

A Study of Luke & Acts

A Reading Guide for the Gospel of Christ and the
History of the Church He established

Scholars generally agree that Luke, the “beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14), wrote both the gospel that bears his name and the book of Acts. The structure and language of each are similar and they are both addressed to a man named Theophilus. Acts 1:1 refers to the book of Luke as “the former account” that Theophilus had received.

The book of Luke is a *gospel*, an account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. The book of Acts is a *history* of the beginning and growth of the church. When studied consecutively, one gets a panoramic view of this crucial time in history when God sent His Son to save man (Galatians 4:4) in accordance with His eternal purpose (Ephesians 1:4). When finished with the study, you will know more about the person and work of Jesus Christ and you will have learned about the church He established. Not only will this information prove of great personal benefit in your pursuit of a relationship with God, but it will also provide valuable background for future Bible studies, whether in the Old Testament or New.

This booklet is a “reading guide.” This approach allows God to do the teaching. We provide a few questions at the end of the readings to help focus on what He has said. We believe that God’s word can be understood by anyone who is willing to read it with an open mind. Do this, and you’ll reap a great benefit.

A Caution

We all have our presuppositions and biases, some of which are long-standing and not easily ignored. Many of these presuppositions are true. Others may be mistaken, products of teaching or upbringing, but not of biblical truth. For example, most people believe that Jesus was born on December 25th and that the Bible teaches us to observe “Christmas.” Yet the Bible is silent about the day of Christ’s birth and “Christmas” is an invention of man¹.

Holding on to presuppositions even when they contradict clear Bible teaching is fatal to a clear understanding of the Bible. If we are unwilling to accept the truth, wherever it leads, we can never please God (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6).


As beneficial as it might be to set aside our presuppositions, however, it is probably not realistic to insist that we eliminate all our biases before reading the Bible. A more reasonable suggestion, perhaps, is to realize that we *do* have some presuppositions and that they are probably affecting our understanding of the Bible. Admitting the presence of our biases, and thus the influence they may have on our thinking, should help us be more objective in our reading of the truth as revealed in the Bible. Remember, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

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¹ The idea of celebrating Christ’s birth on December 25th was first suggested early in the fourth century. The date was chosen to counter a festival celebrated by a pagan religion, Mithraism, on the same date.

Synopsis & Outline

We will study *Luke-Acts* according to the schedule below. Notice that the readings are divided into thirteen sections. If you study one section per week, you will be able to complete the material in one quarter. You may, of course, choose to study at a more leisurely or more rapid pace.

In each lesson, read the section of the text assigned and then answer the questions that follow. The questions will help you focus on the important themes and concepts which are developed throughout the two books. Do not hesitate to share your thoughts and questions with your study partner. From time-to-time, at the end of a lesson, you'll see this symbol  (chosen because Luke was a doctor). It introduces a few thought questions that are designed to make a more personal application of what you have read – a “diagnosis,” if you will. Bible truth is not academic, but meant to change our lives. Or, as one writer put it, we are not “vessels to be filled, but lamps to be lit.”

Luke

The study follows Jesus in His movements in and around Palestine, from His birth to His resurrection and ascension. Try to determine the character of Jesus is from these readings. What did the people think of Him, and why? What claims did He make about Himself? Also, work at getting a clear picture of why He came to earth—what was His mission? Did He accomplish it?

Lesson #1—Preface, the Birth of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptizer [1:1-2:52]

Lesson #2—The Beginning of Jesus' Public Ministry [3:1-4:13]

Lesson #3—The Ministry in and around Galilee [4:14-9:50]

Lesson #4—From Galilee to Jerusalem [9:51-13:21]

Lesson #5—The Ministry in and around Perea [13:22-19:27]

Lesson #6—Jesus' Last Days in Jerusalem: Sacrifice and Victory [19:28-24:53]

Acts

This book picks up where Luke leaves off. It tells us what the followers of Jesus did after the resurrection and ascension into heaven of Jesus.

