

Witnesses

Studies in the Acts of the Apostles
Book 1

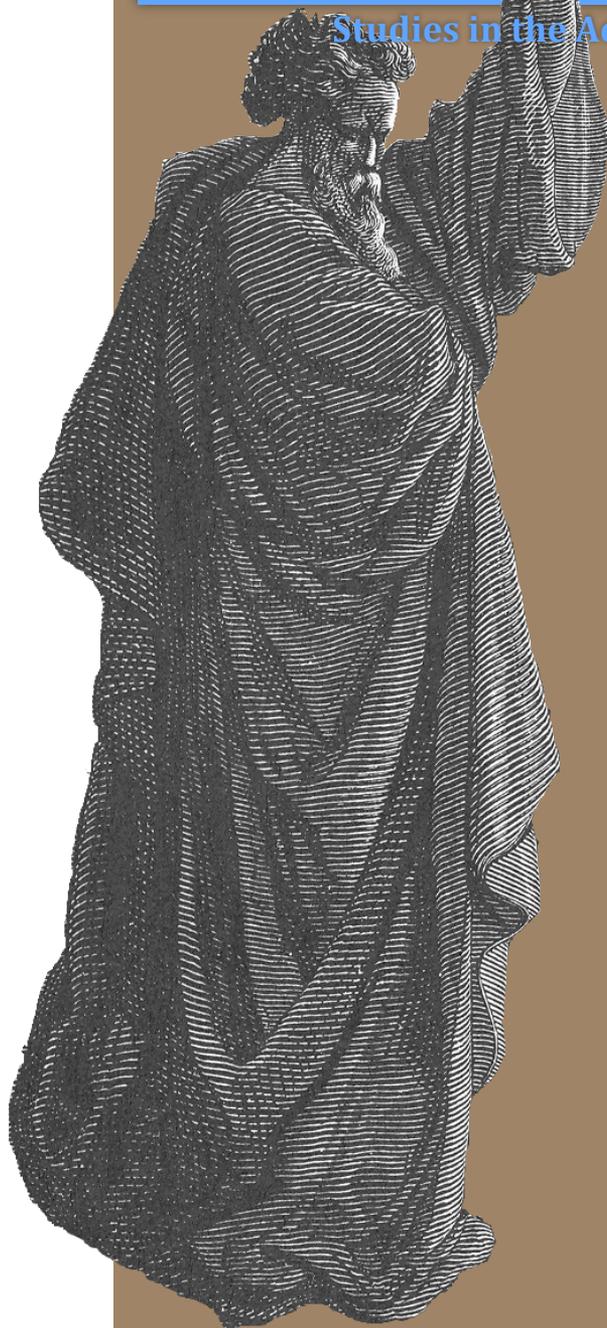


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The purpose of this resource is to coordinate the ministries of Trinity Baptist Church in Sunday School and the AM worship service preaching with the individual and family devotions of its members. The **Bible Study** portion is designed to prepare one for the group study and preaching, while the **Review** section is designed to reinforce, through family and personal devotions, the truths already learned. Each portion contains questions designed to lead one to meditate on both the truth of Scripture and its application to his life; however, these activities contain no sanctifying power intrinsic to themselves; still, if used thoughtfully and prayerfully, God may use them to teach the diligent student of His Word more about Himself.

Introduction



Acts Facts

Background Info

Author

The author of Acts is not explicitly stated in the book; however, it has been attributed to Luke since the late second century based on the overwhelming internal evidence obvious in the text. First, in *1:1* the author references a “first book” written to Theophilus; this same man is also referenced in *Luke 1:3* as the recipient of Luke’s gospel, indicating that the author of both books is the same. Additionally, several times the author mentions *we* to indicate he was traveling with the apostle Paul (*16:10-17; 20:6-21:18; 27:1-28:16*); the only two of Paul’s companions with him throughout the *we* sections of the book of Acts were Titus and Luke (*Acts 20:4-5*), clearly linking Luke to the first-person narrative in Acts. Finally, *Col 4:14* references the fact that Luke was a physician; in light of this fact, detailed descriptions of illness such as the one found in *Acts 28:8* may indicate Luke’s authorship.

