

Witnesses

Studies in the Acts of the Apostles
Book 2



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Witnesses to the ends of the earth 2

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Family Review Questions 29

The purpose of the 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.

Bible Study



13-The Missionaries to the World

Acts 13:1-3

Read Acts 13:1-3

- ❖ Based on these verses, describe the spiritual climate of the church in Antioch. How would this climate contribute to the missions mind of the church?

- ❖ Explain who all was involved and the responsibility of each party in setting Saul and Barnabas apart for this ministry.

- ❖ The disciples in Antioch were fasting before God and after God spoke to them about Saul and Barnabas. What is the significance of their fasting in this passage?

- ❖ What is the significance of the laying on of hands in the commissioning to ministry? Consider the following cross references: *Acts 6:6; 1 Tim 4:14*

14-The First Journey of Paul

Acts 13:4-52

Read Acts 13:4-12

- ❖ Use the map below to chart this portion of Paul and Barnabas's first journey as you read.



- ❖ Contrast Paul and Bar-Jesus/Elymas in what they did and said in this passage.

- ❖ v12 says that “the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.” How does this reveal that the proconsul was genuinely saved?

Read Acts 13:13-52

- ❖ Using the same map above, trace the continuation of Paul and Barnabas's route through this chapter.

- ❖ Why would Paul go to the synagogue to begin his gospel witness to a city?

- ❖ Consider Paul's sermon in the synagogue and Peter's sermon at Pentecost (*Acts 2:14-36*); what similarities do you see?

- ❖ What atmosphere did Paul's message create in the city?

- ❖ What spurred Paul and Barnabas to take their message to the Gentiles?

- ❖ How do the religious leaders' (and most Jews') response to the gospel message differ from that of the Gentiles?

- ❖ What that Paul said would have made the Gentiles rejoice and glorify the Word of the Lord?

15-The End of the First Journey

Acts 14:1-15:35

As you read through the different passages of *Acts 14*, don't forget to record Paul and Barnabas's stops on the map in the previous lesson.

Read Acts 14:1-5

- ❖ How do you reconcile the idea in *v1* with verses like *1 Cor 2:1* and *1 Thess 1:5*?

- ❖ What is the progression of gospel stopping tactics used by the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles in Iconium?

- ❖ How does God thwart the plans to stop the gospel in Iconium? What effect did Paul and Barnabas have on the community as a whole?

Read Acts 14:6-18

- ❖ What are the “vain (empty) things” that Paul refers to? What made these things vain?

Mythology

Zeus - supreme ruler of gods, spiritual leader of gods & men

Hermes - herald/messenger of the gods (son of Zeus)

- ❖ How does Paul contrast Jehovah with Zeus?

- ❖ Summarize how Paul explained God had worked (or not worked) with Gentiles in the past.

Read Acts 14:19-28

- ❖ What caused the people to turn so drastically against Paul and Barnabas?

- ❖ Explain what you think happened to Paul when he was stoned based on the evidence in Scripture. (i.e. did he die?)

- ❖ What did Paul and Barnabas do for the believers as they began to head home? (v21-23) Why was this important for them to do?

- ❖ What did Paul and Barnabas do when they returned to Antioch in Syria? (v24-28) Why was this important for them to do?

Read Acts 15:1-35

- ❖ What does the fact that Paul & Barnabas went to Jerusalem over the legalism they had encountered tell you about their attitude towards it?

- ❖ What does this passage reveal about the relationship between the church in Jerusalem and the church in Antioch?

- ❖ Who was gathered together to consider the matter?

- ❖ What is the significance of *v10-11* in relation to the Old Testament law and Judaism in general?

- ❖ What point is James trying to make by quoting the Old Testament prophets in *v16-17*?

- ❖ What is James's advice at the end of the debate?

❖ Who makes the final decision?

❖ How do you reconcile the advice of the council with Paul's instructions in passages like *1 Cor 8*?

❖ What would have made the letter that was sent an encouragement to the church in Antioch?

❖ How did the Jerusalem council know that their decision was prompted by the Holy Spirit as their letter states?

For Additional Thought

Were Old Testament Jews saved by keeping the Mosaic Law?

