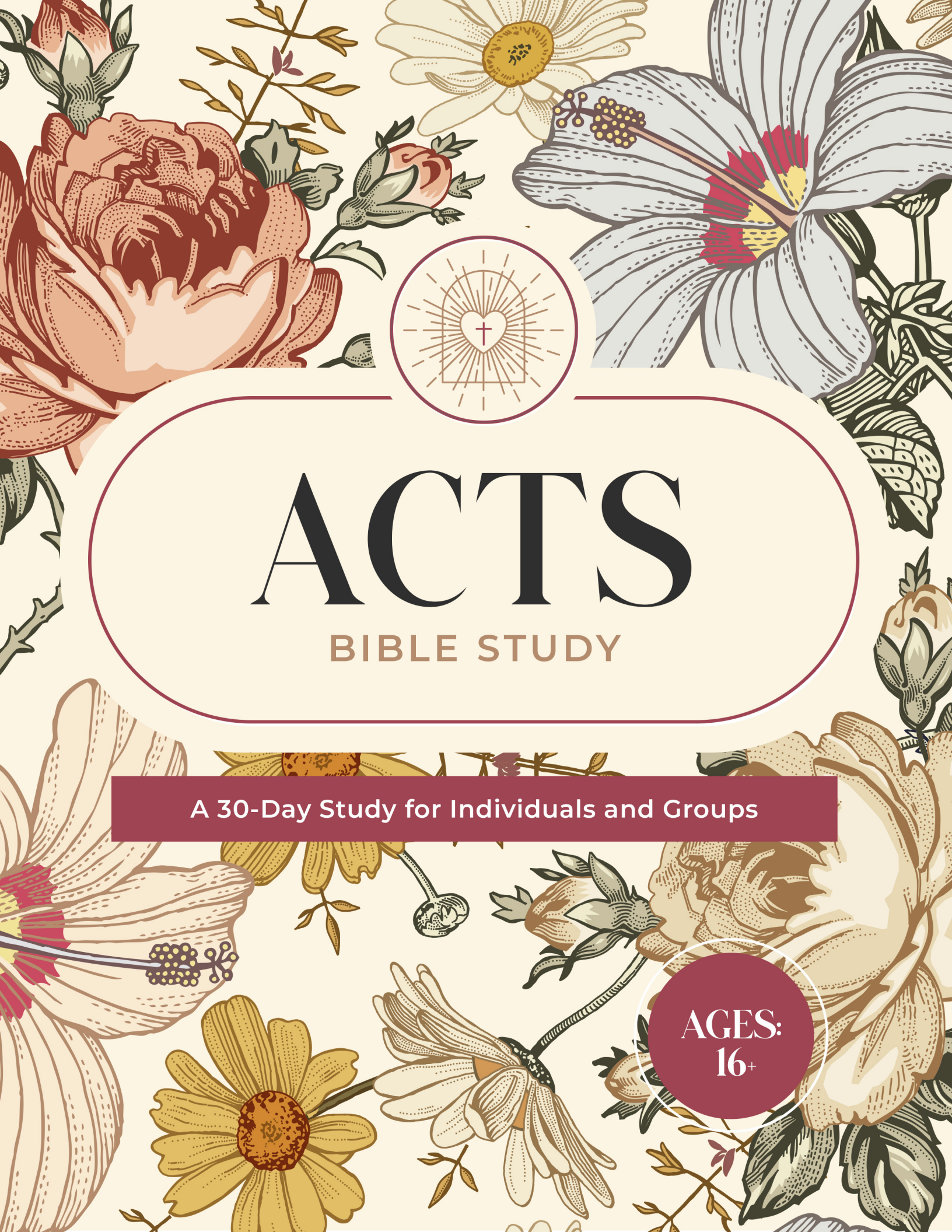




ACTS

BIBLE STUDY

A 30-Day Study for Individuals and Groups

AGES:
16+

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Acts of the Apostles, which details the establishment of the early church after the Ascension of Christ. This book is frequently cited by pastors and teachers to ensure adherence to the principles of those who collaborated with Christ. It narrates the experiences of Apostles Peter and Paul, along with their companions who journeyed with them.

The book was authored by Luke, who was a physician and accompanied Paul on his travels. Luke wrote the Book of Luke before Acts of the Apostles. In Acts, there are some instances where Luke refers to himself, suggesting he was present during Paul's most challenging situations. It's possible that Luke cared for Paul's injuries when he was beaten.

Luke ends the book abruptly, with no additional details as to why. At end of Acts, Paul resides in Rome under house arrest. Eventually, however, Paul would confront Nero and be sentenced to death, either shortly before or after Apostle Peter, but this event remains unaddressed and is not included in the narrative.

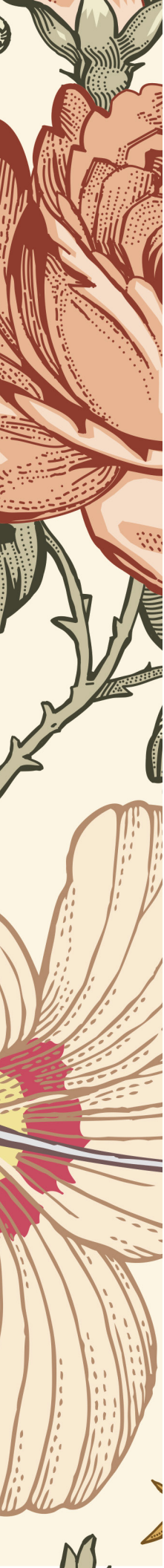
The Christian community holds a deep affection for the adventures depicted in the book, and once you immerse yourself in the text, it will likely leave a lasting impression.

WHAT'S TO BE DONE EACH DAY?

Our Table of Contents preceding this intro shows the comprehensive list of chapters that will be covered in the course. Each day of the month-long study is clearly marked so that you'll always know where to pick up.

Each day you will complete the following mini-segments:

- 1. DAILY READING:** You will generally read one chapter a session for the first few weeks except for a couple of places where the same story covers more than one chapter. The book progresses such that towards the end, there are detailed paragraphs specifically about Paul's whereabouts. Therefore, during Week Four, you will read two chapters each day.
- 2. NOTES:** These are insights provided by scholars and teachers meant to make the passage more understandable and/or useful in our lives. They are generally several paragraphs long and are not difficult, but rather, enlightening.
- 3. MOST POPULAR VERSES (MPVs):** The Bible contains over 30,000 verses. MPVs, or "Most Popular Verses," are those with ratings exceeding 3,000, indicating their widespread recognition. Acts of the Apostles contains several MPVs, reflecting its significance in Christian history. When reading multiple chapters, you'll encounter two MPVs if they appear in both chapters.

- 
- 4. SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS:** You'll be presented with five or six questions that require either filling in the blanks or answering true/false. Each verse is provided where the answer can be found. We include an answer key for these questions.
 - 5. APPLICATION QUESTIONS:** You'll answer one each day of these longer questions requiring reflection and a bit of writing. These are often an effort to get students to think of the passage in terms of how it affects them in contemporary times. These are highly subjective, so they don't come with answers.
 - 6. CROSS REFERENCES:** Here scriptures are presented on one of the subjects covered in the day's chapter. Again, students are asked to reflect on the matter.
 - 7. ANSWERS:** The Short-Answer Questions are answered here.

WHAT IF I'M USING THE BOOK IN A GROUP?

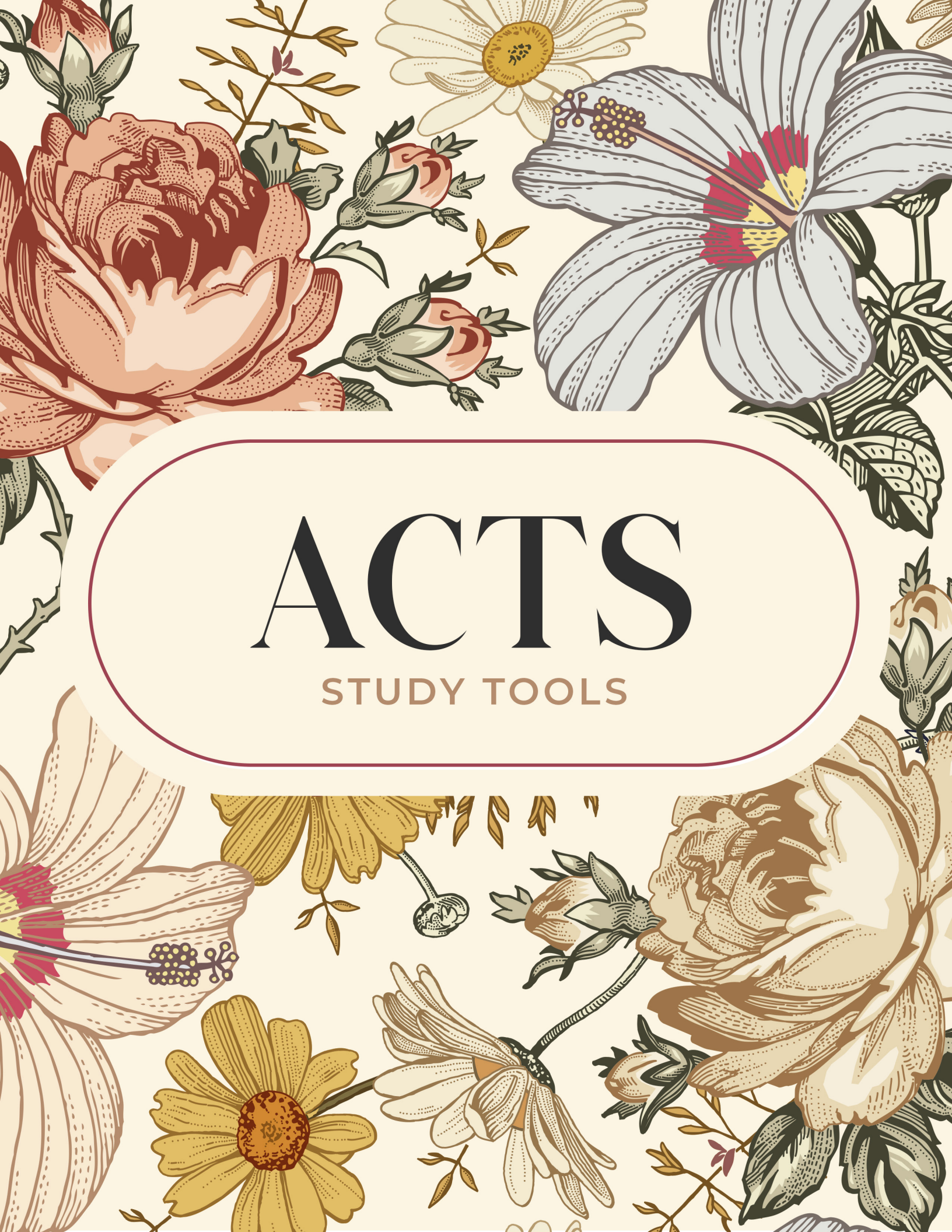
The study is flexible for both group and individual use. You can progress through one lesson per week or per day, whichever suits you. Similarly, you have the option to respond to the questions in the Application and Cross Reference sections independently or through group discussion, according to your preference.

WHAT VERSION OF THE BIBLE IS USED HERE?

We try to create studies in ways that any version of the Bible can be used. Nonetheless we gravitate to the two most popular so as to keep with common language to examine difficult constructs. This study was created using the KJV (King James Version) and the NIV (New International Version).

LET'S GO!

By dedicating a small amount of time each day for 30 study sessions, you'll gain a valuable understanding of the origins of the church, its key figures, and how its teachings remain relevant to followers even after 2,000 years.



ACTS

STUDY TOOLS



Study Tool #1:

Timeline of the Book of Acts

The Book of Acts is the last history book of the Bible. It is not a complete account of the Apostles' lives. It covers the period from the Ascension until shortly after 60 AD, focusing on Peter and Paul.

Chapters 1–12 primarily follow Peter until his belief in preaching to the Gentiles is fulfilled. Chapters 13–28 primarily follow Paul and his missionary journeys far and wide. The book ends before either man is martyred for the faith, which is why it is dated in the early 60s AD. Glance at the timeline at the top of each lesson and/or when a place is mentioned.