Concerning Luke as a person very little is known; although his Greek name and his excellent use of the Greek language lead many to assume that he was a well-educated Gentile who feared God (a Jewish proselyte) and later became a Christian.

Date

A key to the date of Acts is the abrupt ending, with Paul still under house arrest in Rome and awaiting trial. The fact that Luke does not include details concerning Nero’s persecution (A.D. 64), the end of Paul’s life (A.D. 66-68), or the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) indicates that he sent the book to Theophilus before these events commenced. Therefore, Luke seems to have finished the book before these events occurred, between A.D. 62 and 64.

Purpose

A careful reading of Acts reveals three main purposes for his writing. First, *Luke 1:1* and *Acts 1:2* show Luke’s primary purpose for both Luke and Acts was to provide an accurate, detailed historical record for Theophilus and posterity. Luke was finishing the story of the gospel of Christ by describing the Spirit’s empowering of Christ’s followers to spread that gospel through-

out Palestine until it extended to Rome, the center of the empire and the known world.

Also, Luke seems to be presenting a defense of Christianity for the first century. Time and again Luke shows how Christianity is not a revolutionary movement; in fact, he reveals that the Christians were legally respectable with no inclination toward rebellion. His process of presenting Christian persecution coming particularly from Jews and Romans in a generally good light would have distinguished Christianity from Judaism in the minds of the Romans.

Finally, Luke is explaining the delay in the establishment of the promised Kingdom and the working of God through the Gentiles. His reference to Jesus' teaching concerning the Kingdom and subsequent command to wait for the Spirit in *1:1-8* most clearly reveals the postponement of the Kingdom for Jews. In following, Luke's record of the prison-bound Paul's message to Jews in *28:23-31* clarifies God's inclusion of Gentiles in His work.

Outline

Both the title and the structure of our study of the Acts of the Apostles will be based on *Acts 1:8*.

- 1. Witnesses to Jerusalem (*1:1-6:7*)**
- 2. Witnesses to Judea and Samaria (*6:8-9:31*)**
- 3. Witnesses to the ends of the earth (*9:32-28:31*)**

Key Places

Jerusalem

Jerusalem, the city of David, was essentially the capital city of Israel. Jerusalem was the center of the Jewish worship/sacrificial system and a headache to the Roman government because of the Jewish zealotry. The Romans finally destroyed the city and the temple in A.D. 70 following another revolt. The church at Jerusalem was the central mover and shaker in Christianity in the book of Acts (*15:1-35*).

Judea

Judea was the Roman province consisting of the southern half of modern-day Israel. Jerusalem was the most prominent city of Judea, which saw the birth of the church at Pentecost and the stoning of Stephen as the church's first martyr (*1:1-7:60*).



Modern names and boundaries are shown in gray.

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Syria/Damascus

Syria is the Roman province consisting of the northern section of modern-day Lebanon and Syria. Damascus was the destination of the persecutor Saul when he was converted; while Antioch of Syria was the place where Barnabas was greatly used of God to train and assist the missionaries who would take the gospel west (*9:1-12:25*).

Galatia

Galatia was the Roman province consisting of the central portion of modern-day Turkey. The churches in Galatia were planted by the apostle Paul on his first missionary journey with Barnabas (*13:1-14:28*).

Macedonia

Macedonia was the Roman province consisting of the northern half of modern-day Greece. The Spirit led Paul and Silas to Macedonia to plant churches on Paul's second missionary journey (*15:36-17:14*).

Ephesus

Ephesus, a city on the western edge of modern-day Turkey, became a sort of epicenter for Paul's ministry in the region. His address to the elders in Ephesus is one of his more powerful treatises on the ministry of pastors (*18:24-20:38*).

