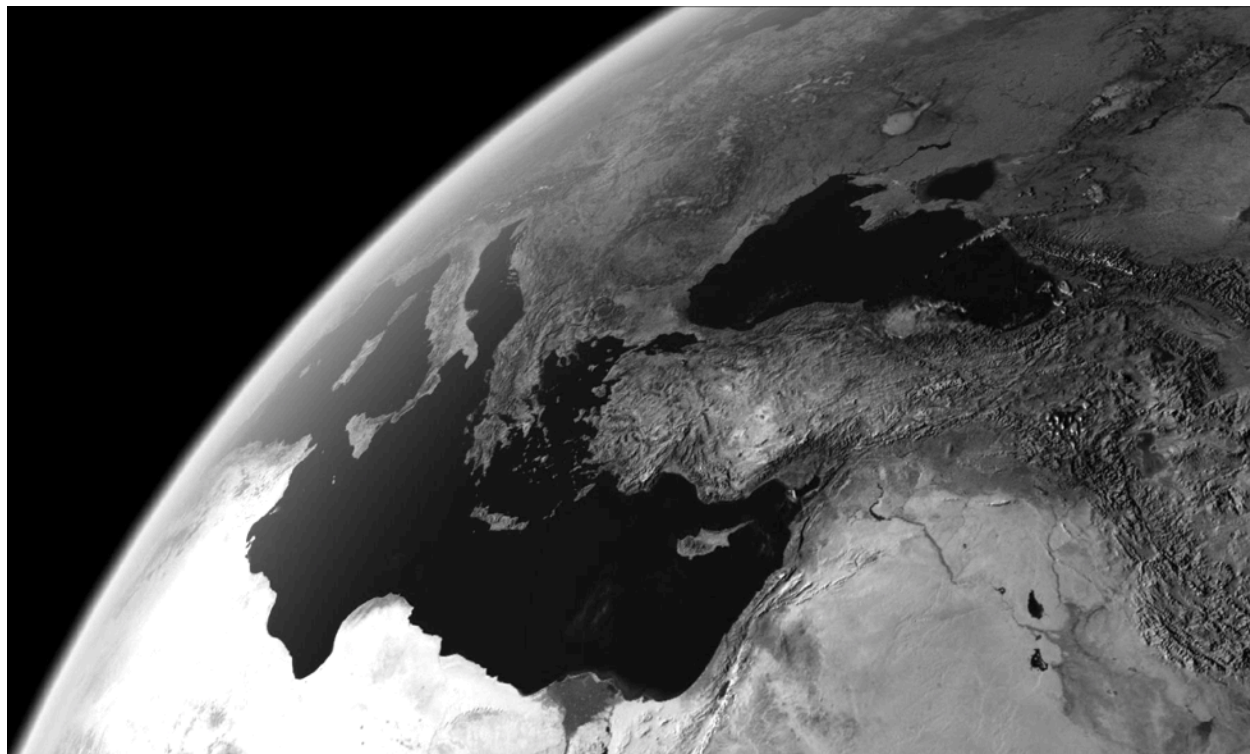




ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

CHURCH, MISSIONS & THE HOLY SPIRIT



FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE // BY JUSTIN HUTTS



ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

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OVERVIEW OF ACTS

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

The book of Acts is a continuation of Dr. Luke's Gospel, a historical account of Jesus' life. In Acts, Luke recounts the origins of the early Christian church in the first generation after Jesus' death and resurrection—a period of 30 years that changed the world.

People seek to build upon their own plot of land, to pursue the things that make them happy, even enshrined them as rights. But the life of a Jesus follower, as seen in Acts, is the opposite of this. Apostles give up his own life for the sake of Jesus' mission. A mission that is far from easy or comfortable. Like the apostles we too can walk by faith going to dark and unreached places all so that all people in all places can know the all-powerful name of Jesus Christ and hear of the hope and truth of his gospel.

Jesus commissioned His apostles to preach the gospel. That same mission continues today, unbroken and unhindered for almost 2,000 years. The book of Acts is an encouragement for the church today as Christians contend for the gospel of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Until all hear the gospel,

Justin T. Hutto



OUTLINE OF ACTS

SIMPLE OUTLINE FOR ACTS [1:8]:

1. Gospel Spreads throughout **Jerusalem** [Chapters 1-7]
2. Gospel Spreads to **Judea & Samaria** [Chapters 8-12]
3. Gospel Spreads to the **Ends of the Earth** [Chapters 13-28]



“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in **Jerusalem**, throughout **Judea**, in **Samaria**, and to the **ends of the earth**.” – Jesus, at the Ascension (Acts 1:8, NLT)

SIMPLE OUTLINE FOR ACTS



KEY QUESTIONS FOR EACH CHAPTER:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built?

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church?

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*?

Q: What do you learn about God?

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit?



ACTS 1 // PRE-CHURCH & PRE-PENTECOST

The Promise of the Holy Spirit [1:1-5]

- ☪ **Who wrote the Acts of the Apostles?** The apostle, Luke. **Who is Theophilus?** [cf. Luke 1:1-3] We don't know a lot about him other than he was likely a Gentile. Some have suggested that he was a follower of God, a ruler, or Luke himself. **What does his name mean?** It means, "one who God loves."
- ☪ **What was Luke's reason for writing?** To erase doubts of Jesus' resurrection through eyewitness testimony and the rapid growth of the church.
- ☪ **When did Jesus promise to give the Holy Spirit? Why?** The Holy Spirit would come soon after he would ascend. Jesus would leave, but he wouldn't leave his followers alone. A good understanding of the church is based on Christ's work in the gospels, but also the Holy Spirit's work. The church built on the resurrection of Jesus and the Spirit of God who gives the church life [vs.1-3].
- ☪ **Where were the apostles to wait and why?** The church was to launch from Jerusalem through the apostles [v.4].
- ☪ **Where did Jesus get his wisdom and counsel?** Jesus gave commands through the Holy Spirit [v.2]. **If Jesus didn't give commands on his own, but through the Holy Spirit, how does this give you insight into seeking the leadership of the Holy Spirit yourself?**
- ☪ Jesus taught about the kingdom of God [v.3, already or not yet]. **What did Jesus mean by the "kingdom of God"?**

The Ascension of Jesus Christ [1:6-11]

- ☪ **How did the "restoration" relate to the kingdom of God?** [v.3] The apostles identified with Israel and God's promises to Israel [v.6]. However, this promise referred more to the work the apostles would do in Israel. The apostles would minister in the power of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus promised [v.8]. They received power in order to be witnesses. Jesus calls the apostles to be witnesses of Jesus inside and outside Jerusalem [v.8].
- ☪ **Why did Jesus ascend? Where did He go? And what is He doing now?** Jesus ascended to heaven to the righthand of God. He promised to return the same way



He left [v.11] He left the apostles, and they were to take responsibility for Jesus' teaching and spread the good news the world until He returned.

Replacing an Apostle [1:12-26]

- 🗣 **What do you learn about the apostles and what they did?** The apostles devoted themselves to prayer together [v.14, 24]. The apostles worked as a team choosing a new replacement for Judas Iscariot relying upon the wisdom of God [v.24]. The only requirement was that he had to be an eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection [v.22].
- 🗣 Both Peter and Judas had made some major mistakes that causes them great shame. **What differences do you note between Peter and Judas as disciples and their response to Jesus?**
- 🗣 **How many disciples of Jesus are mentioned here and in the Gospels?** [cf. 1 Corinthians 15; they are numbered from 12, 120, 500+]
- 🗣 **How did they choose a new apostle?** They cast lots and the lot landed on Matthias [who you never hear from again]. **What was their decision making method? Where in Scripture was this also practiced?**
- 🗣 **How is prayer a mark of a follower of Jesus?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? There is an overt dependency on prayer and the authority of the Holy Spirit

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? They cast lots. They had not yet received the Holy Spirit. They taught on the kingdom of God.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? It is prescriptive to take the gospel of Christ to the nations.

Q: What do you learn about God? Jesus rose from dead. Holy Spirit is authoritative.

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Seeking His leadership in our churches or fellowships. I am in need of more daily dependency on prayer, especially with those I am ministering alongside.



ACTS 2 // PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit Comes [2:1-12]

- 🗣️ **What is Pentecost?** Seven weeks after the Passover was Pentecost. The feast of harvest. Ironically there would be a great spiritual harvest this day. **Why is it significant that God sent His Spirit on this particular day?**
- 🗣️ **Why do we celebrate Good Friday, Passover (Easter), but not often Pentecost on the Christian calendar?**
- 🗣️ Notice the sight and sound: The Holy Spirit came with the sound of a violent wind and appearance of fire [2-3]. **How would you describe the setting and background of these verses?**
- 🗣️ **When did the God appear in fire in the Scripture?** [i.e. burning bush, pillar of fire, Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, chariot of fire, "He is a consuming fire"]
- 🗣️ **What is the significance of tongues in this text?** The Holy Spirit filled them and they were able to speak different but recognizable languages because people were gathered from all over the world to celebrate the feasts [4-13] It was a memorable event. Likely, it was the most memorable Pentecost in Jewish history.
- 🗣️ **How did the crowds respond to the outpouring of the Spirit? How would you have responded?** Some were curious and questioned the meaning of the Holy Spirit's presence. Some were skeptical and questioned whether they were drunk [12-13].
- 🗣️ **What are some of the attacks you have heard on the Bible or the works of God or the Holy Spirit? How do you typically respond to these kinds of attacks? Why is it good to be reminded of God's awesome works?**

Peter's Preaches Part 1: Jesus' Miracles [2:13-47]

- 🗣️ **What changes in Peter do you notice since stories about him in the Gospels?**
- 🗣️ **How does Peter explain the Holy Spirit 'drunkenness'?** Peter gives clarity through the Holy Spirit. They are not drunk because it's too early in the day [14].
- 🗣️ **How does the inclusion of Joel's prophecy fit here?** Peter brings in prophecy from Joel, which talks about God outpouring of His Spirit in the last days [17-18],



which would be accompanied by many signs and wonders to give proof it was from God [20]. The prophecy does not limit the signs and wonders to Pentecost. Women are included in the prophesying [17-18]. The signs and wonders has similarity to the 10 plagues of Egypt [19-20]

☞ **What are the purpose of miracles? Why did Peter refer to Jesus' miracles?**

The signs and wonders are linked to those that Jesus did on earth [22]. Miracles are affirm Him being a messenger from God. This leads to the gospel—Christ died and rose [23-24] Jesus fulfilled the words of king David [25], of a future hope and King [25-36].

☞ **What do you notice about the ministry of the Holy Spirit?** The Holy Spirit is about the conviction of the people's hearts [37].

☞ **How did the people respond to the Holy Spirit?** Their response was to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. [37-38] They received the Holy Spirit [38b] This gospel of Jesus is not only for them but their children and all future generations [39]. The Lord calls those to Himself. God works in salvation to draw people to Himself. Many were added to the new church that day [41]. **What must be our response to the Holy Spirit today?**

Fellowship Among the New Believers [2:42-47]

☞ **How would you describe simply the early church?** The new believers devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, fellowship, communion, prayer, worship, and using their gifts together [42-44]. **What is the meaning of each of those words or components of the early church gathering? How is this similar or different than your church gathering? Would you add to the list any other essentials for what necessitates a church?**

☞ **How did the early church serve one another?** There was a radical abandonment of worldly stuff for the sake of helping one another, especially those in need [45]. **How can this verse be taken out of context or not even applied today?**

☞ **How often did the early church gather?** They met daily for fellowship and communion [46]. **What was the attitude of their worship? How is this different or similar to the worship you experience in your church?** The attitude of their hearts was glad and generous, worshipful and unified [46-47]. Many more were added to the new church [47b]. **What evokes this kind of awe in you?**



KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? The gospel of Jesus, all Scripture including the OT, being together with other Spirit filled believers, and a separation from the wicked generation [worldly things]. Also, they gathered together to hear the teaching of the apostles by the Holy Spirit, baptism, communion, repentance, generous giving, and unity in Christ.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? The new church purposed to meet together. They were devoted to fellowship because of what Christ has done for them. It was not an option or nice result. It takes work. It is not common to see a physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit. There is an incredible sense of unity and togetherness and radical generosity. There were unique gifts [prophesying, tongues, apostleship, signs and wonders] that you don't see in all churches today. They met daily.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Most of Pentecost is descriptive. But Acts 2:42-47 on the unity and togetherness of believers for fellowship and worship is a beautiful template for any church.

Q: What do you learn about God? He loves to wow us with His power and uniqueness. He proves He is God with signs and wonders. He loves to show us His Son. He desires to be worshiped. His redemptive plan is not particular to a specific people, language, race, or economic status. His redemptive plan is for all He calls upon to be saved. As the Trinity is unified He desires unity among the new believers.

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? For unity in the church. For glad and generous compassion to meet the needs of others around me. For determination to value fellowship. For understanding about prophecy [signs and wonders].



ACTS 3 // THE BEGGAR PART 1

From Beggar to Worshiper [3:1-10]

- **Which disciples are mentioned together in this text? What do you know about them? Where are they going? Why?** Peter (bold, denied Jesus) and John (beloved, at the foot of the cross) go to the temple to pray and to find God-fearers. The disciples gathered at the temple to find God-fearers is the beginning of a common practice in the book of Acts.
- **How are John and Peter's actions different than most of the Jesus followers?** (cf. John 20:19)
- **Where are some places you could go where you know there are people who do not know Jesus?** Note: Most of the attention in this account is on Peter.
- **What details do you learn about the other character in this story?** They met a lame (from birth) beggar who sat (but was carried by unknown person up stairs daily) at the Beautiful Gate. **Is there irony between the person and where he is sitting?**
- **Is it strange that the disciples were gazing at the beggar? How would you have responded to the beggar?**
- **Why did Peter choose this beggar at this moment to heal? How does he respond to the beggar?** Peter offers the beggar what he doesn't want [no money] but what he needs [what money can't buy]. Like Jesus, he draws attention to spiritual needs through physical circumstances.
- **What is the beggar's response? How would you respond if you were the beggar?** This beggar born lame walked and leaped on his feet. Everyone knew it was miraculous. The beggar praised God. While others questioned and wondered.

Peter Preaches Part 2: Jesus Messiahship [3:11-26]

- **Who does Peter give credit to for the miracle?** Peter used the illustration as an opportunity to speak about Jesus. He gives the credit for the miracle immediately to Jesus. He comes out in the open right away. The power to do miracles only comes from Christ through the Holy Spirit. [11-12]



- **What is the difference between this sermon and Peter's first sermon at Pentecost? How does he connect Jesus with truth from Old Testament Scripture? How does the depiction of Jesus mesh with Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah?** Peter preaches using their history to connect with the new story of Christ [the promises from the prophets]. The OT God glorifies Christ [13]. But the people denied and killed Him. They killed the Creator [15, using terms they would be familiar with, Holy and Righteous One]. But God raised Him from the grave—a miracle the apostles saw with their eyes.
- **What were some truthful but tough things Peter said in his sermon? What significant points of the sermon are necessary to share with someone outside the faith?**
- The name of Jesus is what healed the man [16]. **How does knowing the power in Jesus name encourage you to speak boldly about him? Where is the power?**
- **Why were the people (rulers) ignorant of what was happening and why?** The people were ignorant, but not anymore. Now they know because they were told [17]. Note: Jesus words on the cross, "Father forgive them for they know not what they are doing." Peter gives clarity and definition to the prophet's promises of a Messiah [18].
- **How did Peter preach for conviction? How might this have offended his hearers?** He called for a response: repent, turn for your sin, and put Jesus on the throne of your life [19-20]. **How did Peter's preaching contrast with the disciples in John 20:19? How would you describe how you preach the gospel? What do you learn from Peter's boldness?**
- **What picture do you have of Jesus from this from this text? How and when will Jesus come back?** Jesus is in heaven at the right hand of the Father, in a position of authority, but will come back to rule one day soon. Kingdom is already, but not yet [20-21]. Moses promised [22-24], Samuel and other prophets promised [24], and the people that day are recipients of the promised/covenant, and therefore will be blessed if they respond to Christ [25-26].

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! Overt [authority and motivation for ministry] about Christ. They looked for people seeking /fearing God [people the Holy Spirit was convicting]. The teachings of all the Bible, OT and Gospels. Teaching of the kingdom, giving Christ a position of authority as God did with the Hebrews.



Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Healing of the lame beggar. Giving praise to God for the miraculous. The power in the church is not in our ability to minister but in God's restoration of His own kingdom. Going to a temple or place where you might find unbelieving God fearers [i.e. mosque, animist, spiritist, etc.].

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Church is not organized yet. However, much of this chapter is descriptive of the gospel message, which should continue to be preached.

Q: What do we learn about God? He highly values His own name and authority. His redemptive purposes are older than the cross; they go back to the prophets and Abraham. He's just used the Hebrews to carry out His promise of a deliverer. His desire is to bless all people through repentance [19, 25-26].

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Pray that He would draw me to people who need Christ [i.e. beggar]. Pray that I would have more awareness and desire for the kingdom of God. Pray for repentance of sin.



ACTS 4 // THE BEGGAR PART 2

Peter and John Get Grilled [4:1-22]

- **What was the response of the religious to the disciples? Why?** The leaders are annoyed. Peter and John are preaching about the resurrection of Jesus. A sign the leader denied. [1-2] Later Peter points to God resurrecting Jesus [10]. P&J are thrown into jail without trial because it's too late. Their arrest gives them an audience. The audience believes already. Total is 5000. [3-4]
- The religious leaders question Peter and John's power [7]. The leaders rejected Christ, but God used it to accomplish His plans and had joy in Him [11]. **How does this remind you of the life of Jesus?** (cf. Mt. 10:34-39) **What do Jesus' words evoke in you? What is His point and how do you personally wrestle with this?**
- The leaders acknowledge P&J's boldness. Thought they were not smart fella's. So they were amazed. They knew they were from Jesus. The leaders could not pin a fault on P&J [14, 21]. Their only charge: "Don't say anything more about this NAME." [18-19] **How does Peter's boldness differ here than we hear about him in other texts?** (cf. Mt. 26:69-75; Gal. 2:11-21) **How can we take a stand for Christ so that we are not merely claiming Him, but are righteously devoted to following Him? How can we prepare ourselves today too so that we can approach any situation with boldness and confidence? What, if anything, stands between you and your ability to be confident in Christ?**
- **Where do you recognize the name Caiaphas?** He is the high priest that helped organize Jesus' crucifixion. He was both present at Jesus' death and the temple's curtain being split in half [6, cf. Matthew 26].
- **What is Peter's response to the leader's demand?** Peter filled with the Spirit gives credit to the name of Jesus [10, 12] and that name is the only name by which men can be saved. P&J's response: "We can't help but speak about what we've seen and heard."
- **How do the people respond?** The people praise God. Note: The beggars age is given. He's old. 40-years old. [22]

Prayer for Boldness [4:23-31]

- P&J tell their friends what happened. They immediately pray. **What do you learn about praying from the apostles?** They recognize God's sovereignty, creator-ship,



and work through history. They pray using words of David (OT Scripture) to show that their own religious leaders would reject God's Anointed, Jesus. [25-26]

- **How does God use the motives of the religious rulers for His purposes?** God used the rulers and the people of Israel who rejected Jesus to carry out His predestined plan of redemption. [27-28] **How do we submit to authorities who do not submit to God? When is it alright to disobey earthly authorities?**
- **What does spiritual boldness look like?** They pray for boldness (to do signs in the name of Jesus) as they live and serve among people who still reject Jesus [29]. They don't pray to escape suffering or rejection. **When we pray to escape, could we be praying for God to stop using us?**
- The place shook to after they prayed. **Why did the place shake? Was it the Holy Spirit? [31]**
- **What did the apostles do after leaving prison? Why did they disobey the leaders?** They continue to preach with boldness, even though the leaders told them not too [31]. Holy disobedience of ungodly leaders to obey God who was their authority.

One in the Same [4:32-37]

- The believers unified. They were one. **How are the people unified? What does it mean to be unified?**
- The apostles continued to preach the resurrection of Jesus [33]. "Great grace was upon them." **Why is the resurrection so important to the gospel? How does God's provision give you confidence when you proclaim the good news?**
- People lived radically selling everything they had to share with those in need. Not necessarily the apostles. **What is holding you back from doing this today?**
- **Who is Barnabas and what's in his name?** Barnabas is called "encouragement". He sells his field.

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Preaching the resurrection and name of Jesus. Prayer for boldness. Radical departure from hoarding



materials. Generosity. Identity as one unit. A measure of resistance or rejection from authorities or religious leaders [media, pop-culture, etc.].

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? People do not sell everything for those in need. Prayer for boldness, not necessarily to escape suffering or rejection is rare.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*?

Prescriptive: preach the resurrection and name of Jesus. Prescriptive: expect rejection for the sake of Jesus. Descriptive: ministry done with signs and wonders.

Q: What do you learn about God? Sovereign. Uses rejection to embolden His servants. [24-29] Fulfills His Scripture [26]. Heals [30] Adores the NAME of Jesus [30] Gives power and grace [33] Raised Jesus from the dead [10] Holy Spirit provides boldness [31]

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Remind me to look forward to God's working in suffering and rejection, rather than escape. Pray for unity and sacrificial attitude in common within church/team. Pray to freely give up possessions for the sake of the needy. He provides.



ACTS 5 // THE CHURCH COMMENCES ITS MISSION

Hoarding God's Resources: Ananias and Sapphira [5:1-11]

- **How does the story of Chapter 5 compare to the end of Chapter 4?** In the end of chapter 4 people (i.e. Barnabas) were selling everything they had and gave to those in need. Those in chapter 4 sought to serve the church, but those in the beginning of this chapter sought to serve themselves.
- **What do we know about the characters in this story?** Ananias and Sapphira sold their property, but they hoarded some of it. It wasn't evil that they kept the money, but the evil was when they covered up their use of the money through a lie. **Where did their deceptive idea come from?** Satan [3; cf. John 8:44; Eph. 4:25-27]. **Have you been guilty of covering for someone else's sin rather than uncovering it to God or others?**
- **What was Peter's response to their lie?** Peter condemns them of lying to the Holy Spirit [4]. **How does this story challenge your own view of lying?**
- **Describe the consequences of their lie?** The judgment was immediate. They both died [5-10]. **Why is this couple judged so severely? How serious is sin in the eyes of God? Why is this sin judged immediately, while other sins have delayed judgement?**
- **How does this situation set the tone for the new church? What does Ananias and Sapphira's sin look like in the church today?**
- The result or response of the church was fear, glory, and honor to God [11]. **How would you respond if this happened in your church?**
- **What does giving say about what we believe about God? What does Jesus indicate is the heart of all giving in Luke 21:1-4? How does this impact you personally?**

Signs and Wonders: Apostles a lot Like Jesus [5:12-16]

- **What special abilities did the apostles have? How were they able to do signs and wonders?** The apostles are now doing the signs and wonders Jesus promised in chapter 1. Example: shadow of the apostles healed sick [15].



- **How did the people respond to the apostles to these signs and wonders?** A result of the signs was respect from the people. It is interesting that no one dared to join them.
- Many believers were added to the church through the apostles ministry. **How do we see the promise of the Great Commission coming to fruition through the apostles? How does the church grow after what happened in the beginning of this chapter?**

Apostles Arrested [5:17ff]

- **What did the religious people think about the apostles ministry?** The priests are ticked because the apostles did not listen to their advice and stop teaching about Jesus and His resurrection.
- **What is the root emotion of the religious towards the apostles?** They were jealous [17] (and fearful of the crowd, 26). The religious leaders aren't the coolest kids on the block. This new group of Jesus followers are encroaching on their territory and they can do little to control the momentum. These apostles are a threat to their religion and rank. The religious guys have a lot of power, enough to desire to kill [33], but actually beat them [40]. **Where have we seen these kind of threats to kill before?**
- **In what ways do you see the emotions of the religious leaders in your life? Are there other Christians or ministries you are tempted to be jealous of? How can you deal with it before it controls you?**
- **How were the apostles set free?** The apostles were freed by an angel of the LORD who commanded them to "go and tell" [19-20]
- **How are the religious leaders responding similarly to the apostles as they did to Jesus?** The priests were trying to blame the apostles for making them look bad, but it was their actions that killed Jesus [28].
- **What was the content of Peter's message? Where have we heard this before?** Peter says Jesus trumps man. Again he preaches His resurrection. Peter makes Jesus shine and calls all to repent. Jesus came to save and forgive the Jews. The apostles and the Holy Spirit are witnesses to this truth.
- The council was so angry that they wanted to murder the apostles. **How does God use a Jewish religious leader to save the apostles?** Gamaliel, a Pharisee, kindly warns the apostles that if they continue to stir the council they will follow through



and kill them and gives two recent examples [Theudas and Judas the Galilean]. But acknowledges that if it is of God these men will still be stubborn [35-39]. **How is Gamaliel's wisdom half-true and half-false? Are there other plans of men or man-made religions that have not failed? How are the plans of God fail-proof?**

Although charged not to speak about the name of Jesus, they continued on doing so. They were again threaten to not speak of Jesus' name and were beaten unmercifully. They considered it an honor to suffer for Jesus' name. [41] **How did the apostles respond to the threats and manipulation?** And everyday thereafter they spoke up for Jesus. **Why is the name of Jesus so important? How does the apostles boldness challenge your witness for Jesus?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Signs and wonders added followers to the new church. Boldly preaching and teaching the resurrection of Jesus. The gospel was front and center. Respect and fear for God.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Signs and wonders. Beaten for Christ and/or threats from other religious systems.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive* Prescriptive: Preach Christ and do not fear man. See suffering for Christ's name as an honor. Descriptive: immediate judgment for testing the Spirit. Shadows healing sick. Angels releasing followers from prison.

Q: What do you learn about God? He is serious about His name. He hates spiritual pride—those who test Him. Suffering comes before glory. i.e. the cross and apostles arrests.

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Strength and a Christ-centered perspective through suffering. Make speaking the gospel a daily/weekly priority. Make His name famous. When I commit to give something to God, give it all.