Note that each block of readings ends with a similar statement that gives us a clue as to what the book of Acts is about (see 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:31) . There is a brief statement in 1:8 that can serve as a general outline of the book, referring to the places that the gospel would be preached. Though not a biography of Peter and Paul, the book shows the growth of the church primarily through the lives of these two men, as well as a few others.

Lesson #7—Introduction [1:1-2:41]

Lesson #8—The Church at Jerusalem [2:42-6:7]

Lesson #9—Critical Events in the Lives of Three Pivotal Figures [6:8-9:31]

Lesson #10—The Gospel in Palestine and Syria [9:32-12:24]

Lesson #11—Paul's First Journey and the Jerusalem Council [12:25-15:35]

Lesson #12—Paul's Second and Third Journeys [15:36-20:38]

Lesson #13—Paul's Journeys to Jerusalem and Rome [21:1-28:31]

Luke

1

Read Luke 1:1–2:52. Preface, the Birth of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptizer

1. Why did Luke write this book? [1:1-4]
2. Who was Zechariah and what happened to him? [1:5-23]
3. Who was John the Baptizer and what was his mission? [1:13-17]
4. Who visited Mary and what was his message? [1:26-37]
5. How did Mary respond? [1:38-56]
6. What was unique about Mary's pregnancy? [1:34] Where is it prophesied about in the OT? (look at the "cross-reference" in the margin of your Bible).
7. At what point was Zechariah able to speak again? [1:57-66]
8. What do you think it means when some of these people are said to be "filled with the Holy Spirit"? What did they actually do? [1:41, 67; see 2:25ff.]
9. Describe the birth of Jesus and the events which followed. [2:1-39]
10. What was Christ's mission on earth? [2:11-14, 25-38]

Luke

2

Read 3:1–4:44. The Beginning of Jesus' Public Ministry

1. What nation was in power when Jesus began His teaching? [3:1]
2. What was the nature of the message John the baptizer was preaching? [3:3-14]
3. What was John's function? [3:15-18]
4. What act preceded the public ministry of Jesus? What happened during it? [3:21-22]
5. Who tempted Jesus while He was in the wilderness and what does the temptation tell us about Jesus [4:1-14; see Heb. 4:15].
6. Explain how the words that Jesus read from Isaiah applied to Him [4:16–21]
7. To what group of people did Jesus preach during His public ministry?
8. Notice the reaction of the people recorded in 4:22, 32, 36. What was different about the teaching of Jesus?
9. What is the basic meaning of "kingdom of God"? [4:43]



Read Mt. 3:13-17, a parallel passage about the baptism of Jesus. Jesus said He was being baptized “to fulfill all righteousness.” What does that statement say to you?

Jesus was tempted in “all things as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). How does Jesus’ experience help us keep from sin?

Mt. 16:18-20. Jesus said He would build His church. What is a “church”? How was He going to build it? Is there a relationship between the church and the kingdom of God?

Luke

3

Read 5:1 – 9:50. Jesus' Ministry in and around Galilee.

1. What did the miracles prove? [5:1-8; 12-16, 17-26; 6:6-11, 18-19]
2. Describe the calling of the disciples [5:9-11, 27; 6:13-16]
3. Why were the scribes and Pharisees upset? [5:21, 30-32; 6:11]
4. Summarize Jesus' sermon, recorded in Lk 6:20–49.
5. What characteristic of the Centurion impressed Jesus so much? [7:1–10]
6. What was the result of the miracles that Jesus performed? [For example, see 7:16].
7. What was John asking in 7:18-23? How did Jesus answer him? Can you explain 7:23
8. In the parable of the sower [8:4–18], what kind of people are represented by the “good ground”?
9. What is a “disciple”? What is required to be a disciple of Jesus? [9:18–25; 57–62]



Jesus taught with authority (see Matthew 7:28-29). Think about the various “authorities” we accept in life – our government, our police force, our laws. What or who should be our authority in religion?

Jesus spent time with sinners (7:36-39; see 5:31-32; 7:40-50). Why? What does it say about His purpose?

