

## Acts 1

1. What is the complete name of this book?

Why do you think this name was chosen?

2. What can you learn about the author of Acts?

What one characteristic distinguishes him from other New Testament writers?

3. About a century ago British scholar William Ramsay focused on the book of Acts to try to show it was rife with geographical and archaeological errors. After all, many scholars of his day, equipped with the tools of textual criticism and archaeology, had exposed many errors in other classic writings. This eminent humanity professor diligently prepared himself by studying archaeology and geography before departing for the Middle East and Asia Minor in his quest to prove Luke's history of the early Church was mostly myth.

His quest didn't turn out as he expected. After a quarter century of research in what is today Israel and Turkey, where he carefully retraced the steps of the apostles as described in the book of Acts, this famous unbeliever shook the intellectual world when he announced he had converted to Christianity. He confessed this radical change of mind and heart was thanks in great part to his surprise at the accuracy he found in Luke's narrative in Acts.

After decades of examining the historical and geographical details mentioned in the book, Ramsay concluded: "Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy, he is possessed of the true historic sense ... In short this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians" (*The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, 1953, p. 80).

He went on to write many books about Acts and the epistles of Paul. Ultimately Ramsay was knighted for his contributions to the study of archaeology and geography.

What can we learn about Acts from this account?

If the study of Acts leads an unbeliever to Jesus, what should the study of Acts do for the believer?

4. Read v. 1. What was the first or former book?

How does Acts pick up where the other book left off?

Luke says he wrote about two main points. What are they?

What do these two points tell us about our ministry?

5. What can we learn about the importance of the Holy Spirit from v. 2?

What does it mean to you that Jesus gave the instructions through the Holy Spirit?

6. What is the definition of the word “proof”?

However, we find the phrase “convincing proofs” or “infallible proofs” in verse 3. What do these phrases signify to you?

7. Why did Jesus command them to wait in Jerusalem?

Do you think the people understood what He meant? Why or why not?

8. In verse 5 Jesus says that they will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Other versions read they will be immersed in the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to be baptized or immersed in the Holy Spirit?

Was this promise just for the disciples or does it apply to us as well?

9. Verse 3 tells us that Jesus spoke about the kingdom of God. What question do the disciples ask Jesus in verse 6 that shows they might not fully have understood His teaching at the time?

How does Jesus’ answer to them in verse 7 apply to us today?

10. Verse 8 states the theme of Acts. What four “stages” are listed in verse 8?

Is verse 8 another command? Explain.

However, what had to happen before they could do this?

How could we apply this verse to our lives today?

11. This may seem like a silly question, but what do you think the disciples were thinking as they watched Jesus ascend to heaven?

What do you think they were feeling?

What message do the angels give them and us?

12. What defined a Sabbath Day's walk? Why do you think Luke mentioned this fact?

13. What do we see happening in verse 13 that shows the disciples are changing? (See John 20:19.)

14. What were ALL the people doing as they waited in that upper room? (Read several versions of verse 14.)

Who do you think the women were? Why were they not mentioned by name?

15. Read vv. 15-26. Who seems to be the leader? In light of his behavior at Jesus' crucifixion, how would he have felt about his leadership?

What place do scriptures play in this meeting? To what scriptures are they referring?

What can we learn about "prayer meetings" from this passage?

What should be the main focus?

Are "prayer meetings" still important? Why or why not?

If yes, do you attend? Why or why not? (This question is not designed to bring condemnation but honest reflection.)

16. According to Peter, what qualifications does Judas' replacement have to meet?

Why?

What was the disciples' main purpose? (See v. 22.)

17. Are we called to be witnesses of Jesus' resurrection?

How can we witness to this event?

Why would this be important?

What do you know about Matthias?

18. What was involved in their decision-making process?

What does this tell us about how we should choose church leaders today?

Does the church follow these guidelines? Why or why not?

19. How can you apply Acts 1 to your life?

What promises and challenges does it hold?

## Acts 2

1. Pentecost fell 50 days after Passover. Jesus appeared for 40 days. Therefore, the 120 had been waiting for 10 days. Reading verse 1, what do you believe they had been doing during that time?

What is the significance in the statement that they were "all together in one place?"

How well do you wait?

2. Read vv. 2-4. List the DETAILS contained in these verses.

Both fire and wind are used to describe the Holy Spirit. What associations do you make with wind? With fire?

How would you react if something like this happened during church?

3. Verse 4 is a critical verse. Who was filled with the Holy Spirit and what happened to them as a result?

Who was responsible for this occurrence?

In your own words, describe what you believe happened in that room.

4. Some believe that what happened in verse 4 was a one-time event, that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the 120 to enable them to start the Christian church. What do you believe?

Do you think the church today needs the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

What do you think the church would be like without the Holy Spirit?

5. What drew the attention of the God-fearing Jews who were in Jerusalem at this time?

Does the church today draw the attention of those on the outside?

Should we? If so, how should we?

6. What can we learn about speaking in other tongues from vv. 6-12?

Does the church still need demonstrations of power like this?

According to what you have read thus far, who is able to receive the Holy Spirit?

7. What does the crowd believe is the reason for this peculiar behavior?

Have you ever faced a situation in which your worship or beliefs were misunderstood? If so, what did you do?

8. Peter is the one who stands up to address the crowd. Compared to the Peter before and after the crucifixion, how is this Peter different?

Who or what is responsible for this change?

Has the Holy Spirit brought about a change in you? Explain.

9. Peter quotes from the prophet Joel. Summarize what Peter quotes.

Do these scriptures apply to you or did they apply just to the 120 at Pentecost? Why or why not?

10. Peter addresses the crowd as Fellow Jews (v. 14) and Men of Israel (v. 22). If you had been in the crowd, how would this make you feel?

What can we learn about evangelism from Peter?

11. What message does Peter deliver to the crowd in vv. 22-24? (Be specific)

12. Read vv. 25-35. What is the main point of Peter's message?

Why was this so important?

Is this teaching still important today? Is it important to you? Why or why not?

Do you think there is sufficient emphasis on the resurrection of Jesus in the church today? Why or why not?

13. Verse 36 is a key verse. What does it mean to you that Jesus is both Lord and Christ?

14. How did the crowd react to this statement (v. 37)?

What happens in this crowd that opens them to receive Jesus as both Lord and Savior? (Study what "cut to the heart" means?)

15. When asked what they should do, what does Peter tell them?

Does this message still hold true for people today?

According to Peter's message (which was echoed by both John the Baptist and Jesus), what is the first step in receiving Christ?

What does it mean to you that we are to repent?

16. What is the promise mentioned in v. 39?

Does this promise still apply to us? Explain.

17. Amazingly, what was the result of Peter's first public message?

Was this the result of a unique set of circumstances, or should we expect to see this type of response today?

What might be some of the reasons we don't see more of this type of reaction?

18. Read vv. 42-47. Describe the fellowship of believers in the new church.

What were their priorities?

Where do you believe these priorities originated?

Should today's church have the same priorities or do different times call for different priorities?

How does your church compare to this fellowship?

How does your church need to change in order to see the power of the Holy Spirit manifested like this?

What can YOU do to help?

19. The Holy Spirit is the key to the events in Acts 2. What do you believe the church would be like without the Holy Spirit?

Do we still need the ministry of the Holy Spirit? If so, why?

How have you experienced the Holy Spirit at work in your life?



## Acts 3

1. Chapter 2 ended with the profound statement that God was adding people daily to the church. Imagine the excitement, the challenges, and the changes in the lives of the apostles. Yet, what do we find Peter and John doing at the beginning chapter 3?

What can we learn about them from these actions?

We have been praying for revival. When it comes, what should remain one of our primary priorities?

2. Read vv. 2-3. What do we know about the beggar?

What do you believe his spiritual condition to be?

How do you react to people who have little or no hope?

3. In verses 4-6 Peter addresses the beggar. First, for what does the beggar ask?

How does Peter treat this man (v. 4)?

What do you think the beggar was expecting to receive?

How do you think the church would treat this beggar today?

4. Read carefully vv. 6-8. What was it that Peter had that he was willing to give to the beggar?

How did Peter come by this?

By what or whose authority could Peter give to the beggar?

5. Do you believe this was a gift given only to the apostles or do you believe that Jesus still gives this gift? Please explain your beliefs.
6. What exactly did Peter do?

When was the beggar healed?

What role did faith play in this encounter?

7. The beggar asked for money but he received something else. He did not get what he asked for.

What can we learn from this about how Jesus answers prayers?

Can you think of a time when you asked Jesus for one thing but received much more?

8. How did the beggar react to his healing?

When was the last time you saw this type of reaction in the church?

How would you react if someone did react this way to answered prayer?

9. What effect did this miracle have on the crowd?

How did Peter react to this opportunity?

How do you usually react when God "opens a door?"

10. In his message to the people, what admission does Peter make in verse 12? How does this apply to our walk with the Lord?
11. In verse 13, Peter refers to God as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers. Why do you believe Peter added the last phrase, "the God of our fathers?"
12. Read carefully vv. 14-15. What "charges" does Peter make against the crowd?

Some view these statements as being anti-Semitic. Do you agree? (Before answering, read again Acts 2:23 and 3:17-18.)

Read again Acts 1:8. Jesus told the disciples they would be His witnesses. In verse 15, Peter meets this responsibility. To what are they witnesses?

This may seem repetitious, but why is this truth so important? To the crowd in chapter 3? To us?

13. What do you think Peter means when he refers to the "complete healing" of the beggar?

In what ways have you received healing from Jesus?

14. According to Peter, what must these people do? What is the result for those who do? For those who do not?

Do you agree with Peter's statements? If so, are you as bold about telling people as Peter? Why or why not?

15. Peter says Jesus must remain "in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything." What do you think this means?

16. Peter states that all the prophets spoke of the coming of the Messiah and that Jesus is that Messiah. What does Peter mean when he says the Jews are "heirs" of the prophets and the covenant of God?

Are they still? If so, what is the significance of this truth?

17. Peter also states that God sent His servant Jesus to the Jews first. Why?

Some hold that God has rejected the Jews because they are responsible for the death of Jesus. How does this belief hold up to Peter's statement in vv. 25-26?

18. What can we learn from this chapter about witnessing?

About the work of the Holy Spirit?

## Acts 4

1. Three "groups" come to question Peter and John: priests, temple guards (represented by the captain), and the Sadducees. What can you learn about each group? What do you think motivated each?
2. Read vv. 1-2. What disturbed the authorities? Why?
3. Read vv. 3-4. What two events take place? How would this make you feel if you had been Peter or John?

What can this teach us about persecution?

4. Who was Annas? Caiaphas? (See John 18:24-28). Why might they be "interested" in the disciples?

What question do they ask Peter and John?

Look carefully at the question. What can we learn from it?

5. What answer does Peter give them?

Why might this answer upset them?

6. What can we learn about "confrontations" from these scriptures?

How do you usually deal with confrontations?

7. What significance did v. 12 hold for the religious leaders?

What significance does it hold for us?

8. What astonishes the council when they hear Peter's answer?

What silences the Jewish council?

How can we apply this scripture to our lives?

Can you remember a time when the Holy Spirit spoke through you? Please share it.

9. What dilemma do the religious leaders face?

What did they order Peter and John to do?

How do Peter and John respond? How would you explain their boldness?

10. In v. 21, what prevented the council from punishing Peter and John? What can we learn from this verse?

11. Why does Luke mention the man's age in v. 22?

12. Read vv. 23-30. What is usually your first response when you hear "bad" news?

What was the relationship between the believers and the chief priests?

How did the believers react when they heard what the chief priests had said?

13. Verse 29 tells us that they had been threatened. If you or your church had received threats like these, how might you first react?

For what would you pray?

For what did the believers pray? (See vv 29-30.)

14. The healing of the crippled man brought the disciples attention. The attention resulted in threats. Yet, they prayed for more signs and wonders. Why?

Why do you pray for signs and wonders?

15. In verse 31, what was the result of their prayers?

Peter has been "filled" with the Holy Spirit at least three times: 2:4, 4:8, and 4:31. What do you believe is meant by "filled with the Holy Spirit?"

What can we learn from this about the Holy Spirit?

What can we learn about ministry?

16. Who or what enabled all the believers to be of one heart and mind?

What do you think this means?

What was the result of this unity?

Should we expect to experience the same unity? Please explain.

If so, how can we reach this unity?

17. Verse 33 tells us the apostles testified with great power to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and that much grace was upon them all. What is grace?

What does it mean to you that much grace was upon them?

18. In vv. 36-37, we hear of Barnabas for the first time. What can you learn about him from these verses?

19. Let us look one more time at who was responsible for Jesus' death. Read carefully verse 27. According to this verse, who was responsible for crucifying Jesus?

How does this verse negate the argument that God cast away the Jews because they killed the Messiah?

What is the implication of verse 28?



## Acts 5

So far, we have witnessed the work of the Holy Spirit. The church has grown daily and signs and wonders have followed those who believed. Several times we have seen the importance of the fellowship and unity of the believers. If one were not careful, one would think the church had no problems. However, as we see in this chapter, that was not the case.

1. Read vv. 1-2. What did Ananias and Sapphira do that was so wrong?

What do you think motivated them to sell their land? To keep part of the money?

How are their actions and motives not consistent with Christian behavior?

Do you think this is still a problem in the church? Please explain.

2. According to Peter, what was Ananias' sin?

Does this seem like such a "big deal" to you?

Do you consider "not telling the complete truth" to be lying to the Holy Spirit and to God?

How do you think Peter learned Ananias and Sapphira kept some of the money?

3. In your own words, what happened to Ananias?

How would you report what happened to others?

4. What was Sapphira's sin?

5. According to verse 11, what was the result of this episode?

What effect do you think this fear had on the church?

Do you think the church needs this fear today? If so, why?

6. So far, we have seen the power of the Holy Spirit transform ordinary people into powerful witnesses for Jesus. Thousands have been saved and many have been healed and set free. We have prayed for this same power and anointing. However, we often fail to see this other work of the Spirit (vv. 1-11). Is it possible to have the power of the Holy Spirit without the convicting of the Holy Spirit?

After reading what happened to Ananais and Sapphira, are you still eager to pray for the Holy Spirit to fall upon the church?