30 AD	The Ascension	Acts 1:1-11
30 AD	Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas Iscariot	Acts 1:12-23
30 AD	The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost	Acts 2:1-13
30 AD	Peter Heals and Preaches	Acts 3
30 AD	Peter and John Arrested and Released	Acts 4
30 AD	Deaths of Ananias and Sapphira	Acts 5:1-10
31 AD	Stephen's Speech, Stoning and Death	Acts 6-7
31 AD	Saul Persecutes the Church	Acts 8:1-3
31 AD	Philip in Samaria	Acts 4-8
31 AD	Simon the Sorcerer	Acts 8:9-13
31 AD	Philip and the Ethiopian Miracle	Acts 8:26-39
34 AD	Saul's Conversion on Road to Damascus	Acts 9:1-19
37 AD	Peter Preaches to the Gentiles	Acts 10:34- 11:18
42 AD	Barnabas Sent to Antioch	Acts 11:22
42 AD	Peter Led from Prison by the Angel	Acts 12:1-11
44 AD	Martyrdom of Apostle James	Acts 12:2
44 AD	Herod Agrippa Dies	Acts 12:21-23
48 AD	Paul's First Missionary Journey	Acts 13-14
48 AD	The Council at Jerusalem	Acts 15
49 AD	Paul's Second Missionary Journey	Acts 16-20
59 AD	Paul Returns to Jerusalem	Acts 21-23
60 AD	Paul Imprisoned in Caesarea	Acts 24
62 AD	Paul Before Festus	Acts 25:1-22
62 AD	Paul Before Agrippa	Acts 25:23-26:32
62 AD	Paul Sails for Rome	Acts 27
62 AD	The Shipwreck	Acts 27:13-20
62 AD	Paul Ashore at Malta	Acts 28:1-10
62 AD	Paul Preaches at Rome	Acts 28:23-31



Study Tool #2: Map of the Early Christian World

Here is the base map covering many of the places mentioned in the Book of Acts. You will see it often in the study, with places highlighted that are part of the current story.

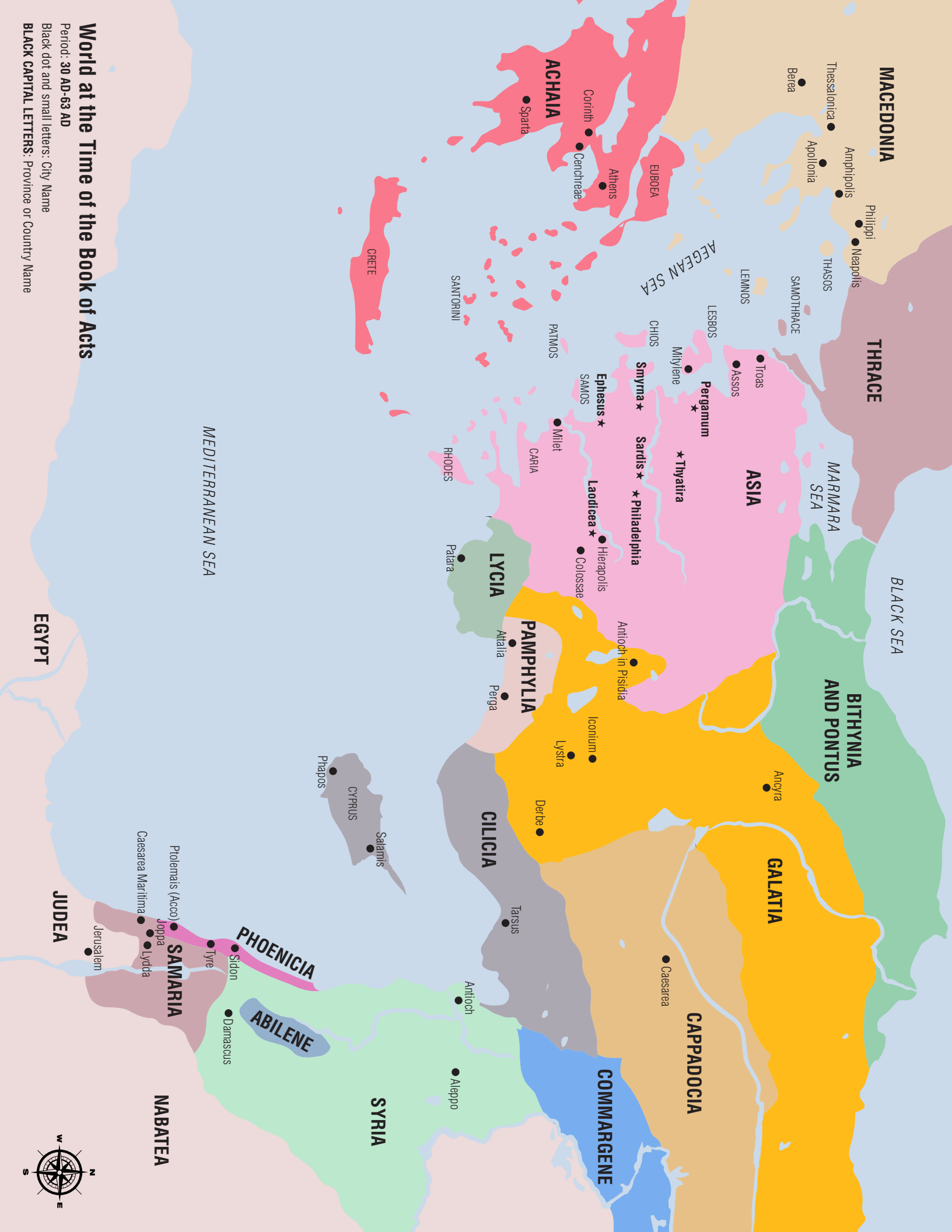
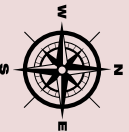
Be prepared to stop and glance until the places start to become familiar to you.

World at the Time of the Book of Acts

Period: 30 AD-63 AD

Black dot and small letters: City Name

Black capital letters: Province or Country Name





ACTS

WEEK 1

WEEK 1, DAY 1:

Welcome to the Book of Acts!

The Book of Acts begins with much anticipation. Jesus is present, giving final instructions to His disciples. They gather around Him and ask, “Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?”

Despite spending three years with Jesus, witnessing His death and resurrection, the disciples still did not fully understand. Jesus was about to leave, and His return would not be for a long time. The establishment of His Kingdom on earth was far enough in the future that we, along with our friends and loved ones, have the opportunity to experience salvation and participate in what the disciples began.

Although the Kingdom of God did not appear immediately as the disciples expected, their mission was to find those who would be part of it and to bring the Kingdom to earth gradually. You’ll learn here how they accomplished that and what our role involves today.

Here is an FAQ about the book:

1. **Where is Acts found?** Acts is the fifth book of the New Testament and the 44th book of the Bible, coming after the Gospel of John. It is the only historical book in the New Testament. The previous four books, which detail the life of Christ, are classified as Gospels.
2. **Who wrote the Book?** The Book of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles were written by Luke, who was a Gentile, historian, and physician. Both texts are addressed to Theophilus, about whom little is known. Theophilus may have been a student or friend of Luke. Luke’s purpose was to assure Theophilus that everything he had heard about Jesus was true.
3. **How did Luke know the Apostles?** Luke was already familiar with the Christian faith when he met Apostle Paul in Troas in AD 51. Troas was an ancient port city in the Troad Region, located in what is now Turkey. It is known that Luke traveled with Paul from Macedonia to Philippi, and he may have treated Paul’s injuries when Paul was beaten or stoned. In the introduction to his gospel, Luke explains that his writings were influenced by his close association with Paul and his companions.
4. **What famous stories will we read?** The most famous stories in the Acts of the Apostles are as follows:
 - a. The Ascension (Acts 1)
 - b. The Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)
 - c. Paul’s Conversion (Acts 9)
 - d. Peter’s vision and the revelation to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 10)

Being classified as a history book, Acts contains other numerous fascinating true stories.

5. How can this book be broken down?

Chapters 1 – 12 primarily follow Peter until his belief in preaching to the Gentiles is fulfilled.

Chapters 13-28 primarily follow Paul and his missionary journeys far and wide:

1. 1st Missionary Journey: Acts 13:1 - 14:28

- a. Lasting 2 years

- b. Covering approximately 1,235 miles

2. 2nd Missionary Journey: Acts 15:36 - 18:23

- a. Lasting 3 years
- b. Covering approximately 2,703+ miles

3. 3rd Missionary Journey: Acts 18:23 - 21:16

- a. Lasting 4 years
- b. Covering some 2,515 miles

- 6. Where does the book end?** The book concludes with the shipwreck of Apostle Paul and his initial period of house arrest in Rome. At this time, he awaited his trial before Emperor Nero. The narrative concludes prior to the martyrdom of Apostles Paul and Peter under Nero's rule, placing the events within the early 60s AD. Historically, Paul and Peter were believed to have been martyred in 64 AD, following Nero's attempt to scapegoat Christians for the Great Fire that ravaged the Circus Maximus.
- 7. How is the book relevant to today?** This book holds significant relevance. Most Protestants believe that prior to Martin Luther's separation from the Catholic Church, the Church had deviated considerably from the authentic Gospel. During the Lutheran movement in the 1500s AD, the Book of Acts was frequently consulted to establish a new framework for church operation. The teachings and mindset of the early Apostles have been extensively studied by contemporary Christians striving to adhere to Christ's intentions.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

Learn the book basics by paying attention to the details! You will be amazed at how you can use them in discussion if you know them.

- 01** Of the 66 books in the Bible, what number is Acts? _____
- 02** Luke may have been involved in Paul's multiple injuries in this way: _____
- 03** What is the name of the man to whom Luke was writing both the Book of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles? _____
- 04** In what chapter of Acts does Saul's conversation with Jesus and his blindness occur? _____
- 05** True/False: Because the book was written by the same author as the Book of Luke, Acts is considered a Gospel as well.
- 06** Paul's three missionary journeys are covered in these chapters: _____
- 07** Paul was waiting to be tried by this man at the end of the book: _____



WEEK 1, DAY 2:

ACTS 1-THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

READ ACTS 1

MVP

"But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit comes
on you; and you will be my
witnesses in Jerusalem, and in
all Judea and Samaria, and to
the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8

NOTES

Today begins our reading of Acts!

The Ascension occurred on the Mount of Olives, which was situated just outside Jerusalem. Again, the disciples were curious about when Jesus would restore Israel to the Jews. However, Jesus had other plans. Let's discover what Jesus intended for the disciples to focus on instead.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 1-4: This passage to the mysterious-yet-famed Theophilus, is significant because it encapsulates the essence of the entire Book of Acts and serves as its prologue.

Verse 6: The issue highlighted here concerns a misconception held by both the disciples of Jesus in the past and some Christians today. They mistakenly believed that the Messiah's arrival would grant them worldly power and status, positioning them as prominent figures under the Messiah's reign, perhaps even bringing them wealth and admiration. However, Jesus clarified that His kingdom does not operate within earthly power dynamics (John 18:36). Instead, believers may often be viewed as foolish or irrelevant in this world. Presently, some Christians seek influence through political participation and legislative actions, echoing the same misguided pursuit of power over spiritual values seen in the past.

Verse 8 remains Jesus' central message for His followers: to prioritize seeking guidance from God, directing our paths and actions each day. Pursuing alternative sources of power detracts from our spiritual journey with Christ. True power, the kind we should seek, often contradicts worldly notions and requires humility. Throughout history, God has emphasized the importance of humility to receive His blessings, rather than attempting to attain power for ourselves.

Verses 12-23 discuss the disciples employing a lottery to seek God's guidance through a precise sign. These individuals resorted to drawing straws for a matter of utmost importance, guided by the Holy Spirit's influence (present with them but not yet within them). Presently, many Christians discourage seeking signs from God. One rationale is that it frequently leads to subjective disappointment, and may leave us puzzled and questioning, for instance, "I requested a sign from God, hoping for a red bird. Does this orange bird qualify?"

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01** Jesus' disciples were told to wait in this place for the Holy Spirit: _____ (v. 4)
- 02** Jesus told them that they would be baptized by _____ within a few days. (v. 5)
- 03** The disciples asked Jesus if He would restore the kingdom of _____ at that time. (v. 6)
- 04** The disciples watched Jesus be taken up into a _____. (v. 9)
- 05** This man was chosen to replace Judas as the twelfth apostle: _____ (v. 26)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells His disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses..." How have you personally experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in your life, and in what ways has it empowered you to be a witness for Christ?



Cross References:

#1: Genesis 18:1-19 Here is another place where angels are referred to as "men." How do the actions and words of the "men" suggest that they are more than just ordinary humans? What do these passages suggest about the nature of angels and their ability to interact with humans?

#2: Matthew 24: People today, especially in Evangelical circles, are quite fixated on the Second Coming. What are the best ways we can show God that we are ready and looking forward to His coming?