ACTS 6 // STEPHEN PART 1: APPOINTED & ANGERED

One of the Seven Chosen: Stephen to Serve the Widows [6:1-7]

- 🗣️ **Who begins this chapter complaining and why?** As the disciples grew, Greek-speaking Jews began to complain because their widows were being neglected. This is the first crisis for the new church.
- 🗣️ **Why is providing for the widows so important? How does this fulfill other Scripture about caring for widows?** In that culture, widows could not provide for themselves financially. They needed outside help. There was inclusion in the Law that provided for them.
- 🗣️ **How can an attitude of complaining be a hinderance rather than a help? How should the Greek believers have handled this situation? How is the care of widows in the church or community neglected? Are there widows you know who need to be served?**
- 🗣️ **What is your initial reaction when the disciples say, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables”? (v.2) What might a modern equivalent of this situation look like?**
- 🗣️ **How did the disciples handle the situation?** The 12 disciples chose 7 servants among the larger group of disciples to serve the widows [note: their names are Greek and they are chosen among the Greeks]. These men are the first deacons.
- 🗣️ **Why are deacons necessary for the church? How does having deacons (and elders) who serve in their role help the church to grow in word and deed? How can you encourage deacons (or elders) who serve you or your church?**
- 🗣️ **What kind of man must a deacon be?** The qualifications: good reputation, full of the Spirit, and full of wisdom [Cf. 1 Timothy 3 & Titus 3 on the qualifications of deacons]. **Why is it important that a deacon be a man of character? How does this contrast the other religious leaders we see in Acts and the Gospels?**
- 🗣️ **Which name is mentioned first? What kind of man is he?** Stephen is introduced for the first time, “a man full of faith and of the Spirit.” **How are these characteristics every follower of Christ should aspire to be like?**



- **How were the men appointed?** The 12 prayed and laid hands on the new deacons. More disciples followed, even many priests “became obedient to the faith” [Cf. Romans 1:5]. **How radical is it that priests are coming to Christ?** [note: there are 8,000+ priests living and working in Jerusalem.]

Stephen Accused of Blaspheme, but Filled with the Spirit [6:8-15]

- **How does the ministry of Stephen compare to Jesus?** Stephen was full of grace and power [Cf. Acts 1:8] and did many signs and wonders. He did many of the things that Jesus did. **Did Stephen serve the widows?**
- Some of the members of the synagogue in Jerusalem wanted to pick a fight with Stephen. **How is Stephen able to champion the debate?** Stephen overwhelmed them with his God-given wisdom and the Holy Spirit. **What can you learn about successful debating from Stephen?**
- **How do the religious leaders respond to being on the losing side of the debate?** At first they have nothing to say. However, quickly the Freedmen, like sore losers find recruits to arrest Stephen. If they can't win with words surely they could win with manpower. **How is attacking the person rather than the problem the worst way to win an argument? How does this corrupt an honest debate?**
- **How did the religious leaders attack Stephen? Is this fair or true about him? How was this similar to Jesus' trial?** They convicted Stephen of blaspheme against Moses and God, but truly he was just repeating the words of Jesus about the destruction of the temple [Cf. Mt.26:61; Dan.9:26] and the fulfillment of the law in Christ [Cf. Mt. 5:17]. He didn't mean to pick a fight with those words, but to the Jewish mind blinded from the truth they misinterpreted it this way.
- **Why does Luke call these men “false witnesses” [13]?** Earlier they accuse Stephen of speaking blasphemy against Moses and God.
- **Did Jesus say He would destroy the temple? What temple was Jesus referring to?** His body which would die and rise again 3-days later. **How is Stephen's reference to the destruction of the temple the same or different than Jesus'?** Stephen echoes Jesus' words [14; cf. Mt.26:59ff]. The temple veil has been split into two given access to the Holy of holies to anyone. The temple is crumbling, physically and spiritually. Jesus is the new temple and High Priest. Stephen is a spokesperson for the new changes that have occurred in Christ, which will continue to radically change the way Old Covenant practices are now replaced by the New Covenant promise. Jesus has fulfilled the Law of Moses. His Way is better. His



sacrifice is better. He is a better priest. No longer are temple sacrifices and priests needed. **How does this feed the fact that priests are coming to the faith? [cf.7]**

- ☞ **Why were the people staring at Stephen?** His face shined like an angel [15]. **What does that mean? Who and where else is this kind of description of a person mentioned in the Bible?** Moses at Sinai [Ex.33:20-23] and Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. **How does Stephen's appearance contrast with those of his accusers?**
- ☞ **Is there someone in your life who reminds you of Stephen? What is this person like? Does their example inspire you to be different? Explain.**
- ☞ Walking with boldness and confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit is a major theme seen throughout Acts. **How do think this boldness is attained practically? In what ways do you need boldness personally?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? The supremacy of preaching the Word of truth without the neglect of helping the physical needs [i.e. widows; cf. 4:35]. Deacons were appointed to serve. A structure of spiritual leadership is established.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Taking care of widows can be forgotten or neglected as passed onto an assisted living or nursing home. Signs and wonders, like those of Stephen. Prayer over newly appointed deacons, and seeking men full of wisdom and the Spirit.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Descriptive and Prescriptive: the care of widows. Prescriptive: preach the truth about Christ. Prescriptive: appointing deacons according to specific spiritual standards.

Q: What do you learn about God? His Spirit fills people with power and wisdom. Sometimes it amazes people. He cares for the physical needs of people. His truth is often misunderstood by the religious who have their own rules to live by.

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? I desire to be full of faith and wisdom like Stephen. I must ask for it. **What are the needs I can fulfill around me?** Any widows needing my help? The qualifications for a deacon should be the aspiration of every believer.



ACTS 7 // STEPHEN PART 2: SPEAKS & STONES

Stephen Speaks: Redemptive History [7:1-53]

- **Who are the major characters of the Bible Stephen references in sermon? Why does he refer to these guys? How does he use them in the greater storyline of Scripture?** His sermon majors Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, and Jesus (all deliverers, all rejected). He uses the OT because his hearers knew it well. But he used it as a springboard to talk about Christ. The rejected Prophet. Stephen gives a lesson in redemptive history.
- **Who was Stephen preaching to? What did they know about their religious history?** These men were Jewish leaders. They would be well aware of their own history, but they rejected Jesus. Stephen is preaching their history and following the line of their fathers.
- **How does Stephen describe Jesus?** Jesus also mighty in His words and deeds (v. 22; cf. Luke 24:19). Like the prophet Moses, Jesus was sent from God (v.35), and performed signs and wonders (v.36-38).
- **What promises of deliverance do you see in Stephen's sermon?** Promises of deliverance: covenant to Abraham, famine through Joseph, and slavery through Moses. Jesus the "Righteous One".
- **How does Stephen come back to the religious leaders question in Acts 6:14?** He ends with talk of Solomon's Temple (vs.47ff). They are people of the temple. But now God does not dwell in the temple, but within His people.
- **What is so provocative about Stephen's conclusion to his sermon?** (vs.51ff) Stephen is bold. He is ready to die for his words. Stephen uses incendiary tone and cuts to the heart of the religious leaders. He is not trying to fluff their feathers, but pluck them out. This is the most gracious thing he could say at the moment to get their attention and call them toward the truth, but they resist the Holy Spirit because they are stuck in their ways. **How does Stephen describe the hearers? How are you like the religious leaders? Do you need to speak truth and grace to someone like Stephen does here?**
- **What do Moses and Jesus have in common? How do the people respond to them in their day?** Both Moses and Jesus (ruler and redeemer) were rejected servants (v.35, 39, 52). The people would rather want an idol. Their hearts turned from God and God gave them over to their own ways (v.43; cf. Romans 1:21-25). All



the prophets were persecuted because their message fell on deaf ears and hard hearts.

Stephen Stoned for Following Jesus [7:54-60]

- **How do the religious leaders respond to Stephen's sermon?** They are cut to the heart (they stung like a bee) and grind their teeth at him. They were not open to the truth or repentance, rather they were closed and burning with anger at their core.
- **How is Stephen described before his death?** He is full of the Holy Spirit ("the Helper"). **Where are his eyes fixed?** He sees the glory of God and Jesus ("the Advocate"), the Righteous One at God's right hand. He got a sneak peak behind the curtain into heaven. He cannot help exclaim what he sees! **How comforting is it to see the One you longed and lived for upon your death? What does this tell you about the Truth and the heart of Stephen? Where are your eyes fixed today?**
- **How are the religious leaders described as they murder Stephen?** They yell out and cover their ears like little children not wanting to hear something ("la, la, la, la"). They break Roman law and take justice into their own hands bypassing their authority. They became a murderous mob. Note: Jesus watched over Stephen's stoning. Stephen's goods are laid at his feet as the spoils of a religious victory. He is an enemy of the church.
- **Who was listed by name as an accomplice in the murder?** Saul of Tarsus. This is the first time in history we hear of him. The first thing he is known for is his connection to a man's murder.
- **How do Stephen's last words reflect Jesus' last words?** His last words mimic Christ on the cross. 1) "receive my spirit" (Luke 23:46), 2) "do not hold this sin against them" (Luke 23:34; cf. Mt. 5:44). **Could he have been looking at Saul when he said these words? What would you say if you were in a similar situation?**
- **How do you see Jesus in Stephen's death?** Stephen in his death is giving the onlookers a picture of Christ. Quite the visual message. Think: the 5 missionaries to Equator in the 1950's—by their blood the church grew.
- **How does Jesus' position in heaven show His authority?** He sits at the right hand of the Father, the seat of authority and judgment, ruling over all creation. This fulfills Jesus' promise given in Matthew 28:19-20. **How does that bring you both comfort and fear? Is Jesus your authority? How does affect your daily walk with Him?**



KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Preach the entire Bible, including the OT which points to Christ. Speak boldly.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Vision of God's glory in heaven (v.55)

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? None.

Q: What do you learn about God? He keeps His promises. He uses His people to carry out His redemptive plan (sends, fills, empowers, and is with them). Not all of His messengers are accepted. He is jealous of our hearts worship and does not tolerate rival gods (vs. 42, 51-53). He rejects those who reject Him. He delights in delivering His people (v.34). He is holy (v.33).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Conviction and understanding of Scripture. Boldness. Fullness of the Spirit.



ACTS 8 // THE GOSPEL SPREADS TO SAMARIA

Saul's Causes the Church to Scatter and Suffer [8:1-3]

- 🗣️ **Who signed off of Stephen's death?** Saul approved of Stephen's execution.
- 🗣️ **What followed Stephen's stoning?** More persecution to the church. **What happened to the church the wake of persecution?** Persecution allowed the church to scatter throughout the region. **How is this God's strategy for the growth of the church?** It begins moving the gospel and the church outside of Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria (cf. Acts 1:8).
- 🗣️ **Who were the devout men? What other responses might the church have to Stephen's sermon?** Complained, clammed up, or clamored. **Why would Stephen be honored rather than blamed?**
- 🗣️ The apostles (leaders) stayed put. **Why did the apostles stay in Jerusalem?** Because Jesus asked them to stay until His Spirit gave hem further instructions (cf. 1:4ff).
- 🗣️ **What was Saul's strategy?** To wreak havoc on Christians in their most intimate domain; He entered the homes of Christians and dragged men and women off to prison. **How are his actions cowardly?** Paul knew that the execution of Stephen was unjust. Paul knew that the execution was against the Law of Moses, of which he was an expert. Yet he let it happen. He signed off on it, but did not help with the dirty work. He was blind to the truth. Later on, Paul referred to himself as the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). **How does getting of snapshot of Saul's starting place give you hope and grace, since you might know 'the rest of the story'?**

Philip Preaches with Power [8:4-8]

- 🗣️ **What happened to the believers? And what did they do? Where did they go?** The scattered believers were not silent, but preached. They went to a city in Samaria. **Why are the believers on the move?** They are under severe persecution. Note: the gospel spread by average Christians (i.e. many Christians), not by the clergy. **How was this persecution used by God?**
- 🗣️ **Who is the main character of this text? What is he doing?** One preacher, Philip (one of the first deacons), proclaimed Christ and did signs and wonders among the Samaritans (cf. Mark 16:17-18). **Why is casting out unclean spirits so**



significant? No prophet or OT character is known to cast out evil spirits but Jesus and His apostles (cf. Luke 11:20). The people are released from spiritual bondage.

- **What is the response of the city?** The result was joy in the city. Ironically, they had joy amidst persecution.

Simon the Magician is Amazed and Saved [8:9-24]

- **Who is the next character introduced? How does he contrast with Philip?** Simon, who amazed people with his magic tricks (not real signs and wonders) was amazed by the message “about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (v.12) and signs and wonders (v.13). Simon claimed that he was someone great. Philip showed how Jesus was the greatest. People were afraid of Simon, but were filled with joy by Philip. Possibly he was controlled by another spirit, and Philip was controlled by the Holy Spirit.
- **What did Simon decide to do?** He was baptized (note: it is unclear whether he is saved because of his understanding of grace later on. Not all who are baptized are saved). **What do we learn about baptism from this passage?** Those who were baptized did so immediately (v.12). Baptism was very public.
- **What message did the Samaritans need?** The word of God and the Holy Spirit (vs.14-15).
- **What was the thing that impressed Simon the most that he wanted?** The apostles give the Holy Spirit by laying hands on people (cf. 19:6). He was a phony that used trickery. He had no real power, but wanted their power. He wanted to be a powerful sorcerer with God’s power, but the glory would be his not God’s.
- **What is Simon willing to do get the power of God? What does this tell you about the condition of his heart?** He was willing to fork out cash for it (v.19), but God’s grace is not for sale. Money does not buy the power of God. That attitude shows a twisted and embittered heart. Peter and God could see Simon’s heart. **How do you try to earn or buy favor with God? How does this text convict or challenge you? What does your heart look like to God?**
- **How does Peter respond to Simon’s request?** First, he says, “You and your money can go to hell.” (v.20) It was a harsh confrontation. Second, he calls Simon to repent (vs.21-23). **Do you need to repent of anything, right now, like Simon?**
- **How does Simon respond to Peter’s words?** He seeks to be saved from the harshness of Peter’s words (v.24). There is no sense that he fears God or desires



saving faith and/or repentance (note: difference between contrition and attrition, David or Esau). His greatest concern is to escape punishment. **How would you respond to Peter's words? How are you encouraged by Peter's consistent words rather than comprising the gospel to give Simon a false sense of hope?**

- **What is so amazing about the grace of God and the gospel in this text?** The unreached Samaritans were receiving the Spirit. No longer is the good news just for God's people.

Philip Encounters the Eager Ethiopian Eunuch [8:25-40]

- **Following the previous scene what did the believer's who went to Samaria do?** The believers preached the gospel on the way back home to Jerusalem (v.25).
- **Who directed Philip to preach elsewhere? Who does he meet along the way?** An angel of the Lord direct Philip southward (v.26), but the Holy Spirit sent him specifically to meet the eunuch (v.29). **Have you heard of God calling people like he does Philip others places in Scripture?** God called Elijah to desert ministry in a similar way.
- **What is a eunuch? What do you know about this eunuch?** This eunuch served under Candace the Queen of Ethiopia (vs.27-28). He guarded her treasury as was customary for most eunuchs. A eunuch was usually emasculated so that he was not tempted sexually and could be trusted by the king/queen. He was a God fearer or a searcher in Jerusalem to worship.
- **What is the eunuch doing when Philip meets him?** He is reading aloud from the book of Isaiah (v.28). These words of Isaiah were written nearing 800 years before. Philip asks to sit with him and engages in a spiritual conversation. **Where in Isaiah was the eunuch reading? Isaiah 53.** This is the passage about the Suffering Servant.
- **How does Philip use this text to preach Jesus?** The OT has direct correlation to the gospel of Jesus (vs.34-35; cf.Phil.2:8). Jesus is not only the One who suffered and died, also atoned, resurrected, and ascended.
- **How did the eunuch respond to the gospel?** He asked about being baptized (v. 36). And Philip told him to believe in the way of Christ, the Son of God.
- **When was the eunuch baptized?** The eunuch was baptized immediately. Not public (v.38) or a lot of requirements. **How does this jive with your view of baptism or the way your church practices baptism?**



🗣️ **How did the eunuch respond?** His response was joy (v.39; cf. v.8).

🗣️ **What happened to Philip in the story?** He disappeared from the eunuch and continued to preach the gospel as he traveled (v.40). All the way to the hometown of Pontius Pilate, Caesarea. This was the missionary journey of Philip. Many more from others to come in the Book of Acts.

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Persecution. Preaching of the kingdom/gospel. Baptism.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Signs and wonders. Laying on hands to receive the Holy Spirit. Immediate baptism.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Prescriptive: baptism, gospel proclamation (even using the OT). Descriptive: signs & wonders

Q: What do you learn about God? His kingdom is an important aspect of the gospel (v.12). God goes to great lengths to save one person (i.e. Simon & Eunuch). He is powerful. God cannot be bought or pawned (vs.20-24). He's not a cheap trinket but the world's greatest treasure. He seeks genuine and repentant hearts (vs.22-24). He's designed His Word to focus on Christ from beginning to end (vs.32-35). His Spirit leads/directs people (vs. 39, 29).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Ask for timing and sensitive to opportunities to preach and pour into people's lives. To come to Him with a pure heart.



ACTS 9 // PAUL'S CONVERSION

Saul Sees the Light [9:1-9]

- **How is Paul described in the opening verses of Chapter 9?** He is like a wild beast snorting (“breathing in”) before it attacks (v.1). (Not like a dragon breathing out hot fumes) He is a terrorist inflicting terror upon the infantile church. Paul has a fierce detest for the Christian community. **What thoughts or types of people come to mind when you think of Paul pre-conversion?**
- **Where was Saul going? What was he going to do?** He is heading towards Damascus, one of the oldest cities on earth, even known to Abraham. He was intending to wreak havoc on Christians. **Who signed off on Saul's next mission?** He got permission for the very top of the Jewish community, the high priest, the theocratic leader.
- **By what title are Christians given?** Christians are called followers of “the Way” (v. 2). **What is significant about this name? How is it still a profitable title today?**
- **How does God pursue Saul?** God intersects with Saul (and his entourage), even on his route to persecute Christians. A great light shone (i.e. lightning bolt) all around from heaven (v.3), brighter than the noontime sunshine. A supernatural light.
- **What did God say or ask of Saul?** In Hebrew, he calls to him in question, “Why are you persecuting Me?” (v.4) Also, his name is repeat twice (15x's in Scripture; i.e. God to Abraham, God to Moses, God to Samuel, David to Absalom, Elijah to God, Jesus to Martha, Jesus to Jerusalem, Jesus to God), which usually signifies deeply personal addresses or warnings.
- **How did Saul respond to God's question?** He responds respective not passively or defensively (v.5). He knows it is the Sovereign one of heaven who speaks.
- **How did God reveal Himself to Saul? How is this comforting to those going through persecution for His name sake?** Jesus identifies Himself. He also identifies with His followers suffering/persecution. Persecution is ultimately against Him (v.5). He claimed persecution by Saul shows that He so identifies with His people that any believer who is persecuted for Christ's sake is identified with Jesus Himself. In other words, “If you persecute My people, you persecute Me.”
- **What does it mean to “kick against the goads”?** “That obscure reference to goads may not be meaningful to us, but in antiquity much of produce was hauled on ox carts, and sometimes oxen, just like mules, were very stubborn, so the drivers



had to whip them a bit to get them moving. Sometimes the touch of the whip would make the oxen all the more stubborn, and they would kick against the oxcart, which could shatter it. To prevent that, the drivers mounted goads or spikes in the front of the oxcart, and when the oxen kicked against the goad, the discomfort from doing so would get them moving. Sometimes when an ox kicked against the goad, the goad would pierce its foot and cause it more pain, so it would get even angrier and kick the goad again. So Jesus was saying, “Saul, you stupid ox! You are no different from oxen that kick against the ox goad as you carry on your hostility toward Me.” Resisting the lordship of Christ is not only sinful, but it is stupid, because God has raised Him from the grave, placed Him at His right hand, and given Him all authority in heaven and on earth and has called every person to bow the knee before Him. To resist Him is foolish.” - R. C. Sproul, St. Andrews Commentary

- **How did Saul respond to Jesus?** First, with amazement and fear. Second, with a willingness to obey (v.6; cf. Isaiah 6:8). **The first time you were on your knees before Jesus, what did you say? How about the last time?** Note: Saul also didn't eat or drink (v.9).
- **What happens to Saul physically after seeing Jesus?** He is blinded. **How is he able to get his sight back to normal?** Jesus commanded him to go to Damascus and there he will be told what to do (vs.6-8). For 3-days, he was able to contemplate his experience. His life, in a moment, was turned upside down. That's what the power of the Holy Spirit can do!
- Just minutes before his conversion, all that Paul could think of was what he could do to Christ, but immediately after, all he could think of is what he could do for Christ, which reveals the essence of his radical conversion. **How did Saul's conversion give you encouragement and comfort as you think about people around you who hard to love or hard to the gospel? How is the love of God on display in Saul's conversion?**

Saul on the Street Called Straight [9:10-19a]

- **Who is the next person God talks to following the Saul dialogue?** Ananias. **How did he respond to God's initial call?** He too, like Isaiah and Saul, expressed his willingness to obey (v.10; cf. v.6; Isaiah 6:8). He is at the Lord's disposal.
- **What did God ask Ananias to do?** Meet Saul at the street called Straight (i.e. Main St.). Saul's blindness will lead him to Ananias (vs.11-12). **How would you respond to a man of Saul's reputation coming to your home? How does Ananias respond to God's request?** He expressed his concern (vs.13-14). Ananias' faith is stretched along willingness to serve. **How have you tried to question or challenge**



God's demands upon your life? What biblical characters do you know who have done the same thing? Moses and Jeremiah. **How did than pan out for them? How did it pan out for Ananias?** God responded by telling him to go anyway (v.15). Note: Ananias refers to Christians as "saints" (or "holy ones"). This is the first time this connection is made in the NT.

- **What does God say about Saul and His plans for him?** (v.15) God has sovereignly chosen him. God will use him as a gospel messenger to the Gentiles, people in high places, and among God's people. **What does it mean that Saul is God's "vessel"?** He is a tool or instrument in God's hands. God will use him to increase and expedite the gospel message among the uttermost parts of the world. **How are you called similar to Paul as a vessel, instrument, tool to bear the gospel of Jesus to the world?**
- **What will God call Saul to do?** He will call Him to suffer for His name sake. Paul's mission is detailed by Jesus, to Ananias, a spiritual leader (v.16): take the name of Christ to kings and suffer for His name. **How is the call to suffer a reward rather than a punishment?** To suffer for Christ is the way of a follower of Christ (v.16). There is no higher calling than to bear the name of Christ and the rewards are great. To bear His names mean you will more than likely bear scars like Him too.
- **Did Ananias go? Yes. When Ananias meets Saul for the first time, how does he greet him? Why is that significant?** He calls Saul "brother", which is an intimate term of endearment and spiritual connection.
- **What happened to Saul following Ananias' visit?** Immediately, he received his sight (think fish scales or flakes), he received the Holy Spirit, and he was baptized (v.17-18). **How did Paul receive the Spirit?** Paul received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands (v.17). All this happened before he ate and rested (v.19).
- **What do we learn about God's authority from Ananias and Saul?** Both walked not in their own authority, but the authority of Christ. Both were merely confirming and corroborating what Christ did and said.
- This is not the only mention of Paul's conversion in Acts. **Why is Paul's conversion mentioned more than once in Acts?** It is possible that since the early church questioned the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship. Has not necessarily see the resurrection, but he saw the resurrected Christ. Acts gives an apology for Paul's credentials. **What was the criteria to be an apostle?** He had to be an eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection and receive a direct and immediate call by Jesus (note: all OT prophets were also called by God).



Saul Preaches Salvation through Christ [9:19b-25]

- **What was Saul's first action after his conversion?** He immediately went to preach the gospel (v.20). **Where?** In the synagogue (a common place for Saul to go before and after his conversion).
- **What does Saul call Jesus?** He calls Jesus the “Son of God,” and Jesus was the Savior. Note: this is the only time in the book of Acts this term is used for Jesus (cf. Mt.17:5; Mk.9:7). The title describes his obedience to God (Sonship) and His Messiahship. **How would this message be radical, let alone, it came from the lips of Saul?** He says that Jesus is equivalent to God. Essentially, he proclaims that Jesus is (begotten), He always has been, and that Jesus is God. Jesus is no longer Saul's enemy, but his Savior, his Messiah.
- **What was the response of the crowd to Saul?** They were surprised (v.21-22). The rumors about Saul spread, but not the kind of rumor about him preaching Christ, but rumors about him persecuting Christians (v.21). He had met both the earthly high priest and the Heavenly High Priest. The latter changed his life and orders (mission) in Damascus, and it's in His authority that he preaches.
- **How did the opinion of Saul change over a few days by the Jews?** They plotted ways to kill him (vs.23-25). A man who once threatened to kill Christians is now threatened to be killed by his own people.
- **How do the disciples help Saul escape?** They lower him in a basket (v.25). A real live “basket case”!?

Saul Visits the Disciples [9:26-31]

- **In Jerusalem, what was the response of the disciples to Saul arrival?** They were afraid and did not believe he was now one of them (v.26). **How would you have responded to Saul if you were in their sandals? How does Barnabas respond?** The encourager, takes Saul in and shares his story of conversion and sermon about Jesus in the synagogue (v.27). Barnabas has Saul's back and welcomes him into the band of apostles. The leaders confirm him. Saul continues to preach boldly the name of Jesus (vs.27-28).
- **What was the response of the church in that region to these new happenings in Jerusalem and Damascus?** Paul's ministry began in Damascus. First, Saul's conversion brought peace and edification to the church. It was a huge victory of the power of God for the young church (v.31). Second, they were walking in the fear of



the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. **How does (or doesn't) this describe your church? Why or why not? How does the simplicity and serendipity of their worship encourage or challenge you? What is the focus of the church's worship?** Who you worship defines how you worship. Jesus, the Son of God, is the center point of the young church and so should it be of your life and church.