16-The Second Journey of Paul, 1

Acts 15:36-16:40

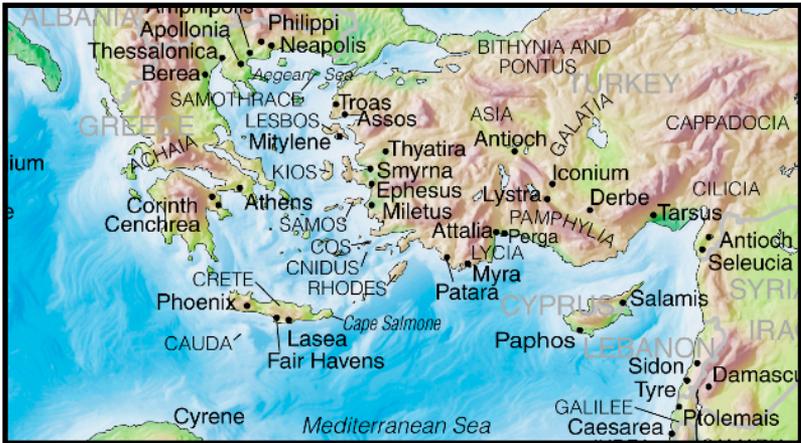
Read Acts 15:36-41

- ❖ Why did Paul not want John Mark to join them on their return trip to Asia Minor?

- ❖ Do you think that the conflict was resolved the best way possible? If not how could the resolution have been better?

Read Acts 16;1-10

- ❖ Use the map below to chart this portion of Paul and Silas's journey as you read.



- ❖ What do you learn about Timothy in these verses that helps you understand why Paul would want him to be a part of their ministry team?

- ❖ What is the significance of Paul's circumcision of Timothy especially so soon after the Jerusalem council?

- ❖ What is the significance of the Holy Spirit's role in Paul's ministry based on v6-10? How can the Spirit have a similar role in our ministries today?

Read Acts 16:11-40

- ❖ What is the significance of the riverside as Paul's choice of place to begin ministering in Philippi?

- ❖ Why would Lydia have been a significant convert?

- ❖ Why would Paul get annoyed at the girl telling everyone that they were servants of the Most High God?

- ❖ This seems to be the first recorded Gentile-only persecution of Paul; contrast the motivation behind the Gentiles' persecution (*v19*) with the motivation behind the Jews' persecution (*ch 13*).

- ❖ What is the significance of the fact that Paul and Silas were singing hymns in the middle of the night in prison?

- ❖ What factors contributed to the conversion of the jailer? (i.e. why did he respond as he did after the earthquake?)

- ❖ Why did Paul demand that the magistrates come down and let them out of jail themselves?

17-The Second Journey of Paul, 2

Acts 17:1-18:17

Read Acts 17:1-9

- ❖ How is the persecution recorded here different from other persecutions that had affected Paul's ministry?

- ❖ What is the significance of the fact that Paul and his comrades are accused of "turning the world upside down"?

Read Acts 17:10-15

- ❖ What is the significance of the nobility of the Berean Jews compared with those in Thessalonica?

- ❖ What happened in Berea that caused Paul to have to leave?

Read Acts 17:16-34

- ❖ What did Paul do that eventually earned him the opportunity to preach at the Areopagus? (i.e. why were the Greek philosophers so aware of his ideas?)

- ❖ What is your opinion of the Athenians desire to tell and hear of something new? Is this a positive thing or a negative thing?

- ❖ What is the significance of the fact that Paul begins his address by talking about the unknown god the Athenians worshipped?

- ❖ As you read through Paul's sermon at the Areopagus, record the different attributes of God that Paul brings to light.

- ❖ What does the phrase, "the times of ignorance God overlooked" mean?

- ❖ Record the different responses to the gospel?

Read Acts 18:1-17

- ❖ Don't forget complete your map of Paul's second journey in the last lesson as you read in Acts 18.

- ❖ What did Paul spend most of his time doing while he was Corinth?

- ❖ It seems to have taken some time before Paul gave up on taking the gospel to the Jews; what made him give up reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath?

- ❖ What is significant about the conversion of Crispus and the beating of Sosthenes?

- ❖ Why didn't Gallio listen to the Jews' complaint or stop the beating of Sosthenes?

