

*(The Apostle Paul as depicted in a twelfth-century mosaic)*

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## **Introduction**

The story of Acts begins in Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish nation, and ends in Rome, the center of the Gentile world. The essence of Acts is the movement of the Holy Spirit continuing what Jesus began to do in His earthly ministry.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven he said to His disciples: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

The early disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit to go as witnesses to the ends of the earth with the good news of the resurrected Jesus. The communities that formed as the result of their witness became the living body of Christ, known as the church. Characterized by both faith and failure, the early church provides important lessons for contemporary believers. This body of Christ remains God's vehicle for dispensing grace and truth until the Lord's return.

## LESSON ONE: ACTS 1:1-11

**OPENING QUESTION:** *What title would you give the story of your life?*

Note: The Book of Acts continues the story begun in the Gospel of Luke.

Note: Theophilus, whose name means “lover of God,” was a Roman Gentile.

1. How do you decide something is true?
2. Read Luke 1:1-4. What care did Luke take so his account might be trusted?
3. How did Luke summarize what he had accomplished in his first book? (Acts 1:1)
4. How did Jesus summarize His mission?

Luke 4:18-19

Luke 4:43

Luke 7:18-23

5. How did Jesus, after His resurrection, help His disciples grasp that He was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament? (Luke 24:25-45)

Note: Jews expected the Messiah to set up his earthly kingdom, defeating all their political and military enemies. (*Luke 19:11 - NIV commentary*)

6. What indicates the disciples still failed to understand His mission as Messiah? (Acts 1:6-7, Luke 17:20-21)

7. What evidence of the resurrection allowed the disciples to give witness to a risen Christ?  
(Acts 1:3, Luke 24)

Why does it remain important for disciples today to grasp the truth of the resurrection?  
(see also 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 14)

8. What do you think enables a person to be an effective witness?

9. How had fear and doubt impaired the witness of the disciples?  
(John 18:25-26, John 20:19-31)

How has it impaired your witness?

10. What would transform the disciples then and now into effective witnesses?  
(Acts 1:2, 8)

11. What were the disciples to give witness to?

Luke 24:45-48

Matthew 28:20

12. Where were they to give witness? And how would this change their lives?

13. What promise accompanied Christ's earthly departure? (Acts 1:11)

Memory Verse: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit will come on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

Prayer Guide: Risen Lord, increase my faith.



## LESSON TWO: ACTS 1:12-2:13

**OPENING QUESTION:** *How have you seen a profound shared experience impact community?*

Note: The ascension of Jesus meant the end of His earthly ministry as well as the prelude to His continuing ministry from heaven through the Holy Spirit. (Stott)

1. What was the ascension's impact on the community of believers? (Acts 1:14, Luke 24:51-53)
  
2. Why was Christ's departure from earth necessary?  
John 16:5-15
  
3. How does the Holy Spirit continue Christ's work?  
John 14:15-19, 25-31  
  
2. Corinthians 3:17-18
  
4. What role did prayer have among the disciples as they waited? (Acts 1:14)
  
5. What do you learn from them as you wait? (see also Psalm 27:14, Psalm 130:5-8)

Note: Drawing lots was a method of discerning God's will sanctioned by the Old Testament.

6. What leadership role did Peter take and why?  
(Acts: 1:15, see also Matthew 16:18-19, Luke 22:31-32, John 21:15-18)
  
7. Who was to replace Judas as the twelfth apostle and for what purpose?  
(Acts 1:21-23, see also Matthew 19:28)

8. What truth about God deepened the trust of the people as they prayed about the choice of the new apostle? (Acts 1:24a)

What difference does this truth make as you pray?

Note: Pentecost was a Jewish feast held 50 days after Passover. It celebrated the firstfruits of harvest and commemorated the giving of Law to Israel.

9. Describe the Coming of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:1-4)

10. Read Genesis 11:1-9. How did God at Pentecost reverse what happened at Babel?

11. Who witnessed the events of Pentecost and what were the responses?  
What is your response?

12. What was significant about God's timing in sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost when the Jews celebrated the giving of the Law?

Jeremiah 31:31-33

Romans 7:6

Memory Verse: "I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." *John 16:7*

Prayer Guide: Holy Spirit, show me Jesus.

### LESSON THREE: ACTS 2:14-41

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Recall the most memorable speech you have heard and what made it so memorable.*

Note: Peter's sermon is the first of nineteen significant speeches that occur in Acts.

1. How did Peter initially gain the ear of the crowd? What do you learn from his example?
2. Why was it important for Peter to draw from Old Testament scriptures as he addressed the crowd? (Acts 2:5)

Note: The "last days" include all the days between Christ's first and second comings and is another way of saying from now on.

3. Read Joel 2:28-32.  
Which of Joel's words were fulfilled at Pentecost?

Which words are yet to be fulfilled?

4. What did Peter want his audience to understand about the death of Jesus? (Acts 2:22-33)
5. If your only knowledge of Jesus came from Peter's sermon, who would you know Jesus to be?
6. What do you know of Jesus that you would share with others?

Note: Among Jews, baptism was required only for Gentile converts. For Jewish men and women to be baptized was a strong public statement of their commitment to Christ.

7. How did the people respond to Peter's teaching and why do you think this was so? (Acts 2:37, 41)

8. What life response did Peter call forth from the people? (Acts 2:38-40)

9. What life response is still called forth from people seeking Jesus? (see also John 5:24)

10. What promise accompanied their response? (Acts 2:38-39, see also John 3:5-7)

11. What does this promise mean to you?

Memory Verse: "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both LORD and Christ."  
*Acts 2:36b*

Prayer Guide: Lord Jesus Christ, draw me to you.