Miracles of Aeneas and Dorcas [9:32-43]

- There is a character switch in this passage. **Who and where is the character in this story going?** Peter is going to the regions beyond Jerusalem. This is the gospel spreading out (v.32).
- **Who does he encounter in Lydda along the way? What does he do? How is this significant?** He finds Aeneas, bedridden for 8-years and was paralyzed. **How does Peter's ministry mimic Jesus'?** He heals him in the name of Jesus (vs.33-34) in the manner of Jesus ("take you bed and walk", cf. Mark 2:1-12; John 5:8). **Why didn't Peter take any credit for the miracle? How is this different than many miracles done today? How does your ministry mimic Jesus'?**
- **While Peter is in Lydda what happens?** A woman named Tabitha/Dorcas (Gazelle) who lived in a town nearby became sick and died (v.37-38a). She was full of good deeds that she poured out on others (v.36; cf. James 1:27). Her funeral was at home (as was the custom). Some caught wind of the news of what happened in Lydda and sent for Peter (v.38b). **Does this remind you of another story in Jesus' life? (Lazarus; cf. Mark 5:21; John 11:43).**
- **What is the significance of the fruit of Dorcas' ministry in the upper room? Do you know women like Dorcas? How are they so important for the church?** (v. 39)
- **What does Peter do next?** He has everyone leave the room and he prays (v.40). **Why is that so significant?** The power is not his, it is God's. This took great faith. He called her to rise, she awoke, and he presented her to those gathered alive.
- **What was the response of the towns towards both miracles?** Many turned to the Lord (vs. 35, 42) **What are other responses that could have appeared? How would you respond?**
- **Who does he stay with in Joppa? What is interesting about this?** Simon, a tanner. An ordinary working class kind of guy. Unclean in most Jews eyes because he had to touch dead animals. Also for a Jew to stay with a Gentile was unclean. A change was happening within the new community of faith that would change the



course of redemption forever for the Gentile. **When you consider Peter's work, the types of people mentioned, what encourages you the most?** Peter cares about the forgotten and ignored people in society. Like Jesus before him, Peter went to places and to people that nobody else wanted to touch.

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Bold preaching of Christ's name, persecution, baptism, and miracles.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Damascus road experiences. Resurrections from the dead.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Prescriptive: preaching boldly Christ's name. The church was build on the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit (v.31) Descriptive: ministry likened to Christ: preach and heal.

Q: What do you learn about God? He chooses people for particular tasks. Jesus takes the ownership for His followers persecution. He promises suffering for His name (16). He fills with His Spirit (17). Holy Spirit brings comfort to His own (31). Jesus is the means for healing (34). Jesus is described as being God's Son and the Savior (20, 22).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Growing a fear of God. Comforted by God, particularly in times of suffering. Boldness in proclaiming His name. Pray for miracles.



ACTS 10 // GOSPEL FOR GENTILES, PART 1

Cornelius' Encounter of a Divine Kind [10:1-8]

- **Who is the next character we meet in Acts 10? What does he do for a job?**
What do you know about his faith? Cornelius, a centurion, which means he captains over 100 Roman soldiers. He fears God, which doesn't necessarily mean he is a believer, but he is a seeker (v.2). Note: Acts categorizes 4-groups of people: Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, and God-fearers (Greeks who converted to Judaism).
- **Who comes to Cornelius? How? How does he respond?** An angel of God. He comes to him in a vision. Like Saul (Act 9:5), he responds as one who knows he is hearing from God (v.3).
- **How does the angel confirm Cornelius in verse 4?** Although you aren't a Jew you prayers and sacrifices are still sweet to God. God sees!
- **What instructions does the angel give to Cornelius?** Send men to Peter at Simon the tanners house. Have the men bring Peter back to you because he will tell you what to do (vs.5-6).
- **How did Cornelius respond to the angel's demand?** Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier to go to Joppa as he was told (vs.7-8).
- **How specific are God's instructions to Cornelius?** Very. Go to this house and find this man. **What kind of specific instructions have you received from God?**
How do you respond when you only have vague information?
- **What do you learn about God and redemption from this passage?** If someone is seeking after the truth about God, He will go to great lengths to rescue them.

Peter's Perplexing Vision [10:9-16]

- The story now shifts to Peter in Joppa. **How does God prepare him to serve Cornelius?** Peter receives a vision from God before asking him to minister to Cornelius (vs.9-11).
- **What is ironic and interesting about Peter's vision?** Peter's hungry, it's lunch time, and the vision includes a smorgasbord of unclean meat. A voice demands him to kill and eat any animal (vs.12-13).



- **How does Peter respond?** Although the voice is God, Peter, being a good Jew, doesn't eat unclean meat (v.14). From birth this was his tradition which was also birthed in the law (on the Hebrew's diet). To eat the meat in Peter's mind was not kosher. Note: the keeping of these laws put Daniel in the lions den, and the Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego in the fiery furnace. Notice: God does not explain the vision to Peter (vs.11-16). This is the same with Cornelius.
- **How does God respond to Peter's rejection of His offer of steak of any kind?** "I cleansed this. This is not our ordinary cut of unclean meat!" (v.15) In that moment centuries of dietary laws and legal requirements given to Moses were instantly repealed. God never repeals moral laws (i.e. 10 Commands) because it would be denying His character. However, historical laws are given with a purpose, but can be repealed at anytime. So to maintain their Jewish purity and identity (a holy nation, set apart by God), the dietary laws were added to the covenant until the coming of Christ, who tore down the wall of separation and began to build His church, not just with Jews but with Samaritans, Gentiles, and God fearers.
- **What does God allude to in Peter's vision?** The vision is not about food, but about people. The vision alludes to the global aspect of the gospel. It is not just for one kind of people from one nation. It's also for Cornelius, a Greek God-fearer. Unclean are made clean by Christ.

Inside Cornelius' House [10:17-33]

- **Who does Cornelius invite to witness? What might this say about him?** Cornelius invites all his friends and family (vs.24, 28). A man of peace. **Who will you invite next?**
- **How does Cornelius respond to Peter's entrance?** He falls at his feet and worship (v.25; i.e. "pray to", as to an icon or image). **Who does this sort of thing usually happen to in the Bible?** Angels, prophets, apostles, Jesus and God. **Have you ever responded like this inwardly or outwardly to anyone? Explain.**
- **How does Peter respond to Cornelius?** He picks him up and says he's only a man. A man like him. **How has Peter matured?** He only give glory to Jesus (Isaiah 48:11). He understands that Jesus alone is worshiped, not man (v.26). Jesus is the only mediator between God and man.
- **What do we know about Cornelius?** Cornelius was a God-fearing man and was serious about his holiness enough to not mingle with people from other nations (v. 28).



- **What do you observe about Peter and Cornelius' obedience to God's demands?** Both Peter and Cornelius obey God immediately without all the facts or details (v.29).
- **How is Acts 10 one of the most important chapters in the Bible on redemption?** The gospel and the plan of God is for the whole world! At this point in history God is making this clear.

Peter Brings the Gospel to the Gentiles [10:34-43]

- **What happens when Peter opens his mouth?** He preaches the gospel (vs.34-35). **What is the gospel?** "Good news" about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Note: v.35, "So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him."
- **What is the message that John preached?** (John 1:29) Jesus is the Lamb that was slain for the sins of the world.
- **How is the gospel explained in verses 38-40?** Jesus' death and resurrection. **How are the death and resurrection of Jesus essential to the gospel and redemption?** (1 Peter 1:16) Without them there would be no hope or salvation. Note: This had to be a part of God's plan, surely it would not have been ours. The death and resurrection of Jesus are open knowledge; they are plain for the world to see.
- **How is the gospel a message for the nations?** The gospel is global (vs.36-39). It's not just for the Jew, but also the Greek. Peter is a Jewish light to the nations.
- **What command did God give that is reiterated here?** Preach Christ and His gospel (vs.42-43). **How are you obeying this command?**
- **How is Jesus our judge now? How is that both bad and good news?** It's bad for those who do not believe and are condemned to a death sentence. It is good news for those who believe because they are covered by His mercy daily to have victory over sin. In Jesus, they have an advocate, redeemer, defense attorney, and friend,
- **How is Peter's message is a concise summary of the work and life of Christ?** Forgiveness of sin is only through His name (v.43).
- **How is this good news for Cornelius, Peter, and you? Who will you share it with next?**



Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles [10:44-48]

- 🗣️ **What does it mean that the Holy Spirit “fell” on the gentiles? It was poured out on them. They were baptized in Him. Who did it fall on?** All who believed the Word. Note: It does not mention “belief”, but the Holy Spirit comes upon them (cf. Acts 2:17, 38; 15:8; 11:15; 1 Thess. 1:5).
- 🗣️ **How did the Jews recognize the Holy Spirit?** It was the same as Pentecost (Acts 2). **How are the gift of the Holy Spirit and tongues connected?** A sign of the Spirit was speaking in tongues and praising God (cf. 2:4). The Jews were amazed by what God was doing among the gentiles.
- 🗣️ **How is this often a misunderstood of misrepresented text among Christians or the church?** In the charismatic movement, this passage is seen as proof for a ‘second blessing’ or second work of grace. In other words, the baptism of the Holy Spirit here is for the empowering of ministry. It’s not a work simultaneous with salvation. Many believe: 1) Not all Christians have the Holy Spirit, 2) There is a sign of having the Holy Spirit baptism (i.e. tongues), 3) Often there is a gap between faith for salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit, 4) Baptism of the Holy Spirit is for power in the ministry, 5) There are two types of Christians when it comes to the Holy Spirit: have’s and have not’s. **How does this passage (and the Scripture) shoot down this idea?** It seems that there is only one kind of Christian: those who have the Holy Spirit. Those who do not have the Holy Spirit are not Christians. You either have Him or not (1 Cor. 12:13). Marks of a Christians are: born of the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit. All are given at conversion. Sanctification by the Spirit is not one time, it’s for a lifetime.
- 🗣️ **What do you notice about the believers water baptism. Baptism was immediate (cf. 8:36). What is the significance of water baptism to the Spirits baptism?** Baptism is an outward sign of the Spirits inward transformation.
- 🗣️ **How do our experiences in the Holy Spirit need to be measured?** By the Word of God. This protects our experiences from being the authority and the Word being the authority (cf. 11:17-18).

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Word from God. Obedience to God. The proclamation of the gospel in Jesus name. Evangelism to the nations. Baptism.



Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Visions. Unique outpourings or signs of the Holy Spirit. Immediate baptism.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Descriptive: Jesus fulfills the law. Gospel is for both Jew and Gentile. Jews are meant to walk in the light of the fact that Jesus fulfilled the law. Prescriptive: God brings more truth to those who are seeking. The name of Christ is what saves. Baptism.

Q: What do you learn about God? He is to be feared (v2). He values prayer and care for the less fortunate. He gives visions (v.19). He does not consider some people groups higher than others (vs.28, 34-35). Jesus is Lord of all (36). God anoints, empowers, and raised Jesus. God chose the witnesses (41). God appoints Jesus to be the judge (42). Forgiveness is in the name of Jesus (43). Holy Spirit fills, empowers, and speaks to people (44-48).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Speak to me. Fill me with your power. Give me an obedient Spirit. Draw God-fearers like Cornelius from all nations.



ACTS 11 // GOSPEL FOR GENTILES, PART 2

Remix: Peter and the Vision [11:1-18]

- ☞ **Why does the Holy Spirit through Luke repeat the same story again?** Possibly, learning comes through repetition. The OT has a lot of repetition of stories because it aided memorization.
- ☞ **To whom does Peter go with the gospel and why?** Peter goes to the gentiles (v. 3). Peter goes to the gentiles because of a vision he received from God (5-11).
- ☞ **Who does he take with him?** He took 6 believers with him (12). **Why is it important to never do ministry alone? Who do you take with you?**
- ☞ **How did the Holy Spirit interrupt Peter's sermon?** He fell on all the people. The Holy Spirit baptizes those who believe on Jesus Christ (15-16).
- ☞ **What does it mean when Peter says, "Who was I that I should stand in God's way"?** Peter understands that the really worker that day was the Holy Spirit, not his sermon. Peter obeys. He would not stand in God's way (17). **What does it mean to stand in God's way? How have you been guilt of doing this?**
- ☞ **How did the crowd respond?** First, they were silent. Second, they glorified God that His plan is to save gentiles too (18). **Do you rejoice when others are saved?**

Team: Barnabas and Saul [11:19-30]

- ☞ **How is this a transitional text?** It transitions from the ministry of Peter to Paul, which takes up the majority of Acts. It also serves as bridge that reaches back to the stoning of Stephen, spans the outreach of Philip and the missionary activity of Peter throughout Palestine, and takes us to the great missionary experience of Paul.
- ☞ **Why is the church scattering?** Church is scattered because of persecution (of Stephen) which had rippled throughout the region (v.19). **Where is the church scattering?** It is going to some of the most densely populated regions of the known world.
- ☞ **As the church scattered under persecution did it keep silent?** No. The gospel of Jesus Christ reaches the gentiles (20) and many believe (21). **What does it mean the the "hand of the Lord was with them"?** This is common throughout the book



of Acts and it is a fulfillment of Jesus' promise that He would be with His followers to the end of the age. The church's growth is a result of the Holy Spirit, no other.

- **Who does the church send out?** The Jerusalem church sends disciples to disciple the new believers (22). They specifically sent Barnabas, the encourager.
- **What do you notice about the ministry of Barnabas?** Faithfulness to the Lord was the primary teaching (23). Many more were added to the Lord (24). **How is his response to the growth of the church different than some? How might you respond?**
- **Where does Barnabas go next? Why is this significant?** He goes to Tarsus the home place of Saul (v.25). It is here he will meet Saul. Note: Barnabas was not an apostle, but he will seek one out ("to find him").
- **What do they do in Tarsus?** Saul and Barnabas disciple for 1-year in Antioch. **What do you notice about the title given to Jesus followers?** This is the first place people who follow Christ are called Christians (v.26).
- **Who are the prophets mentioned in this passage?** They help serve the apostles. They are different than OT prophets. **What did one of them prophesy? What was the purpose of this prophecy for the young church?** The church in Jerusalem and Antioch prepare to help the other believers living in the region with relief from a famine (27-30). The early church was to have a full commitment to mercy ministry. **How is showing mercy a part of your ministry? How is the gospel active in helping show people mercy, especially in calamity? How does this show what it means to be "Christian"?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Going to the gentiles proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. Persecution spreads the gospel. Discipling with teams of people. Discipleship happens soon after conversion. Churches are helping other churches (with resources and leadership).

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Visions, prophesying, church to church help.

Q: Are any details given to the new church descriptive or prescriptive? Descriptive: Visions. Prescriptive: gospel goes to gentiles.



Q: What do you learn about God? He loves all, Jews and gentiles (1). He speaks (7ff). His Spirit fills and baptizes (15-16, 24). He pursues people's salvation (18). He is with us (21). He expects faithfulness (23). He prophesies (28).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? To boldly proclaim Christ with my team. Have a heart for the unreached like God. To go to the unreached even when people question why you aren't staying to serve your own people. To be faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose.



ACTS 12 // DEATH & DUNGEON RESCUES

Herod orders James Death & Peter Imprisoned [12:1-5]

- 🗣️ **What was happening back in Jerusalem?** Herod is harassing the church (v.1).
Note: this is not the same Herod who slaughtered babies at Jesus' birth. This is Herod' grandson.
- 🗣️ **What does Herod do? How does his act set the tone for how Christians are to be treated?** He orders the death of James by sword and beheading (v.2).
Persecution is now also a death sentence.
- 🗣️ **Who is James?** He is an apostle. He is not the first martyr, but he is the first of the apostles to die by persecution. Note: Of the two sons of Zebedee one was the first apostle to die and the other (John) was the last to die.
- 🗣️ **How do the Jews respond to Herod's action?** The Jews are happy with Herod's evil (v.3). Herod has his eye on the crowd. He is a crowd pleaser.
- 🗣️ **What does Herod do to Peter?** Since Herod got a positive reaction for killing James, he brings Peter into prison and puts 4 squads of soldiers to guard him (v.4). It was a high security situation. Over the top!? Too many guards for God to do a miracle? Certainly not. **Why were there so many soldiers guarding Peter?**
- 🗣️ **What was the churches response to the persecution?** Earnest prayer for Peter was coming from the church (v.5) **Why would they pray for Peter when James before him had already died under the same persecution? What would be your response in a similar situation? How does their response encourage or challenge you to pray for those facing persecution for the gospel?**

Peter's Rescue [12:6-19]

- 🗣️ **Where is Peter?** Give details to his situation. Peter is in prison (v.6). He is sleeping and chained between two soldiers. He is at rest even though he is facing a death sentence.
- 🗣️ **Peter is sleeping, but how is he awakened? What does the unexpected visitor do?** An angel shines him and gives him a whack on the face (a shiner). The angel quickly releases Peter and tells him to make haste (v.7-8).



- **How does Peter respond to the visitor?** Peter obeys the angel (v.8). No matter the repercussions for others around him. Peter thought he was living a dream (v.9). It's the real deal Peter! It's not a dream. He comes to this realization (v.11). **How would you respond if you were Peter?**
- **What is so miraculous about Peter's escape?** He had to pass guards and gates without being caught or killed. At each impasse God cleared the way for his freedom.
- **As a fugitive on the run, where does Peter go first?** Peter beelines to Mary's house (mother of John Mark) where the people were praying.
- **What is the response to Peter's arrival? What is funny, ironic and interesting about this encounter?** Comically, a servant girl (Rhoda) leaves him at the gate for a quick consultation (v.14). Immediately, the gathering calls her crazy (v.15). Ironically, they think it's an angel (i.e. Elisha), even though they have been praying for Peter's release (cf. v.5). Shockingly, after further investigation they see it's really him (v.16)! We see a glimpse of the first generation of Christians weak in recognizing God's answers to prayers. **How have you prayed earnestly, but not expectantly? How do verse verse encourage you to pray with faith?**
- **What does Peter do when they recognize him?** First, he tells they to be quiet. Second, he tells how God rescued him (v.17). Third, he demands the gathering to go and tell others. Peter gives a glory to God!
- **What is interesting about Peter's inclusion of James?** James was just killed (vs. 1-5). Did he not know? Certainly he is talking about another named James the Just (brother of Jesus), the one who would become the leader of the church in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15).
- **What is happening at the prison the next morning? How does Herod respond?** There is a panic (vs.18-19). Yeah! Herod put to death the guards who had charge of Peter. Note: Herod applies the Justinian Code, which means the prisoners sentence transfers to the guards (cf. Acts 16). Peter faced a death sentence, but according to God it was not his time.
- **How does your conversion relate to the Peter's miraculous release?** Charles Wesley described his conversion as that of coming out of a dark dungeon. The Spirit of God came upon him, his chains fell off, and he stood up and followed after Christ. From his description, it seems that he had this text in mind. **How do you give God the glory for your eternal rescue?**



Herod Dies [12:20-25]

- **What have we see from Herod already in Acts 12?** Herod Agrippa killed James, harassed the church, and tried to execute the Apostle Peter. In this passage we will see “pomp and circumstance” of another kind.
- **What is the significance of the inclusion of the cities Tyre and Sidon?** Unsure. However, there is a long history of trade between these cities since the days of Solomon. There is something unspoken that is causing a rift (v.20). And Phoenicia wanted to make amends.
- **How does Herod carry himself and how do the people respond to him?** Herod is a glory seeker. He speaks as if he is god; all glory is to Him. It's as if he is putting on a show in the amphitheater with a special costume. He looked and talked like a god. The people feed his ego by calling his voice a gods (vs.21-22). He commits cosmic treason. Note: Peter had a similar response from a crowd, but he gave the credit to God. **In what ways are you like Herod?**
- **How does God respond to this? How does relate to Luke 18:14?** God is jealous for His glory and will not share it with another; He has the last word. Only God is to be know as “the Great”. He is the omnipotent ruler of the world. If you oppose God you will lose. All that Herod tried to do to stop the work of the church and the word of Christ could not stop it.
- **How does God care for His church?** God protects His name and the infant church. An angel arrives, inflicts him with worms and dies (v.23). Not a glorious way to die. Note: Josephus’ account of Herod Agrippa’s death and the owl.
- **Even with all the pressures on the young church and assaults from outside, how does the church fair?** The word of God increased and multiplied (v.24). Justice reigns. God’s name prospers. Persecution is the seed of the gospel. God’s Word and the church do not die.
- **How did the church continue to grow as the gospel went out?** The book of Acts is a historical account of how the church grew as the gospel was preached through the whole world. The chiastic structure of Acts chapters 6-19 show God’s great concern for people to hear His Word:

6:7 “The Word Grew”
9:31 “The Church Grew”
12:24 “The Word Grew”
16:5 “The Church Grew”
19:20 “The Word Grew”



KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Persecution. Corporate prayer for those being persecuted. Church leaders did not serve alone (v.25).

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? At least in Western Christianity, there is no sword from the local government, but in other places around the world that is not the case.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*?
Prescriptive: Earnest prayer for the persecuted (v.5).

Q: What do you learn about God? He is serious about His glory (vs.22-23). His word is fruitful (v.24).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Pray for my persecuted brothers and sister with earnest prayers. To be obedient to authority over me without hesitation or explanation.



ACTS 13 // THE GOSPEL SPREADS TO THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE WORLD

The Church Sends Out [13:1-3]

- **How does this text connect to the previous text?** Everyone is back in Jerusalem from their ministry outside the city (12:25).
- **What do you find interesting about the short list of leaders in the church at Antioch?** They were mixed group culturally and ethically, but inside the church they are one (v.1). The gospel unifies! Barnabas, the encourager from Cyprus. Simeon probably from Ethiopia. Lucius of Cyrene. Saul, the former terrorist of the church. And Manaen, potentially the half-brother of Herod, one who grew up in luxury (i.e. Moses who grew up in Pharaoh's house) and the one who had John the Baptist killed and conspired with the Romans to have Jesus executed.
- **How amazing is it that God can rescue people from various backgrounds and bring them together under one banner? How is your church similar?** Give praise to God for the diversity, yet unity in the church.
- **What are these men doing?** They were praying and fasting. **What does the Holy Spirit say to them?** Saul and Barnabas are to go do my work.
- **What does it mean to “lay on hands”?** It is a symbol; there is no actual power in those hands that conveys anything from one to another. The laying on of hands represents the blessing of God, the anointing of God's power. The reason for the laying on of hands here in Acts is that Paul and Barnabas were about to begin the first missionary journey, 9-years after Paul had been converted on the road to Damascus. The church laid its hands upon him as a sign of consecration, symbolizing the real touch that they needed from God for their work ahead.



1ST MISSIONARY JOURNEY BEGINS



Paul Sails to Cyprus and Faces a Sorcerer [13:4-12]

- ☞ **Who send out? Why is this critically important?** The Holy Spirit is the One who sends out (v.4a). We can commission, license, ordain, and send but it is the Holy Spirit who anoints people for ministry.
- ☞ **Where are Paul and Barnabas going?** By the way of Syria they are going to Cyprus (v.4b). Up to this point, this is one of the longest missionary journeys for the new church.
- ☞ **When they get to where they are going what do they do?** It says they immediately began preaching (v.5). This was no pleasure cruise tied to a short term mission trip. They go to the synagogue (a fertile fishing pond), a common place to find God fearers in Acts.



- **Who do they meet on their journey? Give details about them?** First, they meet Bar-Jesus, a false prophet (v.6). He is labeled as a Jew, but is also into magic (i.e. telling the future). Note: a good Jew would know that the OT says sorcery is an abomination to God. It is ironic that his name means “son of Jesus” (and later Paul calls him the “son of the devil”). Second, they meet Sergius Paulus (v.7). He is described as an intelligent man, a proconsul, connected to the Roman Senate.
- **Why is BarJesus (or anyone) named a false prophet?** He fights and teaches against the truth of God. He challenges Paul and Barnabas in public, not private. **Have you known a false prophet? How would you describe the character of their teaching or presentation?**
- **How does Paul respond to the false prophet?** He doesn’t hold back any punches. He is not try to win a friendship with “Merlin”. He calls him out and speaks the truth because He is filled with the Holy Spirit (vs.9-10). The public needed to hear what kind of man this false prophet was. **How would you respond if you were Paul? What do you learn from Paul’s response? How does his message mesh with the message that ‘God is love’? How is Paul’s response a manifestation of a shepherds heart? How is he responding like Jesus?**
- **How does Paul tell Barjesus’ future?** He says he will be blind for a time. It happened immediately (v.11). Ironically, darkness is a symbol of evil and blindness as one who walks in evilness.
- **How did Sergius Paulus respond to all that was happening?** He was amazed. The proconsul believed. It was the word of God that overwhelmed Sergius Paulus. God gave that man ears to hear and eyes to see. **What do you see here about the power of the Word of God and speaking the truth with love?**
- **Are you surprised that the early churches first missionary journey started off like this? How does this challenge you as you reach out to you world? Are you really trusting in Christ alone for your salvation, or are you resting on your performance (i.e. how often I go to church, how many good deeds I’ve done, how much money I’ve given away)? Have you fled to the cross as your only hope in life and death?**

Paul’s 1st Sermon: OT Survey (Part 1) [13:13-25]

- **What is significant about the places Paul and Barnabas are traveling?** Paphos (god: Venus) and Perga (god: Diana) were both pagan religious centers with temples to those gods (v.13a).



