

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

STUDY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOR

INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND GROUPS

Copyright © 2003-2004 by Jeff Wheeler. All rights reserved.

Second Edition. July 2004.

For additional resources and Bible studies, visit our Web site:

<http://www.thefourwheelers.com>

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Lesson 1 – Acts 1.....	6
Lesson 2 – Acts 2.....	10
Lesson 3 – Acts 3.....	13
Lesson 4 – Acts 4:1-22.....	16
Lesson 5 – Acts 4:23-5:11.....	19
Lesson 6 – Acts 5:12-42.....	22
Lesson 7 – Acts 6:1-7.....	25
Lesson 8 – Acts 6:8-8:1.....	28
Lesson 9 – Acts 8:1b-25.....	32
Lesson 10 – Acts 8:26-40.....	35
Lesson 11 – Acts 9:1-19.....	38
Lesson 12 – Acts 9:19b-30.....	41
Lesson 13 – Acts 9:31-43.....	44
Lesson 14 – Acts 10.....	47
Lesson 15 – Acts 11:1-18.....	51
Lesson 16 – Acts 11:19-30.....	54
Lesson 17 – Acts 12.....	57
Lesson 18 – Acts 12:25-13:3.....	61
Lesson 19 – Acts 13:4-12.....	64
Lesson 20 – Acts 13:13-52.....	67
Lesson 21 – Acts 14:1-20.....	70
Lesson 22 – Acts 14:20b-21a.....	73
Lesson 23 – Acts 14:21b-28.....	75
Lesson 24 – Acts 15:1-35.....	78
Lesson 25 – Acts 15:36-41.....	81
Lesson 26 – Acts 16:1-10.....	84
Lesson 27 – Acts 16:11-40.....	87
Lesson 28 – Acts 17.....	91
Lesson 29 – Acts 18:1-23.....	95
Lesson 30 – Acts 18:24-28.....	99
Lesson 31 – Acts 19:1-22.....	103
Lesson 32 – Acts 19:23-20:12.....	108
Lesson 33 – Acts 20:13-38.....	112
Lesson 34 – Acts 21:1-16.....	115
Lesson 35 – Acts 21:17-26.....	118
Lesson 36 – Acts 21:27-22:22.....	120
Lesson 37 – Acts 22:23-23:35.....	123
Lesson 38 – Acts 24:1-25:12.....	127
Lesson 39 – Acts 25:13–26:32.....	131
Lesson 40 – Acts 27.....	134
Lesson 41 – Acts 28.....	138
Conclusion.....	141

Introduction

We love facts! Who did it; where did it happen; when was it; what happened. Then we like to think about those facts and make guesses: “Why did he do that?” “What would have happened if...?”

The book of Acts is a historical book; it reveals the who, what, when, where and so forth of the start of the Christian church. It’s chock full of facts. However, we want to learn more than mere facts. As you study the facts of this book, be alert for how what you learn can impact you today.

When used in a family or small group, I suggest that you encourage all members to read the Bible passage ahead of time. However, do not complete the worksheet ahead of time. Instead, complete the worksheet with the family, group or class. This will provide an opportunity for additional discussion that might be otherwise missed and will also allow the teacher or facilitator to guide the class based on questions and concerns that are discovered through this process. Of course, the teachers or small group facilitator may prefer to complete the worksheets ahead of time so that you have a possible answer for each blank.

A Note about Translations

While I typically use the New American Standard Bible (NASB) or the English Standard Bible (ESV) for my personal study, these lessons are keyed to the New International Version (NIV), as it is currently one of the more popular translations in use. As a result, some of the fill-in-the-blank questions may make the most sense if you read from the NIV. However, you should be able to use your favorite translation for this study. Additionally, and especially if you have read your current Bible translation for several years, I recommend that you also read from an alternate translation, such as The Message (MSG). Although I do not recommend The Message for serious study, when used in conjunction with a more literal translation, it may help provide you with some fresh insights.

Study Resources

In addition to the Scriptures, the following resources were used in the preparation of this study.

- Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary
- Holman New Testament Commentary, Acts
- New Unger’s Bible Dictionary

A Note about Our Copyright

We’ve published this study in the hope that you will find it interesting and helpful. Although it is a free resource, it is copyrighted material. The purpose of claiming our copyright on these original publications is to protect our authorship and rights of publication.

You may print and duplicate this material for your non-commercial use. You may:

1. Print and reproduce the studies and publications for your personal use.
2. Print and reproduce the studies and publications to use as teaching material, such as to use in small group Bible studies.

You may not make commercial use of this material. You may not:

1. Sell this material in any format.
2. Republish this material in any format, such as including it in a book or on another Web site.
3. Sell the material to your students, though you may recoup reasonable costs of printing and duplication.

Additional Resources

Additional resources are available at our Web site: www.thefourwheelers.com.

Lesson 1 – Acts 1

Introduction

The book of Acts was written by Luke; Luke also wrote _____. This book is really “part 2” of the history that Luke is writing about. While Acts is a book of history (who did what, what happened, etc.), in our study, we will watch for principles that we can apply to our lives today.

What do we know about Luke?

- He was a physician (Colossians 4:14).
- He traveled with Paul on some of his missionary trips.
- He was with Paul while Paul was a prisoner in Rome (2 Timothy 4:10-11)
- Luke was a Gentile, probably Syrian.
- According to an introduction written in the 2nd century, “Luke was a Syrian of Antioch, by profession a physician, the disciple of the apostles, and later a follower of Paul until his martyrdom. He served the Lord without distraction, without a wife, and without children. He died at the age of eighty-four in Boeotia (a region in central Greece), full of the Holy Spirit.”
- He may have written the gospel of Luke and this book of Acts while with Paul in prison in Rome.

The Recipient (Acts 1:1)

Who did Luke write the letter to? _____.

Theophilus means “beloved of God” or “one who loves God”. What do you think:

- ___ Luke wrote his letter to a specific person, named Theophilus.
- ___ Luke wrote his letter for all Christians, and addressed it to a “fake person” named Theophilus as a way to address it to all Christians.
- ___ Luke wrote his letter to a specific person, but intended it to be useful to other Christians also.

Since Theophilus is addressed as “most excellent Theophilus” in Luke 1:3, it is probable that Theophilus was a real person, and a person of wealth or position. There are several interesting possibilities to consider:

- Theophilus was a new believer and Luke wrote his accounts to help him grow in his faith.
- Theophilus financed the writing of the history by supporting Luke while Luke wrote.

Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven (Acts 1:1-11)

Luke gives three additional evidences that Jesus is alive, that he was resurrected from the dead. What evidence does he offer?

1. (vs. 3) _____
2. (vs. 3) _____
3. (vs. 4-5) _____

This third piece of evidence was a specific prediction about what would soon happen. Jesus made the prediction while appearing to his followers. Jesus told the apostles that they would be “baptized with the Holy Spirit”. Do you know when this occurred? _____.

If not, don’t worry. Watch during the next few lessons to discover when this prophecy was fulfilled.

After you see something unusual or amazing (such as a great play in the baseball or football game, a great ending to a game, a shooting star, a great lightning bolt), what do you tend to do? We tend to stand around talking about it with others who saw it also, right? What did the disciples do after they saw Jesus lifted up into the clouds? _____

Was that a pretty natural response?	YES	NO
If you had been there, would you have probably done the same thing?	YES	NO

What might the disciples have been thinking? What might you have been thinking if you’d been there?

- ___ Is he coming back?
- ___ Did I just see what I think I saw?
- ___ I can’t believe it!
- ___ Oh, great. Our leader has left us again. What are we supposed to do now?
- ___ _____
- ___ _____

As the disciples were “looking intently up into the sky”, two angels appeared. In your own words, what did they say? _____

Appointing a New Apostle (Acts 1:12-26)

The apostles and other believers gathered together. Perhaps because they didn't know what else to do, what did they do? _____

"Joined together constantly in prayer" could include:

- public prayer
- out-loud prayer in small groups
- personal prayer

It indicates a commitment and devotion to praying.

Which of the twelve original apostles were present?

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | |

Which of the original 12 apostles was not there? _____. Why not? _____

The apostles must have felt it was important to have 12 apostles again, because they decided to replace Judas. What qualification was applied for the new apostle? _____

What purpose was given for naming a new apostle? _____

What method was used to select between Matthias and Joseph? _____
Casting lots was a means of selecting between choices. It's kind of like drawing straws (short one wins) or flipping a coin. Read Proverbs 16:33. What do you think: is flipping a coin a good way to determine God's plan for your life? _____

I've often wondered about the selection of Matthias. What do you think?

- ___ God led them to make this decision.
- ___ They thought it was a good idea, so they did it.
- ___ I don't know if this was God's idea or just Peter's idea.

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 2 – Acts 2

Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13)

The disciples were all _____ in one place when they were _____ by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit then enabled them to _____ in other _____.

Why was being able to communicate in other languages important? _____

The disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit to communicate the gospel message of Jesus the Christ to the many people that were visiting Jerusalem for the feast. When we are filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit, He helps us accomplish the works that God has for us to do. This may appear miraculous (speaking a new language) or seem ordinary (being kind when we would naturally be angry), but is no less miraculous.

The First Sermon (Acts 2:14-41)

What are some of the main points of Peter's first sermon?

- (verse 21) _____
- (verse 22-23) _____
- (verse 24, 32) _____
- (verse 36) _____
- (verse _____) _____
- (verse _____) _____
- (verse _____) _____

What was the result of Peter's first sermon? _____

Did everyone who heard Peter believe? YES NO

Why did you answer "yes" or "no": _____

Meeting with Other Christians (Acts 2:42-47)

What activities are important when you meet with other Christians?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Singing hymns | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading the Bible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing a sermon | <input type="checkbox"/> Singing praise choruses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An overhead projector | <input type="checkbox"/> Greeting visitors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having an invitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing the Lord's Supper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time for testimonies | <input type="checkbox"/> Public prayer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's church | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery care for children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sitting in the same place | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to special music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having a pretty building | <input type="checkbox"/> Spending time together |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time for prayer requests | <input type="checkbox"/> Drama and skits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A band | <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving an offering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A bulletin or newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable seats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Times to stand | <input type="checkbox"/> Times to sit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responsive reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Dressing up in nice clothes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

If a father said that he was devoted to his children, but only saw them once a month, what would you think?

If a husband said that he was devoted to his wife, but spent his weekends playing golf with the guys, what would you think? _____

If a student said he was devoted to learning, but spent his time at the library reading comic books, what would you think? _____

In Acts 2:42, we learn that these first Christians were devoted to four things:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

What do you think? Since these four activities were important to the Christians then:

- They should be important to us now, too.
- They could be important to us now, too, but they don't have to be.
- It really doesn't apply to us – that was then, this is now.

How do we express devotion (or lack of devotion) to:

1. Apostle's teaching: _____
2. Fellowship: _____
3. Breaking of bread (Lord's Supper): _____
4. Prayer: _____

What improvements or changes, if any, could your church make to better emphasize these aspects?

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 3 – Acts 3

Maintaining Ties to the Jewish Church (Acts 3:1)

Peter and John were going to _____ to _____ at _____ in the afternoon. There were two times of prayer each day: at 9 in the morning and again at 3 in the afternoon. The priests at the temple of Jerusalem would pray at these two times. The priests would lead the people in the temple in both singing and prayer.

Peter and John were both Jewish by race and religion. Even though they believed that Jesus was the Christ, they still participated in the regular worship activities at the temple. What might have motivated them to continue their Jewish religious practices? _____

Since these early Jewish believers still maintained their Jewish practices, should we also “go to the temple” and adopt Jewish practices even though we believe in Jesus?

___ Yes

___ No

Paul later teaches that Gentiles don't need to adopt the religious practices of the Jews in order to be a follower of Christ. Belief in Christ is characterized as “the new covenant” and the Old Testament practices are described as being a type, symbol and shadow of this new covenant by the writer of Hebrews. These lead us to conclude that Christian worship is new and distinct from the Jewish practices. While we can learn from Jewish practices, we need not follow them.

What advice would you give to a Jew who has recently converted to Christianity? _____

What advice would you give to a Muslim who has recently converted to Christianity? _____

What advice would you give to a Wiccan who has recently converted to Christianity? _____

Healing the Beggar (Acts 3:2-10)

A man crippled _____ was taken daily to the temple in order that he might beg for charity. Since he had been crippled from birth, he didn't know what it was like to not be crippled. He had never experienced wholeness.

What did the beggar ask for? _____

What were Peter and John able to give him instead? _____

How did Peter and John accomplish this? _____

Was a response required from the beggar, or did it "just happen" without any response on his part? _____

Consider the similarities between this beggar's physical healing and spiritual healing (salvation).

- The beggar was crippled from birth. The Bible teaches that all people are born spiritually crippled (John 3:1-21; Romans 3:23, etc.)
- The beggar was seeking enough to get by (gifts of money) instead of what he really needed (healing). He probably didn't believe that healing was possible, so he settled for what the world had to offer. Similarly, many people today ask for the wrong things. Perhaps they ask for a better job or better health, but neglect to ask for what is really needed: forgiveness. Some don't know that forgiveness is available, and others don't believe that it is available.
- The beggar was unable to help himself; he could not heal his legs. Similarly, we are not able to give ourselves spiritual life. Only God can do this.
- Peter and John were used by God to bring healing to this man, but God did the healing. Similarly, we may help others understand the truth about God, but God is the only one that can bring spiritual healing.

What was the beggar's response? _____

What was the onlookers' response? _____

What opportunity did this give to Peter and John? _____

Peter's Second (Recorded) Sermon (Acts 3:11-26)

Summarize Peter's second recorded sermon given to these Jewish listeners. _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Answer the following: “When I go to the mall...

___ ...I expect to heal a person in a wheelchair and see her immediately stand up and walk.”

___ ...I expect to give money to homeless people that I pass on the way to the mall.”

___ ...I have a kind response for the person that steals my parking place.”

___ ...and get stuck in a line for 20 minutes, I have an encouraging word for the cashier.”

Which of the above would be considered “miraculous”?

Peter and John gained an opportunity to testify about God when they were involved in the crippled man’s miraculous healing. When you routinely respond with kindness and love, rather than a “natural” response of frustration or selfishness, then your miraculous response may also result in an opportunity to testify about God.

True or False:

___ Your Christ-like lifestyle will give you *credibility* as you talk about your faith in Jesus.

Discuss what you’ve learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 4 – Acts 4:1-22

Peter and John Get in Trouble (Acts 4:1-7)

What were the religious leaders upset with Peter and John about?

- Peter and John were _____ the people.
- Peter and John were _____ the _____ of the dead.

What does this reveal about the religious leaders?

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----|---|
| ___ | They believed in Jesus | ___ | They welcomed open discussion |
| ___ | They were afraid | ___ | They weren't concerned about the crippled man |
| ___ | They did not believe in Jesus | ___ | They loved the truth |
| ___ | They felt threatened | ___ | They were receptive to God |
| ___ | They had hard hearts | ___ | They loved the people |

In general, when people are rebelling against God:

- T F they exercise good judgment.
- T F they are receptive to hearing the truth.
- T F they are more concerned without outward appearance than having a right heart.
- T F they are genuinely happy when good things happen to others.

The religious leaders asked Peter and John “by what power or what name did you do this?” How do you think Peter and John reacted to this question?

- ___ Oh, no! How are we going to get out of this scrape?
- ___ Woo hoo! They've asked the exact question that we want to answer!

Peter and John Give an Answer (Acts 4:8-12)

Peter and John addressed the religious leaders (a) with respect or (b) with rudeness. When you address others (even those accusing you), you should address them (a) with respect or (b) with rudeness.

Read Mark 13:11. What does Jesus promise? _____

Is this promise:

- _____ to all believers
- _____ to the apostles, including Peter and John, and it doesn't apply to us
- _____ to the apostles, including Peter and John, but it may apply to us too

Read Acts 4:8. Who empowered Peter to speak? _____

What points does Peter clearly make?

- The cripple was healed by _____.
- The religious leaders had Jesus _____.
- _____ raised Jesus from the dead.
- Salvation is through _____ alone.

Based upon what Peter said, how do you think Peter would respond to these statements?

1. It doesn't really matter what you believe as long as you are sincere.
2. Christianity is just one of many ways to find God.
3. God is too big for just one religion. (I recently saw this on a bumper sticker.)
4. Since God loves everyone, we'll all go to heaven.

Just Who Are These Guys Anyway? (Acts 4:13)

Peter and John were "courageous" but also "unschooled, ordinary men." Why were they able to give such a bold and intelligent answer? _____

Peter and John had spent three years with Jesus – walking with him, eating with him, learning from him. None of us interact with Jesus in this same way. Being with Jesus made a difference in their lives. While we can't be with Jesus in the same way that Peter and John were with Him, what are some things that can make a difference in our lives?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Peter and John Take a Stand (Acts 4:14-22)

When told that they have to stop talking about Jesus, Peter and John reply that it was better to obey God than to obey man. How would we correctly apply this principle today? What do you think of these examples?

- _____ They don't allow soliciting at the mall, but everyone should have a Bible, so I'm going to hand out Bibles at the mall anyway.
- _____ Bibles are illegal in country Iowazistan. I am going to smuggle Bibles into the country across the border, then distribute them.
- _____ The government uses my tax money for all sorts of awful things that God wouldn't want me to support, so I'm not going to pay taxes anymore.
- _____ The police came to take all of our Bibles, but when they asked me if I had one, I lied and said, "No". I hid it in the basement.
- _____ The school principal says that we can't have school sponsored prayer before the football game, but I'm going to stand up and pray real loud anyway.
- _____ My boss has said that I have to take down the Ten Commandments plaque that is on my desk. I plan to replace it with a Ten Commandments monument that will be too heavy for him to move.
- _____ The police say that every church must be registered, but only their kind of church is legal. We have to keep our church meetings secret because they are against the law.