These verses also show us the importance God places on honesty and truthfulness. Locate some scriptures (please list them) and write in your own words what Jesus is saying to His church.

What are some of the ways we can "lie" to each other?

7. Read vv. 12-16. What evidence do we have of the presence of the Holy Spirit?

What was the result?

8. Why is it significant that the believers worshipped at Solomon's Colonnade?

9. Why do you think no one else dared join the believers as they worshipped at Solomon's Colonnade? (See v. 13.)

In light of this statement, how do you explain verse 14?

Are believers today "highly regarded" as stated in v. 13? If not, why do you believe this is so and how can we correct this?

10. Why did the religious leaders place the apostles in jail? What do you think they hoped to accomplish?

11. While in jail, the Lord speaks to the apostles. What does the angel of the Lord tell them to do?

If you had been in that jail, how would you react to this directive?

Since they are locked up, how were the apostles able to obey? What does this show us about the faithfulness of the Lord and the equipping of the Holy Spirit?

12. Read vv. 21-26. What happens the next morning?

If the temple guards did not use force (why not?), how did they get the apostles to go with them?

13. What is the main complaint of the Sanhedrin?

Are the charges true? Please explain.

14. What did the apostles say in response to these charges?

What makes the high priest and the Sanhedrin "furious?"

15. How does Gamaliel calm the situation?

How can we apply Gamaliel's advice to our lives?

What would be the consequences of not following this course of action?

16. The Sanhedrin takes Gamaliel's advice, but what do they do to the apostles before letting them go?

How do the apostles react to this treatment?

How do you usually react to "unfair" treatment? What can we learn from the apostles' actions?

17. In what ways is your fellowship similar to that which we have studied in Acts?

In what ways would you like to see your church change? (NOTE: This is not an invitation to complain but to make Godly suggestions, remembering that we all will be affected.)

## Acts 6

In chapter 6 we see that the first century church experienced growing pains, and with those growing pains came situations that challenged their new-found faith. We should not be discouraged by these situations or allow them to separate us; instead, we should seek the Lord's will in the midst of them. Jesus will bring about a solution that blesses all.

1. What can you learn about the Grecian Jews and the Hebraic Jews?

What was the "problem" faced by the church?

If not addressed, what might have been the result of this "disagreement?"

How do you react to situations like this? How should the church react?

What situations should we expect to encounter with the growth of the church?

2. What solution do the apostles present to the church?
3. Read v. 2. If you were present, how would you react to the statement that the apostles were not to neglect their ministry to wait upon tables?

Does this mean they are more important than those chosen to wait upon tables?

What was the apostles' ministry that could not be neglected (see vv. 2 & 4)?

How does this relate to the ministry of the church today?

How would you feel if you were selected to "wait upon tables" while someone else was selected to a more visible ministry?

4. Lest we think this responsibility was not important, what qualifications do the seven men have to have?

Why are these qualifications significant?

If you were responsible for choosing someone to wait upon tables today, for what qualifications would you look?

What can we learn from these scriptures about selecting any person for ministry?

5. What do the apostles' do to begin the ministry of the chosen men?
6. We hear of Philip for the first time in v. 5. What do we learn about him?

Have you ever met anyone with these qualifications?

What do we learn of him from v. 8?

Would you associate these actions with someone chosen to wait tables?

What does this tell us about the first century church?

7. What result did the handling of this problem have (see v.7)? Why do you think this happened?
8. What is the significance of the statement in v. 7 that even a large number of priests believed?

9. What can you learn about the members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen mentioned in v. 9?

10. What really made these men angry with Stephen?

What did they do as a result (vv. 11 - 13)?

11. How did Stephen react to these men who purposely "stirred up" the people and the elders?

How do you react to people who like to stir things up on purpose?

How do you believe Jesus wants His church to react to such people?

12. What impact does v. 15 have on you?

13. What can we learn about selecting people for ministry?

How does the church usually select leadership?

## Acts 7

Acts 7 is a direct continuation of Acts 6. Therefore, some of these questions will require us to look back to Acts 6.

1. Who is the high priest?

What are the charges brought against Stephen? (See 6:11-14)

2. Stephen gives his "defense" in verses 2-50. It is a brief "history" of Israel. As you read, jot down any questions you have about what Stephen says. Why do you believe Stephen began his defense with Abraham?

Can you find anything "blasphemous" or untrue about Stephen's statements?

3. Let's look at a few of the details contained in Stephen's comments to the authorities. What does God instruct Abraham to do?

What does Abraham receive when he arrives in the new land (v. 5)?

What promise does Abraham receive and why would this require faith?

4. What does God say will happen to Abraham's descendants?

5. Briefly tell what happened to Joseph and why?

6. What happened to the Israelites once they arrived in Egypt?

7. Read carefully vv. 20-22. What details do we learn about the life of Moses?

8. What is the implication in v 23 that Moses went to visit "his fellow" Israelites?



9. What can we learn from v. 25?

10. Stephen spends considerable time talking about Moses. Why? (Look back at the original charges brought against him.)

11. In verse 38 Stephen says an angel spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai; however, Exodus 31:18 states that God wrote the Ten Commandments Himself (see Ex 31:18). How do you account for this apparent contradiction?

Stephen also says that Moses received "living words" to pass on to us. What is meant by "living words"?

12. How did Israel respond to these living words? (see vv 39-43).

How is the reaction of the religious leaders listening to Stephen similar to that of their fathers?

What are some of the reasons people might refuse to obey the living words of God?

13. In vv. 44-47, Stephen turns his attention to the "holy place" and worship. What does Stephen say about the tabernacle?

What was the purpose of the tabernacle and the temple?

14. Now read vv. 48-50. What is Stephen's main point in these verses? Why would this upset the religious leaders?

How do these statements apply to us today?

15. Stephen's tone changes in verse 51. What does Stephen mean when he says they are a stiff-necked people?

What does it mean to have an uncircumcised heart and ears?

What does it mean to resist the Holy Spirit?

Can you remember a time when you resisted the Holy Spirit? Why did you?

16. What accusations does Stephen make in vv. 52-53?

Are they true? Explain.

17. The religious leaders were furious at Stephen. Why?

How did Stephen react?

18. What did Stephen see?

Why did this upset the religious leaders even more?

What did they do?

19. In v. 58, those stoning Stephen laid their clothes at the feet of Saul. What is the significance of this act?

What was Saul's reaction to the stoning of Stephen?

20. Look at Stephen's last words. What were they?

Who or what enabled Stephen to say these things?

How would these words affect you if you were one of those stoning Stephen?

How do these words affect you today?

21. In Acts 6:5 & 8, Stephen is described as a man full of faith, the Holy Spirit, God's grace, and power. How do Stephen's actions in chapter 7 support these qualities? Be specific.

22. Chapter 7 begins with Stephen being accused of blasphemy, a crime punishable by death. After looking at this chapter in detail, was Stephen more interested in defending himself or in witnessing about Jesus?

What would have been your main priority?

23. What can we learn from Stephen, a man chosen to wait on tables?

## Acts 8

1) What is your first impression of Saul?

What characteristics do you see in Saul that would cause you to choose him to be a leader in the church?

2) What was the result of the church's being persecuted?

Why do you believe the apostles remained in Jerusalem?

How do you usually react to persecution?

What does the Bible say about persecution?

3) Look again at Jesus' words in Acts 1:8. How do they relate to v. 1?

4) What is the significance of the men's being referred to as "Godly"?

5) What was Saul doing during this time?

What would have been your reaction had you seen Saul approaching your house?

What does it tell you about the church that they continued to meet in their homes?

What can we learn from these believers?

6) Read vv. 5-8. What does it mean to you that Philip "preached the Christ" (or Messiah)?

What caused the people to pay close attention?

What two areas of ministry are recorded in v. 7?

Do we still need both today? Please explain.

7) What was the cause of the town's great joy?

What are you willing to do to see that your city experiences the same joy?

8) Describe the man Simon mentioned in vv. 9-11. Why was he held in such high regard?

How is the people's reaction to Simon different from their reaction to Christ's disciples?

Are there still "Simons" around today? Please explain.

9) What are God's instructions concerning sorcery and witchcraft? (List some verses you used to answer.)

After reading these verses about Simon, what would you say is the greatest danger in practicing or experimenting with sorcery?

What would you tell someone who said he was just curious about witchcraft?

10) Where did Simon get his power to perform his magic?

Read carefully Acts 5:30-32 and 8:10. What do you notice about these two passages?

11) Why did the people follow Simon?

Why did they decide to be baptized? In other words, what caused them to stop following Simon and begin following Jesus?

12) Why do you think Simon was baptized?

Why was he following Philip everywhere?

13) Why did the apostles send Peter and John to Samaria?

What can we learn about how the church grew in other cities?

How can we apply this to church growth today or does it apply?

14) What did Peter and John do?

After reading vv. 15-17, what conclusions can you draw about baptism and the Holy Spirit?

About the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

About the laying on of hands?

15) What was wrong with Simon's statement in vv. 18-19?

What does it reveal about his "heart" and attitude?

16) How does Peter respond to Simon's request?

According to verse 21, what kept Simon from having a part of Jesus' ministry?

What does it mean to you that our hearts must be right?

17) What was wrong with Simon's heart (see v. 23)?

So, what is the danger to us of harboring bitterness in our hearts?

What is one cause of bitterness?

How can we overcome it and cleanse our hearts?

18) What did Peter tell Simon to do?

What was Simon's response?

How do you usually react when someone "chastises" you?

19) In v. 26, Philip is instructed to leave Samaria in the midst of "revival." How might you have reacted?

Can you remember a time God had you travel a "desert road?"

What did you learn?

20) How is Philip's meeting the Ethiopian eunuch a further fulfillment of Acts 1:8?

What do we know about the Ethiopian official?

Why do you believe God sent Philip to meet him?

21) Looking at vv. 26-30, what instructions does Philip receive?

Why do you think he did not receive them all at once?

What can we learn about the leading of the Holy Spirit from this?

22) What is the significance of the official's comment in verse 31?

What do you see as one of our major responsibilities?

23) Read vv. 32-34. Philip's answer to the official's question was important to the official's becoming a believer. How would you respond to this question? Please give this some thought and be willing to share your answer.

24) In verse 36 the official asks why he should not be baptized immediately. What would you answer?

Can you think of a reason why someone should not be baptized?

What can we infer about the Ethiopian from the fact that Philip did baptize him?

By what "authority" could Philip baptize the Ethiopian?



25) What does it mean to you to be baptized?

What can we learn about the importance of baptism from this account?

26) What happens to Philip as soon as he comes out of the water?

If you had been the Ethiopian official, what might you have been thinking?

If you had been Philip and immediately found yourself in another city, what might you have been thinking?

Is this just an interesting story, or can we apply this to our lives?

27) What have you learned from our study of the lives of Stephen and Philip?

What changes, if any, do you plan to make?

## Acts 9

1. This chapter relates the salvation of Saul. Take a few minutes and write about your salvation experience. Please share it with the others.

Do you sometimes hesitate to tell others about your salvation because it is not "exciting" like Saul's? Why? Is one "experience" more effective than another?

Do you have a tendency to question dramatic conversion experiences like Saul's? Why?

2. What do we find Saul "still" doing in verse 1?

What do you believe was Saul's intention?

If you had been a Christian during this time, what would most likely do if Saul came to your town?

3. Why did Saul need letters from the high priest and what was he planning on doing with them?

What can we learn about Saul from the fact that he had access to the high priest?

Why do you think Saul focused on the believers in Damascus?

4. What is the significance of Saul's going to the synagogues to "arrest" believers?

Why do you think they referred to believers of Christ as belonging to "the Way"?

5. Briefly describe Saul's encounter with Jesus.

What question does Jesus ask Saul?

In what way was Saul "persecuting" Jesus?

Jesus takes the persecution of His disciples personally. How does this affect you? Please explain.

6. Look carefully at Saul's answer in verse 5. Compare it to Ananias' answer to Jesus in verse 10. What is the difference?

How does Ananias' encounter with Jesus differ from Saul's? (Look carefully at vv. 5 and 10.)

Why do you think the Lord struck Saul blind?

7. Read v. 7 and v. 22:9. What exactly did the men traveling with Saul hear?

How do you explain the difference between what Saul heard and what the other men heard?

What can we learn from this?

8. What do you think Saul was feeling and thinking as he was led into Damascus?

Why do you think the Lord kept him blind for three days?

9. What can we learn about Ananias from these verses?

Look at Ananias' response to the Lord in vv. 13-14. Was Ananias being disobedient? Please explain.

How did Jesus respond to Ananias' concerns?

How is this conversation similar to God's conversation with Moses at the burning bush?

10. Read carefully vv. 15-16. What is the "call" on Saul's life?

Is Saul aware of this call? As a matter of fact, what was Saul doing up to this point?

What can we learn about Jesus' call upon our lives? about His call upon others?

11. What is the significance of Ananias' calling Saul "brother"?

What is the result of Ananias' obedience to the Lord? (See v. 18)

What can we learn about obedience from both Saul and Ananias?

12. Read vv. 19-22. What did Saul do once he regained his strength? Why do you think he did this?

What was the people's reaction?

What effect did this have on Saul?

13. Verse 23 begins, "After many days had gone by...." What can you learn about the length of time represented by this phrase?

What do you think Saul was doing during this time?

14. Upon his return to Damascus, the Jews plotted to kill Saul. Why did they want him dead?

Upon his escape, where did Saul go? What kind of reception did he receive from the apostles? Why did they react this way?

Were they wrong, or should they have immediately welcomed Saul into their midst? Please explain.

15. Who comes to Saul's aid? What does Barnabas do?

What does the name Barnabas mean?

When have you experienced the encouragement of a Barnabas? Please explain.

16. Saul was well-known in Jerusalem. Before, he was debating "religion". Now he is doing the same thing. What is different?

17. Verse 31 tells us that the church enjoyed a time of peace. Who strengthened and encouraged the church during this time?

How did the believers live?

How could this have brought them peace, prosperity, and growth?

18. Beginning with verse 32, we once again encounter Peter. Read carefully vv. 32-35. What strikes you most about Aeneas' healing?