The Witnesses

Peter

Peter may be one of the most well-known and well-beloved leaders of the early church second only to Paul in many minds. He was the de-facto leader of the apostles after Christ's death, evidenced by his being mentioned first in the four lists of the apostles in the gospels and Acts (*Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:13-16; Acts 1:13*). His position of leadership may be attributed to his impetuous, out-spoken nature which often got him into trouble (*cf. Matt. 14:28; Mark 14:29; Luke 5:8; John 21:7*). His importance to the events recorded in Acts cannot be overemphasized; first, his address at Pentecost is one of clearest presentations of the gospel based on Old Testament prophecy in Scripture (*2:14-41*). Also, his position of authority made him the target of much of the early persecution of the church (*4:1-4; 5:17-33*). Finally, his role in the inclusion of Gentiles into the church caused much friction among the believing Jews, especially in Jerusalem (*10:1-11:18; 15:21*).

Paul

Paul's importance to the beginning of Christianity is as clear as Peter's. A well-educated Pharisee and leader of the Jews, Paul first appears as Saul the persecutor of Christians, specifically the ring-leader of Stephen's stoning (*7:54-60*); however, God's intervention in his life, on the road to Damascus, turned one of Christianity's greatest enemies into its greatest defender (*9:1-19*). After a period of training (*11:19-26; Gal 1:11-17*), Paul was set aside through the Spirit by the church at Antioch to a special work, planting churches with an eye toward the west (*13:1-3*). His importance to first-century Christianity is seen in the plethora of letters he wrote to his church plants and students which compile most of our New Testament.

Stephen

Stephen lived a short, but effective life for the ministry of the gospel. He was one of the more godly men in the church in Jerusalem as seen in his being chosen by the church to be one of the first deacons (*6:1-6*); however, his ministry would be short-lived, as his effective ministry was undermined by

the disputing Jews. His subsequent arrest and stoning immortalizes Stephen as the first martyr for the cause of Christ (6:8-7:60).

Comparing the Ministries of Peter and Paul		
Circumstance	Peter	Paul
healing crippled men	3:2-8	14:8-10
healing via extraordinary means	5:15 (his shadow)	19:12 (hankies)
casting out demons	5:16	16:18
being flogged or beaten	5:40	16:23
defeating sorcerers	8:18-24	13:6-11
raising the dead	9:36-41	20:9-12
escaping from prison	12:6-11	16:25-26

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Barnabas

Barnabas ought to be considered one of the unsung heroes of the book of Acts; his consistent commitment to God and Scripture is something to be admired throughout the book. Barnabas appears only in the first half of Acts but is an important person none-the-less; he first appears donating all the proceeds from the sale of one of his fields to the church (4:36-37). Later, he is sent to Antioch from Jerusalem to assume a major role in the discipleship of Paul; while there, he and Paul are commissioned by the Spirit to become missionaries to the west (11:22-27; 13:1-3). Together, Paul and Barnabas plant several churches in southern Galatia and Asia Minor before returning to Antioch; however, this would be their last journey together (13-14). A disagreement over the trustworthiness of John Mark proved to be too much for Paul and Barnabas to overcome, and they parted ways (15:36-40).

Silas

Silas is the second primary companion of Paul in his missionary journeys and another fine example of faithfulness. He has much in common with Barnabas, as he was a member of the church in Jerusalem, was sent to the

church in Antioch following the Jerusalem Council, and was clearly a gifted teacher (*15:22-32*). Silas was chosen by Paul to replace Barnabas on his missions team following the falling out with Barnabas, and he proved his faithfulness in many ways, not the least of which was in the prison in Philippi as he and Paul sang hymns in the darkness (*15:40; 16:26-35*).

Bible Study



Witnesses to Jerusalem

1-The Commissioning of the Witnesses

Acts 1:1-26

Read Acts 1:1-5

- ❖ v3 mentions that Jesus “presented Himself alive after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the Kingdom of God.” Why was it so important that he appear in “many proofs” to them?