18-The Third Journey of Paul, 1

Acts 18:18-19:41

Read Acts 18:18-28

- ❖ How did God use Paul's leaving of Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus to strengthen the church?

- ❖ What attributes of Apollos did God use to further the ministry? Where did Apollos continue his ministry?

Read Acts 19:1-10

- ❖ Use the map below to chart this portion of Paul's third journey as you read.



- ❖ What did the disciples in Ephesus misunderstand about John's message and baptism?

- ❖ What is the significance of the fact that these disciples in Ephesus spoke in tongues after receiving the Holy Spirit?

- ❖ Considering Paul's leaving the synagogue in Corinth and his leaving here in Ephesus; what generally pushes him to stop taking his ministry to Jews?

Read Acts 19:11-20

- ❖ What is the significance of what happened to Sceva's sons after they invoked the name of Jesus to cast out evil spirits?

- ❖ Note the effect the events with Sceva's sons had on the church?

Read Acts 19:21-41

- ❖ Note Paul's plan for his future ministry

- ❖ Again we see the Gentiles agitated against Paul and his ministry; what is the motivation for stopping Paul here?

- ❖ Why did the disciples want to prevent Paul from going anywhere near the theatre?

- ❖ What do the details of the riot at Ephesus teach concerning human nature?

- ❖ What is the point the town clerk is trying to make in order to calm the riot down?

19-The Third Journey of Paul

Acts 20:1-21:14

As you read through the different passages of *Acts 20*, don't forget to record Paul's stops on the map in the previous lesson.

Read Acts 20:1-16

- ❖ Note why Paul decided not to go back to Antioch in Syria but headed to Macedonia instead.

- ❖ What is Luke's purpose in recording the story of Eutychus's fall and recovery?

- ❖ Paul seems to be working rather hastily at this point, why?

Read Acts 20:17-38

- ❖ Note why Paul was going to Jerusalem and what he expected when he arrived.

- ❖ These verses are important verses concerning pastoral ministry, as Paul leaves the elders from Ephesus with instructions that he is convinced will be his last. What specific instructions does he give them?

- ❖ Based on the context, why does Paul quote Jesus as saying, “It is better to give than to receive”?

- ❖ Note what prompted the tears when Paul finished speaking and they prayed together.

Read Acts 21:1-14

- ❖ Note why the disciples in Tyre were telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem.

- ❖ Note why the disciples in Caesarea were telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem.

- ❖ Does Paul disobey the Spirit by heading to Jerusalem? (consider his words in 20:22-23)

For Additional Thought

Did Eutychus actually die when he fell out of the window?

20~The Plot Against Paul

Acts 21:15-23:35

Read Acts 21:15-36

- ❖ What was it that worried the elders in Jerusalem about Paul and his influence?

- ❖ When Paul decided to take James's advice and proceed with the ritual purification was he being hypocritical? Explain.

- ❖ Note who it is that incites the crowd concerning Paul and consider the lengths they went to.

- ❖ Note what the Jews accused Paul of. Why was Paul arrested by the Romans?

Read Acts 21:37-22:22

- ❖ How do you reconcile v16 with passages that teach salvation by faith (e.g. *Eph 2:8-9*)?

- ❖ Why did the Jews become so stirred up during Paul's testimony?

Read Acts 22:22-23:11

- ❖ What motivated the tribune to order Paul's whipping?

Citizenship
Roman law forbade the flogging of a Roman citizen without a hearing or a formal sentence. Being a citizen by birth was especially prestigious.

- ❖ What was Paul attempting to accomplish by claiming his Roman citizenship?

- ❖ Paul seems to be in a battle of wits against the Jewish leaders; what does each side seem to be trying to prove?

- ❖ How do you explain Paul's claim that he did not know that Ananias was the high priest?

- ❖ Paul wins the battle of wits; how does he do so?

- ❖ Note God's encouragement of Paul in *v11* especially in light of the question concerning Paul's disobeying God's will in going to Jerusalem.

Read Acts 23:12-35

- ❖ What does the fact that the Jews took an oath not to eat or drink until they killed Paul tell you about their motivation to eliminate him? (i.e why did they want to kill him?)