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 5 – Acts 4:23-5:11

The Believers Pray (Acts 4:23-31)

Peter and John were released by the religious leaders – after having been jailed overnight and repeatedly questioned and threatened by them – and they then found the other followers and told them of what had happened. How did Jesus’ followers react to this news? _____

The believers made several statements of fact during their prayer. [Unscramble the words]

- 4:24 God is [o g r v e s e n i] _____.
- 4:24 God is the [a t r r e c o] _____.
- 4:25 God [k p e o s] _____.
- 4:28 God was in [t o n c o r l] _____ of what happened to Jesus.

How important is it to believe that God is in control when you pray? _____

If God is not really in control of what happens, then can He answer your prayer?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Maybe ___ Sometimes

What did these followers of Jesus ask for? (4:29-30) _____

What didn't they ask for that we might have asked for if we had been in their shoes?

What did they get? (4:31) _____

Was their prayer answered? ___ Yes ___ No

Was their request granted? ___ Yes ___ No

Are there some prayers that God always answers? If so, give some examples and reasons.

- _____
- _____
- _____

The Believers Live as Changed People (Acts 4:32-37)

What evidence do we see that these followers of Jesus were unusual people?

- 4:32 _____
- 4:32 _____
- 4:32 _____
- 4:32 _____
- 4:33 _____
- 4:34-35 _____

To what do you attribute these unusual characteristics? _____

An Enemy Resurfaces (Acts 5:1-11)

The Holy Spirit was working in the lives of these believers. They were characterized by:

- unity
- generosity
- a powerful witness

We've already seen how the religious leaders reacted to these positive characteristics. Now we'll see how a stronger enemy responds.

"Ananias" means "God is merciful".

"Sapphira" means "Beautiful" and was a popular woman's name.

What sin(s) did Ananias and Sapphira commit?

- _____ They didn't give all of their money.
- _____ They lied about what they were giving.
- _____ They didn't sell more and give more.
- _____ They didn't use an approved offering envelope.
- _____ They were motivated more by what others would think of them than what God knew of them.

How did Peter know what had really happened? _____

Who had influenced Ananias and Sapphira to do this? _____

What was the result of their sin? _____

According to verse 11, what seized the whole church? _____

What might the believers have been thinking?

- _____ They got what they deserved.
- _____ Uh oh. I'm probably just as guilty as they were...
- _____ I'd better watch my step; I could get zapped at any time.
- _____ God must be serious about honesty.

What does it make you think?

- _____ I'm glad God doesn't do that anymore, 'cause I'd be dead by now.
- _____ At that point of the church, God needed to quickly weed out the hypocrisy because of the damage it could do. I need to be wary of hypocrisy in my life, too.
- _____ Why was God so harsh with Ananias and Sapphira, but not with others?

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary, Volume 2, page 251:

Extraordinary generosity and a caring sensitivity to the poor characterized the life of the early church. These virtues are quite contrary to our natural tendency to focus on ourselves. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that prompts a desire to give. Are you allowing the Spirit to warm the coldness of your heart? Do you periodically contribute to your church's common fund for the poor? Are you responsive when you hear of some one in need?

Lesson 6 – Acts 5:12-42

Signs and Wonders (Acts 5:12-16)

All the believers used to meet together at Solomon’s Colonnade. The temple area was surrounded by a colonnade, which is a long, narrow, open building supported by columns. The colonnade on the east side of the temple was known as Solomon’s Colonnade.

The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. Do we see such signs and wonders today? What do you think?

- ___ Yes. You can see miracles by watching the faith healers on the television.
- ___ Yes. Miraculous signs and wonders are still seen in places where demonic influence is seen.
- ___ Yes. However, the signs and wonders that we see today are not as visible or obvious. The signs and wonders we see are like an alcoholic being delivered from his addiction.
- ___ No. The signs and wonders were needed then to give authority and credibility to the apostles as the church was starting. Now that the church is started, we don’t need such signs.
- ___ No. However, we should see signs and wonders, but our faith is too weak.
- ___ I don’t really know.

What did the citizens think of the apostles? _____

Why might those curious to learn more about the apostles’ teaching not dare to join them?

- _____
- _____
- _____

The First Jailbreak Miracle (Acts 5:17-42)

Word about the apostles has spread beyond Jerusalem. People from the surrounding area are bringing their sick to the apostles, and the sick are being healed. Some people are superstitious and think that even Peter’s shadow can heal. So, what are the religious leaders jealous about?

Acts of the Apostles

What “rule” were the apostles breaking that led to their arrest? _____

This rule was given in Acts chapter _____ verse _____.

An angel of Lord appears to the apostles in jail (we don’t know which apostles they were), releases them from jail, and gives them instruction. They are to stand in the _____ and tell the people the full message of this _____.

When the religious leaders sent for the apostles in jail, they discovered they weren’t there. Where were these apostles instead? _____

What were they doing? _____

What does their obedience teach us? _____

The religious leaders want to kill the apostles, but a Pharisee named Gamaliel urges against killing the apostles. He wisely tells that if God is not in this, the new movement will fade away on its own. But if God is in it, they are fighting God and not merely the apostles. Where did Gamaliel, who did not believe in Jesus, receive such wisdom? _____

Can people who don’t believe in Jesus offer us wise advice?

____ Yes

____ No

____ It depends on the subject

Instead of killing the disciples, the religious leaders “merely” had them flogged. How did the disciples respond? _____

Have you ever suffered disgrace? ____ Yes ____ No

Have you ever suffered disgrace, not because of your own foolishness but because of your faith in Jesus?

____ Yes ____ No

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Are there still people today who are curious to learn more about Jesus? ___ Yes ___ No

What might discourage people with questions about Jesus from joining us in church today?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

How, then, can we help people learn about Jesus?

- _____
- _____
- _____

“When I see how the disciples responded to being flogged because of their obedience to God...

___ I wonder how I would respond in similar circumstances.”

___ I thank God that it isn't that bad here where I live.”

___ I am challenged to grow further.”

___ _____”

___ _____”

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 7 – Acts 6:1-7

The Believers Organize to Meet a Need

- “Hebraic Jews” were Jews who likely lived within Israel and spoke Hebrew as a native language. They would have read the sacred Scriptures as written in Hebrew.
- “Grecian Jews” (also known as “Hellenistic Jews”) were Jews that did not live within Israel and who likely did not speak Hebrew. Since Greek was their common language, they probably read a Greek translation of the Old Testament (called the Septuagint) when they met to worship. They were often looked down upon as second-class by the Hebrew-speaking Jews.
- What word describes this attitude? r e j u d e d .
- As a result of the cultural difference between the Hebraic Jews and the Grecian Jews, a problem arose. What was the problem? _____

Something to Think About

Prejudice – “a preconceived and often irrational judgment or opinion about an individual or group without having grounds for that opinion.” Some of the believers that we are reading about were prejudiced and as a result showed favoritism. Read James 2:1-4. What does God think about favoritism? _____

In your daily experiences, do you show favor or preference, or avoid showing favor, to any particular group of people? The wealthy, the homeless, the healthy, the sick, the native, the foreign?

In response to the problem, what did the twelve apostles, the leaders of the Christians in Jerusalem, do?

- They gathered all of the disciples (that is, all of the believers) together.
 - Was it important to gather them all together? Yes No
 - Why? _____

- They did not ignore the problem.
- They recognized their limitations.
 - What were they already busy doing? _____
 - What needed to be done? _____
- They suggested a solution.

What qualifications were necessary for one chosen to serve the believers?

- _____
- _____
- _____

The apostles do not indicate that one “job” was more important than the other. They were busy with their assignment (the ministry of the word of God) and now a new assignment (serving the widows) came along. They could not do both, so they suggested that this new assignment be given to other wise Christian men.

The apostles identified the criteria, but the entire group of believers selected those to serve. Who did they select?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | |

In verse 6, the apostles “laid hands” upon the seven. This was a symbolic act of welcoming them as partners. It is similar to our custom of shaking hands.

Something to Think About

Since the church is composed of imperfect people like you and me, it is inevitable that conflicts and problems will arise. God is interested in how we respond to these problems. Do we want to get our own way, or do we not seek our own? Do we act with love towards those that disagree with us?

The apostles gave us a good example of how to respond to conflict.

1. Do not ignore the problem.
2. Get everyone involved in the conflict involved in a discussion.
3. Recognize that you can't do it all.
4. Make suggestions, not demands.
5. Let people make their own decision, and then be responsible for it.

We can be challenged at each of these steps.

1. It is easier to ignore a problem than to confront it.
2. It is easier to talk to those that agree with us than to get everyone together.
3. It is easy to over-extend ourselves and take a job that should go to some one else.
4. It is easier to dictate than to reach consensus.
5. It is difficult to let people be responsible without trying to step in and “fix it”.

How do you handle conflict? Can you use these principles to help when you are in a conflict?

What was the result (verse 7)? _____

The Animal’s Football Game

The Big Animals and Little Animals were playing a football game. After the first half, the score was Big Animals 84, Little Animals 0. In hopelessness, the Little Animals kicked off to begin the second half.

Somehow, the Chimp who caught the kickoff was tackled on the 10-yard line, their worst field position of the day. On first down, the Big Animals ran the Elephant up the middle – no gain. On second down, the Big Animals tried a screen pass to the Zebra – again, no gain. On third down, a deep pass to the Giraffe – incomplete for no gain.

As the defensive unit of the little animals came screaming off the field, the coach (a gopher) shouted over their excited roar: “Who made the tackle on the kickoff?” The centipede responded, “I did, Coach.” “Who stopped the elephant down the middle?” Again, the centipede, “I did, Coach.” “Who knocked down those two passes?” To the gopher’s amazement the centipede again acknowledged his surprising feat on defense: “I did, Coach.”

Having heard the report, the coach screamed at the centipede, “Where were you in the first half?” The centipede replied, “I was in the locker room taping my ankles.”

The moral? Don’t be caught in the locker room when it’s time to play the game.

Holman New Testament Commentary, Acts

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you’ve learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 8 – Acts 6:8-8:1

Stephen is Arrested (Acts 6:8-15)

- Stephen was described as “a man full of _____ and _____”, who “did great _____ and _____”. Would you use any of these descriptions to describe some one that you know today?
- “Stephen” is not a Hebrew name. We don’t know where he was from, but based on his name, we think that he was a Christian Jew, but a citizen of a different country. He was likely part of the “Hellenistic Jews” (also known as Grecian Jews) discussed earlier in chapter 6.
- The Synagogue of the Freedmen was frequented by people from Cyrene and Alexandria and the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. Most of the people at that synagogue would have been:
____ Hebraic Jews
____ Hellenistic Jews
- Stephen was one of those selected to help oversee the care of the widows. However, he was also busy doing something else. How would you describe what Stephen must have been busy doing. _____

- Stephen went to his own people, the Hellenistic Jews, to tell them the truth about Jesus being the Messiah. Stephen is described as being wise and speaking with the power of the Holy Spirit. As a result, those that argued with him didn’t make any progress. They must have concluded, “If we can’t beat him, we should:
____ join him.”
____ have him arrested.”

Something to Think About

Stephen’s enemies couldn’t find any “dirt” on him, so they had to resort to lies. Are you living your life in such a way that if an enemy wanted to get rid of you, he’d have to lie?

- When he was accused by the powerful religious leaders, Stephen’s face “was like the face of an angel.” What do you think Luke meant by that? _____

- How do you imagine you might feel if you were arrested and brought before a hostile judge? Would you be confident? Afraid? Nervous? Intimidated? Calm? Hysterical?

- Stephen responded with confidence and boldness. What made the difference? _____

What Do You Think?

Imagine that you arrive at church and find a foreigner engaging your church leaders in debate. The foreigner insists that some of your traditions are wrong and your understanding of the Bible is incomplete. You need to listen to what a newer prophet, Mohammed, had to say, then follow his teachings if you really want to be a true follower of God. Inexplicably, your church leaders seem confounded by this foreigner, and they are unable to refute what he teaches. How would you respond? How would your leaders respond?

Stephen was a foreigner in Jerusalem. He visited the Greek speaking synagogue and began to teach of Jesus. Those that were listening were being asked to adjust their thinking and change their traditions. Their leaders, wanting to protect their faith and traditions, argued with Stephen. However, Stephen's arguments were full of wisdom and he could not be refuted.

How are these events (one imagined and one real) similar? _____

How are they different? _____

Stephen Gives Testimony (Acts 7:1-53)

- Stephen was asked a simple question: "Are these charges true?" How did Stephen respond?
____ With a simple "Yes, sir" or "No, sir".
____ With a detailed history of how God revealed Himself to Israel and how Israel had a long history of rejecting God and his prophets, culminating in their rejection and murder of Jesus.
- We could spend several studies looking in more detail at Stephen's testimony and the actual events that he describes. Instead, however, I encourage you to read it again a few times during the next week. Ask yourself these questions while you read:
 - Why did Stephen choose to include this bit of history?
 - What effect might that have had on the listeners?

Something to Think About

Stephen obviously knew his Old Testament history. However, he also demonstrated here that he knew more than the mere facts of history. He was able to apply what he knew.

Sometimes we can get caught up in the knowing “the facts” and forget that the real value of knowing the facts is in knowing what they really mean. How about you? It’s great to know the facts of the Bible; Stephen’s story should encourage us to know the facts even more than we do. But the goal of knowing facts isn’t merely knowing facts, but to use the facts to help us better understand the world around us. How are you doing?

Stephen is Murdered (Acts 7:54-8:1)

- How do people respond to learning the truth?
 - ___ Accept it as being true and live as if it is true.
 - ___ Accept it as being true, but not live as if it is. “Yes, I know smoking is bad for my health, but I don’t really care.”
 - ___ Simply reject it: “Oh, I don’t believe that.”
 - ___ Ridicule it. “You can’t possibly believe that the earth is round. Why, anyone can plainly see that it is flat.”
 - ___ Ignore it. “Well, that might be, but I don’t really see that it affects me.”
 - ___ Get angry. “You shouldn’t say intolerant things like that...”
 - ___ _____
 - ___ _____
 - ___ _____
- How did the religious leaders respond? _____
- Stephen added fuel to the raging fire by telling them of his vision of heaven.
- The response appears to be spontaneous and not premeditated. Stephen is dragged outside of the city and killed by people throwing rocks at him.
- Stephen’s last acts reveal:
 - His c ___ ___ ___ d ___ ___ ___ in Jesus.
 - His c ___ ___ ___ a ___ ___ ___ o ___ for the people.
- What’s the only thing that can possibly explain his dying acts? _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 9 – Acts 8:1b-25

A Time of Transition (Acts 8:1b-3)

Verse 1b

Following Stephen’s execution, “persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem.” It was no longer safe to have public discussions about religion. As a result, all except _____ left Jerusalem and were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Verse 2

Despite this new danger, _____ buried Stephen. What characteristics did this act reveal? _____

Would you like to have these same characteristics in your life? Yes No

Verse 3

Saul began to “destroy” the church. Later, we will know Saul by another name. He will be known as _____. Saul’s actions were not passive; he was very involved in finding and arresting Christians.

Since the apostles stayed in Jerusalem, some commentators believe that many of the Christians that made their homes in Jerusalem did not scatter. Instead, the Hellenistic Jewish Christians – the ones who were Jewish by religion and perhaps race, but that did not live within “Israel” – were the ones that left. We know that some Christians remained in Jerusalem, because Saul was looking for them and arresting them.

Philip Proclaims the Gospel in Samaria (Acts 8:4-13)

- Even as they are “fleeing for their lives”, what are the scattered Christians doing? _____
- Stephen had been one of the seven men chosen to serve widows.
- Philip was one of the _____.
- The crowds all paid close attention to what Philip said because:
 1. _____
 2. _____
- Simon practiced _____ and amazed the people of Samaria with his magic. He was known as “the Great Power” but was still astonished by Philip’s signs and miracles. What do you think?

- _____ He did simple slight-of-hand “illusions”
- _____ He was an astrologer and fortune teller
- _____ He performed supernatural acts with the aid of supernatural demons

- (verse 12) Many of the men and women _____.
- (verse 13) Simon himself _____.
- The word “believe” is the Greek word *pisteuw*, Strong’s number 4100. This is the same word used in John 3:16 and also translated there as “believe”.
- What happened to the people that believed? _____
- When were they baptized?
 - _____ When they were babies.
 - _____ Before they believed.
 - _____ Immediately after they believed.
 - _____ Maybe not immediately, but at least soon after they believed.
 - _____ Only after they’d had a chance to study the theology of baptism and reach an intellectual conclusion about it.

Established Prejudices Are Overcome (Acts 8:14-17)

- Philip had been preaching the gospel to Samaritans. Samaritans were Jewish by religion (though they didn’t worship at the temple in Jerusalem) but were no longer purely Jewish by race. They descend from the 10 northern tribes that had intermingled and intermarried with gentiles.
- The Jews looked down upon the Samaritans as “half-breeds”.
- The Samaritans didn’t appreciate that, and didn’t think too highly of the Jews, either.
- When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaritans were responding to the gospel and believing in Jesus, they wanted to check it out. Who did they send? _____
- How might Peter and John have felt about traveling to Samaria? (See Luke 9:52-54) _____

- Peter and John discovered that they had believed, but not yet received the Holy Spirit. This is one of a few times in Acts where there is a delay between “conversion” and “receiving the Spirit”. Why might there have been a delay?
 - _____ Because no one receives the Holy Spirit until clergy lays hands on him or her
 - _____ Because the Jews needed a sign that the Samaritans were received by God, and the Samaritans needed a sign that they should respect the apostles

The Sad Story of Simon (Acts 8:18-24)

- What did Simon want? _____

- What was his apparent motive?
 - ___ To help people.
 - ___ To make money.
 - ___ To be respected and reestablished as “a great power” among the people.
- How did Peter respond?
 - ___ With gentle teaching – “Simon, I’m concerned about your attitude; can we pray about this...”
 - ___ With warning – “Simon, these decisions that you are making may cause problems...”
 - ___ With harsh condemnation – “May your money perish with you...”
- Peter identified that:
 - Simon was not qualified to minister
 - Simon’s heart was not right before God
 - Simon needed to repent of wickedness and seek forgiveness
- Was Simon a genuine Christian? This is one of the mysteries of the New Testament. What do you think?
- “We can be confused by people’s words and actions, but God knows the heart.”