## LESSON FOUR: ACTS 2:42-3:26

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Have you ever benefitted by using another person's name?*

Note: The Jewish followers of Jesus continued practices of prayer and worship in the temple. The gate called "Beautiful," with its 75-foot high brass doors, lived up to its name.

1. Describe the shared life of early believers and the good that resulted from it.
2. How does their example challenge you as you share life with other believers?  
(see also Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 John 3:17-18))
3. What kind of life did the beggar lead before his encounter with Peter and John?  
(Acts 3:2)
4. How was his life transformed? (see also John 8:36, 10:10b)
5. What important role did the name of Jesus play in the man's healing?
6. What important role does His name continue to play?  
Matthew 28:18  
  
Philippians 2:9-11  
  
In what way are you encouraged to use the name of Jesus?
7. How did the beggar celebrate his transformation?

How do you celebrate transformations in your life or how might you?



8. After the man's healing what opportunity arose for Peter and John and what danger accompanied it? (Acts 3:11-12)

9. What questions did Peter use to make the most of the opportunity and avoid the danger?

10. What reminders of their spiritual heritage did Peter provide?

v.12

v.13

v.22

vv.24-25

v.26

11. Where did Jesus fit into their spiritual heritage?  
(see also Deuteronomy 18:18-19, Luke 24:19-27, 44-48)

12. What were the failures of the people?

13. What hope was offered? (see also Isaiah 1:18-20, Isaiah 43:25)

14. How in your experience are repentance and refreshment connected?  
(see also 2 Corinthians 7:10)

Memory Verse: "Repent, then, and turn to the Lord, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord..." *Acts 3:19*

Prayer Guide: Lord Jesus, refresh me.

## LESSON FIVE: ACTS 4:1-31

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Have you ever had the opportunity to do something that required more strength than you thought you had?*

Note: The Sanhedrin, made up of rulers, elders and teachers of religious law, was responsible to protect the Jewish faith which meant examining new teachers and teaching.

Note: The Sadducees were ruling aristocrats who did not believe in the resurrection. They supported Roman rule in exchange for Rome's protection of their power.

1. Why were the religious leaders disturbed?

v.2

vv.16-17

2. What evidences of God's power were displayed for the religious leaders?

v.13

v.14

v.16

vv.21-22

3. What was the response of the leaders to such power? How did they seek to contain it? (vv.17-21)

4. What did the leaders fail to grasp about God's power? (see also 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, 2 Corinthians 4:7)

5. What did Peter mean when he spoke about the stone?

Acts 4:11-12, Psalm 118:19-23

1 Peter 2:4-8

What does the stone mean to you?

6. What difference can it make to pray in a time of need?

7. How do these verses encourage you to pray?

Psalm 121

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

James 5:13-16

8. What did the believers include in their prayers?

v.24

vv.25-28 (see also Psalm 2)

vv.29-30, (see also Isaiah 64:1-4)

Using this model write a prayer about a need in your life.

9. What did their prayer reveal about their view of God?

10. What do your prayers reveal about your view of God?

11. What was God's answer to their prayer?

Memory Verse: "Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved." *Acts 4:12*

Prayer Guide: Sovereign Lord, give me courage to live for Jesus.

## LESSON SIX: ACTS 4:32-5:42

**OPENING QUESTION:** *How do you cope when life gets difficult?*

1. What shaped the hearts and lives of early believers? (Acts 4:31)
2. Describe the life they shared together. (Acts 4:32-37)
3. What do you find compelling about such a life and what would be difficult?
4. What do you think motivated them to give so generously?
5. Why does God want you to give generously?

Acts 2:44-45, 4:32, 36-37

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

6. What steps did Ananias and Sapphira take that displeased God?
7. What possible motivations lay behind their action?

Proverbs 16:18

Matthew 6:1-4

Matthew 15:8

Luke 12:15

8. Why do you think they received such harsh punishment?  
(see also 1 Corinthians 10:11-12, 11:31-32, 1 John 1:5-10)

9. What was the result of their punishment?

Acts 5:11

Acts 5:13

Acts 5:14

10. Why were the apostles arrested? (Acts 5:17, 27-28,33)

11. How did God rescue the apostles?

12. How did the apostles live after having been rescued by God?

Acts 5:20-32,

Acts 5:40-42

Psalm 107:1-9, 42-43

1 Peter 3:14-15

13. How have you experienced God's rescue and how has it clarified your purpose?

Memory Verse: "We must obey God rather than human beings." *Acts 5:29*

Prayer Guide: Strong Savior, keep me faithful.



## LESSON SEVEN: ACTS 6:1-8:4

**OPENING QUESTION:** *What do you do when people bring their problems to you?*

Note: The historic tension between Grecian and Hebraic Jews due to cultural differences spilled over into the church.

Note: All seven men chosen to serve the widows had Greek names.

Note: Blasphemy is insulting the honor of God. It was punishable in the Old Testament by stoning.

1. What division threatened the early church? (Acts 6:1)
2. What steps were taken to resolve the problem? (Acts 6:2-6)

What model does this provide in restoring unity today?

3. What does this passage reveal about Stephen's character and his relationship with God?
4. What are the parallels in the treatment of Stephen and Jesus?