WEEK 1, DAY 3:

ACTS 2-THE DAY OF PENTECOST

READ ACTS 2

MVP

"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

Acts 2:38

NOTES

The day of Pentecost, recognized as the first significant event in the early Church, provides us with many insights into what is important to the Lord, and consequently, what should be important to us.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 2-4 describe the first instance of believers speaking in tongues. They were about to convey a message to a gathering of Jews from various parts of the known world. Today, we have the convenience of using online translators to understand and communicate in pretty much any language. If the disciples had not been empowered to speak in different languages, the message of Jesus' death and resurrection would not have spread as rapidly and widely as it did.

Verses 5-11 mention places that are not found on modern maps and are not related to the travels of Peter or Paul in Acts. However, these places are still noteworthy: Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and Mesopotamia were located further east, near the regions of present-day Iraq and Iran.

Verses 17-21 contain a well-known prophecy frequently cited today, though one important aspect is often overlooked. Peter, despite being an uneducated man, quotes Old Testament prophecies three times in his first sermon, guided by the Holy Spirit. Many people today share that after becoming Christians, they find the Bible much more engaging and can quote it more extensively than any other book they have read.

Verse 27 shifts its focus from David to Christ, and verse 28 might apply to both. These subtleties in the Old Testament that refer to Christ become clearer with the help of the Holy Spirit. Frequently pray to God to use the gift of the Spirit to understand parts of the scriptures that others might find obscure or confusing.

Verse 37 shows that the listeners were deeply moved, demonstrating the presence of the Holy Spirit. In a different context, these words might not have had any impact. The main lesson is to seek guidance from the Holy Spirit on what to say to convince, encourage, and inspire others.

Verses 42-47 highlight what remains significant to God in the Christian life and what should be important to us. Reflect on each aspect, as you will later be asked how your life compares to these early enthusiastic believers.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 The Holy Spirit came with the sound of this kind of wind: _____. (v. 2)
- 02 The Holy Spirit appeared over the disciples as tongues made of this substance: _____. (v. 3)
- 03 When the Spirit appeared, the disciples began speaking in different _____. (v. 4)
- 04 The crowd accused the disciples of having drunk too much _____ instead of being influenced by the Holy Spirit. (v. 13)
- 05 Those who accepted Peter's message were _____. (v. 41)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

The early believers in Acts 2 were characterized by their devotion to teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer, generosity, and communal living. Reflecting on your own life and the life of your church community, how can you make your life more congruent with the early believers?



Cross References:

#1: Hebrews 10:25 concerns fellowship and its importance. Reflecting on these passages, what significance do you think community and fellowship held for the early Christians? Furthermore, how can we apply this understanding to our own lives and church communities today?

#2: Isaiah 9:7 contains a significant prophecy concerning King David's connection to the Messiah. This prophecy finds its fulfillment documented in Matthew 1:1-11, detailing the lineage from Abraham and David to Jesus. What aspect of the prophecy from Isaiah remains to be fulfilled?



WEEK 1, DAY 4:

ACTS 3-A FANTASTIC HEALING STORY

READ ACTS 3

MVP

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”

Acts 3:19

NOTES

Today we focus on Acts chapter 3, which contains compelling examples of God’s power and the unwavering faith of the early disciples. Here, we witness a beggar being miraculously healed at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. Peter and John, empowered by the Holy Spirit, confidently declare the name of Jesus Christ, leading to a significant change in the life of the man who had been unable to walk since birth. Through this miraculous event, we are reminded of the limitless power of God to bring about healing and restoration, as well as the transformative impact of encountering Jesus Christ in our own lives.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 1-10 narrate a significant miracle, one familiar to Jesus’ disciples, though they hadn’t experienced such moments themselves yet. Their adept handling of it indicates the Holy Spirit’s work in cultivating humility alongside extraordinary feats.

Verses 6-8 merit special attention because they depict moments when God is poised to exceed our expectations. The crippled man wasn’t anticipating this, and neither should we solely focus on “what God can do for us.” Instead, our focus should be on what we can do for Him, which might lead to our own benefit.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01** A man who was carried into the temple had been lame since this time:
_____. (v. 2)
- 02** The man was carried to the temple gate that is known by this name:
_____. (v. 2)
- 03** The healed man began doing these two things in joy and praise: _____
and _____ (v. 8)
- 04** Peter explained to the amazed crowd that they should do this: _____ (v. 19)
- 05** Peter said that these important people wrote about Jesus and restoration:
_____. (v. 21)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 3, we see Peter and John encountering a man who was unable to walk from birth. Through the power of God, the man was not only healed but leaped up, stood, and began to walk. Reflecting on this miraculous event, consider a time in your life when you sought God's intervention or guidance in a situation. Did God provide an unexpected answer or blessing that surpassed your expectations? How did this experience deepen your trust and faith in God's providence and power?



Cross References:

#1: Ephesians 3:20-21 discusses the significant blessings attainable through following God's will. Why do you believe that some individuals do not receive a positive response to their prayers?

#2: James 4:2-3 offers some insight into the inquiry raised in the initial cross reference. What are the desires you possess but haven't sought God's fulfillment for, recognizing that they stem from worldly impulses rather than spiritual guidance?



WEEK 1, DAY 5: ACTS 4-PETER & JOHN

READ ACTS 4

MVP

“Salvation is found in no
one else, for there is no
other name given under
heaven by which we must
be saved.”

Acts 4:12

NOTES

In Acts 4, we dive into a crucial moment for the early Christian community, where they clash with powerful religious leaders like Caiaphas and Annas. These leaders are deeply rooted in tradition and authority, while the Christians are spreading a new message of hope. It's a chapter that shows us the tension between old ways and new beliefs, and how standing up for what's right isn't always easy. Let's witness the disciples' newly found faith and courage as they face this challenge.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 2-4: The Sadducees were troubled by Peter and John's assertion of the resurrection because they themselves did not believe in it. Their discomfort led them to have the two Apostles arrested and detained overnight.

Verses 5-7 contains the information referenced in today's introduction. It's remarkable to observe Peter's eloquent and courageous response to the Sadducees, considering his previous denial of the Lord just over one month before. His reply in **verses 8-12** illustrates the strengthening power of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 17 is surprising because it reveals that these leaders were both deceitful and violent. Their main priority here is devising another falsehood to hide the truth.

Verse 19 is frequently overlooked by Christians nowadays, especially when emphasizing the importance of respecting whoever is elected politically. Here, Peter and John are informing those responsible for Christ's death that they cannot comply with their orders because doing so would lead many others to stumble or remain unaware. As Christians, we share the same responsibility and obligation for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Review **verses 27 and 28**. In the reformed church, influenced by Martin Luther, the doctrine of substitutional atonement is significant. It asserts that Jesus took the punishment for our sins on the cross, serving as our substitute. While this doctrine holds true, it's crucial to maintain balance and acknowledge the responsibility of those who commit evil deeds. God didn't intervene to prevent these actions but instead turned them into something good. Forgetting our own wrongdoing can lead to a skewed perception of God as a harsh figure sending us a bill for our sins.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01** The priests and Sadducees were angry that Peter and John were preaching about this miracle of Jesus: _____. (v. 2)
- 02** Many new believers converted, their number about _____. (v. 4)
- 03** The priests told Peter and Paul that they were forbidden to _____ or _____ in the name of Jesus. (v. 18)
- 04** Despite the threats, the believers prayed to speak God's word with great _____. (v. 29)
- 05** The new believers did this with all their possessions and money: _____. (v. 32)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Considering the communal living described in Acts 4, how might this model of sharing possessions challenge our individualistic culture today? What steps can we take to cultivate a spirit of generosity and communal living in our own lives and communities?

Cross References:



#1: 1 Corinthians 1:10: This is another verse that speaks of a very important virtue in a growing church. What is it, and how does your church hold up in the cultivating of it?

#2: Ephesians 4:1-6: This passage also reinforces the conduct of believers in Acts, focusing more on an individual level rather than a collective one. Compile a list of the characteristics Paul mentions here that believers ought to possess. How can you personally utilize this list to improve your own journey?



WEEK 1, DAY 6:

WEEK 1 IN REVIEW

Look back over the material for each day while trying to answer the subjective questions below.

Day 1

Look through the introductory material again and make a list of things you learned about Acts and its author Luke that you didn't know before.

Day 2

In Acts 1:4-5, Jesus instructs His disciples not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the Holy Spirit. Reflecting on this period of waiting, have you experienced times in your life when you had to wait for God's timing or guidance? How did you handle that season of waiting, and what lessons did you learn from it?

Day 3

In Acts 2, we witness the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Reflecting on this event, consider how the presence and power of the Holy Spirit transformed the early church. How does this event relate to our understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in the church today? How can we actively seek and experience the Holy Spirit's empowerment in our personal lives and in our communities of faith?

Day 4

In Acts 3, we see Peter delivering a powerful sermon in the aftermath of the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. Reflecting on Peter's message to the people, why do you think he emphasizes the role of repentance in their response to Jesus Christ? Consider how this call to repentance applies to our lives today and the significance of turning away from sin and turning towards God.

Day 5

In Acts 4, Peter and John display great boldness in proclaiming the gospel despite facing opposition from religious leaders. Reflecting on this passage, how can we cultivate a similar boldness in our own lives when sharing our faith, especially in the face of opposition or skepticism? How does our trust in God's sovereignty and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit influence our courage to speak up for the truth?



Fill-in-the-Blank Answers

FROM DAY 1

1. 44
2. He may have tended to Paul's wounds
3. Theophilus
4. Chapter 9
5. False (It is considered the only history book in the New Testament)
6. Chapters 13-21
7. Emperor Nero

FROM DAY 5

1. Resurrection of/from the dead
2. Five thousand
3. Speak, Teach
4. Boldness
5. Shared everything or Had all things in common

FROM DAY 2

1. Jerusalem
2. Holy Ghost/Holy Spirit
3. Israel
4. Cloud
5. Matthias

FROM DAY 3

1. Violent/Rushing mighty
2. Fire
3. Tongues
4. Wine
5. Baptized

FROM DAY 4

1. Birth/In his mother's womb
2. Beautiful
3. Walking and Leaping/Jumping
4. Repent
5. Prophets



ACTS

WEEK 2

WEEK 2, DAY 1:

ACTS 5-ANANIAS & SAPPHIRA; APOSTLES FLOGGED

READ ACTS 5

MVP

“Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?’”

Acts 5:3

NOTES

Today we encounter a significant event involving Ananias and Sapphira. Their story highlights the importance of honesty and integrity within the community of believers. Let’s explore this passage together, learning valuable lessons about the consequences of deceit and the importance of living authentically in our faith journey.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 1-11 describe the deaths of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. Similar to narratives in the Old Testament, it may be unsettling to witness God permitting individuals to die for what appears to be a minor transgression. These deaths serve as an exemplary punishment, often implemented during the establishment of a new kingdom or covenant to highlight the importance of taking actions seriously. Another instance of this is evident in the Cross References.

A note on **verse 4**: It’s important to understand the nature of the couple’s wrongdoing. Some leaders, with manipulative intentions, misrepresented it as a failure to give all their money to the church. However, neither scenario—giving all their money nor withholding it—is accurate. The problem lies in that Ananias and Sapphira lied about how much they gave. Their sin wasn’t just about the money; it was about being dishonest and deceitful within the early Christian community. They broke trust and showed they weren’t truly committed to God and the church. As a result, they faced serious consequences.

Verses 17-42 depict the Sanhedrin facing significant embarrassment as their attempts to silence the apostles about Jesus fail repeatedly. **Verse 29**, “We must obey God rather than men,” is notable. We should be prepared to invoke this verse (with careful consideration) when confronted by any government that demands we act against God’s will.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01** Ananias sold a piece of property but kept back _____ of the price for himself. (v. 2)
- 02** When Peter confronted Ananias, Peter asked him how Satan had filled his heart to lie to the _____. (v. 3)
- 03** When Ananias heard Peter's words, he _____. (v. 5)
- 04** People brought those who were sick and afflicted with unclean spirit to Jerusalem so they could be _____. (v. 16)
- 05** Peter and the other apostles respond to the high priest's orders not to teach in Jesus' name, asserting, "We ought to obey God rather than _____." (v. 29)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 5:17-42, Peter and the apostles boldly stand before the religious leaders and declare their commitment to obey God rather than men, despite the threat of persecution. Reflect on a time when you faced pressure to compromise your beliefs. How did you respond and what can you learn from Peter's example?