Do you believe we can see and experience the same healing? If so, why are we not witnessing more of it?

What was the result of Aeneas' healing? (See v. 35)

Do you **really** believe the Lord can save all of Coalgate?

19. Read vv. 36-43. What do we know about Tabitha or Dorcas? What specifically were some of her good works?

What can we learn about being a disciple of Jesus and good works?

Read Matthew 5:16. How was Dorcas' life an example of this scripture?

Sometimes we focus on the more visible ministries of people like Paul and Peter and often look others like Dorcas. However, what impact did she make upon the people of her town? Is there such a thing as an insignificant spiritual gift? What conclusions can you draw about your gift and ministry?

What good works are others seeing in your life that is causing them to praise the Lord? Could you be doing more?

20. If Dorcas was already dead, why did the disciples send for Peter?

21. Here we see Dorcas raised from the dead. Question 18 asked if you believed in healing. Do you believe we still have the authority to raise people from the dead?

22. Look carefully at vv. 35 and 42. Besides the healings themselves, what was another result of these miraculous occurrences?

Do we still need this type of "witnessing" today? Please explain.

23. What has impacted you the most from this chapter? What changes if any do you plan to make?

## Acts 10

The scene now changes. Lest we think that God works only in one place, we are now taken to Caesarea, where God has been preparing the heart of a man named Cornelius. As we study chapter 10, may we come to understand that God is doing a work, not isolated works.

1. List all the details that you can discover about Cornelius.
2. In verse 2 Cornelius and his family are described as being "devout" and "God-fearing" people. What does it mean to you for someone to be devout?

For someone to be God-fearing?

How do you believe this Gentile family came to fear and love God?

3. Once again we see the importance of prayer. In v. 3 it states that Cornelius was praying at three in the afternoon. What is the significance of this statement?

What do you think the scriptures mean by "regularly"?

Why do you think Cornelius prayed regularly?

What does it mean to you to pray regularly?

4. Why do you think Cornelius looked at the angel in fear?
5. What did he say to the angel?



6. If possible, read several different versions of verse 4. What does the angel say has happened to Cornelius' prayers and gifts?

What do you think this means?

What insight into prayer can we get from this?

7. What does the angel tell Cornelius to do?

Is this an "answer" to Cornelius' prayers? Please explain.

8. As the men are traveling to Joppa, the Lord is preparing Peter to receive them. Can you remember a time when the Lord changed you or your way of thinking in preparation for a future encounter?

What does this teach us about obedience to the leadings of the Lord?

What is the difference between a vision and a trance?

Do you think God still speaks to us this way?

Have you ever experienced a trance or a vision in which the Lord spoke to you?

9. Peter goes to the roof to pray. Why? What would be the equivalent of "going to the roof" for us?

10. While in the trance, what did Peter see?

What did the voice instruct Peter to do?

Why was this such a shock to Peter?

As a matter of fact, what was Peter's response?

Why do you think Peter saw the vision three times?

11. Read very carefully verse 15. The interpretation of this verse has generated much debate. What do you think the Lord was telling Peter?

What about us?

Did Peter understand the meaning of this vision? Please explain.

Are we always going to have instant understanding when God speaks to us? What should be our reaction?

12. Meanwhile, the men from Cornelius have found Peter's house. Verses 17 & 18 state that they stopped at the gate and called out to those inside. Why did they stop at the gate?

13. What does the Spirit tell Peter to do in v. 19? Why would it take the Spirit of God to tell Peter to go with these men?

14. From the men's description of Cornelius in v. 22, what does Peter learn about Cornelius? What makes this "meeting" so unusual?

15. Verse 23 is a short, often over-looked passage. What is the significance of Peter's inviting the men into his house to be his **guests**?

Applying verse 23 to our lives today, what is the Spirit saying to the church? To you?

16. What does Cornelius do in preparation for Peter's visit?

How comfortable are you with inviting your relatives and close friends to meet a man of God?

Why do you think they came?

17. What does Peter tell Cornelius when Cornelius falls to his knees before Peter? What can we learn from Peter's words?

18. In verse 28, Peter said that it was against the law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile. Why? Can you support your answer with scriptures?

How did the Jews view Gentiles?

Can you think of a modern-day example of this type of encounter?

19. Peter says that God showed him not to call any man impure or unclean. Once again, what was God teaching Peter through the vision of the sheet?

What is God telling us?

How can the church apply this truth?

20. Read vv. 29-33. Cornelius explains why he sent for Peter.

What does Cornelius ask Peter to do in verse 33?

What are Cornelius and the others ready and willing to do?

How ready and willing are you to listen to what God has to say?

21. Peter says that he has learned that "God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right."

What does it mean to you that God does not show favoritism?

Did Israel show favoritism? Does the church? If so, what should be done?

Why would God choose people who fear Him?

What is the relationship between fearing the Lord and doing what is right?

22. In verse 36, Peter mentions the message of God. To whom did God send this message?  
How did Cornelius come to know this message?

According to Peter's words, what was this message?

23. Read vv. 39-43. To what does Peter testify?

What new insights do Cornelius and the others gain from Peter's testimony?

Do you feel you have any "personal" insights to share with others? Please explain.

24. In verse 43, Peter states that **all** the prophets testified about Jesus. About what have they testified?

What significance does this verse hold for us?

25. Read vv. 43-48. What happens as Peter is speaking?

What do you think was happening in Cornelius and the others as they listened that led to the Holy Spirit's falling on them?

Why were those who came with Peter astonished that the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit?

What is the message for the church today?

26. How did Peter and those with him know the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit?

Should we expect to "see" changes in people today when they receive the Holy Spirit?

What are some of these changes?

27. Why do we need the Holy Spirit?

Have you received the Holy Spirit? If so, what changes have others seen in you?

If not, are you ready?

28. Many times the Holy Spirit is received through the laying on of hands, but not this time. Why?

29. What does Peter realize about the *Gentiles*? As a result of their receiving the Holy Spirit, what does Peter decide to do?

30. What did this episode with Cornelius do to Peter's theology?

What impact has it had on yours?

## Acts 11

1. News of Peter's encounter with Cornelius traveled quickly. Verse 1 tells us that people throughout Judea heard about it. What two groups are mentioned in verse 1?

How do you think they heard about it? In other words, did Peter tell them about it or did they hear it from someone else?

Why would it bother these men to hear that the *Gentiles* had received the word of God also?

If Jesus had used you as He used Peter, would you want to tell others? Why or why not?

2. Verse 2 states that the "circumcised believers" criticized Peter. First, who are the "circumcised believers?"

Why did they criticize him? Were they being fair?

The word for criticize means "to take issue with; to oppose; to pass judgment." Is their reaction understandable or are they suffering from a religious spirit like the Pharisees?

Can you remember a time when you were criticized for doing something right? How did you react? How do you usually react to criticism?

How did Peter react?

What can we learn from these first few verses?

3. Read carefully Peter's answer in vv. 5-18. Do you notice anything about Peter's story?

What convinced Peter that the *Gentiles* were to be included in *God's kingdom*?

How did those listening react to this truth?

What did those who were criticizing Peter do after they heard Peter's account?

How easily do you move from criticizing someone to praising *God*?

4. In verse 17, Peter stated that to keep to the "old ways" would be to oppose *God*. What does it mean to you to oppose someone?

Can you think of an instance where the church today is "opposing" *God*?

What would cause someone to oppose *God*?

5. According to verse 18, what leads to life?

Is this still a major part of the church? Why or why not?

If not, should it? How do we return to this truth?

6. In verse 19, what was one of the results of the persecution in connection with Stephen?

How do you explain this phenomenon?

How do you usually react to persecution?

7. How did the church in Antioch differ from the churches in the other towns?



8. When the church in Jerusalem heard about the new work in Antioch, they sent Barnabas. What do you remember about Barnabas (see also v. 25)?

Why do you think they sent him and not one of the apostles (see verse 23)?

9. John states that Barnabas saw evidence of the grace of God at Antioch. This may seem a simple question, but what does the word "evidence" mean to you?

What would be evidence of the grace of God?

Can visitors see evidence of God's grace in you? In your home church? Please explain.

10. After observing the church in Antioch for a while, Barnabas sends to Tarsus for Saul. Why is Saul in Tarsus?

What can we learn about Saul in that he waited to be called?

11. Saul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch for a year teaching the believers. How important is sound teaching in the life of a new believer? In your life?

12. What does it mean to you to witness to others? To make disciples?

When we look at this episode, we see that bringing people to Christ is but the first step. It took Saul and Barnabas an entire year to lay a foundation in the new believers at Antioch. What should we learn from this?

How do you relate to new believers in your church?

Are we taking care of new believers like Saul and Barnabas? If not, what should we be doing?

13. Why do you think the believers were called Christians?

What does it mean to you to be called a Christian?

14. In verse 27 we see the importance of the gift of prophecy. What does the prophet Agabus prophecy?

What effect does this "news" have on the believers (see v. 29)?

How do times of testing affect you?

15. What does it mean to you that the disciples gave according to their ability?

Do you think the church as a whole gives to its ability? Why or why not?

16. What lessons does this chapter hold for us as Christians? For the church?

## Acts 12

Acts 11 covers the spreading of the gospel to *Gentiles*. It depicts the power of the church and the grace with which it operated. For the first time, Jew and *Gentile* worshipped together as equals in the eyes of Jesus. Now, in stark contrast to Acts 11, we see another part of the body of Christ.

1. What can you learn about King Herod?
2. Why do you think Herod had some of the believers arrested?

Do we still see believers arrested or persecuted because it "pleases" others?

3. What can you learn about James?

Why would his death have pleased the Jews?

How did you react when you saw people who were pleased about the World Trade Center attack?

How does this attitude encourage more such acts?

As a result of the Jews' reaction, what does Herod decide to do?

What should be our reaction when we see this type of "injustice"?

4. What can you learn about the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Why is this such an important festival for the Jews?

Why did Herod decide to keep Peter in prison until after the Feast?

What kind of trial do you think Peter was going to receive?

5. Read v. 4. Herod was having four squads of four soldiers each guard Peter. Why use so many men?
6. James has been put to death, and Peter is now in jail. What does the church "combat" these injustices?

Do you view prayer as a weapon of warfare or as a last resort? Please explain.

What part did prayer play for you during the tragedy in New York City?

7. Read vv. 6-12. Again we see Peter under very heavy guard. He is chained and sleeping between two guards while two other guards keep watch. Of what is Herod afraid?

If you were Peter, how would you react to this treatment?

8. What is the significance of Peter's being asleep?

As a matter of fact, how does the angel have to wake him?

What does this tell us about Peter's state of mind?

How do we find this peace that surpasses understanding?

9. Peter was arrested during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Verse 6 states the angel came the night before Peter's trial. Why do you believe God did not rescue Peter immediately instead of letting him remain in jail several days?

10. Describe the details of the angel's visit.

Why were the guards not awakened by the light or the talking, and why did the other two guards not see anything?

What can we learn from this about heavenly visitations?

11. As Peter follows the angel's directions and gets dressed, what does he believe is happening?

How does Peter escape from his cell and from the prison?

When does Peter realize this is real?

12. Now for a very difficult question. Both James and Peter were arrested. James was put to death while Peter was miraculously delivered. How would you explain this to someone who asked, "Why?"

Have you ever faced a situation in which one person was healed and another wasn't? What effect did this have on your faith? Your prayer life?

What effect did James' death have on the church (see again v. 5)?

13. Who was John Mark?

14. What were the people doing when Peter arrived?

From this, how long has the church been praying for Peter's release? How long do you think they would have prayed?

Does the church hold such prayer vigils today? Why or why not?

Have you ever been a part of a sustained prayer vigil? What are some of the reasons you might hesitate to go?

15. We can see from this the power of prayer. What can we do to return this type of fervent prayer to the church?

What are you willing to do, if anything, to help?

16. What does Rhoda do when she realizes Peter is at the door? Why didn't she open the door?

Look carefully at the reaction of those in prayer (vv. 15-17). Now we know they believed in the power. For what do you believe the people were praying?

Why did they doubt Rhoda's statement that Peter was at the door?

Have there been times when you honestly prayed for something yet did not really expect an answer?

Can you remember a time when such a prayer was answered?

17. If you were Rhoda, how might you have reacted when the others told you you were out of your mind?

Have you ever faced this type of ridicule?

18. What does Peter do while the others are in the house debating whether he really is there?

What does he do once he is let in the house?

Why do you think Peter did not rebuke them for their unbelief?

19. God had miraculously delivered Peter from an impossible situation. What does this mean for you?

20. Verses 18-19 describe the scene back at the jail. What do you think the guards told Herod?

Would you have had a difficult time believing their story?

What would it mean to Herod if their story were true?

Why was Herod so angry that Peter escaped?

Why did Herod have the guards put to death?

21. Read verses 19-20. Describe the political climate.

Why did the people of Tyre and Sidon need Herod?

22. How and why did Herod die?

What warning does this episode carry for us today?

23. Why do you think verse 24 begins with the word "But"?

What was going on while Herod was arresting believers and putting some of them to death?

24. What mission had Barnabas and Saul finished?

Why do you think they took John, called Mark, with them?

25. We see light and darkness, life and death contrasted in chapters 11 and 12. Briefly describe the light of the church versus the darkness of the world.



## Acts 13

1. Verse 1 states that the church in Antioch had both teachers and prophets. What is your definition of a teacher (in relation to the church)?

What is your definition of a prophet?

How do you see these two gifts or offices working together?

What is the significance that the church had teachers and prophets (plural)?

Do we still have teachers and prophets? If so, are they accepted or suspected? If not, do we still need them?

2. In verse 2, they are worshipping and fasting. What does it mean to you to worship the Lord?

From what you can learn, what is the purpose of fasting?

Should we still fast today? If so, do you?

If you do, what has fasting meant to you? If not, why not?

What do you believe is the greatest hindrance to fasting?

In verse 2 what was the result of their worshipping and fasting? Should we expect the same results today? If so, should this not be an incentive to fast?

3. What does it mean to you when the Holy Spirit said they were "to set aside" or "separate" Paul and Barnabas for work?

Should we still expect to hear from the Holy Spirit? Would you share a time when the Holy Spirit spoke to you?