Faith was something that Jesus considered very important, as borne out by His reaction to the Centurion. How would you define faith? Do you think you have it?

Why did Jesus do miracles? If they were to help people believe in Jesus and His teaching, would they serve any purpose today?

Recalling the parable of the Sower, what kind of “ground” would you say you are?

Do you think it would be easy to be a disciple of Jesus? Do you think it would be worth it? Do you think there is a difference between being a disciple and being a Christian? (Read Acts 11:26)

Luke

4

Read Luke 9:51 – 13:21. From Galilee to Jerusalem

1. Who wanted to call “fire down from heaven” to destroy the Samaritans? Why? [9:51-56]
2. How did Jesus describe the cost of following Him? [9:57-62]
3. Jesus sent out ___ men two-by-two into every city. What were they to preach? [10:1-16]
4. Review your understanding of the term “the kingdom of heaven.” [10:9, 11]
5. Why were the seventy rejoicing when they came back from their mission? [10:17]
6. Jesus told them that they should rejoice over something else - what?
7. In what sense has God “hidden things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes?” [10:21; cf. I Cor. 1:18ff.]
8. Jesus taught the parable of the good Samaritan in response to a question from a lawyer. What was the lawyer’s attitude? [10:25-37]
9. Analyze the “Lord’s Prayer” [11:1-4; see Mt. 6:9-13]. What did Jesus teach about prayer?
10. An important principle is developed out of the confrontation recorded in 11:14-28. What essential lessons does this event and Jesus’ response teach us?
11. We talked earlier about the “good and honest heart” which Jesus discusses in the parable of the sower. What is the opposite of such a heart? [11:29-12:3]

12. What is “confession”? [12:8-9; see Rom. 10:9-13].

13. What is more important than riches? [12:13-34].

14. Christ is the “Prince of Peace” yet He says that His coming will cause division. Why?



Would knowing that your name was written in the “Book of Life” cause you to rejoice? Why?

How might we “test” Jesus, like the lawyer did? What kind of attitude should we have instead?

Have you ever confessed Christ before men? What is the alternative to confession?

Read 13:22–19:27. The Ministry in and around Perea

1. Some people teach “pluralism” in religion meaning that anyone who believes in God will be saved, regardless of what doctrines they believe or reject. Looking at 13:22-27, do you think Jesus taught pluralism? If not, what *did* He teach? (Cf. Mt. 7:13-14, 21-23).
2. “Jerusalem” (the main city of the Jews) had rejected Jesus as the promised Messiah. But how did Jesus feel toward Jerusalem and how did He express these feelings? [13:34-35]
3. Why did Jesus ask the Pharisees whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath? What was their response and what does it prove? [14:1-6]
4. When you are invited to a banquet, what “seat” are you to seek? Why?
5. Who is invited to participate in the kingdom of heaven? Who is most likely to come? [14:15-24]
6. If we are going to follow Jesus, what kind of attitude must we have and what should we do first? [14:25-33].
7. Read again Luke 15. This is a chapter which we might call “lost and found.” What was lost and what was found and what was the reaction in each case when that which was lost was found? Why?
8. In the parable of the unjust steward [16:1-11], the master commended him for something. What was it and why? What is the point of the parable (remember that parables generally have only one major point)?

9. We, as humans, take a certain view of things and make certain assessments regarding their value. How does God regard many of the things that we tend to hold dear? [16:14-15].

10. After reading the story of the rich man and Lazarus, do you think a person will have an opportunity to repent after he dies? [16:19-31]

11. How forgiving is a disciple of Jesus to be? [17:4]

12. What is the proper attitude of a disciple toward his duty to Jesus? [17:5-10]

13. Describe why a disposition of gratitude is important to discipleship and pleasing to God. [17:11-19]

14. From 17:20-21, describe the nature of the kingdom of God – what is it, where is it?

15. Study the parable of the persistent widow and discuss what it teaches about the importance of fervency in prayer. Note especially the statement found in verse 8 regarding faith. [18:1-8]

16. What does it mean to receive the kingdom “as a little child”? [18:17; cf. Mt. 18:1-5]

17. Why did Jesus tell the rich young ruler to sell all he had? Why didn't he obey Jesus? What is Jesus teaching us through this story?