Cross References:

#1: 1 Chronicles 13:10: This is another example of exemplary punishment, when Uzzah touched the Ark of the Covenant, sparking God's anger and killing him. How does this scripture reflect the seriousness with which God views sin, especially in relation to His holiness and commands?

#2: Matthew 5:4: Among Christ's most famous words are these. How can we apply the principle of mourning over sin in our own lives and church community to foster a culture of honesty and spiritual growth?



WEEK 2, DAY 2:

ACTS 6-7-THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN

READ ACTS 6-7

MVP

**"You stiff-necked people!
Your hearts and ears
are still uncircumcised.
You are just like your
ancestors: You always
resist the Holy Spirit!"**

Acts 7:51

NOTES

In Acts 6-7, we witness a significant episode in the early Christian church through the story of Stephen. Chosen as one of the first deacons, Stephen's powerful preaching and miracles drew opposition from religious leaders. His bold testimony before the Sanhedrin, characterized by unwavering faith, ultimately led to his martyrdom. Stephen's death marked a crucial moment for the early church, highlighting both the cost of discipleship and the spread of the gospel beyond Jerusalem.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 6:1-2 have sometimes been misinterpreted to suggest that serving others without sharing the gospel is ineffective. However, not everyone has the gift of evangelism. It is important to note that the apostles were already serving others, understanding that service is a vital part of being a good witness, regardless of evangelism.

A note to look on your map to see where the places are that are discussed in **verse 6:9**. You can see ASIA and CILICIA, near the center of the map in caps as they are provinces. Cyrene and Alexandria will not be seen, though both were in northern Africa on the Mediterranean Sea (near EGYPT).

Verses 6:12-15 illustrate a serious offense that God cannot overlook: causing harm to someone without justification. Stephen's angelic appearance indicates God's support for him, as God consistently stands with those who are unjustly treated.

Chapter 7:1-53 presents a compelling and clearly inspired defense of Stephen and the actions of the other apostles. It effectively summarizes the history of the Old Testament in just one page. Remember to refer back to this chapter in the future, as it serves as a concise summary when required.

Stephen's martyrdom is described in **7:54-60**. It's uncertain whether Stephen or other martyrs experienced intense pain, or if God removed them before things became unbearable. What's evident is that God promptly revealed Himself to Stephen by opening the heavens to welcome him. This event signifies the first Christian martyrdom.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01** This group of needy people were being overlooked in food distribution:
_____ (6:1)
- 02** Stephen was said to be a man full of _____ and the Holy Spirit. (6:5)
- 03** Stephen was falsely accused of this crime: _____ (6:11)
- 04** Stephen calls the Scribes and Pharisees _____ and with hearts and ears uncircumcised. (7:51)
- 05** As Stephen was dying, he directed his prayer to this person: _____ (7:59)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 6-7, Stephen's speech before the Sanhedrin is a powerful retelling of Israel's history, highlighting God's faithfulness despite human rebellion. How does Stephen's approach to defending the faith through recounting history challenge us to deepen our understanding of Scripture and its relevance to our lives today?



Cross References:

#1: Hebrews 11:36-40: This passage speaks of those who faced trials, persecution, and martyrdom for their faith, yet did not receive what was promised in earthly terms. How can we reconcile the idea enduring faith in the face of suffering with our expectations of blessings and rewards in this life?

#2: Matthew 14:1-12: Here the death of John the Baptist is mentioned, as he is killed by Herod. Consider the reaction of Herod, the reason behind the executions, and the legacy John left behind. How can his example inspire us in our own faith and commitment to proclaiming the truth?



WEEK 2, DAY 3:

ACTS 8-THE SORCERER & THE ETHIOPIAN

READ ACTS 8

MVP

"Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Go south to the road - the desert road - that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.'"

Acts 8:26

NOTES

In Acts 8, we see the gospel spreading outside Jerusalem. Philip, a follower of Jesus, goes to Samaria, where he faces challenges but also sees many people embrace the message. This chapter shows us how God's message spreads and changes lives, teaching us important lessons along the way. Let's explore Acts 8 together and learn from its stories.

CHAPTER STUDY

In **Verses 1-2** we witness challenges emerging for the early church. They faced the loss of a cherished member and were forced to disperse. This account highlights that even in times of disillusionment, God remains actively involved.

Verses 9-11 illustrate the susceptibility to deception. However, God did not abandon these individuals for this reason; otherwise, **verses 12-13** wouldn't have followed. In a scenario where a nation is divided and the church is entangled, with some believers considering others heretical, it's beneficial to acknowledge our shared experiences of being misled. God has consistently guided us back to the right path, a reality that persists today.

Verses 18-25 convey a similar message. Nowadays, many might hesitate at Simon's request to purchase spiritual abilities. However, we shouldn't overlook that he thought this might negatively impact his business (as others did later in Acts). He also demonstrated humility by apologizing when corrected. This isn't something everyone would do.

Verse 34 illustrates a common question encountered when reading the Prophets. Just as God carefully answered the eunuch's questions, He remains faithful to do so for us as well.

(A note to look on your map to see where Philip was when all of this happened and where Caesarea is in the province of CAPADOCIA).

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01** This was a time of great _____ or hardship against the church. (v. 1)
- 02** A man named _____ was determined to destroy the church. (v. 3)
- 03** As Philip headed south, he met a sorcerer named _____, and saved and baptized him. (v. 13)
- 04** Philip also helped an Ethiopian man understand this important prophet:
_____. (v. 28)
- 05** The Ethiopian eunuch went on his way doing this after he was baptized:
_____. (v. 39)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 8, we see Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch, leading to his baptism. Reflecting on this narrative, how does Philip's obedience to the Holy Spirit's guidance inspire us in our own lives? How can we cultivate a deeper sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives?



Cross References:

#1: Isaiah 53: This is the passage the Ethiopian was thought to have been reading, and it is all about Jesus Christ. What aspects of this chapter resonate most deeply with you, and why? How does this chapter deepen your understanding of Jesus Christ and His sacrificial love for humanity?

#2: Psalm 51: This psalm contains David's repentant prayer after he recognizes his sin. Consider the importance of genuine repentance, humility, and reliance on God's mercy. Reflect on both Simon's mistake and David's example, and consider how they speak to our own approach to seeking God's grace and forgiveness.



WEEK 2, DAY 4:

ACTS 9-CONVERSION OF SAUL, DORCAS ARISES

READ ACTS 9

MVP

“In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor.”

Acts 9:36

NOTES

Today we'll focus on the remarkable conversion of Saul, later known as the Apostle Paul, whose encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus transforms his life and sets the stage for his profound impact on spreading the gospel. Additionally, we'll explore the touching story of Dorcas, whose life and miraculous restoration to life by Peter underscore the power of faith and compassion within the Christian community.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 1-15: At this juncture, the full extent of Saul's actions against the church remains unclear, except for his involvement in the stoning of Stephen, the first martyr. However, Paul later elaborates on his crimes in Acts 26:9-11, which included voting for the execution of disciples—a detail many may not be aware of.

Verse 16 presents a challenging scenario. However, Saul's divine calling—and the inevitable suffering that accompanies it—shows God's sovereignty in shaping Saul's ministry and highlighting the hardship of Christian life. This verse underscores that suffering for Christ's sake is not in vain but serves a greater purpose in advancing the gospel. It urges believers to embrace suffering as part of their discipleship, trusting in God's plan and the promise of future glory despite present challenges.

In **verses 26-30** Saul, who later becomes Paul, faces skepticism from fellow believers in Jerusalem because of his past as a persecutor of Christians. This passage shows that even after a change of heart, our past actions can still affect how others see us. It teaches us the importance of patience and humility as we earn back trust and reconcile with those we may have hurt in the past.

Look at your map. Lydda and Joppa were near Jerusalem. Joppa is well-known today because Tel Aviv was founded on its outskirts.

Verse 36: Don't miss that the word 'disciple' is used here to describe the woman Tabitha (aka Dorcas). Can women be disciples? Absolutely! Dorcas is a great example due to her selfless service to others, particularly the widows in her community. She devoted herself to good works and touched the lives of many—a powerful reminder that discipleship is not merely about belief, but also about actively living out one's faith through acts of love and compassion towards others.

Verse 42 illustrates how Dorcas' restoration serves as a testament to God's ability to bring forth life from death, inspiring believers to trust in His sovereignty and to continue spreading His message of hope and redemption. This event not only emphasizes the authority granted to the apostles but also underscores the importance of faith and community in the early Christian church. It's worth noting that throughout Jewish and Christian history, miracles were infrequent—similar to today. However, significant periods of miraculous events occurred during the Exodus (around 1400s BC), the era of prophets Elijah and Elisha (around 800s BC), and the time of Christ.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 On the road to Damascus, Saul saw a _____ from heaven. (v. 3)
- 02 A voice said "Saul, Saul, why _____ me?" (v. 4)
- 03 Saul was blinded for this number of days: _____ (v. 9)
- 04 Ananias was told to go to the house of this man to find Saul: _____ (v. 11)
- 05 Saul was chosen to take the gospel to this group of people: _____ (v. 15)
- 06 Saul developed great faith and proclaimed Jesus as the _____ of God. (v. 20)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Acts 9 describes Saul's dramatic encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, leading to his conversion. Known for persecuting Christians, Saul becomes Paul, a devoted follower of Christ and a significant figure in spreading the gospel. Reflecting on this transformation, how does this story challenge your understanding of personal transformation and God's ability to use anyone for His purposes?

Cross References:



#1: Acts 22:1-5 is another passage where Paul confesses to persecuting Christians. He also tells of his background and education (v. 3 & 4.) What in Paul's education would have given him great credibility as an apostle?

#2: Galatians 1:13-14 is another instance where Paul is sharing his credentials with the believers from Galatia. Consider why God might allow some notable Christians to commit serious wrongdoings before their conversion. What do you think could be some reasons for this?



WEEK 2, DAY 5

ACTS 10 & 11-PETER'S VISION EXPANDS

READ ACTS 10-11

MVP

"...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him."

Acts 10:38

NOTES

Chapter 11 is largely a retelling of Chapter 10 up until verse 11:19, which is why it is included in today's reading.

In these readings, we witness a pivotal moment in the early Christian church. These chapters detail the groundbreaking events of Peter's vision and the conversion of Cornelius, a Gentile centurion. This narrative underscores the inclusive nature of the gospel, highlighting God's plan for salvation to extend beyond Jewish boundaries, breaking down long-standing barriers and uniting believers from diverse backgrounds into one faith community.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verse 10:4 is relevant to us today because we often hear the gospel emphasized without the importance of works, focusing instead on grace. However, it is incorrect to say that works have no rewards. Their rewards can be significant, and our joy grows as we strive to do work that will "be remembered by God."

Verses 10:12-15: In Peter's vision, he resists eating various animals based on the Jewish dietary laws from Leviticus 11 that distinguish clean from unclean animals. Certain animals were considered unclean and therefore unfit for consumption because they did not meet specific criteria. Eating only clean animals was considered a sign of righteousness and obedience to God's commandments, reflecting holiness and separation from Gentile practices.

Peter's instructions and vision, repeated three times, symbolize a profound shift in the early Christian understanding of purity and inclusion. It heralded the acceptance of Gentiles into the Christian community, emphasizing that God's salvation is available to all.

Verses 10:42-43 encapsulates the essence of Christian faith and mission, emphasizing Jesus Christ as the ultimate judge and Savior. Peter declares that Jesus has been appointed by God to judge the living and the dead, affirming His divine authority. Importantly, Peter underscores the centrality of Jesus in salvation, proclaiming that through Him, all who believe receive forgiveness

CHAPTER STUDY

of sins. This passage resonates deeply with the universal message of redemption, inviting all people—irrespective of background or status—to find reconciliation with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Whether or not we were taught to believe that the Holy Spirit is received at the time of salvation or independently of it, we should be aware that there is something distinctive about the pouring out of the Holy Spirit **10:45-47**. Just as the Gentiles were visibly marked by the Holy Spirit's presence, so too should our faith be evident for all to see. Our lives should reflect the transformative power of God, drawing attention to His grace and love.

A GEOGRAPHY NOTE

There are two Antiochs discussed in the Book of Acts. This one in verses 25-30 is Syrian Antioch, located between Aleppo to the south and Tarsus to the north (Tarsus is where Paul was trained). The other is Pisidian Antioch, farther north and west in Asia Minor. As Acts is not always clear on which is being discussed, clarity will be provided in the notes.