4. Why do you think the believers laid their hands on Paul and Barnabas before sending them out?

What does it mean to you to have hands laid on you?

5. In these opening verses we see the missionary heart of the church in Antioch. What part did the church play in Paul's ministry?

How does the church today compare with Antioch in regards to missions?

When you think of missions or missionaries, what comes to mind?

Do you ever see yourself being sent out? Please explain.

6. Where did Paul and Barnabas preach the message of Christ?

Who accompanied them?

7. In Paphos, Paul and Barnabas had the opportunity to witness to the proconsul, the highest Roman official in the land. Why would the proconsul's conversion be important?

What can we learn from this encounter? (First, who sent Paul to the proconsul?)

8. Also in Paphos, they met a Jewish sorcerer or magician. What did Paul and Barnabas do when they first encountered him? When and why did they openly oppose him?

What message does Paul have for Elymas?

What happens to Elymas as a result of his opposing God? How do you think the church today would react to something like this?

What does it mean to you to have a fear of the Lord?

What happened as a result of Elymas' being stricken blind?

What effect would such an event have on you?

9. Verse 13 states that Paul and his companions sailed to Perga. It is evident from this wording that Paul was now seen as the leader instead of Barnabas. True to his nature Barnabas shows no hint at jealousy, anger, or disappointment. Being as honest as possible, how might you react if the Lord replaced you after you had worked so hard?

Can you remember a time when something similar happened to you? Would you please share it with others?

What does this reveal about Barnabas' heart?

What can we learn from it?

10. At this same time the scriptures say John Mark left and returned to Jerusalem. Many theories abound as to why he left. What are some of the possibilities?

What effect did this have on his relationship with Paul? (See Acts 15:38.)

What should be our reaction to people who begin a work but do not stay with it?

11. At Pisidian Antioch Paul enters the synagogue on the Sabbath. The synagogue rulers read from the Law and the Prophets. How would you react today if someone read from the Bible as part of worship?

What type of message do they ask Paul to deliver?

How important is it to you to hear a message of encouragement? Please explain.

Do you have a message of encouragement for the Body of Christ? If so, please share it.

12. As Paul begins his message, whom does he address? What does this tell us about the early church?

What implications does this hold for us today?

13. Read carefully Paul's message in verses 16-41. He begins in verse 17 by stating that God chose Israel. What does this mean to you that God chose Israel? For what did He choose them?

Do you believe Israel is still chosen by God? Please explain.

14. The synagogue rulers had asked Paul to give them a message of encouragement. After reading Paul's message, what words of encouragement do you find?

What does the message reveal about God? About His plan for salvation?

How does Paul introduce Christ?

How does Paul show that Jesus is the Christ?

What can you learn from Paul about witnessing and about encouraging?

15. Read carefully v. 26. This contains an extraordinary statement. To whom is Paul referring when he says, "Brothers,"?

Also, to whom has the message of salvation been sent?

Today, to whom has the message of salvation been sent? Who has been entrusted with this message?

16. In verse 32 we read the words "good news" for the first time. What is the "good news" of which Paul speaks?

Is this still good news to you? Please explain.

If so, how eager are you to share this good news with others?

17. Paul also gives quotes Psalm 2:7, Isa 55:3, and Psalm 16:10. How do these 3 passages testify to the truth about Jesus Christ?

18. What two everlasting truths are stated in verses 38 and 39?

What do they mean to you personally?

Have these truths been "compromised" in any way today? If so, what can we do to restore them?

19. In verse 41, who are the scoffers? What happened and will happen to them?

God also states that He is going to do something that we would not believe even if someone told us. To what could God have been referring?

Do you believe this verse is talking about one thing only, or is God still doing things that we find difficult to believe? Please explain.

20. Because of Paul's encouraging message, the people invited Paul and Barnabas to speak again the next Sabbath. What part do you think Barnabas was filling?

How eager are you to seek after those who can bring you the good news?

Paul and Barnabas encouraged the believers to continue in the grace of God. What does this mean to you? How can we encourage others to continue in the grace of God?

21. We read in verses 44-45 that almost the entire city came the next Sabbath to hear the word of the LORD. Do you still think this is possible?

We also read that the main problem the Jews had with Paul and Barnabas was not theological. The word says they were jealous. Of what were they jealous?

Do we still find jealousy in the Body of Christ? Why is jealousy so dangerous?

What can we do to combat jealousy in the church?

22. Why did the good news have to be preached first to the Jews? What was the result of their rejecting the Gospel? (Read carefully verse 47).

23. Compare the Gentiles response to the Gospel in verse 48 to that of the Jews in verse 45. How do you deal with people who reject the good news? With those who receive it?

24. What is the significance in verse 50 that the Jews incited God-fearing women of high standing and leading men to oppose Paul and Barnabas?

What did these men and women manage to do?

While they were stirring up persecution, what else was happening? (See verses 49 & 52).

25. What does verse 51 mean to you? (See also Mark 6:11.)

26. In this chapter, what were some of the ways in which Paul responded to those who rejected Jesus? To those who received Him?

27. At the beginning of the chapter we read that the Holy Spirit set apart Paul and Barnabas for a work. After reading the chapter, what do you think that work might be?

What qualities do you see in Paul and Barnabas that help make them effective in their calling?

28. We read very little of Barnabas in this chapter. Why do you believe God paired him with Paul?

29. What have you learned from this chapter about sharing the good news with others?

## Acts 14

1. Once again we find Paul and Barnabas going to the Jewish synagogue. Verse 1 states that they spoke in such a way that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. What do you think it takes to speak in such a way?

What do you look or listen for in an effective speaker?

Do you see yourself as being able to speak in such a way? Please explain.

2. However, verse 2 presents another side. It talks about those who refused to believe the good news. What did these people do?

What do you believe this entails?

What does this tell us about the danger of not believing Christ's message?

3. According to verse 3, how did Paul and Barnabas react to these unbelievers?

What does the Lord do?

Looking carefully at this verse, what aspect of God's grace is revealed?

4. We often assume that if we saw more miracles in the church, more people would believe. However, after reading carefully verse 4, we find that some still did not believe. Why do you believe they still refused to believe?

What did these unbelievers decide to do? (See verse 5.)

Do you think people today would react the same? If so, why?



5. So, Paul and Barnabas spoke effectively and performed miracles by the power of the Lord. Yet, they were mistreated, attacked, and almost stoned. As a result, what do they do? (See verses 6-7.)

How would you react to this type of treatment?

What can we learn from their attitudes and decisions?

6. Read vv. 8-11. We read that the crippled man did not verbally ask to be healed. However, Paul could tell by looking at him that the crippled man had the faith to be healed. What do you think Paul saw when he looked at the man? In other words, how can we tell if someone has the faith to be healed?

What do you think people see in you? (Do not be critical, only honest.)

Where did the crippled man get his faith? (See Rom. 10:17.)

7. The people of Lystra were greatly influenced by the Romans. Zeus and Hermes (also known as Jupiter and Mercury) were two of the most popular gods. After witnessing the crippled man walk, what did these people do?

Why did they call Paul, Hermes?

8. Read carefully vv. 14-18. What did Paul and Barnabas do to prevent the people from sacrificing to them?

Even in this challenging time, they witness about God. What do they tell the people?

Why should we never accept praise or worship from people?

9. One day the people in Lystra thought Paul and Baranbas were gods. A few days later they stoned Paul and left him for dead. What caused them to change their minds?

Why do you think they stoned Paul and not Barnabas?

What can we learn about people from this?

How can we guard ourselves and our churches from this type of destructive persuasion?

10. What do you believe took place in vv. 19-20?

Is what happened to Paul a miracle? Please explain.

What effect would such treatment have on you and your ministry?

What qualities do you see in Paul that make him such an effective speaker?

11. When Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe, they again won a large number of disciples. What two areas did they stress? (See vv 21-22.)

How important are these areas to you personally?

How can you strengthen and encourage others?

12. What did Paul say about hardships?

Why do you believe this is true?

13. How did Paul and Barnabas appoint elders?

Should we still appoint leaders this way? Please explain.

Do we? If not, why do you think we don't?

What is an elder?

14. Upon arriving back in Antioch, what did Paul and Barnabas do?

How important is it to you to hear others "report" about their ministry?

How has it helped you?

15. As you reflect over chapters 13 & 14, what qualities do Paul and Barnabas possess that make them effective in spreading the gospel? Be as specific as possible.

Which of these qualities do you share with them?

Which qualities need more development?

What can you do to help develop these qualities in others?

## Acts 15

Before we begin this chapter, let's look at some "introductory" questions.

1. Christ speaks much about the unity of believers. The church will be recognized by its unity. As a matter of fact, the world will know Christ through the unity they see in the church. What does "unity" mean to you?

What are some of the characteristics that would define this unity?

2. How do you react to disagreements?

How do disagreements in the church affect you?

What is the best way to deal with disagreements?

Do disagreements reflect a lack of unity? Please explain.

Now, let us look at chapter 15. As we read and study this chapter, let us remember we are witnessing a church that is growing.

1. Notice that the "argument" mentioned in the opening verses was not about whether Gentiles could be saved; instead, it was about how they were to be saved.

Is this still an issue in the church today? Please explain.

The central issue was circumcision. Why was this so important to the Jews? Please list some scripture references if possible.

What do you believe motivated these men?

Without being judgmental, can you think of similar instances in the church today where we put "requirements" on people before they can be saved?

Have you ever felt, or do you now feel, that your salvation was more meaningful or certain if you did specific things or believed a specific way? Did this help or hinder your decision to become a Christian? Please explain.

2. Why did Paul and Barnabas disagree with these Jews so heatedly?

Adhering to the law of Moses was a very important issue to the Jews. Are there any doctrines or beliefs that are vital to your faith?

What did Jesus have to say about the relationship between the law and salvation?

Is "legalism" still an issue in the church today? In what ways have you encountered this idea, if any?

Does this "sharp dispute" mean there was no unity in the church at this time? Please explain.

3. How did those involved decide to settle this matter? (Read vv 2-3.)

What did Paul and Barnabas do while they were traveling to Jerusalem? Why do you believe they did this?

How did the brothers react to this news?

What two groups were they going to see in Jerusalem?

What is the difference between an apostle and an elder? In other words, what is an apostle? What is an elder?

Do we still need apostles and elders in the church? Please explain.

Why were they sent to Jerusalem?

4. How were they treated when they finally in Jerusalem?

What **three** groups welcome them? (See verse 4)

Remember, Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to settle this dispute concerning Gentiles and circumcision. However, upon arriving in Jerusalem, what did Paul and Barnabas do first?

5. What can you find out about the Pharisees? Please be as specific as possible.

In verse 5, we learn that those who were speaking for circumcision were Christian Pharisees. How might you define a Christian Pharisee?

Do we still have "Christian Pharisees" in the church today? Please explain.

The comment has been made that we all, at one time or another, suffer from a Pharisaic attitude. What does this mean to you?

Do you agree?

How did you overcome this attitude? Or, if you are still dealing with it, what steps are you taking to overcome it?

6. After listening to both sides, who met to discuss or consider the issue further?

What does it mean to you to discuss an issue?

What is the difference between a discussion and an argument?

7. Read verses 7-11. Why do you believe Peter was the one who addressed the council?

What was Peter's view on the matter?

What were his arguments to support his viewpoint?

Do you notice anything about Peter's statement in verse 11? (Hint: About whom is he speaking?)

According to Peter, how are we saved?

What does this mean to you?

How do we know we are accepted by God? (See verse 8.)

8. What is a yoke?

Peter says that keeping the law was a yoke to both the Jew and the Gentile. What does he mean?

Compare this verse with Jesus' statement in Matthew 11:30. What makes one yoke a burden and the other light?

9. What is Peter's conclusion concerning this matter? (See v. 11)

What does it mean to you to be saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ?

10. According to verse 12, what were the others doing as Paul and Baranbas told their story?

How common is it for people to listen seriously to both sides of an issue before making a decision?

What can the church learn from this council?

11. Read verses 13-21. Earlier we said that two groups, the apostles and elders, were overseeing this council. It is common to think that the apostles made all the decisions and were the ones with all the authority. However, who addresses the council?

What can you learn about James?

What was James' view concerning the matter of circumcision?

How did James support his view?

Do the apostles submit to the decision of James the elder?

What, then, is the relationship between apostles and elders?

12. What do vv. 16-18 mean to you?



13. James states his decision in vv. 19-21. What was his reasoning for this decision?

How can we make turning to God less difficult for people in our community?

What was James' primary motivation?

14. Paul, Barnabas, and James were not in favor of requiring Gentiles to be circumcised because it would be too much of a burden and legalistic. However, what does James suggest they tell the Gentiles?

What is the difference? In other words, why are these suggestions not a burden like circumcision?

Do we have certain "criteria" today that people must meet in order to turn to God? If not, should we? Please explain.

15. Look carefully at the four points James makes. What does the law of Moses say about abstaining from food polluted by idols?

...from sexual immorality?

...from the meat of strangled animals?

...from blood?

Why are these four areas so important that the Jerusalem council would send them to the Gentiles?

16. What is the significance of verse 21?

Should we still be preaching Moses?

17. Who made the final decision to send the letter to the Gentiles?

How did they decide to send it?

Why did they send Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas to deliver it?

18. Let's take a minute to review the first part of chapter 15. We hear of a serious disagreement that could separate the early church and turn believers against each other. Instead, we read that all agreed with the decision and the church continued to grow. Look over the events once more and list the steps the church and its leaders took to deal with this situation. Be as specific as possible.

What can we learn about finding God's will in the midst of disagreements?

We can see that the church in Acts 15 is still unified in the Lord. How can this be in light of the disagreement?

19. Carefully read the letter in verses 24-29. What is the tone of the letter?

If you had been a Gentile believer in Antioch, how would the letter make you feel?

According to the letter, why were they sending the four leaders to them?

Verse 28 gives us insight as to why this situation did not divide the church. Who else was involved in deciding what should be said to the Gentile believers?

What part does the Holy Spirit play (or should He play) in our committee meetings and decisions?