18. What does 18:31 tell us about fulfillment of prophecy? (Cf. 24:44)

19. What did Zacchaeus do to earn the commendation of Jesus? [19:1-10]

20. To what extent will we be held responsible for what we have been given? [19:11-27]



Do you think it is possible for all so-called “Christian” religions to be right in the sight of God? How does God feel about division?

Have you ever lost anything important? How did you feel when you found it? How do you suppose God feels when a sinner returns to Him?

Do you think much about the brevity of life and what follows? In what sense was there a great “reversal in the lives of the rich man and Lazarus?”

What does it mean to be “justified” [18:14]? Do you think you have been justified by God?

Are you impressed with the fact that so many prophecies about Jesus came true?

Luke

6

Please read Luke 19:28–24:53. Jesus' Last Days in Jerusalem: Sacrifice and Victory

1. What is the significance of Jesus coming into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey? How was He received? [19:28-40].
2. Jesus again was touched by the sight of Jerusalem. What did He do as He drew near and what did He do when He arrived at the temple? In both cases, discuss why He reacted as He did. [19:41-48]
3. The Jews immediately questioned the authority of Jesus to “cleanse” the temple. What is “authority”? How did Jesus respond to their questions, and what does it tell us about His view of His authority? [20:1-8]
4. Who are the “vinedressers” in the parable? [20:9-19]
5. Christ is the “chief cornerstone” of what? [20:17; cf. Eph. 2:20; I Pet. 2:6]
6. How did Jesus handle the attempts by the Jewish religious establishment to trap Him? What does this tell us about His authority?
7. The Sadducees were a Jewish sect who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They asked Jesus a lengthy question about it [20:27-40]. How did Jesus respond and what does it teach us about the resurrection?
8. What do we learn about the demands of discipleship from the widow who put all her living in the treasury? [21:1-4]

9. Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70, about 40 years after Jesus spoke the words found in chapter 21. What was Jesus' purpose in speaking these words?

10. Who betrayed Christ? [22:1-6]

11. What memorial was instituted, as recorded in chapter 22? Why? [Cf. I Cor. 11:23-29]

12. Who did Jesus predict would deny Him three times? [22:31-34]

13. Describe the experience of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. Why do you suppose He was so distressed, since He knew that He would be raised from the dead? [22:39-46]

14. The Jews violated many of their own laws when they arrested Jesus. Why were they so intent on killing Him?

15. What was the charge against Jesus that the Jews presented to Pilate? [23:2] Compare the charge with what Jesus said in 20:20-26. What were the Jews doing?

16. Describe the actions of Pilate and Herod as they attempted to please the people and still uphold some semblance of the Roman law. [23:6-25]

17. Describe the crucifixion, as Luke describes it. Why do you suppose there isn't more detail about the agony of the death itself? What's the point in telling this story? [23:32-49]

18. Who first discovered that Jesus had been raised from the dead? [24:1-12] What did they do?

19. To how many people did Jesus eventually appear? [See I Cor. 15:1-8] Why is this fact important? Why is the resurrection so important to Christians?

20. Luke records a relatively long account about two disciples on the road to Emmaus. What lessons do we learn from the exchange between them and Jesus? What kind of attitude did they have? [24:13-35]

21. How did Jesus appear to the disciples and how did He prove His resurrection? What is the significance of His asking for something to eat? [24:36-43]

22. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do and where were they to begin? [24:44-49].



Did you notice that the preaching of Jesus caused one of two reactions – either anger (rejection) or joy (acceptance). Why?

Of how many churches is Christ the “chief cornerstone”?

How often should we commemorate the death of Christ? (Cf. Acts 20:7)

What does the death, burial and resurrection of Christ mean to you personally? Why did Jesus undergo such terrible suffering?

