that:

- man is completely a part of and a microcosm of nature, therefore the best way to live is in harmony with nature.
- self sufficiency is the highest human virtue.
- god is not a person, but rather the soul of the universe and a spark in each thing.
- the soul survives when the body dies but it becomes part of the world soul.
- Brotherhood of mankind

3. How does Luke describe Athens? 17:16,21

4. What did the cultured men think of Paul and why? 17:18,32

- a. Why was Paul able to face those men confidently? (Optional: see 1 Cor 1:18-2:5)

5. When invited to speak to the prestigious Areopagus, what did Paul say about...

- the nature, character, and attributes of God?
- the nature of man?
- Idols:
- Jesus:

6. Contrast what Paul said that contradicted what the Epicurean and Stoics believed?
  - Epicureans
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Stoic

How does Paul show respect or tolerance for the Athenians? Questions 7 and 8

7. What do you think was the purpose of Paul's opening words? 17:22-23
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Why did he quote Greek poets that philosophers liked? 17:28 The first quotation (**in him we live ...**) appears to be from a hymn to Zeus by Epimenides of Crete (c. 600 b.c.) The second quotation here is from the poem Phainomena by the Stoic poet Aratus (c. 315–240 b.c.).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Why did you think he talks about the nature of God rather than the identity of Jesus?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Why do you think Paul addressed the Athenians differently than Jews? (What principle of evangelism was he practicing, and why is it important?) 1 Corinthians 9:19-23
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What other principles of evangelism does Paul demonstrate in Athens?

**Corinth** 18:1-23 46 miles west of Athens, while here Paul wrote 1,2 Thessalonians.

12. What do you think Paul meant when he said, "I am clear of my responsibility?"
  - a. 18:6 At what point do we stop trying to share the gospel with a person?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. What did God promise Paul while in Corinth? 18:9-10
  - a. How did he respond? 18:11
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. Does God still use secular officials to further the gospel as He did in 18:2, 14-16? If so, how? Can you think of some examples?

15. How long did Paul stay in Corinth and what did he do while there?
16. What was the crime Paul was charged of by the Jews? :13
17. What do the events of 18:1-23 tell you about God?
18. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5. How does Paul describe the different ways that people respond when they hear the Good News about Jesus?
  - a. Who did God choose to believe the message? What kind of people?
  - b. Why did Paul say that he chose not use a great speech to try to persuade them to believe?
19. Describe at least one way in which this study is relevant to your life. Is there a promise, an example, or an insight about God that you might take to heart?

## Lesson 12      Acts 18:24-20:38      Ephesus

**Topics:** Spiritual warfare, magic, forsaking evil influences from your past

**Note:** **Ephesus** was the most important city in western Asia minor. Because it had a harbor and was the intersection of major trade routes it became a commercial center. It boasted a pagan temple dedicated to the Roman goddess Diana. When Paul passed through Ephesus on his way to Antioch and Jerusalem, he left Priscilla and Aquila there to begin building the church.

1. Both Apollos and the disciples Paul met had a similar gap in their information about the gospel. What did they not know? 18:25, 19:2,3
2. Why was it essential to be baptized in the name of Jesus, not just for repentance as John had done? (see Romans 6:3-11)
3. From what you know about the people of Ephesus (19:17-20), can you think of a reason why God worked healings and exorcisms through Paul? 19:11-12 Explain?
4. Why couldn't Jesus' name be invoked to magically cast out demons (19:13-16)? What else is necessary for the name to be effective?
5. Exactly what is wrong with magic? Why do you think God abhors it so much?
6. Why was it important for the Ephesians to burn their magical scrolls? 19:17-20 Is there anything you should destroy or get rid of?

**pieces of silver** probably refers to the Greek *drachma*, which represented a laborer's average daily wage. At \$15 (U.S.) per hour, or \$120 per day, 50,000 *drachmas* would equal approximately \$6 million in today's currency.

7. What good resulted from the miraculous healings in Ephesus?
8. What are some possible drawbacks of a ministry that overemphasized miracles? How did Paul keep his ministry in balance?

**Note:** the temple dedicated to Artemis of the Ephesians was known as one of the seven wonders of the world.

9. Why were the Ephesian silversmiths against Paul? 19:23-27
  - i. How was this reason similar to the opposition they faced in Philippi? 16:16-21
10. Do economic interests set any groups against the gospel today? If so, give an example.

11. What protected Paul from the violence of the mob? 19:31, 35-41
12. In light of this episode (19:37-40) and the one in Corinth (18:12-17), explain why Paul and Peter considered it so important that Christians carefully obey the civil laws. (Rom 13:1-7, 1 Pet 2:13-17)
13. In the events of 20:1-38, how did the various believers show fellowship/partnership/communion with each other? What feeling did they express, and how?
- 20:1-6
  - 20:7-12
  - 20:13-38
14. What actions and attitudes had Paul practiced as a model for Christian leaders? (20:17-27, 33-35)
15. What do you think is Paul's life mission, purpose? Acts 20:24 1 Cor 9:24-27
16. What warning and command did Paul repeat? (20:28-31)
- i. What would protect the elders in the face of this danger? 20:32
17. What does God want you to learn and/or do as a result of this study?

a.d. 52–57

Paul's third missionary journey traversed much the same ground as his second (cf. [map](#)). Passing through Galatia and Phrygia, he proceeded directly to the great port city of Ephesus. After three years of preaching and teaching there, Paul traveled again through Macedonia and Achaia, strengthening the believers, and then finished with a visit to Jerusalem.