20. Verses 22 & 30 state that the four leaders were sent by the church. These are powerful leaders with great anointing; yet, they did not strike out on their own. They went where they were sent. Should the church today still abide by this example? Do we? Please explain your answers.

21. According to verse 31, how did the Gentiles react to the letter?

Why did they react this way?

22. We learn that Judas and Silas were prophets, which may be one of the reasons they were selected to go to the Gentiles. What were they able to do?

Where have we encountered these two areas before? (Hint: see 14:22.)

What is the relationship between prophecy and strengthening and encouraging others?

Have you ever been strengthened or encouraged by a prophetic word? If so, would you please share it?

23. How did the four know when it was time to return to Jerusalem? (See verse 33.)

Again, we see the importance of being sent. Paul, Baranbas, Judas, and Silas submitted to the leadership in the local church. What can we learn from this?

24. Why did Paul and Barnabas decide to stay in Antioch?

## Chapter 16

1. Paul and Silas arrive in Lystra where they meet Timothy. What do we learn about Timothy?

How do you believe Timothy came to become a believer?

What can we learn from this about raising children?

2. In verse 2 we read that the brothers spoke well of Timothy. What do you think this means? In other words what do you think they said that caused Paul and Silas to notice Timothy?
3. Paul was so impressed with Timothy that he wanted to take him with them. However, before Timothy could join them, Paul circumcised him. In light of the ruling by the Jerusalem council in chapter 15, why did Paul insist Timothy be baptized?

Can you think of an example where the Lord asked you to do something not because it was "necessary" for your salvation, but because it was necessary for you to reach others?

How do we usually react?

4. Paul was traveling to the Gentiles but he was still concerned about the Jews. Why?

What does this tell us about Paul's ministry? About ministry in general?

5. As they traveled from town to town, what did they do?

What was the effect on the churches?

Why do you think this "news" had that affect on the churches?

6. Find a map and locate the places Paul, Silas, and Timothy are visiting. What do you think traveling was like?

Why do you think the traveling conditions are rarely mentioned?

7. In verses 6-7 we read that the Holy Spirit kept them from preaching the word in Asia and prevented them from entering Bithynia. Why would the Holy Spirit keep them from spreading the gospel in Asia?

This is a speculative question, but how might the Holy Spirit stop one from going to a certain place?

Should we still expect the Holy Spirit to lead us like this? If so, are we?

Would you share a time when you felt the Holy Spirit guide you by either leading you to a certain place or preventing you from going?

8. In verse 9 we read Paul received a vision to go to Macedonia. What is a vision?

Have you ever experienced a vision? If so, would you share it?

9. Now for a little grammar lesson. So far Acts has been written in the third person (using they, he, or names). However, in verse 10 the pronoun changes to "we". Instead of saying Paul and Silas got ready to leave for Macedonia, it reads "we got ready." What is the significance of this change?

10. The group leaves immediately for Macedonia and travels to Philippi. A key word here is "immediately". What keeps you from immediately obeying the Holy Spirit?

11. What can you learn about Phillippi?

What challenges do you think they would face in taking the gospel to Phillippi?

Are we likely to face the same or different challenges in our home town? Please explain?

12. Verse 13 states that they went outside the city gate to find a place of prayer. Why did they have to go outside the city?

13. We read that Paul and the others shared the gospel with the women who gathered. Why would this be unusual?

How would you feel "preaching" to hundreds of prominent citizens verses a few women?

Would your message change? Please explain.

What can we learn from this about preaching the gospel? (What is the Great Commission?)

14. What can you learn about Lydia?

Who enabled Lydia to receive Paul's message?

So, what is our responsibility in sharing the gospel?

Before Lydia heard Paul's message, it states that she was a worshipper of God. If so, then why did she need to receive Paul's message?

15. Verse 15 states that after Lydia received Paul's message, all the members of her household were baptized. Why all of them?

16. Read vv. 16-18. Paul and the others encounter a slave girl. Why was this girl valuable to her owners?

What did the slave girl shout about Paul and the others? Was this statement true?

If so, then why did Paul object to this "truth"?

What spiritual lesson can we learn from this encounter?

Why do you think Paul waited "many days" before rebuking the spirit?

What should be our reaction to anyone or anything that "predicts" the future?

Upon whom should we rely solely for guidance about the future?

17. Why did the owners become so angry?

From their reaction, what is one of the main reasons people might reject the gospel?

What are some of the reasons people have given you for not coming to church?

18. Up to now, Paul and the others had not met any resistance. However, when their message affected the financial status of some, opposition rose against



them. Is this still a possibility today? In other words, how might the acceptance of the gospel affect the "livelihood" of some?

19. What happened to Paul and Silas as a result of their message and their setting the slave girl free?

What can you learn about the beating or flogging they received?

What does it mean to be put in stocks?

20. Now, the men were instructed by the Holy Spirit to go to Macedonia. They obeyed. They were instructed to preach the Good News. They obeyed. They did not hold back because of small crowds, gender, or cultural differences. They upheld the truth and set people free. As a result, they are stripped, flogged, and thrown in prison. Yet, what were Paul and Silas doing at midnight? How, under these circumstances, could they be praying and singing hymns?

What might you have been doing around midnight?

21. The last part of verse 25 is very important. It states that the other prisoners were listening to them. Our words are powerful and people are listening to us even when we are not aware of it. What are they hearing from us?

What did those prisoners hear from Paul and Silas?

22. How do we know that the earthquake was not an ordinary earthquake?

Why was the jailer ready to kill himself and why did Paul care?

According to the scriptures, how are we to treat those who persecute us?

Why do you think the prisoners did not run?

23. Why did the jailer fall trembling at Paul and Silas' feet?

24. The jailer asks a question that has been asked many times since then: what must I do to be saved? What was Paul's response?

Has the answer changed any in the last 2000 years? Please explain.

25. What was the result of Paul and Silas' being imprisoned?

What can we learn from this?

26. What did the jailer do immediately after receiving Jesus as His savior and being baptized?

How was the jailer, a brand new Christian, living the gospel of Jesus Christ?

How important is it for us not only to preach the gospel but also to live it?

27. Read vv. 35-40. Why does Paul decide not to go in peace?

## Acts 17

1. Chapter 17 finds Paul and his companions traveling to Thessalonica. What can you learn about this city?
2. Verse 2 states that Paul's custom was to go first to the synagogue, if one was present. He visits the synagogue on three Sabbaths. What did he do during this time?

What does it mean to you that Paul "reasoned" from the Scriptures?

Could you "reason" with someone about Jesus from the Scriptures? (Remember, all Paul had was the Old Testament.) Please explain.

How important is it that we know the Old Testament well enough to reason with others that Jesus is the Christ?

What is the difference to you between reasoning and witnessing?

3. Verse 3 states that Paul explained and proved that Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. Why are these two points so important?

Using scriptures, why did Christ have to suffer?

Using scriptures, why did Christ have to rise from the dead?

How do these scriptures prove that Jesus is the Messiah?

4. What was the result of Paul's messages in the synagogue?

It is interesting to note that "some of the Jews" and "a large number of God-fearing Greeks" believed. How do you explain the difference in numbers?

5. Who were the Jews in verse 5? Note that the verse does not say they disagreed with Paul and Silas. Instead, it says they were jealous. Why were they jealous?

Is jealousy still a problem in the church today? Please explain.

What can we do to confront and defeat this spirit of jealousy?

6. What did these prominent, Jewish leaders do as a result of their jealousy?

Why do you think they could not see that what they were doing was wrong?

What do you think the Jewish leaders were hoping to achieve by bringing Paul and Silas out to the crowd?

7. Who was Jason and what can you deduce about him?

Why was Jason brought before the city officials?

Jason and the brothers were accused of defying Caesar's decrees. What decree were they defying and how were they defying it?

8. In verse 6, the Jewish leaders state that these men "have caused trouble all over the world." Verse 8 states that the message threw the city officials into turmoil. Should sharing the gospel have this affect?

Does it have that affect?

Did it have that affect on your life and world? Please explain.

When we share the gospel, do we expect to see people's worlds turned upside down? Should we? Please explain.

9. Where were Paul and Silas during this uproar? Why do you think they did not make themselves known?

10. Paul and Silas were sent to Berea. How did the people of Berea differ from the people of Thessalonica?

11. Verse 11 states that the Bereans examined the scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Should we have the same attitude?

What is the danger of not doing this?

Do we examine messages like this in the church today? If not, why not?

How would you feel if every word you preached or taught were examined in this way?

12. Once again look at the way the Bereans received the good news as opposed to the way the Thessalonians received it. What was the difference? (Compare vv. 4 and 12.)

13. Why do you believe the Jews in Thessalonica went to Berea? In other words, why did they care what happened in another town?

14. Why did they send Paul away?

Why did Silas and Timothy stay in Berea?

15. Paul now finds himself in Athens. What unique challenges does Paul find in Athens?

Are we "distressed" when we see our city full of idols? Why or why not?

16. Paul once again reasoned with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks. However, this time he not only went to the synagogue but also to the marketplace. Why?

17. What is a philosopher?

What can you learn about the Epicureans?

About the Stoics?

18. How did the Athenians react to the message about Jesus Christ and the resurrection?

19. What was the Areopagus?

Why was Paul taken there?

20. Read carefully verse 21. What is the danger of spending our time doing nothing but talking and listening to new ideas?

Does this mean we should not discuss new philosophies or ideas? Please explain.

21. Paul is faced with an interesting situation. He knows how God feels about idols. He is standing in the midst of a city that even has an idol to an unknown god. When asked to address the Areopagus, how does Paul respond?

How does Paul use their worship of idols to bring them to an understanding of Jesus?

What are some of the things we worship today?

How would turn someone from these idols to Jesus?

22. So far in chapter 17, Paul has visited Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. Each city presented Paul with a different challenge. How were Paul's presentations of the gospel different?

What remained the same?

Do you think one approach will reach all the people in your city? Please explain.

What can we learn from this about sharing the message of Jesus Christ?

23. In Thessalonica, Paul reasoned from the scriptures. In Athens he reasons but does not use the scriptures. Why?

Instead, how does he reason with the Athenians?

Why would it be important to know how to reason with others about the truth of Jesus Christ without using the scriptures?

24. What truths does Paul reveal about God in vv. 24-26?

How does Paul's God differ from the Athenians' idols?

25. In verse 27 Paul reveals God's heart toward man. What does God desire from us?

How are some of the ways we can seek Him?

How can we know that God is not far from each of us?

26. What is the significance for the Athenians of verse 28?

What is the significance for us?



27. Reading vv. 26-29, how does Paul reason that God is not like one of their idols?

28. In verse 30 Paul says that God overlooked such ignorance. What ignorance did God overlook?

Why did God overlook it in the past?

29. Paul goes on to say that God will no longer overlook this ignorance. Instead, what does God command all people everywhere to do?

30. Now Paul introduces Jesus Christ. What will Jesus do on God's appointed day?

How will He judge the world?

How would you explain this truth to someone who does not know Jesus?

31. Up to this point, Paul has met with little resistance. However, what one thing does he say that causes the people to ridicule him?

Why would the resurrection cause a problem for philosophers?

32. What was the result of Paul's speaking before the Areopagus?

What can you learn about Dionysius? About Damaris?

## Acts 18

1. Here we read that Paul left Athens and traveled to Corinth. Yes, another one of those questions. What can you learn about Corinth?
2. Verse 2 introduces us to Aquila and Priscilla. From these verses (and any other sources you might have) what do we know about this couple?

It states that they had to leave Rome because Claudius ordered all Jews to leave Rome. One word that describes this type of "order" is anti-Semitism. What is anti-Semitism?

Can you give some examples from history of anti-Semitism?

Does anti-Semitism still exist today? Please explain.

What do you think is the underlying cause behind anti-Semitism?

3. Why do you think Paul went to see Aquila and Priscilla?
4. Why do you believe the Bible records the fact that Paul worked at his trade as a tentmaker?

What do the scriptures tell us about idleness? About work?

It was extremely important for Jews to pass on their trades to their children. We witness this when Joseph taught Jesus to be a carpenter. How important is this to us today? In other words, what type of work ethic do we pass on to our children?

What did Paul do every Sabbath?

5. In verse 5 we read that Paul was joined once again by Silas and Timothy. This means that Paul had been traveling alone. How do you react to spreading the gospel alone?

What is the hardest part of being alone?

How would it make you feel to be joined by two very close, godly friends?

Have you ever had the opportunity to be a "Silas" or a "Timothy" for someone else? Please explain.

6. Once Silas and Timothy joined Paul, Paul devoted himself exclusively to the preaching of the gospel. Before he spoke only on Sabbaths. What made the difference? In other words, what did Silas and Timothy contribute to Paul's ministry?
7. Paul testified that Jesus was the Christ or the Messiah. What does "Christ" and "Messiah" mean?
8. What did Paul do when the Jews opposed and abused him?

What was the significance of this act?

Can you find scriptures to support this type of action?

Might there be instances today when the Lord would have us shake out our clothes in protest?

How might such an act "look" to the world?

9. Read carefully Paul's response to these Jews in verse 6. What does he mean when he says that their blood is on their own heads and that he is clear of responsibility? (NOTE: Read Ez. 3:18-20)

Do we have the same responsibility today? Please explain.

10. Paul then states that from then on he would go to the Gentiles. What do you think he means? Has he given up on the Jews?
11. What effect do you think Paul's message that Jesus is the Christ and his comment about shaking out his garments had on the Jews?

What effect do you think such statements would have on you?

12. When Paul leaves the synagogue, where does he go? Why do you think he decided to stay there?

What can we deduce about Titius Justus?

13. When Paul spoke in the synagogue, he was opposed. Then he goes to the house of a Gentile and continues to teach and preach. What do you think the atmosphere was like in Titus' house as compared to that in the synagogue?

What was the result of Paul's changing locations?

What can we learn from this about sharing the gospel?

14. Why do you think the Jews rejected the message while many of the Corinthians believed?

15. Read carefully the Lord's words to Paul in verses 9 & 10. Why do you think the Lord chose this time to visit Paul in a vision and speak to him?

Why might Paul be feeling a little discouraged? (Look back at what happened in Athens and here at Corinth.)

Look carefully at what the Lord told Paul. Based on these words of encouragement, what do you think was going on in Paul's life at this time?