Notes

Acts of the Apostles



The Ethiopian Eunuch, Acts 8

Introduction

The study of the book of Acts requires a slightly different approach than the study of Luke. Places are more significant, since it records history which takes place over a longer period of time and in many different places. The book records events which occur from about AD 30 until about AD 63-64, covering the reign of Roman Emperors from Tiberius (AD 14-37) to Nero (AD 54-68). The events take place first in Jerusalem and then expand to “the uttermost parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Also, beginning in Chapter 13, Acts records the travels of the apostle Paul. He goes on three missionary journeys and a trip to Rome, all of which are recorded in some detail. Some supplementary maps will be included in the study to help you visualize these journeys. Remember what was said in the Introduction: Acts is not a biography of Peter or Paul but is designed to record the birth and growth of the church. Such a history is critical to our understanding of how the early church functioned. Since the church was functioning under the leadership of the apostles, we can be sure that if we pattern our organization, worship and doctrine after the church of the first century, we cannot be mistaken.

Acts

7

Please read Acts 1:1–2:46. Jesus’ ascension, choosing of Matthias, Pentecost, establishment of the church.

1. Note the similarities of the first part of Acts with the last part of Luke. What evidence is there that Luke is author of both?
2. What prophecy is made concerning the apostles? [1:4-5]
3. What is the significance of the question which the disciples ask in 1:6? What is a “kingdom” and what do you think the disciples were looking for? How did Jesus answer and why is it significant?
4. Write an outline of Acts using only 1:8 as a guide.
5. Where did Jesus go when He was “taken up”? [1:9; cf 2:33; 7:56] What did the men in white apparel mean when they said Jesus would return in the same manner?
6. How many disciples had gathered in the “upper room”? What were they doing? [1:12-15]
7. Who was chosen to replace Judas? What qualifications did a man have to meet to become an apostle? Why can there be no apostles today? [1:15-26]
8. Look carefully at the text and determine who the “they” refers to in 2:1.
9. Who was involved in the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Had such a thing ever happened before? What was the effect? [2:1-13]

10. We're told that the apostles began to speak with "other tongues." What does that mean and is it anything like what people are claiming to do today? [2:4-11]
11. What was the crowd's response? [2:7-13]
12. Peter's is the first sermon recorded, though all of the apostles had been teaching (2:4). Analyze Peter's sermon and answer the following questions: [2:14-39]
- a. How does he answer the charge that they are drunk?
 - b. Why does he use so many Old Testament quotations?
 - c. What does the prophesy of Joel refer to and how is Peter making application of it?
 - d. What evidence does Peter give to show that Jesus is the Messiah for whom they have been looking?
 - e. Where was King David at the time Peter spoke and why is his "location" important?
 - f. What is unique about Jesus of Nazareth, especially when compared to all other religious leaders?
 - g. What was the response of the crowd when Peter told them they had killed Jesus?
 - h. How did Peter answer their question, "What must we do?"?
 - i. What effect(s) does baptism have, according to Peter?
 - j. What is the "promise" referred to in verse 39?

13. In what sense was the generation “perverse” and why did the people need to be saved from it? [2:40]

14. What was the state of mind of the people who were baptized? How many were there? To what were they added? [2:41]



Luke claims that Jesus proved His resurrection by “many infallible proofs.” How do you feel about that? Are you convinced? Do you know about those proofs? (See I Cor. 15:3-8)

What do you think when people today claim they are “apostles,” such as some in the Mormon church? Is it possible for them to be apostles?

Some claim to speak in “tongues” today. In fact, they claim that you are not truly a Christian unless you do. How do you feel about that? Do you think modern “tongue-speaking” is of the same quality and has the same purpose as we read about in Acts?

What caused the people to be “cut to the heart”? Have *you* ever felt that way? Has it ever happened when you read or heard something about Jesus?

Peter told the people to repent and be baptized for forgiveness of sins. Why did he tell them that? Why didn't he just tell them to “accept Jesus into your heart as your personal savior”? Do you believe Peter was right when he said that baptism was for forgiveness of sins?

Have you ever been baptized? Why or why not? (See Rom. 6:3-7; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12-13; I Pet. 3:21).