- ❖ What were the apostles to wait for? Considering *Luke 3:21-22* why was this so important for their future ministries?

Read Acts 1:6-11

- ❖ Put yourself in the place of the apostles as they watched Jesus ascend into heaven; now consider why God would send the two men in white robes to talk to them. Why were these men necessary?

Read Acts 1:12-26

- ❖ What were the apostles preoccupied with while they were in the upper room?

- ❖ Examine Matthew's account of Judas's death (27:3-10); how do you harmonize the events of these two passages?

- ❖ On what basis did Peter propose replacing Judas among the twelve? What were the specific requirements for the replacement?

- ❖ Who chose Judas's replacement? Defend your answer from the text.

2-The Sermon of Peter

Acts 2:1-39

Read Acts 2:1-13

- ❖ Looking back at chapter 1, why were the apostles where they were, and what do you deduce they were probably doing?

- ❖ Note the miraculous events that took place on this day.

- ❖ Why were so many “men from every nation under heaven” in Jerusalem at this time? What amazed them? How did they summarize the apostle’s message?

Read Acts 2:14-39

- ❖ According to v4, all of the apostles spoke; why would Luke focus on Peter’s message?

- ❖ Peter answers those who thought the apostles might be drunk with a more rational explanation for the apostle’s strange behavior; what was it?

What is Pentecost?

(Lev 23:15-22; Deut 16:9-10)

Pentecost means "fifty" and designates the fiftieth day after Passover. Pentecost relates to the Old Testament Feast of Weeks.

Pentecost is observed for only two days, marks the closing of the Passover season, and was a display of thanksgiving to the Lord for His provision.

- ❖ What events from the text of Joel were fulfilled at Pentecost, and which events are still future?

- ❖ Note the ways in which Peter's message focuses on the work of God through Jesus Christ; what would motivate that focus in his message?

- ❖ What does Peter's quotation of David (from *Ps 16:8-11*) prove about Jesus Christ?

- ❖ What two facts about Jesus did Peter emphasize at the end of his sermon, and why are these two facts so important?

For Additional Thought

- ▶ What differences are there between modern tongues and tongues at Pentecost?
- ▶ What evidence is there in Scripture pointing to whether or not gifts have ceased?

3-*The Birth of the Church*

Acts 2:37-47

Read Acts 2:37-47

- ❖ What is repentance? What obvious progression of steps is seen in those who obeyed Peter's exhortation to repent?

- ❖ What is the emphasis of the word *received* in v41? Does the passage seem to emphasize something more than just listening attentively?

- ❖ What four activities did the first church engage in in v42 that ought to be hallmarks of the current church?

- ❖ What motivated the believers to sell their possessions and belongings?

- ❖ Describe the meetings of the first church based on the context of these verses? What do you learn about the purpose of the church from these verses?

❖ Why were there people being saved daily? Why isn't this happening in our day very often?

4-*The Power of the Gospel*

Acts 3:1-26

Read Acts 3:1-10

- ❖ Notice that Peter and John were heading up to the temple when they met the lame man; why were the Christians still worshipping at the temple?

- ❖ Why did the man stop Peter and John, and what did he expect from them when they started talking to him?

- ❖ What is the significance of the fact that Peter gives his command to the man in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth?

- ❖ What is the significance to us that Peter does not offer the man silver or gold, but healing?

- ❖ What effect does the healing have on the man? What effect does the healing have on the people of Jerusalem?

Read Acts 3:11-26

- ❖ To whom does Peter ultimately point the people's attention as they stood astounded by what had happened to the blind man?

- ❖ Peter uses two different names for Jesus in his sermon to the people, what is the significance of each?

NAME	SIGNIFICANCE
Holy & Righteous One	
Author of Life	

- ❖ To what does Peter point that had made the blind man strong?

- ❖ Although Peter says that the people had acted ignorantly in murdering Jesus, what does he still call them to do in response to their sin?