BIBLE DIRECTIONS

Keep in mind that the Bible's use of "up" and "down" in geographical descriptions often reflects local topography rather than cardinal directions, with "up" denoting higher elevations and "down" lower ones. For instance, in Verse 11:27, the disciples are said to have traveled "down from Jerusalem to Syrian Antioch," even though they were actually journeying north or "up" according to contemporary maps.

These terms also carry metaphorical and cultural meanings, symbolizing honor, power, humility, and submission. Translators must navigate linguistic nuances, as the original Hebrew and Greek texts use words that may not directly correspond to north and south. Moreover, "up" and "down" frequently hold spiritual significance, representing proximity to or distance from God and heavenly realms. Overall, these terms may reflect ancient perspectives, cultural conventions, and symbolic meanings embedded in biblical narratives.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01** Peter had a vision of a _____ being lowered to the earth covered in different kinds of animals. (10:11)
- 02** In his vision, God told Peter to do this to the animals: _____ (10:13)
- 03** Peter was told not to call anything that God made clean by this term: _____ (10:15)
- 04** The name of the man who went to Tarsus to look for Saul: _____ (11:25)
- 05** The tragedy that was predicted by Agabus was this: _____ (11:28)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In verse 10:4 we read about Cornelius, a devout centurion who offered prayers and gifts to God. Reflecting on Cornelius' example, how can we incorporate the practice of offering our prayers and gifts to God into our daily lives? What are some ways we can demonstrate our devotion to God through our offerings, both in terms of material gifts and the offering of our time and talents?



Cross References:

#1: Matthew 5:16 The cross references for today emphasize the importance of believers focusing on their actions. These actions bring joy to the giver, receiver, and the Lord. Many believers find it challenging to allocate time in their busy schedules for service. Take a moment to consider your schedule and identify opportunities to dedicate time to helping others.

#2: Matthew 25:34-45 is a well-known passage where the Lord emphasizes the significance of one's actions. Often when you begin to view helping others as a joy and a privilege, your actions will reflect this mindset, leading to more opportunities. Take a moment to consider how this transformation has occurred in your own life, or in the lives of those you know, or how it could happen given more commitment.



WEEK 2, DAY 6:

WEEK 2 IN REVIEW

Look back over the material for each day while trying to answer the subjective questions below.

Day 1

In Acts 5, we see the story of Ananias and Sapphira, who faced severe consequences for lying to the apostles and to God. What lessons can we learn from their story about the importance of honesty and integrity in our relationship with God and others?

Day 2

In Acts 6:12-15, we see the reaction of some individuals to Stephen's preaching. How did they respond to his words and what does their reaction reveal about the challenges early Christians faced in spreading the gospel message? How might we apply this lesson to our own lives and interactions with those who may oppose or challenge our beliefs?

Day 3

In Acts 8, Simon wanted the power of the Holy Spirit for his own gain. How can we avoid using spiritual gifts selfishly and instead use them to help others? Can you think of a time when you were tempted to use your gifts for personal gain? How did you handle it?

Day 4

Beyond Saul's transformation, Ananias' obedience often goes unnoticed. How does his trust in God, despite initial doubts, inspire our faith journeys? How does Ananias' story remind us to avoid judging others prematurely?

Day 5

Reflecting on Acts 10-11, consider the transformation Peter undergoes in his understanding of God's inclusive love for all people. How does this narrative challenge your own perceptions of who is included in God's family? What steps can you take to embrace a broader understanding of God's love and acceptance in your own life and community?



Fill-in-the-Blank Answers

FROM DAY 1

1. Part
2. Holy Spirit
3. Died/Gave up the ghost
4. Healed
5. Human Beings/Men

FROM DAY 5

1. Sheet/Vessel
2. Kill and eat them
3. Impure/Common
4. Barnabus
5. Famine/Dearth

FROM DAY 2

1. Widows
2. Faith
3. Blasphemy
4. Stiff-necked
5. Lord Jesus

FROM DAY 3

1. Persecution
2. Saul
3. Simon
4. Isaiah/Esaias
5. Rejoicing

FROM DAY 4

1. Light
2. Do you persecute/Persecutest thou
3. Three
4. Judas
5. Gentiles
6. Son



ACTS

WEEK 3

WEEK 3, DAY 1:

ACTS 12-MARTYRDOM OF JAMES; PETER RESCUED

READ ACTS 12

MVP

–“When she recognized Peter’s voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, ‘Peter is at the door!’”

Acts 12:14

NOTES

Here we delve into a chapter of both miraculous deliverance and heartbreaking loss within the early Christian community. As Peter miraculously escapes prison, we witness the power of prayer and divine intervention in the face of persecution.

Yet, amid these triumphs, the chapter also recounts the martyrdom of James, a sobering reminder of the sacrifices made for the faith.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verse 2: King Herod had James, one of Jesus’ followers, put to death by a sword. This means James was beheaded because of his faith. Hence James died in the same fashion as John the Baptist.

This sacrifice reminds us of the persecution endured by believers throughout history and highlights the losses experienced for the sake of spreading the message of Christ. However, it also underscores the unwavering faith and commitment of the early disciples to their mission, inspiring Christians today to stand firm in their faith regardless of the opposition they may face.

In **verses 3-19** we witness a vivid portrayal of the power of prayer amidst persecution. King Herod arrests Peter, planning to harm him. But the church prays earnestly for Peter’s safety. God sends an angel to rescue Peter from prison. This emphasizes God’s faithfulness in answering prayers, even in the face of seeming insurmountable obstacles and underscores the strength found in united faith when His people pray together.

Verses 19-24 cover the death and downfall of Herod, a ruler whose pride blinds him to divine authority. Seeking the people’s favor, he metes out cruel judgment against the apostle Peter, only to face divine retribution himself. As Herod basks in the adulation of his subjects, an angel of the Lord strikes him down, and he is consumed by worms and dies. This passage serves as a stark reminder of the fleeting nature of earthly power and the inevitability of divine justice.

The term “Herod” served as title for rulers during the Herodian dynasty, a powerful family closely associated with the Roman Empire who ruled various regions in New Testament times. Six Herods are mentioned in the Bible and were largely corrupt leaders:

CHAPTER STUDY

1. **Herod the Great**, featured in the Christmas story, attempted to deceive the Magi and ordered the massacre of infants in Bethlehem (Matthew 2).
2. His son, **Herod Archelaus**, appears briefly in Matthew 2:22, succeeding his father and allowing Mary and Joseph to return from Egypt, but he was known for even greater cruelty.
3. **Herod Antipas**, Archelaus' brother, was rebuked by John the Baptist for marrying his brother Philip's wife and later ordered John's execution. Jesus referred to him as "that fox" (Luke 13:31-32).
4. **Herod Philip**, another brother, is mentioned once without any negative commentary.
5. Not mentioned in this chapter but historically known, **Herod Agrippa I** killed James and attempted to execute Peter before dying from an intestinal disease. His grandfather, Herod the Great, also died from an infestation—in his case, of maggots.
6. The last **Herod, Agrippa II**, is the only one with a positive mention when he expressed interest in Christianity during Paul's testimony.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 James, who was killed by King Herod, was the brother of _____.(v. 2)
- 02 Peter was arrested and being kept in _____ before being put on trial. (v. 5)
- 03 Peter went to this woman's house after being rescued: _____ (v. 12)
- 04 When people declared Herod's voice was the voice of a _____, he was immediately struck down. (v. 22)
- 05 Which apostle did Barnabas and Saul take with them on their mission? _____ (v. 25)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 12, we read about Herod's persecution of the early Christians, including his imprisonment of Peter and the execution of James. What do you think motivated Herod to target the followers of Jesus in such a violent manner? How does Herod illustrate the clash between worldly power and God's power, and what lessons can we learn from this dynamic?

Cross References:

#1: Matthew 14:1-12 recounts the account of Herod Antipas, who was responsible for the death of John the Baptist. In this passage, whose behavior do you think is most egregious; Herod's, his wife's, or his stepdaughter's?

#2: Romans 8:38-39 This passage contains what many Christians regard as one of the most uplifting messages in the New Testament. Summarize it in your own words or connect it to your personal experiences.





WEEK 3, DAY 2:

ACTS 13-THE START OF PAUL'S 3 JOURNEYS

READ ACTS 13

MVP

"When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed."

Acts 13:48

NOTES

Today, we embark on a journey with the early church as they continue spreading the message of Jesus Christ beyond the borders of Jerusalem. This pivotal chapter introduces us to Paul's first missionary journey (which ends in chapter 14), highlighting his calling, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the profound impact of the gospel on diverse communities. Reference your map and note the places Paul traveled.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verse 4: Here we see the beginning of Paul's first missionary journey, a pivotal moment in the spread of Christianity. If you are using your map, remember the Bible's use of "up" and "down" doesn't always match cardinal directions. For more information, see note on page 36.

Verses 5-12 cover the encounter with Bar-Jesus (also known as Elymas), a sorcerer and false prophet. His confrontation with Paul underscores the ongoing battle between divine truth and human deception. Paul invokes a temporary blindness on Elymas, a display of divine authority, demonstrating God's superiority. The blindness experienced by Elymas symbolizes spiritual blindness that affects those who refuse the truth. It also suggests the possibility of gaining insight and true repentance upon witnessing the power of God.

Verse 45 states that the Jewish leaders were filled with jealousy. Faced with the message of salvation reaching beyond traditional boundaries, some respond with jealousy and rejection. This verse serves as a reminder of the ongoing tension between acceptance and resistance to the gospel message. It prompts reflection on how we should respond to truths that challenge our preconceptions and comfort zones.

In verses 51-52 we witness a profound response to Paul and Barnabas' preaching. Faced with rejection from the Jewish leaders, they shake off the dust from their feet as a symbolic gesture, signifying that they have done all they could to share the gospel. In contrast, the Gentiles are filled with joy and the Holy Spirit, embracing the message of salvation eagerly. This serves as a reminder that while some may reject the truth, there will always be those who receive it with gladness.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 Saul and Barnabas sailed from Antioch to _____. (v. 4)
- 02 Along their way they encountered a _____ named Bar-Jesus. (v. 6)
- 03 Saul's name was changed to _____. (v. 9)
- 04 In Antioch, Paul preached that Jesus is the _____. (v. 23)
- 05 The Jews rejected the gospel and _____ Paul and Barnabas from the region. (v. 50)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In verse 51, Paul and Barnabas “shook the dust off their feet” as they left Antioch in Pisidia after facing rejection and opposition. Reflecting on this action, what does it teach us about handling rejection and opposition in our efforts to share the gospel? How can we discern when it is time to persist in a challenging situation versus when it is time to move on and focus our efforts elsewhere?



Cross References:

#1: Matthew 6:14-15: These verses offer strong encouragement to forgive and let go of difficult situations. Think about a negative experience in your life that you often dwell on and would like to move past. Pray to God for the strength to let it go, and share this experience with Him.

#2: Matthew 18:21-35: This covers the parable of the unforgiving servant, highlighting the fundamental concept of forgiveness. Think about a time when you witnessed someone acting hypocritically. How can we avoid falling into the trap of hypocrisy ourselves?



WEEK 3, DAY 3:

ACTS 14 - ADVENTURES OF PAUL IN GALATIA

READ ACTS 14

MVP

“...strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. ‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,’ they said.”

Acts 14:22

NOTES

In Acts 14, we journey with Paul and Barnabas as they continue their missionary work, spreading the gospel in Galatia and visiting the cities of Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Notably, it recounts the harrowing incident in Lystra, where Paul is stoned by an angry mob and left for dead, only to miraculously survive and continue his mission. In this chapter, we see the apostles' unwavering commitment to their mission and the miraculous signs that accompany their bold proclamation of the Good News.

CHAPTER STUDY

Galatians: Paul later writes to the people of this region in his Galatians epistle. This is a great introduction to the Book of Galatians, as it details all the adventures that inspired the Apostle Paul's words.

Verses 1-7: Paul's experiences in Iconium are representative of what the Apostles frequently encountered during their travels. Even today, when a city experiences a revival, some people will accept the message, while others will oppose it. When sharing the gospel, keep their experiences in mind. If you face similar challenges, take comfort in knowing you are not alone.

Verses 11-18: Let's not underestimate how devastated Barnabas and Paul were when the people began to worship them like idols. Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes in distress, a traditional Jewish expression of horror at blasphemy, and urgently implored the crowd to abandon their idolatry. They pointed to the “living God” who created heaven, earth, and sea, emphasizing that true worship belongs to the Creator rather than to created things or human interpretations of the divine. Their response highlights their mission to turn people away from false gods and towards the true and living God.