Acts

8

Please read Acts 2:47-6:7. The Church at Jerusalem.

1. In what did the new converts “continue steadfastly”? [2:42]
2. What does the word “fear” mean in 2:43?
3. Describe the atmosphere of the first church. [2:42-47]
4. Who was the Lord adding to the church each day? [2:47] Why doesn't it say the people were *joining* the church?
5. What was the purpose behind the healing of the lame man? [3:1-10] What opportunity did it create? [3:11]
6. Summarize the main points of Peter's second sermon. What does he command them to do? [3:12-26].
7. What was the purpose of prophecy? [3:24]
8. Why were Peter and John arrested – what had they done? [4:1-3]
9. How many people were in the church by now? [4:4]
10. What does it mean to do something in the “name of” someone? In whose name had the apostles acted? Did they have authority for this? In whose name is salvation found? [4:5-12]

11. What steps did the council take to try to silence Peter and John? How did Peter and John respond? [4:13-22]

12. Who was responsible for the death of Jesus and why? [4:27-28]

13. How were the disciples demonstrating their care for one another and for the church? [4:32-37]

14. What lessons do we learn from the sin of Ananias and Saphira? [5:1-11]

15. How did the imprisoned apostles escape? What were they told to do? [5:17-21]

16. Why did the Jewish leaders fear the people? [5:26]

17. Who is Gamaliel and what did he have to say about the teaching of the apostles?

18. What was the attitude of the apostles about suffering for the name of Jesus? [5:41]

20. What problem occurred between the Jews (Hebrews) and the Greeks (Hellenists)? How was it handled? [6:1-7]



This section records a number of threats to the church. They take three forms: external persecution; internal evil (Ananias & Saphira); and internal strife (the rift between the Jews and Greeks). Why did these occur and how might they occur in the church today? How can they be prevented?

What got into these apostles that caused them to undergo such suffering with no complaint?

What is the church to do when confronted by evil within it?

Acts

9

Please read Acts 6:8 – 9:31. Critical Events in the Life of Three Pivotal Figures

1. Who was Stephen and why were people angry with him? [6:8-15]
2. Carefully read the text of his defense before the council [7:1-53]. Summarize the main points below:
3. What was the response to Stephen's words? What did they do to him? How did Stephen respond? [7:54-60]
4. Who was the young man who was "consenting to his death" and what did he do? [8:1-3]
5. What effect did the stoning of Stephen have on the disciples? [8:1-4]
6. Philip is the third major figure introduced in this section. What kinds of things did he do, where did he do them and what was the result of his actions? [9:5-13]
7. Did the people of Samaria just "accept Jesus into their heart" or did they do something else? [8:13]
8. Describe the sin of Simon the Sorcerer. What was required in order for him to be forgiven? [8:14-25]
9. Describe in detail the conversion of the Ethiopian [8:26-39].

10. Saul was still persecuting the church, but something very dramatic happened to him. What was it and why is it significant? [9:1-22]

11. Was Paul saved? At what point? [9:18; cf. 22:16]

12. Stephen had been killed and the church was undergoing severe persecution. What happened to the church, in spite of these things? Why? [9:31] Think About It. . .



What do the conversions which you have read about so far have in common? Can you construct a “plan of salvation” from them?

Have you undergone a conversion like any of the ones mentioned in Acts?

Does it appear that being a good, moral person is enough to save him or her?

Acts

10

Please read Acts 9:32–12:24. The Gospel in Palestine and Syria

1. Chapter 10 introduces us to a very important individual named Cornelius. Describe him in as much detail as you can from the information given in this chapter.
2. What was the nature and message of the vision which Peter saw? Why was this necessary? [10:9-16].
3. Why was Peter sent to Cornelius? [10:17-33]
4. What did Peter teach Cornelius? [10:34-43]
5. How did Cornelius respond? Was he saved? At what point? [10:44-48]
6. The conversion of Cornelius is significant for reasons beyond the personal salvation of he and his household. Why? [10:44-48]
7. The first part of Chapter 11 is basically a repetition of the events of Chapter 10. What new information does it add to our understanding of what happened? [11:1-18]
8. Who was Barnabas and how would you describe his attitude? [11:19-26]
9. What is a “prophet”? What did one of them (Agabus) predict about Jerusalem? [11:27-30]
10. Who died at the hand of Herod? [12:1-2]

