

- *Study Guide* -
THE BOOK OF ACTS

Class Goals:

- To better understand the growth and practices of the New Testament church. Especially their worship, leadership, sharing, perseverance, and involvement in the Great Commission.
- To equip one another to imitate the role models of the early church
 - First, to respond to the gospel with trust and loyalty towards God
 - Second, to tell others about Jesus in a loving and bold manner.
 - Third, to serve one another thoughtfully for true edification.
 - Fourth, to recognize the usefulness of the many various talents and personalities that make up the body of Christ.
- To appreciate the role of the Holy Spirit through the events in the book of Acts.
- To avoid and overcome the attitudes found in those who opposed the gospel.

6 Week Lesson Plan:

Lesson 1, Sun Feb 25 th	Introduction & Ascension of Jesus	(Acts 1)
Lesson 2, Wed Feb 28 th	The Gospel in Jerusalem	(Acts 2)
Lesson 3, Sun Mar 4 th	The Early Church	(Acts 3-4)
Lesson 4, Wed Mar 7 th	The Early Church	(Acts 5-7)
Lesson 5, Sun Mar 11 th	The Gospel Taken to Samaria & Saul	(Acts 8-9)
Lesson 6, Wed Mar 14 th	The Gospel Taken to Gentiles	(Acts 10-12)
Lesson 7, Sun Mar 18 th	The First Journey	(Acts 13-15:35)
Lesson 8, Wed Mar 21 st	The Second Journey	(Acts 15:36-18:22)
Lesson 9, Sun April 1 st	The Third Journey	(Acts 18:23-21:17)
Lesson 10, Wed April 4 th	Defense Before The Jews	(Acts 21:18-23:35)
Lesson 11, Sun April 8 th	Defense Before Felix, Festus, & Agrippa	(Acts 24-26)
Lesson 12, Wed April 11 th	The Journey to Rome	(Acts 27-28)
Lesson 13, Sun April 15 th	Review	

1: Introduction & The Ascension of Jesus

Reading: Acts 1

“...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”
(Acts 1:8-9)

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK:

What do you know about Luke, the author of this book?

How does Luke summarize the activities of Jesus during the Lord's 40 days on earth between his resurrection and ascension? (vs. 1-8)

What three areas are described in verse 8 which form the outline for the book of Acts?

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus told the apostles to wait. Where? For What? Why? When?
2. How many continued together between the ascension and Pentecost? Identify the family members of Jesus who were there.
3. What were the necessary qualifications to serve as an apostle? How are these different from becoming a servant in Acts 6:3? What do you notice about who made the final decision? (vs 24-26)
4. What observations can you make about the Holy Spirit from this chapter?
5. How does the description of Judas' death in Acts 1 harmonize with Matthew 27:1-10?

PRAYER: According to verse 14 the disciples were assembled for prayer. What would you be praying about in their position?

2: The Gospel In Jerusalem

Reading: Acts 2

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ – this Jesus whom you crucified.” (Acts 2:36) “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” (Acts 2:42)

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who had promised to send the Holy Spirit? (1:4)
2. Who was filled with the Holy Spirit? (1:26, 2:1-4)
3. Who received the gift of the Holy Spirit? (2:38, 41)
4. What evidence does Peter provide to establish the identity of Jesus?
_____ (vs. 16) _____ (vs. 22)
_____ (vs. 24) _____ (vs. 25)
_____ (vs. 30) _____ (vs. 32)
_____ (vs. 34-35) _____ (vs. 40)
5. With what crime did Peter charge the audience?
6. What were they promised if they responded to the gospel? (vs. 21, 38, 40, 47)
7. What amazed the multitudes about the tongues? How does this compare to the tongue speaking practiced today by Pentecostals?
8. What qualities of the early church most impress you? (vs. 41-47)

PRAYER: Pray for a heart of readiness: Readiness to consider Biblical evidence. Readiness to grow in knowledge. Readiness to assemble with saints. Readiness to praise and rejoice. Readiness to share the gospel with those who have not put on Christ in baptism.

3: The Early Church

Reading: Acts 3-4

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, who you crucified, who God raised from the dead – by this name this man stands here before you in good health.”
(Acts 4:8-10)

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What time did Peter and John go to the temple? What time were they arrested?
2. How can we imitate both Peter’s focus in Acts 3:6 and Barnabas’ generosity in 4:37?
3. How did the healed man show his joy and gratitude?
4. By what different names did Peter refer to Jesus?
5. What did Moses say about Jesus?
6. If we preach the same message as Peter, what will we tell sinners to do to be saved?
7. How did Peter and John handle their arrest and release?
8. How did Christians respond to the needs of other saints among them? (vs. 32-37)

What conditions made this model function well, and how can we best apply this example today?

