

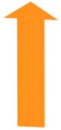
# SEVEN ARROWS



What does this passage say?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What does this passage tell us about man?



What does this passage demand of me?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

## ACTS 7:54-8:3



God formed a unique plan to scatter His disciples. He intended for His followers to take the gospel message to the nations, but to this point, the church remained centered in Jerusalem. Stephen's death changed that. Followers of Jesus left Jerusalem because of the hatred they experienced and began to make their homes in adjacent regions and countries. Because His Spirit was in them, God went with these men and women, and the message of the gospel was carried into each new area. They no longer required a temple to worship because their bodies had become temples of God. They could worship wherever they went, and they could invite others to join with them in worship of the one true God. People from all nations, not just Israel, could now hear about Jesus, respond in faith, and gather together in the local church. God's mission was on the move.

## ACTS 9:1-22



The first mention of Paul's name appeared during the story of Stephen's death. Paul, also known as Saul, was an intense persecutor of the church, even approving of the murder of many Christians. God took His most vocal opponent and turned Him into His most effective missionary. The remainder of the book of Acts and much of the New Testament tell stories of Paul's mission work and the churches he started along the way. Thirteen of the letters he wrote are included in our Bible and continue to provide encouragement and instruction for the church today. God saved Paul in a most extraordinary way and immediately sent him on mission. The one who spoke in opposition to Jesus was transformed. Paul began joyfully sharing the good news that the man he once opposed, Jesus, is in fact the true God and the one all people owe allegiance.

## ACTS 11:1-18



Up to this point, the majority of the Bible has focused on God's chosen people, the nation of Israel. Though a majority of them failed to trust in Jesus, they were the focus of God's work through Jesus and through the disciples. The Spirit of God and the salvation He offers is never confined to a certain nation, however. Non-Jews, also known as Gentiles, heard the message of salvation as Jesus' followers were scattered throughout the world. Amazingly, God was gracious to save them as well! For a time, the church debated whether or not God was actually willing to save non-Jews, but it's clear that this is exactly what he was doing. They received the Spirit of God, trusted Him in faith, and were baptized just the same. The church grew from a small band of disciples hiding in an upper room to a worldwide movement of people from every nation, just as God had always intended.

# ACTS 13



The remainder of the book of Acts is filled with stories of the church's expansion, which happened primarily because of the missionary work of men like Paul, Peter, and Barnabas. The church officially recognized God's saving work among the Gentiles and began to actively commission God's people to go to the nations to preach the gospel and plant churches. This work encountered a lot of difficulty, but it was destined all along to succeed. No one, not even Satan, can stop the advance of the church, because God has always been intent on seeing the earth filled with those who reflect His image. The book of Acts shows that He is doing just that. You, and the church you attend, are a continuation of this work which Jesus began long ago. He is still on mission to save sinners and gather them in local churches, from the high-rises of New York City to the jungles of Peru. Each of these churches can trace its origin back to these first missionaries and their faithful work.

## REVELATION 7:9-12



The book of Revelation contains John's vision of God's final victory over Satan, sin, and death, and His eternal rule in Heaven. John saw a coming day when the promise God made to Abraham would come true—a large multitude numbering like the stars in the heavens or the sand on the seashore, gathered around the throne to offer praise to God. Among this number are those God saved from every tribe, tongue and nation on earth. There will be a day when the mission of God is complete, and the salvation of sinners throughout the world will be accomplished. This vast assortment of worshipers will receive the blessings that come to all those who are, by faith in Jesus, heirs of the promise made to Abraham. You've probably heard the children's song that tells of Jesus' love for all the children of the world—whether they are red or yellow, black or white. Who knows whether or not we will sing this song in heaven, but we will certainly experience the truth of those words.