11. Why did Herod imprison Peter? [12:3-4]

12. What was the church doing while Peter was in prison? [12:5]

13. How did Peter get out of prison? How did the church respond when told about it? [12:6-16]

14. What happened to Herod? [12:20-23]

15. How successful has the preaching of the gospel been so far? [12:24]



Cornelius was a very good person but not yet saved when Peter meets him. Why?

What qualities did Cornelius have that we should emulate?

The church prayed for the release of Peter but didn't believe it when he was released. If we're going to pray, shouldn't we pray with faith? (Cf. Luke 18:1-8)

Herod killed James. God killed Herod. Who would you rather be - Herod or James?

Acts

11

Please read Acts 12:25–15:35. Paul’s First Journey and the Jerusalem Council

The first preaching tour of Paul and Barnabas took place from AD 46-48 and is recorded in the following passage in Acts. Maps of Paul’s journeys follow this series of questions.

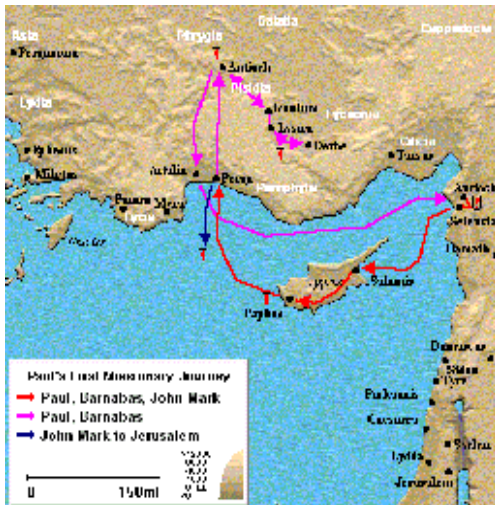
1. Trace out Paul’s travels from the text. List the cities that he went to and, where details are given, note what occurred in those cities.
2. Compare Paul’s sermon in Chapter 13 with Peter’s in Chapter 2. What points of similarity do you find in them? What differences?
3. Note the difference in attitude between the Jews and the Gentiles in Antioch. Why did Paul and Barnabas “turn to the Gentiles”? [13:42-52]
4. What did the people of Lystra try to do with Paul and Barnabas? Why? How did they respond? [14:8-18].
5. What did Paul and Barnabas do when they returned through the cities of Lystra, Iconium and Antioch? [14:21-23]
6. What question was raised by “certain men” from Judea and how was it handled? [15:1-29]
7. As you read through Chapter 15, note how certain methods were employed to establish the authority for the decision. Note how they used commands, examples, and even inferences to form their arguments.



What does Chapter 15 teach about the necessity of keeping the Ten Commandments or any other part of the Old Testament?

How do you determine what scriptures apply to you? How do you establish religious authority for an action? How do you suppose God views actions done without His authority?

Below are maps of Paul's three missionary journeys covering a period of about fifteen years, from AD 46 to 60. Take special note of how the gospel spread, even in the face of stiff opposition. You can use the space below to make notes on some of the highlights of these trips.



Acts

12

Please read Acts 15:36–20:38. Paul's Second and Third Journeys

1. There arose a sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas. Why and what was the result? [15:36-40]
2. Who was Lydia? Describe her conversion. [16:11-15]
3. Describe the conversion of the Phillipian Jailer. Note especially his attitude afterward [16:25-34].
4. Compare the mind-set of the Bereans with the Thessalonian Jews. Who was more “noble-minded” and why? How did each group respond to the teaching of the gospel? [17:10-15]
5. Note the approach Paul uses in trying to reach the Athenians with the gospel. Why did he talk about an “unknown God”? [17:16-34]
6. Describe the attitude of the Athenians both before and after Paul preached. Did he have much success there? Why or why not?
7. What does God command all men to do today? Why? [17:30-31]
8. What does Paul offer as proof that there will be a resurrection some day? [17:30-31]
9. What important couple did Paul meet in Corinth? [18:2]
10. How long did Paul stay in Corinth? [18:11-18]



What is impressive to you about the conversions of Lydia and the Jailer?