Peter and John Preach in Samaria (Acts 8:25)

- Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, but on the way, they preached the gospel in other parts of Samaria. What does this tell you about their prejudice? _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you’ve learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 10 – Acts 8:26-40

Philip Gets Some New Instructions (Acts 8:26-29)

Philip had been preaching in Samaria, and many had believed and been baptized (verse 12). Many people had been healed, and those under the influence of evil spirits had been set free. What might Phillip have been thinking? (What would you have been thinking?)

- ___ Woo hoo! This is going really well.
- ___ I bet God's going to keep me here doing this for a long time.
- ___ These new believers need some one like me to teach them.
- ___ Maybe God will send me to a really big city next, where lots of people can believe.
- ___ Maybe God will want me to witness to one man in the desert next.

Ethiopia Refers to the land south of Egypt, including what today is the Sudan and Ethiopia. In Old Testament times this same region was known as Cush.

Eunuch A castrated man placed in charge of a harem or serving a high official. A eunuch was considered permanently unclean and prohibited from participating in Jewish worship.

Candace This is probably not a name, but a title meaning "Queen".

An important official for the queen of Ethiopia had traveled to Jerusalem to worship. He may have been a Jew by religion, or may have been seeking to learn more about the God of the Jews. Either way, the trip was not insignificant. It is estimated that the trip to Jerusalem would have taken 6 to 8 weeks, and another 6 to 8 weeks to return back home. What does this indicate about this man? _____

God knew that he would be on the highway returning home. He gave two instructions to Philip:

1. The general instruction (verse 26): _____
2. The specific instruction (verse 29): _____

Is there any evidence that Philip hesitated in obeying God?

- ___ No, he appears to have immediately obeyed.
- ___ Yes, he did delay and question, but eventually obeyed.
- ___ Yes, he ignored God altogether.

Imagine that you are in the airport waiting for your flight. You approach the waiting area and see the ambassador of Iowanistan, with his traveling party and security detail, walking through the airport. The ambassador is riding one of those electric carts, and you notice that he is reading John chapter 3 in a Bible. You go up to him and ask him if he understands it. He says, “How can I unless some one will explain it to me.” What do you do?

- Invite him to your church.
 - Make an appointment for him to talk to your pastor.
 - Say, “Yeah, it is hard to understand.” Then excuse yourself.
 - Pray for wisdom, then tell him about Jesus and the gospel, starting in John 3.
-

The Bible says that “both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water” and “they came up out of the water.” What does this suggest about how the eunuch was baptized?

- Philip sprinkled a little bit of water on the eunuch.
- The eunuch was dunked underwater.
- The eunuch got a little wet.
- The eunuch got very wet.

What conclusion do you draw from this example?

- It doesn't matter how they did it then; we can do it just as well another way now.
 - I want to see other examples of baptism before I reach a conclusion.
 - Baptism routinely and immediately follows confession of faith.
 - Baptism involves getting dunked in water, not being merely sprinkled with water.
 - No one should be baptized without a vote of the church membership.
 - Only a pastor or elder is allowed to baptize.
-
-

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 11 – Acts 9:1-19

Saul Has a Plan (Acts 9:1-2)

Saul had been present at Stephen’s murder (Acts 8:1) and had given his approval. It is likely that Saul had witnessed Stephen’s final sermon that resulted in his death. However, he was not convinced, because he is still actively persecuting the believers.

How would you describe Saul?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| _____ An enemy of Jesus | _____ A zealous follower of God |
| _____ An enemy of God | _____ Powerful |
| _____ Confused | _____ Sincere |
| _____ A threat to Jesus’ followers | _____ A potential ally |
| _____ A likely convert | _____ Dangerous |

Believers in Jesus are referred to as “followers of the Way”. Where might this phrase have originated?

Jesus Confronts Saul (Acts 9:3-9)

Damascus is approximately 175 miles from Jerusalem, and would have been about a 6 days journey. Damascus is the second oldest city still in existence in the world (*Holman NT Commentary, pg 139*).

What does light represent in Scripture?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Read John 8:12. How is Jesus described? _____

Read Revelation 21:23. How is Jesus described? _____

What may have been the source of the light that blinded Paul? _____

Saul saw a bright light and heard a loud voice; a devout Jew such as Saul would have recognized this as a word from God. Even so, how did Saul initially reply? _____

What might Saul have experienced when he learned that he was being addressed by Jesus, whom he had denied?

___ Shock

___ Disbelief

___ Fear

___ Joy

___ Loss of appetite

___ Repentance

What instruction was given to Saul? _____

What did Saul do? _____

Saul was blind for three days. Three is a recurring number in Scripture. Where else do we see “three”?

- Jonah: _____
- Jesus: _____
- The trinity: _____
- _____

Jesus Instructs Ananias (Acts 9:10-16)

Jesus appeared to Ananias in a vision. Compare Ananias’ response to Saul’s response.

- Saul: “Who are you, Lord?”
- Ananias: “_____”

What does this reveal about Ananias? _____

How does Ananias respond to Jesus’ instruction? _____

What do you think?

- Read Luke 1:12-20. Zacharias received a message from God, and had a question about it.
- Read Luke 1:30-35. Mary received a message from God, and had a question about it.
- Ananias received a message from God, and had doubts about whether it was a good idea.

Zacharias was “punished” for his questioning; Mary and Ananias were not. How do you explain this?

What does this teach you about your relationship with God? _____

Jesus tells Ananias what His plan for Saul is. What is Jesus' plan for Saul? _____

Ananias Obeys (Acts 9:17-19)

Ananias went to Saul and addressed him as "Brother Saul". What impact might this have had upon Saul?

Does the way you address other people have an impact upon them?

____ Yes

____ No

Saul had been proud and a powerful man. Now he was blind and helpless, and had learned that his denial of Jesus was wrong. Then, one of his former "enemies" came to help him. What impact might this have had upon Saul? _____

Read Jesus' command in Matthew 5:44.

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 12 – Acts 9:19b-30

Introduction

Based on what we've learned about Saul from the previous lessons, what had Saul done to deserve God's divine intervention in his life? _____

Have you experienced God's divine intervention in your life? Yes No

If so, what did you do to deserve God's divine intervention in your life? _____

The Bible teaches that none of us deserve God's grace and mercy. Saul is a dramatic example of this. Saul was actively persecuting the followers of Jesus and was resisting Jesus himself. Though he thought he was religious, he was, in fact, an enemy of God. Yet God sought him out, forgave him, and reconciled him.

If we don't do anything to earn God's favor, then why does He show favor to us? _____

(Romans 5:6-8; 1 John 3:1; John 3:16-18; etc.)

Is it hard for you to believe that you can't earn God's favor or make Him love you more by doing good things? Yes No

Saul in Damascus (Acts 9:19b-25)

When did Saul begin to preach about Jesus? _____

What did he preach about? _____

What had Saul previously been upset about? _____

What could explain this difference?

He was wishy-washy.

He was easily swayed and changed his mind often.

He was pretty sure that he might have been wrong and Jesus might be the Son of God.

He was thoroughly convinced that he had been wrong before and that Jesus was the Son of God.

News about Saul and his attitude towards Christians had reached Damascus. After all, Ananias had heard about him and the trouble he caused the believers (verses 13 and 14). Additionally, Ananias knew why Saul had come to Damascus (verse 14). Since Ananias knew this, it is likely that many residents of Damascus knew about Saul and why he had come to Damascus.

Given this, who would have been astounded by this sudden change?

- _____ No one
- _____ The Jews
- _____ The Christians
- _____ Everyone

What do you think is meant by “Saul grew more and more powerful” in verse 22? _____

Saul’s preaching was so persuasive that the local Jews decided to get rid of him by killing him. How did Saul escape? _____

Saul in “Arabia” (Galatians 1:13-18)

According to the letter that Saul later wrote to the church in Galatia, where did he go after he left Damascus? _____

When did Saul finally go to Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 9:26? _____

“Arabia” probably refers to kingdom of Nabatea, which was south of Damascus and southeast of Palestine. The capital of Nabatea was Petra. Petra was a city built into rock cliffs, and is about 60 miles south of the Dead Sea. Nabatea was originally Edom and Moab, but conquered between 500 and 300 BC by Arabians.

It isn’t clear whether Saul went to Arabia between verses 22 and 23, or between verses 25 and 26. According to the letter to the Galatians, Saul returned to Damascus, then went to Jerusalem. Thus, the plot against him could have been before he went to Arabia, or after he return to Damascus from Arabia. However, 2 Corinthians 11:32 suggests that perhaps Saul had angered both the local Damascans and the King of the Nabateans, and both plotted against him in Damascus. This suggests that the plot may have occurred after he’d spent 2-3 years in Nabatea.

Saul in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-30)

Even three years after his conversion to Christianity, Saul is still feared by the disciples in Jerusalem. What does this suggest about Saul's activities before he had left Jerusalem? _____

How many "good things" do you have to do to "make up for" a bad past? _____

What had to happen for Saul to finally be accepted by the local believers? _____

Barnabas was willing to testify on Saul's behalf, and based upon Barnabas' acceptance of Saul, the other believers finally accepted him also. Saul was accepted because of Barnabas' influence. What influence can you have on whether others are accepted or rejected? _____

Who do you know that needs a friend, acceptance or encouragement? _____

What does Saul start to do in Jerusalem? _____

What is the reaction? _____

How did Saul escape this time? _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 13 – Acts 9:31-43

A Time of Peace (Acts 9:31)

From the previous lesson, how much time had passed between when Paul left Jerusalem to persecute the Christians and returned to Jerusalem as a Christian? _____

How do we know this? _____

The Christians “enjoyed a time of peace”. What did God do for the church during that time?

1. It was _____.
2. It was _____.
3. It _____ in numbers.
4. It was _____ in the _____.

Have you heard the expression that the church grows most during times of persecution? What is that based on?

___ What the Bible says.

___ Personal experience.

___ It just makes sense.

___ Who knows?

___ _____

What do you think of that statement?

___ It is always true.

___ It is generally true.

___ There isn't necessarily a relationship between persecution and growth.

___ I don't know.

___ _____

While it does seem to be generally true that we can become complacent during good times and can be refocused on God during difficulty, we need to be careful not to conclude that God only works through persecutions. Here was a time of peace of tranquility, and God worked to cause the church to grow and be strengthened.

Word about Peter must have spread, because when Tabitha died and they learned that Peter was so close, they asked him to come. When Peter was asked to come help, what did he do? _____

How did Peter restore Tabitha to life? _____

What was the result? _____

Peter stayed in the home of a tanner named Simon. Why would Luke include a seemingly insignificant detail in this story?

____ There must be something significant about it.

____ Because details make the story more believable.

Tanning was not an honorable profession because the tanner was in regular contact with dead animals. Peter chose to stay with a tanner; what does that reveal about Peter? _____

What, if anything, does it teach you about how you should relate to others? _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 14 – Acts 10

God Reveals Himself to Cornelius

Read all 48 verses. Pretend that it's your job to write the title for each part of the story. What title would you select?

Verses 1-8: _____

Verses 9-16: _____

Verses 17-23: _____

Verses 24-33: _____

Verses 34-43: _____

Verses 44-48: _____

Now read the following verses and make note of what you learn about the people involved.

Cornelius

Peter

v 1: _____	v 9: _____
v 2: _____	v 10: _____
v 2: _____	v 14: _____
v 2: _____	v 21: _____
v 2: _____	v 23: _____
v 7-8: _____	v 26: _____
v 22: _____	v 27: _____
v 22: _____	v 34: _____
v 33: _____	v 47: _____
v 44: _____	_____
_____	_____

Facts about Caesarea:

- It was built by Herod the Great, beginning in 23 B.C. and being completed 10 years later.
- Herod named the city after Augustus Caesar.
- The harbor is man-made, using a new invention: a type of concrete.
- The city included temples, a 30,000 seat amphitheater, and a water & sewage system.
- The water was brought via an six-mile aqueduct.

- The city was built on a grid, with north-south and east-west streets.
- The population was about 50,000.
- People of many different religions lived there.
- It was the seat of the Roman government for the province of Judea.

Facts about Centurions:

- Just as there are _____ years in a century, a centurion is a commander of _____ men.
(Actually, he commands 80 – 100 men.)
- A centurion was paid around 16 times as much as a basic legionnaire.
- A centurion was always a Roman citizen.

From the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, the Roman military was divided into these groups:

Century	100 men	
Maniple	2 Centuries	(200 men)
Cohort	3 Maniples	(600 men)
Legion	10 Cohorts	(6000 men)

Digging Deeper

Verse 3. Cornelius received a vision at what time? _____

Three in the afternoon was one of the times of Jewish prayer. Cornelius was probably praying (and not taking a nap) when he received the vision.

Verse 9. Peter was praying at what time? _____

Noon was not a Jewish prescribed time of prayer. This might indicate that Peter had begun a habit of praying more frequently.

Verse 10. Peter experiences a “trance” (ekstatis) whereas Cornelius received a “vision” (horama). A trance is more of an “out of body experience”.

Leviticus 11 provides details about clean (OK to eat) and unclean (not to be eaten) animals. The rules can be summarized as follows. Write an example in the blank.

- Clean land animals had to both chew the cud and have a split hoof.

OK to eat: _____

Do not eat: _____

- Clean sea creatures had to have fins and scales.

OK to eat: _____

Do not eat: _____

- Clean winged insects had to have jointed legs to hop.

OK to eat: _____

Do not eat: _____

- Birds of prey, reptiles and other crawling animals were unclean.

Do not eat: _____

Do not eat: _____

Verses 11-16. What is God teaching Peter:

- About food? _____

- About people? _____

Verses 23 and 27 show that Peter is _____ the lesson.

Verse 36. What is the “good news” that Peter focuses on? _____

When you have the opportunity to talk to others about what is important to you, what is one thing that you can focus on? _____

Read **verse 34 and 35**. God does not show _____. Which of these statements best describes you? Talk to God about your answer.

____ I do not show favoritism. I treat everyone the same, regardless of ethnic, cultural or social differences.

____ I am prejudiced and do show favoritism, probably in ways that I don't yet understand.

____ I do show favoritism, but wish that I did not.

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.
3. Review the previous 9 chapters of Acts to keep the story fresh in your mind.

Lesson 15 – Acts 11:1-18

Peter Is Criticized (Acts 11:1-3)

Word got back to Jerusalem about what had happened in Caesarea. How did the Jewish followers of Christ react to the news?

- ___ “It’s great that you were able to break through societal barriers and share the good news with those Gentiles, Peter! You’ve been a great example to us all.”
- ___ “What were you thinking, eating with Gentiles like that? Now you’re defiled.”

How would you describe their reaction?

- ___ Ugly
- ___ Understandable
- ___ Proper
- ___ _____

Imagine that a youth has just pitched a 5-inning 1-hitter. After the game, you overhear the father talking to the son: “Why’d you let that guy get a hit? You should have thrown inside instead of outside. What were you thinking?” Instead of congratulating the son on 15 outs with only one hit, the father criticizes the son because of the hit! While that may sound ridiculous, many of us have a tendency to focus on the few things that we might have done differently rather than on the many positive things in some one else’s life. How would you describe yourself?

- ___ I am often critical and a nit-picker.
- ___ I am often self-righteous and judge others by my own standard.
- ___ I rarely criticize out loud, but often criticize in my heart.
- ___ I’ve heard about “speaking the truth in love” but I really don’t seem to know how to do that. I try to speak the truth, but it isn’t always perceived as speaking in love.
- ___ I encourage others more than I criticize.
- ___ I find it easy to look at the positive and not focus on the negative.

Would others describe you the same way that you described yourself?

Are you happy with the answers? If not, talk to God about it.

Peter Responds (Acts 11:4-17)

How do you respond to criticism?

- I get defensive.
 - I get angry.
 - I listen carefully to determine if I can learn anything from it.
 - I just ignore it.
 - It makes me cry.
 - I look for something that I can start to criticize.
-

How did Peter respond?

- “Who are *you* to question *me*? After all, I’m an apostle who spent time with Jesus.”
- He was humble and not defensive.
- He ignored them because he knew he was doing the Lord’s work.
- He gave them a complete explanation.

Peter’s version of the story that he tells the Jewish believers in Jerusalem is substantially the same as Luke recorded in chapter 10. However, Peter provides a new detail in verse 14. Compare 11:14 with 10:4-6.

How do these differ? _____

What (if anything) do you find significant about this new information? _____

Does verse 14 remind you of another verse? _____ (It reminds me of Acts 16:31.)

What do you think?

- God calls individuals, but often showers his grace on family units.
- God cares about your family.
- God wants your family members to trust Him. (If so, how do you know this? _____)
- God has outgrown families.

The Jewish Believers Repent (Acts 11:18)

What was the result?

- “We don’t care what God is doing; we’re not going to welcome Gentiles in to our church.”
- “That might be true for you Peter, but we have our own truth here.”
- “Well, we must have been wrong. We’re glad to know the truth now!”

How would you describe their response?

_____ That's the kind of attitude I'd like to have: willing to change when God shows me that I'm wrong.

_____ It was an unusual response, the kind that we need more of today.

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Review this lesson; talk to God about any bad attitudes that He convicts you of.
2. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
3. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 16 – Acts 11:19-30

Events at Antioch (Acts 11:19-21)

Read Acts 8:4: “Those who had been _____
the word wherever they went.”

According to Acts 11:19-21, where did “wherever” include?

If you have a map of the New Testament period,
locate these places on the map.

Some of the Jewish believers that fled Jerusalem talked about Jesus and the Gospel only with other Jews.
What might have caused them to ignore the Gentiles?