- ❖ In quoting the prophecy of Moses and the promise of Abraham, what had Peter said about Jesus?

5-The Persecution from the Outside

Acts 4:1-22

Read Acts 4:1-22

- ❖ Note both the positive and the negative outcome from Peter's sermon listed in 4:3-4; what does this reveal about how God works in the lives of His servants and His children?

- ❖ Peter uses a Old Testament metaphor to describe how the religious leaders had responded to Jesus (cf *Ps 118:22*); what does this indicate concerning man's ability to discern God's work in and of themselves?

- ❖ What is the significance of Peter's statement in 4:12 especially thinking of post-modern America?

- ❖ How should we reconcile the role of Bible colleges and seminaries with the recognition that Peter and John were uneducated (4:13)?

- ❖ What does the religious leaders' releasing of Peter and John indicate about the religious leaders?

For Additional Thought

Consider v20 and Peter and John's response to the threats of the religious leaders; is this attitude evident in your evangelism?

6-The Issues on the Inside

Acts 5:1-16

Read Acts 5:1-16

- ❖ Scripture does not record any spoken words from Ananias, yet Peter accuses him of lying; based on the passage, what was Ananias's lie?

- ❖ What are the implications of Peter's statement that Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit when you consider his statement at the end of v4?

- ❖ Why do you think that God dealt so harshly with Ananias and Sapphira?

- ❖ v13 says that none of the rest of the church dared to join the apostles as they performed signs and wonders; why was this the case?

- ❖ God answered the believers' prayer for boldness and signs (cf 4:30) in a powerful way; what was the result among the people in Jerusalem?

7-The Need for Help

Acts 4:23-36; 6:1-7

Read Acts 4:23-36

- ❖ The believers in Jerusalem made an extraordinary commitment to boldness in 4:23-31. What did these believers believe about God that made them willing to make this commitment?

- ❖ How did these believers receive the boldness they asked God for?

- ❖ What did the members of the Jerusalem church do to demonstrate their unity in Christ?

- ❖ Many people see the practice of the Jerusalem believers as “Christian communism”; how is what the believers practiced here different from communism?

- ❖ What principles do you see in v32-37 that could influence your own view of material possessions?

- ❖ What can you deduce was already happening in the church at Jerusalem for widows, and what problem arose?

- ❖ What did the apostles see as their primary responsibility?

- ❖ Who chose the seven men who were appointed to “widow duty”? What qualifications did the apostles give for these servants?

- ❖ Consider the qualifications for deacons laid out in *1 Tim 3:8-13*, why do we often consider this passage to be talking about the first deacons?

- ❖ What are the implications of these verses (especially v7) in relation to church growth?

Hellinist
Greek speaking Jews from the Diaspora (“dispersed” Jews living outside Palestine).

8-The Sermon/Stoning of Stephen

Acts 5:17-42; 6:8-7:70

Read Acts 5:17-42

- ❖ What is it that drives the religious leaders in both their arrest (v17) and questioning (v26) of the apostles?

- ❖ What drove the apostles in both their preaching (v20) and their answer to the council (v29)?

- ❖ What is the significance of the two witnesses that Peter identifies in v32?

- ❖ As you consider Gamaliel's advice to the council, do you think that he gives a sound principle to follow in determining the will of God?

- ❖ What two effects did the apostles' time before the council (and their beating) have on the apostles?

Read Acts 6:8-15

- ❖ What was it that appears to have caused Stephen's arrest and trial?

- ❖ What is the significance of the fact that Stephen's face was like the face of an angel?

Read Acts 7:1-70

- ❖ What is the significance of the amount of time and material Stephen spends on laying out Israel's history? What point is he trying to make?

- ❖ What four offenses did Stephen accuse the religious leaders of that caused their fierce reaction?

- ❖ What characteristics similar to Christ's did Stephen show in his death?

For Additional Thought

What are some values in studying OT history?