### **Stephen**

Acts 6:11

Acts 6:12

Acts 6:13-14

Acts 7:54

Acts 7:58

### **Jesus**

Matthew 26:64-65

Matthew 26:4-5

Matthew 26:59-61

Matthew 26:67

Matthew 27:22

5. How did Stephen's face appear to the people and why do you think this was so? (Acts 6:15, Exodus 34:29-30)

6. In Stephen's review of Israel's history, what were the contributions of their revered leaders?

Acts 7:2-8	Abraham
Acts 7:9-17	Joseph
Acts 7:20-44	Moses
Acts 7:45	Joshua
Acts 7:46-47	David/Solomon

7. How was Stephen's review an indictment against his accusers? (see also Romans 9:4-5)

8. What does the Bible say about "stiff-necked" people?

Exodus 32:7-10

Nehemiah 9:16-17

Proverbs 29:1

9. What charges did Stephen level against the Sanhedrin and why?

10. What was God's alternative for stiff-necked people then and now?  
(see Deuteronomy 10:14-20, 2 Chronicles 30:7-9)

Note: Romans had taken away the right for Jews to inflict capital punishment

11. With what words did Stephen acknowledge Christ's presence at his stoning?

What hope do you find in these words and his example?

12. What happened after Stephen's death? Acts 8:1-4

Memory Verse: "Lord do not hold this sin against them." *Acts 7:60*

Prayer Guide: Father, help me forgive those who sin against me.

## LESSON EIGHT: ACTS 8:1-40

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Have you ever moved because you had to and seen good come out of it?*

Note: Samaritans were a half-breed people, despised by the Jews who had their own temple and priesthood.

Note: The Eunuch, a castrated court official, was from biblical Ethiopia, which today comprises modern Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia.

1. Describe the persecution that broke out after Stephen's death.

2. What was Saul's role in the persecution?

Acts 7:58

Acts 8:1-3

Acts 9:1-2

Acts 22:4

Acts 26:10

3. How were God's purposes furthered by the persecution? (Acts 1:8)

4. What did Philip bring to the people of Samaria and with what result?

5. What did Simon provide for the people of Samaria and with what result?

6. How were the apostles Peter and John used by God in this first spread of Christianity outside of Jerusalem and into Samaria? (Acts 8:14-17, 25)

7. What held Simon captive even after his baptism and what warning does he provide? (see also 2 Timothy 2:25-26)

8. What excuses might Philip have given for not going to the desert road?

9. What opportunity would he have missed if he had not gone?

10. How do you know when an opportunity has come to you from God?

What do you miss when you don't pursue it? (see also Romans 8:5-6)

11. What steps did Philip take to introduce the Ethiopian to Jesus?

What do you learn from his example?

12. How was the conversion of the Eunuch a significant part of God's plan?

Isaiah 56:3-5

Ephesians 2:11-18

13. What role did scripture play in drawing the man to Jesus?

14. What role has scripture played in drawing you to Jesus?

What role might it play in opening doors in your discussions with others?

Memory Verse: "The Spirit told Philip 'go to that chariot and stay near it.'" *Acts 8:29*

Prayer Guide: Holy Spirit, help me to listen.

## LESSON NINE: ACTS 9:1-31

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Have you ever welcomed someone you feared?*

Note: The journey from Jerusalem to Damascus, an oasis surrounded by desert, was about 150 miles and would have taken about a week to make.

1. What do you think causes people to become fanatics?
2. What kind of fanatic had Saul become and what treatment did he intend for his enemies? (Acts 9:1-2, 13-14)
3. Who supported Saul's plans?
4. What reasons for his actions do you think he would have given if you had stopped him on the Road to Damascus before his conversion?

5. What reasons did he give after his conversion? (1 Timothy 1:13)
6. How did Jesus introduce Himself to Saul and who did Saul understand Him to be?

Acts 9:4-5

Acts 9:20

Acts 9:22

How were you introduced to Jesus and who do you understand Him to be?

7. What plans did God have for Saul's future?  
Acts 9:15-16

Acts 26:16-18



8. How was Saul transformed by his encounter with Jesus? List the changes that occurred.  
(see also 1 Timothy 1:12-17)

9. How does transformation remain evidence of a genuine encounter with Jesus today?

Have you experienced such transformation?

10. How did people react to Saul's transformation?

Acts 9:22-23, 29

Acts 9:26

Note: Ananias (Hananiah) means "the Lord is gracious." Barnabas means "son of encouragement."

11. How did God use people in Saul's spiritual journey?

Acts 7:60-8:1

Acts 9:8

Acts 9:17-19

Acts 9:25, 28-30

Acts 9:27

12. How might God use you to encourage others in their spiritual journey?

Memory Verse: "I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life." *1 Timothy 1:16*

Prayer Guide: Merciful God, have mercy on me a sinner.

## LESSON TEN: ACTS 9:32-11:18

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Have you ever had an experience that overturned a prejudice?*

Note: Peter who was given the “Keys to the Kingdom” (Matthew 16:19) opened the door of faith for Jews (Acts 2), for Samaritans (Acts 8) and for Gentiles (Acts 10).

Note: “God-fearers” had not converted to Judaism but respected its moral teachings and believed in one God. No orthodox Jew would enter the house of a Gentile God-fearer.

1. How did God use Peter to transform Aeneas’ life? (Acts 9:32-35)
2. Why was Dorcas so precious to the widows?
3. What steps did Peter take to respond to the grief of the widows and to restore life?
4. Why does physical healing so often strengthen faith?  
What happens when illness persists?

Note: Tanners worked with dead animals, and therefore the Jews regarded them as ceremonially unclean. Staying with the tanner may have prepared Peter’s heart for God’s outreach to Gentiles.

5. How had Cornelius honored God with his life? (Acts 10:1-2)
6. From a Jewish perspective, what did Cornelius lack? (Romans 9:4-5)

From God’s perspective, what did he lack?

7. How did the vision of the animals prepare Peter for his visit with Cornelius?  
(Acts 10:17-29, see also Mark 7:14-23)
8. Why do you think people develop a sense of entitlement?

What are the negative impacts?