- ____ They didn’t yet understand that God loved the Gentiles and wanted them to be saved, too.
- ____ They were prejudiced, and just didn’t like the Gentiles.
- ____ They thought that God wanted them to avoid the Gentiles, since they were Jews.

But some of the Jewish believers – ones that had lived somewhere other than Jerusalem – did decide to tell the Gentiles about Jesus. What might have motivated them?

- ____ Now that they knew Jesus, they were motivated by love to help everyone, not just those that were like them.
- ____ They had heard about Peter’s experience with Cornelius, and therefore knew God’s plan was for the Gentiles also.
- ____ Because they were Hellenistic Jews – instead of natives of Israel – they were more liberal and open-minded.

It isn’t clear what the exact timeline of these events are. Did they happen about the same time that Philip went to Samaria, about the time that Peter went to Cornelius, or somewhere in between? We do know that a bit later on, Barnabas sends for Saul. So, we know that Saul and Barnabas have already met, and Saul has already been to Jerusalem and left for Tarsus. It’s likely that those scattered had been traveling around or been in Antioch for a while.

What was the result of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles in Antioch? _____

What was the ultimate reason for this result? _____

What can you learn from this example? _____

Word Gets Back to Jerusalem (Acts 11:22-24)

At this time, the believers in Jerusalem consisted of

- Only Jewish people
- Mostly Jewish people
- A random mixture of Gentiles and Jews
- Mostly Gentiles, because all of the Jewish believers fled

What was their reaction?

- “Hey, what’s going on in Antioch? We’d better send Barnabas to put a stop to it.”
- “That’s strange. I wonder what that means? Let’s send Barnabas to find out.”
- “This sounds like what happened to Peter when he visited Cornelius. Let’s send Barnabas to find out what’s happening. Maybe we can help.
- We don’t know for sure.

What was Barnabas’ reaction? _____

How is Barnabas described?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Barnabas and Paul Work Together (Acts 11:25-30)

Where did Barnabas go to find Saul? _____ How would you describe the round trip from Antioch to Tarsus? Short Long Other: _____

Barnabas and Saul spent an entire year in Antioch, meeting with the believers and teaching many people.

What does this tell you about Barnabas and Saul? _____

What can you learn from their example? _____

Luke tells us that some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. What is a prophet? _____

Are there still prophets today?

____ No. After Jesus, there wasn't a need for prophets anymore.

____ No. After the formation of the early Christian church, there wasn't a need for prophets anymore.

____ Sure. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 that prophecy is one gift that God gives to the Church.

____ Yes, but many people are confused about what it means.

____ I'm not sure.

The believers in Antioch trusted Barnabas and Saul with taking their gifts back to Jerusalem. What does this tell you about their trust? _____

How did the people give? _____

What can you learn from their example? _____

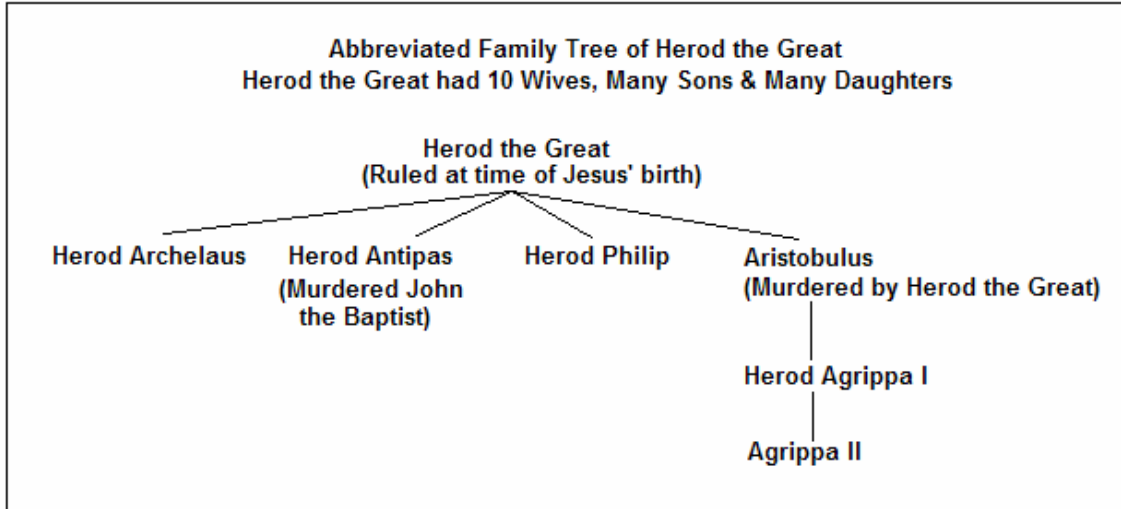
Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 17 – Acts 12



The Death of James (Acts 12:1-2)

Who are these people? Herod is Herod Agrippa I, who kept Jewish customs and was actually liked by the Pharisees. James the brother of John is almost certainly James, the son of Zebedee, one of the 12 apostles.

Read Mark 10:35-40. What had Jesus said would happen to James and John? _____

What did happen to James? _____

This probably indicates that he was beheaded.

Peter's Arrest and Imprisonment (Acts 12:3-5)

How did the local Jews react to the news of James' death? _____

What appears to have motivated Herod's murder of James and arrest of Peter?

- _____ He ruled the Jews; by pleasing them, he solidified his power.
- _____ He hated this new faith in Jesus.
- _____ James and Peter were revolutionaries who threatened his kingdom.
- _____ James and Peter were crooks who took advantage of people.

When was Peter arrested? _____

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was one of the “pilgrim feasts” of the Jews. Many Jews would travel to Jerusalem for the feast. The population of Jerusalem swelled from about 100,000 to close to a million people! (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary, Volume 2, page 326). Also, Passover was observed as part of this feast.

What modern Christian holiday is related to Passover? _____

What does that holiday celebrate? _____

How did the Christians in Jerusalem respond to the news that Peter had been arrested? _____

Based on what had happened to James, what would the Christians have expected to happen to Peter? _____

This is about 10 years following the death and resurrection of Jesus. What tradition that we have today did they apparently not have then? (Hint: think about the holiday) _____

Does this mean that the Christians at that time did not remember the death and resurrection of Christ?

Read Acts 2:42. What were they devoted to?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. What was one purpose of the Lord’s Supper (also referred to as “the breaking of bread”)? _____

Easter was not celebrated by the early Christian church. However, that doesn’t mean that they didn’t remember the death and resurrection of Christ. In fact, they may have put more emphasis on “the Easter message” than we typically do today by their regular observance of the Lord’s Supper.

Peter’s Miraculous Escape (Acts 12:6-19a)

This is at least Peter’s third time in jail (Acts 4:3, Acts 4:18) and his second miraculous escape (Acts 4:19ff).

It was the night before Peter's "trial" and he was sound asleep – sleeping so soundly that it took a sizeable whack to wake him up. What does this reveal about Peter? _____

How would you feel in similar circumstances? _____

Where did Peter go? _____

Why is this noteworthy? _____

How did the believers react to the news that Peter was at the door? _____

Based on their response, what did they really expect was going to happen?

- Peter would be executed just like James.
- God might intervene and rescue Peter, but maybe not.
- God would respond and intervene and rescue Peter.

Are you ever surprised when God answers your prayers? Yes No

It appears that the believers had some doubt that Peter would be rescued. At least, they were surprised to learn that he was free and at their door. Isn't it a comfort to know that God answering their prayer wasn't totally dependent upon their ability to "believe" that He would respond in a specific way?

What About Peter's Angel?

It was a common belief that God assigned a specific angel to each person, and that angel could take on the appearance of that person. Our concept of "guardian angels" is similar. Jesus may refer to this in Matthew 18:10. The Bible doesn't say much about angels, except make it clear that both angels and demons do exist.

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 18 – Acts 12:25-13:3

Lessons from the Church at Antioch (Acts 12:25-13:3)

Do you remember why Saul and Barnabas were in Jerusalem? _____

In verse 12:25, Saul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem. Where did they return to? _____

How many churches were at Antioch?

- None
- One
- Several
- Lots
- There's no way to know

While reading the New Testament, we get the idea that the Christians in a city considered there to be only one church in that city, even if they did not meet at the same place at the same time. We often read of “the church” instead of “a church” in a certain place. For instance, here in these verses, we read of *the church at Antioch*. They may have met at different places and different times, and rarely all met together, but their attitude was that they were all part of the same Christian group, the same “church”. How does this compare to our attitude about church today? _____

What might explain the difference?

- We have different beliefs about what the Bible teaches; these differences divide us.
 - Our cities are bigger. It isn't feasible that we would all be part of the same thing.
 - We tend to magnify our differences rather than our similarities.
 - Only people of our denomination are truly Christians, so we should only fellowship with them.
 - We're just not very good at handling differences.
 - They met in homes, but we meet in big buildings. Since we can have bigger meetings, it's less important to gather a bunch of small groups together.
-
-

How can you help foster a spirit of unity among believers, both within your church and within your community?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

The church at Antioch was led by five men who were prophets or teachers.

- “Barnabas.”
- “Simeon called Niger.” Niger is the Latin term for “black”, which is likely an indication of Simeon’s skin color. He was probably from Africa.
- “Lucius of Cyrene.” Cyrene is in Northern Africa.
- “Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch.” Herod the tetrarch was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. Manaen was “brought up with” (perhaps as a foster brother) this Herod.
- “Saul.”

This was a diverse group of men. They were racially, socially, and culturally diverse. Yet they all worked together in God’s kingdom. How would you describe your church?

- ___ We are racially diverse.
- ___ We are socially (economically) diverse.
- ___ We are culturally diverse.
- ___ We may not be diverse in one or more of these areas, but not because we aren’t willing.
- ___ We don’t like diversity. We prefer people like us. There are other churches for people who aren’t like us.
- ___ We recognize that people are most comfortable with those who are like them. We try to welcome everyone, but understand that people look for a place where they fit in.
- ___ It’s God’s plan that some churches minister to certain groups, and that other churches minister to other groups. We don’t need to try to be all things to all people.
- ___ _____
- ___ _____

How can you help others, especially those that “aren’t like you”, to feel welcome at your church and to be ministered to by your church?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Acts of the Apostles

Are you willing to do those things? ___ Yes ___ No

What were these men doing when the Holy Spirit directed them?

1. _____
2. _____

Fasting is abstaining from food (and sometimes drink) for a specific period of time in order to help you focus on something else. Is fasting part of your spiritual discipline? _____

Saul and Barnabas were set apart because:

- ___ The missions committee met, brainstormed, strategized, and voted on these men.
- ___ The church membership elected them at a business meeting.
- ___ The leaders recognized God’s leadership and obeyed.

Is it wrong to plan, brainstorm, strategize, and vote? ___ Yes ___ No

Can our good-intentioned methods hinder God’s plan for us? ___ Yes ___ No

How can we avoid the extremes of “we’re just waiting on God” and “let’s get a committee to look into that” so that we make appropriate use of our God-given talents and abilities without leaving God out?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you’ve learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 19 – Acts 13:4-12

Mission to Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12)

Saul and Barnabas had been set apart for a special task (v. 13:2). Now they have left Antioch to start.

- Where did they go? _____
- Read Acts 4:36. Where was Barnabas from? _____
- What might have influenced Saul and Barnabas to go to Cyprus? _____

Some facts about Cyprus:

- Cyprus was governed by the Romans.
- It is the third largest island in the Mediterranean.
- It is 138 miles long and 60 miles wide, so it is a large island.
- Salamis was the largest city on Cyprus, but Paphos was the Roman capital.
- The two major cities, Salamis and Paphos, were approximately 105 miles apart.
- It is about a 75-mile trip by boat from Seleucia to Salamis.
- Barnabas was a native of Cyprus.

Saul and Barnabas began preaching the gospel in the synagogues. Apparently there were enough Jews in Salamis that more than one synagogue was necessary. Why might they have begun by preaching in the synagogues?

- Read Romans 1:16: _____
- The synagogues outside of Israel would have been attended by Jews, but also by Gentiles that had converted to the Jewish faith. Most of these Gentiles would have converted to Judaism only if they were seeking to know God; why else would they have converted? Since they were seeking God, they might be receptive to Saul and Barnabas' message of redemption through Jesus.

When they arrived in Paphos, they encountered “a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus”, who was also known as Elymas the sorcerer. He probably practiced “fortune-telling”. Sorcery is divination by assistance of evil spirits. Read Deuteronomy 18:9-12. What has God said that He thinks about this practice? _____

When Elymas opposed the gospel, what did Paul tell him? _____

Paul's response was:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic | <input type="checkbox"/> Blunt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two-guns-blazing blunt | <input type="checkbox"/> Conciliatory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle | <input type="checkbox"/> To change his mind |
| <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> Wishy-washy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging | |

What explains Paul's response?

- He spoke his mind because, well, that's just the way he was
- He was filled with the Spirit
- He was a smart, confident fellow that knew what he was talking about

What do you think? How should you respond to people that are opposing the gospel and trying to influence others not to consider it? _____

Questions to consider when answering:

- Did Paul set an example for us to follow?
- How did Jesus respond to those that opposed him?
- Paul was directed by the Holy Spirit to respond as he did; how does that affect your answer?
- Is there a single answer that applies to all situations?

What was the result of the gospel being presented to the Roman governor of the island? _____

What's In a Name?

“Bar-” means “son of”, so Elymas' full name was “Elymas, son of Jesus.” Jesus (or Joshua) was a common name. However, Paul make a play on words when calls Elymas a child of the devil. Rather than being a true son of Jesus the Messiah, Elymas is a son of the devil.

In verse 9, we finally are introduced to Saul's other name: _____

“Saul” is a Hebrew name, but “Paul” is not a Hebrew name. Why might Luke change which name he uses to refer to Saul/Paul at this point? _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 20 – Acts 13:13-52

Stopover in Perga (Acts 13:13)

Paul, Barnabas and John sailed from Paphos, Cyprus, to Perga, a trip of about 150 miles Perga was located on the Cestus River, about 5 miles inland from the coast. We aren't told how long they stayed in Perga, but know that they returned there to preach the gospel on their return trip (see 14:25).

Some facts about Perga from the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*:

- It had a 14,000 seat theater.
- It had many Roman baths.
- It had a large gymnasium.
- Three aqueducts supplied water to the city.
- Jews from Perga were in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost, so the gospel message may have already been introduced in Perga.

John left the missionaries here and returned to Jerusalem. We're not told why here. However, read 15:37-39. How did Paul look at John's departure? _____

Remember, John is also known as John __ __ __ __. He later recorded the gospel of __ __ __ __. Even though his first ministry experience "ended in failure", God still used him to do a great thing.

What do you think?

- ___ It doesn't matter what my past is like; God can still use me for His purposes.
- ___ It doesn't matter what my past is like; there are no limits on how God will use me.
- ___ It does matter what my past is like; there are some things that I just can't do anymore.
- ___ Because of my past, I've completely spoiled God's plan and am worthless.

Consider these men from the Bible and complete the table.

	Failure	Accomplishments	Consequence or Limitation
Abraham	Didn't wait on God to provide Isaac		
Moses	Didn't obey God to bring forth water from rocks		

David	Committed adultery and murder		
David	A man of war		

The Bible gives an accurate portrayal of humanity; it isn't sugar-coated. Even the heroes of the Bible had weaknesses, and yes, even failures. While sin and failure to follow God do result in real consequences, we need to be careful not to give the impression that some people can no longer be useful to God.

Read John 15:4-6. What is the key to being useful for God? _____

Mission to Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14-52)

Some facts about Antioch near Pisidia:

- This is not the same Antioch that Paul and Barnabas left from. This is Antioch near Pisidia, or Pisidian Antioch. They left from Antioch in Syria.
- It was in the Roman province of Galatia. So, when Paul wrote his letter to the _____ the church here may have been one church that received the letter.
- It was one of the more important Roman cities in the province.
- Many Roman senators made their home in Antioch.

Where did Paul and Barnabas go to start their work in Antioch? _____

Who did Paul address his sermon to? _____

How did Paul's sermon differ from some of Peter's recorded sermons and Stephen's sermon in Acts 7?

What verses are the climax – or the important point – of Paul's sermon? _____

How did the listeners, both Jews and Gentiles, initially respond? _____

What happened next week when Paul and Barnabas returned to speak again?

The Jews: _____

The Gentiles: _____

How do you think Barnabas felt when Paul seemed to be getting the attention?

____ This is great; God is working here. I'm glad to be a part of it.

____ He wouldn't be anything without me.

____ Cool. If the Jews get mad, Paul will be the one getting in trouble, not me.

____ Who knows? Luke doesn't say.

How do you feel when others have success in ministry?

____ I get jealous.

____ I am happy for them.

____ I am glad to see the result of God's work.

____ I am encouraged.

____ I am suspicious.

The Jealous Jews (probably the leaders of the synagogue) stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and eventually had them expelled from Pisidian Antioch. What was Paul and Barnabas' response? _____

Even though they may have been discouraged, what did God do for them instead? _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 21 – Acts 14:1-20

Mission to Iconium (Acts 14:1-7)

Some facts about Iconium:

- It was approximately 90 miles from Pisidian Antioch.
- It was part of the Roman province of Galatia, so Paul’s letter to the Galatians would have included the church at Iconium.
- It was on a major trade route.
- It was a fertile area, water was plentiful, and agriculture flourished.

Once again, Paul and Barnabas began their ministry in the _____.

What were the two different responses?

1. _____
2. _____

In verse 2, Paul and Barnabas are called “_____”. In what sense are Paul and Barnabas brothers? _____

Who do you consider to be your brothers and sisters?