- ❖ What does the event with Paul's nephew reveal about what God really wanted to happen?

- ❖ How does Claudius Lysias cover himself in his letter to Felix?

- ❖ Why would Felix question what Roman province Paul was from?

21-The Trial of Paul

Acts 24:1-26:32

Read Acts 24:1-27

- ❖ Tertullus may have been a Gentile professional lawyer; what evidence of his professionalism can you see in the text?

- ❖ How does Paul defend himself? Why doesn't he place more of a distinction between himself and the unbelieving Jews?

- ❖ What impression do you get of the kind of ruler Felix was based on v22-27?

Read Acts 25:1-27

- ❖ Why does Paul appeal to Caesar? Was this a wise move?

- ❖ What appears to be the motivation behind Agrippa's desire to hear Paul's case?

22-*The Final Days before Rome*

Acts 26:1-27:44

Read Acts 26:1-32

- ❖ What gave Paul hope as he presented his case to Agrippa?

- ❖ What is the significance of the question Paul asks in v8?

- ❖ Notes the main points of Paul's gospel presentation to Agrippa.

- ❖ Contrast Festus's and Agrippa's response to Paul's testimony and the gospel. How do you account for their different responses?

- ❖ Many times throughout Paul's trials and imprisonment in Judea and Caesarea political leaders comment on how Paul had done nothing deserving of death; why wouldn't they let him go?

Read Acts 27:1-44

- ❖ Would you be inclined to listen to Paul's advice about the journey? Why or why not?

- ❖ What is the significance of the ship abandoning its cargo in a storm?

- ❖ Contrast Paul's attitude after seeing the angel to that of the ship's crew even after Paul's encouragement.

- ❖ In what ways does Julius show Paul unusual respect? Why does he do so?

- ❖ What encouragement can we find from the disappointing events of v39-44?

23-Paul in Rome

Acts 28:1-31

Read Acts 28:1-31

- ❖ Note how God used the unfortunate shipwreck and Paul to His glory on the island.

- ❖ What encouragement did God allow Paul to have upon his arrival in Rome?

- ❖ Note how Paul got right to work even while he was a prisoner in Rome.

- ❖ Considering the rest of Paul's ministry, what is significant about the messages that Paul gives to the Jews in Rome?

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 discuss the 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.

13~The Missionaries to the World

Acts 13:1-3

- ❖ God doesn't call everyone to leave their home country to be a missionary, but he does call all of us to be a missionary in our sphere of influence. Discuss ways in which you could practically become a missionary in the different arenas of your life.
- ❖ What was the disciples part in the Spirit's work to set apart Paul and Barnabas? Discuss the role of fasting in Christianity today and whether or not you or your family ought to consider the practice.
- ❖ How did the disciples know that they were to set apart Paul and Barnabas to a special work? Discuss how we can be in tune to the Holy Spirit in the same way so that we might know what God would have us do.

14~The First Journey of Paul

Acts 13:4-52

- ❖ What happened that caused the proconsul to believe the gospel? What did you have to see to get you to the point of believing the gospel? Discuss the relationship of faith to sight (consider *John 20:29*).
- ❖ What happened when Paul and Barnabas started preaching in Antioch Pisidia? Discuss your response and attitude to the Word of God whether read or preached. Are there attitudes that you need to guard against or change?
- ❖ What does Paul use to prove his points in his sermon in Antioch Pisidia? How useful do you find the Old Testament? Discuss the usefulness of the Old Testament for your life and ministry today.

15-*The End of the First Journey*

Acts 14:1-15:35

- ❖ What did Paul call the worship of Zeus in Lystra? Discuss some of the vain things that you are tempted to worship in America.
- ❖ What did Paul and Barnabas do on their way back to Syria? Discuss how someone filled a role of discipleship in your life, and how you can fill a role of discipleship in someone else's life.
- ❖ Who all is involved in the final decision of the Jerusalem council? Discuss the implications of this council on your role as part of the Body of Christ (the church) and how you can best fulfill that role.