- **Where did John Mark go?** He left and went back to Jerusalem (v.13b). **Why did John Mark bail out?** Fear of Asia Minor? Conflict with leadership? Other? This will resurface later in the relationship of Paul and Barnabas on the 2nd missionary journey (cf. Acts 15). What we know from Acts here on out is that Paul is the leader, not Barnabas.
- **Once in Antioch, where do Paul and Barnabas go?** The synagogue (v.14). Note: this is not the same Antioch, but is Pisidium Antioch which is in the interior of Asia Minor. Antioch is used for 3 cities in the region. The cities were named after Antiochus the Great (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:22-26).
- **What was happening in the synagogue?** First, they were reading from the Law and the Prophets (v.15), which was customary. Second, the leaders of the synagogue opened up the floor for anyone to share a word for the people.
- **Paul speaks up. How does he gain the attention of the people?** He appeals to their heritage (vs.16-17). Like Jesus, he begins with Moses and the Prophets and all of Scripture as a springboard to talk about Jesus (cf. Luke 24:27-32). Note: This is Paul's first recorded sermon. Whenever we see Paul teaching the gospel in his epistles, he always begins with this: Jesus according to the Scriptures was born as the seed of David.
- **How does Paul summarize Scripture?** 1) Paul starts with Abraham and how God called a people to Himself (v.17), 2) Redemption from Egypt via Moses, 3) wandering in the Wilderness (v.18), 4) victory over nations (v.19, cf. Numbers and Joshua), 5) Samuel and the judges (v.20), the kings (v.21), and Messianic hope (vs. 22-23). Paul gives a swift history lesson of the OT. Along the way he makes it clear that God is Father, Redeemer, Victor, Judge and King. All the OT points to Jesus the Savior (Messiah) of Gods people (vs.23-25).
- **How would you describe the gospel? How does Paul describe this? Why is this message important, even for religious and educated people like those Paul is communicating? How does your gospel point to Jesus?**
- **Why does Paul include John the Baptist?** In some places he was more famous than Jesus, but even John the Baptist knew Jesus was more worthy than himself. **How does your life and words reflect a humility towards Jesus?**

Paul's 1st Sermon: Jesus and David (Part 2) [13:26-39]

- **To whom is Paul speaking in this text?** He is preaching to Jews in the synagogue (vs.26-27). As a Jew himself he has a heart for his kinsmen.



- **Why is he speaking to them?** He is informing them about Jesus because they did not recognize Him as Messiah nor connect the dots of the prophets that they read in the synagogue that day (and every Sabbath). **How is Jesus visible in the pages of the OT? How is it easy for one to miss this?**
- **How was the unjust death of Jesus also a fulfillment of the OT?** The Jewish leaders rejected the claims of Jesus and they killed Him. Paul reminds them that thousands of years before Jesus it was predicted what would happen to their Messiah (v.28-29). All that happens in the OT points to Jesus.
- **How does Paul then explain the gospel?** God raised Jesus (the seed of David) from the dead. There were many witnesses. This is “good news” (vs.30-32). The good news is about the story of Jesus. The gospel is who Jesus is, what He did, and what is available to all of us through Him. He lives, therefore, we too can live. **Why is it important to get the gospel right? What isn’t the gospel?**
- **What does it mean that Jesus was “begotten”?** Paul references Psalm 2:7 here (vs.32-33; cf. Psalm 2:1-2). It does not have the same meaning here as in “His only begotten Son,” but Jesus’ “begottenness” is a synonym for His exaltation (cf. Matthew 3:17; Mark 9:7). **How does God the Father exalt His Son? How do you exalt the Son of God?**
- **What is so important about the resurrection of Jesus?** Jesus was the first person to raise for the dead and not face the corruption of the grave (vs.34-35; cf. Psalm 34). Although, He was not the first person to raise from the dead in Scripture, even Jesus raised people from the dead (i.e. Lazarus; John 11:39), however, they all died again and returned to the grave. Jesus’ body did not have stench or decay. **Why do our bodies die and decay?** Sins curse. **How is the message of the resurrection your hope too?**
- **What is the difference between David and Jesus?** David died in the grave. Jesus was raised from the dead (vs.36-39). David was a man after God’s own heart. Jesus is God’s beloved. David was king of the Jews. Jesus is King of kings. David pointed to the Messiah. Jesus is the Messiah. David sought forgiveness for his sins. Jesus forgives sins (cf. Galatians 2:16).
- **Why would Paul use David as the character to connect Israel to the gospel?** David is the Jewish hero. He was a great king and warrior. He was their poet and song writer (75 psalms in total). Also, David spoke specifically about a Messiah who would come after him who would be his son and Lord.



Paul's 1st Sermon: Eternal Appointment (Part 3) [13:40-52]

- **How does Paul conclude his sermon?** With a warning. He desires his hearers to listen or the things in the prophets will come upon them too (v.40). **Which prophet does he quote?** Habakkuk (v.41; cf. Habakkuk 1:5-9). Note: Jesus also did the same thing; punctuating His sermons with future predictions of judgment if His listeners did not listen (cf. Luke 21:6, 24; 16:19-31).
- **How did the crowds respond to Paul's message?** They begged for more the next day (v.42). They loved the gospel and wanted to hear more. Many believed (v.43).
- **How did the Jews respond when Paul returned the following day?** Almost the entire city gathered to hear the word of God, but the Jews had great envy and opposed everything Paul said (vs.44-45). They did not embrace the gospel, rather they fought against it. **How have people been opposing the gospel through the centuries, even today?**
- **How do Paul and Barnabas respond to the blaspheme?** They become bolder (v. 46). They made it clear that the gospel is first for the Jew and then for the Gentile. Since the Jews reject the truth Paul will take it to the Gentiles (v.47).
- **How is turning to the Gentiles, in fact, Paul turning to the call God has placed upon him?** Like God's call to Israel, to be a light to the nations of salvation, so is Paul being that light to the Gentiles (cf. Isaiah 49:6; 45:22; 42:6).
- **How do the Gentiles respond to Paul's words?** They rejoice and glorify the word of the Lord (v.48). Notice, they do not glorify Paul or Barnabas. They praise God's Word. **Why do these Gentiles love the Word of God so much? How excited are you to hear and read the Word of God?**
- **What does it mean to be "appointed to eternal life"?** God chose us for salvation. God creates the faith to believe. The only reason anybody was saved out of that ungodly mass of people who were blaspheming and criticizing the preaching of the Word of God was that God intervened in the hearts of His elect and translated them from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.
- **What do the Jews do in response to all this?** They stir up their own faith sector to persecute God's messengers and kick them out (v.50). They went to great lengths to oppose the gospel.
- **What did Paul and Barnabas do amidst the heat?** They shook the dust off their feet and go to the next town (v.51; cf. Matt. 10:14; Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5; 18:6). This is exactly what Jesus told them to do. The idiom means "don't take the dirt with



you.” There are many today who have heard the gospel many times, and still they do not believe. We need to thank God that he has not yet shaken the dust from His feet. **How is the patience and kindness of God on display in this story?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? The church is sending out to the nations/Gentiles. The church addresses false prophets. The church majors on the gospel, even in the face of persecution. The church uses all of Scripture to point to Jesus.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today’s church? An emphasis on sending out (rather than on bringing in). Persecution in the Western church. Dealing with false prophets. Using all the Bible to preach the gospel or point to Jesus (rather than moralize the OT narratives).

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Descriptive: addressing false prophets. Going to the synagogue first. Prescriptive: preaching the gospel using the OT.

Q: What do you learn about God? God can rescue and bring together people from various backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities through the gospel (i.e. Antioch). The Holy Spirit appoints, sends and fills people for ministry (v.2, 4, 9). God uses all of His Word to point us to His Son. God gives grace (v.43). Holy Spirit fills with joy (v.52).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Seek His wisdom and joy for ministry. Praise Him for the unity and diversity within the Body. Ask for discernment between true and false teaching. Strength amidst persecution and opposition.



ACTS 14 // PAUL & BARNABAS MAKING THE ROUNDS

Paul & Barnabas: The Same Old Story [14:1-7]

- **How is this the same old story?** In the midst of bold preaching, divisions occurred, opposition arose, and hostility set in, and the Apostles were barely able on very many occasions to escape with their lives. This would be a trend that would continue in Acts. **How does the gospel bring division? How does the gospel bring peace or animosity? Why is the gospel the consistent message of the apostles?**
- **Where did Paul and Barnabas go and what happened there?** They go to Iconium, preach, and many believe (v.1).
- **How do the unbelieving Jews respond?** They stir up division (vs.2) and poisoned the minds against the believers.
- **How did Paul and Barnabas respond?** They kept on preaching boldly for the Lord (v.3). **Why are they able to do signs and wonders?** God authenticates their message with signs and wonders (cf. John 3:2).
- **How did the town become more divided and hostile towards God's messengers? What did the apostles do?** The unbelieving Jews became violent and desired to abuse and stone the apostles. Therefore, they fled to Lystra and Derbe (vs.4-6) to preach the gospel (v.7). **How would you respond if in the sandals of the apostles? To where would you flee?**
- **Have you experienced animosity for sharing the gospel? How does this help you to relate with the story of Paul and Barnabas?**

Paul & Barnabas: Gods or Men? [14:8-18]

- **Who do the apostle meet in Lystra? Does this story remind you of another in Acts?** They meet a man crippled from birth (vs.8-10). This is similar to Peter and John's encounter with the lame man at the Beautiful Gate in Acts 3-4. Paul looks at the man, sees his faith, calls him to stand to his feet, and the man walks. **When you consider this miracle, what amazes you?** I consider that he needed no help to get up and walk, even though it is something he had never done before.



- **How do the crowds respond to this miracle?** They call them gods (vs.11-13), specifically Zeus (Barnabas) and Hermes (Paul). They treated them like gods too bringing pomp and sacrifice. **Have you received more praise than deserved in ministry? Who got the glory? How did you respond? How can you deflect the glory to God?**
- **How did Paul and Barnabas respond to the god-like treatment?** They did not take flattery well, rather they were disappointed. They tore their cloths and ran to the crowd crying out, “We are men like you. Turn from your gods to the Living God. The One who has shown you common grace” (vs.14-17). The apostles were not into man-worship, but God-worship alone. The crowd was making the common mistake of worshiping creation (idolatry) rather than the Creator and exchange the glory of God for a lie (cf. Romans 1:25).
- **How do the crowds still respond?** They have a hard time not treating them like gods and sacrificing to them (v.18). **How have you been guilty of worshiping creation over the Creator? Why is it so easy to deify men? How quick are you to deflect praise and glory to God? Why is Jesus the only man we should deify and give glory and praise?** Jesus is God incarnate. He is the only perfect man.

Paul & Barnabas: On Entering the Kingdom [14:19-28]

- **What is the ministry of the apostles?** They preach the gospel wherever they are. **Why were they so bold, so public, and so unreserved about their faith? How does this give you an example for your own ministry?**
- **When the mob finds Paul and Barnabas what do they do?** Angry Jews from Antioch and Iconium persuade the crowds against the apostles and they drag them out of the town and stone them (i.e. kangaroo court), leaving them for dead (v.19). **Why stoning?** This was the OT practice for punishing false prophets. The unbelieving Jews did not recognize God’s messengers.
- **When other disciples gather around “dead” Paul and Barnabas, what happens?** They rose, went into the city, and went on to Derbe (v.20), and they continued to preach the gospel. **Is the gospel really that important to lose your life over it? Why or why not?**
- **How do the disciples retrace their steps?** They bring the gospel to Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (v.21), and Pisidia, Pamphylia, and Perga (v.24). Now they go back the same way they came encouraging the disciples through the gospel. **Why do they encourage the disciples?** From all that has happened to Paul and Barnabas because of the gospel, the disciples need encouragement amidst the



persecution and opposition (vs.21-23). Also, they share about what God is doing among the Gentiles, the open door (v.27). It is great when the encouragement is reciprocal and the church encourages its servants (v.26).

- 🗣️ **What does it mean “that through many tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God”? How did persecution grow the church rather than squelch it?** Notice how Paul’s encourages Timothy (a convert from this missionary journey; cf. 2 Timothy 3:10-13) within persecution. And Jesus’ message to His followers while on earth (cf. Matthew 10:16-25) facing persecution.
- 🗣️ **How did Paul and Barnabas assure the future of the churches in the towns they visited on their first missionary journey?** They appointed elders with prayer and fasting committing them to the Lord (v.23). **Why is it so important to appoint leadership humbly and biblically?**

1ST MISSIONARY JOURNEY ENDS

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Persecution. Humility. Giving glory to God (rather than men). Preaching the gospel and the kingdom of God. Pray and fasting. Appointing elders. Encouragement.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today’s church? Deflecting glory from man to God immediately. Acceptance of division that comes from the gospel. Stoning.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Prescriptive: Preach the gospel. Appoint elders. Pray and fast. Encouragement through persecution. Humility. Descriptive: healing and miracles.

Q: What do you learn about God? God gives grace for healing and authentication for His messengers. He desire praise above creation. He gives common grace to all (vs. 15-16). Declare all that He has done to one another (v.27).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Boldness to preach the gospel continually. Humility to give God the glory and praise for His work through me.



ACTS 15 // THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

The Judaizers: Threat to the Early Church & the Gospel [15:1-21]

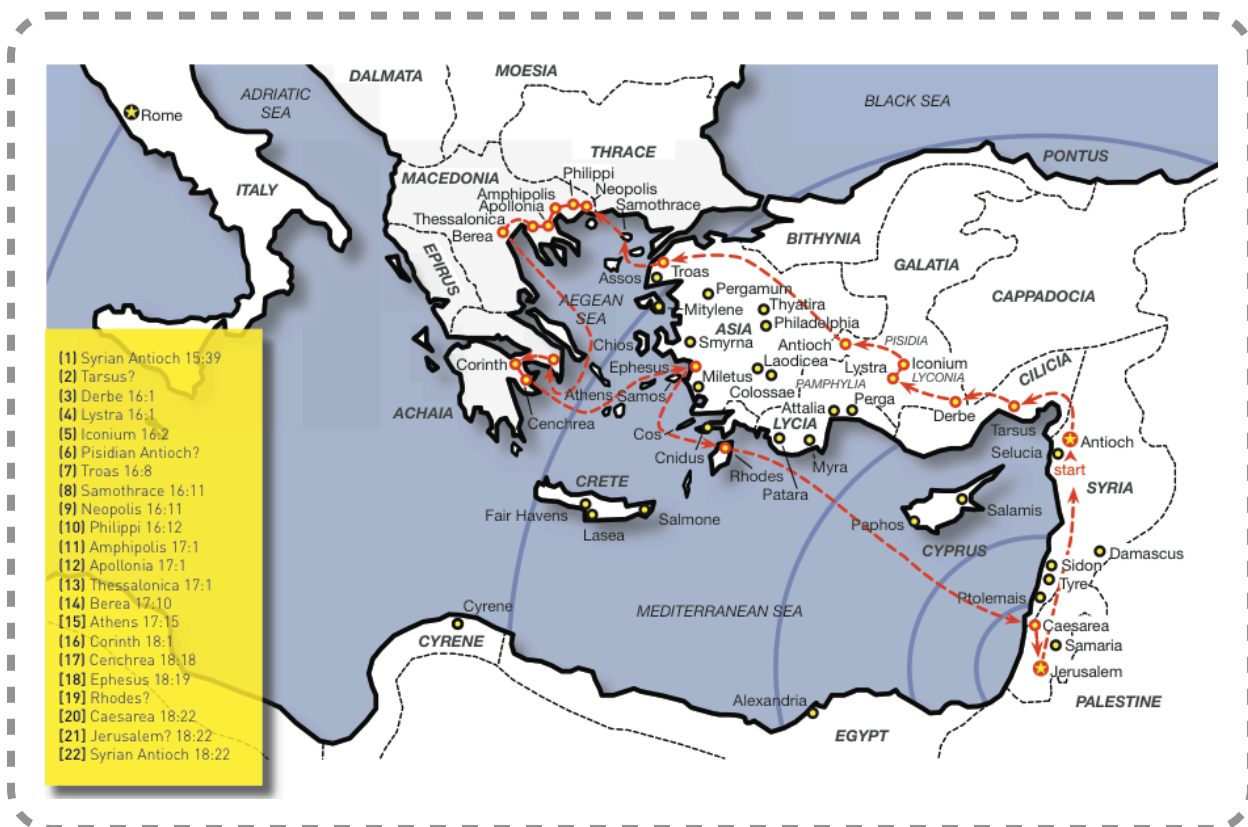
- **What is a church council? Why does a church council convene? What types of topics were discussed at churches councils in the past?**
- **What is the teaching that is being addressed in the church?** Whether circumcision according to the law saves (v.1). Since the Christian faith was birthed out of a Jewish region of the world many wanted to know know the Gentiles, Samaritans, and God-fearing Greeks fit into the church. Were they 2nd Class citizens? Do they have to be more Jewish? The real question was: What is really necessary for salvation? Is anything added to it?
- **What is heresy? How can truth and heresy be so closely related? How does the church protect itself against heresy?**
- **How does the book of Galatians (cf. 1:6-10; 3:1-3) aid the issues being discussed in Acts 15? How will you stand firm for the truth in the face of false teachings?**
- **How do Paul and Barnabas respond?** They go to Jerusalem with the question for the apostles and elders (v.2). **Why did they go to Jerusalem and why now?** It wasn't a small issue. The gospel and the doctrine of justification were at stake.
- **How do the Pharisees respond to the question?** As guardians of the law they side with the law that circumcision is necessary (v.5).
- **What is the significance of circumcision?** Circumcision is the sign of the old covenant (first to Abraham and then under the Mosaic Law; cf. Deuteronomy 28:1-15). **How did the Pharisees not understand the significance of circumcision?**
- **How did Jesus submit to the law and free us from it?** He obeyed all of it and born the curse of the law upon the tree (cross). He completely and perfectly obeyed the old covenant and brought us a new covenant by His blood. He freed us from the curse of the law. As Jesus said, you cannot put new wine in old wineskins.
- **How and why is Jesus' atonement for sin "good enough" and circumcision is "unnecessary"?** Jesus did the great work, so we don't have to be measure by our good works (cf. Mark 10:17-21). I am not good enough to get salvation on my own. I need Jesus.



- **Who is the first to speak at the council in Jerusalem?** Peter (vs.5-6). **How does he respond?** He affirms the gospel going to the Gentiles for their salvation too (vs. 7-11). Gentiles are saved in the same manner as Jews, by faith alone through the grace of Christ alone (cf. Ephesians 2:8-10). Not a popular message to the Jews present, but the crowd became silent (v.12a).
- **Who is the second to speak at the council?** Barnabas and Paul. **How do they respond?** They speak to the affirmation of God's message through miracles among the Gentiles (v.12).
- **Who is the third to speak at the council?** James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem. **How does he respond? Why does he include a text from Amos?** God uses His people to reach out to the globe with the good news, since the moment He's called them. James shows how the OT (Amos 9:11-12) backs up the the promise of salvation is for the Gentiles too (vs.13-18). He lovingly backs up the Gentiles turning to the faith and it is the Jews responsibility and privilege in Jerusalem to encourage the Gentiles (vs.19-21). Until all have heard the good news. **How does this text support the mission of God? And global outreach?**
- **How does the council answer the original question definitively against the Judaizers?** Nothing is required for salvation but resting in the grace of Jesus by faith alone (for the just shall live by faith). Salvation is for Jews and Gentiles alike. Circumcision is not a cultic rite of passage, but a symbol of the old covenant. Jesus is the way to a new covenant available to all. To accept circumcision is to reject the gospel.
- **How has tradition, religion, or personal biases interfered in your attempt to spread the good news to all people? How does this passage and the various responses encourage or challenge you? How will you answer someone who has questions about what is necessary (or unnecessary) for salvation? How will you take a stand for heresy in your church with love and grace?**



2ND MISSIONARY JOURNEY BEGINS



The Council's Letter: Encouraging Gentiles Believers [15:22-35]

- How would you communicate important truth to new believers in a foreign place if you didn't have email or video chat? Why is having a medium that is reviewable or reread-able so important?
- What was the motivation for addressing the issues in the early church? The Holy Spirit and the apostles (v.22, 28).
- How did the early church decide to deal with the problem of false teaching in the church? They write a letter and send servants of God (Paul, Barnabas, Judas and Silas) to hand deliver it to many churches. Their goal was to encourage the young Jesus-followers by letter and face time (vs.23-27). They just don't say, "Read this book." They go and help the young believers understand.
- Why is it so important to be there face to face when conveying a hard truth or encouragement for the first time, rather than just sending a note or email?



- **What types of things do they encourage the believers to abstain?** Four things: 1) abstain from things given to idols (cf. Romans 14), 2) abstain from blood, 3) abstain from things strangled, and 4) abstain from sexual immorality (vs.28-29).
- **Which of these things is explicitly sinful nor situation?** Sexual immorality (cf. Ephesians 5:3). Other things are preferential or situational related to idolatry and pagan worship.
- **Why does the early church leaders request other believers to abstain from these things?** They were to abstain from these things while with their Jewish brother, particularly, since this Gentile baggage was hard for their Jewish brothers to carry at this moment in church history.
- **Where did they go first?** They went back to Antioch. **How did they deliver the letter?** They delivered it to the church together (v.30).
- **How did the church respond?** They rejoiced and were encouraged (v.31-32).
- **What did the men who came from Jerusalem do?** Silas and Judas returned to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas continued teaching and preaching the Word (vs. 33-35).

Paul & Barnabas: Going Different Directions [15:36-41]

- **How does it help you to see the differences in the early church and the way the leaders dealt with their problems? What weaknesses, failures and sins affected the early church and it's leaders as you have seen in Acts?**
- **Explain the relationship between Paul and Barnabas before this text? What kind of things have they gone through together? What knit them together as a friendship? Where have they been together? What did they do together?**
- **What has caused a rift in their relationship?** The place of John Mark in their mission. He left the first missionary journey. Barnabas wants him to join on the second, but Paul insists that now is not the time (vs.36-38).
- **What could have caused this rift?** It could be a personal thing, since John Mark bailed on the first missionary journey. It could have been a family thing since John Mark was a kin to Barnabas. It could have been an ability thing since John Mark didn't show he was competent for the tough and dangerous itinerant ministry. **Who was right, Paul or Barnabas?** The text does not say. Either or neither, perhaps.



How can you relate to this situation from either Paul, Barnabas, or John Mark's point of view?

- **What happened between Paul and Barnabas?** They split up. Barnabas sided with John Mark and sailed to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas and went on their second missionary journey (vs.39-41). **What kind of disagreement is this?** First, it is personal. Second, it is serious (sharp). It is not mild. It is fierce and angry.
- **What do we learn from the dispute between the men in this test?** 1) The first leaders are not perfect. They are infallible. God uses our differences and disputes for His glory. 2) Paul takes into account the history of John Mark. It doesn't mean that Paul didn't have grace towards John Mark or believe he could change. God has given Paul a spirit of wisdom. 3) All men involved love the mission of Christ and continue on in that.
- **Is there another way to look at this situation other than an angry split?** Missionary teams double. Note: Barnabas doesn't appear in Acts hereafter.
- **Is it ever okay to fire someone from ministry? What reasons are okay to let someone go? Why is it difficult to do?**
- **What did John Mark do?** He might not have traveled with Paul and served as a "missionary", but he did write the gospel of Mark. He made a tremendous contribution to the kingdom of God as a chronicler the Word of God. Just because he didn't make the cut as a missionary didn't mean he gave up on ministry. **Why is there always an opportunity for Christians to serve and be used? Who qualifies and gifts us for ministry? How does God confirm these gifts? How does this text help shed light on this?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Fighting for truth. Addressing truth. Using truth to encourage the church. Seeking counsel from many.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Judaizers, however, face teaching and adding to justification is common.

Q: Are any details given to the new church descriptive or prescriptive? Prescriptive: Nothing is added to salvation, nothing.

Q: What do you learn about God? God deserves praise for all He has done (v.4, 10). God loves the Gentiles like He does His own people. God doesn't like to be put to the



test (v.10). God remembers His promises (v.17). Jesus is worth to risk ones life (v.26). Holy Spirit burdens men (v.28).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? I want to remember and declare all that God has done. Stand up for truth and encourage those who have questions related to it.



ACTS 16 // MACEDONIAN CALL, LYDIA & THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER

Introducing Timothy: Welcome to the Team [16:1-5]

- **Has Paul been to these places before?** Yes. On his previous, first missionary journey (v.1a).
- **Which character is introduced for the first time in this text?** Timothy (v.1b).
What do you learn about him? He is from Lystra. He probably became a follower during Paul's first missionary journey there. His mother is Jewish believer and his father is Greek (pagan). He has a good reputation among the brothers near his home (v.2).
- **What do you know about Paul and Timothy's relationship?** Paul became like a spiritual father to Timothy. Paul encouraged him dearly in the pastoral ministry.
- **What did Paul desire of Timothy?** To accompany him on his current journey (v.3a).
- **What does he request Timothy to do? Why?** He takes him to be circumcised because of the Jews in the areas they were going. It was strategic. **Why is it strange to subject Timothy to circumcision knowing the argument in the church in Acs 15?** The question at the Jerusalem Council was whether new believers needed to be circumcised in order to be saved. The answer was no. However, in order not to be a stumbling block to the "weak" Jewish believers Paul thinks it is wise that Timothy subject himself to this OT law and symbolic gesture. Paul, in a sense, here becomes his spiritual father, doing something that Timothy's father would have done in his youth if he were a Jew. Note: Later Paul will refuse to circumcise Titus. He also later emphasizes the circumcision of the heart.
- **How does Paul demonstrate his concern to pour himself into younger believers? How is this a valuable illustration for you? Who are you pouring into right now? Who is your Timothy?**
- **As Paul and Timothy went, what did they observe?** They observed all the people who had been reached. The churches were strengthened in faith and growth (vs. 4-5).