Witnesses to Judea & Samaria

9-The Gospel to Judea & Samaria

Acts 8:1-40

Read Acts 8:1-25

- ❖ What did God use to get the gospel message out to Judea and Samaria? How does what happened in *v1-4* prove the concept of *Romans 8:28*?

- ❖ Who is Philip? (cf *Acts 6*) We already saw Stephen and now Philip doing much more than helping widows. How did their previous roles lead to the level of ministry described in *Acts 7-8*?

- ❖ What was Simon's relationship with the people of Samaria?

- ❖ What is the significance of the fact that the Peter and John came to Samaria to observe the believers' receiving of the Holy Spirit?

- ❖ Based on your earlier thoughts concerning Simon, what do you perceive to be his motivation for offering to buy the power the apostles had displayed?

- ❖ Explain Peter's reprimand of Simon. How was his heart not right? How was he bitter? Was Simon truly saved (cf 8:13)?

Read Acts 8:26-40

- ❖ How do you understand the spirituality of the Eunuch based on the description of him in v27-28?

- ❖ What are the implications regarding the OT and especially Isaiah based on this passage?

- ❖ What seems to be missing in the conversion of the Eunuch?

10-The Conversion of Saul

Acts 9:1-43

Read Acts 9:1-31

- ❖ Discuss the implications of the fact that Christianity was called “The Way.”

- ❖ Re-read *Acts 8:1*; what difference in wording do you see between that verse and *v4*? What is the significance of this difference?

- ❖ What physical and spiritual impact did the event on the road to Damascus have on Saul? What effect did it have on his fellow travelers?

- ❖ What caused Ananias’s hesitation when it came to ministering to Saul? What eventually caused his obedience?

- ❖ It seems that both the Christians and Jews were confused by Saul; explain how each group struggled with what to do with him.

- ❖ What can we learn about discipleship from the example of Barnabas?

- ❖ What was the effect of the conversion of Saul on the church as a whole?

Read Acts 9:32-43

- ❖ What impact did the healings Peter performed have on the cities of Lydda, Sharon, and Joppa?

- ❖ What is the significance of Tabitha's life as evidence that she was disciple?

11-The Gospel to Gentiles

Acts 10:1-11:18

Read Acts 10:1-11:18

- ❖ How had God prepared Cornelius to be the first Gentile convert of Peter?

- ❖ What does Cornelius's response to the vision reveal about him?

- ❖ What does Peter's vision on the housetop indicate about the observance of the Mosaic food laws?

- ❖ Explain how Peter felt when he arrived as described in v25-29.

- ❖ What does the crowd at Cornelius's house reveal about Cornelius?

- ❖ Explain v35 in the context of salvation by grace through faith.

- ❖ Summarize or outline Peter's message in *v34-43*.

- ❖ Cross reference Peter's message in *Acts 2:22-36*. What differences do you see, and what similarities do you see?

- ❖ What is the significance of the fact that these believers spoke in tongues, yet several of the other converts in this section (the Samaritans, the Eunuch, Saul, those in Lydda, Sharon, and Joppa) did not?

- ❖ What is the significance of the response of the church in Jerusalem upon hearing Peter's story (*11:17-18*)?

For Additional Thought

Does conversion to Christ automatically remove a person's prejudices? If not, why not?

12-The Preparation for Change

Acts 11:19-12:25

Read Acts 11:19-30

- ❖ Why does the church in Jerusalem send Barnabas north to Antioch?

- ❖ What excited Barnabas about the believers in Antioch? Why would he choose Saul to minister with him?

- ❖ What prompted the offering for the saints at Jerusalem? Why did the church in Antioch feel this responsibility to the church in Jerusalem?

Read Acts 12:1-19

- ❖ What was Herod's motive for arresting Peter?

- ❖ What does the church's response to Rhoda reveal about them?

- ❖ Why would God deliver Peter from prison but not deliver James?

Read Acts 12:20-25

- ❖ What is the significance of the record of Herod's death here?

- ❖ Why does God kill Herod? How does this relate to you?