16-*The Second Journey of Paul, 1*

Acts 15:36-16:40

- ❖ Who prevented Paul from going the way he intended to go? Discuss the type of relationship with God that is necessary to achieve this level of intimacy. Do you know what God wants for you? Why or why not?
- ❖ How did Paul and Silas respond to being thrown into the Philippian jail? Discuss what it would take to be singing in the conditions that Paul and Silas found themselves in. Do you respond to difficult circumstances with praise? Why or why not?
- ❖ Luke never records for us Paul and Barnabas sharing the gospel with the Philippian jailer, but the man immediately asked about salvation after the earthquake. Discuss how your life could be such a testimony that you would hardly have to say a word of testimony to those without Christ. What changes would need to take place for that to be true of you?

17-The Second Journey of Paul, 2

Acts 17:1-18:17

- ❖ How did Paul occupy himself while he was in Athens? Are you one that cannot be quiet about how great God is and how He is working in your life? Discuss why we tend to avoid topics like God's goodness and His work in our lives. What could you do to be more bold?
- ❖ What does Paul say in his sermon at the Aeropagus that God overlooked? Discuss how God has overlooked times of ignorance in your life and how He has changed you since.
- ❖ What title did two of the recorded converts of Corinth carry? Discuss people that you think would never respond to the gospel; discuss someone you know who seemed unreachable that Jesus saved.

18-The Third Journey of Paul, 1

Acts 18:18-19:41

- ❖ What happened to the disciples of John in Ephesus when they received the Holy Spirit? Discuss the "tongues" passages in Acts (*ch 2, 10, & 19*) and why God used tongues in these particular instances.
- ❖ What did Paul eventually tell the Jews in the synagogue at Ephesus? Discuss how Paul gives us an example of how we can most effectively use our evangelism energies.
- ❖ In the Ephesian riot recorded at the end of *ch 19*, Luke states that some of the people didn't even know what the raucous was about. Discuss your tendencies to follow the crowd and listen to people even when you don't understand the issues at stake. Do you think this is a common deficiency in all men?

19-The Third Journey of Paul, 2

Acts 20:1-21:14

- ❖ What is Paul expecting when he gets to Jerusalem? Discuss how willing you would be to obey God even you knew there would be opposition. Discuss our tendency to see opposition as God telling us “no.”
- ❖ In what context is Paul talking when he quotes Jesus as saying, “It is better to give than to receive”? Discuss how we normally apply that statement and whether or not it is accurate in the context.

20-The Plot Against Paul

Acts 21:15-23:35

- ❖ Several people accuse Paul of being hypocritical based on the fact that he went through the purification ritual while he was in Jerusalem. Discuss your own tendencies toward hypocrisy and consider why Paul might find that battle to be a difficult one.
- ❖ Who was responsible for stirring up the crowd in Jerusalem? Discuss your own tendencies toward going out of your way or to great lengths to make someone else’s life miserable. What does this reveal about your heart?
- ❖ What was motivating the religious leaders in their outrage toward Paul? Discuss your own tendencies toward spiritualizing what you do to make it seem right. What types of things might we do with the same motivation as the religious leaders?

21-The Trial of Paul

Acts 24:1-26:32

- ❖ Felix's rule seems to be motivated by his own welfare. Discuss the affects that an unjust government or authority of any kind might have on its subjects. Are you unjust in your areas of authority?
- ❖ What rights did Paul exercise in his own defense? Discuss the use of governmental methods to accomplish an end. Are there times when this is wrong? How can we know where we should draw the line in our use of the government to accomplish things.

22-The Final Days before Rome

Acts 26:1-27:44

- ❖ Paul doesn't seem to think that God's raising of the dead is all that incredible. Discuss why Paul would say this (c.f. 26:8). Does he make a legitimate point? Why is it especially legitimate in the context in which he asks it?
- ❖ How does Paul respond to the angel's message that no one would die in the shipwreck? Discuss your responses to God's revelation in comparison (or contrast) to Paul's. Do you respond with the same confidence as you read Scripture?

23-Paul in Rome

Acts 28:1-31

- ❖ What happened when Paul arrived in Rome? Discuss instances in your own life when God has sent something or someone who has been a great encouragement to you.
- ❖ Paul seems determined to evangelize the world no matter what his circumstances. Discuss how we can have a similar mindset in our evangelism. What is it that prevents that sort of boldness and tenacity in most Christians?