Verse 19-20: Paul was stoned and left for dead but miraculously survived, demonstrating the challenges and dangers faced by early Christian missionaries. However, that was not all Paul suffered, as he and Silas were severely flogged with rods later. Paul wrote of his sufferings later, included below in the Cross References.

Verses 24-26 contains the many places Paul visited with his companions. These locations can all be found on your map.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 While Paul and Barnabas spoke, there was a plot among the Jews as well as _____ to stone them. (v. 5)
- 02 Paul and Barnabas fled to this other city in Galatia: _____ (v. 8)
- 03 After Paul was stoned, he returned to the city of Lystra and the next day left for _____. (v. 20)
- 04 Paul and Barnabas appointed these special leaders in every church in the area: _____ (v. 23)
- 05 Paul and Barnabas helped to open the door of this spiritual virtue to the Gentiles: _____ (v. 27)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 14:22, Paul and Barnabas encouraged the believers to remain true to the faith, reminding them that through many tribulations they must enter the kingdom of God. Reflect on the concept of enduring trials in your own faith journey. How do these trials shape and strengthen your relationship with God? Share an example of a trial you faced that ultimately deepened your faith and commitment to following Christ.



Cross References:

#1: 2 Corinthians 11:23 Paul lists the hardships here he faced while spreading the gospel. Many of these challenges are detailed in the Book of Acts. How might our faith be fortified if we resided among individuals openly opposed to the gospel message?

#2: Matthew 10:34-42 This passage contains the direct teachings of Christ regarding the potential challenges Christians may face. Initially directed at His disciples, Jesus extends His discourse to encompass broader audiences starting from verse 34. It's advisable to read the entire chapter to grasp the context fully and consider any adjustments it prompts in your spiritual journey.



WEEK 3, DAY 4:

ACTS 15-COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

READ ACTS 15

MVP

"Certain individuals came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: 'Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.'"

Acts 15:1

NOTES

In Acts 15, we encounter a significant juncture in the early Christian church as leaders confront the contentious issue of circumcision. The council in Jerusalem further delves into matters of tradition, identity, and inclusion, providing meaningful lessons for believers both then and now. Let's explore this important chapter and discover its enduring lessons for our journey of faith.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verse 1: The Antioch involved here is Syrian Antioch.

Verses 7-11: This is the crux of the dispute, as Peter affirms that the Gentiles are accepted by God through faith, not by adherence to Jewish law. He underscores that both Jews and Gentiles are saved by grace through faith, without distinction. This pivotal moment challenges the prevailing notion that salvation was exclusive to Jews and sets the stage for the inclusion of Gentiles in the early Christian community.

Verse 13: This James could refer to either the half-brother of Jesus, who later authored the book of James, or one of the Twelve known as James the Less, also known as James son of Alphaeus. Initially, James, the half-brother of Jesus, did not believe during the crucifixion. However, he is explicitly mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:7 as a witness to the Risen Lord.

Verses 16-18: James is quoting Amos 9:11-12 (from the Greek Septuagint, which is one reason why the language in both passages doesn't line up perfectly).

Verse 19: James emphasizes the importance of not imposing the entirety of Jewish law on Gentile converts. He recognizes that while certain customs may have been significant within Jewish culture, burdening Gentiles with these requirements could hinder the spread of the gospel among them. Instead, he suggests a more inclusive approach, focusing on fundamental moral principles that are universally applicable.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 28-29: The Jerusalem council decreed that Gentile believers need not adhere to Jewish customs except to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, blood, meat from strangled animals, and sexual immorality. The prohibitions against food underscore the Council's concern for maintaining fellowship and avoiding unnecessary offense to Jewish sensibilities. The prohibitions against sexual immorality highlight the Council's concern for maintaining moral purity among believers. These emphasize the importance of unity and sensitivity to cultural differences in Christian communities.

Verses 38-40: Here we witness a notable disagreement between Paul and Barnabas regarding John Mark's participation in their missionary journey. This event underscores the humanity of the apostles, showing that even those chosen by God can have differences in opinion and approach. While Barnabas was willing to give John Mark a second chance, Paul's concern for the mission's effectiveness led to a separation between him and Barnabas. Despite this disagreement, it's crucial to recognize that God's plans can still unfold through different paths and individuals, as seen in how both Paul and Barnabas continued their respective ministries.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01** A debate arose over whether this spiritual ritual was necessary for the Gentiles:
_____ (v. 1)
- 02** It was decided Gentiles did not need to participate in the ritual who
_____. (v. 19)
- 03** Gentiles were told to abstain from food sacrificed or offered to _____. (v. 29)
- 04** Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement over this person and actually parted ways: _____
_____. (v. 39)
- 05** Paul went instead with this brother, and they headed for Syria and Cilicia:
_____ (v. 40)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 15, the early church faced a significant challenge regarding the inclusion of Gentile believers. How does this chapter demonstrate the importance of seeking unity within the body of Christ despite differences in background and culture? Reflect on a time in your own life or in your church community where you encountered differences among believers. How did you navigate those differences in a way that honored God and fostered unity?



Cross References:

#1: Genesis 17:9-13 This scripture introduces the concept of circumcision as directed by God. In the Old Testament, many laws served to protect people from disease, although this aspect was not explicitly stated. How can we employ this knowledge to counter arguments that Old Testament laws were burdensome and difficult to adhere to?

#2: Matthew 22:37-40 These verses contain Jesus' explanation about the essence of the Mosaic Law. Consider various scenarios where this verse could serve as a reminder to individuals who find commandments restrictive.



WEEK 3, DAY 5:

ACTS 16 & 17-INTRODUCING TIMOTHY, LYDIA

READ ACTS 16 & 17

MVPS

"Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."

Acts 17:11

NOTES

These chapters cover the beginning of Paul's secondary missionary journey, starting in Chapter 16. Accompanied by his new companion Silas, Paul endeavors to share the gospel with people in new regions. They experience violence and opposition, but continue to proclaim the message of Christ. Paul and Silas also experience some success as they witness the conversion of Lydia in Philippi and miraculously deliver a demon-possessed girl.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 16:1-3: Timothy is significant in early Christianity because of his mixed heritage, which allowed him to connect with both Jews and Greeks. Paul's decision to circumcise Timothy shows the importance of cultural sensitivity in spreading the gospel message. Timothy's background teaches us that diversity strengthens the Christian community and helps reach people from different backgrounds.

This Timothy is the same person to whom Paul wrote the letters known as 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy. Paul regarded Timothy as a son, as mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:2.

Verse 16:13: This verse highlights the inclusivity of women in the early Christian community. In this verse, Paul and his companions, including women, gather by the riverside for prayer. This underscores the significant role women played in spreading the gospel and participating in spiritual activities. It also challenged traditional gender roles of the time and demonstrates the egalitarian nature of the Christian message, where both men and women are valued and active participants in the work of God.

CHAPTER STUDY

The use of “we” in **verse 16:16** indicates that Luke, the author of Acts, was present during the events described. This firsthand witness account lends credibility to the narrative, reinforcing the historical reliability of the text. Additionally, Luke’s presence highlights his role as both a historian and a participant in the early Christian mission, underscoring the interconnectedness of the biblical narrative and its historical context. By including himself in the story, Luke emphasizes the communal nature of the early Christian experience, where believers journeyed and ministered together.

Verse 16:18 contains a profound moment where a demon-possessed girl, under the influence of evil spirits, exposes the truth about Paul and his companions. While the demon speaks the truth about Paul and Silas, its intentions are not aligned with God’s. It is likely its presence hindered the purity and integrity of Paul’s message.

In **Verses 16:22-24**: Paul and Silas endure a brutal flogging at the hands of Roman authorities. This punishment, administered without trial, reflects the hostility early Christians often encountered from those threatened by their message of salvation through Christ. Despite the physical pain and injustice they endured, Paul and Silas remained steadfast in their faith.

Verses 16:25-35: Despite being imprisoned unjustly, Paul and Silas turn to prayer and worship, demonstrating their unwavering trust in God’s sovereignty. The subsequent earthquake provided a miraculous intervention by God, emphasizing His power to deliver His faithful servants. Paul’s compassion toward the jailer, preventing his suicide and leading him to salvation through baptism, showcases the transformative power of Christ’s love.

Verse 16:33 records the profound conversion of the Philippian jailer and his household, as they respond immediately to the message of salvation preached by Paul and Silas. Their swift baptism illustrates the urgency and sincerity of their faith, and how deeply the truth of God’s word can profoundly impact individuals who wholeheartedly embrace the gospel message.

Verses 17:10-11 recounts the noble character of the Berean Jews, who eagerly examined the Scriptures daily to verify the teachings they heard, demonstrating a commitment to truth and discernment. This attitude toward the Scriptures can serve as a model for believers today, emphasizing the importance of diligent study and critical examination of spiritual teachings. Their example challenges us to approach God’s Word with an open mind and a willingness to question and verify what we hear, rather than simply accepting it at face value. It is the responsibility of every believer to seek understanding and discernment through regular study and reflection.

Note that Berea is in MACEDONIA and can be seen on your map in the upper left corner.

Verses 17:16 describes Paul’s reaction to the idolatry he witnessed in Athens. In a world inundated with distractions and false gods, this serves as a call to our own introspection, urging us to recognize and confront the idols in our lives. Just as Paul confronted the physical idols in Athens, it can be a challenge to identify and dismantle the idols of materialism, self-worship, and worldly pursuits that often dominate our hearts and minds. This serves as an opportunity to examine our allegiances, priorities so that we align ourselves more closely with the truth and worship of the one true God.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 Lydia, a worshiper of God, was the first convert in this city: _____ (16:14)
- 02 This natural disaster allowed Paul's and Silas' prison door to open: _____ (16:26)
- 03 The jailer was amazed and asked what he must do to be _____. (16:30)
- 04 All the Athenians spent their time doing nothing but these two activities: _____ (17:21)
- 05 In Athens Paul explained that God does not dwell in temples made by _____ . 17:24)
- 06 Many people sneered or mocked the story of this miracle: _____ 17:32)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 16:19, we see Paul and Silas encountering a situation involving monetary gain through exploitation. Reflect on how this passage prompts us to evaluate our own relationship with money. How does the story challenge us to consider the ethical implications of financial gain, especially when it comes at the expense of others? How might our understanding of Christian stewardship inform our approach to wealth and its acquisition?



Cross References:

#1: Hosea 2:1-8 reflects God's pain at the idolatry of mankind and especially Israel. Compare the idolatry here with the idolatrous practices encountered by Paul in his journey. What similarities or differences do you notice?

#2: Isaiah 44:9-20 is another description of Israel practicing idolatry. How does this contrast with the true worship of God? How can we avoid falling into the trap of idolatry in our own lives?



WEEK 3, DAY 6:

WEEK 3 IN REVIEW

Look back over the material for each day while trying to answer the subjective questions below.

Day 1

In Acts 12, Peter was imprisoned by Herod and facing imminent execution. How did Peter respond to this dire situation, and what can we learn from his response about maintaining faith under pressure in our own lives?

Day 2

During Paul's oration concerning the history of Israel, we find a very special verse about King David in 13:22, where God had referred to David as "a man after my own heart." Reflecting on this, how did David's life and character exemplified qualities that endeared him to God? How can we strive to emulate these qualities in our own lives as we seek to grow closer to God?

Day 3

Acts 14 recounts miraculous events, such as the healing of a crippled man in Lystra. Reflect on the significance of miracles in spreading the gospel. How do these supernatural interventions serve as testimonies to the truth of Christ's message? In what ways do miracles impact both believers and non-believers?

Day 4

The decision to include Gentiles in the early church was a radical departure from tradition. How can we extend hospitality and welcome to newcomers or outsiders in our communities today? List or discuss ideas for creating a space where people feel valued, accepted, and loved, regardless of their background or beliefs.

Day 5

Paul's approach to preaching varied depending on his audience, whether it was the Jewish synagogue in Thessalonica or the Athenian philosophers in Athens (Acts 17:1-34). How can we adapt our communication of the gospel to effectively reach different audiences in our own contexts?



Fill-in-the-Blank Answers

FROM DAY 1

1. John
2. Prison
3. Mary (mother of John)
4. Died
5. John (also called Mark)

FROM DAY 5

1. Thyatira
2. Earthquake
3. Saved
4. Talking about and listening to the latest ideas/Telling or hearing something new
5. Human hands/Hands
6. The resurrection of the dead

FROM DAY 2

1. Cyprus
2. Sorcerer
3. Paul
4. Savior
5. Expelled

FROM DAY 3

1. Gentiles
2. Lystra
3. Derbe
4. Elders
5. Faith

FROM DAY 4

1. Circumcision
2. Turned to God/Are turning to God
3. Idols
4. John Mark
5. Silas



ACTS

WEEK 4

WEEK 4, DAY 1:

ACTS 18 & 19-CORINTH, EPHESUS, GALATIA & PHRYGIA

READ ACTS 18-19

MVP

"Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the believers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken."