Paul's Call from Macedonia [16:6-10]

- **Have you received a call to go somewhere that you've never been before? What was your reaction?**
- **Where did Paul and Timothy want to go? What prevented them from going there?** First, They wanted to go to Asia (Phrygia and Galatia), but the Holy Spirit prevented them (v.6). Second, they went up to Mysia and Bithynia (v.7), but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.
- **What doesn't it mean that the Spirit prevent them from going to a particular place? What does God's stop sign look like?** It is unclear what that looks like, but what was obvious to them were roadblocks of some sort. **Have you ever been blocked from going somewhere you really wanted to go?**
- **So how did Paul know where they were suppose to go?** In Troas, God gave him a vision in the night of a man from Macedonia calling him to come there (v.8-9). **How are people calling everyday around the world for the gospel to come to them?**
- **How did Paul respond? Where is Paul to go? What is he to do there?** When he woke he left immediately for Macedonia to preach the gospel to the people there (v. 10). **How would you have responded?**
- **Does the Macedonian Call differ from what ministry he has already been doing? His ministry is no different than what he has already been doing. Why is it important to know he was doing what he was use to do here and there?**

Lydia Loves Jesus [16:11-15]

- **What do you notice about the tense of this passage?** Luke includes himself into the story (vs.11, 15).
- **What is the first place in Macedonia Paul, Silas, and Timothy visit? Philippi (vs. 11-12). Where do they go to find seekers?** On the Sabbath they went to where people might be praying by the riverside because water was used for cleansing rites (v.13). **How is this different than other strategies in Acts?** Usually they would go to a synagogue, but Philippi is a heavily Roman town. Note: Philip of Macedon, who the name sake for Philippi was the father of Alexander the Great.



- **Who did they meet there?** They meet many woman. One in particular is named Lydia. **What do we know about her?** She is a lucrative business woman (of regal wear). She fears God (v.14a).
- **How does God call her?** He opens her heart to pay attention to the words of Paul (v.14b). It is God who intervenes in her life. **How is what happens to Lydia true for all followers of Jesus?** It takes a work of God to open our hearts to Him and to hear His word.
- **What happens next for Lydia?** She is baptized; making her faith public. Her household also believes (v.15a). She shows hospitality to the apostles (v.15).

Slave Girl [16:16-24]

- **Where are they apostles going as the texts begins? They are going to another place of prayer in Philippi (v.16a).**
- **Who do they meet on their way?** They met a slave girl who had a spirit of divination (occult), she was able to tell fortunes and do sorcery (v.16a). **How did her owners use her and her divination?** They made money off of her predictions of the future. They kept close tabs on her because she was a means of economic gain for them. **How do people exploit dark powers today for gain?**
- **How did she react to Paul and the others?** She followed them around for many days yelling at them (v.17). Really, she is harassing and stalking them.
- **What was she saying? Was it blasphemous?** No, in fact, she was saying the truth (v.17b). It wasn't a matter of what she was saying, it was a matter of how she was saying it and how often (almost laughing at them). It annoyed the apostles. Sometimes people can say the truth in a way that belittles the truth or attacks it, such as satire or mockery (cf. Matthew 8:29). This is what the slave girl was doing.
- **How did the apostles respond?** First, they were annoyed (v.18). Second, they commanded the spirit out of her. And it came out.
- **How did the slave owners respond to the girls new state?** They were ticked. They saw her only as dollar signs, but now she was wasted goods. They took Paul and Silas to the rulers in the marketplace (i.e. agora). This is a public spectacle and court hearing (v.19). **Why would they be so upset about something so good? How do our desires blind us to God's goodness?**



- **How do they convict Paul and Silas of a crime?** First, it's spiritual. They label them Jews (v.20). Second, it's civil. They accuse them of public disturbance. Third, it's legal (v.21). They accuse them of doing things unlawful for Romans (i.e. teaching foreign religion there). **How does this set-up remind you of Jesus' trial?**
- **How does the crowd respond?** They join the attack (v.22a). **How do the leaders respond?** They tear their clothes and order them to be beaten and humiliated (v. 22b), and threw them into prison (v.23).
- **What details are given about their prison sentence?** The jailor is told to keep them safe (v.23b). They are ordered to the inner prison and their feet were set into stocks (v.24). They are in the most secure part of the prison and inflicted with more pain and punishment. The possibility for escape was nearly impossible.

Free at Last [16:25-40]

- **Where are Paul and Silas? What are they doing there? How are they passing time?** They are in prison for healing a possessed slave girl. To pass time they were praying and singing worship songs (i.e. OT psalms), while the other prisoners listened in (v.25). **How is this opposite to what many would be doing in their same predicament? How can you be a witness or give God glory even in the darkest dungeon? What would those other prisoners be thinking as they hear praise in the midst of abject suffering?**
- **What natural occurrence happens next?** An earthquake shakes the foundation of the prison (v.26), the cell doors were opened, and everyone's stocks were loosed. Likely, the the earthquake was so strong the building collapsed.
- **How was this a problem for a jailer?** Other than the obvious, escapees. He didn't have a building to house the convicts. **How did he respond?** Once he woke up, ironically sleeping through the earthquake, he supposed the prisoners escaped and he was ready to kill himself before the leaders of the city had the opportunity (v.27). Loosing prisoners is a jailers most feared nightmare and biggest disgrace. If he wanted to regain his honor, he could do so by falling on his sword. Such suicide was not considered to be an act of cowardice but a heroic act of personal sacrifice.
- **What happened that prevented the jailers death?** Paul intervened by telling him not to kill himself (v.28). **Why would Paul want to stop the jailer from committing suicide? Isn't he stopping justice?**
- **How did the jailer respond?** He rushed to Paul and Silas asked what he must do to be saved? (vs.29-30) **What does the word "saved" mean here?** Is it eternal



salvation from the consequences of sin or temporary deliverance from the consequences of his job at the prison? **Why would he respond this way? What's in the jailers mind?** Perhaps he is thinking about the consequence of prisoners on the loose. Perhaps he is grateful the prisoners had not escaped. Perhaps he heard the praying and singing the night before and knew what had happened related to their God. Perhaps he thinks he is at the end of his life and is seeking real answers to life's toughest question. The details are uncertain.

- **Is it odd that Paul and the prisoners are still at the prison even though they are freed? Why would they stay rather than flee? How does this differ from the previous prison release in Acts 12:6-19?**
- **How did the apostles respond to the jailers question?** They told him what was essential: Jesus. "Believe on the name of Jesus, you and your household." (vs. 31-32) **Why would they include "households" in their response?** It is possible that a decision that sinks is one that is shared by family and close acquaintances.
- **What does the jailer do? How does he respond to the great invitation?** First, he helps the apostles by cleaning their wounds (vs.33-34). Second, he was baptized, which shows publicly what decision he made internally. Third, his family took part in the decision. The new prison becomes his personal residence. Fourth, he fed them at his house. Fifth, he praised God that he believed. He had his worst day and best day on the same day. **How can you relate to the jailers day? Have have you experience the worst and best at the same time?**
- **What happens the next day?** The leaders of the town ask for the men to be let go (v.35) and the jailers sets them free (v.36).
- **How does Paul respond to this?** He makes a complaint saying, "They publicly humiliate their own citizens. Now they want to let us go secretly?" He plays the Roman citizen card. Public shame justly deserves public outcry. Paul demands that the leaders come themselves and set them free. It is a public statement (v.37). **Why does Paul make a public statement for this situation? Why doesn't he just thank God and go free? What would you have done?**
- **How did the city leaders respond to the request?** First, they were afraid because they were Roman citizens (v.38). Punishment for Romans was different than those of foreigners. These city leaders crossed the line hastily without doing their research. Second, they come to apologize in person and asked them to leave (v.39).
- **Once freed, where do the apostles go?** They beeline it to Lydia's house to encourage the new believers (v.40). This the do before departing.



🗣️ **How is the salvation of the jailer and his house an illustration of God's grace?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Calling and training up new leaders, like Timothy. Obedience to the Spirit by going to unreached places. Baptizing new believers. Obedience to earthly authorities. Proclaiming the gospel, even in difficult situations.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Visions in the night. Casting out demons. Baptizing new believers immediately.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Prescriptive: Train new believers by bringing them with you. Preach the gospel of Jesus. Baptize new believers. Encourage the saints. Descriptive: Depending on visions in the night. Casting out demons.

Q: What do you learn about God? God calls people to preach the gospel (v.10). He leads people by His Spirit. Even the demons know His name (v.17). Jesus name has power to cast out demons (v.18). He is worthy to be praise no matter the situation (v. 25). Jesus is the name that saves (v.31).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Pray for boldness to preach the gospel everywhere to anyone. Listen to His leading. Depend upon His power. Praise Him in the times of suffering.



ACTS 17 // PAUL AT ATHENS

Turning the World Upside Down [17:1-9]

- **What is common about Paul's entrance into Thessalonica that is similar to other missionary endeavors in Acts?** They come as a group, they go to the synagogue (vs.1-3), they preach the Scripture (gospel), a few are converted (v.4), others protest (vs.5ff), beat and imprison the apostles. **Why does Paul keep doing this if he knows this will probably be the pattern in the next town? (cf. Colossians 1:24)**
- **What is the history of Thessalonica?** Its name came from the sister of Alexander the Great and the city was named by her husband in her honor.
- **What does it mean that Paul “reasoned with them from the Scriptures”? Why does Paul use the Scriptures to point to Jesus?** Jesus is referenced and prophesied about hundreds of times in the OT (v.3). The Scripture is his greatest asset because Jesus is in the pages and the people respect the pages of the OT (cf. Romans 10:17). **How much do you reference the Scripture when you talk to people about Jesus?** Notice: women coming to Christ is noted more than once in this chapter (v.4, 12, 34). **Why is it so important or encouraging to you to see when coming to faith in Christ?**
- **Why were the Jews jealous? Why did they pick on Jason's house?** They do not like Jesus or those who follow Jesus (v.5). Since Jason is housing the Jesus-followers they attack his house to drag out the apostles. **Why do the Jews often resort to public shaming of Jesus followers?** This is almost the best form of peer pressure and humiliation. In an honor shame culture, if you want to intimidate and change someone, bring them before the crowds publicly.
- **What do the Jews say about the Jesus followers?** First, they call them the ones who “have turned the world upside down,” (v.6) in other words, they are the words who are causing all this ruckus and rabble-rousing in the news lately (ironically it's the other way around). Second, they convict them of breaking Caesar's decrees by saying there is another king (Jesus), which is true but an entirely different king (v.7). **Why is it a blessed thing that Jesus is turning the world upside down? How are you known as someone who is turning the world upside down.**
- **What was the response of the authorities towards the Jesus-followers?** They were disturbed, took their money, and let them go (v.8-9).



On Being a Berean [17:10-15]

- **Where did the apostles go next?** They go to Berea. **What do they do there?** They go to the synagogue, likely looking for God-fearers (v.10).
- **How does Luke compare Berea to Thessalonica?** He saw it is a more fair-minded place. **What does “fair-minded mean”?** They were read to receive the word with eagerness. They were not jealous or antagonistic (v.11). **What was the proof of their fair-mindedness?** They studied the Bible daily to see if what the apostles were saying were true, rather than immediately assuming they were wrong. **How are you like the Berean's? Why is it good to go to the Scriptures to see if something is true?**
- **What was the response of the Berean's to the teaching of the apostles?** Many believed (v.13). When the Word is preached and read, people learn about Jesus.
- **So what do the Thessalonians think about this?** The cankerous Jews in Thessalonica catch wind what is happening in Berea. **What did they do?** They came to Berea to stir the crowds against the apostles teachings. Who are the rabble-rousers now?
- **How do the apostles respond?** Paul sails away, but Silas and Timothy stick around Berea (v.14). Once Paul landed somewhere where he was received he send for Silas and Timothy (v.15).

Paul in Athens: Mars Hills (Part 1) [17:16-21]

- **Where was Paul?** He was in Athens (v.16a). **Initially, what was he doing?** He is waiting for Silas and Timothy to come from Berea. He is not there as a tourist. He is there to bring the gospel.
- **While Paul waits what does he see in Athens? How does he respond?** While in Athens he takes a tour of the chief cultural center of the world (v.16b), home to the great philosophical minds (i.e. Plato, Aristotle, etc.). He sees all the idolatry in the city. He feels provoked, in other words, his heart stirred, he felt unwelcomed, he was overwhelmed by the paganism and evil that flooded Athens. **Have you ever been provoked by your spirit like Paul? Explain.**
- **So where does he go next? What does he do there?** First, he finds the synagogue and reasons the Jews. Second, he reasons with the Epicureans and Stoic philosophers in the marketplace (v.17). **What does it mean to “reason”?** Paul is a chief apologist. He went directly to the intelligent people of Athens and



reasoned with them about the truth. Note: temples were often built on the highest point in a town or region for their great deities to reside. These were often called “high places”. The acropolis means, “height of city.”

- **Who are the Epicureans and Stoics?** They are the two main schools of thought (or philosophy) that circled and flourished during Paul’s day. Epicureanism was the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain (i.e. hedonism) as the purpose of life. Stoicism was the pursuit of a meaning in a meaningless life. They were two quests for ultimate truth, but they were polar opposites, yet they both tried to understand truth practically (pragmatically). It was certainly an age of skepticism and living for the “here and now”. **How is Paul’s day a lot like ours? Or how is the philosophical climate of Paul’s day similar to our day?**
- **What do the philosophers call Paul?** They call him a babbler, or seed picker (v.18). It had reference to those who gathered little pieces of cloth to sell in the marketplace at cheap prices, much like people today who collect bottles and try to make a living selling them for a few cents. That is how they considered Paul, this ragtag fellow. **How is this similar to how the intelligentsia perceives the church and Christian community today?**
- **How did others view Jesus and His resurrection?** Some thought he was just another divinity among many (v.18b).
- **Where do the philosophers take Paul? Why?** They took him to the Areopagus to hear more about his preaching. They were curious. They want to know more about these strange new teachings. **What is the Areopagus?** It is the temple to Ares, the Greek god of war (Roman god, Mars). It is also known as Mars Hill. People would go to Mars Hill to dispute and debate (or hold trials) with the philosophers (vs. 19-20).
- **What does Luke tell us about the Athenians in his verse 21 footnote?** They spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. **What is a “new thing”? Why is the world, particularly the philosophical world hyper about hearing a new thing?** The old is boring, but to come philosophical fad of the day is chic. Often credibility comes to people who come up with something new and different. **What is the new thing today? Yesterday? Or tomorrow? How are new fads usually old fads with new clothing? How has new philosophy infiltrated the church today too? How is the gospel new and old at the same time? How does the gospel satisfy the philosophical thoughts of all eras?**



Paul in Athens: Mars Hills (Part 2) [17:22-34]

- **Where is Paul? What is he doing there?** He is standing in the midst of the Areopagus (a high place), in Athens, explaining the gospel to polytheistic and philosophical minds (v.22).
- **What did Paul observe in Athens as he passed through?** He observed their objects of worship particularly on inscribed to the “unknown god” (v.23).
- **How does Paul use this to launch into the gospel?** He says, I know this God you do not know. **How is God knowable?** God has revealed Himself through creation, His Word, and the law written on man’s heart (cf. Romans 1:18-19; 2:5-6; Psalm 19:3). **How have the Athenians exchanged God for a lie? (cf. Romans 1:25)**
- **Why does Paul go into a treatise on God and idolatry?** He desires to clear the air about God. He does not live in man made houses. He created the world. Man does not create Him (v.24). **How is God jealous of the “high places” and desire to be the Most High God? How does Paul put away the notion of polytheism?**
- **How is verse 25, a humbling statement?** God doesn’t need me or my service, but I desperately need Him to live (v.25).
- **Who is the “one man” in verse 26?** This is a reference to Adam, who was the first man. **How was Paul describe the sovereignty of God?** God has the authority to create man. He has the power to reign over earth and the affairs of the world.
- **What is God’s grand purpose for the world?** That the nations should seek Him and find Him (v.27). **Where is God in relationship to man?** Here. Not far. (v.27b) **How is verse 27 one of the most profound statements in the Bible? How does it address the issue of ultimate truth, philosophy in Athens, and modern philosophy?** In God we live and move and have our being (v.28-29). **How does Paul use their own poets to back this up?**
- **How is Paul opening their eyes to the ultimate truth?** No longer are they ignorant. No longer can they say, “We never knew.” The mystery of Jesus has been revealed to them (v.30). **How is Paul calling them to respond to the truth?** Repent of their philosophy and turn to Jesus. Trash their gods and treasure Christ. God commands people everywhere to repent. Sooner or later we will all know who is greater.
- **Why is God calling people to repent now?** A time is coming a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has ordained. **Who is this man?** The second Adam, Jesus, the one who rose from the dead (v.31). **How does this**



make Jesus different than other prophets, teachers, and men of God? Why is His resurrection so important? Without the resurrection Jesus is just another dead man. His resurrection proves His claims. **When is this judgement day?** Only God knows. **How does a pending judgment day leave us at a point of decision other than pluralism? Where does your allegiance lie?**

🗣️ **How did the crowd respond?** First, some mocked (v.32). Some wanted to hear more (v.32b). Some followed and believed (v.34). Note: the believers listed were women. **Do you know people who fit into these various response categories? How have you responded in the past?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Preaching the Word, including the OT. Confronting the gods of the land. And a call for repentance.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Sometimes the emphasis is on repentance. Sometimes engaging the intellectuals. Sometimes using all the Scripture to preach the gospel. Going to a different place when there is not response to the gospel.

Q: Are any details given to the new church descriptive or prescriptive? Prescriptive: Preaching the Word, including the OT.

Q: What do you learn about God? God uses His Word to change people. God is knowable. God is Creator (v.24). God is provoked by idolatry (v.24). God is dependent upon no one or nothing (v.25). God is sovereign (v.26). God draws people to Himself (v.27). God is Father (v.29). God has given His Son to be Judge of the world (v.31).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Give me strength to preach the gospel amidst hostility. Help me to live in such a way that makes the gospel attractive. Give me Your wisdom.



ACTS 18 // PAUL IN CORINTH

Corinth: Sometimes Ministry takes Longer in Some Places [18:1-17]

- **How long did Paul stay in Athens?** Not sure. It doesn't appear to be very long. **Where does he go next?** To Corinth (v.1), in modern day Greece (Macedonia). **How does Paul reflect on his time in Athens and Corinth in 1 Corinthians 1:27?** "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty". By the leading of the Spirit, Paul shook the dust from Athens off his feet and made his way to Corinth.
- **When Paul arrived in Corinth, who did he first meet?** Aquila and Pricilla, an Italian couple (v.2). **Where did the couple come from and why?** They came from Rome because an edict was passed expelling all Jews from the city (52AD), possibly related to the teachings of Jesus. **How is Paul meeting them perfect timing?**
- **What did Paul have in common with the husband?** They were both tentmakers. They did this as a side job for income and livelihood.
- **As Paul enters Corinth, how does he engage the religious community?** As usual, he reasons in the synagogue on the Sabbath (v.4). He is compelled by the Spirit to speak about Jesus to the Jews. **How do the Jews respond to Paul's message?** They oppose and cuss him out (v.6). Not the most pleasant response. **How does Paul fire back a response to the Jews?** He shakes his garment. A visual to indicate he is shaking the filth of the Jews off from himself. In a sense, he says, "You have condemned yourselves." (cf. Luke 23:28) From this point on, he will make his ministry focus on Gentiles, not Jews, since the Jews are so hard to the gospel of Jesus (v.7). **Why would Paul turn his back to his own people? When would you stop sharing the gospel with a person or group of people? When people reject you who are they really rejecting?**
- **Where are Silas and Timothy as Paul is ministering in Athens and Corinth?** They have made their way from Macedonia to Corinth. It doesn't say that they met Paul in Athens (v.5).
- **As Paul leaves the Jews, who does he meet and where?** He goes next door to the synagogue and meets a Gentile named Titus Justus. He starts holding meetings in his home (v.7).



- **What impact do these meetings have on the community?** Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, next door, becomes a Jesus follower along with his entire household (v.8). Also, many other Corinthians come to Christ and are baptized. **How does this remind you of the story of Nicodemus?**
- **How does God confirm and encourage Paul's ministry?** In another vision in the night, God shares how He will protect Paul from danger, but he must not keep silent. God also promises His presence (vs.9-10). **Why does even Paul need this encouragement from God?** It doesn't say. Yet Paul is human. Maybe like most people in his shoes, he is afraid. He has many experiences already that have put him in harms way (cf. 14:19; 2 Corinthians 11:22ff). Speaking up for Jesus is hostile work. **How does this promise reflect Matthew 28:19-20? How do you gain encouragement from the presence of God for your ministry?**
- **How long did Paul stay in Corinth?** A year and a half. **What did he do there?** He taught the Word of God.
- **How do the Jews continue to respond to Paul's teaching?** They remain hostile. They bring Paul before the Roman leader, Gallio (vs.11-12). They convict him of teaching against Roman law. He is now on trial. **Have we seen this before?**
- **Who is Gallio?** He is the Roman leader over the area of Corinth (appointed by Claudius). Gallio's brother, Seneca, was one of the most famous writers of the Roman world. Seneca was celebrated for his wisdom. Seneca dedicated two of his books to his brother Gallio. They shared a common commitment to wisdom and justice. **How did Gallio help Paul?** He throws the words back at the Jews who maliciously mixed their religious convictions to pin Paul against the law. Justice freed Paul to continue to preach because he was a Roman citizen (vs.14-17), at least for another ten years until the reign of Nero who executed Gallio, Seneca, and Paul.
- **How did the Greeks respond to the Jewish episode?** They beat the new Jewish leader of the synagogue before the judgement seat. **How did Gallio respond to this?** He did not take notice.
- **How did God use Gallio to protect Paul? How does God keep His words of encouragement to Paul How does this bring your encouragement for the ministry ahead for you?**

2ND MISSIONARY JOURNEY ENDS



Ephesus and Antioch Revisited [18:18-23]

- **Where does Paul go and who does he take with him?** He goes to Syria. He takes Priscilla and Aquila, the couple from Corinth with him (v.18a). Priscilla is also a tentmaker (cf. 18:2).
- **What does Paul do at his first stop?** In Cenchreae, he (finds a barber and) cuts his hair. **Why?** He is under a vow (v.18b).
- **Where does Paul visit that he had visited a few years earlier?** Ephesus. **What does he do there?** He goes to the synagogue and reasons with the Jews (vs. 19-21). The Jews ask him to stay, but he declines yet leaves the door open to God to change the plans if He wills. **Why would he do this when his new mission was to the Gentiles?**
- **Following Ephesus where does Paul travel? What does he do there?** First he visits Caesarea and Antioch to encourage the churches (v.22; cf. 13:13ff; 14:22). Second, we passed through the region of Galatia and Phrygia to strengthen the disciples (v.23; cf. 16:6).
- **What is Paul's role the the new churches in Asia and Europe? Why does the church need servants like this? How are you encouraged and strengthened by Paul-like people in your life?**
- **What do you recognize about all these city names? How do the letters Paul wrote to each of these cities/churches show the encouragement and strength he poured into them? How have these letters benefitted you too?**



3RD MISSIONARY JOURNEY BEGINS



Boldness: Apollos at Ephesus [18:24-28]

- Who do we meet in this text? What do you learn about him? Apollos (cf. 19:1; 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:5, 6; 4:6; 16:12; Titus 3). He is a Jew from Alexandria (Egypt, Africa). He knew the Bible really well and he was able to teach the Bible really well (v.24). **Do you know anyone like Apollos? What makes someone competent in the Scriptures?** According to Apollos, he had been discipled in the way of the Lord and fervent in spirit. He also taught accurately the things concerning Jesus (v.25a).
- How was Apollos limited in his understanding of Jesus? He only knew of the baptism of John the Baptist (v.25b).
- Where is Apollos and what is he doing? He is speaking boldly in the synagogue at Ephesus. **What does it mean to speak boldly?**



- **Who heard Apollos? How did they help Apollos?** Priscilla and Aquila were there, the godly couple from Corinth (cf. 18:2). They took Apollos aside to teach him the way of God more accurately (v.26). **What you had a couple like Priscilla and Aquila in your life? Why is it important to have people help you to know the way of God more accurately?**
- **What does it mean that they took him aside to teach him the way of God more accurately?** Since Apollos only knew the story of Jesus up to the baptism of John, they filled him in on the rest of the story. **Why is it important (and abnormal) that Apollos is a great teacher yet teachable?**
- **Where was Apollos to go next? How was he welcomed there?** He was to cross the pond to Achaia. The brothers in Ephesus wrote ahead to the disciples in Achaia to welcome him (v.27). And they had a joyous welcome party.
- **Once in Achaia, what was the response to Apollos' message?** Through grace many believed. He had a way of powerful refuting the arguments of the Jews by using the Scriptures to point to Jesus as the Messiah (v.28). He was a Jewish apologist. **How is this similar to the message that Paul was teaching in Corinth in verse 5 that Priscilla and Aquila likely heard? How does the OT Scripture point to Jesus as the Messiah?**
- **How do we see Apollos grow in the this text? How does this encourage you? How does this encourage you to pour into peoples lives the Scriptures? How does this text encourage you to be bold?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Teaching the Scriptures (at times boldly). Baptism after conversion. Encouraging the disciples within the churches.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Going to another religious institution to preach the gospel of Jesus.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Prescriptive: Proclaiming Jesus from the Scriptures. Baptism after conversion. Encouraging disciples. Descriptive: Preaching in the synagogue.



Q: What do you learn about God? He comforts, encourages and equips His servants (vs. 9-10). His Word is powerful enough to change a life. God does change our ministry course direction (vs. 6, 21). Jesus is the Messiah (vs. 5, 28).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Teaching the Scriptures boldly. Encourage disciples, particularly young or uneducated disciples. Get my encouragement for ministry from God (first) and His disciples. Depend on God for future course directions.