## **Lesson 13**      **Acts 21:1- 23:11 To Jerusalem**

### **To Jerusalem** 21:1-16

1. Why was Paul going to Jerusalem? 20:22, 24:17
  
2. The Holy Spirit repeatedly warned Paul both internally and through prophets that danger waited in Jerusalem (20:22-25, 21:4, 10-13). Why do you think the Holy Spirit warned Paul about this? With what attitude did Paul respond to these warnings? 20:24, 21:13
  - While all agreed that the Holy Spirit promised suffering in Jerusalem, there was disagreement as to what Paul should do in light of these warnings. Why didn't Paul heed the prophetic warnings given to him? Should he have gone? What can we learn about how to deal with conflict regarding the Spirit's leading?

### **Arrest in Jerusalem** 21:17-23:11

3. Why did the leaders of the Jerusalem church want Paul to participate in the vow? 21:20-25 How did they believe this would serve the gospel?
  
4. What might have been some of Paul's reasons for doing as these believers asked? (1 Cor 9:19-23 and Romans 14:13-15:3)
  
5. What can 21:17-26 teach us about dealing with differences within the church today?
  - Can you think of any present day conflicts within the church or your fellowship to which you can apply these principles? What are they?
  
6. Paul called his speech a "defense". Summarize what he said to the Jews in 22:1-21.

7. How did Paul shape his speech to appeal to the Jews? 21:40-22:21
  
8. What made the Jews interrupt with rage? 22:21
  - What aspects of the gospel seem offensive to people today?
  
9. For what 3 important things had God chosen Paul? 22:14
  - To what extent have you been chosen for these?
  
10. Paul might have known that 22:21 would infuriate the Jews. Why do you think he risked his life to say 22:6-21, instead of just refuting the charge of defiling the Temple? (see Rom 9:1-5, 10:1)
  
11. What do you think was the purpose of the promise in 23:11? What does it tell you about the Lord? Has God ever done this for you? If so, describe a time.
  
12. What one truth from this passage would you like to take to heart this week? How can you apply it?



## **Lesson 14      Prisoner in Caesarea   Acts 23:11- 26:32**

1. In 23:11, God promised Paul that he would testify about Him in Rome. How much time passed before this actually happens? Check your time line and 24:27. Would this have discouraged you to have to wait so long for God to fulfill His promise?
  - a. Do you think this was “wasted” time? What evidence do you see that God was sovereign over this time just as much as when he was establishing new churches?
  - b. What lessons can you learn about waiting?
  
2. Consider the lengths to which the Jewish fanatics were willing to go to silence Paul. 23:12-15 What human and divine factors prevented them? 23:16-30
  
3. How did Paul refute each of Tertullus’s charges against him?
  - making trouble, inciting dissension 24:11-13, 17-18
  - leading a new and unlawful sect 24:14-16
  - desecrating the Temple 24:11-13, 17-21
  
4. Put yourself in Paul’s place in 24:23-26. Would you have tried to raise money to buy your way out of prison, or would you have continued to wait and preach to Felix? What does this tell you about Paul and yourself?
  
5. How did Paul’s expectation of resurrection and possible judgment affect him? 24:15-16
  - a. Why was it so important to Paul to keep a clear conscience before God and man?  
23:1, 24:16 Is this important to you? Is so, how do you do it?
  - b. How did this idea affect Felix? 24:25 Why do you think the prospect of judgment affected these men so differently?

6. Lysias, Felix and Festus all knew that Paul had broken no Roman laws. Why didn't they free him?
7. Do you think Paul should have appealed to Caesar or simply trusted God to protect him in Jerusalem? Why?

**Agrippa** 25:13-26:32

8. What did Paul think was the issue for which he was being held prisoner? 26:6-8
9. Summarize the message Paul gave to Agrippa. 26:2-23
10. Why do you think Paul so often told about his conversion in his defenses? Why was this a good evangelistic technique?
11. How does Paul set an example for you as a Christian in 23:12-26:32? (Consider especially 24:10-26, 25:8-11, 26:1-29)
12. Acts 26:17,18 describes what Jesus will do for people. What must they do in response? 26:20 How can you also do this?
13. What do you think God wants you to learn or do as a result of this study?

**Lesson 15 Journey to Rome; Review Acts 27:1-28:31**

1. What did Paul say and do during his trip to Rome?

27:9,10

27:21-26

27:30-32

27:33-36

28:1-6

28:7-10

2. What can you learn about Paul from his comments and actions (his gifts, character, beliefs, attitudes toward people, view of God, etc.)?

3. Why do you think Paul, a prisoner, came to have such an influential role (adviser to the ship's captain, the centurion, encouraged of the crew and passengers) during the trip?

4. How is Paul an example to us? What would you like to imitate in your own life?

**Paul Preaches in Rome 28:17-31**

5. Why did Paul address the Jews when he got to Rome? (see Acts 13:46, Rom 1:16)

6. What did he say to them first? 28:17-20

7. When they agreed to hear him further, what did Paul then discuss with them? 28:23

8. What was the point of the prophecy from Isaiah that Paul quoted? 28:25-29
  
9. How did Paul spend his time awaiting trial? 28:30-31
  
10. Why do you think Luke wrote so little about the church in Rome? How did his choice of information in 28:17-31 serve his overall plan for Acts?
  
11. Why do you think Luke ended Acts where he did? What does this tell you about the theme of Acts?

**Review** - do your best to answer the following summary questions.

1. From your study of Acts, what would you say the Church is?
  
2. What is the Church's mission?
  
3. Summarize in a few sentences the Christian message - who Jesus is, what He has done and how we should respond.
  
4. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in Acts? In your own life?
  
5. What has Acts taught you about Christian fellowship or partnership?
  
6. Have you learned any other important lessons from Acts? If so, explain.