Acts 18:18

NOTES

In Acts 18-19, we witness the transition from Paul's second to his third missionary journey. Departing from Corinth, Paul sails to Ephesus, where he lays the groundwork for a vibrant Christian community. Paul then returns to Jerusalem and sets off on his third missionary journey to Antioch. This period is characterized by Paul's fervent dedication to spreading the gospel throughout Asia Minor, as he revisits churches he had previously established and boldly proclaims the message of Christ in new territories.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 18:1-17: In Corinth, Paul spends time preaching in the synagogue every Sabbath, reasoning with both Jews and Greeks.

In Verse 18:6, Paul decided to stop preaching to the Jews as a whole. By shaking off the dust from his clothes, he symbolically leaves the responsibility for their rejection of the message with them, while affirming his innocence and resolve to continue his mission among the Gentiles. This shows that God can remove us from ministries where the supposed beneficiaries are unappreciative or harmful, instead of letting us exhaust ourselves.

Verse 18:9 highlights another of God's blessings: His encouragement when we, like Paul, are uncertain about what to do next.

Verse 18:12: ACHAIA is the province on the left of your map that contains Corinth.

Verses 18:12-17: Paul's opponents bring him before the judgment seat of Gallio, accusing him of violating Jewish law. However, Gallio refuses to involve himself in what he sees as an internal Jewish dispute, dismissing the case. This decision not only secures Paul's freedom but also sets a precedent for the legal treatment of Christianity as a separate entity from Judaism.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verse 18:18 indicates that Paul had committed to the Nazarite vow, which involved fulfilling it by burning his hair on the temple altar. Nazarite vows were voluntary commitments made by individuals to dedicate themselves to the service of God for a specified period. These vows involved abstaining from certain activities, such as drinking wine and cutting one's hair, as a sign of consecration. They were a tangible expression of devotion and could be taken for various reasons, such as seeking God's favor or fulfilling a vow made in a time of distress. Another familiar Nazarite in the Bible is the judge Samson. His story is covered in Judges 13-16.

Verses 19:1-7 narrate Paul's encounter with some disciples in Ephesus who had received John's baptism but were unaware of the Holy Spirit. This passage underscores the significance receiving the Holy Spirit for believers in the early church. It also emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, which equips believers for ministry and empowers them to spread the gospel effectively. This passage, however, has caused a great deal of debate among Christians about whether the Holy Spirit is received at the time of salvation or as a separate experience. Both perspectives show evidence and offer compelling arguments. This prompts the question: Why not seek everything God offers, if not already done? If uncertain about what one possesses or lacks, simply ask, and you will receive (Matthew 7:11).

Verses 19:14-16 tell a terrifying tale of the sons of Sceva who attempted to cast out demons and failed miserably. This illustrates the danger of attempting to wield spiritual authority without a genuine relationship with Jesus. The seven sons of Sceva lacked the personal connection with Christ that Paul had, highlighting the importance of authentic faith and relationship with God in spiritual warfare.

In verses 19:23-41 we witness a riot instigated by Demetrius, a silversmith in Ephesus, who fears for his trade due to the influence of Paul's teaching on the worship of Artemis. The uproar shows the power of economic interests and the threat posed by the spread of Christianity to established pagan practices. The city clerk's intervention highlights how God can use even secular authorities to protect His servants and advance His purposes. Other examples of God using non-religious groups include the Assyrians and Babylonians conquering Israel and Judah respectively to punish them for their idolatry (2 Kings 17 and 1 Kings 24:1-9). Additionally, King Cyrus of Persia provided funds to rebuild Solomon's temple (Ezra 5:13-16).

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01** While in Corinth, Paul met these two people who were tentmakers by trade:
_____ and _____ (18:2-3)
- 02** The Lord told Paul, in a vision, not to fear because He had many _____ in Corinth. (18:10)
- 03** How long did Paul teach in Corinth? _____ (18:11)
- 04** Paul then sailed to _____ with the tentmakers who had become his companions. (18:18)
- 05** When Paul saw some disciples on the road and baptized them, they received the Holy Spirit and began to prophesy in _____. (19:6)
- 06** The Ephesians were making a commotion because Paul spoke out against their false goddess named _____. (19:35)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Acts 18:24-26 mentions Apollos, who was an eloquent speaker and knowledgeable about the Scriptures, yet he was open to correction and guidance from Priscilla and Aquila. How can we cultivate a teachable spirit in our own lives, being open to learning from others regardless of our current level of understanding or expertise?



Cross References:

#1: Numbers 6:1-20 outlines the rules for becoming a Nazarite, a practice mentioned when Paul cut his hair in Acts 18:18. Review the requirements for Nazarites, and then consider how you can dedicate yourself to God in ways appropriate to the New Testament.

#2: Romans 12:1-2 is often considered the New Testament's counterpart to the consecration of the Nazarites. How does this passage either allow you to focus on other ways to express your love for God or help you understand the purpose of the Nazarite law?



WEEK 4, DAY 2:

ACTS 20-22-GREECE, MACEDONIA, TROAS, JERUSALEM

READ ACTS 20-22

MVP

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”

Acts 20:28

NOTES

These three chapters recount Paul's emotional farewell to the Ephesian elders, his arrest in Jerusalem, and his powerful defense before the Jewish crowd. His ability to travel and preach is coming to an end. However, what seems like a sad ending led to a new beginning. After being imprisoned and placed on house arrest, Paul was able to continue his ministry by writing most of the Epistles.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verse 20:2-3: The statement that Paul “traveled through that area” doesn’t provide a timeframe. This unspecified duration implies the dynamic nature of Paul’s travels and unpredictable nature of his ministry, as he traveled to extensive regions to share the gospel and support early Christian communities. In contrast, the “three months in Greece” referred to in **verse 3** suggests that the time spent in Greece was significant. Paul likely spent the time in Corinth, the capital city of ACHAIA (see your map).

Verses 20:7-12: Here is the story of Eutychus, a young man who falls asleep during a lengthy evening gathering where the Apostle Paul is preaching, falls from the window and is declared dead. This can serve as a cautionary tale about the importance of staying spiritually awake and engaged, especially when receiving the Word of God. Eutychus’ physical drowsiness mirrors a spiritual lethargy that can creep into our lives when we become complacent or distracted in our faith. Additionally, miraculous intervention that follows demonstrates God’s power to overcome even death itself. Paul, through the power of the Holy Spirit, raises Eutychus back to life, showcasing the divine authority and presence working through the apostles.

Verses 20:22-24: In these verses, Paul declares that he is “bound or compelled by the spirit” to go to Jerusalem, signifying his determination and obligation to finish the mission he was entrusted with. The Holy Spirit had made it clear to Paul that trials and tribulations awaited him in Jerusalem. Yet, Paul’s resolve was unshaken. He understood that suffering was an inevitable part of his calling as an apostle and that it served a greater purpose in advancing the Kingdom of God. Instead of avoiding it, Paul embraces suffering as a means to testify to the gospel of God’s grace. He sees his own life as secondary to the task of proclaiming the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. This selfless devotion is a testament to Paul’s deep faith and commitment to his calling.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 21:1-16 contain Paul's encounter with the prophet Agabus, who dramatically binds his own hands and feet with Paul's belt, symbolizing the chains and imprisonment that await Paul in Jerusalem. Prophets, like Agabus, often used symbolism to convey their message because it would communicate ideas in a memorable way for visual impact, universal meaning (transmitting past language or cultural barriers), depth of meaning, emotional impact, and fulfillment of prophecy. The symbolism of the binding serves as a powerful reminder of the cost of discipleship and the courage required to follow Christ wholeheartedly, even in the face of suffering and persecution. Paul, however, embraces what awaits him in **verses 12-14**. You will be asked to reflect on Paul's words below.

Verses 22:1-21 present a significant moment in the life of the Apostle Paul, where he recounts his conversion story before a hostile Jewish crowd in Jerusalem. This passage serves as a summary of Paul's life, highlighting key events and themes that shaped his identity and mission. These verses make for good reading, lest we have missed something.

Verses 22:22-25: Paul addresses a crowd that is deeply divided. His message challenges their religious convictions and cultural norms, provoking a strong reaction. Some among the crowd, likely devout Jews who adhere strictly to traditional Jewish law, are incensed by Paul's assertion that he has been chosen to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. To them, Paul's message threatened the exclusivity of their religious identity and challenged their understanding of the Jews being God's chosen people.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01** What is the name of the man Paul raised from the dead after he fell three stories?
_____ (20:9)
- 02** Paul did not go to Ephesus because he wanted to reach _____ in time
for the day of _____. (20:16)
- 03** When Paul went to Jerusalem, he went to see the elders, including _____
(21:18)
- 04** Where was Paul when the crowd in Jerusalem turned against him? _____
(21:27)
- 05** Paul was not flogged because he was a _____ citizen. (22:27-29)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 22, we see a significant event where a riot ensues due to the pride of the Jews. Reflecting on this passage, consider the role pride played in the actions of the Jews. How did their pride blind them to the message Paul was conveying? In what ways can we guard against similar pride in our own lives, ensuring that we remain open to God's truth even when it challenges our preconceptions or traditions?



Cross References:

#1: Luke 23:13-25: These verses cover the Lord's experience before Pilate, with some similarities to Paul's experiences. Consider the role pride played in the outcome of these scenarios.

#2: Proverbs 6:16-19: This passage lists six things that the Lord despises. Choose four of these and explain how they are connected to harmful pride.



WEEK 4, DAY 3:

ACTS 23 & 24-THE PLOT TO KIL PAUL

READ ACTS 23-24

MVP

"And I have the same hope
in God as these people
themselves have, that there
will be a resurrection of
both the righteous and the
wicked."

Acts 24:15

NOTES

In these chapters, we follow Paul's trials before the Sanhedrin and Roman authorities, showcasing his resilience in the face of opposition. Despite threats to his life and false accusations,

Paul remained steadfast in his commitment to spreading the gospel, demonstrating unwavering faith and courage. His example challenges us to stand firm in our convictions, trust in God's sovereignty, and boldly proclaim the message of salvation amidst the challenges of our own modern contexts.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verse 23:3-10: In this passage, Paul, standing before the council, cleverly stirs up conflict between the Pharisees and the Sadducees by proclaiming his belief in the resurrection, causing a division among his accusers. In **verse 3**, Paul has an outburst, which can be seen in the context of persecution where he was defending himself against just actions. His reaction reminds us that being a follower of Christ does not mean we are immune to emotions like anger. We should manage these emotions constructively. In **verse 5**, Paul responds with sarcasm, implying that the high priest's behavior was so uncharacteristic of his position that Paul couldn't believe he was speaking to the high priest. Paul's statement not only reveals his surprise but also suggests a subtle rebuke of the high priest's unjust command to strike him.

Verse 23:12-22: A group of Jews make a vow not to eat or drink until they have killed Paul. However, Paul's nephew learns of the plot and informs the Roman commander, who sends Paul, under heavy guard, to Caesarea to protect him from the conspiracy. The plot shows us the great depths to which these people would stoop to protect their pride. The Cross References below show it was not just a passing phase.

Verses 24:1-9: The high priest Ananias and a group of elders accuse Paul before Governor Felix, charging him with stirring up riots among the Jews. Felix's position as governor gave him considerable discretion in administering justice, but it also subjected him to pressures and influences, both political and personal.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verse 24:10-21: Paul refutes the accusations against him, arguing that he came to Jerusalem to worship and did not incite any riots. The accusations brought against Paul by his adversaries are baseless and motivated by their desire to suppress his message, manipulating the legal system to achieve their ends. This serves as a reminder of the reality that those who stand for truth and righteousness may face false accusations and persecution. Paul acknowledges his belief in the resurrection of the dead, which causes Felix to postpone the trial until Lysias, the Roman commander, arrives.