ACTS 19 // PAUL IN EPHESUS (PART 1)

Paul in Ephesus [19:1-10]

- ☞ **Where was Paul while Apollos was in Corinth?** Apollos was continuing Paul's work in Corinth, but Paul moved on to Ephesus (v.1). It's as if they did a city switch-a-roo.
- ☞ **What did Paul first ask the disciples in Ephesus?** Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? (v.2a) **What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Why is the baptism of the Holy Spirit so important?**
- ☞ **How did the Ephesian disciples respond to Paul's question(s)?** No. They only heard of John's baptism, not the Holy Spirit's baptism (v.2b-3). **Does this remind you of someone else's story in Acts 18?** The story is similar to Apollos who had only a little bit of the story of Jesus (18:25).
- ☞ **How did Paul explain the difference between John's baptism and the Holy Spirit's?** John's baptism was of repentance and proclaiming Jesus who would come after him (v.4). John's baptism inaugurated the ministry of Jesus the Messiah, he did not inaugurate the new covenant because Jesus did that on the cross. A baptism without Jesus would not grant the Holy Spirit. Jesus' baptism is better.
- ☞ **How did the disciples respond to the teaching on baptism?** They believed in Jesus (v.5). **How did they receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?** Paul laid his hands on them and the Spirit came upon them (vs.5-7). **What was the confirmation of receiving the Holy Spirit?** They (twelve) spoke in tongues and prophesied. Similar to Pentecost in Acts 2. This time it is coming to the Gentiles, not just the Jews. **How is this text often used to promote other teachings related to baptism or salvation?**
- ☞ **How did Paul continue his ministry in Ephesus?** He went to the Synagogue and boldly proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom (v.8; cf. Ephesians 6:19-20; Acts 4:29-30). **How was the response to the gospel?** As normal and as to be expected; some disbelieved and seeded discord among Paul and the disciples (v.9). **Where else are Christians called "the Way"?** Acts 9:2 (cf. v.23).
- ☞ **How did Paul respond to the stubborn unbelievers?** He took the disciples to another location down the street (to a teachers school) and continued teaching (v. 9b). **For how long did he do this?** Two years until all the residents heard the good news (v.10). **How does Paul's never surrender spirit encourage you? How does the gospel bring division and breed discord?**



Sons of Sceva [19:11-20]

- **What kind of extraordinary things was God doing through Paul at Ephesus?** He was doing miracles (not magic): he was healing the sick with just pieces of his clothing. Their diseases and evil spirits were cast out (vs.11-12). **Have you seen works like this done today? What is the same or different to their work compared to Paul's ministry?**
- **After Paul's does these miracles, what kind of people try to copy him?** Some itinerant Jesus exorcists try to use the same method by calling out evil spirits in Jesus name (v.13). **Who were doing this?** The 7 sons of a Jewish high priest who's name was Sceva (v.14).
- **How did the evil spirits respond to the 7 sons?** "Jesus and Paul I know, but you I don't know." The demons recognize and fear Jesus and His servants (v.15). The 7 sons are powerless against the forces of hell, rather they themselves were over powered by them (v.16).
- **What kind of power does Satan have? How are the forces of evil a power not to be messed with? How is the way Jesus and His servants ministry of casting out spirits different than these others? How is the power of Jesus sufficient over all evil spirits?** Jesus said that the exorcism of demons was the one sign that should have convinced everybody of His origin and redemptive purpose (Luke 11:20). Also, Jesus had power of the spiritual world and kingdom.
- **How did the word spread about this incident? What was the result of this situation in the community?** 1) It became known to all in Ephesus and fear fell on them all (v.17). 2) Jesus' name was magnified and many believed in Him confessing their sinful ways (v.18). 3) Many burned their magic books (v.19). Note: burning these books was no small thing. Not only were they extremely expensive, but they had great power over the people in town. 4) The Word of God continued to spread successfully (v.20).

Riot in Ephesus [19:21-41]

- **How does the gospel bring with it controversy, hostility, violence and dissension? How have you faced these things for the sake of the gospel? How has Paul already face these situations in Acts?**
- **What is Paul's ministry plan laid out in verses 21-22?** He will backtrack to Jerusalem, but he desires to go to Rome. He stays in Asia for a while.



- **What is the problem at Ephesus? Who was upset and why?** There is a big problem and it is with the people of “The Way” (v.23). Christians are causing people to turn away from idol worship and idol makers are losing money. An economy was built on idolatry in Ephesus (v.24), and Demetrius, a silversmith wanting this to stop.
- **What idols are known in Ephesus?** The temple of Diana (i.e. Artemis), which was one of the largest cult religions of the world at that time. Diana was the fertility goddess. **How are all men idolaters? (cf. Romans 1:18-23) Why should Christians not put up with idols? How should we confront idols? How do people normally respond when their idols are confronted?**
- **How does Demetrius stir up his fellow businessmen?** He appeals to their pocket book, livelihood, and cultural/religious beauty and reputation of their city (vs.25-27). Demetrius saw himself as a temple warden and union leader. He points to Paul as the key culprit in persuading people away from buying idols because gods are not made with human hands. The souvenir shop owners selling Diana-related paraphernalia rose up against the Christians.
- **How did the crowd respond?** They sided with Diana and Demetrius. They chanted her name (vs.28, 34). They gathered in the theatre to regard the disciples (i.e. Gaius and Aristarchus), which tells you the gathering was large (est. 25,000 seats), but they were in great confusion over the matter (v.29). It was all like a big act and the disciples were on display, but the crowd's response was the parody of confusion. A Jew in the crowd named Alexander wanted to make a defense, probably against Paul and the disciples, but when the crowd found out he was a Jew they continued to pay homage to their god (vs.33-34).
- **Why was Paul prevented from going to the gathering?** Both disciples and rulers in the area (who were his friends) told him to stay away (vs.30-31). Possibly for his own protection because the crowd was screaming for blood (v.34).
- **How was the crowd eventually quieted? How does God use a city official to save the disciples?** The proconsul city clerk told them not to be hasty, since the world know Ephesus is Diana's city (vs. 35-36). In other words, he was saying that a few preachers had no power over what Zeus had brought to them in Ephesus. He disbanded the mob by telling them to deal with the complaint legally in the open court (vs.37-41). **How could this situation have turned out much worse for Paul and the disciples? If you were in the apostles shoes would you continue to preach boldly?**
- **How does Jesus bring peace and division? (cf. Matthew 10:34-35) How does the church need to be bold in an idol filled world? How will you be bold in an**



idol filled society? How is not being bold a blemish on the church and the name of Jesus Christ? Will you shout, “Great is Jesus the Son of God!”?

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Baptism (in Christ). Boldly proclaiming the gospel. Confronting false teachers and idolatry.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Exorcisms.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Descriptive - exorcisms. Prescriptive - baptism, preaching the gospel, dealing with false teachers.

Q: What do you learn about God? The Holy Spirit indwells believers at salvation (vs. 2-4). Belief in Jesus is necessary for salvation (v.4). The Holy Spirit gifts believers (v.6). Demons know who Jesus is (v.15). Jesus name has power over evil spirits (v.17).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Boldness to proclaim the gospel in the midst of hostility and falsity.



ACTS 20 // PAUL IN EPHESUS (PART 2)

Traveling to Troas: Two's Company [20:1-6]

- ☛ **Where did Paul go to next?** He departed for Macedonia. **Before he left and along the way what did he do?** He encouraged the disciples (vs.1-2).
- ☛ **How long did Paul stay in Macedonia (Greece)? What was the cause of his departure?** Three months. The Jews had another plot on Paul's life (v.3).
- ☛ **On his way through Macedonia who traveled with Paul?** Sopater. **What do you know about him?** He was from Berea, possibly part of the group that really enjoyed studying the Scripture. **Who else traveled with Paul? Where were they from?** Aristarchus, Gaius, and Timothy from Thessalonica (v.4). Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia. **Where did they travel to?** Philippi and Troas (vs.5-6).
- ☛ **Why is it important and helpful not to do ministry alone? What do you know about many of these companions in Paul's life and ministry? Who accompanies you when you minister?**

Eutychus' Resurrection [20:7-16]

- ☛ **What day of the week did the Christians meet to worship?** On the first day of the week (v.7). **What did they do together?** Broke bread and Paul preached a long sermon. **What was normal for other worshipers in that day?** Saturday was the Sabbath for the Jewish people.
- ☛ **Why is the breaking of bread together with other Christians important and a necessary part of worshipping together?**
- ☛ **What details are given about the time and hour of this worship service?** It was late, dark, and nearing the middle of the night (vs.7-8).
- ☛ **Who is in the service? What is he doing?** Eutychus is by the window, getting fresh air, but he is sleeping. **What happens to him?** He falls into a deep sleep and falls out of the window to the ground 3-stories below. He dies (v.9).
- ☛ **How did Paul respond?** He doesn't rebuke him for sleeping during his sermon. He went down the stairs and brought him back to life (v.10). Paul continued with the service and included Eutychus in the conversation long into the wee morning (v.11).



How is this similar to Elisha in the OT? How was Paul able to raise people from the dead?

- ☞ **How did the worshipers respond to this?** They were comforted (v.12). **How would you have responded? How could this situation have been different if Paul had responded differently?**
- ☞ **Do you know people asleep like Eutychus? How about you? How do you and others in the church need an awakening?**

A Word to Elders [20:17-38]

- ☞ **Who does Paul while he has a layover in Miletus?** He calls the elders (pastors) of Ephesus (v.17). **What is the role of an elder in a church? What does he share with them?** A sermon. Note: This is one of only a few sermons that Paul gives to Christians. All others he preaches to Jews, Greeks and authorities.
- ☞ **How does Paul give a defense of his ministry? What do you learn about Paul's ministry in Ephesus?** 1) From the first day until his last he served the Lord with humility, even through trials (vs. 18-19; cf. Acts 9; 2 Corinthians 2:4). 2) He did not keep any helpful word back from them while proclaiming the gospel publicly from house to house (v.20), 3) the core of his message was repentance and faith (v.21), 4) he did not shrink back from teaching the whole counsel of God (v.27). **What have you kept back from your hearers? How have you shrunk back? How does this defense of Paul both challenge and encourage you? How does preaching and teaching the Bible keep you on task/target?**
- ☞ **Where is Paul going? What awaits him there?** He is going to Jerusalem and he knows imprisonment and great trials await him there, even suffering and death (vs. 22-23). **How does this echo Jesus' conversation with His disciples? (Matthew 16:21-23) Why would Paul walk into this kind of situation in Jerusalem?** Paul knew that he was called to suffer for the name of Jesus. **How would you respond?**
- ☞ **What is Paul's motivation? What is his joy? What has God called him to do?** It is not the things that he holds dear to himself or his life. It is to tell of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul is not afraid because he is fulfilling the ministry God has given him (cf. 2 Timothy 4:6-7). **What do you hold onto dearly that often takes the place of the ministry God has given you?**
- ☞ **How many parallels do you see between Paul's sermon here and Jesus' sermon in the upper room to His disciples? (Mark 14:12ff; Luke 22)** He would



only be with them for a short while, but his departure would be for their benefit (vs. 25-26).

- **How does Paul challenge the elders of Ephesus? Who does Paul credit the church?** 1) Watch yourself and your flock, 2) the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, 3) Jesus owns the church because he bought it with His blood (v.28). **Who do you give credit to for your calling to ministry? How do you refer to your church as yours or God's?**
- **What is Paul's warning over the church?** Watch out for wolves who will draw away disciples to false teachings (vs.29-31). **Where did Paul say the wolves would come from?** From among themselves. The wolves would come in sheep's clothing. **How is this an important and emotional thing for Paul? How have you seen a church destroy from within by its own members? How is this like the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood"? What do we learn about Ephesus in later revelation? (Revelation 2:4)**
- **How does Paul exhort the Ephesian pastors with the words of Jesus, the Good Pastor?** Although these words are not mentioned in any of the gospels, Paul uses words accredited to Jesus to give more than receiving because there is a blessing in giving (vs.32-35). **Why is this a critical exhortation for pastors and leaders of churches? How did Jesus talk a lot about and model generosity and giving?**
- **How did the Ephesian elders respond to Paul's words? How did they send out Paul to Jerusalem?** It was an emotional sendoff. Paul knelt down, the elders fell on him and wept. They did not know if they would see him again (vs.36-38). **How is the scene reminiscent of the disciples and Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration? (cf. Matthew 17:1ff; Mark 9:1ff; Luke 9:28ff) How was the Word of God the greatest treasure Paul could have given to the Ephesians?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Doing ministry with others. Meeting together and breaking bread. Preaching and teaching the Word of God. Training and encouraging elders.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Resurrection from the dead.



Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Descriptive - Resurrection from the dead. Doing ministry with others. Prescriptive - Preach and teach the Bible and the gospel. Fulfill your ministry. Eldership. Breaking bread together.

Q: What do you learn about God? The Holy Spirit calls people to ministry. The Holy Spirit calls people to be pastors. Jesus paid for the church with His life. Jesus commends generosity.

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Wisdom when serving with others. Give credit for the church to God. Serve in the power of the Holy Spirit. Be generous. Enjoy the meeting and fellowshiping with one another.



ACTS 21 // PAUL IN JERUSALEM (PART 1)

The Road to Jerusalem [21:1-16]

- **How does Luke describe Paul's travelogue?** Paul travels mostly by sea from Miletus to Cos to Rhodes to Patara to Phoenicia to Cyprus to Syria to Tyre to Ptolemais to Caesarea (vs.1-8). **When Paul did stop what did he do?** He visited disciples along the way and at times encouraged them for a few days.
- **What did the disciples tell Paul not to do and why?** They told him not to go to (through the Holy Spirit) Jerusalem because he would face many hardships there (v. 4). **Would Paul be disobeying the Spirit if he were to go on to Jerusalem?**
- **Once in Caesarea who did Paul meet?** He met Philip the Evangelist (v.8; cf. Acts 8) who was earlier set apart and used of God for outreach and missions. Note: 20 years have elapsed between Acts 8 and 21. **What do you learn about Philip and his family?** He had four unmarried daughters who had the gifts of prophesy (v.9). Note: At least three of those daughters lived into their nineties and became a rich source of information for the early church fathers, who wanted to research everything that had transpired in the apostolic church. **How is it encouraging to see the progress of people you've met earlier in the Book of Acts?**
- **While at Philips house who came to visit?** A prophet named Agabus came from Judea (v.10). **What did he do to Paul?** He took Paul's belt and bound himself and said (through the Holy Spirit) that the Jews in Jerusalem would bind Paul in the same manner (v.11). **How is Agabus following in the footsteps of other prophets and doing radical things to gain the attention of his hearers?** Note: Isaiah the stalker, Ezekiel's model, etc.
- **How did the other hearers respond to this news about Paul?** They urge Paul not to go to Jerusalem (v.12). **How is Luke recording his own shame?**
- **How did Paul respond to all this feedback about not going to Jerusalem?** It broke his heart because he was ready to be imprisoned, even die for the name of Jesus (v.13). **How is Paul modeling the words of Jesus?** (cf. Matthew 16:22-23; Acts 20:22-23) **Is Paul a fatalist? Why would this break Paul's heart? Why is he ready to die? Is Paul ignoring sound advice?** Paul knew what would be his ultimate end. God had already given him that news. He was ready (cf. Acts 9:6). **What might the people be missing about Paul and the situation in Jerusalem? Following Paul's words, how did the crowd respond?** They stopped trying to persuade him and they left Paul in the hands of God (v.14). **What does it mean to**



let “the will of the Lord be done”? (cf. Luke 22:42) **How does Paul’s drive to finish his race to the end inspire, challenge or encourage you?**

- ☞ **Where did Paul go next?** He went to Jerusalem (v.15) with some of the disciples and they stayed with Mnason an early disciple (v.16).

Paul & Pastor James: Dealing with Rumors [21:17-26]

- ☞ **Where is Paul now in this text?** He has arrived in Jerusalem (v.17). **How did the Christian community welcome him?** They received him gladly.
- ☞ **Once in Jerusalem who did Paul visit first?** He visited James and the elders (v. 18). Who is James? He is an elder (pastor) at the church in Jerusalem. He is also the brother of Jesus. **What did Paul share with the elders?** All the things that God had done among the Gentiles (v.19). **Who quickly do you give God the credit for the ministry that is done through you?**
- ☞ **How did the elders respond?** They glorified God (v.20). **What problem or rumor do the elders propose from the Christians in Jerusalem?** They say that Paul is teaching Gentiles to forget the law of Moses and not practice traditions like going to the temple or circumcising their children (vs.21-22). **Was this true?** No. However, he did teach the Gentiles that they had freedom from the law.
- ☞ **What is their advice to Paul?** To purify himself with four others (Nazarites) and live according to the law (for purification in accordance to the feast of Pentecost). As for the Gentiles they have written a letter of judgement that they should abstain from idols, blood, and sexual immorality (vs.23-24). These are items in the law, but also each are marks of paganism. All in all, the elders wanted Paul to deal with these rumors. **How are rumors in the church often started? What are the roots of this rumor? How can rumors be dangerous for the Body?** Often rumors are an attack on a person, not his teaching. **How would you deal with these rumors?** Note: The number of Christians in Jerusalem, now number into the thousands.
- ☞ **How did Paul respond? Why?** He took the four men and were purified the next day (vs.25-26). He did this to stop the rumor spreaders from continuing their slander. **How do you stop a rumor? How do you defuse a slanderer?**



Paul Arrested at the Temple in Jerusalem [21:27-36]

- 🗣️ **Where is Paul?** He is in Jerusalem in the temple. **What has Paul about to finish doing?** He has almost completed seven days of purification (v.27).
- 🗣️ **Who sees Paul and what do they do to Paul?** Jews (not Christians) from Asia (Ephesians who rejected Paul) see him in the temple and stir the crowd towards him. They charge him with false teaching and bringing Greeks into the temple. No Gentiles were allowed in the temple and false teaching were charges that could get Paul stoned to death (v.28). **Is this rumor true?** No. Note: this is the second time many of these Asian Jews wanted to kill Paul. **Why were these Jews in Jerusalem from Asia?** It was Pentecost and Jews came from all over the world to come to Jerusalem.
- 🗣️ **How did the city of Jerusalem respond to the rumors about Paul?** They were disturbed. They dragged him out of the temple together and closed the doors behind him. They sought to kill him (vs.30-31).
- 🗣️ **Who else caught wind of this?** It was no small disturbance for the commander of a garrison (1000 men) heard about the uproar (v.31). Note: He was more than likely housed at the Antonia Fortress adjacent to the temple. He probably heard the uproar from where he was sitting. **How did he respond?** He immediately sent his centurions and their soldiers into action to rush to the front of the temple (v.32).
- 🗣️ **How did the crowd react to the soldiers presence?** They stopped beating Paul. It is likely that if the crowd was not interrupted Paul would have died.
- 🗣️ **What did the commander do to Paul?** He bound and arrested him (vs.33-36). **(How does this fulfill Agabus' prophecy?** Though dramatic, he is accurate.) The commander then asked the crowd who Paul was and what he had done. **How did the crowd respond to the commanders question about who Paul was and what he had done?** There were many answers. Without a clear answer the commander took Paul to the barracks. **As Paul was being taken to the barracks how did the crowd respond?** They were violent. Paul had to be carried by the soldiers. The crowd cried for his death. **How is this reminiscent of Jesus arrest?** Note: This is 27 years after Jesus' death (cf. Luke 19:40).

Paul Speaks to the People [21:37-40]

- 🗣️ **As Paul is being led into the barracks, what does he ask of the commander?** He wants to speak to the people (v.37). **Why would he want to speak to the people? What must Paul have looked like at this moment?**



- 🗣 **What language was Paul speaking?** Greek. This was much to the surprise of the commander.
- 🗣 **Who does the commander think that Paul is?** An Egyptian, who led thousands into the wilderness to plot a revolt to overthrow the Romans. It was known that many who followed this Egyptian had died, but he himself escaped (v.38).
- 🗣 **What was Paul's response?** Of course, no. He said he was a Jew from Tarsus and a citizen of Rome. Again, he asked to speak to the people (v.39).
- 🗣 **When given permission to speak to the people, how did he arrest their attention?** With a mere gesture of his hands and spoke in the Hebrew language (v. 40). **How did the crowd respond? They were in a hush.**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Following the Holy Spirit even into danger. Listening to spiritual leadership. Speaking in the language of the people.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Prophets, especially female prophets.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*?
Descriptive: women prophesying. Prescriptive: elders leading the church. Encouraging churches and Christ-followers to abstain from sinful living.

Q: What do you learn about God? The Holy Spirit leads people, but people do not always like what they hear (4).! People prophesy in the Spirit's name (11). Jesus' name is worthy of laying down one's life (13). God is sovereign (14). God is the one who gets the glory for the results in ministry (20).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Respect that God has given women an opportunity to proclaim the good news too. Listen to Him and spiritual leaders he has placed in my life.



ACTS 22 // PAUL IN JERUSALEM (PART 2)

Paul Defends Himself [22:1-21]

- **Where is Paul and what has happened to him?** Paul is in Jerusalem and he has just been physically attacked and falsely accused of leading Christians away from the law. **What did Paul ask the Tribune to do?** He asked to speak to the mob.
- **What language does Paul speak and why?** He speaks Hebrew because that is the language of the people of Jerusalem. They also speak Greek, but their heart language is Hebrew (v.1). He was showing respect by speaking their tongue.
- **Who else began his defense like Paul?** Stephen. **Isn't that ironic?** Know it was Paul who ordered Stephen's stoning (cf. v.20; Acts 7:2).
- **What are Paul's credentials and why does he begin his defense with this list?** 1) He's a Jew, 2) from Tarsus, 3) but lived in Jerusalem, 4) studied under Gamaliel, one of the most celebrated rabbi's, and 4) zealous towards God (and the law) as is the mob he is addressing. Paul appeals to his Jewish hearers and is building common ground with them. He is no ordinary Jew, but is a full-bred educated Jew (vs.2-3).
- **After Paul shares the good-side of himself, how does he share the other-side?** On his way to persecute Christians Jesus stopped him and questioned why Paul was persecuting Him (vs.6-8) because His church is His Body (cf. Matthew 25:45).
- **How many times has Paul's testimony been shared in the Book of Acts?** Three times (Acts 9, 22, 26) Paul's conversion is told and retold. The first is told by Luke and the other two are told by Paul and quoted by Luke. **Why would Luke share Paul's testimony so many times?** He is authenticating Paul's apostleship because he was not one of the original twelve apostles.
- **What two questions does Paul ask of Jesus on the Damascus road?** 1) Who are you Lord (v.8)? 2) What shall I do? (v.10) **How else in Scripture has repeated These questions? Have you every asked God these questions? Explain.**
- **How did Jesus respond to Paul?** 1) I am Jesus. 2) Arise and go... (vs.8,10).
- **How did Paul arrive to Damascus?** He was held by the hand because he was bling. He did not come in chariots and power, but in humility and lowliness (vs. 9-11).



- **Where did Paul go in Damascus?** Ananias' house. **Who is Ananias?** He was a devout man, but he also calls Paul "brother" (vs.12-13, cf. Acts 9-10).
- **What does Ananias say to Paul?** 1) God has chosen you, 2) you will be His witness to all, and 3) go and be baptized (vs.14-16). **Why is Paul's call so important?** It is in the fashion of all prophets and apostles. It places him in that same category because he was directly and immediately called by Christ. **Why is Paul's conversion so amazing? How does it encourage you? When you think of your own conversion, how are you amazed?**
- **What title does Ananias give to Jesus?** Righteous One (v.14). Peter and Stephen also give Jesus extraordinary titles (cf. Acts 3, 7). **Why would Paul use this title in his defense?** It was a term all Jews knew about and it referred to their Messiah. However, Paul makes mention that they have killed the Messiah the Righteous and Holy One of Israel.
- **What happened to Paul when he went back to Jerusalem after Damascus?** He was in a trance or mental stupor. Like Peter at Cornelius' house and John when he received the revelation (cf. Revelation 1:10). **How is Paul's conversion similar to Isaiah's call in the temple?** (Isaiah 6:8-11) God would speak through both. Any differences? Isaiah stayed and spoke to Israel, but Paul was sent to speak to the Gentiles (vs.18-21). **How are some sent to stay or go?**
- **What kind of response was there to Paul's defense?** Little if any. However, the message still go out. A lot like the prophets of old. The message got out, but there wasn't much response.

The Mob Responds [22:22-30]

- **How did the mob respond to Paul's defense?** Not well. It did not calm the crowd. They became even more cankerous. They raised their voices and they called for his head (vs. 22-23).
- **How did the tribune respond?** They took Paul into custody to interrogate Paul and find out why the mob was so angry with him. The commander wanted to find out the truth of the matter. They were ready to torture it out of him (vs.24-25a). Note: Paul had already endured beatings and stoning and imprisonment, and he had been beaten by the Jews on more than one occasion. Yet up until now, Paul had never been subjected to the Roman form of scourging.



- **Just before Paul was going to get a beating how did he get out of it?** He plays his Roman citizen card (vs.25b-29). **Why would Paul play the Roman citizen card?** A Roman citizen was due a legal process. **How are Paul and the commanders citizenship different?** Paul is a citizen by birth, but the commanders citizenship came at a cost.
- **On the next day, how did the commander try to find out the truth of the situation?** He unbound Paul and gathered the chief priests and the council to meet together (v.30).
- **How is the mob's response a common response to the gospel? How does God deal justly when the mob often times isn't? How would you respond if you were Paul, the commander, or the mob?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? The Scriptures pointing to the Messiah. Testimony of Jesus Christ and personal transformation.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Trials with the government.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? None!

Q: What do you learn about God? Jesus called Paul (7ff). Persecution of the church is ultimately persecuting Jesus (8).! God appoints people (14). Jesus desires people to testify about Him (18).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Stand for Jesus under trial. Glory in the work God has done in the ministry. Boldly tell people about how Jesus has transformed me.