- ❖ What is the significance of v24 in the context of Herod's death?

Review



Using the Reviews

“These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” (Deut 6:6-7)

The purpose of this portion of the book is to give you a chance to keep the things you are learning in Acts in your heart and mind and to help you be able to talk about them whether you’re out and about or sitting at home around the dinner table. The Word of God is living and active, and the more exposure you can give yourself to it, the better off you will be. With that in mind, let’s discuss how you can use this section.

The review section is designed to give leading questions that will open up discussion not only about what the text was about but how it applies to your life. These questions could be used around the dinner table for family devotions, between husband and wife on a date night, or even between accountability partners who are looking to be reminded about the things that they are learning. Don’t get bogged down looking for a “right” answer, especially to the application questions; rather, listen to each other and learn. This section probably won’t work best in a formal setting (although it could be used in one), but it is designed to initiate conversation about the Word of God and how it applies to your life.

1-The Commissioning of the Witnesses

Acts 1:1-26

- ❖ Where was the apostles' power to come from? How do you see that same power working in your life?
- ❖ What does Jesus tell the disciples they will become? Discuss ways in which you are currently being a witness for Jesus; what are some ways you could improve?
- ❖ How did the apostles select Judas's replacement? Are you making decisions in your life with a similar mindset? Why or why not? How could you improve? In what areas do you need the most improvement?

2-The Sermon of Peter

Acts 2:1-39

- ❖ What specifically happened to give the apostles boldness? Do you have the same boldness? Why or why not? Do you have the same advantage that the apostles had? Why or why not?
- ❖ What points of the gospel does Peter emphasize in his sermon? Do you have a good grasp of the gospel? *Discuss the first time you heard or responded to the gospel.* How can the gospel impact you even after your justification (initial conversion)?
- ❖ What did Peter call the people to do after his sermon? What role does repentance play in your life? Is repentance something only for the new convert to pursue? If not, how ought a Christian to pursue repentance after salvation?

3-The Birth of the Church

Acts 2:37-47

- ❖ What did the new converts devote themselves to after their salvation? Discuss the importance of church attendance and why you attend. How often is “enough”? What is your responsibility at church?
- ❖ How did the new converts show their appreciation to God for saving them? How do you show your appreciation to God for saving you? What priorities are revealed in your checkbook?
- ❖ v47 says they were having favor with the people. How can you have favor with people without compromising your standards/purity? How much ought we to seek favor with people in our lives?

4-The Power of the Gospel

Acts 3:1-26

- ❖ How did Peter and John help the lame beggar? What is your responsibility to social problems as you face them in the world? How can you give what you have to someone in need today?
- ❖ What do Peter and John point to as having healed the man? What areas of your life exhibit strong faith? What problems does it take to make you start to waver in your faith?
- ❖ What does Peter say about the way that the people had acted toward the prophets and Jesus? Does ignorance excuse sin? Why or why not? Is there any hope of knowing that something is wrong even in ignorance? If yes, how; if no, what should we do then?

5-The Persecution from the Outside

Acts 4:1-22

- ❖ What question did the council ask Peter concerning what He did? Where does your power come from? How is it evident in someone's life if they trust the power of God?
- ❖ What did the council primarily notice about Peter and John? What does boldness look like? What was the basis for Peter and John's boldness? What prevents you from having the same boldness?
- ❖ How did the people respond to what was going on in Jerusalem? Do you often praise the Lord for His work in the lives of others? Why or why not?

6-The Issues on the Inside

Acts 5:1-16

- ❖ What happened to Ananias and Sapphira because of their lie? Do you take sin this seriously in your own life? Why or why not? What does this passage teach you about the seriousness of sin? Ought we to live in fear of dropping dead because of our sin? Why or why not?
- ❖ What caused the people to hold the apostles in high esteem? Do those watching your life have reason to hold you in high esteem? Why or why not? What would mark a life worthy of high esteem?