9. Why had the Jews developed a sense of entitlement?  
Deuteronomy 7:6-16

10. What had the Jews failed to grasp?  
Genesis 12:1-3

Psalms 67:2

Romans 15:8-13

11. What radical message broke down barriers between Jew and Gentile?

Acts 10:34, 2 Chronicles 19:7

Acts 10:35

Acts 10:36, Romans 1:16

Acts 10:43

Acts 10:45-47

12. Read Ephesians 2:14-18. How does Christ continue to break down barriers?

13. How did Peter respond to his critics and what do you learn from him about responding to yours? (Acts 11:1-18, see also Philippians 2:1-5, Colossians 2:2)

14. Are there any areas in which your sense of entitlement is keeping people from seeing Christ in you and from being welcomed by Him?

Memory Verse: "For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility." *Ephesians 2:14*

Prayers Guide: Savior, break down walls in my heart.

## LESSON ELEVEN: ACTS 11:19-30

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Remember a time when someone noticed and encouraged you in a way that helped you persevere.*

Note: Antioch, located 300 miles north of Jerusalem, was the capital of Syria and the third largest city of the Roman Empire. Known as the “Golden Queen of the East,” it was the center of trade, transportation and culture.

1. Why did believers end up in Antioch?
2. What news reached the Jerusalem church and what was its reaction?
3. What kind of leader was Barnabas?

Acts 4:36-37, 11:23

Acts 9:26-27

Acts 11:24

Acts 11:25-26

Acts 11:30

4. Why did the Jerusalem church send Barnabas to Antioch?
5. What do you tend to notice and do when sent into new places?

6. What did Barnabas notice and do?

List the steps he took with believers in Antioch. (Acts 11:23)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How might you follow his example?

7. What does it mean to remain “true to the Lord with all your heart?”

Joshua 22:5

Mark 12:30

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

8. Describe as fully as you can the practices of the church in Antioch and the blessings that resulted.

Acts 11:19-31

Acts 13:1-3

Note: The Latin suffix “ian” means “belonging to the party of” and denoted the allegiance of Christians to Christ. Whether adopted by believers or invented by enemies as a term of reproach, the word *Christian* is found only three times in the New Testament.

9. What had Luke previously called believers in Christ?

Acts 2:47

Acts 9:13

Acts 6:1

Acts 9:14,21

Acts 9:2

Acts 9:30, 10:45

10. What had Jesus called his followers?

Matthew 5:13

John 10:27

Matthew 5:14

John 13:35

Matthew 25:21

John 15:14

11. What meaning does the word “Christian” have for you?

12. Why do you think the word “Christian” has become an obstacle for many around the world?

Memory Verse: “...he encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.”  
*Acts 11:23b*

Prayer Guide: Gracious God, help me to remain true to You with all my heart.

## LESSON TWELVE: ACTS 12:1-25

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Describe a time you were rescued.*

Note: James, the brother of John, was put to death, while James, the brother of Jesus, became the recognized leader of the church.

Note: Herod Agrippa I was the grandson of Herod the Great, who ordered the Bethlehem children to be murdered, and the nephew of Herod Antipas, who had John the Baptist beheaded.

1. How did Herod reveal himself to be an enemy of God?  
(Acts 12:1-4, 21-23)
  
2. Why do you think God allowed Herod to kill James but kept him from harming Peter?
  
3. What did Peter later write about suffering?  
1 Peter 1:3-7  
  
1 Peter 3:13-17  
  
1 Peter 4:12-19  
  
1 Peter 5:8-11
  
4. What reasons did Peter have for great fear?
  
5. What reasons did Peter have for deep trust?  
Isaiah 41:10  
  
Matthew 14:25-33  
  
Acts 4:13-22  
  
Acts 5:17-19
  
6. What reasons do you have for trust? For doubt and fear?

7. What power did Herod use to secure Peter?

What power did the believers use to obtain his release?

8. How can you grow in using God's power for God's purposes?  
(see also Ephesians 3:16-21)

9. Describe the responses to Peter's rescue.

Peter: Acts 12:8-12

Rhoda: Acts 12:13-14

Church: Acts 12:15-16

Herod: Acts 12:18-19

10. What is your response to rescue? (see also Psalm 18:1-6, 16-19)

11. Read Psalm 9. How did God exercise justice toward Herod and how does He continue to exercise justice?

What hope does this provide?

Memory Verse: "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."  
*Isaiah 41:10*

Prayer Guide: LORD, teach me to wait in hope.

## LESSON THIRTEEN: ACTS 13:1-14:20

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Has a travel experience changed your perspective?*

Note: Paul, as a Jew, had a Hebrew name in addition to the name given him as a Roman citizen. Luke calls him by his Hebrew name “Saul” when he is among the Jews, but shifts to his Latin name “Paul” when he goes among the Gentiles.

Note: Antioch in Pisidia, a military center 100 miles north of Perga, is not to be confused with Antioch in Syria.

Note: The names of the five prophet/teachers of the Antioch church reflect cultural diver

1. What happened while the Antioch church was worshipping? (Acts 13:2-3)  
How do you think this equipped Paul and Barnabas for what lay ahead?
2. How have you ever received direction for service in worship?  
How did this equip you?
3. Why was Elymas so dangerous?
4. Why was it necessary for Paul to speak to him as he did and what was the result of his confrontation? (Acts 13: 10-11, see also John 8:42-47)

Note: John Mark was a cousin to Barnabas. His mother’s home was a gathering place of believers. The exact cause of John Mark’s desertion is unknown but Paul did not want him back on his team. Eventually, he proved himself to Paul and authored the Gospel of Mark.

5. In the first recorded full sermon of Paul what was the setting and who was the audience? (Acts 13:14-16)
6. How did Paul shape the message for his audience?