ACTS 23 // PAUL IN JERUSALEM (PART 3)

House Divided [23:1-11]

- **Where is Paul and to whom is he speaking?** He is in Jerusalem and he is talking to the Jewish council that the commander has convened to find out why Paul has made such a great disturbance (v.1).
- **What is meant when Paul says, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day? What about the stoning of Stephen and the persecution of Christians including women and children?** He is referring to his conviction of Scripture and the testimony of Jesus Christ (cf. Romans 14:23).
- **What was Ananias’ response to Paul’s remark?** He wanted to hit Paul on the mouth. He didn’t want to do it, but commanded those near to Paul to do it. **Who is Ananias?** He is the high priest (v.2).
- **How did Paul respond to Ananias?** He fired back words of wrath and hypocrisy (v. 3). He is calling the Jewish leaders white tombs; beautiful, clean and pure on the outside, but dead on the inside. **Have heard Jesus use words like this to the Pharisees?**
- **How did the Jewish leaders respond to Paul’s remarks to the high priest?** They questioned why he would disrespect the high priest (v.4).
- **What is Paul’s response to the Jewish leader’s question about disrespecting the high priest?** Paul says he didn’t know he was the high priest and uses Scripture to say it is not right to speak evil of a ruler of your people (v.5). Note: “Scholars have gone through all sorts of gymnastics to try to explain why Paul spoke so harshly against the high priest and then claimed he did not know he was the high priest. One excuse offered is that Paul was troubled with his vision so he was unable to distinguish among those who were speaking to him. That is possible. Others exonerate Paul with the excuse that since he had been away from Jerusalem for twenty years, he did not recognize Ananias. Others argue that, according to Josephus, Ananias was not the high priest at this time, and there was some confusion in the crowd there about who this Ananias actually was. Another option, which is somewhat imaginative, is that Paul was speaking ironically, saying something such as, “I never thought a high priest would order a prisoner to be slapped without due process, so I assumed he couldn’t be the high priest.” Sproul, R. C. Acts, St. Andrew’s Expositional Commentary (pp. 373-374). Good News Publishers. Kindle Edition.



- **How does Paul give us insight as to which parties of the Jewish leadership was present?** He sees both Sadducees and Pharisees present (v.6). Both differ from one another, but both want to stop the ministry of Paul. **How does Paul choose sides and create a division among the two groups?** It was the old strategy of divide and conquer. Paul sides himself with the Pharisees because he was one. He uses a bit of theology to choose his side by referring to the resurrection of the dead. This was the main reason Paul was in custody: he was a witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was the foundation of everything he taught (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:14). Christianity lives and dies on the resurrection.
- **How did the two Jewish parties respond to this?** There was a division. The Pharisees sided with Paul and saw nothing wrong with him, but the Sadducees did not because they did not theologically believe in resurrection, angel or spirit (vs. 7-9).
- **How did the commander respond to the chaos?** When the argument became violent he took Paul back to the barracks out of fear that he would be torn to pieces (v.10). **Have you ever seen theological arguments like this? How were the Jewish leaders so bonded on the issue of Paul yet so divided over theology?**
- **How does God confirm, comfort and call His servant Paul that very night?** In the barracks, Jesus stands with Paul and encourages Paul because he has testified His name in Jerusalem. Paul stood for Jesus and Jesus stands for Paul. Although Paul is in pain and under chain God is not finished with him yet. He still has work to do. Now He will use Paul again for similar purposes in Rome (v.11; cf. Acts 1:8). Jesus came to cheer up Paul. Jesus was saying, “Paul, be constant and consistent. Continue with the ministry I have called you through all these years.” **How do these words of Jesus comfort you? How do His words continue to fulfill the promise He gave in His commission?**

Kill Paul [23:12-22]

- **What are some of the Jews scheming to do to Paul? Why do they make such an evil plan yet package it in good practice?** A group of 40 Jews (zealots; i.e. terrorists) have banded together to plot to murder Paul (vs.12-14). They are fasting from food and drink until the job is done. They even brought the Jewish leaders into their plan (v.15). They men are convinced that Paul must die and that is the only way to keep him quiet and squelch the message about Jesus from expanding. **How can people be so religious and ungodly at the same time?**
- **Who overhears and intercepts the plot to kill Paul? What does he do to stop the plan from executing?** The son of Paul’s sister catches wind of the ambush and



enters Paul's barrack to tell Paul and the commander all that he had heard (vs. 16-21). Note: Paul's family is loyal to him.

- **How did the commander respond?** He dismissed Paul's nephew and ordered that he keep what he heard silent (v.22).
- **How does this plot to kill Paul resemble Judas Iscariot's plot to murder Jesus?** The plot was founded by zealots. They plot was overheard and sought to be intercepted. The anger surrounding the victim was because religious differences.
- **How does anger or bitterness become out of control? How is God sovereign even in the midst of chaos? How is God just even when the situation seems unjust?**

Forwarded to Felix [23:23-35]

- **What kind of escort does the commander put together for Paul?** He gets 200 soldiers and 70 horsemen and 200 spearmen. Almost 500 in all to take Paul to Caesarea to the governor, Felix. This is the biggest military escort in Acts. Each escort gets bigger and bigger. Paul gets a horse too (vs.23-24).
- **What did the commander write on his letter for the governor?** That Paul was about to be killed by the Jews and that he is a Roman citizen. He broke Jewish laws, but no Roman law deserving of death. There was a plot to murder him, thus he is sending Paul to Felix to have a fair trial (vs.25-30). **What kind of chain of command do you see in Rome?** Local and regional government, but ultimately the Caesar is the highest in their system.
- **What do you know about Felix?** He is a governor in the Roman government. "We are told that Felix (and brother Pallas) was born into slavery but later was given his freedom. Felix had three wives. His first wife was the granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra. His third wife was Drusilla, the daughter of King Herod Agrippa I. At the time of Paul, Felix, who had begun as a slave, was married to royalty, surrounded by royalty, and holding the honorific titles of royalty." Sproul, R. C. Acts, St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (p. 380). Good News Publishers. Kindle Edition.
- **How did Felix respond to the letter from Claudius concerning Paul?** He ask Paul where he was from and then send he would give a trial once his accusers arrived to Caesarea (vs.33-35). He was wise enough to hear all sides of the story.
- **What do you learn about conflict resolution form this passage? How do you handle or hear-out accusations from accusers?**



KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus.! Giving testimony of Jesus Christ.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church? Servants having trials in the high places of government.

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*? Descriptive: Visions from God. Prescriptive: Testifying about Jesus and His resurrection.

Q: What do you learn about God? God is just (3). He is with and comforts His servants (11).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Boldness when under attack. Testify of Jesus even if it will cost me a trial. Find my comfort in God alone.



ACTS 24 // PAUL IN CAESAREA (PART 1)

Paul Defends Himself to Felix [24:1-21]

- **Where is Paul and what is happening to him?** He is in Caesarea and is under trial before Felix, the governor. He is awaiting trial until the accusers from Jerusalem come.
- **When and who come from Jerusalem to testify against Paul?** Ananias the high priest and an orator named Tertullus, a Jewish attorney (v.1).
- **How does Tertullus butter-up the governor and strip the reputation of Paul?** First, he began with a bit of flattery, which was disguised as hypocrisy. He praised the governor for peace in the land, yet the Jews hated the Roman occupation. He gave praise to the governor that was only due to his God (vs.2-3). Second, he refers to Paul as the plague or pest of the earth and people are sick of him (vs.4-5). Quite the opposite of Felix's compliments. **Why would Tertullus call Paul the plague? How are Christians today often seen as the plague? How can our faithfulness to the truth make people sick of us?** Note: Name calling doesn't reveal the truth, in fact, it is often the response of the losing side. If you can't win an argument, make your accuser look like a fool.
- **What was the accusation that Tertullus laid on Paul before the governor?** That Paul profaned the temple and they want to judge Paul according to their Jewish law yet the Romans took Paul out of their hands (vs.6-9). **Was the accusation true? Explain.** No. Paul was in the temple to worship. **How is the accusation against Paul before Felix a tad different than the accusation brought before Claudius Lysias in Acts 23? What facts are twisted or distorted?** When Paul was brought before Claudius Lysias in Jerusalem, the charge was that he did defile the temple, that he had taken a Gentile into the inner chamber. Tertullus said that Paul had "tried" to defile the temple but had been stopped. Tertullus said nothing about the mob that had tried to kill Paul. Tertullus claimed that Claudius Lysias had grabbed Paul away from them, which is the exact opposite of what had happened. All the Jews sided with the twisted facts that Tertullus presented. **How is Paul's trial similar to Jesus or Stephen? When you have no one to defend you, how is Jesus your advocate and Holy Spirit your defense?**
- **How does Paul defend himself?** First, he acknowledges justice that he is able to speak on his own behalf (v.10). Second, he denies the charges and he says that it is impossible for him to have done all that the Jews are accusing him of within the 12-days he was in Jerusalem, when he was there to worship and purify himself in the temple (vs.11-13). Third, he brings up the real accusation against him, which is that



he follows “the Way” and acknowledges the resurrection also spoken about in the Law and Prophets (vs.14-18a; 21). Fourth, he makes mention that the real accusers (from Ephesus) that beat Paul are not before him, but should be (vs.18b-20). **How does this trial parallel with that of Jesus? How does Paul honor his people and the Lord at the same time?** (cf. John 8:54-56) **How is Paul backing the claims of Jesus and receiving the same response as Jesus? How does Jesus divide and unify? How is telling the truth without compromise loving?!**

Paul in Custody [24:22-27]

- **What is the importance of recording all of the trials that Paul faces here in Acts? How are these trials profitable for you, your faith, and your edification?**
- **How does Felix respond to Paul’s defense?** He delays the trial. The final decision is TBD until Lysias comes to Caesarea to take part in the trial. Felix will have the reputation of being a procrastinator of justice. He keeps Paul under custody, yet given freedom to see his friends (vs.22-23). Note: Felix is has a more accurate knowledge of the Way. **How does knowledge of “the Way” become distorted or twisted? How is waiting sometimes the hardest part of a trial? How could have the situation been much worse for Paul?!**
- **While in custody who visits Paul? What do you discover about this person?** Felix brings his wife Drusilla. She is a Jew. **What do they want to hear from Paul?** They hear him speak about faith in Jesus Christ (v.24).
- **What of Paul’s words alarmed Felix that caused him to leave?** Words about righteousness, self-control and the coming judgement (v.25). **Why might these words cause alarm in Felix? What importance might Luke find in these three redemptive subjects?** As ruler and governor these subjects make Felix subject to a higher authority, God’s authority. Only God is righteous, sovereign, and judge. Felix would have been confronted with his sin and need of God. Felix was also made aware of the bad news before the good news. **How would you respond if Paul were talking with you? Would you be alarmed (or terrified) like Felix?**
- **Did this stop Felix from meeting with Paul?** No (v.26). **How does the good news perk ears, nag, and gain interest? How is the gospel the remedy of the bad news that Paul was earlier talking about?**
- **How long is Paul in custody?** Two years (v.27). **What political changes happen during that time?** Nero replaces Felix with Festus. Ironically, it is said that Felix was too harsh a governor for Nero’s tastebuds. **What changes happen to Paul’s**



imprisonment? Nothing. He stays in prison because Festus thinks he's doing the Jews a favor. Paul's imprisonment was a Roman political move to appease the Jews and keep the peace. **What do Felix and Pontius Pilate have in common?** (cf. Luke 23:4). Although he saw Jesus as innocent, he turned Jesus over to the will of the people. Justice blew with the wind of the populace. **How do we see political expediency versus justice in our day?**

🗨 **What details of the two-years does Luke leave out?** Whether Lysias came to Caesarea or whether Felix rendered a verdict. **What is Paul doing during these two years? What would you be doing?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Speaking the truth (in love; 10ff). Preaching the gospel from the Law and the Prophets (14; 24-25).

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church?

Q: Are any details given to the new church descriptive or prescriptive?

Q: What do you learn about God? He is just. He is the resurrection and the life (15) He is righteous, sovereign, and judge, even over Paul's trial (24-25).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Boldness to explain respectfully and lovingly the bad and good news to those in authority over me. Patience and perseverance to endure a long trial.



ACTS 25 // PAUL IN CAESAREA (PART 2)

Paul Appeals to Caesar [25:1-12]

- **Where is Paul? Who is he with?** He is in custody under Festus the governor. **What is the difference between Felix and Festus?** Festus replaced Felix. Felix seemed to be a procrastinator, but Festus a diplomat. Within 3-days he goes to Jerusalem (v. 1).
- **While in Jerusalem what did the Jewish leaders what Festus to do with Paul?** They wanted Paul to come back to Jerusalem for another trial, but their plan was to ambush and kill Paul (vs.2-3).
- **What was Festus' response to the Jews in Jerusalem?** Nope. He will stay in Caesarea where he will also go back to soon (v.4). He also called the men of authority with charges against Paul to go back to Caesarea with him to have a trial (v.5).
- **Once back in Caesarea what did Festus do with Paul and the Jewish authorities?** He ordered Paul to be brought before him. The Jews gave many serious but unfounded charges against Paul (vs.6-7). No charges could be proven. It was an empty case.
- **How did Paul defend himself to Festus and the Jews?** He did nothing wrong against the law, the temple or Caesar (v.8).
- **What question does Festus ask Paul? And why?** He asks if Paul would like to have a trial again in Jerusalem with Festus present (v.9). Possibly because the trial is a religious matters to the Jews. For Festus, this was a way to compromise with Paul and the Jewish leaders. He agreed to judge Paul, but the location was to be in Jerusalem again.
- **How does Paul respond to Festus' question?** Since he was a Roman citizen he wanted to use his right to appeal to Caesar (vs.10-11). The Roman seat was in Caesarea. Paul knew if he went to Jerusalem he could be a dead man and the trial would be falsely loaded.
- **How does Festus get out of this sticky situation?** After conferring with his council he lets Paul go to Caesar (v.12). **Who is the Caesar during this time?** Nero (aka. "wild beast"), but during the early years of his reign he was a model of justice; it was later that he would become the most bloodiest, ruthless and corrupt emperor



or Rome. **What would you be thinking if you were to take your appeal to Caesar?**

- **How is the church often judged politically rather than by principle? How can we protect ourselves from falling into this mode?**

Paul and the Pomp of King Agrippa II [25:13-27]

- **Who are Festus' special guest who come to Caesarea?** King Agrippa and Bernice (v.13). It is a big visit from some bigwigs. There would have been a lot of pomp for a king visiting a governor. **How would you view such a visit?**
- **What kind of business does Festus share with Agrippa?** He share about the prisoner, Paul, that Felix left behind for him to deal with (v.14). **Who is Agrippa?** He is King Agrippa II, a local Jewish king. He is the grandson of Herod the Great. **Who is Bernice?** She is Agrippa's sister, but also lover.
- **How does Festus explain the case against Paul and his verdict?** "The Jews want a case against him to condemn him, but there is no proof against Paul. The matters against Paul are religious and pertain to Jesus. He appealed to Caesar so to Caesar I will send him." (vs.15-21)
- **What information does Festus give about Paul's words about Jesus?** Jesus is dead, but Paul says he is alive (v.19). **What does Festus not understand about Jesus?**
- **What is Agrippa's response to Festus on Paul?** He wants to hear from Paul himself (v.22).
- **What is the scene leading up to the hearing of Paul by Agrippa and Festus?** There is much pomp (or fantasy, *phantasias*) and a great hall filled with important members of the military and society (i.e. business men) (v.23). **How do we often get pomp and circumstance turned around? How is this scene so ironic?**
- **With a large crowd present, how does Festus present Paul before Agrippa?** "Paul is here because the Jews want a trial that will lead to his death. However, I do not see any thing deserving of his death. I will send him to Caesar as he requested, but I don't know what to write Caesar. I hope after King Agrippa has examined him we will have something to write since it is not right to send a prisoner without specific charges against him." (vs.24-27) **Why and how would Festus hope Agrippa could help in the case on Paul?** Since he a king over Jews, he would



know Jewish customs and might know how to craft a letter of explanation to Caesar.

- 🗨 **How does this text draw you to pray for your leaders and people in authority? Given a chance to speak before them what would you say?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Jesus and His resurrection.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church?

Q: Are any details given to the new church descriptive or prescriptive?

Q: What do you learn about God? Jesus is alive (19).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Patience, boldness, and words of wisdom before worldly authority. Favor in the eyes on men because of my favor with God.



ACTS 26 // PAUL IN CAESAREA (PART 3)

Paul's Defense before King Agrippa II [26:1-11]

- **If you had to give a defense for your faith before crowds or kings, what would you say? What famous defenses before authorities throughout history are familiar to you?** (i.e. Luther, William Wallace, Tyndale, etc.)
- **Where is Paul and who is he with?** He is in Caesarea and he is before King Agrippa (v.1). He has just been brought before a crowd to give his defense, again. **How does Paul get the attention of the people?** He raises his hand (cf. 21:40).
- **Why is Paul happy to be able to give his defense before King Agrippa?** He is the ruler of the Jewish portion of the Roman empire. Agrippa is accustomed to the customs, traditions, law and culture of the Jews. Surely Agrippa will understand Paul's situation (vs.2-3).
- **How does Paul begin his defense?** He starts with his youth. How he spent his beginnings among the Jews and his own people in Jerusalem (v.4). **How was Paul not your ordinary Jew? He was a Pharisee.** He strictly obeyed the law and imposed it upon others, especially those who opposed it. His life goal was to remind people of their God and turn them back to the law (v.5).
- **For what reason, is Paul standing before the crowd this day?** He sees the promise and hope made by God to his fathers and the 12-tribes as being Jesus, the Messiah (vs.6-7). The people were trying to kill him in the name of orthodoxy, but he was being orthodox. He just came to a different conclusion from Scripture as to who was the Messiah, which the Jews rejected.
- **What question does Paul ask that shouldn't be surprising to the Jews?** Why are you surprised that God raises the dead?" He believed in the resurrection, which the OT believed and taught in the fulfillment of the God's covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel (v.8). The problem facing Paul is of intellect versus religion because the resurrection seems to our natural minds incredible (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:17-19).
- **How was Paul once contrary to Jesus and the resurrection?** He publicly shamed and persecuted Christians trying to get them to recant their views. He gained the approval of the Jewish leaders to put to death Christians (vs.9-11). **How is it a natural reaction to want to punish or destroy those who disagree with you? How is it hard to defend yourself against people who hate you? How is Paul's life an illustration of the miraculous mercy of God?**



Paul's Testimony [26:12-18]

- **What is so important and powerful about sharing your story? What is your story? How did God call you to Himself? How have you shared this story with others?**
- **Where is Paul telling his story?** He is in Caesarea and standing before a crowd that includes King Agrippa. **How does Paul begin his story?** He connects his desire to punish Christians with his journey to Damascus under the authority and commissioning of the chief priests (v.12).
- **How did God intersect with Paul on his way to Damascus?** A light, brighter than the sun, shone around him, he fell to the ground, and a voice called to him (vs. 13-14). **What did God say to Paul? "Saul, why are you persecuting me?"**
- **What is the significance of God repeating his name twice?** Often in the Scripture when God was personally calling someone He would repeat their name for emphasis (cf. Abraham, Elijah, Samuel, Absalom, Martha, Simon, My God).
- **What does it mean that Paul was "kicking against the goads"?** At the front of the oxcart was a plate with spikes jutting out. When a stubborn ox refused to move, the driver would hit the ox with a switch, and the ox in anger would kick back, driving its feet right into those spikes. Likewise, Paul had once fought against Jesus. **How is this an illustration for many today who reject Christ?** Many today fight and kick against Christ and the gospel in an effort to resist Him.
- **What does Paul ask of the voice?** He is clarifying who is the voice (v.15). **How does the voice identify Himself?** Jesus, who Paul is persecuting. **How does the voice identify Himself with Paul's mission?** Paul is on a mission to persecute and kill Christians, but Jesus stands with His brother and sisters and says it is Him that Paul is really persecuting. **How does it bring you comfort and strengthen to know when under persecution it is not you who they are persecuting but Jesus? How is conversion an immediate and supernatural work?**
- **How does Jesus call Paul to a new mission?** Instead of persecuting Christians and Christ, he will be a servant and messenger of Christ (v.16). **How is Jesus calling Paul out from among his people?** He will use Paul as a tool to the Gentiles, but also to open the eyes of God's people to the truth that they might know the forgiveness of sins (vs.17-18). **How is the "darkness to light" illustration used other places in the Gospels or Scripture? How is this such a powerful**



illustration hearts? (cf. John 3:19) How is Paul calling people to repentance and forgiveness here in front of King Agrippa? Did the people choose light or darkness that day? Did they choose the power of God or Satan?

- **How is Paul's recounting of his testimony similar or different to the other two occasions in Acts? Why does Luke repeat Paul's story three times?**
- **Have you ever seen someone so close to the truth, yet still reject it?! How has Paul been obedient to God and honest to the King?** Jesus gave Paul this heavenly vision and he has not disobeyed it (v.19). **Is Paul bragging or speaking the truth? How do Christians sometimes appear confident and proud about their faith like Paul?**
- **How does Paul go on to fulfill the mission that Jesus called him to the day he saw the light in Damascus? How is his mission similar to Jesus disciples? What is the mission Jesus has called you to fulfill?** There is no mistake that Luke under the guidance of the Holy Spirit compares Paul's mission to Jesus' Great Commission (v.20; cf. Matthew 28:19-20). Like a prophet, Paul is calling people to repent from their sins and turn to God.
- **For what reason is Paul under arrest by the Jews?** Teaching that Jesus is the Messiah, promised by the prophets and Moses, and His resurrection (vs.21-23).

Almost Persuaded [26:19-32]

- **What do the OT Scriptures teach about the servant of Israel who would suffer, die and rise from the grave? How is Jesus the light to the nations?**
- **Who do the king and governor respond to Paul's claim?** They call him crazy (lit. maniac). Although they compliment his intellect, they think his mind has gone mad (v.24). Some say there is a thin line between genius and insanity. **How do those who are learned often think the claims of Christ and Christians are crazy? Has anyone thought you were crazy for your beliefs in Christ?**
- **How does Paul respond to this insult?** Paul is not fazed by the insults. What kind of response to you expect from an unregenerate mind? Paul states the truth and only desires to get the truth out no matter the response (v.25).
- **How is Christianity anything but secret? What makes Christianity a public faith? Why does Paul include Agrippa in his response?** Christianity did not happen in the closet. Jesus was tried, punished, killed and rose publicly. These



details were documented, distributed and delivered far and wide. Paul was aware of the truth, Agrippa was aware of the details (vs.26-27), and the Jews in the crowd were aware with and were left to wrestle with the truth. Nothing about Christianity is private and personal. It's public from birth to death (cf. Luke 9:26). **How is your faith in Christ public? How are you tempted to keep it private? How does Jesus want His story to be made public? What is your part in coming out of the closet?**

🗣 **How does Agrippa respond? How are these the saddest words in Scripture a person can utter?** “You have almost persuaded me.” (v.28) Agrippa heard the truth about Jesus and yet he is not quite ready to hear any more or respond accordingly. He is on the brink of salvation (light), but is gripped by darkness. **How is almost not good enough? Have you ever had an “almost” moment?**

🗣 **How does Paul respond to Agrippa’s “almost” moment?** I desire not only Agrippa to believe, but also all who are hearing him in the crowd that day. He desires no one to turn away from the gospel (v.29). **How is Paul’s response much like God’s desire for us to hear and respond to the gospel? How would you feel if you were Paul giving this plea to an unresponsive crowd? How does their response crush you? How would you want to plead for them to reconsider the gospel?**

🗣 **What did Agrippa, Festus and Bernice decide about Paul at the end of his defense?** They did not think he did anything deserving death. They were even willing to set him free. However, Paul appealed to Caesar, the higher authority, therefore to Caesar he must go (vs.30-32). **What might Paul have been thinking about other than his freedom? Who was really wearing the chains or bonds that day (other than Paul)?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Jesus, the Messiah, and His resurrection.! Recalling our testimony of salvation.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today’s church?

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*?

Prescriptive: Proclaiming the gospel of Christ (8, 23). Prescriptive: The Great Commission (20).

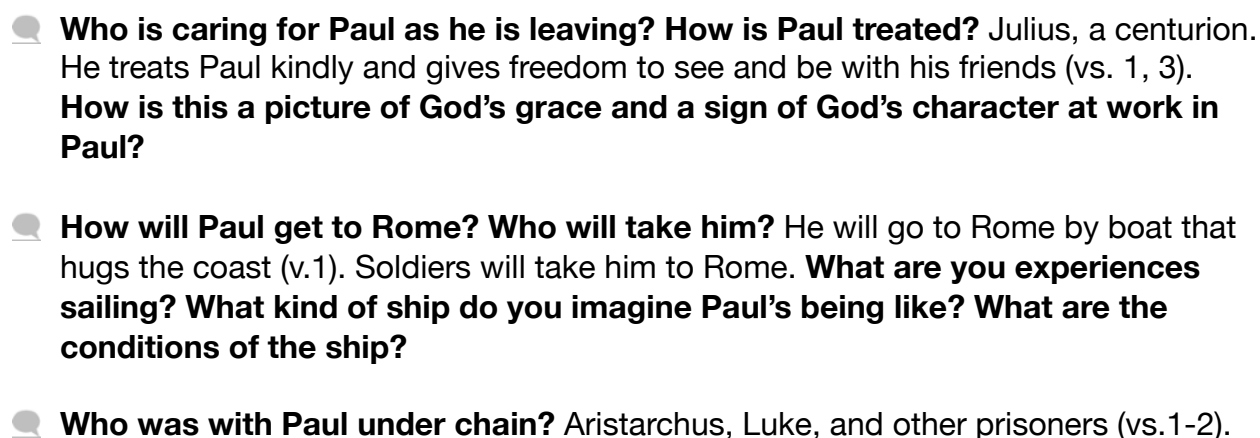


Q: What do you learn about God? God made mention of the Messiah to the fathers, prophets, and Moses (6-7, 22) He raises the dead (8, 23). Jesus stands for those who are being persecuted (14). He forgives sins (18, 20).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? Boldness even among an unresponsive crowd. Proclaim the gospel. Make my faith and testimony public.



 Where is Paul, where is he going and why? Paul is in Caesarea and heading to Rome. He appealed to Caesar and to Caesar he will go.