- Not really anyone
- Only my “real” brothers and sisters
- Other believers in my church
- Other believers in my church and community
- Other believers, wherever they might be from
- I use the words “brother” and “sister” when talking of other believers, but my actions don’t really match that.
- _____

According to verse 3:

What did Paul and Barnabas do? _____

What did God do? _____

What does this teach you about your ministry? _____

Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there (verse 3). Why did they leave? _____

Where did they go next? _____

Mission to Lystra (Acts 14:8-20)

Some facts about Lystra:

- It was about 20 miles from Iconium.
- It was a “new” city, formed around 26 B.C.
- It was a Roman colony, but never considered an important city.
- Farming (both livestock and crops) was the major occupation of its residents.

What happened shortly after Paul and Barnabas arrived in Lystra? _____

How did the residents react? _____

They called Barnabas _____ and Paul _____. Zeus is also known as “Jupiter” and is the chief of the gods. Hermes is also known as “Mercury” and was the messenger of Zeus. Zeus and Hermes are the Greek names; Jupiter and Mercury are the Roman names for these imaginary gods.

Paul then tries to convince the people that he and Barnabas are not gods, but messengers of the true God. In verse 15, Paul challenges them “to turn from these worthless things.” What worthless things was he referring to? _____

In verse 16, Paul tells the listeners that “in the past, he (God) let all nations go their own way.” What does this mean? _____

Even though God did not force Himself or His ways upon people, He did leave a testimony about Himself. What does Paul say are testimonies that God exists and cares for people?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

At first, the people were ready to treat Paul and Barnabas as gods, but not long after that, they stoned Paul and left him for dead outside the city. What explains this total turn-around? _____

Paul was not dead, however. Where did he go after being stoned and left for dead? _____

What does this reveal about Paul?

- _____ He had a high pain tolerance.
- _____ He was brave.
- _____ He was foolhardy.
- _____ He wasn't one to quickly give up.
- _____ God sheltered him from death.

The Jews had followed Paul from Pisidion Antioch and Iconium, and found him at Lystra. What might have motivated them to go to such lengths to try to stop Paul's message? _____

What do these things teach you about your ministry? _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 22 – Acts 14:20b-21a

Mission to Derbe (Acts 14:20b-21a)

Some facts about Derbe:

- It was approximately 65 miles from Iconium.
- It was not located until the 1950s.

We don't know how long Paul and Barnabas spent in Derbe, and we don't know precisely what they did while they were there. However, we do know that they preached the gospel. What was the result? _____

Disciple Detour

Are you a disciple of Jesus? YES NO

According to the *American Dictionary of the English Language* (Webster, 1828), a disciple is “1. one who receives or professes to receive instruction from another; 2. a follower; an adherent to the doctrines of another. All Christians are called his disciples, as they profess to learn and receive his doctrines and precepts.”

According to this definition, a disciple of Jesus will (unscramble the words):

1. [e r l n a] _____ what Jesus teaches, and then
2. [b y o e] _____ what Jesus teaches.

According to this definition, are you a disciple of Jesus? YES NO

How do we learn about the teachings (doctrines and precepts) of Jesus? Check all that apply.

- ___ Read and study the Bible
- ___ Read the Qur'an
- ___ Listen to or sing hymns
- ___ Send money to needy children or television evangelists
- ___ Listen to conservative talk radio, such as Dr. Laura and Rush Limbaugh
- ___ Participate in Bible studies
- ___ Have discussions like this one
- ___ Buy a new study Bible each year

- ___ Meditate on the Bible
 - ___ Listen to sermons and then apply what we learn
 - ___ Have good intentions to read and study
 - ___ Spend most of our free time with other Christians
 - ___ Teach a Bible study
 - ___ Watch movies about Jesus
 - ___ Pray
 - ___ Listen to or sing worship music
 - ___ Fast
 - ___ Read good books (do you have any examples?)
 - ___ Memorize Scripture
-

Now circle the methods above that you make a part of your life.

Read and comment on each of the following verses – how do they relate to being a disciple of Jesus?

Luke 11:27-28 _____

Hebrews 4:12 _____

Hebrews 5:14 _____

2 Timothy 3:16 _____

2 Peter 1:5-8 _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 23 – Acts 14:21b-28

Ministry on the Way Home (Acts 14:21b-25)

Paul and Barnabas began their return trip to Antioch (in Syria). They traveled back through Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch. Why did they leave each of those cities?

- Lystra (14:19-20) _____
- Iconium (14:5) _____
- Antioch (13:50) _____

From what we read in verses 22 and 23, what motivated Paul and Barnabas to return through these cities, despite the treatment that they'd received? _____

How would you answer this question: "Is following God always safe?" _____

According to verse 23, Paul and Barnabas "appointed elders for them in each church".

- How many churches were in each city?
 - _____ None
 - _____ One
 - _____ More than one
 - _____ We don't know
- How many elders were in each church?
 - _____ None
 - _____ One
 - _____ More than one
 - _____ We don't know

The Jewish synagogue was led by a group of men (usually older men). This arrangement of having multiple men lead and guide the local church would have been "culturally comfortable" for Paul and Barnabas.

What do you think?

- If Paul and Barnabas organized church leadership that way, then we should too.
- If Paul and Barnabas organized church leadership that way, then we can too.
- I want to see what other guidance the New Testament gives.

Which best describes your church?

- My church is led by a strong, central figure.
- It may look like my church is led by a strong central figure, but it is really led by a group of men.
- My church is led by many men; one of these is the pastor.
- My church is led by many men; we do not have a pastor.
- My church is led by many men; the pastor is a hired teacher but not the leader.
- My church encourages women to fill these rolls.
- We don't use the term "elder".
- We use the term "elder" but our elders are unofficially recognized
- We use the term "elder" and have some sort of official recognition.
- _____
- _____

For Additional Study

- Multiple elders in each church: Acts 14:23
- Elder and deacon qualifications: 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9
- Elders and deacons both present in the same church: Philippians 1:1
- Elders oversee the church: 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Peter 5:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:17
- Some elders "teach" and "preach": 1 Timothy 5:17
- The church honors elders: 1 Timothy 5:17-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
- Elders were appointed in cities: Titus 1:5
- Peter called himself an elder: 1 Peter 5:1
- The Apostle John called himself an elder: 2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1

Back Home in Antioch (Acts 14:26-28)

What did Paul and Barnabas do upon their return to the believers in Antioch? _____

Is it “ok” to tell other Christians about the work of God in and through your life?

___ Yes ___ No

Does that sometimes seem like “bragging”?

___ Yes ___ No

What steps will help such reports avoid being bragging?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

It is thought that while Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch, Paul wrote his letter to the churches in Galatia (the book of Galatians).

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you’ve learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Acts of the Apostles

- Conclude that they could accommodate different opinions within the church
 - Just ignore it and hope that the dissension would go away
 - Agree to change in order to maintain unity
 - Call a special business meeting to address the issue
 - Tell the delegates whatever they wanted just to get rid of them
-

How were the Christians from Antioch received by the Christians in Jerusalem? (Verse 4)

- They were welcomed
- They were treated with suspicion

Who said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses?” (Verse 5)

What was Peter referring to in verses 7-9? (Hint: we previously studied it in our study of Acts) _____

Peter agreed with Paul and Barnabas. Summarize what Peter said in verses 10 and 11. _____

What about James, another leader of the church in Jerusalem? Did he agree or disagree with Peter, Paul and Barnabas? Agreed Disagreed

Question for men: If salvation required circumcision as an adult, would you be more or less likely to follow Christ? _____

We believe and teach that the Bible reveals that salvation is by grace, and not through any additional “work”. However, we also know that the Bible teaches repentance, and that following the new birth, we expect to see the results of God’s work evidenced in changed attitudes and actions. We know that changes result from the new birth. This dynamic is sometimes confused in our gospel presentations. What might some people mistakenly believe is necessary to become a Christian? “To become a Christian, I must ... “

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> be circumcised | <input type="checkbox"/> quit smoking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be baptized | <input type="checkbox"/> quit drinking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> go to church 3 times each week | <input type="checkbox"/> confess my sins to a priest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stop using bad language | <input type="checkbox"/> become a missionary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be “good enough” | <input type="checkbox"/> wear nice clothes to church |

Some Lifestyle Advice for Gentile Believers (Acts 15:20-21)

While James agreed that it was not right to identify circumcision and obedience to the Jewish religious laws as conditions for salvation, he did have some advice for the new Gentile believers. Many of these new believers would have been previously involved in idol worship; James gives four instructions that would help a new believer avoid any temptation of idol worship, and avoid being an unnecessary offence to Jewish believers.

1. Abstain from food polluted by idols
2. Abstain from sexual immorality (many public practices of idol worship involved sexual sin)
3. Abstain from the meat of strangled animals (related to sacrifices to idols)
4. Abstain from blood (eating or drinking blood, related to idol sacrifice)

An Encouraging Letter (Acts 15:22-35)

The believers in Jerusalem decided to send a delegation of respected men back to Antioch. They were to take a letter from “the apostles and elders”. In this letter, we learn two things about the original group of men that went to Antioch to teach about circumcision.

- They were not sent with the authority of _____
- They _____ the believers in Antioch

How did the believers in Antioch respond to this delegation and the letter (verse 31)? _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

What effect does the decision at Jerusalem have on me today? _____

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 25 – Acts 15:36-41

Paul and Barnabas had recently cooperated to help settle a disagreement regarding circumcision for Gentile converts to Christianity. They:

- Discussed with Christians in Antioch
- Traveled to Jerusalem and discussed the issue with the apostles and elders there
- Returned to Antioch with a letter encouraging the believers there

How would you characterize their handling of this disagreement?

- ___ They set a good example for us to follow
- ___ They just muddled along and it happened to turn out right
- ___ They really bungled it up

Another Disagreement (Acts 15:36-40)

Paul suggested taking a trip to visit the new believers in the towns where they had previously preached.

What did Barnabas think of that idea?

- ___ It was a good idea
- ___ It was a bad idea

Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along on the trip. What did Paul think of that idea?

- ___ It was a good idea
- ___ It was a bad idea

What might have motivated Barnabas to want to take Mark along?

- ___ He hoped that the trip would be good for Mark
- ___ He wanted to give Mark a second chance
- ___ He knew Mark would get on Paul's nerves

What might have motivated Paul to want to exclude Mark from the trip?

- ___ He was still hurt by Mark abandoning the first mission before it was complete
- ___ He didn't think Mark was dependable
- ___ He wanted to punish Mark for his previous behavior

How did Paul and Barnabas reconcile their differences?

- They talked to the other elders and received their input
- They talked it over and prayed until they were united
- They didn't; their disagreement was so sharp that they decided to part company

Which of the following is more important than the other?

- Whether John Mark should travel with Paul and Barnabas on another trip
- Whether a Gentile must be circumcised in order to become a true follower of Christ

Isn't it interesting that Paul and Barnabas had just worked through a major disagreement that could have impacted all potential Gentile converts – in fact, the disagreement was the gospel itself – but when shortly after that they disagreed with each other, they could not reach agreement? What might explain this? _____

These two great men in the New Testament could only settle a disagreement by agreeing to go their separate ways. How does that make you feel?

- Wow, what hope is there for me, then? If they can't get along, how can I hope to get along?
- I'm glad that the Bible is honest about the struggles that we all have, even after we are believers.
- The example of God doing good things after the disagreement encourages me.

What disagreements seem harder for you to settle? Why?

- Disagreements with strangers
- Disagreements with friends
- Disagreements with family
- Disagreements with church folk
- Disagreements with co-workers
- Disagreements about important things
- Disagreements about trivial things

Can you think of any biblical instructions that would help you resolve differences or disagreements? Here are a few to get you started.

- Ephesians 4:32 _____
- Philippians 2:3-4 _____

- Proverbs 29:22 _____
- James 1:19-20 _____
- 1 Corinthians 6:1 _____
- Proverbs 17:14 _____
- Ephesians 4:26 _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Barnabas Goes to Cyprus by Sea (Acts 15:39b)

Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus. The New Testament doesn't tell us any more about Barnabas. However, we will hear from Mark again.

Paul and Silas Travel By Land (Acts 15:40-41)

Luke continues the narrative by following Paul on his second missionary journey. We'll continue next week by learning more about Paul's continued ministry.

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 26 – Acts 16:1-10

Timothy is Enlisted (Acts 16:1-5)

Paul went to Derbe. Had he been there before? YES NO
Paul went to Lystra. Had he been there before? YES NO

At Lystra, Paul met Timothy. Luke gives us some background information on Timothy.

- He was a _ _ _ c _ _ _ _ .
- His mother was a _ _ w.
- His mother was a _ _ _ i e _ _ _ .
- His father was a _ _ _ _ _ . He was, therefore, not a _ _ _ .
- He was not _ _ _ c _ _ _ c _ _ _ _ as a child.
- The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. So, he had a _ _ o _ _
_ _ p _ _ _ t _ _ _ .
- According to 2 Timothy 1:5, his mother's name was _ _ _ _ _ and his grandmother's name was _ _ _ _ .

Jewish law forbids a Jew to marry a Gentile. Since Timothy's mother married a Gentile, and since Timothy had not been circumcised as a child, we can assume that he was not raised in an observant Jewish family. However, Jewish tradition traced family ties through the mother in the event of an illegal wedding. As a result, the Jews of that time would have considered Timothy a Jew, even though his father was Gentile.

Extra Credit: Can you think of any "famous" people in the Bible with mixed Jewish-Gentile marriages?

Here are some hints.

– Matthew 1:5; Joshua 6 _____

– Matthew 1:5; Ruth _____

– _____

– _____

Since Timothy would have been recognized as an uncircumcised Jew – abhorrent to practicing Jews – Paul deemed it wise to have Timothy circumcised. As a result, his circumcision or uncircumcision could not have been a stumbling block to the Jews. In other words, Paul probably thought that if Timothy remained uncircumcised, then the Jews would focus on Timothy rather than the gospel message. Paul didn't want to

have that distraction. We see in these verses that his ministry was effective, and that the churches were strengthened and continued to grow.

What are some distractions in our life – things that aren't necessarily sins but that may distract from the gospel or our ability to minister to others?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Paul Barred from Asia (Acts 16:6)

The Holy Spirit did not allow Paul to travel to Asia. Which direction from Derbe, Lystra and Iconium was Asia? North South East West

Locate Phrygia and Galatia on a map. Which direction is Paul traveling? _____

Paul Barred from Mysia and Bithynia (Acts 16:7)

Paul wanted to preach in Mysia and Bithynia, provinces of Asia Minor. However, the Spirit of Jesus prevented him.

Pergamum was part of Mysia. Locate Mysia (or Pergamum) on a map. We know that the gospel was preached in that area, because Jesus addresses the church in Pergamum in Revelation 2:12-17. We know that evil was prevalent in Pergamum; in fact, Jesus said that "Satan lived there" when describing Pergamum.

Paul wanted to go there, knowing that much evil was practiced there. How do you feel about going to places where evil seems strong?

- ___ I'd be excited to go because of the need for the gospel that must be there.
- ___ I'd be scared to go.
- ___ I wouldn't want to expose myself to all of that sin.
- ___ I'd want to know that it was God's plan for my life.

Byzantium (later known as Constantinople, and then later as Istanbul) was in Bithynia. Locate Bithynia or Byzantium/Constantinople/Istanbul on a map.

Paul's Call to Macedonia (Acts 16:8-10)

Locate Macedonia on a map. Which direction is Macedonia? _____

How would you complete this sentence: "When I have a vivid dream..."

____ "... I pay attention because I know that God is talking to me."

____ "... I wonder what I had for dinner."

____ "... I consider whether there is something that I need to learn."

____ "... I figure that I am easily confused or deceived, and don't pay much attention to it."

____ "... _____."

Paul and a vision (or dream) of a man from Macedonia asking for Paul to come and help them. What did Paul conclude? _____

So what did he do? _____

Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

Lesson 27 – Acts 16:11-40

Fruitful Ministry in Philippi

Locate these places on a map:

- Samothrace
- Neapolis
- Philippi

Some facts about Philippi, from the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*:

- Its original name was Krenides.
- Octavian (Caesar Augustus) defeated the murderers of Julius Caesar, Brutus and Cassius, near Philippi in 42 B.C. At that time, the city was renamed Philippi and made a Roman colony.
- Several productive gold mines were in the vicinity.
- Many different pagan “gods” were worshipped there.

Luke, the author of the book of Acts, begins using the first person pronoun “we” instead of the “they”. This probably indicates that Luke is traveling with Paul and Silas at this point in the story. In Luke’s story of their time at Philippi, we see that the team affected many people.

1. Lydia (Acts 16:13-15)

While in Philippi, the missionaries went to the river, where they “expected to find a place of prayer.” This may have been an outdoor meeting of local Jews, or it may have referred to a house of prayer, which was a common name for the synagogue.

Lydia heard Paul speak. What do we learn about Lydia?

- On the Sabbath, she was at the _____.
- She was a dealer in _____. (She was probably wealthy.)
- _____ opened her heart so that she believed in Jesus.
- Then, she [m m d y l i e e a i t] _____ was baptized.
- Her _____ was baptized along with her.
- Her house was _____ enough to accommodate the missionary team. (Again, this indicates her wealth.)

2. Demon-Possessed Slave Girl (Acts 16:16-18)

The slave girl had an unusual ability. What was she able to do? _____

How was she able to do it? _____

Once the girl met Paul and his team, what did she start to do? _____

Was she telling the truth? YES NO

Was it annoying? YES NO

Even though the possessed girl was telling the truth, the way that she was doing it must have been annoying and disruptive. What do you think?