7. What did Jesus provide that Paul made clear in his teaching?

Acts 13:38-39

Galatians 3:23-25

Romans 3:21-24

8. What were Paul's warnings to his listeners? (Acts 13:40-41, 46)

9. How were Paul and Barnabas opposed and persecuted?  
What in each case was their response?

*Opposition/Persecution*

*Response*

Acts 13:8-11

Acts 13:50

Acts 14:2-6

Acts 14:19-22

10. What are you tempted to do in face of opposition?

11. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-18 and 12:7-10.  
What enabled them and what enables you to stand firm in faith?

12. Why did Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes in Lystra?  
(Deuteronomy 4:39, 5:7)

13. What is your response to people who give you credit that belongs to God?

Memory Verse: "My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness."  
2 Corinthians 12:9

Prayer Guide: God of Grace, help me to stand firm.

## LESSON FOURTEEN: ACTS 14:21-16:5

**OPENING QUESTION:** *What helps you to resolve a conflict?*

1. How did Paul and Barnabas strengthen and encourage the early church?

Acts 14:21,25

Acts 14:22

Acts 14:23

Acts 14:27

Acts 14:28

2. Why do such practices remain important for today's church?

3. Read Matthew 28:18-20. How did Paul and Barnabas show obedience to Jesus' command?

4. In your experience, what most often threatens unity?

5. What teaching threatened unity? (Acts 15:1-2)

Why was this teaching so dangerous?

Galatians 5:1-12

6. What steps were taken to resolve the conflict?

Acts 15:2

Acts 15:5-6

Acts 15:7-11

Acts 15:12

Acts 15:13-21

Acts 15:22-23

Acts 15:30-31

Note: The council made four requirements regarding habits common to Gentiles but offensive to Jews.

7. What was contained in the letter and why was it received as encouragement?  
(Acts 15:23-29)

8. Why is unity in the church so important?

John 17:20-23

Romans 15:5-7

Ephesians 4:1-6

Have you experienced the blessing of living in the unity Christ intends? Explain.

9. Why did Barnabas and Paul part ways? (Acts 15:36-39)

How would Paul later view John Mark? (2 Timothy 4:11)

10. What new partnerships formed as a result?

11. What did Paul believe about circumcision? (Galatians 5:6)

12. Why do you think Paul thought it wise to circumcise Timothy?  
(see also Romans 14:19, 1 Corinthians 9:22)

13. Have you gained insights from this lesson to equip you as a peacemaker?  
In what setting might you practice?

Memory Verse: May the God who gives endurance and encouragement, give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus.

Prayer Guide: Prince of Peace, help me bring peace.

## LESSON FIFTEEN: ACTS 16:6-17:15

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Have you ever had a sudden change of plans that altered your life?*

**Read Acts 16:6-40**

1. Has God ever redirected you mid-stream as you served him?
2. How did God redirect Paul and his companions? (Acts 16:6-10)
3. What do you think made it possible for them to respond in obedience?

What makes it possible for you to respond in obedience?

4. Where did Luke join the journey for the first time? (Acts 16:10-11)

Note: Philippi was a Roman colony. There seems to have been no synagogue in Philippi which would indicate that the city was without a quorum of ten Jewish men required to establish one.

5. Who was Lydia and what choices did she make that opened her world to God and His people? (Acts 16:13-15)
6. Describe the bondage of the female slave.

Note: The Romans were intent on maintaining peace, so anything that threatened it was taken seriously, and accusations of treason often proved fatal.

7. What accusation provoked the crowd's anger against Paul and Silas? (Acts 16:19-21)

How did Jews in Thessalonica use similar tactics? (Acts 17:5-8)

8. Describe Paul and Silas' response to mistreatment. What insights do you gain from this about your response to mistreatment?

Acts 16:25

Acts 16:35-39

9. What might the prisoners been tempted to do when their chains came loose?

How were their loosened chains used for God's purposes? How are yours?

10. How was the jailer transformed by Jesus and what service resulted?

11. How do you think a person of faith can influence a household for Jesus today?

How can a person of faith live in a household that resists Jesus?

12. Read Galatians 3:26-28. How is the truth of these verses illustrated in this lesson?

**Read Acts 17:1-15**

13. Compare the response of the Thessalonians and the Bereans to the gospel presentation.

*Thessalonians*

*Bereans*

14. Read 1 Thessalonians 1-10.

In light of the initial response in Thessalonica, what were the unexpected results of Paul's ministry there?

How does this encourage you to persevere?

Memory Verse: We continually remember before God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. *1 Thessalonians 1:3*

Prayer Guide: Holy Spirit, guide me.

## LESSON SIXTEEN: ACTS 17:16-34

**OPENING QUESTION:** *How does a public speaker capture your attention?*

Note: Athens was a fading cultural and intellectual center.

Note: The Areopagus, a hill south of the market place, was named for “Ares” (the Roman Mars), the god of war and thunder. Once the site of the Council that governed the Greek city-state, it retained authority only in areas of religion and morals.

Note: Epicurean philosophers believed that the purpose of life was pleasure and happiness. Stoics believed they should live in accord with nature, as independent self-sufficient people who suppressed personal desires.

Note: Paul quoted two Greek poets.

- 1) “In him we live and move and have our being.” (Cretan poet Epimenides – 600 B.C.)
- 2) “We are his offspring” (Cilician poet Aratus – circa 315-240 B.C.)

1. What did Paul notice about Athens and what was his emotional response?
2. What do you think the challenges would be of speaking in a city like Athens?
3. Why were the people interested in Paul’s message?
4. How did Paul connect with his audience?
5. Why did he call the people “religious?”
6. In what way might this be like connecting with an audience today by calling them “deeply spiritual” people?