PRAYER: Think about the big ideas in ch. 4:11-13. Pray for an appreciation of the prophecies about Jesus, pray for clarity and conviction about Jesus as the **ONLY** name by which men can be saved, and pray for such a change in our hearts and behavior that we would be recognized as disciples of Jesus.

4: The Early Church

Reading: Acts 5-7

“The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:7

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. This section begins with the death of Ananias & Sapphira, but it ends with the death of Stephen. Compare and contrast these two situations.

Death often makes us ask, “Why?” Why would God’s punishment of Ananias & Sapphira be so strong? And, why would God allow the death of such a great servant like Stephen?

2. Luke often describes the power of the gospel to touch hearts. What is different about Acts 2:37 and Acts 5:33?
3. Who is arrested in Acts 5:18? What are they instructed to do in 5:20?
4. Dishonesty, imprisonment, and favoritism are all shown to threaten the unity of the church. How is the whole church part of solving these problems?
5. How did appointing servants address the economic problem, organizational problem, and growth problem facing the church?
6. Create a Character Description of Stephen... (6:3, 6:8, 6:15, 7:51-60)
7. What reputation did the early church have at this point? What reputation do you think we have in our community?

PRAYER: Pray that we would not give into temptation so that we can grow spiritually, and so that our sins do not disrupt the soul-saving mission of the local church. Pray for good men and women to willingly serve the church, so that many would become obedient to the faith.

5: The Gospel Taken to Samaria & Saul

Reading: Acts 8-9

“Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” (8:4)
“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.” (8:35) “But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.” (9:15-16)

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What did the scattered saints do? How does this fulfill the words of Jesus in Acts 1:8?
2. What caused the Samaritans to give heed to Philip’s preaching? What claims had Simon made?
3. What assistance did Peter and John give? How did the power of the apostles differ from that of Philip?
4. Where was Philip directed to go from Samaria? What did Philip preach and why did the Ethiopian rejoice?
5. At what point did Saul believe in Jesus as the risen Lord? What was Saul told to do?
6. Who assisted Saul in obedience to Christ? What did Ananias tell Saul to do? (See also 9:18 and 22:16)
7. According to Galatians 1:15-17 where did he go for three years?
8. Where did churches exist by this time? (9:31) What was the common attitude and teaching in all of the churches?

PRAYER: Chapter 8 and 9 are full of amazing people. We see the evangelistic spirit of the scattered saints, the godly sorrow of Simon, the preaching of Philip, Saul, & Peter, and the love of Dorcas, plus others. Write down 3 qualities you want to imitate from these early disciples and pray about developing these qualities.

6: The Gospel Taken to the Gentiles

Reading: Acts 10-12

“Opening his mouth, Peter said: I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.” (Acts 10:34-35)

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe Cornelius.
2. How did he know where to find Peter? What lesson did Peter teach Cornelius about worship?
3. What happened as Peter continued to speak? What was the unmistakable evidence that God approved of the conversion of the Gentiles?
4. What similarities and differences do you find between this outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles and that in Acts 2 upon the apostles?
5. Why was it important for Peter to tell about the salvation of Cornelius and his household?
6. What happened at Antioch and who was sent to help?
7. What were the disciples called for the first time in Antioch? Where else is this word used in the New Testament?
8. What did Herod do to oppress the Christians?
9. What did Peter think as he followed the angel?
10. What example of caring and sharing is given by the early saints?

PRAYER: No matter the persecution, the word was taken to city after city. Pray for the conviction, courage, and open doors you need to take part in this good work.

7: The First Journey

Reading: Acts 13-15:35

“And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers...”
(13:32) “Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.” (13:46)

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who selected Barnabas and Saul? Who sent them out?
2. List the cities visited in each region and one event occurring in each:

On Cyprus:

In Pamphylia:

In Pisidia:

In Galatia:

In Lycaonia:
3. What did they do in each church they had established?
4. Why is it important to imitate the example of Paul and Barnabas in following up with those previously taught?
5. What problem was discussed and resolved in Jerusalem in Acts 15?
6. What evidence was offered by Peter, Paul, and James?
7. Does Acts 15 establish authority for church conferences to determine doctrinal matters and teaching practices?

PRAYER: Consider the positive and negative experiences Paul and Barnabas face on this journey. What important things should we pray about for evangelist traveling and preaching?

8: The Second Journey

Reading: Acts 15:36-18:22

“Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”
(17:30-31)

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What was the original purpose of the journey? Why did they go into Europe?
2. Who joined Paul, Silas, & Timothy in Troas?
3. Who remained with the young church in Philippi? (16:12 and 16:40)
4. How many Sabbaths did Paul preach in Thessalonica?
5. What was the early reception in Berea? Did this change?
6. Who did Paul live with in Corinth? How did Silas and Timothy’s arrival affect him?
7. What two assurances was Paul given in a vision?
8. What is Paul’s response to the observing the idols in Athens?
9. What do the conversions recorded in the book of Acts have in common so far?
10. How does Luke describe the women who heard the gospel during this journey?