What words of Jesus do you find most encouraging? Why?

How does it make you feel that one of the greatest apostles needed encouragement from the Lord?

Can you remember a time when you were doing the Lord's work and became discouraged because you were not seeing results? How did the Lord encourage you?

How might we encourage one another?

16. What do you believe the Lord meant when He told Paul that he had many people in Corinth?

Since the Lord only speaks the truth, where were all these people?

How might this apply to our ministry in our community?

As a result of these words from the Lord, what did Paul do? What were some of the results of Paul's stay in Corinth? (Note: you may have to look at your footnotes.)

17. Verse 12 tells us that Gallio was procounsul of Achaia when the Jews made a united attack on Paul. What is a procounsul?

Paul had been in Corinth for a year and a half. We have read of opposition from the Jews and even mob violence. However, this time we see something very different, a united attack. What do you think is meant by a united attack?

What had Paul been doing that so angered the Jews? (Read their statement to Gallio in verse 13.)

18. What charges did the Jews bring against Paul?

What decision were they hoping Gallio would make?

What was Gallio's response to their charges against Paul?

Was it fair and just? Do you agree with it? Please explain.

19. Verse 17 states that "they" turned on Sosthenes. Who were the ones who beat him?

Why did they turn on Sosthenes and beat him?

Why did Gallio not stop them from beating Sosthenes?

Based on this episode, what is your opinion of Sosthenes? Did he deserve this beating?

Now read 1 Corinthians 1:1. If this is the same Sosthenes, now what do you think?

20. Paul stays for some time in Corinth and then leaves for Syria. He takes with him Priscilla and Aquila. We also read that before he left, he had his hair cut off because of a vow he had taken. What can you learn about this?

21. The three arrive in Ephesus and receive a fairly warm welcome. The Jews even ask Paul to spend more time with them, but Paul declines. Why? Remember, he stayed over a year and a half in Corinth.

Why did he leave Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus?

22. We read in verse 22 that Paul returned to Antioch, which had become his "home" church. Therefore, his return marks the end of his second missionary journey. Then, in verse 23, we read that Paul left Antioch, thus beginning Paul's third missionary journey. Looking back at the first two journeys, how would describe Paul's ministry or purpose? (Note verse 23.)

23. The scriptures tell us that some plant and some water, but God is the only One Who can make anything grow. How does Paul fulfill the call to plant and to water?

This may seem like a simplistic question, but why is it so important for these two areas of ministry to go together?

24. We are now introduced to Apollos. Describe him. What were some of his strengths? Weaknesses?

25. We read that Apollos knew only the baptism of John. What was the baptism of John? Why did Apollos (why do we) need to know more than this?

26. What was there about Apollos that caused Priscilla and Aquila to take Apollos into their home?

Why did they invite him to stay with them?

What does this show about this couple? About Apollos?

How do you feel about women in ministry? (NOTE: we do not want to get into arguments or attack others beliefs. Based on these scriptures about Priscilla, how do you feel about this issue?)

27. What did the church in Ephesus do when Apollos wanted to go to Achaia?

What can we, as a church body, learn from this?

28. In what way was Apollos a great help to the believers in Achaia?

29. Chapter 18 is a chapter about relationships, about people working together and not in opposition to each other. How did these relationships help Paul? The church?

How can these relationships help us?

30. Do you have a need for these types of relationships or do you prefer to "work" alone? Please explain.

31. How can we nurture these types of relationships?

## Acts 19

1. In Acts 18:24-26, we read that Apollos had been in Ephesus but that he only knew the baptism of John. Now in chapter 19 we read that Apollos is in Corinth and Paul is in Ephesus. While in Ephesus, Paul encounters disciples. How would you describe these disciples?

Why do you think Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed?

They answer, No. Some say this indicates that they were not really saved but were only disciples of John. What do you think?

Is it possible to believe in Jesus and not receive the Holy Spirit? Please explain.

What part does the Holy Spirit play in the church today? In your life?

How would you explain the Holy Spirit to a new believer?

2. Paul asks these disciples what baptism they received and they reply, "John's baptism." What was John's baptism?

Why was his baptism not enough or complete?

Does this mean that they did not know Who Jesus was? Please explain.

What similarities do we find between Apollos and these disciples? How might you explain them?

3. Do you believe we have people in the church today who are sincerely worshipping the Lord Jesus but are limited by the teaching they have received? (NOTE: This is not a



condemnation of denominations or faiths; instead, it is taking an honest look at the church today.)

4. Verse 5 states that on "hearing this" they were baptized again. What did they hear?

Why was it necessary for them to be baptized a second time?

What baptism did they receive this time?

What does it mean to you to be baptized "into the name of Jesus?"

Can you think of any circumstance where a person should be baptized a second time?

5. What happened to the disciples when Paul laid hands on them?

What does it mean to you for the Holy Spirit to come on someone?

To be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Is this a one-time occurrence? Please explain.

Have you personally experienced the Holy Spirit coming upon you? If so, would you share it? If not, would you like to know more?

6. What happened to the disciples when they were filled with the Holy Spirit?

Should we expect the same things to happen to us today? Please explain.

7. What can we learn from Paul about discipling new believers?

8. Paul then goes to the synagogue where he was once again "arguing persuasively" about the kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God?
9. Verse 9 states that some became obstinate. What does "obstinate" mean?

How does one become obstinate?

What was the result of their becoming obstinate?

Are we likely to do the same things if we become obstinate? Can you give some examples?

How did Paul deal with these obstinate people?

10. After leaving the synagogue, where did Paul go and whom did he take?

Why did Paul do this?

Verse 10 states that Paul did this for two years. What was the result of Paul's persistence?

11. Verse 10 says that all the Jews and Greeks in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. Find a map that shows the province of Asia. This may sound like a simple question, but what does "all" mean to you?

Can we honestly say that all in the province of Coal county have heard the word of the Lord? In Coalgate?

Is this possible? If so, how?

Verse 10 says that all heard the word. Does this mean that all believed? Please explain.

12. Read vv 11-12. We read that God did extraordinary miracles through Paul. What is meant by extraordinary? Are there ordinary miracles?

What were some of these extraordinary miracles?

Why do you believe God chose to work these miracles through Paul?

Should we expect to see God work extraordinary miracles through us today? Please explain.

13. Verse 13 states that some Jews went around driving out evil spirits. What can you learn about this practice?

What does the word "invoke" mean?

Why would they try to invoke the name of Jesus? (See verse 12)

How did they invoke the name of Jesus?

What can we deduce about these Jews from their comments?

14. Read carefully vv 14-16. What did the evil spirit say?

What happened to the seven sons of Sceva?

What is the most important thing we can learn from this episode?

15. Paul drove out evil spirits. The evil spirits drove out the seven sons. What effect did this have on both the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus?

Should we expect to see the same thing in our city? Please explain.

16. Read vv. 18-19. What two things occurred as a result of this demonstration of God's power?

How do you feel about "public confessions" of evil deeds?

What is the relationship between believing and confessing sin?

Today, do we see these two "operating" together? Please explain.

17. Verse 19 says that a number of people burned their scrolls publicly. If this were to happen in Coalgate, what might our "scrolls" be?

It states that these scrolls were worth 50,000 drachmas. Doing a little research, how much would this be worth today?

What impact would this have on a city? What would be the positive results? The negative?

18. Verse 20 says that in this way the gospel spread widely and grew in power. What do you think is meant by "in this way"?

19. After all of this, what does Paul decide to do?

Why do you think Paul was so set on going to Rome?

In verse 22 we read for the first time of Erastus. What can you learn about him?

20. Read vv. 23-27. Who was Demetrius?

What was his "complaint" against the Way? Was it more religious or financial in nature? Please explain.

How has Paul led people astray? (See v. 26.) What did Paul say that was causing so much trouble for Demetrius and the other silversmiths?

21. Read carefully Demetrius' words in v. 27. He says there is a danger that their trade will suffer and that Artemis will be discredited. Which do you think is more important to these men?

We have asked this question before, but could or would the spread of the gospel in power affect certain "trades" in Coalgate and in Coal County? Please explain.

22. What was the effect of Demetrius' speech? (Read carefully vv 28-29.)

Why do you think the crowd grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus?

If you had been one of these two men, what might you have been thinking as the crowd rushed you to the theater?

23. When Paul heard about this, he wanted to appear before the crowd. Was this Paul speaking or the Holy Spirit leading him? Please explain.

Why did the disciples stop Paul?

Even some of the officials begged Paul not to come. What do you think they feared?

What can we learn about Paul from this episode?

24. Read v. 32. What do we know about the crowd?

Why do you think they were in confusion?

The verse states that many did not even know why they were there. Then, what caused them to join the crowd?

How can we tell these people were not being led by the Holy Spirit?

25. Who was Alexander?

Why do you think the Jews pushed him to the front?

What "instructions" do you think the others were yelling at him?

Considering Alexander was a Jew, what do you believe his "defense" was going to be?

We have three groups represented here. Jews, Christians, and everyone else. Briefly explain the relationship between the three. How has this added "fuel to the fire?"

26. What happened when the crowd realized Alexander was a Jew?

What would you call this type of behavior?

27. In these verses we see two groups, one who worships the LORD God and one who worships Artemis or Diana. What are the major differences that separate them?

28. The crowd is becoming more and more violent. Finally, in verse 35 the city clerk steps forward. What can you learn about this position?

What authority did he have that he could quiet this raucous crowd?

29. Read carefully the clerk's argument in vv. 35-40. What does he say about Ephesus that appeals to the crowd's vanity?

From this "argument" what seems to be a major component of this religion?

30. This man is very good. What does he say that compels the crowd to calm down?

What does he say about the men who have been brought before the crowd? (See v. 37.)

What does he say about Demetrius and the other craftsmen?

31. Verse 40 gives us the main reason for the town clerk's concern. What is the danger?

Who might charge them with rioting and what might be the result?

32. With this, the city clerk dismisses the crowd. What does Paul decide to do at this time? (You will have to read Acts 20:1)

Why do you think Paul made this decision?

33. Looking at this episode, what might be your thoughts about staying in Ephesus to continue the church?

From reading the book of Ephesians, we know the church survived and prospered. How does this encourage us?

## Acts 20

1. We read in chapter 19 about the near riot in Ephesus and Paul's being stopped from appearing before the crowd. Following the uproar, Paul decides to leave, apparently a little earlier than he had planned. What did Paul do before leaving for Macedonia? Placing yourself in Paul's place, what words of encouragement could you find to give?

Once again, we see the importance of encouraging others as Paul continues to speak words of encouragement wherever he visited. How important is it to you to be encouraged? Please explain.

Can we do more to encourage those around us? How?

2. Paul stays three months in Greece, where we find the church at Corinth. What do you think the plot against Paul was that caused him to leave Greece?

What keeps Paul going?

3. What can you learn about the men listed in verse 4?

Can you discover any leadership "qualities" that they have in common?

4. Some suggest these men were appointed to carry money or offerings to the church in Jerusalem (see 2 Cor 8:23). If this is true, what can we learn about the church during this time?

What implication, if any, does this hold for us?

5. Why do you believe Paul did not leave until after the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

What is this Feast and why is it so important?



6. Verse 7 states that they met on the first day of the week. What day was this? Why do you think they met on this day?
7. We read that they met to break bread together. What does this mean? Why was this so important to Paul?

What does it mean to you to break bread with fellow believers?

Do you feel the Lord's Supper has lost its place of importance in today's church? Please explain.

8. Paul then begins to speak, and since he was leaving the next day, his time was limited. How would you feel about attending a "meeting" that had the potential to run all night?

Paul spoke until midnight, at which time a young man named Eutychus fell asleep. (See, even Paul put some to sleep.) Eutychus fell from the window and was killed. What would this do to one of our meetings?

What did Paul do?

After this extraordinary miracle, what does Paul do? Why?

What does this tell us about the importance of Paul's message?

9. Verse 13 states that everyone except Paul went by ship to Assos. Paul wanted to walk. Why do you think Paul preferred to walk by himself?

Are there times when you feel like being alone? Why?

10. In verses 14 - 16, we read of Paul's journey. We learn that Paul decided to sail past Ephesus. Why was Paul in such a hurry?

Why would stopping in Ephesus have the potential of costing Paul time?

What is Pentecost?

11. While in Miletus Paul sends for the elders of the church in Ephesus.

What is an elder to you?

What makes this meeting so special?

12. Read carefully Paul's words in vv. 18-35. Why do you think Paul began this talk with how he lived while among them?

How did Paul live while ministering to the church in Ephesus? Please be as specific as possible?

What does it mean to you that Paul served with both humility and tears?

13. Paul says that he never hesitated to preach **anything** that would have been helpful to the church. Do we see that type of freedom from the pulpit today? Please explain.

Paul also said he taught house to house. How important are house meetings to the church today? Please explain.

14. Paul's message to Jews and Greeks was the same. What was his message? (See v. 21.)

What has happened to this message?

15. Paul says he is compelled by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. What does it mean to be compelled?

Paul says he does not know what will happen to him in Jerusalem, but he has an idea. What is it and what makes him think this?

16. Explain the significance of verse 24. What does it mean to you to finish the race?

17. What impact do you believe Paul's statement in verse 25 had on the elders? What effect does it have on you that we are hearing Paul's last words to them?

18. What does Paul mean that he is innocent of the blood of all men?

Would this be a statement you would like to make? Why?

19. What admonitions does Paul give to the elders in verse 28?

What does it mean to you to be a shepherd?

20. Who are the savage wolves of whom Paul warns them (and us)?

From where will they come? Why are they in the church?

How can we protect the church from them?

21. In what ways is the truth being distorted today such that it draws disciples away?

22. To whom and/or what does Paul commit them as he prepares to leave?

What does it mean to you to be committed to the word of God's grace?

23. Why was it so important to Paul that everyone know he never coveted money and that he supported himself with his own hands?

24. In verse 35, Paul states that Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." However, this quote cannot be found in the gospels. How do you account for this?

Do you receive these words as the Lord's? What does this statement mean to you?

25. What did Paul do when he had finished speaking?

What is the significance of kneeling?