7-The Need for Help

Acts 4:23-36; 6:1-7

- ❖ What elements of prayer are evident in the prayer of the believers in *ch4*? Do you spend time praising God regularly? What could you praise God for right now? Do you spend time praying for strength and boldness regularly? Why should you pray for strength and boldness as the disciples did here?
- ❖ Who chose the seven deacons? Why would the apostles allow the church to select the men and not have the Holy Spirit point them out? What can you learn here about the importance of attendance and attitude during church business meetings?
- ❖ What marked the men chosen as deacons? Would you currently qualify based on these qualifications? Why or why not? Why are these things important for a deacon?

8-The Sermon/Stoning of Stephen

Acts 5:17-42; 6:8-7:70

- ❖ How did Peter and John respond after the high priest forbid them from teaching in the name of Jesus? What is the Christian's role to governmental authority? Ought we to spurn all governmental authority based on Peter and John's statement here? Why or why not?
- ❖ What was Gamaliel's formula for determining God's will? How can one know the will of God? Discuss the responsibility we have toward finding and doing God's will.
- ❖ What stands out to you about Stephen before the council and his persecutors? What made Stephen able to stand with such grace in the midst of strong opposition? Discuss situations you have been in when you have had opportunity to respond to persecution as Stephen did.

9-The Gospel to Judea & Samaria

Acts 8:1-40

- ❖ What effect did the persecution of the church have on the gospel? How would you respond to a similar situation? Why would someone continue preaching if being open about Christianity often resulted in imprisonment or death?
- ❖ What did Simon try to do that brought Peter's wrath upon him? What does this teach you about the work of the Holy Spirit and God? Discuss the trap of following men instead of God. Have you ever faced times when you became more enamored with a man than God?
- ❖ What prompts the Eunuch to seek baptism? What is baptism and why it is important for a Christian? Have you been baptized? Why or why not?
- ❖ What evidence did Philip have that the Eunuch had been saved? How important is prayer in one's conversion experience?

10-The Conversion of Saul

Acts 9:1-43

- ❖ Discuss the conversation between Jesus and Saul on the Damascus road. Why doesn't Jesus have to say much? What other situations had possibly had an impact on Saul? Are you faithful in presenting the gospel even when it seems like people don't care or aren't listening? Why or why not?
- ❖ Why was Ananias hesitant to obey the vision from the Lord? Discuss times when you have been hesitant to obey God because of the circumstances? What does it take for a Christian to obey God regardless of the cost?
- ❖ What did Barnabas do for Saul? Have you ever been as Barnabas to someone? Why or why not? What opportunities for discipleship has God given you that you need to take advantage of? What are some essential elements to good discipleship?

11-The Gospel to Gentiles

Acts 10:1-11:18

- ❖ Discuss prejudice and its dangers. Who are some people you tend to be prejudiced towards? How ought the grace of God in your life impact your prejudices? What other Biblical truths ought to nullify prejudice in our lives?
- ❖ Discuss the OT Mosaic Law in relationship to Christianity and the church. What are the dangers of following a law? How can we be morally pure yet avoid being legalistic? What are some issues that you have struggled with in the realm of legalism?
- ❖ How did the Jerusalem church respond to the salvation of the Gentiles? How do you respond when people get saved? How do you respond when people you think really deserve hell get saved? Why? What ought to be our attitude when people get saved?

12-The Preparation for Change

Acts 11:19-12:25

- ❖ What name were the Antioch converts called? What is the significance of this? How does an unbelieving public identify you? Why? How can we live so that we are identified with Christ?
- ❖ Why does Herod arrest Peter after killing James? What does this teach you about the pressure of others? Discuss times when you have given in and times when you have stood fast against negative peer pressure. How can we best avoid the negative effects of peer pressure in our lives?
- ❖ What was the church's response to Rhoda's announcement of Peter's presence? Do you really believe that your prayers will be answered or do you look at prayer as a mere formality? Why? What difference would it make in our prayers if we really believed God could answer?