- **What time of the year is it?** It is after fast, Day of Atonement (v.9). **What is the problem with sailing at this time of the year?** Normally, ships would not sail in the Mediterranean between November and January. The winds were strong and the waters were treacherous and dangerous (vs. 4-8; cf. 2 Timothy 4:13).
- **What is Paul's advice to the centurion on the ship?** It is too dangerous to sail at this time of the year. Surely injury will happen to the cargo and the people on the ship (v.10). Land during winter is safer than sea during winter.
- **How was Paul's advice received?** He was ignored (v.11). He paid more attention to the pilot and owner of the ship than Paul. Paul was no sailor and knew nothing about sailing, however, he knew the Holy Spirit and the Creator of the wind and the waves. **Have you ever given good advice that was received badly?**
- **What did they pilot and owner decide to do?** Explain. They decided to sail on because the harbor at Fair Haven and Lasea was unsafe to spend winter. The majority opinion was that they could survive the winter at sea. They would rather risk losing the ship at sea and kill the prisoners there since the prisoners would probably die in Rome at the arena anyways (v.12).
- **What would you be thinking if you were a prisoner (pilot, owner, centurion) on this ship? What would Paul be thinking knowing what the Holy Spirit has already told him?**

Storms a Comin' Part 1: Take Heart [27:13-26]

- **What was the weather forecast? What did the shipmen decide to do?** It was favorable and they thought it was the right time to leave (v.13). It appears to be smooth sailing.
- **How do the weather conditions quickly change? How did they adjust to these changes?** A tempestuous wind arose and the ship was not able to be controlled. They went where the wind would take them (vs. 14-15). They tried to shelter the ship near Clauda, but feared they would run aground they throw most of their important gear overboard and sailed on (vs. 16-19). **Why would they need to throw items over board?**
- **How did this storm deteriorate the spirits of those on the ship? What does this tell you about the type of storm they were in? Or the state their soul was in?** All "hope" of being saved was given up. The storm and their situation was so hopeless they thought they would perish out at sea (v.20). The sailing professionals did everything they knew to do, but failed in any attempt to control their situation. They



were at the mercy of the waves and the wind. **How does does a situation need to be before you lose all hope?**

☪ **Why would the shipmen have been without food for a long time? How does Paul step in and help?** They were all fighting the storm or helping to save the ship and themselves. Paul was not having an “I told you so” moment, rather he was reminding them that his earlier words were a prophetic warning from God (v.21, 10).

☪ **What new word from God does Paul share with the shipmen? How would this word bring hope?** That night, Jesus told him that there would be no loss of life among any of the shipmen. Therefore, God reminds Paul to 1) take heart, and 2) do not be afraid. Paul is assured that he is to stand before Caesar. Even the worst storm will not prevent him from getting to Rome. God will have mercy on the shipmen because He has on mercy Paul (vs.22-24). **How is God reminding Paul of something He has already promised him?** (cf.23:11) **How does this encourage you to “take heart” when life is a wreck? How can fear turn our eyes from the God who provides and protects? How are the two phrases “take heart” and “do not fear” repeated other places in Scripture? How is the mercy that God has on Paul a picture of salvation?**

☪ **How does Paul refer to the God whom he heard these words?** Paul did not speak of the God of heaven and earth, or of the God of providence, or of the God who rules over the seas. He said that he had heard directly from the God to whom he belongs and worships/serves (v.23). **What does it mean to belong to God?** (cf. Psalm 24:1; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Romans 1:1; Matthew 7:22-23; John 6:37) Paul considered himself owned by God (or His possession) and therefore His servant/slave. **Do you know Jesus and does Jesus know you? Do you belong to Him? Do you serve Him? How can you not belong to Him and not serve Him?! How does Paul have confidence in God’s words?** He reminds them that what God has said will come to pass just as He has said (v.25; cf. Psalm 14:1). **What confidence do you have in God’s existence and plan? Why? What is more difficult: believing in God or believing God? How is God with you as you walk or sail through the valley of the shadow of death? Like Paul, how can you have the end goal in mind?** (cf. John 14:1-2)

☪ **What will still happen to the ship?** The ship will run aground on some unnamed island (v.26).

Storms a Comin’ Part 2: Last Meal [27:27-38]



- **How many days have past since the second storm began?** 14-days or 2-weeks have past (v.27).
- **How did they check to see if they were close to land?** They took a sounding, which is to take a small anchor and they measured the depth with fathoms (about 6 feet each or the width of a grown man's arm span; v.28).
- **What did they fear and pray?** They feared running the ship aground. They prayed for daylight (v.29). **What would you have feared and prayed?!**
How did some of the sailors act upon their fears? They lowered a life boat to try to get to try land. However, there were to leave the prisoners on board (v.30). **How is it common to think about your safety and security when you are afraid?**
What do you run to when you are fearful?
- **What was Paul's warning to the centurion and soldiers as the sailors considered an escape to land?** He said, "Unless the sailors stay in the ship they cannot be saved." In other words, "If you take the life boat, you will die." (v.31)
- **What did the soldiers do in response to Paul's advice?** They listened. They cut the ropes of the life boat and let it go. Their one means of escaping safely was now floating off into the sea (v.32).
- **What does Paul remind the shipmen to do that they have not done the past 2-weeks?** He encourages them to eat (v.33). What promise he give to them? Not a hair will perish from anyones head (v.34).
- **What does Paul do in the company of all the soldiers before they eat?** He blesses the food and prays (v.35). **What is the testimony of praying publicly before you eat to unbelievers?** Note: this is not the Lord's Supper, but a meal prayer (cf. Luke 22:19-20). **Yet how is this similar to the meal Jesus shared with His disciples in the upper room?**
- **What was the mood on the ship after this meal?** They were all (276 persons) encouraged (vs.36-37).
- **What did they do on the ship after they had eaten?** They continued to lighten the ship by throwing the wheat overboard into the sea (v.38). **What would this mean for their next meal?** They wouldn't have a next meal on the ship, but they would have to wait upon God to provide their next meal.

Shipwrecked [27:39-44]



- **After a storm like Paul and the shipmen have been through how happy would you be to see land?**
- **Where is Paul and the ship?** They do not know, but they are in a bay and they see a beach. Later they would find out it is Malta (28:1). **What kind of plan do they have to get safely on land?** They will run the ship ashore (v.1).
- **What did they do to the ship to get ready for impact on the beach?** They throw the anchors overboard, loosened the rudder ropes, and hoisted the foresail to get a good wind to run the ship ashore (v.40).
- **What prevented the ship from running ashore?** They strike a reef and the bow was stuck. **What was happening to the ship?** The stern was being broken up by the surf (v.41).
- **Now that they were stuck and near to land what was the plan?** The plan was to kill all prisoners lest they escape to land (v.42). If a prisoner escaped the soldier would receive the prisoners punishment. In this case, death (cf. 12:19). **What would this mean for Paul?**
- **How did the centurion change the plans?** He wished to save Paul, therefore he saved all the prisoners (v.43-44a' cf. v.3). So he ordered all who could swim to go overboard and make for land and the others were to float on debris. **How has Paul found so much favor in the eyes of the centurion and shipmen? How is God keeping His promises (sometimes through unregenerate people)?** (cf. v.24)
- **Did everyone make it alive ashore?** Yes, every one. All 276 passengers including many prisoners (v.44b; cf. v.22). **How are the words "all were brought safely to" a gift of encouragement to you? How is this a picture of God's grace in life?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Dependence on the Holy Spirit (10).! Believe in God's Word (and His promises).

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church?

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*?

Q: What do you learn about God? Although no explicit mention of God, He is all over this chapter:! He gives special words in special times (10). My life is His (23). He



encourages His servants in difficult times (24, 36). He keeps His promises always. He provides all we need (34-35). God protects and keeps His own (44).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? I desire to listen keenly to His Spirit. I desire to lean on His promises, particularly in difficult times. I desire to view my life as God's and serve Him freely (23).



ACTS 28 // PAUL TO ROME

Paul on Malta [28:1-10]

- **How does Chapter 28 pick up where Chapter 27 left off?** Repetition of the phrase: “we were brought safely through.” (v.1) **What would be thinking if you were stranded on a strange island with prisoners and soldiers?**
- **What do you learn about the island and the islanders where Paul was shipwrecked?** It is called Malta (v.1). The natives were kind and helpful. They kindled a fire because it was cold and rainy (v.2). Note: the Greeks referred to the natives on Malta as Barbarians. Anyone who wasn't Greek or Jew was a Barbarian.
- **What happened to Paul while he was seeking to stoke the fire?** A viper came out and bit him on the hand (v.3). Note: Paul is serving when he is bitten.
- **How did the native people respond to Paul's incident?** They attributed it to him being a murderer and that Justice (i.e. Nemesis, the god of vengeance) would not allow him to live (v.4). They were quick to judge. Is what they said true? The first part is true. Paul was a murderer, although it wasn't the reason he was a prisoner on the ship.
- **What did Paul do?** He shook the snake from his hand into the fire (v.5). **What happened to him?** Nothing. Even though the people waited a long time they saw no misfortune happen to Paul (v.6). “Nothing” isn't completely accurate since what happened to Paul was an utter miracle. **What was the response of the people to Paul's condition?** They thought he as a god (cf.14:11-13). **Why would they think this about Paul?**
- **What man does Luke introduce us to in the text? Who is he?** Publius, the chief of the island. He showed much hospitality to the shipmen for 3-days (v.7).
- **What do you learn about Publius' family?** His father is sick with fever and dysentery (aka: Maltese Fever caused by bacteria that was common in goats). Doctor Luke, makes the diagnosis. Normal recovery time was about 6-12 months and could flare up all throughout ones lifetime. **How does Paul handle the news from Publius' family?** He prayed, layer hands on him, and healed him (v.8). **How is this a fulfillment of Jesus' command in Mark 16:15-18?**
- **What happened next on the island?** All those who were sick came to Paul and were healed (v.9). **How did the islanders respond?** They honored Paul and Luke greatly (v.10). They helped give whatever they needed for their next ship o Rome.



Paul arrives in Rome [28:11-16]

- **How long did they wait in Malta before sailing to Rome?** 3-months (v.11). After all that (27:1-28:10) Paul and the shipmen still had to voyage to Rome. **What would you be thinking about the voyage ahead? Fear? Worry? Relief? Joy?**
- **What do you learn about Paul's ship?** It is Alexandrian, from northern Egypt. It is adorned with the figurehead of the Twin Brothers (Casper and Pollux), mythical twins linked to the constellation named Gemini. **Did this hinder Paul from boarding?** No.
- **What pitstops did Paul make on the way to Rome?** They stopped in Syracuse (Sicily) for 3-days, circled around to Rhegium (toe of the boot in Italy), and the next day in Puteoli (vs.12-14). Note: They had to pass through the Strait of Messina, which was immortalized in Greek literature and Homer's The Odyssey for being dangerous and treacherous. This is where the saying "between a rock and a hard place" has roots and meaning.
- **Who did they meet outside and inside Rome?** They met fellow believers (vs. 14-15). Christian brothers greeted him, some from a distance. **How encouraging would this have been after this long journey without fellowship? What did Paul think of the believers in Rome?** (cf. Romans 1:9-11)
- **Once in Italy how did Paul travel to Rome?** By road. The Roman Roads are still visible today. Many of the sights Paul saw, you can still see today. The Romans were master engineers and architects.
- **Once in Rome where did Paul stay?** He was under house arrest and guarded by a soldier 24-7, maybe Julius (v.16; cf. 27:1; 24:23; 27:3). **What kind of freedom does Paul have that many prisoners do not have? How is this a measure of God's grace upon him? How would being cuffed as a guard to Paul be the worst and best job position in the world?**
- Paul is finally in Rome. **If you were Paul, what would be your thoughts? How do we see the providence of God in Paul's arrival in Rome? What can we learn from this? Who holds your manifest destiny? Is it always an easy journey? How can this passage help you to be courageous and strengthened for the journey?**



Paul in Rome [28:17-31]

- ☪ **What was Rome like in Paul's day? What is so important about this city?! What does Paul do soon after arriving in Rome? Who does he want to meet with other than Caesar?** He calls all the Jews together. Note: he doesn't go to the synagogue like he so often did in Acts. **What does he say to them?** He explains his case and the Jewish position against him. He explains why he appeal to Caesar. He explains to them that it is because of "the hope of Israel" that he is in chains (vs. 17-20). **What do you notice about Paul's attitude and speech in this situation that surprises you?**
- ☪ **How do the Jews respond?** They had not heard anything evil from Judea about Paul. No one came to Rome to bear witness against Paul (**Why not? Wasn't it required of a prisoner who appealed to Caesar?** Maybe it was the bad weather, but we do not know). They want to hear more about his views since there is much spoken about the "sect" of people who follow Jesus (vs.21-22).
- ☪ **How and where did Paul explain to the Jews his "views"?** On an appointed day with a great number of people he began to expound to them (v.23a). What did Paul expound to them? The kingdom of God, Jesus teachings (vs.23b). He was teaching them from all-Scripture (the Law and Prophets) how Jesus is the hope of Israel. **Why teach on the kingdom of God?** It is the greatest link between the OT and NT. Jesus awaited a king and his kingdom. Jesus and the gospel is the message of the kingdom of God (cf. Matthew 3:2; 4:17). He is the King of kings. **How did Jesus teach on the kingdom of God?**
- ☪ **How did the Jews respond to Paul's teachings?** 1) Some were convinced, and 2) some disagreed (v.24). Some had open hearts while others had hard hearts. **How has this been the response to the gospel wherever it has been proclaimed?!** **What was Paul's departing statement?** He echoes the Holy Spirit's words to Isaiah (v.25). The Holy Spirit is always right. **Where is Paul quoting from in Isaiah's prophecy?** Isaiah 6. Immediately after Isaiah was called by God, he was given this charge and message for Israel (vs.26-27). **Why would he have quoted this text?** First, it was very familiar to his audience. Second, Paul and Isaiah's call and mission from God were similar. The response of the people to their message was also similar. Third, it was very powerful and truthful. Israel had become what they worship and like the idols they worshiped them became deaf, dumb and blind. They did not recognize and rejected the Messiah, Jesus Christ. In fact, God closed their eyes, ears and hearts because they had heard, seen and known the truth yet refused it over and over again. **How does this text condemn, yet give words of hope to the Jews?** Though they are deaf, dumb and blind to the truth, God does



promise to heal them if they open their eyes, ears and hearts to Him. **How does this text give you hope? How are you deaf, dumb and blind to the truth like the Jews? How is your call and mission similar to Isaiah and Paul? How can you expect people will respond to your message?**

- **Since the Jews do not listen to their prophets, what does Paul say?** This good news of salvation has been sent to the Gentiles because unlike the Jews they listen (v.28; cf. Romans 5:20). The Gentiles are the grafted in wild olive tree.
- **What does verse 29 say and why is too often eliminated from Bible translations?** It says that the Jews departed with much dispute among themselves.
- **How long did Paul stay in Rome? Two years (v.30a). How did he live out the remaining days of his life there?** He lived there at his own expense. He welcomed all who would come visit him (vs.30b-31). He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about Jesus with boldness (cf. 4:29) and unrestraint.
- **What do you think about the ending of Acts? What information would you like to hear about Paul? Where can you find that out? (cf. 2 Timothy 4:6-22) Why do you think the Book is left open ended and unfinished?** Note: Jesus is the focus not His followers.
- **How does Paul continue the ministry of Jesus to Rome?** He is going to the ends of the earth. He will speak to kings and rulers. He proclaims all the teachings and commands of Jesus including the kingdom of God (cf. Matthew 12:28; 13:19).
- **How is Jesus the bookends (i.e. the beginning and end) and the focus of the Book of Acts? How is that fitting and characteristic of most all books of the Bible?**

KEY QUESTIONS:

Q: What are principles on which the new church was built? Proclaiming the hope of nations to Jews and Gentiles. Teaching the kingdom of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Q: What in the new church is not familiar culturally to today's church?

Q: Are any details given to the new church *descriptive* or *prescriptive*?

Q: What do you learn about God? He heals in the power of Jesus (8). Jesus is the



hope of Israel (20, 23). The Holy Spirit speaks rightly (25). God opens and closes eyes, ears, and hearts (26-27).! God has opened salvation to the Gentiles too (28). Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ is the king (31).

Q: How did this text draw you to pray in the Holy Spirit? I want to preach the gospel boldly without hindrance. I want to have open eyes, ears and heart to the truth from God. I want to speak in the Spirit. I want to share the hope of all nations.



APPENDIX A: ACTS 29

Did you notice that the Book of Acts ends unfinished? It is that way on purpose. Unlike the gospels or epistles there is no goodbye. This is because the work of the apostles goes on. Luke leaves it with anticipation of more to come.

You continue Acts 29 writing the next chapters of God's redemptive plan among the nations. **How will you continue to proclaim boldly the kingdom of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ? How will you make disciples of all nations?**



APPENDIX B: ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Over 40 times in the book of Acts you see the Holy Spirit living and working among followers of Jesus. His ministry is so similar to that of Jesus. The apostles barely skipped a beat and enjoyed sweet fellowship with the Holy Spirit as you hear one say, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us!” (Acts 15:28)

Notice how the Holy Spirit interacts with the apostles in the following verses:

Acts 1:2	The Holy Spirit gave instructions
Acts 1:8	The Holy Spirit came upon them
Acts 1:16	The Holy Spirit spoke
Acts 2:4	The Holy Spirit enabled
Acts 9:31	The Holy Spirit strengthened and encouraged
Acts 11:28	The Holy Spirit predicted
Acts 13:4	The Holy Spirit sent them on their way
Acts 13:62	The Holy Spirit filled them with joy
Acts 16:6-7	The Holy Spirit closed doors
Acts 16:9	The Holy Spirit opened doors
Acts 20:23	The Holy Spirit warned them

The Holy Spirit is the God given means of “walking as Jesus walked” (1 John 2:6) and “doing what Jesus did” (John 14:12). This shouldn’t surprise us because Jesus in His humanity leaned upon the Holy Spirit too. By the Holy Spirit Jesus was:

- ◆ Conceived (Luke 1:35)
- ◆ Anointed (Luke 4:18, Acts 10:38, Is 11:1-2)
- ◆ Filled (Luke 4:1,14; John 3:34)
- ◆ Sealed (John 6:27)
- ◆ Led (Luke 4:1)
- ◆ Rejoiced (Luke 10:21)
- ◆ Performed miracles (Matthew 12:28, Luke 4:14-15,18)
- ◆ Raised from the dead (Hebrews 9:14, Romans 8:11)

A Spirit filled life is not an additional luxury to the Jesus follower. It is an essential element of life and ministry. Without the Holy Spirit we are doomed to failure. !

For further discussion:

Q: Is the Holy Spirit your friend?

Q: What would need to change for that to become a reality?

Q: Why is it significant that Jesus said He’d send another Counselor of the exact same kind? What does a renewed emphasis upon the Holy Spirit look like?

Q: In what ways is your ministry emphasizing the Holy Spirit?



APPENDIX C: GROWING THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH FROM ACTS

Acts tells the story about how the church began and grew. The essential ingredients of the church are mentioned in Acts 2:42, “And they devoted themselves to the **apostles' teaching** and the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and the **prayers**.” As the Book of Acts unfolds there is a growing theology of the church that are useful ingredients for the church today.

DEPENDENCE ON GOD

- ◆ **Prayer** (1:14, 24; 2:42; 4:24-31; 5:6; 6:4; 12:5, 12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:25; 20:36; 21:5; 28:8);
- ◆ **Filled** with the Holy Spirit (2:2-13, 38; 4:8, 31; 7:55; 10:44-48; 11:24; 13:9, 52; 19:2-6); **Comforted** by the Holy Spirit (9:31);
- ◆ **Praising** God (2:47; 3:8-9; 16:25); **Ministering** to the Lord (13:2);
- ◆ **Glorifying** God (3:11-14; 4:21; 10:46; 11:18; 13:48(?); 21:20);
- ◆ **Obedying** God (4:19-20; 5:29; 8:26; 9:10-17; 10:19-29; 13:2-3; 16:6-10; 12:19);
- ◆ **Fearing** God (9:31);
- ◆ **Fasting** (13:2-3; 14:23);
- ◆ **Persevering** (14:3, 20a; 16:4);
- ◆ **Dedicating** new churches ministries and leaders to the Lord (14:23, 26);
- ◆ **Singing** hymns of praise (16:25);
- ◆ **Dying** to self (20:24; 21:1)

MATURING BELIEVERS

- ◆ **Teaching** and **preaching** (1:15-22; 2:42; 5:21-5, 42; 11:26; 13:1; 14:22; 15:35; 18:11; 20:20);
- ◆ **Disciplining** errant believers (5:1-11);
- ◆ **Laying hands** on for receiving the Holy Spirit (8:17; 9:17; 19:6);
- ◆ **Laying hands** on for consecration to ministry (5:6; 13:3);
- ◆ **Building up** new believers (9:27);
- ◆ **Encouraging** and **strengthening** (11:23; 13:43; 14:22; 15:32, 41; 16:40; 18:23);
- ◆ **Following up** churches (9:32; 14:21; 15:36, 41; 16:1-5; 18:23);
- ◆ Seeking theologically true and culturally relevant solutions (15:2-30; 16:3);
- ◆ **Confessing sins** and disclosing practices (19:18);
- ◆ **Destroying** occult objects (19:19);
- ◆ Maintaining culturally important traditions(?) (18:18; 21:21-26);
- ◆ **Sharing testimony** as a form of witnessing (22:1-21; 26:2-29);
- ◆ **Modeling** and mentoring believers (20:18-35)



TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

- ◆ **Appointing** leaders (1:23-26; 14:23);
- ◆ **Reporting** to a local church (4:23; 11:2-18; 12:17; 14:27; 15:4; 18:22(?); 21:19);
- ◆ **Delegating** responsibility (6:2-6; 13:2-3; 14:23; 15:2, 22; 19:22; 20:28);
- ◆ **Sending** leaders to deliver important decisions made by the church (15:22)

LIFE TOGETHER (COMMUNITY)

- ◆ **Gathering** together (2:1; 11:26; 14:27; 15:30; 20:1);
- ◆ **Fellowshipping** (2:42; 20:7);
- ◆ **Breaking bread** (2:42, 46; 20:7, 11);
- ◆ **Sharing** all things in common (2:44-45; 4:32-37);
- ◆ **Visiting** the temple or synagogue (church) (3:1; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:2, 10; 18:4, 19; 19:8);
- ◆ **Answering** questions or problems as a body of believers (6:2; 11:2-18; 15:2-30);
- ◆ **Supporting** and giving relief collection (11:29-30)

WALKING IN POWER

- ◆ Speaking in **tongues** (2:6-11; 10:46; 18:6);
- ◆ **Power**, signs, and wonders (2:43; 4:33; 5:1-11, 12; 6:8; 8:6-13; 10:44-46; 13:8-12; 14:3; 15:12; 16:16-18; 19:11-12; 28:3-6);
- ◆ **Healing** (3:2-10; 5:15-16; 9:34, 40-42; 14:8-10; 20:7-12; 28:8-9);
- ◆ Feelings of **awe**, wonder, amazement (2:43; 3:10-12; 12:16);
- ◆ **Prophesying** (11:28; 13:1; 15:32; 18:6; 21:4(?), 10-11; 27:21-26);
- ◆ **Dreams** and **visions** (10:1-48; 16:10; 18:9-11; 27:22-26)

REACHING OUT

- ◆ Group **evangelism** (or preaching to unbelievers) (2:14-41; 3:12-4:2; 4:8-12, 31, 33; 5:25, 42; 7:1-53; 8:4, 5-12, 25, 40; 9:20-22; 10:34-48; 11:19-21; 12:38-9; 13:5, 15-42, 44-49; 14:1, 15, 21; 16:10, 13; 17:2-4, 17-18, 22-32; 18:4-5, 8, 19; 19:1-7, 8-10; 20:20-21; 21:28; 21:40-22:21; 24:24-25; 25:23-26:29; 28:16-24, 30-31);
- ◆ House-to-house evangelism (2:46-7(?); 5:42; 11:20; 16:32; 20:20);
- ◆ **Baptizing** believers (2:38, 41; 8:12, 16, 38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5);
- ◆ Preaching to salvation (2:40; 14:15);
- ◆ **Debating** truth (using reason, in the power of the Holy Spirit) (6:10; 9:22, 29; 17:2-3, 17; 18:28; 19:8-9);
- ◆ **Rebuking** the "religious" (7:51-53; 8:18-24; 13:9-11, 46-47, 51; 23:1-5);
- ◆ Personal evangelism (8:26-39);
- ◆ **Spreading** the word of God (or the word of God growing) (12:24; 13:49; 18:20);



- ◆ **Contextualizing** the message (17:16-31);
- ◆ "Shaking the dust of the feet off" at those who refuse to hear (13:51; 18:6; 19:9?)

BEARING FRUIT

- ◆ **Confidence** (4:13; 9:28; 14:3);
- ◆ **Rejoicing** in suffering (5:41);
- ◆ **Forgiving** enemies (7:60);
- ◆ **Refusing** to accept money as payment for giving true spiritual power (8:18- 24);
- ◆ Not giving a bribe (24:26);
- ◆ **Rejecting** the attempts of others to worship the believer (10:26; 14:11-18);
- ◆ Being full of **faith** (11:24);
- ◆ Being filled with **joy** (2:46; 13:52);
- ◆ Living **holy** lives (5:12-13; 6:15; 7:60)

THINKING STRATEGICALLY

- ◆ Keeping **priorities** straight (6:2-6; 18:5);
- ◆ **Fleeing** persecution (8:1; 9:21-5, 30; 12:17; 14:6, 20b; 17:10; 14, 17);
- ◆ **Investigating** reports (11:22-23);
- ◆ **Teamwork** (10:45; 12:25; 13:5, 13; 15:22, 39-40; 20:4);
- ◆ **Sending out** laborers (13:3);
- ◆ Following a specific **plan** (13:46; 17:2);
- ◆ Writing **letters** (15:22-23; 21:25);
- ◆ Claiming **legal rights** (16:35-40; 22:24-29; 23:12-23; 24:10-21; 25:8-12);
- ◆ Utilizing **public facilities** (17:17, 19-22; 18:28; 19:9, 19(?));
- ◆ **Targeting** leading centers and trade or travel (16:12);
- ◆ Reaching opinion **leaders** (8:9-24(?), 26-39; 13:12; 16:14; 17:12; 26:24-29)