____ Even when I know the truth, there may be times when it is better to be silent.

____ How I tell the truth can affect whether it is believed.

____ I can be disruptive and unproductive even when telling the truth.

____ People need to know the truth; sometimes I have to get their attention by doing “weird” things.

____ _____

When Paul couldn't stand it any longer, he:

____ Addressed the situation.

____ Decided to do something else.

____ Caused the girl to be freed from the demonic spirit.

3. The Slave Girl's Owners (Acts 16:19-24)

What did the slave girl's owners think of this miraculous healing? _____

Why were they upset? _____

~~~ *Some hard questions to consider:* ~~~

Do you ever get upset about money matters?

\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_ No

Which is more important to you?

- \_\_\_ God
- \_\_\_ My money

Would you continue to be faithful in the event of financial ruin?

- \_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_ No
- \_\_\_ I don't know

If so, how?

- \_\_\_ By God's grace
- \_\_\_ By my own effort
- \_\_\_ Both

Perhaps you don't worry about money. Is there something other than money (health, friendships, what other people think of you, etc.) that you are often anxious about? If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

Because of their "crime" of healing the spirit-possessed slave girl...

- The crowd was stirred up.
- False accusations were made against them. (The owners were upset about their loss of income, not some kind of unlawful teaching.)
- Paul and Silas were stripped and beaten ("severely flogged").
- Paul and Silas were put in jail.

Does this treatment remind you of the treatment that some one else received? If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **4. The Jail Keeper (Acts 16:25-34)**

What are you usually doing at midnight? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think you might do if you were unjustly imprisoned? \_\_\_\_\_

What were Paul and Silas doing? \_\_\_\_\_

If you were unjustly imprisoned, and there was an earthquake, and the doors of the jail were thrown open, what do you think you'd do?

- \_\_\_ I'd decide that this was God's way of setting me free; I'd try to escape!
- \_\_\_ I'd stay put.

When that happened to Paul and Silas, what did they do? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

As a result, what happened to the jailer? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think? Do the choices you make affect other people?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

How do Paul and Silas answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?" \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. The Magistrates (Acts 16:35-40)

Why were the magistrates alarmed? \_\_\_\_\_

Why might Paul and Silas have chosen to keep their Roman citizenship a secret until now, even if they could have saved themselves a beating? \_\_\_\_\_

"Then they left." (16:40). This phrase suggests that Paul and Silas left Philippi, but that Luke stayed behind.

### Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

---

### Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 28 – Acts 17

### Ministry in Thessalonica (17:1-9)

Locate Thessalonica on a map.

Following their poor treatment in Philippi, Paul and Silas traveled to Thessalonica. Once there, Paul continued his habit of teaching at the synagogue.

- According to verse 3, what did Paul's teaching focus on? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Who would most of the people at the synagogue have been?    JEWS                      GENTILES
- What kind of Messiah did the Jews expect? \_\_\_\_\_
- So why would Paul's teaching about the suffering, death and resurrection of the Christ have been significant? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Paul began by correcting the faulty expectations. The Jews expected the Messiah to be a great military ruler who would establish the kingdom of Israel again. Their expectations for the Messiah were not accurate, so Paul needed to help them understand the Old Testament prophecies, and then how Jesus fulfilled them.

Similarly, we may need to help people past false or unreasonable expectations regarding Jesus. What are some faulty expectations that people have about Christianity?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What three groups of people are identified as believing Paul's message that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah).

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Though some of the local Jews believed Paul's message, others opposed him. What tactic did they try in an effort to silence Paul? \_\_\_\_\_

## Ministry in Berea (17:10-15)

Locate Berea on a map.

When it was no longer safe for the missionary team to minister in Thessalonica, Paul and Silas were smuggled out of town at night. Is there a principle here that we can learn?

\_\_\_\_\_ When our ministry faces opposition, we should close shop and go somewhere else.

\_\_\_\_\_ When our ministry is opposed, we need to stick to it until we are beaten and put in jail.

\_\_\_\_\_ When our ministry is opposed, we need to pay attention to God's leading.

\_\_\_\_\_

What are the Bereans commended for in verse 11?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

What three groups of people are identified as believing Paul's message that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah).

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Who began to oppose Paul in Berea? \_\_\_\_\_

Berea was about 47 miles from Thessalonica. What does this reveal about the strength of the opposition?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Ministry in Athens (17:16-34)

Locate Athens on a map.

Even though Paul had witnessed the worship of idols before, "he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols (verse 16)". This suggests that pagan worship was more pervasive and obvious in Athens.

Where did Paul teach about Jesus? (See verse 17)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Paul's teaching attracted the attention of two groups of philosophers.

- Epicurians believed that experiencing pleasure (or freedom from pain) was the goal of life. Often this was accomplished by "living in harmony with nature". They believed in "gods" but thought that these gods were not involved in human affairs. They did not believe in any sort of life after death.
- Stoics believed that life was controlled by fate, and that a person's fate could not be avoided. They also taught "living in harmony with nature" and exalted reason and intelligence. Seeking virtue was considered the highest good. They believed that the soul is absorbed into the universe following death.

According to verse 21, what did these philosophers (and others) spend their time doing? \_\_\_\_\_

What points did Paul make in his speech?

- vs. 23 \_\_\_\_\_
- vs. 24-25 \_\_\_\_\_
- vs. 29 \_\_\_\_\_
- vs. 30 \_\_\_\_\_
- vs. 31 \_\_\_\_\_

What were the three different responses to Paul's message?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

From what we're told, which seemed larger?

- \_\_\_ The number of people that sneered.
- \_\_\_ The number of people that wanted to hear more about it.
- \_\_\_ The number of people that believed.

What, if anything, do you conclude from this?

- \_\_\_ It's not a good investment of my time to try to minister to intellectuals (at a college campus, etc).
- \_\_\_ We could easily be discouraged if we become focused on the "number" of people that respond to God.
- \_\_\_ Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. (Matthew 7:14)

## **Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

---

## **Homework**

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 29 – Acts 18:1-23

### Ministry in Corinth (18:1-11)

Paul left Athens and traveled to Corinth. Why did Paul leave Athens?

- \_\_\_\_\_ It wasn't safe for him to stay; he was arrested and beaten.
- \_\_\_\_\_ He was discouraged by the lack of response to the gospel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It was time to move on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We don't really know.
- \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

Locate Corinth on a map.

Some facts about Corinth from the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*.

- Corinth was destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C. and was abandoned for nearly 100 years.
- It was rebuilt by Julius Caesar and made a Roman colony in 44 B.C.
- The population was about 100,000.
- The cult of Aphrodite was popular; worship of Aphrodite consisted of many immoral acts.
- "Corinth" came to mean the same thing as "immoral". For instance, to describe an immoral woman, you might call her a Corinthian woman.

Before Silas and Timothy arrived from Berea, when and where did Paul teach about the gospel?

When: \_\_\_\_\_

Where: \_\_\_\_\_

After Silas and Timothy arrived in Corinth, when and where did Paul teach about the gospel?

When: \_\_\_\_\_

Where: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think made the difference?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul was encouraged to have his two friends with him again.
- \_\_\_\_\_ His two friends could work to support him, so he didn't need to work anymore.
- \_\_\_\_\_ His two friends challenged him to be more active in preaching.
- \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe yourself?

- God has called me to teach or preach “on the front lines”.
- God has not called me to teach or preach “on the front lines”.

True or False: “Just like Silas and Timothy, those of us not on the front lines of preaching or teaching have an important role in God’s work.”

What are some ways that those of us “not on the front lines” can contribute to ministry?

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Luke writes that many believed, and identifies two people specific people that believed. Who?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

How long did Paul stay in Corinth? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did Paul stay so long in Corinth?

- It was safe for him to stay; he wasn’t arrested and beaten.
- He had a vision encouraging him to be brave and speak the truth.
- He had a good job.
- He was encouraged by the response to the gospel.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Opposition in Corinth (18:12-17)

In different towns, the Jews had brought made-up civil charges against Paul before. What was different about this result? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sosthenes was the ruler of the local synagogue. Why wasn’t Crispus still the synagogue ruler? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When Crispus became a follower of Jesus, he gave up:

- Respect of some of his Jewish friends.
- Prestige of leading the synagogue.

Which is more important to you?

\_\_\_\_ Being forgiven by God and being given eternal life.

\_\_\_\_ Being respected by your friends and having a prestigious position.

Read Mark 8:36.

## The Trip Home (18:18-22)

Before leaving, Paul had his hair cut off because he had taken a vow. What kind of vow? There are two common suggestions:

1. A Nazarite vow. You can read more about this type of vow in Numbers 6:1-21. Such a vow might be taken as a sign of dedication, or to seek God's blessing. It involved:
  - A fixed period of time (one week, one month, one year, etc.)
  - Abstaining from wine.
  - Abstaining from impurity, such as contact with the dead.
  - Leaving the hair uncut.

After the period of the vow had passed, the hair would be cutoff and brought to the temple in Jerusalem as an offering.

2. A vow taken after recovery from an illness.

What famous people in the Bible were under a Nazarite vow?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

(Some of these people had a life-long Nazarite vow made by God's direct choice or by their parents.)

On his way back to Antioch:

- Paul left Silas and Timothy in Corinth.
- Paul visited Ephesus, then left Aquila and Priscilla there.
- Paul landed at Caesarea (he traveled by ship).
- Paul went \_\_\_\_\_ to greet the church.
- Paul went \_\_\_\_\_ to Antioch.

Antioch is north of Caesarea. We would usually say “went up” when talking about going north, but Luke writes that Paul “went down to Antioch”. However, because Jerusalem was high on a hill, you always went up to Jerusalem, no matter what direction you came from. Likewise, you’d go down out of Jerusalem no matter what direction you were headed. So, we think that Paul went up to greet the Christians in Jerusalem, then left Jerusalem to return to Antioch. In just a few short verses, Luke covered several days and about 1500 miles of travel!

This is the end of what we call:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul’s first missionary journey.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul’s second missionary journey.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul’s excellent missionary journey.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul’s third missionary journey.

### **No Vacation from Ministry (Acts 18:23)**

What did Paul do after he returned to Antioch?

1. He spent some \_\_\_\_\_ in Antioch.
2. He \_\_\_\_\_ from place to place, \_\_\_\_\_ all the disciples.

This was the start of what we call his third missionary journey.

### **Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you’ve learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

---

### **Homework**

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 30 – Acts 18:24-28

### A Man Named Apollos (18:24-26)

What are we told about Apollos?

1. He was a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. He was a native of \_\_\_\_\_, which is in Egypt.
3. He traveled to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. He had a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Scriptures.
5. He had been instructed \_\_\_\_\_.
6. His teaching about Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_.
7. However, he knew only of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. The baptism of John was a baptism of repentance.
8. He spoke \_\_\_\_\_ in the synagogue.

There's some mystery about Apollos in these verses. For instance, how could he teach about Jesus accurately but know only the baptism of John? What does that even mean? There are different opinions.

1. One possibility is that Apollos had learned of John's teaching about the coming Messiah, and perhaps knew some of the early teachings of Jesus. However, he did not know "the rest of the story" of Jesus' death and resurrection. He was not a believer in Jesus because he had not heard the complete gospel.
2. Another possibility is that Apollos knew the facts of Jesus and his ministry, but he didn't understand or experience the personal salvation by Jesus. He was not a believer in Jesus because he did not understand or respond to the complete gospel.

When Priscilla and Aquila met Apollos and heard him teach, they:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Apollos to their \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Explained to Apollos the \_\_\_\_\_ more \_\_\_\_\_.

Were both actions important? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

---

We can often focus on one or the other of these. For instance, we may be really good at coming some one and making them listen to "the truth". Or we may excel at inviting people to our homes in order to foster a relationship, but then assume that our lifestyle will be enough to lead them to Christ. Yet when we look at Priscilla and Aquila, we see an example of both building relationships and teaching the truth.

How would you describe yourself?

- I am hospitable.
- I enjoy forming relationships with people.
- I enjoy sharing my faith in Jesus.
- The idea of talking to some one about my faith in Jesus makes my knees knock.
- I'd like God to help me follow the model of Aquila and Priscilla.

Who helped Apollos?

- Aquila
- Priscilla
- Both Aquila and Priscilla

We assume that the result was that Apollos believed in Jesus and experienced the new birth at this time.

Priscilla and Aquila invited Apollos into their home. What does this indicate about them and their concern for others? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Aquila and Priscilla are often used as an example of a Christian couple that served God in their day-to-day lives. They weren't "missionaries" or "pastors" – they were regular folk like us. Let's take a few minutes to consider Aquila and Priscilla.

- They had a profession; they were tentmakers. We have the idea that they were both involved in their business.
- We always hear of Aquila and Priscilla doing their work and ministry together. We don't read about Aquila going here and doing this while Priscilla went there to do that.

Match the name with the title:

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Priscilla | A. Husband |
| 2. Aquila    | B. Wife    |

Which of these phrases do you use more often?

- |                                               |    |                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dad and Mom          | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Mom and Dad          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jeff and Lu          | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Lu and Jeff          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. and Mrs.         | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. and Mr.         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> His and Hers         | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Her and His          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brothers and Sisters | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Sisters and Brothers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Husband and Wife     | or | <input type="checkbox"/> Wife and Husband     |

It seems that most often we refer to the masculine and then the feminine, as in “his and hers” and “mister and missus.” Of course, there are exceptions; “Mom and Dad” and “Grandma and Grandpa” seem to be more common. Yet it is most common for masculine to be followed by feminine.

However, Luke referred to “Priscilla and Aquila”. What might we learn from him identifying the wife prior to the husband?

- \_\_\_ The wife is generally the one that invites people into the home.
  - \_\_\_ At a time when a woman’s contributions may have been overlooked, Luke was emphasizing that Priscilla and Aquila worked together in partnership.
  - \_\_\_ Priscilla “wore the pants” in this family.
  - \_\_\_ Nothing. You’re grasping at straws to try to make something out of this.
- 

While this passage doesn’t address these issues directly, considering the partnership of Aquila and Priscilla brings these to mind. What do you think?

- \_\_\_ Men and women are essentially the same.
- \_\_\_ Men and women are fundamentally different.
- \_\_\_ Anything a woman can do, a man can do too.
- \_\_\_ Anything a woman can do, a man can do better.
- \_\_\_ Anything a man can do, a woman can do too.
- \_\_\_ Anything a man can do, a woman can do better.
- \_\_\_ Men and women complement one another, not compete with one another.
- \_\_\_ In general, a woman makes a better “mom” than a man does. It isn’t sexist to say so.
- \_\_\_ In general, a woman makes a better “mom” than a man does, but I feel stupid saying that, like somehow it shouldn’t be that way.
- \_\_\_ We each have individual strengths and weaknesses that are often balanced when we work as a team (husband and wife, father and son, etc.)
- \_\_\_ The husband – wife relationship is a picture of the relationship between Jesus and the church. (See Ephesians 5:22-32)
- \_\_\_ Just as the church cooperates with Jesus and responds to his leading, a wife should cooperate with her husband and respond to his leading.

What are some consequences in our society from the idea that a man and woman are interchangeable instead of complementary?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Apollos the Missionary (18:27-28)

Find Achaia on a map.

When Apollos wanted to leave Ephesus and go to Achaia, what did the local believers do?

1. They \_\_\_\_\_ him.
2. They gave him a \_\_\_\_\_ of introduction and commendation.

If you planned to move from here to there, would you like to have a letter of introduction and commendation from your church? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

According to verse 27, the believers believed because of what?

- \_\_\_\_ Their intelligence.
- \_\_\_\_ Their good deeds.
- \_\_\_\_ God's grace.

Because of his knowledge of the Jewish scriptures, Apollos was able to "prove" that Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_.

## Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

---

## Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 31 – Acts 19:1-22

### Paul Returns to Ephesus (19:1)

Locate Ephesus on a map.

Some facts about Ephesus from the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*.

9. The population was about 250,000.
10. It was considered the first and greatest metropolis of Asia.
11. Only Rome, Alexandria, and Syrian Antioch had larger populations.
12. It was a port city.
13. The temple of Artemis was in Ephesus. This temple is one of the “seven wonders of the world.”
14. The believers in Ephesus had asked Paul to return and help teach them. (Acts 18:20)

### Paul Teaches John’s Disciples (19:2-7)

Paul found some “disciples”, but they apparently were disciples of John the Baptist. They may have referred to themselves as disciples of Jesus, however it is clear that they didn’t know what that meant. They did not know of the Holy Spirit, so they had not heard of the events at Pentecost that occurred several years before this event. It is likely, therefore, that their knowledge of Jesus was minimal.

Paul taught them about the difference between John’s baptism and the Christian’s baptism. Though it’s not recorded for us, we can assume that Paul taught them more about Jesus and the gospel message.

“This is the only situation we find in the New Testament or early Christian literature of a group of people who are aware of Jesus teaching only through John the Baptist’s teaching (though see 18:25). It is important to see that their partial knowledge is not enough for a genuine Christian experience and the reception of the Spirit. In the gracious providence of God, however, they gain the opportunity to hear the complete story and enter into a relationship with the Spirit of God.”

*Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, pages 406-407

“These twelve men, who had been baptized by John the Baptist, were rebaptized by Paul after they believed the Christian message. This furnishes an example for counseling those who today were baptized either as unbelieving infants, adolescents or adults and who then came to faith in Christ.”