26. Which of Paul's words means the most to you? Why?

## Acts 21

1. We see Paul at the end of his third and last missionary journey. Verse 1 says that they had to tear themselves away from the others. What does this say about the relationship Paul had with these believers?

How do you believe Paul established and nurtured these relationships?

Paul obviously cared very much for them and loved them deeply. Why, then, was he leaving?

What can we learn from this?

2. Read vv. 1-3. Why do you think Luke goes into such detail about their journey?

When reading, do you "skim over" these details or have you ever wondered why God had Luke include them?

3. After spending seven days with the disciples in Tyre (verse 4), the disciples give Paul a warning. Through or by the Holy Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. Look again at Acts 20:22. There we read that Paul was compelled by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. This looks like an apparent contradiction. How would you reconcile these two verses?

What does Paul decide to do and why do you think he made this decision?

Once again, what is the last thing Paul does with the believers before leaving?

How comfortable are you leading others in prayer? Please explain.

4. Read vv. 5-9. Paul continues his journey and stays at the home of Phillip. Where have we read of Phillip before and what do we know about him?

Phillip is the one of only two people designated an evangelist. That does not mean there were not others. What is an evangelist? Who was the other?

Phillip is also referred to as one of the Seven. Who were the Seven?

What is the significance of Phillip's having four virgin daughters who prophesied? (See Acts 2:17 and Joel 2:28.)

How do you feel about women prophesying?

5. For the third time the Holy Spirit warns Paul. This time the Holy Spirit sends Agabus. What does the Spirit have Agabus do?

If you were in Paul's shoes, what might you be feeling?

Why might the Holy Spirit show Paul in such a graphic way what was going to happen?

6. Read vv. 12-14 and compare Paul's reaction to the reaction of the other believers. How did Agabus' prophecy affect the other believers?

How did Paul respond to their plea that he remain behind?

How do you explain Paul's resolve to go to Jerusalem knowing what would happen to him?

7. Paul leaves for Jerusalem, accompanied by some of the disciples. What does this tell us about these disciples?

They take Paul to the home of Mnason. What do we know of Mnason?

From this account and others, we discover that there are many disciples doing the Lord's work, yet we never hear of them. What does this mean to you?

8. Paul receives a warm welcome when he arrives in Jerusalem. He immediately goes to see James. Who is James and why does Paul go to see him?

We also read that the elders are present also. However, we do not read of any other apostles. Where do you think they are?

Paul has received warning after warning that he was going to be bound and turned over to the Gentiles. Yet, what does Paul report to James and the elders? What "evidence" does Paul have with him to support his reports?

What does this tell us about Paul?

9. How do the elders respond to Paul's report?

However, they have a concern. Their focus is on the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, of which there are many thousands. What concerns do James and the elders have?

What are they worried will happen?

The report about Paul is not true. So, how did this spread? How did Paul respond to this false report?

10. In verse 22 the elders ask, "What shall we do?" In response to that question, what do they tell Paul to do?

What can you learn about "purification rites" and "shaving the head"?

How will this help solve the dispute with the Jews?

What about the Gentiles?

11. Now Paul has done nothing to violate Jewish custom or law. Yet, he agrees to these conditions without question or complaint. What does this tell us about Paul?

What can we learn from this?

12. Despite this we read in vv. 27-29 that the Jews were still angry and against Paul. We read that they stirred up the crowd and seized Paul. What accusations did they make against Paul?

13. What led to the accusation that Paul had brought Gentiles into the temple?

What caution does this hold for us about jumping to conclusions and about believing "eyewitness" reports?

14. Following this, the entire city of Jerusalem was caught in the uproar. What was their intention?

It is ironic that Paul is attacked by his own people and saved by the Romans. This situation might cause one to wonder where God was. However, God told Paul through the Holy Spirit that this was going to happen. How would those prophetic warnings now strengthen and encourage Paul?

15. The commander assumes that because Paul is being attacked, he is the one who deserves to be arrested. He has Paul bound with chains and then tries to find out what Paul has done. What was the result

Since the commander could not get at the truth, what does he decide to do with Paul?



How does the crowd react?

16. Once again we see the Jews of Jerusalem attack an innocent man. (When was the first time?)

How do you explain their extreme hatred of and desire to kill Paul?

17. Before Paul is taken away, what does Paul ask the commander to let him do?

If you were in Paul's shoes, what would want to say to this crowd?

What do you think Paul wants to say?

18. Who does the Roman commander think Paul is?

What is Paul's response to this accusation?

Paul receives permission to speak to the crowd. This leads us into chapter 22, so we will pick up the questions with that chapter. After looking back at chapter 21, what event or events in Paul's life touched you the most? Please explain.

## Acts 22

1. Paul has received permission to speak to the crowd. He is standing on the stairs to the Fortress of Antonia which overlooks the temple area. He motions to them with his hands until the crowd quiets down. Then, Paul begins to speak in Aramaic. What is Aramaic? Why would Paul choose this language to speak to the Jews?

Some suggest that instead of Aramaic, Paul spoke in Hebrew. What would be the difference?

2. What is the significance of Paul's addressing the crowd as "brothers and fathers"?
3. Beginning in verse 3, Paul begins his defense by establishing his credentials as a Jew of Jews. What are his credentials?

Who was Gamaliel?

What was the significance that Paul was brought up in Jerusalem?

4. Paul says that he was thoroughly trained in the law of their fathers. What does this mean?

What does Paul mean when he says he was zealous for God?

5. Interestingly, Paul uses his persecution of those who belonged to the way as proof of his identity as a Jew. What did Paul do?

Who could testify to Paul's actions?

Why was Paul on his way to Damascus?

How does this prove that he is a zealous Jew?

6. Paul next relates what happened to him on the way to Damascus. In a way, we can say that he is giving his testimony. What strikes you most about Paul's testimony?

The crowd does not react when Paul mentions the name of Jesus. Why?

According to Paul, those with Paul could not understand the voice of Jesus as He spoke to Paul. Why do you think this was so?

7. What does Paul reveal about Ananias?

8. According to Ananias, what was Paul's mission? Please be specific.

9. In verse 16 what instructions did Paul receive?

Why do you think God had Paul do this?

10. Beginning in verse 17 we learn something new. According to Paul he had a vision in which Jesus spoke to him again. What did instructions did Jesus give Paul?

Why would the people not receive his testimony?

What was Paul's reply to the Lord?

11. Up to this time, the crowd had remained quiet, listening to Paul. Then, Paul shares Jesus' next instruction. What did Jesus tell Paul Jesus was going to do?

How did the crowd react?

Why did these believing Jews react this way?

12. Read carefully v.23. What was the crowd doing?

Does this remind you of another Jewish mob? (See Acts 7:57-8:1.)

Why were the people throwing dust into the air?

13. What did the commander of the Roman forces decide to do with Paul?

Why was he going to flog Paul?

What can you learn about being flogged?

14. Verse 25 says that as Paul was being stretched out, he asked a question. What was that question?

What was the Roman law about flogging a Roman citizen?

What does the centurion do when he learns Paul is a Roman citizen?

15. The commander tells Paul that he had to pay a high price for his Roman citizenship. Paul says that he was born a citizen. What was the difference?

Why would the commander be afraid to harm Paul?

16. After letting Paul go, what did the commander do?

How do you think the chief priests and the Sanhedrin reacted to this order?

## Acts 23

1. When Paul was given the opportunity to speak to the Sanhedrin, he looked straight at them. What does this indicate?

How difficult is it for you to maintain eye contact with someone? Please explain.

2. Paul is speaking with the permission of the Roman commander. Yet, when he speaks to the Sanhedrin, he addresses them as "My brothers". What are Paul's intentions in using this greeting?

How do you think the Jews felt when they heard it?

3. What does Paul tell them?

What do you think he meant by this?

4. What can you learn about Ananias?

How did the high priest react to Paul's statement? Why?

What was the significance of Paul's being struck on the mouth in public?

5. In reading verse 3 we see Paul lose his temper. Do you think he is justified in doing so?

What does Paul say to the high priest? What do you think he meant by it?

How would a "whitewashed wall" behave in the church today?

In what way was the high priest violating the law? (Use scripture if possible.)

6. What was Paul's reaction when he learned he had been speaking to the high priest?

Some have suggested that Paul was using irony in his statement in verse 5 while others say Paul was being very serious. What do you think? Please explain your answer.

How could Paul, a devout Jew, not know Ananias was the high priest?

How does the fact that Paul appears to be apologizing to the one who ordered him struck affect you?

To what scripture is Paul referring in verse 5?

How does this truth apply to us today?

7. Verse 6 states that Paul knew some were Sadducees and some were Pharisees. What can you learn about these two groups? In what ways did they differ?

Now look carefully at Paul's statement to the Sanhedrin. What did he say that caused such an uproar?

Did Paul do this on purpose in order to cause greater division? Please explain.

8. Paul, himself a Pharisee, is pronounced innocent by the Pharisees. Are they being fair in their judgment, or are they pronouncing him innocent because he is a Pharisee like them?

What is implied by their question, "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him"?

Why would this "What if" question cause even more trouble?

9. Remember, the Roman commander is present with his troops. Yet, even their presence does not stop this crowd. What do you think is meant when we read that the crowd became so "violent" that the commander feared for Paul's life?

What did the commander do?

10. Once again the Lord Jesus visits Paul. What does Jesus say to him?

How do you think this affected Paul?

11. Read carefully vv. 12-15. About 40 Jews took a solemn oath. What was that oath?

What does the law say about oaths?

How could these "law-abiding" Jews take an oath to kill someone?

What do these conspirators want the Sanhedrin to do?

12. The Sanhedrin agrees to send for Paul under the pretext of wanting more information about Paul. However, this is not true. What does the law say about telling lies?

How could these religious leaders justify breaking the Law of Moses in order to protect the Law of Moses?

What does the phrase "the ends justifies the means" mean to you? Can you think of an instance where this might be true?

The 40 men plan on killing Paul before he arrives before the Sanhedrin. This is murder. What does the law say about murder?

13. Now, when we talk about the Law of Moses, we are talking about the law God gave the Israelites. These leaders are just a little corrupt. What does God say about submitting to leaders of this type? (For reference, look at David and King Saul.)

What are we to learn from this?

14. Who warns Paul about the plot?

How could he possibly have learned about their plans?

What does this tell us about Paul's family?

15. Paul sends the boy with one of the centurions to tell the commander. The young man tells him the entire plot. What does the commander tell the young man to do? Why?
16. The commander decides to get Paul out of Jerusalem that night. How many men does he send with Paul? Why do you think he sent so many?

He is sending Paul to Governor Felix. What can you learn about him?

Do we learn anything new in the letter the commander sent to the governor? If so, what?

17. They leave Jerusalem at night. Why?

Why would the Romans be afraid of the Jews?



18. Why does Governor Felix ask Paul what province Paul was from?

What is the significance of Paul's being from Cilicia?

What does the governor agree to do?

## Acts 24

1. Tertullus addresses Felix in verse 2. It would be safe to say that he begins by flattering Felix. What does Tertullus say to Felix?

What can you learn about Felix and his rule?

2. Read vv. 5-8. Tertullus lists three charges against Paul. What are the three?

What can you learn about the "sect" called Nazarenes? Why did Tertullus use this designation?

3. As we know, these charges are groundless. However, in verse 10 we read that the Jewish leaders joined in the accusations, testifying that these charges were true. How would you react if you were wrongly accused?

At issue here is the question of justice. What do the scriptures say about God and justice?

4. Read I Cor. 6:1-6. What do these scriptures mean to you?

If we apply them to this situation, what can we learn about the Jews?

5. This brings up an interesting point. As God's chosen people, Israel was given charge to keep God's law and administer His justice. God's law and form of justice is far superior to man's. However, here we witness the Jews presenting their case to an unbeliever. What does this tell us about the spiritual condition of the Jews?

As a matter of fact, Paul receives a fairer trial from Felix and the Romans than he does from his own people. We begin to see Gentiles now trading places with God's people. Is this still a problem today?

Is the church today doing a good job of protecting and implementing God's laws and system of justice? Please explain.

Along these lines, why do we need Christian lawyers?

6. Finally, Paul gets the opportunity to present his defense. He also begins by addressing Felix. How do his statements to Felix differ from those of Tertullus?
7. Read carefully Paul's defense in vv. 11-21. Unlike the Jews, Paul states facts. Remembering that facts can be proven or verified, what facts does Paul give in his opening remarks in vv. 11-13?

What does he say cannot be proven?

8. Next, Paul, making no attempt to hide the truth, makes several admissions. To what does Paul admit?

These admissions can also be proven by the life Paul lived. We all have probably been asked if we were brought to trial for being a Christian, would we be found guilty. What admissions could you make that can be verified by your actions?

9. As a result of all Paul believes, he states in verse 16 that he always strives to keep his conscience clear before God and man. What does this mean to you?
10. Paul continues his testimony in verse 17. What was his reason for coming to Jerusalem?

Concerning this visit, what truths can be proven?

11. Paul finishes by stating that those present should state what crime Paul has committed. Yet, they already presented their "charges" against Paul. Why, then, did Paul make this statement?

According to Paul, what is the real reason for this trial?

12. What is the significance of Felix's being well acquainted with the Way? In other words, how might this have helped Paul?

How might Felix have learned about the Way?

What decision does Felix reach as a result of this trial?

13. Up to this point, what are your feelings concerning Felix and the Roman system of justice?

14. Why did Felix bring his wife Drusilla to listen to Paul?

What did they talk about? (See v. 25)

Why would Felix become "afraid" as a result of this visit?

What does Felix decide to do?

15. Why might someone react with fear when they hear about Jesus?

Is this a good sign? Please explain.

16. It might seem that Felix has been touched by Paul's testimony. However, despite the fact that he has not found Paul guilty of any crime, he keeps Paul locked up. Why? How long does Felix keep Paul locked up? Why does he not let Paul go?

17. In this chapter, we see Paul once again take advantage of a situation to testify about Jesus Christ. Paul is not intimidated or afraid to be identified with the name of Jesus. What can we learn from Paul's example?

## Acts 25

1. Two years have passed, yet the Jews have not forgotten about Paul.

Can you learn anything about why Rome replaced Felix with Porcius Festus?