Can “religious” or “deeply spiritual” people fail to connect with God? Explain.

7. What is idolatry?

Acts 17:23,29

Jeremiah 2:11-13

Romans 1:25

Colossians 3:5

8. Why are idols not to be worshipped?

Exodus 20:3-6

Isaiah 44:9-22

9. Reflect on your own life. Are there things, even “good things,” that have become idols?

10. What did Paul say at the Areopagus about...

God:

Man:

Jesus:

11. How was Paul’s message different from others he had given?

(see also Acts 9:20-22, 13:16-41)

12. What can you learn from Paul about shaping your message to be heard by a particular audience?

What are the dangers of trying to shape a message to fit an audience?

13. What are the cultural factors to be considered in shaping a message of Good News about Jesus for your neighbors?

14. Write a brief message that might be heard by them.

Memory Verse: “In Him we live and move and have our being.” *Acts 17:28*

Prayer Guide: Holy God, help me live and move in You.

## LESSON SEVENTEEN: ACTS 18:1-19:41

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Have you ever done something in partnership that you could not have done alone?*

Note: Corinth was the political and commercial center of Greece, known for hedonism and immorality attached to the worship of the goddess Aphrodite.

Note: To have blood *on your hands* meant that you bore responsibility for another's death because you have failed to warn them. But, to have blood *on your head* meant you were to blame for your own judgment. (Acts 18:6, Joshua 2:19)

1. Paul later wrote his letter to the Romans from Corinth. Read Romans 1:22-32.  
How might the description in his letter mirror what he found among the people of Corinth?

2. How did Paul seek to draw people to Christ?

Acts 18:4-5

Acts 18:7,11

Acts 18:19-21

Acts 19:8-10

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

3. What was the response to Paul's preaching in Corinth? (Acts 18:4-8)

4. Who were Priscilla and Aquila?

Acts 18:1-3

Acts 18:18-19

Acts 18:26

Romans 16:3-4

1 Corinthians 16:19

What do you find remarkable in their example of faith?



5. How did God Himself comfort Paul in Corinth? (Acts 18:9-11)
6. Why do you think Paul needed that encouragement and what was his response to it?

What difference does such encouragement make in your life?

7. How did Roman law protect Christianity? (Acts 18:12-16, 19:38-41)
8. Describe Apollos. (Acts 18:24-28, 1 Corinthians 3:5-9)  
How was his ministry affected by Priscilla and Aquila?

What lessons for you are embedded in this encounter?

Note: With Paul's return to his home church in Antioch and Jerusalem, he concluded his second missionary journey. His third journey began in the regions of Galatia, Phrygia and Ephesus.

9. Whose disciples did Paul encounter in Ephesus, and what changes occurred when they learned of Jesus? (John 1:29-34, Acts 19:1-7, Ephesians 1:13-14)
10. What led people to recognize and confess their evil deeds? (Acts 19:11-20)  
What changes resulted?
11. What led to the great disturbance against Christianity in Ephesus? (Acts 19:23-41)
12. How does Christ continue to impact economic realities for His true followers?  
What is the current challenge in this for you?

Memory Verse: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." *Acts 18:9-10*

Prayer Guide: Lord, cast out my fear.

## LESSON EIGHTEEN: ACTS 20:1-38

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Have you ever said a tearful “good-bye” to someone you thought you might never see again?*

Note: *Breaking of bread* in the early church included both the Lord’s supper and a shared meal.

Note: Eutychus means “fortunate.”

1. What difference does it make if God has given you a clear destination?

What destination shaped Paul’s travels and ministry? (Acts 20:22, 24)

2. What similarities do you find in the journeys of Paul and Christ toward their destinations? (Luke 9:51, Luke 13:22, Luke 18:31-34)
3. Read 2 Corinthians 2:12-13. Why did Paul go to Troas and what was his disappointment there?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 7:5-7. What sorrow and what joy awaited Paul in Macedonia?
5. What do you learn about worship services in the early church? (Acts 20:7-12)

Note: Paul’s address to the Ephesian elders is the only speech in Acts addressed to a Christian audience.

6. Why did Paul ask the Ephesian church elders to meet him in Miletus? (Acts 20:16-18)

7. What message did Paul leave with the church elders?

Acts 20:18-19

Acts 20:20-21,27,31,33-35

Acts 20:22-23, 2 Timothy 4:6

Acts 20:28-31

Acts 20:24, 2 Timothy 4:7, Philippians 1:21

Acts 20:32

8. What was the response of the elders and what does this reveal about their relationship with Paul? (Acts 20:36-37)

9. Why was it so important for the leaders to take Paul's words or warning seriously?

Ezekiel 34:1-10

Revelation 2:1-6

1 Timothy 1:3-6

2 Timothy 2:14-19

10. Why do these warnings remain important?

11. Which of Paul's words or actions are most compelling for you and why?

Memory Verse: "Now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."  
*Acts 20:32*

Prayer Guide: Gracious God, overflow Your love through me.

## LESSON NINETEEN: ACTS 21:1-22:29

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Have you ever ignored warnings and done something dangerous?*

1. What might have prevented Paul from traveling to Jerusalem?

Acts 20:23

Acts 21:4

Acts 21:10-12

Acts 22:18

2. Why did this not deter Paul from going to Jerusalem?

Acts 21:13-14

Philippians 3:12-20

3. Describe the Jerusalem reception. (Acts 21:17-26)

4. Read Acts 24:17 and Romans 15:25-27. How might this have impacted the reception?

5. How did Paul seek to maintain unity with Jewish Christians?

Acts 16:1-3

Acts 21:20-26

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

What might have been tempting at this point?