Charles Ryrie, *Holman New Testament Commentary on Acts*, page 331

A few points to take away from this unusual event:

- A person may call himself a follower of Jesus without knowing much about Jesus.
- Calling yourself a follower of Jesus doesn't necessarily make you a follower of Jesus.
- God brought the gospel message to these men.
- Following their confession in Christ, the men were baptized (even though they had been previously baptized).
- This is the only place in the New Testament where the laying on of hands is associated with baptism.

## Paul's Teaching and Healing Ministry (19:8-12)

Paul taught in the synagogue for \_\_\_\_\_ months.

Paul taught in the lecture hall of Tyrannus for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

\_\_\_\_\_ the Jews and Gentiles in the area heard the word of the Lord.

According to verse 11, who was responsible for the miracles? \_\_\_\_\_

A common belief at that time was that objects could hold supernatural energy. So, it would have been natural for the people to think that a handkerchief might have held magical powers if it had been handled by Paul. From what we know about Paul from his earlier ministry, what might he have said about such an idea? \_\_\_\_\_

Even though the people had a mistaken idea about the handkerchiefs and aprons, did God choose to provide miraculous healing?

\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_ No

What do you think?

\_\_\_\_ God waits until my knowledge and understanding are perfect before He is willing to help me.

\_\_\_\_ God waits until my knowledge and understanding are perfect before He helps me help others.

\_\_\_\_ God does not wait until my knowledge and understanding are perfect before He is willing to help me.

\_\_\_\_ God does not wait until my knowledge and understanding are perfect before He helps me help others.

What do you think? Are there any Christian superstitions?

- Having a statue of Mary in my front yard brings God's blessings on my home.
- Wearing a cross necklace makes me a better Christian.
- Wearing a cross necklace protects me from evil spirits.
- I have a lucky rabbits foot and I feel luckier when I have it with me.
- Friday the Thirteenth is an unlucky day.
- I'd like to have a stone from Israel, knowing that Jesus may have touched it.

### Imposters Need Not Apply (19:13-16)

Describe what happened in your own words. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

“People who practiced magical incantations invoked any name thought to be laden with spiritual power. Because of the reputation surrounding Jesus as a mighty exorcist, it is of little surprise to find someone adding Jesus' name to their repertoire of names in the formula.”

*Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, page 409

What do you think?

- If I know the right words to say, God will bless me.
- I can do miracles if I know the right words to say.
- Following God is not a formula.
- Our world is still influenced by demons.
- Some one can “get saved” by repeating the right words after me.

### The Seriousness of the Gospel (19:17-22)

Why did learning about the *failure* of the Jews to caste out a demon in the name of Jesus result in more honor for the name of Jesus?

- It's kind of a reverse psychology thing.
- People realized that Paul's teaching was different than just using the name of Jesus.
- People realized that there was more to Paul than just saying magic words.
- People realized that Jesus – not aprons or handkerchiefs or magic words – was the source of the healing.

Based on the example in these verses, what do you think?

- It is healthy for a new believer to recognize and renounce specific sins.
- We may have possessions that we need to get rid of.
- It's OK to have a garage sale to sell our un-Christian stuff.
- There's no need to publicly confess my sins.
- If it's not good for me, then it's not good for anyone else. I should destroy it rather than profit from selling it.
- There are times when it is healthy to publicly confess my sins. (Acts 19:18, James 5:16)
- There is a time and place for public confession of some, but not all, sins.

What are examples of stuff that a new believer might need to get out of his life?

- Drugs
- Books (Examples: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Magazine (Examples: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Art (Examples: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Music (Examples: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Idols (Examples: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Movies (Examples: \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Might an "old" believer need to get this stuff out of his life too?

- Yes.
- No. A mature believer wouldn't have any of that stuff.
- No. A mature believer would be able to handle it.

What do the above examples have in common? Each hinders your walk with God; each takes you further from God rather than closer to him.

### **Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

---

## **Homework**

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 32 – Acts 19:23-20:12

### A Riot in Ephesus (19:23-41)

Though Paul has made plans to travel to Jerusalem, and sent two of his helper ahead of him, he is still in Ephesus. A man named Demetrius, who sold silver idols, was losing business and blamed Paul. Soon he had quite a large number of people stirred up.

What evidence do you see that many in Ephesus had come to believe in Jesus?

- vs. 26: \_\_\_\_\_
- vs. 27: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What motivated Demetrius?

- \_\_\_\_ His sincere faith in Artemis.  
\_\_\_\_ His loss of income – his money.

What motivates you?

- \_\_\_\_ Your sincere faith in Jesus.  
\_\_\_\_ Your desire for money, a good job, etc.

A great crowd gathered at the theater, but “most of the people did not even know why they were there.”

What does this reveal about the mob mentality? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does it encourage you to be cautious about your actions in a large group?

- \_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_ No  
\_\_\_\_ Maybe

How was the riot finally dispersed?

- \_\_\_\_ Tear gas and pepper spray.  
\_\_\_\_ Threats of violence.  
\_\_\_\_ A respected official appealed to them and convinced them to disband.

### Paul's Travels (20:1-6)

Paul had been in Ephesus about three years. Many commentators describe these six verses as spanning 2 years. He traveled through Macedonia and spoke to the believers there, then arrived in Greece (probably Corinth). Look at a map and list some places that Paul might have visited again.

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Paul has been collecting money to aid the Christians in Jerusalem. He took several representatives from the local churches with him. Who did he take?

1. From Berea: \_\_\_\_\_
2. From Thessalonica: \_\_\_\_\_
3. From Thessalonica: \_\_\_\_\_
4. From Derbe: \_\_\_\_\_
5. From Derbe: \_\_\_\_\_
6. From Asia: \_\_\_\_\_
7. From Asia: \_\_\_\_\_

What might we learn from Paul's example?

- \_\_\_ When dealing with other people's money, it's best not to do it alone.
- \_\_\_ We should watch for opportunities to involve others in our ministry.
- \_\_\_ Batman had Robin, the Lone Ranger had Tonto, Paul had his helpers, but I can do it alone.
- \_\_\_ We should watch for opportunities to introduce and involve people from different churches.

What risks are there in being the only person responsible for other people's money? (Unscramble)

1. I might be [ e e d t t m p ] \_\_\_\_\_ to use it for my own gain.
2. I might be [ a y s l f e l ] \_\_\_\_\_ [ c s u c d e a ] \_\_\_\_\_ of using it for my own gain.

Who are three people that either help you in your ministry, or pray for you, or help you in your Christian walk, or that you can count on when you need help.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Was it easy or hard to complete that list?

- \_\_\_ Easy
- \_\_\_ Hard

How many people do you think might have put *your* name on *their* list?

- \_\_\_ None
- \_\_\_ A few, maybe
- \_\_\_ Some
- \_\_\_ Several
- \_\_\_ Lots

What can we do if we're not satisfied with those answers?

1. Ask God for help.
  - a. Help you be a better friend.
  - b. Provide you with partners in your discipleship and ministry.
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Paul in Troas (20:7-12)

The believers gathered together on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of the week.

Is it your habit to gather with other believers on the first day of the week?      YES      NO

Paul taught the local believers, who apparently met at night on the first day of the week. Sunday was a work day, so many spent the day working and then gathered at night. After probably a long day at work, a young man named Eutychus sat in a window to listen to Paul. Paul talked on and on, Eutychus fell asleep, then fell three stories to the street below. The fall killed him.

How would you have responded? \_\_\_\_\_

How did Paul respond? \_\_\_\_\_

What can we learn from this?

- \_\_\_ When we teach, we shouldn't talk on and on.
- \_\_\_ Don't sit in windows, especially late at night after a full day of work.

- \_\_\_\_\_ It's OK to doze during a sermon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Don't get offended if some one dozes off while you're talking.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The best time to talk is late at night.
- \_\_\_\_\_ People falling asleep during church is inevitable.

---

---

### **Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

---

### **Homework**

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 33 – Acts 20:13-38

### Encouraging Words for Christian Leaders in Ephesus (20:13-38)

Miletus is about 30 miles south of Ephesus. There were three harbors in Miletus, so it was an ideal port. Paul sent a messenger from Miletus to Ephesus (a one or two day trip) and the elders in Ephesus traveled to Miletus to be with Paul. They were apparently willing to drop what they were doing and make a trip to Miletus in order to see Paul. What does this tell you:

- About their respect for Paul? \_\_\_\_\_
- About their love for Paul? \_\_\_\_\_
- About their desire to be taught by Paul? \_\_\_\_\_

How does Paul refer to these leaders?

- In verse 17: \_\_\_\_\_
- In verse 28: \_\_\_\_\_

What does Paul say about himself?

- Verse 19: He served with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Verse 19: He was opposed by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Verse 20: He didn't avoid teaching \_\_\_\_\_ things.
- Verse 20: He taught \_\_\_\_\_ and also \_\_\_\_\_.
- Verse 21: He taught both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Verse 21: Both Jews and Gentiles need to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus.
- Verse 22: He is going to Jerusalem because \_\_\_\_\_.
- Verse 23: \_\_\_\_\_ has warned Paul to expect prison and hardship.
- Verse 24: He desires to \_\_\_\_\_ the race.
- Verse 25: He does not expect to \_\_\_\_\_ these men again.
- Verse 33: He did not \_\_\_\_\_ silver or gold or clothing.
- Verse 34: He \_\_\_\_\_ to meet his needs.
- Verse 34: He \_\_\_\_\_ to meet the needs of his companions.

Read Ezekiel 33:1-7. What made the watchman guilty of the blood of others? \_\_\_\_\_

How could the watchman be innocent of the blood of others? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Paul said that he was innocent of the blood of all men (verse 26). In verse 27, Paul gives the reason he could say this. What was the reason? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

From what we know about Paul from our earlier studies, was that always true in his life?

\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_ No

**Something to Think About:** Can you say, like Paul could, that you have not hesitated to proclaim the whole will of God? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Paul couldn't say that about his whole life. In fact, before he became a believer in Jesus, he actively arrested and persecuted people that were teaching the whole will of God! After become a believer, though, God changed his life. God wants to change your life, too!

How can we proclaim the whole will of God today?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What instructions did Paul give to the Christian leaders from Ephesus:

- Verse 28: Keep watch over \_\_\_\_\_.
- Verse 28: Keep watch over \_\_\_\_\_.
- Verse 31: Be on \_\_\_\_\_.

What are some things that the New Testament encourages us to watch out for, or to be on guard against?

- Acts 20:30 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matthew 16:6 \_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 12:1 \_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 12:15 \_\_\_\_\_
- Romans 12:17 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Corinthians 8:9 \_\_\_\_\_

- Ephesians 5:15-16 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Timothy 6:20-21 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Peter 3:17 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 John 5:21 \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### **Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

---

### **Homework**

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 34 – Acts 21:1-16

### Warm Relationships and More Warnings (21:1-16)

What does verse 1 reveal about the relationship between the missionary team and the leaders from Ephesus? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What does verse 5 indicate about the relationship between the missionary team and the local believers?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have friends or ministry partners like that?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes, lots.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes, a few.
- \_\_\_\_\_ No, not really.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I wish I did.

Locate the following places on a map.

- Cos
- Rhodes
- Patara
- Cyprus
- Tyre
- Ptolemais
- Caesarea

While in Caesarea, the missionaries stayed in Philip's home. Where have we heard of Philip before?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What does "one of the seven" (verse 8) refer to? \_\_\_\_\_

How are Philip's daughters described? \_\_\_\_\_

What can we assume about Philip based upon this description of his daughters? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you think?

- \_\_\_ A parent determines the spiritual outcome for his children.
- \_\_\_ A parent influences the spiritual decisions of his children, but the child makes his own choices.
- \_\_\_ A parent has little or no influence on the spiritual outcome of his children.
- \_\_\_ God is in control and orders our lives; God, not parents, influence spiritual decisions of children.
- \_\_\_ If I am a good Christian parent, my children will be believers also.
- \_\_\_ Because I am a believer, God is obligated to save my children also.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

**DIG DEEPER:** It's great to have an opinion, but our opinion should be based on truth. What Scriptures caused you to reach your conclusion above?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

How does knowing that you have an influence on others affect your daily decisions?

- \_\_\_ Not at all. I try not to think about.
- \_\_\_ It's a big responsibility; each day I ask for God's help.
- \_\_\_ It helps me have self-control.
- \_\_\_ I try to be a good example for others.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

According to Acts 20:22, why was Paul headed to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

What advice had he received along the way?

- 20:23 From: \_\_\_\_\_ Advice: \_\_\_\_\_
- 21:4 From: \_\_\_\_\_ Advice: \_\_\_\_\_
- 21:10 From: \_\_\_\_\_ Advice: \_\_\_\_\_

Paul believed that the Holy Spirit had instructed him to travel to Jerusalem. While on the trip there, however, other believers warned him of trouble and encouraged him not to go to Jerusalem. How do you explain this apparent conflict?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul was mistaken.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The other believers were mistaken.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It was God's will for Paul to go to Jerusalem, but the Holy Spirit was preparing him in advance for difficulty. The believers naturally were concerned for his welfare.

### **Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

---

### **Homework**

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 35 – Acts 21:17-26

### Back in Jerusalem (21:17-26)

One of the first things Paul did when he arrived in Jerusalem was report to the elders (leaders) there. What might this teach us?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul submitted to the authority of others. I should submit to church authorities as well.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul considered himself a peer of the elders in Jerusalem. His visit to them was a courtesy visit because of his respect for them. I should respect other Christian leaders as well.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paul treated his mission as “independent” of any church, and therefore wasn’t subject to oversight.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My ministries, even those outside the church, should be subject to church approval and oversight.
- \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

How did the elders in Jerusalem respond to Paul and his report?

- Verse 20: They \_\_\_\_\_ God.
- Verse 20: They called Paul their \_\_\_\_\_.

Paul’s arrival in Jerusalem caused some unexpected problems. The elders told Paul that “thousand” of Jews have believed. These Jewish believers believed that they should still follow the teaching of the Law. In verse 25, the elders told Paul that they affirmed that Gentiles didn’t need to accept and follow Jewish practices before they could become a follower of Christ. So, we know that the elders agreed with Paul’s teaching.

Why, then, would the elders have suggested that Paul take part in Jewish purification ritual? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. How does this apply to Paul’s actions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you think of this quotation from the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (page 434): “For the sake of the gospel, it may be important for us (and our fellow believers) to engage in certain practices, wear special clothing, or wear our hair in a particular way – as long as it is not inconsistent with the gospel. Believers trying to reach the youth culture on Hollywood Boulevard, for instance, should dress

differently than those trying to share Christ in a retirement community. The goal is for the progress of the gospel to be the driving passion of every believer.”

- \_\_\_ It’s right on.
- \_\_\_ It’s too extreme, but I am in general agreement.
- \_\_\_ It’s wacky.

How do you determine if something is consistent or inconsistent with the gospel?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Can you think of any examples of “conforming” or changing to further the gospel?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any cautions about conforming?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### **Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you’ve learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

---

### **Homework**

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 36 – Acts 21:27-22:22

### The Arrest of Paul (21:27-34)

While Paul was at the temple, some Jews made two accusations against him. What were the accusations?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Was there any truth to the accusations?

1. “He teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place.”  
 Yes, it was true.  
 No, it was false.  
 No, but was close enough to the truth to be plausible.
2. “He has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place.”  
 Yes, it was true.  
 No, it was false.  
 No, but circumstances made it plausible.

When the police (the Roman soldiers) arrived, what were the people doing?

- Having a reasoned discussion with Paul.  
 Making a citizen’s arrest.  
 Beating Paul.

How many times have you been beaten because of your Christian witness?

- Never                       Once or twice                       Often

How many times have you been jailed because of your Christian witness?

- Never                       Once or twice                       Often

How many times have you been persecuted because of your Christian witness?

- Never                       Once or twice                       Often

What kind of persecution have you experienced because of your Christian witness?

- I’ve been ostracized.  
 I’ve been made fun of.  
 I’ve lost a job or promotion.  
 My family has rejected me.

\_\_\_\_\_ Some friends have rejected me.

\_\_\_\_\_ I've been beaten.

\_\_\_\_\_ I've been put in jail.

\_\_\_\_\_ Christians I know have been killed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I've had to leave my home.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Read Matthew 5:11-12. What does Jesus say about people who are persecuted because of him? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you believe that?     \_\_\_\_\_ Yes     \_\_\_\_\_ No

Really?                    \_\_\_\_\_ Yes     \_\_\_\_\_ No

What did the police do when they arrived at the scene?

\_\_\_\_\_ Arrested Paul first, then asked questions later.

\_\_\_\_\_ Asked questions, then arrested Paul.

\_\_\_\_\_ Conducted a careful study of the events.

\_\_\_\_\_ Came to the defense of the man being beaten by the mob.

### **Mistaken Identify (21:35-39)**

Who did the officer think that Paul was? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Perhaps this explains why he so quickly arrested Paul.

### **Paul's Defense to the People (21:40-22:22)**

Complete this list based on Paul's speech.

- v. 3 Paul was a \_\_\_\_\_, born in \_\_\_\_\_.
- v. 3 Paul was brought up in \_\_\_\_\_.
- v. 3 Paul was trained in the Jewish faith by \_\_\_\_\_.
- v. 3 Paul was \_\_\_\_\_ for God.
- v. 4 Paul \_\_\_\_\_ followers of Jesus.
- v. 4 Paul went to \_\_\_\_\_ to arrest Christians.

*Acts of the Apostles*

- v. 6-10 \_\_\_\_\_ spoke to Paul.
- v. 11 Paul was \_\_\_\_\_ by the light.
- v. 12-13 Paul's blindness was \_\_\_\_\_.
- v. 14-16 Paul was given a special \_\_\_\_\_ by God.
- v. 17-21 God told Paul to \_\_\_\_\_ Jerusalem and go to the \_\_\_\_\_.

Though the crowd at first listened attentively, when Paul began to speak of the Gentiles, how did the crowd respond? \_\_\_\_\_

What were they most upset about?

\_\_\_\_\_ Paul believed in Jesus.

\_\_\_\_\_ Paul taught Gentiles that they could be reconciled to God.