2. When Porcius Festus replaces Felix, what do the Jews do?

What are they still plotting?

They request, as a favor to them, that Festus do what?

What do you think the Jews meant when they asked Festus to do this as a favor to them?

3. Place yourself in Festus' place. You are newly placed in authority. The "religious leaders" come to you and warn you about certain members of the church. What would you do?

What should be the scriptural response?

4. God once again intervenes. What does Festus decide to do?

Read verse 5. What do you notice about Festus' attitude toward Paul?

5. After arriving in Caesarea, Festus convenes court the next day. How do you account for the quick action in regard to Paul when Felix kept Paul for two years without holding a trial?

What happened when Festus ordered Paul to appear before him?

6. In making his defense, Paul says he has done nothing wrong. What three areas does he list?
7. When asked before about bringing Paul to Jerusalem, Festus refused. Why now does he ask Paul if Paul is willing to go there to stand trial?

Earlier we read that Festus had stayed 8 or 9 days in Jerusalem before going to Caesarea. What do you think happened during that time?

Why would Festus want to do a favor for the Jews?

Why does Festus ask Paul if he is willing to go to Jerusalem instead of ordering him there?

8. Paul answered by saying he should be tried in Caesar's court. Why?

Paul, in essence, accuses Festus of wanting to hand him over to the Jews. On what grounds does Paul object?

9. Paul ends by appealing to Caesar. What does this mean?
10. A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice come to pay their respects to Festus. Who was King Agrippa? Bernice?

What can you learn about them?

11. Why did Festus discuss Paul's case with King Agrippa?

What does Festus tell King Agrippa about Paul?

Festus reveals that the Jews brought none of the expected charges against Paul. Instead, he states that the "charges" revolve around what?

What do you believe Festus thinks about these charges?

12. Festus concludes by mentioning a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. Why was Festus at a loss to investigate these charges?

13. Why do you think King Agrippa wanted to hear Paul himself?

14. In verse 23 we read that King Agrippa and Bernice enter "with great pomp" attended by high ranking officials. What does this tell you about them?

We also read that Paul was brought in at Festus' command. What is the significance of this statement?

15. Festus addresses all who are present. He states that the Jews brought charges against Paul, but that he (Festus) found that Paul had done nothing wrong. As a matter of fact, he would have let Paul go if Paul had not appealed to Caesar. However, Festus has one problem. What is it?

How does Festus hope King Agrippa will help him?

Why is Festus hesitant about sending Paul to Rome without charges?



## Acts 26

Paul now prepares to address King Agrippa. Agrippa opens by allowing Paul to speak for himself. What is different about this setting as opposed to the one with Festus?

Paul begins by stating how fortunate he is to present his case to the king. Why does Paul say this?

Why would this make speaking to King Agrippa "easier" than speaking to Festus?

Paul first witnessed to Festus, a gentile. Now, he testifies to Agrippa, one who is acquainted with Jewish laws and customs. What differences do you notice in Paul's approach, if any?

How would you change your presentation of the gospel for a nonbeliever as opposed to someone who was acquainted with the church?

How would you do this without comprising the truth? How did Paul?

What is the significance of Paul's comment in verse 3 that Agrippa was well acquainted with Jewish controversies as well as the customs?

How could this be good for Paul?

Paul tells Agrippa that the Jews know how Paul has lived his life. He states that if they were willing to testify, they could tell Agrippa all about him. To what "facts" could they testify?

According to verse 6, why is Paul on trial? What do you think Paul means?

What is the promise to which Paul is referring in verses 6 & 7?

What does Paul's question in verse 8 have to do with this promise?

Remember, Paul is speaking to Agrippa, who is familiar with everything to which Paul is referring. How familiar are we with Paul's references? Should we be? Please explain.

Paul holds nothing back. What does he reveal about himself in verses 9-11?

Did you learn anything new about Paul?

What changed Paul?

How does Agrippa receive this news?

Paul then relates Jesus' words to him. This time the account is longer. How do you explain this?

What does Agrippa (as well as we do) learn from Jesus' words?

What did Jesus mean in verse 17 when He said He would rescue Paul from his own people as well as the Gentiles?

How does this promise relate to Paul's present situation?

To whom does the word "them" refer in verses 17-18?

What was Paul's mission to these people?

Paul tells Agrippa that he was not disobedient to this vision. What does he mean?

How do you feel about visions from God?

What does it mean to you to be obedient to a vision, provided, of course, that the vision is from God and not man?

Read vv. 19-20. How did Paul remain faithful to the vision?

What message did Paul preach?

To whom did he preach this message first? Second?

What was and still is the implication that Paul preached this message to both groups?

According to Paul, why did the Jews seize him and argue for his death?

What has saved Paul to this day?

What did Paul mean when he said that he has said nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen?

How does this apply to us, or does it?

Briefly, what did the prophets and Moses say would happen?

So far, Paul has not been interrupted once by King Agrippa. What does this mean to you?

However, following Paul's statement in verse 23, Festus does interrupt Paul and says that Paul has lost his mind. Why does he say this?

What is Paul's response to Festus' remarks?

Paul makes an interesting comment concerning the resurrection of Jesus. He says that the resurrection of Jesus is both true and reasonable. In what way is it true? In what way is it reasonable?

How does this exchange between Paul and Festus reflect the truth found in I Corinthians 1:18?

Are we likely to encounter this same reaction today? Please explain. If we do, how should we react?

In addressing Festus, Paul is still speaking for Agrippa's benefit. He says that he can speak freely to Agrippa because Agrippa is familiar with the things Paul is saying. Why is Paul certain that none of what he has said has escaped Agrippa's notice?

Why is it important for us not to do the works of Jesus "in a corner"?

What is the significance of Paul's question to Agrippa in verse 27?

What was Agrippa's response?

Was Paul trying to get Agrippa to become a Christian? Please explain.

What is the difference to you between getting someone to believe in Jesus and converting them?

Paul's answer to Agrippa is simple but powerful. What did Paul answer the king?

What implications does this answer hold for us?

If someone asked you what it meant to be a Christian, how comfortable would you be making the statement Paul made: to be a Christian is to be what I am?

The king and the others leave at this point. What conclusion did they reach about Paul after listening to him speak?

What does Agrippa say to Festus?

Considering Agrippa's statement, was Paul wrong in appealing to Caesar? Please explain.

## Acts 27

1. Once again the account mentions "we" when referring to their preparations, meaning once again that Luke has joined Paul. The last reference to Luke was in Acts 21:18. Where do you believe Luke was during this time? What do you think he was doing?
2. Who was Julius? What was the Imperial Regiment?
3. We read again of Aristarchus. What do you remember about him?

What can you deduce about Paul's traveling companion?

4. Why did Julius allow the prisoner Paul to go to his friends that they could provide for Paul?

What needs do you think they met?

What does this tell us about Paul and his relationship with those around him, even those sent to guard him?

What can we learn from this?

5. The ship arrives in Myra in Lycia. This ship is bound for ports along the coast of Asia (Macedonia). This route would get them to Rome but it would take longer. However, Julius decides to change ships. He finds an Alexandrian ship bound for Italy and decides to take it. What is an Alexandrian ship?

Why do you think Julius made this decision?

6. Next we learn they sail from Myra to Cnidus, a distance of about 170 miles. From there they are forced to sail to the island of Crete and landed at Fair Havens. Why did the journey take so long?

7. Why do you think Luke recorded their journey in such detail?
8. In verse 9 we read that sailing had become dangerous because it was after the Fast. Luke is writing to a Jewish audience who would understand exactly what he meant. However, it might take a little study for us. What is the Fast and when is it held?

What does this have to do with sailing?

9. Knowing what lies ahead, Paul addresses the men. Who are these men and why would they listen to him?

What does Paul tell them?

How does Paul know this?

What would following Paul's advice entail?

10. The centurion does not listen to Paul. Instead, he followed the advice of the pilot and the owner. What advice do you think they gave him? What was their motivation?
11. Why was Fair Havens' harbor unsuitable to winter in?

As a result, what do they decide to do?

How long a journey was it to Phoenix?

12. They set sail amid favorable winds. However, before long, the winds change. Luke records that a "northeaster" swept in. What is a "northeaster"?

What affect did this storm have on the ship and crew?

13. Read very carefully verse 17. What happens?

What can you learn about the storm from this verse?

What do you think was the mood aboard that ship?

Do you get any sense from reading this account that Luke was afraid? Please explain your answer.

14. What is the significance of verses 18 & 19? (See v. 12.)

What spiritual and scriptural truth do we see operating?

What is significant about the fact that the men threw overboard the ship's tackle with their own hands?

15. After all this time, Luke records in verse 20 that they finally gave up all hope of being saved. It is at this time that Paul speaks and tells them that they should have taken his advice. If they had, what would they have been spared?

Notice, Paul never mentions their lives being at stake. He tells them to take courage because not one of them will be lost. How does Paul know this?

What does Paul say about God in verse 23?

What does the angel tell Paul?

If you had been one of these sailors, believing there was no hope of being saved, how might you have reacted to Paul's message? Why might you be led to believe him?



16. Paul does tell them that the ship will be destroyed and that they must run the ship aground on some island. Finally after 14 days they approach land. How did they know they were nearing land?

What did they do to slow down the ship?

Fearing they would be dashed against the rocks, some of the sailors attempt to escape by the lifeboat. What does Paul tell the centurion about this plan?

What does the centurion do and why do you believe he does this?

17. Paul knows the men need to eat. For fourteen days they have been battling the storm and fearing for their lives. No one has felt like eating, but Paul knows they need their strength for what lies ahead. In the middle of this storm, what does Paul do? (See v. 35.)

What effect did this have on the 276 men aboard?

18. The next morning they sight land and make preparations to run the ship aground. What do they do?

What goes wrong that prevents them from running aground on the island?

As a result what are the soldiers preparing to do? Why do you believe they are going to do this?

Why does the centurion stop the soldiers?

19. In this chapter we see Paul encourage the men to stay with a ship that was not going to reach its destination. To abandon that ship meant death; to stay with that sinking ship meant life. Are there spiritual applications we can make from this? Please explain. (Remember the word the Lord gave us: looks will be deceiving)

What else have you learned from this chapter?

## Acts 28

Acts 28 immediately follows Acts 27. Paul and the rest have been shipwrecked on the island of Malta. Faithful to His word, God preserved the lives of all the men. The inhabitants of Malta were considered barbarians. Now let us look at Paul's stay on the island.

1. We read that the islanders (whom many of the men considered barbarians) showed the shipwrecked men considerable kindness. What did the islanders do?

How do you explain these actions coming from "barbarians"?

What can we learn from the actions of these islanders?

2. We read that the islanders are the ones who welcomed them and built a fire to warm them. Why, then, do you think Paul was gathering wood for the fire?

What does this act tell us about Paul?

What lesson does it hold for us?

3. What happened to Paul as he put the wood on the fire?

What did everyone think was going to happen to Paul? Why?

What explanation did the islanders give for this happening to Paul?

Do we in the church apply such "logic" to events around us? Please explain.

4. As the others waited for Paul to die, what did Paul do?

As time passed, nothing happened to Paul. How did the islanders account for this?

How do you explain the change in them concerning Paul?

5. By all accounts of nature, Paul should have died. Why didn't he?

What can we learn from this?

6. Malta was part of the Roman Empire and so had a Roman official living there. Publius probably did not get many visitors, so he welcomes them into his home. How important is it that we offer hospitality to others, even shipwrecked prisoners?

What happens when Paul learns that Publius' father is sick?

As a result of this episode with Publius' father, the rest of the sick on the island came to Paul. What happened?

Is this an isolated incident or should we expect to see and to participate in similar actions? Please explain.

7. In his stay on Malta, Paul brought the gospel to pagans. He became a missionary. How did he reveal the gospel of Jesus Christ to them?

What result did Paul's presentation of the gospel have on them?

What can we learn about ministering to people who are not familiar with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

8. After three months they prepare to leave Malta. They sail on an Alexandrian ship. What is the figurehead of a ship? What was the figurehead of this ship?

Why do you believe Luke mentioned this fact?

9. On their way to Rome, they stopped in Puteoli, where they found some brothers. How do you believe these brothers came to be in Puteoli?

Why do you think Paul's Roman guard allowed him to stay a week with the brothers?

10. Finally, after a 2,000 mile journey, Paul arrives in Rome. News of his arrival had preceded him, and Paul was met by more brothers in Rome. Paul was still "under arrest" but what special treatment did he receive?

What does this tell us about the Romans attitude toward Paul?

11. Paul had never been to Rome before, yet the brothers there welcomed him and met his needs. What does this show us about the church?

What can we learn as a local church body?

12. Paul wastes no time. Verse 17 tells us that three days after arriving in Rome, Paul called together the leaders of the Jews. What does Paul tell them? (Read vv. 17-20.)

Why did Paul do this?

13. What do the leaders of the Jews reply in response to Paul's concern?

What request do they make of Paul?

Based on these scriptures, why might Paul have been sent to Rome?

14. Paul makes arrangements to meet with the leaders on a certain day. When that day came, even larger numbers of people came to hear Paul. We read in verse 23 that Paul spoke from morning till evening. What was Paul's objective?

Briefly look at a synopsis of the book of Romans, and we will get an idea of what was taking place. What are some of the major themes covered in Romans?

Could you speak from morning until evening convincing people that Jesus is the Christ? If the answer is "No," what can we do to change this?

15. Read vv. 24-25. What was their response to Paul's message?

16. We read that the Jews left following Paul's final statement. In your own words, what was this final statement?

What do verses 26-27 mean to you?

What do you think they meant to the Jews?

17. Why do you think Paul ended with the statement in verse 28?

How do you think the Jews reacted to this statement?

What implications does it hold for us today?

18. Acts ends by telling us that for two whole years Paul welcomed people into his rented home. Why do you think no further mention is made of Paul's trial?

Based on this abrupt ending, what would you say the book of Acts is about?

19. Read v. 31. In what way does this verse summarize Paul's life?

What does this verse mean to you?

20. What are some of the theories about Paul's fate?

21. What has this study of Acts meant to you?

What have you learned and how has it affected you personally?

What can we, as the church, learn from Acts?