Would you honestly put yourself in the category of the Bereans, who were more “noble-minded” than the Thessalonians? Why?

The Athenians were always looking for something “new”? Why does that attitude make it difficult to receive the gospel?

Have you thought about the reality of judgment recently? How will you answer when you are asked to give an account of your life? (Cf. Romans 2:6ff.)

If we are attached to something physical that is opposed to the word of God, what will we do when we are truly converted, in light of 19:19?

What do you think is involved in declaring the “whole counsel of God” (20:27)?

Acts

13

Please read Acts 21:1–28:31. Paul’s Journeys to Jerusalem and Rome

1. What was Paul’s attitude about serving Christ? Was he crazy or truly committed to a risen Lord? [21:11-14]
2. After the mob seized Paul and had beaten him, he was arrested and taken to some barracks. But he was allowed to address the mob. Read his speech carefully and note the major points he makes below [22:1-21]:
3. At what point did the crowd become incensed again? How did Paul save himself? [22:22-29]
4. How is it that Paul could say he lived “in all good conscience” if he had “persecuted the Way to the death”? What is the function of the conscience? [23:1]
5. What is the difference between the Sadducees and the Pharisees and how did Paul use this difference to his advantage in his speech before the Sanhedrin (the Jewish High Court)? [23:3-10]
6. What lie did the commander tell Felix in his letter to him? (Cf. 22:25ff. with 23:26-30)
7. What charges were leveled by Tertullus against Paul to Felix? Were any of them true? [24:1-9]
8. Study Paul’s defense and Felix’ response. [24:10-27] When Felix called for Paul again, what was he hoping to get and what did he get instead? Why was he afraid? What had Paul reasoned with him about?

9. Even though neither Felix nor Festus had cause to bind Paul they both left him imprisoned. Why? [24:27; 25:9]

10. To whom did Paul finally appeal and why was this significant? [25:11-12; 26:32]

11. Outline the defense which Paul makes before King Agrippa. How is it similar and how is it different to previous defenses that he has made? [26:1-32]

12. What was Agrippa's response when Paul appeals to his conscience and knowledge?

13. Chapter 27 describes the beginning of Paul's trip to Rome and tells of a shipwreck. Note how Paul's faith is displayed and expressed in this crisis and make some notes below.

14. What interesting event took place on the island of Malta? What did it prove? [28:1-10]

15. How was the church viewed in the eyes of society, according to the people in Rome? [28:22]

16. What circumstance was Paul in while in Rome and what did he do there? Why do you think the book ends so abruptly? [28:30-31]



Paul was ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem. Why? Are you ready to make that kind of commitment to God?

Paul relates how he was told to be baptized and “wash away your sins” (22:16). Do you think it is possible for one’s sins to be “washed away” without baptism? Are your sins washed away?

Paul persecuted the church and even consented to the death of some of its preachers (22:4, 19-20), yet he was certain he was saved. How did he overcome his guilt? Do you think you’ve done something so evil that you could never be saved? Think about Paul, who called himself the “chief of sinners” in I Timothy 1:15. Do you believe anyone is beyond the reach of God’s grace, even if they completely obey Him?

Festus became afraid when Paul preached about righteousness, self-control and the judgment (24:25), which indicated that he still had a conscience. But he responded by putting off hearing any more from Paul. Have you ever procrastinated about doing something important? How about your obedience to the gospel? Will there be a *more* convenient time?

After Paul recounted his conversion experience and asked King Agrippa if he believed the prophets, Agrippa said, “Paul, you almost persuade me to become a Christian.” Almost persuaded, but lost. Are you almost or “altogether” persuaded?