\_\_\_\_\_ God had a plan for the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Something to Think About**

These Jews had a hard time accepting that God could accept people that weren't like them. They were prejudiced against Gentiles. Are there any people groups that it's hard for you to believe God loves? Would it anger you to learn of a special work of God amongst them?

**Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

---

**Homework**

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 37 – Acts 22:23-23:35

### A Quick Review

- Paul has traveled to Jerusalem, even though the Holy Spirit and others have warned him that troubles will follow.
- Paul has been arrested by the Roman commander following a riot started by some Jewish citizens.
- The Roman commander thought that Paul was a terrorist from Egypt.
- Paul addressed the crowd, who listened until Paul talked about his mission to the \_\_\_\_\_.
- At that point, the mob wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ Paul.

### The Legal Maneuvering Begins (22:23-29)

The Roman commander ordered that Paul be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

A flog was a whip-like device consisting of leather straps and sharp objects, such as wire, lead pellets, or rocks. In order to “get at the truth”, Romans would often flog their prisoners to “encourage” them to talk.

The Roman commander didn’t know what the uproar was about, but wanted to find out. The easiest way to find out was to have Paul flogged and questioned. It didn’t matter if Paul was guilty of any wrong doing or not.

What did Paul tell the Romans that resulted in him not being flogged? \_\_\_\_\_

What does this reveal about the Roman system of law?

\_\_\_\_\_ Roman law protected Roman citizens from punishment without a trial.

\_\_\_\_\_ Roman law didn’t protect people that weren’t Roman citizens.

\_\_\_\_\_ Foreigners were considered guilty until proven innocent.

How does this compare to our American system of law? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In Acts 16:23-39, Paul and Silas were flogged by city officials. Only afterwards did they reveal that they were Roman citizens. What might explain the difference between that event and this event? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Paul Appears Before the Jewish Court (22:30-23:11)

The Roman commander was in a pickle. He couldn't beat the truth out of Paul because he was a Roman citizen, but he also didn't understand why the local Jews had nearly started a riot because of Paul. So, he ordered the Jewish council (the Sanhedrin) to meet and took Paul before this group. (Since Paul was a Roman citizen, the Jewish council could not "try" him. However, the Roman commander was hoping to learn more about what was going on.

After Paul insulted the high priest Ananias, and then learned that Ananias was the high priest, how did he respond?

- He expressed regret
- He repented
- He was sarcastic

How does God want you to respond to authorities in your life, such as your employer, police officials, and church leaders? \_\_\_\_\_

---

The Sadducees \_\_\_\_\_ believe in the resurrection and supernatural beings.

The Pharisees \_\_\_\_\_ believe in the resurrection and supernatural beings.

When Paul introduced the subject of the resurrection, the \_\_\_\_\_ came to his aid.

Who told Paul that he would testify in Rome? \_\_\_\_\_

How might Paul have felt?

- Encouraged
  - Discouraged
  - Challenged
- 

## A Secret Plot is Foiled (23:12-35)

What are we told about the conspirators?

- How many were there? \_\_\_\_\_
- How serious were they? They took an \_\_\_\_\_ not to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ until they had killed Paul.

Who discovered the plot and took news to Paul about it? \_\_\_\_\_

How did the Roman commander treat Paul's nephew? \_\_\_\_\_

Based on his earlier behavior, does that response surprise you?

\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_ No

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

How did the commander respond to the news of the plot?

\_\_\_\_ He didn't believe it.

\_\_\_\_ He took action to protect Paul.

\_\_\_\_ He said, "Bring it on" and told his men to get ready to fight.

\_\_\_\_ He wrote a letter to his boss, being sure to make himself look good.

Paul was sent to Caesarea under guard of 200 soldiers, 200 spearmen, and 70 horsemen. What does this large force indicate?

\_\_\_\_ The commander was being cautious.

\_\_\_\_ He wanted to make sure Paul arrived safely.

\_\_\_\_ He was concerned about a possible Jewish uprising.

\_\_\_\_ The Romans did everything to excess.

What do you suppose the more than 40 men did after Paul escaped?

\_\_\_\_ They obeyed their oath and starved to death.

\_\_\_\_ They repented of making a rash oath.

\_\_\_\_ They found some one else to bully and abuse instead.

### **Something to Think About**

Are you prone to make rash statements, promises or oaths?

### **Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

## **Homework**

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 38 – Acts 24:1-25:12

### The Accusation Before Felix (Acts 24:1-9)

How would you summarize the accusation that the lawyer Tertullus made against Paul? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did Tertullus make the accusation?

\_\_\_\_\_ He jumped right in and got right down to business.

\_\_\_\_\_ He offered flattering words before getting down to business.

\_\_\_\_\_ He began the conversation with niceties, then worked the conversation toward his topic.

What do you think? “When I have a conversation, ...

\_\_\_\_\_ ... it’s best to get right to what I want to talk about as soon as possible.”

\_\_\_\_\_ ... I like to say nice things about the other person to make them more likely to listen to me.”

\_\_\_\_\_ ... I like to gently ease into the topic that I really want to talk about.”

\_\_\_\_\_ ... it’s important to me to get to say what I want to say.”

\_\_\_\_\_ ... it’s important to me to listen to what the other person says.”

\_\_\_\_\_ ... I often interrupt the other person because there’s something I want to say.”

\_\_\_\_\_ ... I think being nice to the other person, especially during a negotiation or business transaction,  
is a sign of weakness.”

\_\_\_\_\_ ... it’s more important that the other person understand what I said than that I understand what  
they said.”

\_\_\_\_\_ ... I try to listen more than I talk.”

Do you know some one that talks with flattering words? How do you feel after talking to that person?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you know some one that always seems to turn the conversation to himself? How do you feel after talking to that person? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know some one that dominates every conversation by talking much more than listening? How do you feel after talking to that person? \_\_\_\_\_

## Paul's Defense to Felix (24:10-21)

How would you summarize Paul's defense? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Read verse 16 again. This is the second time that Paul has made a statement like this. (The other was in Acts 23:1.) Paul stated: "I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man."

What is a "clean conscience?" \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

How do you keep your conscience clear before God? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

How do you keep your conscience clear before man? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Are these both important to you?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

## Two Years with Felix (24:22-27)

What did Felix know about Christianity?

\_\_\_\_\_ He was well acquainted with it.

\_\_\_\_\_ He didn't know much about it all.

Was he a follower of Jesus and his teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes.

\_\_\_\_\_ No.

When he heard Paul speak about "righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid."

What might he have been afraid of?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Felix knew a lot about Jesus, but he didn't believe him or follow his teachings. When he heard Paul teach about Jesus, he became afraid. Perhaps he feared judgment because he knew of his sins. Perhaps he feared having to change his lifestyle. Perhaps he feared that Paul's teaching was correct, and he didn't want to admit that he was wrong or needed help.

This description of Felix seems to describe people that we know today, doesn't it?

- Some people know a lot about Jesus, but they don't know him.
- Some people know a lot about Jesus' teaching, but do not follow those teachings.
- Some people respond to the gospel with fear. That fear may be seen as rejection, or anger, or ridicule, or fear of change, or fear of admitting failure.

Do you know some one like Felix?

- \_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_ No

What can you do to help that person?

- \_\_\_ Pray for him.  
\_\_\_ Be a friend.  
\_\_\_ Tell him the gospel message each time that I see him.  
\_\_\_ Don't pressure him to be like I want him to be.  
\_\_\_ Give him a WWJD bracelet along with a gospel tract.  
\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

## **Trial Before Festus (25:1-12)**

It's been two years since the Jews tried to kill Paul in Jerusalem. Paul's been under house arrest in Caesarea. Now Festus has replaced Felix, and the Jews are still interested in pressing their case. In fact, the Jews would really like to kill Paul. They had a plot to ambush the Romans moving Paul to Jerusalem. Why, after two years, are they so interested in getting rid of Paul?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of accusations did the Jews bring against Paul?

- \_\_\_ Serious charges that they could not prove.  
\_\_\_ False accusations.  
\_\_\_ True accusations.

Why did Festus ask Paul to stand trial in Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What does that reveal about Festus?

- \_\_\_\_\_ He was a just judge.
- \_\_\_\_\_ He was more interested in personal ambition than justice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Jews had more influence than Paul.

Why might Paul have appealed to Caesar?

- \_\_\_\_\_ He knew he wouldn't get a fair trial in Jerusalem.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ God had told him he would go to Rome, and this was one way to get there.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ He was getting tired of Caesarea and wanted to travel again.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ He was led by the Holy Spirit.
- \_\_\_\_\_

### **Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Homework**

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read the Scripture for the next lesson.

## Lesson 39 – Acts 25:13–26:32

### Festus' Summary to Agrippa (Acts 25:13-22)

Agrippa was the great-grandson of Herod the Great. He had two sisters, Bernice and Drusilla. Drusilla was the wife of Felix, so Agrippa was Felix's brother-in-law. (Remember, Felix was recently replaced by Festus.) The Roman Emperor Claudius appointed Agrippa as king of Chalcis (Lebanon) and gradually added territory to his domain.

Festus was the Roman governor of Judea, and Agrippa had no authority there. However, Agrippa was influential in both Rome and Jerusalem, so Festus consulted with Agrippa. As a result, Agrippa decided to learn more about Paul.

### Festus' Introduction of Paul (Acts 25:23-27)

Festus revealed his problem in these verses. What was his problem? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Paul's Defense Before Agrippa (Acts 26)

Summarize the important points that Paul made.

- vs. 2           The accusations are from \_\_\_\_\_.
- vs. 3           Agrippa is \_\_\_\_\_ about Jewish customs.
- vs. 4           Paul did not live his life in \_\_\_\_\_.
- vs. 5           Paul lived as a \_\_\_\_\_.
- vs. 6-8         Paul's hope \_\_\_\_\_ as related to the resurrection of \_\_\_\_\_  
is the root of the charges against him.
- vs. 9-11       Like his accusers, Paul once \_\_\_\_\_.
- vs. 12-18      \_\_\_\_\_ personally appeared to Paul and talked to him.  
Jesus appointed Paul \_\_\_\_\_.
- vs. 18         Paul's mission was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- vs. 19         Paul \_\_\_\_\_.
- vs. 20         Paul preached to:
- those in \_\_\_\_\_

- those in \_\_\_\_\_
- those in \_\_\_\_\_
- and to the \_\_\_\_\_.

vs. 22

God has \_\_\_\_\_ Paul.

Was there ever a time that God abandoned Paul and did not help him?

\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_ No

Even after being imprisoned for two years, Paul trusted that God had helped him even through that period.

### Something to Think About

1. Read Hebrews 13:5. When things are tough in your life, has God abandoned you?  
\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_ No
2. As a result, the writer of Hebrews encourages us to be \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What can you do when you feel that God has abandoned you?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the difference between “contentment” and “complacency”? Define these words, using a dictionary, if necessary.  
“content” \_\_\_\_\_  
“complacent” \_\_\_\_\_
5. How would some one who is content finish this sentence? “I could be in better physical condition, \_\_\_\_\_.”
6. How would some one who is complacent finish this sentence? “I could be in better physical condition, \_\_\_\_\_.”

vs. 22 Paul wasn't teaching anything that the \_\_\_\_\_ didn't also teach.

vs. 23 What did Paul and the prophets teach?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Festus and Agrippa had different reactions to Paul's defense. Describe their response.

Festus \_\_\_\_\_

Agrippa \_\_\_\_\_

Festus and Agrippa believed that Paul:

- \_\_\_ was guilty
- \_\_\_ was not guilty
- \_\_\_ should be immediately set free
- \_\_\_ would be set free except for his appeal to Rome

### Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

### Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read Acts 27.

## Lesson 40 – Acts 27

### Paul Sails for Rome (Acts 27:1-8)

The author, Luke, uses the pronoun “we”, which indicates that he was traveling with Paul on this trip. How would you describe his narrative?

- It’s just a summary.
- It has some details, but not many.
- It is full of details.

Do these details make the story more believable?

- Yes, because they were written by an eye-witness.
- No, because he could have just made it all up.

Trivia question: Where was the home of the real “Santa Claus” (Saint Nicolas)?

- The North Pole
- The South Pole
- The Netherlands
- Myra

(The real Saint Nicolas was a Christian from Myra, in modern day Turkey, who lived around 300 AD. Our stories of Santa Claus are loosely based upon this Christian.)

### Paul Predicts Trouble (Acts 27:9-12)

Why was it becoming dangerous to travel by sea? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did Paul predict?

- A safe trip because God was with them.
- Loss of cargo.
- Hazard to life.
- Shipwreck.

Sea travel was considered risky in the fall (September – November) and extremely dangerous during the winter (November – March). Paul says that it is “after the Fast”, which refers to Yom Kippur. In the year

AD 59, Yom Kippur was on October 5. So, it is probably sometime in October, and sea travel would have been considered risky. (*Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, Volume 2, page 472)

Whose advice was taken?

- \_\_\_ The missionary.
- \_\_\_ The owner.
- \_\_\_ The ship captain.
- \_\_\_ The Roman soldier.

## The Storm (Acts 27:13-26)

The decision was made to skirt along the southern shore of Crete to reach a better harbor. However, the winds shifted and a storm arose and the ship could not return to the island.

How violent was the storm?

- The lifeboat was hoisted onto the ship; normally it was towed behind.
- Ropes were passed under the ship to help strengthen it.
- The anchor was lowered to try to slow and stabilize the ship, or the sails were lowered. (The Greek text states that the vessel was lowered, so there is some disagreement about what that was.)
- Cargo was thrown overboard.
- The ship's tackle was thrown overboard.
- Men weren't eating (Seasickness? Shortage of food?)

When Paul addressed the crew, what did he say?

- \_\_\_ "See, I told you so."
- \_\_\_ "I feel your pain."
- \_\_\_ "We're all in this together."
- \_\_\_ "I have good news; God says that our lives will be spared."
- \_\_\_ "Cheer up; God uses all things for good."
- \_\_\_ "The ship will be lost, but you will be saved."

## The Shipwreck (Acts 27:27-44)

After being in the storm for two weeks or more, how would you be feeling?

- \_\_\_ Nauseated.
- \_\_\_ Discouraged.
- \_\_\_ Depressed.
- \_\_\_ Expectant.
- \_\_\_ Encouraged; it can't go on much longer.
- \_\_\_ Hopeless.

What did the sailors try to do (verse 30)? \_\_\_\_\_

How did the soldiers prevent it? \_\_\_\_\_

What promise did Paul make to all aboard the ship? \_\_\_\_\_

How many were on board? \_\_\_\_\_

After the ship ran aground and began to break up, the soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners rather than give them the opportunity to escape. However, the centurion prevented that. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

The prisoners were spared because of Paul. If Paul had not been with them, then the soldiers probably would have killed them all. What do you learn from this?

\_\_\_ One person can make a difference.

\_\_\_ It's hard to predict the difference that I might make in a stranger's life.

\_\_\_ Never travel by ship without Paul.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who reached land safely?

\_\_\_ No one but Paul.

\_\_\_ Some of the sailors.

\_\_\_ Some of the soldiers.

\_\_\_ Some of the prisoners.

\_\_\_ All 276 persons from the ship.

Did God do what he told Paul he would do?

\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_ No

### **Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Other Resources**

Focus on the Family's *Adventures in Odyssey* includes a multi-part dramatization of Paul's voyage and shipwreck, from Acts 27 and 28. *Adventures in Odyssey*, Volume 26, "Back on the Air." If you have children, consider listening to that dramatization after completing this lesson and the next one.

## **Homework**

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Read Acts 28.

## Lesson 41 – Acts 28

### Drama on Malta (Acts 28:1-10)

Paul made himself useful by collecting wood for the fire, but was bitten by a snake as a result. What did the natives think that revealed about Paul? \_\_\_\_\_

---

What do we sometimes think when misfortunes occur to some one else?

- \_\_\_\_\_ God is punishing him.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ God is trying to get his attention; he must be “backslidden.”
  - \_\_\_\_\_ He’s just getting what he deserves.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ I’m glad it happened to him and not to me.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ I wonder how I can help him.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Is there something I should learn from his experience?
- 
- 

After Paul didn’t swell up and die, the people changed their minds and thought that he was a God. How do you suppose Paul responded?

- \_\_\_\_\_ He reveled in the attention.
- \_\_\_\_\_ He assured them that he wasn’t a god and told them about the real God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ He got even with his Roman captors.

What would you have done? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Probably as a result of Paul’s immunity to the snake bite and his response to the people that thought he was a god, Paul (a Roman prisoner) was welcomed into the home of a public official and used by God to bring healing to the official’s father. What do you think?

- \_\_\_\_\_ When I am faithful in a little, God may provide additional opportunities for ministry.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ If I ever survive a poisonous snake bite, I should see if anyone in the area needs healing.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ God may open additional doors if I am faithful with what I’ve already been given.
- 
-

## Paul Finally Arrives at Rome (Acts 28:11-16)

The ship that Paul sailed on from Malta to Rome contained two figureheads of pagan Gods. Did Paul balk at traveling on the ship?

\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_ No

Why not?

\_\_\_ The images were only figures carved from wood, not images of real gods.

\_\_\_ He wasn't superstitious.

\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe Paul's treatment on the trip to Rome and once he arrived there? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Paul Teaches the Jews (Acts 28:17-30)

Paul had been sent to Rome as a prisoner due to the accusations of the Jewish religious leaders. Who did he seek out once he arrived in Rome? \_\_\_\_\_

What does that tell you about Paul?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

How did the Jews respond to Paul's message?

- Some \_\_\_\_\_.
- Some \_\_\_\_\_.

How do people respond to the gospel message today?

- Some \_\_\_\_\_.
- Some \_\_\_\_\_.

Did the fact that some didn't believe prevent Paul from sharing the gospel with others?

\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_ No

What verse in this passage is the climax of the message of the book of Acts? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

---

## The Rest of the Story

Paul stayed two years in Rome, but where's the rest of the story?

According to *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*:

- It is generally agreed that Paul appeared on trial before Nero and was acquitted and released.
- Some think that Paul traveled to Spain and remained there for two years.
- Paul was arrested again while in Ephesus, taken to Rome, and treated more harshly, as a criminal.
- He was sentenced to death, and is generally thought to have been decapitated in the summer of 67 or 68 AD.
- He was buried in the Roman catacombs, where the persecuted church to refuge.

## Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life.

---

---

---

---

## Homework

1. Choose one thing that you learned in this lesson and share that with your family.
2. Complete the following "Conclusion" exercises.

## Conclusion

Now that you've completed the several lesson study, schedule time within the next week to review the "Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today" section of each lesson. Ask God to help you identify:

- two or three of the most important applications that you noted, and
- two or three areas of growth that are most needed in your life.

Most Significant Applications

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Most Needed Areas of Growth

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Commit these to God!