Note: It was prohibited for Gentiles to go beyond the designated court for Gentiles in the temple. Signs were posted which read: "No foreigner may enter within the barricade which surrounds the temple and enclosure. Anyone who is caught trespassing will bear personal responsibility for his ensuing death."

6. What charges did the Jews bring against Paul? (Acts 21:27-28)

What treatment did he receive?

7. How were they similar to Christ's charges and treatment? (see also Luke 23:1-25)

8. What triggered the people's anger in Paul's defense?(Acts 22:21)

9. What was God's purpose for the Jewish people?

Isaiah 42:1-9

Isaiah 49:6

10. What was God's call to Paul and how might this be His call to you? (Acts 22:14-16)

11. What are the privileges of your earthly citizenship and how can you use them for God's purposes?

12. What privileges did Paul's Roman citizenship provide? (Acts 16:35-39, 22:25-29)

13. How do you think God ultimately protected the church through Roman law and Paul's citizenship?

14. Read Philippians 3:20-4:1. What hope does this provide for you?

Memory Verse: "The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from His mouth. You will be His witness to all people of what you have seen and heard." *Acts 22:14-15*

Prayer Guide: Father in heaven, use my citizenship to build your kingdom.

## LESSON TWENTY: ACTS 22:30-24:27

**OPENING QUESTION:** *What importance did your family place on always telling the truth?*

Note: Ananias was killed in 66 A.D. by Jewish guerillas after fleeing for his life because of his known sympathies with Rome.

Note: Felix was born a slave, but because of his brother's favor with Claudius and Nero, he was freed. He became the first slave in history to govern a Roman province and was known for cruelty, lust and greed.

1. How did both the High Priest and Paul dishonor each other and violate law?  
(Acts 23:1-5, Hebrews 5:1-3, Exodus 22:28)
  
2. How did Paul defend his conscience before the Sanhedrin?  
Acts 23:1 (see also 1 Corinthians 4:3-5)
  
3. What allows a clear conscience and are you experiencing this?  
  
Hebrews 10:19-25  
  
1 Peter 3:15-17
  
4. What did Paul state was the reason for his trial and how did this divide the council?  
(Acts 24:21)
  
5. Imagine yourself in a setting of such hostility. What temptations might you face?
  
6. How did God strengthen Paul for what lay ahead? (Acts 23:11)
  
7. What pattern of encouragement do you see in God's care for Paul?  
  
Acts 18:9-10  
  
Acts 23:11  
  
Acts 27:24  
  
2 Timothy 4:16-18

8. Read Psalm 27. How can you take courage in times of difficulty?
9. List the practical means God used to protect Paul. (Acts 23:12-35)
10. Contrast the three accounts of Paul's arrest and the charges brought against him.
- Luke's account (Acts 21:27-40)

The Captain's account (Acts 23:25-30)

The Lawyer's account (Acts 24:5-8)

11. How did Tertullus seek to gain favor with Felix?

What are the dangers of using such a technique?

Proverbs 26:28

Proverbs 27:6

Proverbs 28:23

Proverbs 29:5

12. What do you learn of Felix that would erode your respect for him?

Memory Verse: "He (God) will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of people's hearts." *1 Corinthians 4:5b*

Prayer Guide: Holy Spirit, teach me to speak only truth.

## LESSON TWENTY-ONE: ACTS 25:1-26:32

**OPENING QUESTION:** *Have you ever delivered a speech before a person or group of great influence?*

Note: Nero was the emperor (Caesar) at this time. It was the right of every Roman citizen to have his case heard before the emperor or his representative in Rome.

Note: Felix was recalled to Rome about 60 A.D. because of irregularities in his rule. Festus succeeded him.

1. What are God's warnings about injustice?

Jeremiah 5:26-6:1

Isaiah:10:1-4

2. How were the Jews and Festus torn from true justice by self-interest? (Acts 25:1-12)

3. Why is justice so costly when it threatens self-interest?

4. What are God's promises for people who pursue justice at the cost of their own comfort?

Isaiah 58:6-12

5. What conclusion had Festus come to about Paul's guilt? (Acts 25:18-21,24-27)

6. Imagine yourself in the audience when Paul spoke before Agrippa and describe the pageantry.

7. How was scripture fulfilled in this event?

Luke 21:12-15

Acts 9:15



8. What was Paul's hope as he spoke before Agrippa? (Acts 26:29)
9. What good news did he proclaim about Jesus?
10. What changes in Paul's life following his encounter with Jesus did he proclaim before Agrippa? (Acts 26:4-23)
11. How did Festus and Agrippa each respond to Paul's proclamation?
- Festus (see also 1 Corinthians 1:18)

Agrippa

12. Paul described his mission as turning people "from darkness to light."  
How did he explain what this meant?

Acts 26:18

2 Corinthians 4:6

Colossians 1:13-14

Ephesians 5:8-14

13. How has Jesus brought light in your darkness?  
How might you seek His light?

Memory Verse: "I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." *Acts 26:18*

Prayer Guide: Lord Jesus, bring light into my darkness.

## LESSON TWENTY-TWO: ACTS 27:1-28:31

**OPENING QUESTION:** *What elements help provide a satisfying end to a story?*

1. Who was Julius and how did God provide for Paul through him?

Acts 27:1-3

Acts 27:6

Acts 27:42-43

2. What was the impact of the storm on the men? (Acts 27:13-44)

How do life's storms impact you?