Verse 24:22-27: Felix, intrigued by Paul's teachings, postpones his verdict and allows Paul to receive visitors and basic freedoms while in custody. He hopes for a bribe from Paul but does not receive one, reflecting the moral ambiguity and corruption often found in secular governance. Felix leaves Paul imprisoned for two years, but then is succeeded by Porcius Festus, who leaves Paul imprisoned as a favor to the Jews, though he also listens to Paul's case.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 The high priest _____ commanded that Paul should be smitten on the mouth. (23:2)
- 02 The dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees was so great the chief captain sent Paul away because he feared Paul would be _____. (23:10)
- 03 How many Jews were involved in the plot to kill Paul? _____ (23:13)
- 04 The name of the man who argued against Paul before Governor Felix: _____ (24:2)
- 05 Felix's wife _____ was also Jewish. (24:24)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 23-24, we observe Paul unjustly accused multiple times, both by the Jewish council and later by Governor Felix. How does Paul's response to these false accusations highlight the tension between the concept of fairness and the reality of unjust treatment? Reflecting on Paul's actions, how can we maintain integrity and trust in God's justice, even when faced with situations that seem inherently unfair?



Cross References:

#1: John 11:45-53: Here Caiaphas unknowingly prophesies of Christ's death for the nation. Reflecting on this plot, how can we discern between human intentions and God's divine plan? Can you think of modern-day situations where people may justify doing wrong for what they perceive as a good outcome?

#2: Matthew 10:16-25: These are Christ's words on service, which later influenced Apostle Paul. Reflect on this passage in relation to your own life, considering how God's protection has benefited you or could benefit you.



WEEK 4, DAY 4:

ACTS 25-26-PAUL ON TRIAL, FESTUS & AGRIPPA

READ ACTS 25-26

MVP

“...to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

Acts 26:18

NOTES

In these chapters, we witness the continuation of Paul's trials and testimonies as he navigated through the intricate web of Roman governance and Jewish opposition. Paul appeared before both Festus (the Roman governor) and King Agrippa II, passionately defending his beliefs and his mission. His words can help us reflect on how to defend the gospel in modern times.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 25:1-12: This is Paul's trial before the Roman governor, Festus, who succeeded Felix. Festus encountered pressure from the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to condemn Paul. Paul, however, appealed to Caesar, exercising his right as a Roman citizen. Paul's trial illustrates his understanding of the legal system of his time. Paul's defense is not merely a legal maneuver but an opportunity for him to proclaim the gospel boldly. Paul eloquently articulates his faith in Jesus Christ, presenting it as the fulfillment of Jewish prophecy and God's plan for salvation.

Verses 25:13-22: Festus consults with Agrippa here about Paul's case, demonstrating the Roman governor's desire for insight from a regional expert. Agrippa, being of Jewish descent and knowledgeable about Jewish customs and beliefs, could provide valuable context for Festus to understand the accusations against Paul. Moreover, Festus' consultation with Agrippa reveals the limitations of human wisdom and authority in discerning spiritual matters. While Festus may have sought Agrippa's counsel for a better understanding of the case against Paul, it is ultimately through Paul's testimony and the work of the Holy Spirit that hearts are transformed and truth is revealed.

Verse 25:23-27: Paul presents his defense before King Agrippa and other officials, emphasizing his faithfulness to the teachings of the Jewish prophets and his conversion to Christianity. King Agrippa's interest in hearing Paul's case likely stemmed from the fact that he would have a vested interest in understanding any potential disruptions within the Jewish community, particularly vor

CHAPTER STUDY

Verses 26:1-11: Here, Paul defends himself by highlighting his life before Christianity and his strict adherence to Judaism, even persecuting Christians himself. Then he recounts his conversion on the road to Damascus in **verses 12-18**. Sharing his conversion not only gains him credibility as having apostolic authority, but it also is an opportunity for him to present the gospel message and testify to King Agrippa and those present at the trial.

Verse 26:20: Paul's message is repentance. He calls upon people to acknowledge their sins, to turn away from their former ways, and to embrace a new life in Christ. Repentance involves a deep change of heart and mind, a turning away from sin and a turning toward God. Repentance is one of the works that God asks of us.

Verse 26:27-28: Paul appeals to Agrippa, asking if he believes the prophets, to which Agrippa responds with a rhetorical question, acknowledging Paul's efforts to persuade him to become a Christian. By expressing confidence that Agrippa believes the prophets, Paul not only acknowledges Agrippa's familiarity with Jewish tradition but also hints at the consistency between Agrippa's beliefs and the message Paul is proclaiming. Paul's question subtly challenges Agrippa to confront his own convictions, inviting Agrippa to reflect on whether his own beliefs align with the truths Paul is proclaiming.

Verse 26:32 Agrippa acknowledges that Paul could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar, indicating that he finds no fault in Paul deserving imprisonment or punishment. This reflects the divine plan at work in Paul's life. Paul's appeal to Caesar was part of God's sovereign plan to bring the gospel to Rome, where Paul would eventually preach and further spread Christianity.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 Festus asked if Paul wanted to go to this place for trial: _____ (25:9)
- 02 Paul insisted he have his trial in front of _____ as a Roman citizen. (25:11)
- 03 Festus consulted with King _____ about Paul's case. (25:13-14)
- 04 True/False: Paul told King Agrippa he was not insane. (26:25-27)
- 05 Agrippa did not believe Paul deserved death or _____. (26:31)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

We witnessed Paul defending himself before rulers and accusers. Reflecting on his defense, what practical steps can we take to spiritually and mentally prepare ourselves when facing opposition or accusations related to our faith? How can prayer, studying Scripture, and reliance on the Holy Spirit equip us to respond with wisdom, grace, and truth when challenged about our beliefs?



Cross References:

#1: 1 Peter 3:15: This verse encourages us to always be prepared to defend the gospel. Reflect on whether you feel prepared to share your faith and testimony with others. If not, what steps could you take to feel more confident?

#2: Mark 13:11: These are Christ's words, which may seem the opposite of the first cross reference and comforting to those who live with natural shyness. Reflecting on your own life, can you think a time when you felt the guidance of the Holy Spirit during a challenging situation? How did this experience impact your faith and your response to difficulty?



WEEK 4, DAY 5:

ACTS 27-28-PAUL SHIPWRECKED, ARRIVES IN ROME

READ ACTS 27-28

MVP

“Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight”

Acts 27:29

NOTES

For the last reading in this series, we follow Paul’s dangerous journey to Rome, where he faced a shipwreck and encountered different people. Despite the dangers, Paul’s faith and God’s protection continued to guide him. As Paul reached Rome, he shared the message of Jesus despite challenges, showing us the power of resilience and spreading hope even in difficult times.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verse 27:1-12: Paul set sail for Rome with other prisoners and Julius, a centurion. Note the “we” narrative begins again here (see chapter 16). Luke had spent the two years of Paul’s Caesarean imprisonment nearby and now joins those ready to sail.

Verse 27:9: The NIV Bible specifically mentions the Day of Atonement, which was a solemn occasion in the Jewish calendar, occurring in the autumn usually between September or October. The fact that it had already passed suggests that the sailing season was coming to a close, and the weather conditions were becoming increasingly unfavorable for travel by sea.

Verses 27:9-11: Paul, being guided by the Holy Spirit, perceived the impending danger of the journey. Despite the advice of the ship’s owner and the centurion in charge, Paul asserted his warning, urging them to reconsider their course of action. His warning wasn’t merely based on his own intuition or experience but was rooted in his faith in God’s guidance. Paul’s warning serves as a reminder of the importance of heeding spiritual guidance, even when it contradicts conventional wisdom.

Verse 27:21-26: The ship encountered a severe storm, which threatened to destroy them. In the midst of this chaos, Paul encouraged the crew, urging them to take heart and prophesying of God’s promise of safety. Paul’s prophetic promise highlights the divine protection and guidance that believers can expect, even in the midst of life’s storms. It demonstrates God’s faithfulness to His promises and His ability to intervene in the affairs of humanity for the good of those who love Him.

CHAPTER STUDY

Verse 27:42: Guards or soldiers who were responsible for prisoners faced severe consequences if a prisoner under their watch escaped. The Roman military held its soldiers to strict standards of discipline and accountability. If a prisoner escaped while in their custody, guards could face punishment ranging from severe reprimands to execution, depending on the circumstances and the mood of their superiors.

Verses 28:1-6: The viper is believed to be a species of snake native to Malta, likely the Malta Viper. This viper is known for its potent venom, which can cause severe harm or even death to its victims. In this context, the sudden attack of the viper on Paul would have been a terrifying and potentially fatal incident. Vipers were commonly associated with danger and death in ancient cultures, and their bites were often regarded as a swift and merciless form of punishment. The fact that Paul not only survived the viper's bite but also remained unharmed serves as a powerful demonstration of divine protection and intervention.

Verse 28:16: In the Roman legal system, prisoners awaiting trial often had certain rights and privileges. Paul, as a Roman citizen, would have been entitled to these rights. While he was under guard, he may have been granted certain freedoms, such as the ability to live in his own rented quarters, as long as he remained under supervision. He also likely had a favorable and trustworthy reputation, so this arrangement would have been low-risk.

Verse 28:22: This sect refers to the early Christian movement, which was still seen as a sect within Judaism by many at that time. This distinction was likely a point of contention and confusion for the Jewish leaders Paul was addressing. The term "sect" could have carried negative connotations, suggesting a deviation from established religious norms and beliefs.

Verse 28:31: This verse summarizes Paul's activity during his two-year stay in Rome while under house arrest. This extended period of house arrest provided Paul with a unique opportunity to engage in teaching and preaching. Furthermore, Paul's house arrest in Rome allowed him to write several of his letters, known as the "Prison Epistles," including Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. These letters, inspired by the Holy Spirit, continue to edify and instruct Christians today, highlighting Paul's ongoing ministry even while confined.

TEXT QUESTIONS

- 01 A strong wind called _____ struck Paul's ship. (27:14)
- 02 True/False: Paul told the soldiers on board that an angel told him they would all be saved. (27:23-24)
- 03 After how many days did the ship run aground? _____ (27:27)
- 04 The island they landed on was called by this name: _____ (28:1)
- 05 After Paul was bit by the viper, the Malta people believed it was a sign that he was a _____. (28:4)
- 06 True/False: Paul was allowed to live by himself in Rome though a soldier guard was assigned to him (28:16)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 27, Paul warned the crew about the danger of continuing the journey, but they didn't listen. How do you think Paul felt when his advice was ignored? Can you recall a time when you felt like your advice or warnings weren't taken seriously? How did you handle it, and what can we learn from Paul's response in this situation?



Cross References:

#1: Matthew 13:10-17: Jesus explained to His disciples (referencing Isaiah 6:9-10) about why He spoke to the people in parables. What are some common reasons or obstacles you notice that hinder people from grasping or accepting spiritual truths or teaching? How can we approach these situations with empathy and patience, seeking to guide others towards a deeper understanding of God's Word?

#2: Romans 1:21: This verse describes the consequences of refusing to acknowledge God despite knowing His existence through the evidence of creation. In what ways do you see the temptation to suppress the truth about God or ignore His presence? How can you actively cultivate a heart of gratitude and acknowledgment of God's existence in your daily life?



WEEK 4, DAY 6:

COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW: PAUL'S SUFFERING

NOTES

The verses below from the Book of Acts detail the hardships Paul would face, as predicted by God in chapter 8. Read them again and then list what Paul endured in each verse. Pray for guidance from the Lord to draw inspiration from these verses and broaden your understanding of how God can use you and your dedication.

- Acts 21:27 _____
- Acts 21:30-31; 23:3 _____
- Acts 22:22; 27:42 _____
- Acts 21:33; 22:24, 31; 23:35; 28:16 _____
- Acts 21:34; 22:30; 24:1-2; 25:2, 7; 28:4 _____
- Acts 25:24-27 _____
- Acts 26:24 _____
- Acts 27:11 _____
- Acts 27:41 _____

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Most likely, the only events missing from Luke's account are Paul's trial before Nero and his death, which happened either soon after Peter's death or just before it. If you were facing death for spreading the gospel, describe how you would feel. Then, explain how you would prefer to feel. How do these two sets of feelings differ, and if they are significantly different, why do you think that's the case?



Fill-in-the-Blank Answers

FROM DAY 1

1. Priscilla and Aquilla
2. People
3. A year and six months/A year and a half
4. Syria
5. Tongues
6. Artemis/Diana

FROM DAY 5

1. A Northeaster/Euroclydon
2. True
3. 14 days
4. Malta/Melita
5. Murderer
6. True

FROM DAY 2

1. Eutychus
2. Jerusalem, Pentecost
3. James
4. The temple
5. Roman

FROM DAY 3

1. Ananias
2. Torn to pieces/Pulled to pieces
3. 40
4. Tertullus
5. Drusilla

FROM DAY 4

1. Jerusalem
2. Caesar
3. Agrippa
4. True
5. Imprisonment/Bonds