PRAYER: Identify the reasons the gospel is rejected by some during this journey. Pray that we would not let these distractions hinder our obedience to the gospel or our desire to share the gospel with others.

9: The Third Journey

Reading: Acts 18:23-21:17

“When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.” Acts 21:19

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Where did Paul start his third missionary journey?
2. Describe Apollos. What error was he preaching? How was the correction handled?
3. How long did Paul preach in the synagogue at Ephesus? In the school of Tyrannus?
4. What happened to the Jewish exorcists who tried to use the name of Jesus?
5. Where did the mob assemble against Paul? Who finally quieted the mob?
6. Describe the assembly in Troas in Acts 20:1-12.
7. Who did Paul stay with in Acts 21:7? How had each of these men previously been connected to Stephen?
8. How does Paul respond to those urging him not to travel to Jerusalem?
9. When Paul met 12 disciples in Ephesus, he baptized them. Why? What does this teach us about today?
10. In addition to Acts 20:7, what other passages influence the frequency of observing the Lord's Supper?

PRAYER: Review Acts 20:17-37 and pray for yourself and other Christians to exercise such diligence, love, leadership and other qualities in their homes and local churches. What qualities do you hope we will most imitate locally?

10: Paul's Defense Before The Jews

Reading: Acts 21:18-23:35

“Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.” Acts 22:16

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What step does Paul take in Acts 21:21-26 to show his respect to the Jews? How do they respond? How does Paul view the law of Moses? (Rom. 7:6-7, Gal. 3:23-29, 1 Cor. 9:20)
2. What charges were made against Paul in Acts 21:28? Why did the Romans arrest him?
3. How does Paul describe Christianity in Acts 22:4? What is meant by this description?
4. What topic became the turning point that caused the Jews not to listen to Paul's conversion and mission any further?
5. How did Paul acquire his Roman citizenship? How can your American citizenship become an asset in sharing the gospel?
6. Why did the high priest command Paul to be hit in the mouth?
7. What comfort is given Paul in Acts 23:11?
8. What plot is formed against Paul?
9. Who is Paul sent to for his trial to continue?
10. Paul's eyewitness testimony and preaching is dismissed. How are his writings still dismissed today? Are the reasons for rejecting him today similar to the reasons given thousands of years ago?

PRAYER: Give thanks for the function of the law of Moses. Pray for an open heart to listen to gospel truths that challenge our prejudices. Pray for courage and boldness in the face of critics.

11: Paul's Defense Before Felix, Festus, & Agrippa

Reading: Acts 24-26

“But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you.” (Acts 24:25)

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Felix defer sentencing Paul? Why did he send for Paul often? (24:17, 24:26)
2. Why does Paul appeal to Caesar? (25:7-11)
3. How does Festus view the charges against Paul? (25:18-22) What does this indicate about Paul's blamelessness?
4. Why does Paul begin his defense before Agrippa describing his conversion?
5. How does Paul's language in 26:6-7 relate to 1 Peter 3:15?
6. What details do we learn about Paul's persecution of Christians in 26:9-11?
7. In Paul's mission to the Gentiles, what would he be seeking to change? (vs. 15-18)
8. What do you admire about the exchange Paul and Agrippa share in vs. 24-32?
9. What would you say to someone who hears the gospel but delays or dismisses it?

PRAYER: As Luke records Paul's powerful preaching, we must remember that these sermons were given in chains – not in a church building. Pray that we will speak about our hope in eternal life through Jesus Christ no matter where we are.

12: The Journey to Rome

Reading: Acts 27-28

“Having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and broke it and began to eat. All of them were encouraged and they themselves also took food. All of us in the ship were two hundred and seventy-six persons.”
(27:35-37)

STUDY & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What advice did Paul give at Fair Havens?
2. Why were the prisoners not killed?
3. On what island did they become shipwrecked? What led the people to consider Paul to be a god?
4. In what two places did Christians from Rome meet Paul?
5. What were the conditions of Paul’s confinement in Rome? (vs. 16, 30)
6. Paul stayed seven days at Troas in Acts 20: _____, Tyre in Acts 21: _____, and Puteoli in Acts 28: _____. Why do you think he stayed for 7 days?
7. How long was Paul confined in Rome? How did he spend his time?
8. How did Paul use the Law of Moses and Prophets in making his case?
9. What can we learn from Paul’s strategy in sharing the gospel?
10. How would Luke and Paul feel about the efforts you are making to share the gospel?

PRAYER: Pray that we would use our freedoms, our knowledge, and our influence to shine brightly for the risen Lord, Jesus, in every place we live or visit. Pray about the places you can plan to travel to spread the gospel.