3. What kept Paul confident through the storm?

Acts 27:23-25

4. How did Paul continue to display leadership in the midst of difficulties?

Acts 27:9-10

Acts 27:22, 25

Acts 27:30-32

Acts 27:33-36

Acts 28:8-9

Acts 28:17-20

Acts 28:30-31

5. What important characteristics of leadership were displayed in his life that you would like in yours?
6. What causes people to have influence in the lives of others even when they are not in designated positions of leadership?
7. Why is a welcome so important?
8. How was welcome extended?  
Acts 28:1-10  
Acts 28:13-14  
Acts 28:15  
Acts 28:30
9. In the face of Jewish opposition throughout his journeys, what was Paul's desire for his fellow-Jews?  
Acts 26:29  
Romans 9:2-3  
Romans 10:1
10. How will Paul's deep desire one day will be fulfilled? Romans 11:25-27

Note: Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians during his time in Rome.

11. How does Acts 28:31 summarize Paul's whole life?
12. Read Ephesians 3:14-21. What empowered Paul to live such a life?

How will you draw from God's power to live a life that pleases Him?

Memory Verse: "Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ." *Acts 28:31*

Prayer Guide: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to You be the glory. Amen

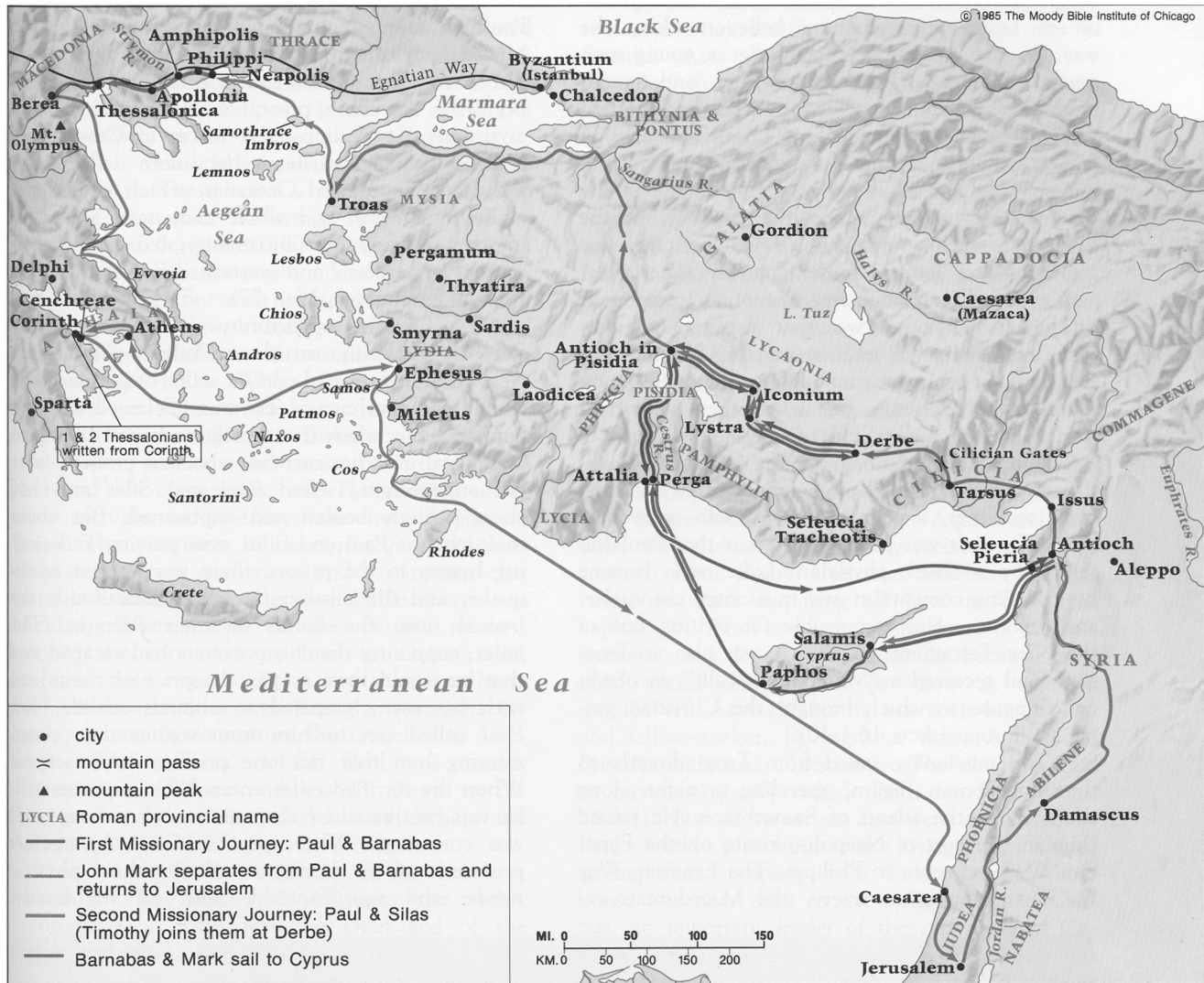
## REVIEW I

1. What verses have become most significant for you during this study?
2. What question posed during this study have you pondered deeply?
3. What have you learned about God's power?
4. What new understanding of the church have you gained?
5. Which character from our study has helped shape your life?
6. How have you experienced the power of prayer?
7. How has your faith been deepened?

## REVIEW II

1. Which verses have become most important to you?
2. Describe the key issues of Acts using only five words.
3. What title would you give to a biography about the Apostle Paul?
4. What have you learned about God's work in the world through the acts of the Holy Spirit?
5. How have you been strengthened to endure suffering and opposition?
6. What have you learned of God's sovereignty?
7. In what way has the witness of Paul challenged you?
8. How has the study of Acts expanded your commitment to unity and partnership in the church?
9. How has your relationship with Jesus been deepened through the study of Acts?

# PAUL'S FIRST AND SECOND JOURNEYS



# PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY





## PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME

