ACTS

(THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LORD'S CHURCH)

Acts 1 - A New Book (1:1,2)
A New Experience (1:3-8)
A New Assurance (1:9-11)
A New Apostle (1:12-25)

Acts 2 - The Miracles (2:1-13)
The Message (2:14-41)
1. Introduction (14-21)
2. Explanation (22-36)
3. Application (37-40)
The Multitude (2:42-47)

Acts 3 - Power (3:1-11)
Preaching (3:12-26)

PAUL'S EPISTLES IN CONNECTION WITH THE BOOK OF ACTS

The following list of books written by Paul were written during the period covered by Acts. Many times we think of these letters outside the context of what was happening in Paul's life and the development of the church at that time. It is helpful to think of Paul's epistles in connection with the text of the last few chapters of Acts.

The "themes" of Paul's epistles written during the period of the book of Acts:

1 & 2 Thessalonians (Comfort for those who endure)
1 & 2 Corinthians (Various problems in the congregation)
Galatians (Freedom in Christ)
Romans (God's gospel)
Ephesians (God's Scheme of Redemption)
Colossians (Pre-eminence of Christ)
Philemon (Personal Note - the only one written)
Philippians (Joy in Christ)
Hebrews (?) (Superiority of Christ)

This is how the letters arrange themselves with the book of Acts:

1 & 2 Thessalonians (Acts 18:1-18) - A.D. 51,52
1 Corinthians (Acts 19) - A.D. 56
2 Corinthians (Acts 20) - A.D. 57
Galatians/Romans (Acts 20) - A.D. 58
Ephesians/Colossians/Philemon/Philippians/Hebrews (Acts 28:16ff) A.D. 62,63.

INTRODUCTION TO ACTS

Luke reminds us that Acts is "Volume 2," and that there are many important truths laid down in Luke which serve as a basis of Acts. The most important truth is that the Christ is risen from the dead. Another link between Luke and Acts is the word "promise." Cf. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33,39. In connection with the promise of the Holy Spirit, Jesus gave the apostles a commission, part of which is found in Acts 1:5-8. One of the most thought provoking and climactic passages is Acts 1:9-11. There is power in the hope of Christ's return. Acts is a letter that covers a FEW of the acts of a FEW of the apostles. Many are never mentioned again after Acts 1.

The outline of the book is to be found in Acts 1:8 - the growth, spread and development of the Lord's church as found in that verse. Acts follows very closely that commission. Cf. -

The growth, spread and development of the Lord's church in--

Jerusalem (1-8)
Judea (8:1)
Samaria (8:1-5)
The uttermost parts of the world:

Preacher (9)
People (10,11a)
Church (11b,12)
Journeys (13-28)

The Church In Jerusalem (1-7)
Education

The Church In Palestine (8-12)
Extension

The Church In The World (13-28)
Evangelism

Acts continues to unfold the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. Notice the following benefits of studying the book of Acts:

Confirmation that the prophets were men of God, and that their writings are useful to us;

Further proof that Christ is God's Son;

Evidence that the church is an integral part of God's plan - not just an after thought;

Knowledge that God's plan was designed to save all who come to Him through Christ.

No book of the New Testament is more earnest in exposition. It calls the church of today to look at the church as it was at the beginning. We are able to trace how Christ encountered the world through His church to triumph with the gospel. Note the importance of Acts in our study:

Provides knowledge of the early apostolic period of Christianity;

It is a link between the gospel accounts and the epistles;

It is an aid in understanding the epistles of Paul;

Acts explains how Christianity displaced Judaism;

Helps to understand apostolic teaching;

It is rich in biographical and historical value;

Missionary methods, founding, and message of the church.

THE PENMAN

Luke, the historian (1:1-4), same penman of Luke's gospel

Luke, the physician (Colossians 4:14). Medical knowledge in the book

Luke, the companion of Paul (2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24)

Luke, the eyewitness (Acts 16:1-17; 20:5-15)

PROLOGUE

1. To convince the disciples of the certainty of the resurrection of Christ because Christianity stands or falls by this event

2. To instruct the disciples concerning the kingdom (Acts 1:3,6,7)

STUDY OF ACTS
ACTS 1:1-26

EVENTS: Christ's ascension into heaven; the choosing of Matthias.

PLACES: The Mount (12); Jerusalem (4,8,12); Field of Blood (19); Judea (8); Samaria (8).

PEOPLE: Theophilus; The Apostles; Mary; Barsabas; Matthias.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES: Psalm 69:25; 109:8 (Acts 1:20).

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER ONE

1. When were the "many infallible (convincing) proofs" shown?

2. List some of the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection.

3. How many days elapsed from the ascension to Pentecost of Acts 2?

4. Where were the apostles to wait? Why?

5. Did Jesus ever have any intention of establishing an earthly kingdom? Are there any people anticipating such a kingdom in the near future?

6. What do we know about the "manner" of Christ's return?

7. What does Acts 1:14 tell us about the faith of Jesus' brothers?

8. About how many disciples were together in Jerusalem? Were there more elsewhere?

9. What scriptures did Peter say needed to be fulfilled?

10. What qualifications were needed for a man to be an apostle?

11. Who were appointed? Who was numbered with the original apostles?

12. What is Judas' "own place?"

Acts 1:1
In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach

Acts 1:2
until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Acts 1:3
After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Acts 1:4
On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

Acts 1:5
For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1:6
So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Acts 1:7
He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

Acts 1:8
But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:9
After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Acts 1:10
They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

Acts 1:11
"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Acts 1:12
Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

Acts 1:13
When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

Acts 1:14
They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Acts 1:15
In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)

Acts 1:16
and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus--

Acts 1:17
he was one of our number and shared in this ministry."

Acts 1:18
(With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.

Acts 1:19
Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

Acts 1:20
"For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms, "'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,' and, "'May another take his place of leadership.'

Acts 1:21
Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

Acts 1:22
beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

Acts 1:23
So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.

Acts 1:24
Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen

Acts 1:25
to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."

Acts 1:26
Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

STUDY OF ACTS
ACTS 2:1-47

EVENTS: The Holy Spirit coming with power on the apostles; Peter's sermon; the effects of Peter's sermon; the establishment of the Lord's church.

PLACE TO REMEMBER: Jerusalem

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER: Apostles; The Holy Spirit; the 3,000 added to the church.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES: Joel 2:28-32 (Acts 2:17-21); Psalm 16:8-11 (Acts 2:25-28); Psalm 110:1 (Acts 2:34,35).

WORDS: "cloven" (KJV) - lit., "being distributed" - perhaps the indication that a single body like fire appeared, then parted to rest on each of the apostles. (2:3)

"tongues" - glossais - "languages" - not just language, but particular dialects (dialekto). (2:4,6)

"Galileans" - strong indication that the 120 were not being referred to.

"hell" (KJV) - "hades" - place of the unseen. All dead go to hades, but only the wicked to hell (gehenna). Our Lord did not enter gehenna. (2:27)

"for" - eis - "into; implies purpose, aim or direction. Cf. Matthew 26:28. (2:38)

SYNOPSIS: Acts 2 has been called the "hub of the Bible." It is the culmination of God's plan for redeeming mankind. It is not possible to over-emphasize this chapter because of the fact that an eternal plan is finally executed.

The people in Jerusalem who are witnessing the events taking place are, naturally, shocked and puzzled. They first accuse the twelve of being drunk, but Peter very effectively explains the miracle by quoting the prophet, Joel, and thus sets the stage for a beautiful and powerful full gospel sermon. "They that gladly received his word were baptized," and the situation has not changed in over 1900 years.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Who was filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost of Acts 2? Why is this question important?

2. Who was at Jerusalem on that particular day?

3. How was the power of the Holy Spirit evidenced on the day?

4. What did the people initially think of that evidence?

5. What is the difference between "tongue" in Acts 2, and "tongue" as it is used by charismatic groups today?

6. Who preached on the day of Pentecost? Whose sermon is recorded?

7. How did Peter defend the accusation of drunkenness laid against the apostles?

8. Whom did Peter quote in explaining the situation?

9. Of what did Peter accuse his listeners?

10. According to Acts 2:23, was God's plan a failure when Christ was killed?

11. Of whom was the Psalmist speaking in Psalm 16:8-11?

12. What reason did Peter give for Psalm 16 not being applicable to David?

13. Where was Jesus as Peter preached on the day of Pentecost?

14. Is baptism necessary for remission of sins? Why?

15. What was the gift of the Holy Spirit?

16. Who was baptized on Pentecost? How many?

17. Do we "join" the church? Why?

18. Can one be saved outside the church?

Acts 2:1
When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Acts 2:2
Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:3
They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

Acts 2:4
All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:5
Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

Acts 2:6
When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

Acts 2:7
Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?

Acts 2:8
Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?

Acts 2:9
Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

Acts 2:10
Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome

Acts 2:11
(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

Acts 2:12
Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Acts 2:13
Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Acts 2:14
Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.

Acts 2:15
These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!

Acts 2:16
No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

Acts 2:17
"'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Acts 2:18
Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Acts 2:19
I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

Acts 2:20
The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

Acts 2:21
And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

Acts 2:22
"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

Acts 2:23
This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 2:24
But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

Acts 2:25
David said about him: "'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Acts 2:26
Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope,

Acts 2:27
because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

Acts 2:28
You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

Acts 2:29
"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

Acts 2:30
But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

Acts 2:31
Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

Acts 2:32
God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

Acts 2:33
Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

Acts 2:34
For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand

Acts 2:35
until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."'

Acts 2:36
"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Acts 2:37
When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Acts 2:38
Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:39
The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Acts 2:40
With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

Acts 2:41
Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 2:42
They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:43
Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

Acts 2:44
All the believers were together and had everything in common.

Acts 2:45
Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

Acts 2:46
Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

Acts 2:47
praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

THE STUDY OF ACTS
ACTS 3:1-4:26

EVENTS: The healing of the lame man; Peter's second recorded sermon; Peter and John arrested; membership grows; the Council; "all things common."

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

Deuteronomy 18:15,18,19 in Acts 3:22,23
Genesis 22:18; 26:4; 28:14 in Acts 3:25
Psalm 118:22 in Acts 4:11
Psalm 2:1,2 in Acts 4:25,26

WORD STUDY

3:19 "Be converted" - The KJV indicates that this is a passive verb, but it is active, and thus, does not allow for some mysterious action upon the sinner.

3:19 "When" (Greek) - "Hopes on" - so as instead of "when", the refreshing is conditional upon the repentance.

4:4 "Number...was...five thousand" - We have traditionally misrepresented the situation. The word translated "was" (KJV) comes from "ginomai" which means "become." The tense used here is better rendered "the number of men became or grew to be about five thousand." The indication is not that another five thousand were converted in addition to the three thousand on Pentecost (Acts 2), but that the "total" after combining all the growth of the church had become about five thousand men, not including women and children.

SYNOPSIS: (Chapters 3,4)

Chapter Two closed with the disciplines continuing steadfastly and the church growing daily. Acts 3 continues to inform us of the tremendous interest in Christianity. Chapter 4 serves as a foreshadow of the dreadful persecution to come.

In this section we have another of Peter's sermons which, once again, is delivered after a miracle and follows the same general outline as the sermon on Pentecost.

1. It is delivered after a miracle;
2. He accuses his listeners of murdering Jesus;
3. He tells them of the hope they have in Christ.

In this section we have the first persecution of the church. From this we can see the position that Judaism will take against the church.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What was the beggar expecting to receive from Peter and John?

2. Where were Peter and John going? Why?

3. How does the miracle performed in Acts 3 differ from the feeble attempt to deceive the gullible today?

4. What effect did this miracle have on the crowds around the Temple?

5. Whom did the people believe had performed the miracle? To whom did Peter attribute the miracle?

6. What terms does Peter use to describe Jesus to the Jews who chose a murderer to be released instead of Jesus?

7. Under what conditions can "times of refreshing" come from the Lord?

8. From where is Peter quoting in Acts 3:22?

9. Why were the Priests, the Captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees grieved at the preaching of Peter and John?

10. Why did the Council marvel at Peter and John?

11. How did Peter and John respond to the command by the Council not to preach or teach any more in the name of Jesus?

12. What is the meaning of Acts 4:27,28?

13. For what did the apostles pray after being released from the Council?

14. How were needy saints provided for in Jerusalem during those first days of the church?

15. Who was Barnabas?

16. Consider possible reasons why the church doesn't grow as rapidly as it did in the early days of the book of Acts.

THE STUDY OF ACTS
ACTS 5:1-6:8

EVENTS: Ananias and Sapphira; Power of the Holy Spirit; Obeying God; Persecution; Church growth.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES: None in this section.

WORD STUDY:

"Indignation" (5:17) - filled with passion; overflowing; "hot steam" (noun)
"Senate" (5:21) - Eldership. Another word for Sanhedrin; old and honored men
"Murmuring" (6:1) - subdued complaint
"Proselyte" (6:5) - a convert to Judaism
"Increased" (6:7) - continued to grow, as if the word of God were a living thing; Cf. 1 Peter 1:22-25.

SYNOPSIS: Luke continues to show how the church progressed in and around Jerusalem. One theme runs through all - God can only be glorified when we honor His will, no matter what the circumstances are. In the very face of their enemies, and in spite of severe punishment, the men of God resolved not to give in. They would teach and preach whenever possible. They were now experiencing firsthand the application of the last beatitude of the Sermon on the Mountain. Cf. Matthew 5:10-12.

Luke shows next that God is honored when His people use principles from His word to solve problems in the local church. Problems are not solved by ignoring them. In Acts 6:7,8, the author lists some of the results of glorifying God. How many positive results can you find in these two verses?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the contrast of Barnabas with Ananias and Sapphira?

2. How did Peter know the secret plans of this couple?

3. To whom did he say they lied? Why?

4. What results came after the incident of Ananias and Sapphira?

5. Of what sect was the High Priest?

6. Who were put in prison?

7. What is the significance of verse 24?

8. Have we filled our community with the apostles' doctrine? How can this be done?

9. List the things in verses 29-32 that would have offended the High Priest.

10. Who were the "Grecians" and the "Hebrews?"

11. Who were the "seven?"

12. Why were they chosen?

THE STUDY OF ACTS
ACTS 6:9-7:60

EVENTS: The dispute (6:9-15); Stephen's defense (7:1-50); Stephen's accusation (7:51-53); Stephen's stoning (7:54-60); Responses of the audience, the Son of God; Stephen.

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES:

7:3	Genesis 12:1
7:7	Genesis 15:14; Exodus 3:12
7:27,28	Exodus 2:14
7:32	Exodus 3:15,16
7:33,34	Exodus 3:5-10
7:35	Exodus 2:14
7:37	Deuteronomy 18:15
7:40	Exodus 32:1,23
7:42,43	Amos 5:25-27
7:49,50	Isaiah 66:1,2

WORD STUDIES:

Disputing (6:9)	To seek or examine together (Acts 9:29). Apparently they were "putting questions" to Stephen.
Resist (6:10)	To set against, to withstand or oppose (Matthew 5:39)
Suborned (6:11)	To throw or put under, to subject, denoted to suggest, whisper, prompt - hence, to instigate
Looking steadfastly (6:15)	Gazing earnestly. This is a highly important term, and is also used in such places as Luke 22:56; Acts 1:10; 3:4,12; 11:6; Acts 7:55
Charan (7:2)	Haran (Genesis 12:1-5)
Subtilly (7:19)	Having craftily treated. The identical word found in the Greek translation of Exodus 1:10
Trembled (7:32)	An adjective signifying "trembling with fear"
Lively oracles (7:38)	A phrase which shows that the word of God is alive, and has the power to be the "life-giving" oracles
Moloch (7:43)	A heathen god worshipped especially by the Ammonites with gruesome orgies in which little ones were sacrificed

Remphan (7:43) A pagan deity. Some have said that it is another name for Saturn.

Cut to the heart (7:54) They were being "sawn in two" as regards their heart

Gnashed on him (7:54) Grinding their teeth at him in suppressed rage

SYNOPSIS: There are several key points of this section. It shows how easy it is to resist God, and how impossible it is to succeed when we resist Him. This lesson also illustrates the attitude of the early church toward the Old Testament. It was accepted as a perfect record of God's prior dealings with mankind.

Luke also shows us that the church used the Old Testament as God wanted it to be used - to prove Jesus was the Messiah; that God blesses the obedient; that God's displeasure with the rebellion of His own people against His will and His messengers.

We ought to meditate carefully on the fact that the Lord Jesus clearly approves of such preaching as Stephen's.

QUESTIONS

1. Why couldn't Stephen's enemies resist his wisdom?
2. What was false about the charges brought against Stephen?
3. Discuss the statement about Stephen's face being as the face of an angel.
4. List the 12 sons of Jacob.
5. Where did Moses receive his education?
6. Why did Stephen say so much about Moses? (7:37; 3:22,23; 7;51-53)
7. What two Old Testament places of worship are mentioned by Stephen?
8. What connection do verses 48-50 have with Stephen's defense?
9. What possible reasons can be given for the reaction of Stephen's listeners?
10. What groups of people disputed with Stephen?

THE STUDY OF ACTS
ACTS 8:1-40

OUTLINE: Philip, the Evangelist (In Samaria; With the Eunuch)

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES: Acts 8:32,33 (Isaiah 53:7,8)

PLACES TO LOCATE: Jerusalem, Samaria, Gaza, Ethiopia, Azotus, Caesarea

WORD STUDIES:

8:1 "At that time" - on that day. Sadducees and Pharisees were involved in persecuting the church. The persecution became even more widespread and vicious.

8:3 "Haling" - dragging forcibly

8:37 "If thou believest". Many MSS omit this verse. It is generally conceded that it was added at a later date. However, it has no effect on the importance of baptism

SYNOPSIS: Jerusalem became the center of Christian persecution, and this persecution forced the brethren to spread. The apostles remained "at the battlefront" in Jerusalem.

Acts 8:4 tells us that evangelism was not halted by the persecution, and the rest of the chapter describes the evangelistic efforts of Philip in Samaria, and then with a Eunuch from Ethiopia. In Samaria, Philip's powers are matched against the trickery of a sorcerer named Simon. With the eunuch, the only power necessary was the word of God and the preaching about Jesus Christ.

Chapter 8 establishes beyond any reasonable doubt how the gifts of the Spirit were passed on. Simon observed that the Spirit was received by the laying on of the apostles' hands. The apostles were called from Jerusalem for that very purpose. Philip, though he could perform miracles, could not pass those powers on. Only the 12 could do that. Thus, we have the logical conclusion. When the last apostle died, thus vanished the succession of miraculous powers and unless there was an apostle alive in the last generation, miracles are not performed today.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What effect did Saul's persecution have upon the church? How did this fit into the plan laid out in Acts 1:8?

2. Who were the exceptions to the dispersion?

3. How did Saul make havoc of the church?

4. What obstacle did Philip have to overcome in Samaria?

5. Was Simon converted? Some conclude, based upon the incident that followed his baptism, that he was not really converted. How does Luke respond to this in verse 13?

6. Why did the apostles leave Jerusalem and come to Samaria? What observation did Simon make as recorded in verse 18?

7. Why did Simon want the power of the apostles?

8. What did Peter think of his request? What did Peter subsequently advise Simon to do?

9. What is the proper response of a Christian who has sinned and placed his soul in jeopardy?

10. What was unusual about Philip leaving Samaria to go to the Gaza road?

11. What position did the eunuch from Ethiopia hold?

12. Was this man a religious man? How do we know?

13. Where was the Eunuch reading when Philip came upon him?

14. Is it safe to assume that Philip mentioned baptism in his sermon to the Eunuch?

15. How was the baptism done?

16. Why was the conversion of the eunuch so important?

17. What was the eunuch's state of mind after being baptized?

18. Why do you think he felt this way?

3. What did Saul do while waiting in Damascus?

4. What kind of heart did Saul have in contrast with the hearts of the Pharisees?

5. How did the Lord reassure Ananias?

6. Why did Ananias call Saul "brother?"

7. What was the theme of Saul's preaching?

8. How was Saul saved from his enemies?

9. Who stood up for him at Jerusalem?

10. Where did Tabitha reside?

11. What steps did Peter take in raising Dorcas?

12. What does verse 31 say about the Lord's church then?

STUDY OF ACTS
ACTS 9:1-43

OUTLINE: Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (1-30); Condition of the church (31); Two miracles (32-43)

WORD STUDIES:

9:1	"Breathing out" - indicating that threatening and slaughter were the elements from which Saul drew and expelled his breath (Vine).
9:6	"Must" - an impersonal verb, signifying 'it is necessary'
9:22	"Confounded" - to pour together, hence, to trouble or confuse; to stir up (Acts 19:32; 21:31; 2:6)
9:26	"Assayed" - tried; attempted
9:31	"Edified" - to build a house; in the sense here, of promoting spiritual growth
9:33	"Palsy" - being enfeebled by a paralytic stroke
9:36	"Tabitha" - Dorcas; a gazelle doe. Tabitha is the Aramaic word; Dorcas is the Greek word.

SYNOPSIS: Acts 9 is one of three chapters where the conversion of Saul is recorded. One of the significant lessons to be gained from this account is that Paul knew what he did to be saved. We hear people say that Paul was saved on the road to Damascus, but when he recounts his conversion (Acts 22; 26; Romans 6:3,4), he never says a word about being saved on the way to Damascus.

Verse 31 is a key verse that deserves a lesson by itself. Luke describes the condition of the churches in five powerful phrases.

Although Paul will soon come into prominence in this study, Luke reminds us that the highly effective work of Peter was continuing. More people came to Christ as a result of the miracles done by Peter.

QUESTIONS

1. Why would Saul be looking for Christians in Synagogues?

2. Did Saul rebel against the Lord? Is that the same as rebelling against the church?

STUDY IN ACTS
ACTS 10:1-11:18

BRIEF OUTLINE: Chapter 10 - Conversion of Cornelius; Chapter 11 - Peter rehearses the situation.

WORD STUDIES:

10:1	"Band" - a legion composed of 6,000 men. There were ten "bands" or "cohorts," or 60 centuries.
10:14	"Common"; "Unclean" - ceremonially unclean (Leviticus 11:1-47). Peter was having difficulty overcoming his previous teaching and understanding even though the Lord was telling him otherwise.
10:29	"Gainsaying" - objection

SYNOPSIS: It is evident in Acts 1:8 that the gospel was not intended to be for the Jews alone. Yet, that seemed to be the way Christ's orders were interpreted for quite some time. Acts 10 is the turning point in that emphasis. Cornelius was a Gentile, and his conversion showed the apostles and others that the gospel was for all.

Later, Peter had to defend his actions to those of the circumcision, but when they heard about the incident with the Holy Spirit and all that led to that miraculous confirmation, "They held their peace, and glorified God, saying, 'Then has God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.' (Acts 11:18).

QUESTIONS

1. What was Cornelius' occupation? How is he described?

2. Did the angel of the Lord tell Cornelius what he must do? Why was Simon sent for?

3. Where was Simon Peter lodged?

4. Whom did Cornelius send?

5. What kind of influence did Cornelius have on those around him? (2,7)

6. Describe Peter's vision, and share what it was to teach him.

7. How many brethren went with Simon? (11:12)

8. What had Cornelius been doing while waiting for Peter to come?

9. Why did the Lord communicate with Cornelius (10:4,31)?

10. Who is accepted with God?

11. Was the Holy Spirit coming upon the Gentiles in Chapter 10 the same as with the apostles in chapter 2?

12. At what point were those Gentiles in Chapter 10 saved? Why was water baptism commanded?

13. How did the Jewish brethren back in Jerusalem react to the news concerning Cornelius?

14. Do you think the Gentiles would ever have been accepted by the Jews had the Holy Spirit never fallen upon them as He did in Acts 10?

15. What did the angel tell Cornelius that Peter would tell him? (11:14)

THE STUDY OF ACTS
REVIEW

IN WHAT CHAPTERS IN ACTS ARE THE FOLLOWING EVENTS LOCATED?

( ) Conversion of Cornelius
( ) Ananias and Sapphira
( ) Peter healed Aeneas and raised Dorcas
( ) Conversion of the Samaritans
( ) Prayer and sacrifice of the early church told
( ) Stephen's sermon and death
( ) Peter's second recorded sermon
( ) Choosing of seven servants
( ) Conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch
( ) Peter's trance
( ) Saul's conversion
( ) The apostles imprisoned and released by an angel
( ) Stephen arrested
( ) The ascension of Jesus
( ) The coming of the Holy Spirit with power

INDICATE CHAPTER AND VERSE FOR THE FOLLOWING VERSES:

"Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps He will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart." ( )

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." ( )

"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism." ( )

"For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. ( )

"But accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right." ( )

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out." ( )

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ( )

"We must obey God rather than men!" ( )

"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." ( )

"It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables." ( )

"Lord, do not hold this sin against them." ( )

IDENTIFY THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE OR PLACES:

1. Raised from the dead by Peter.

2. Asked to be allowed to buy the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. First recorded Gentile convert.

4. Man who baptized Saul of Tarsus.

5. Man who sold land and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

6. Name two of the servants chosen in chapter 6.

7. Who gave us a summary of Jewish history in a sermon?

8. He was on the Gaza Road reading Isaiah, and in need of a teacher.

9. The chosen vessel to the Gentiles with God's word.

10. Christ ascended to heaven from this place.

STUDY IN ACTS
ACTS 11:19-12:25

OUTLINE: Persecution and Growth (Antioch; Herod; Work)

SYNOPSIS: The last section of chapter 11 introduces us to one of the most important churches in the first century - Antioch in Syria. It was to serve as a hub for the radiating of the gospel into the Roman Empire through Paul and his associates. We learn what this church was built on - it was established and edified by faithful saints; it was composed of many honest believers who had a mind to work; and it was willing to let God's revelation be its standard.

In Acts 12, Luke presents several examples of faith and unbelief.

> Unbelief - Peter, who did not believe he was free; those who prayed; Herod, who did not believe God deserved the glory.
>
> Belief - Those who prayed since they finally let the facts seep in; Rhoda, in whom we see no evidence of weakness; and James, who died in faith.

Luke prepares us for the record of the gospel's being taken to "the uttermost parts of the earth," with one of his many summary statements of the power of the gospel and the cooperation among early disciples (12:24,25).

WORD STUDIES:

"Cleave" (11:23)	should continue; lit., 'to abide with.' This was the burden of his exhortations
"Were called" (11:26)	Its primary significance, to have business dealings with, led to the translation, "called" or "named." They "were (publicly) called" Christians, because this was their chief business
"Quaternions" (12:4)	Squads in groups of four
"Easter" (12:4)	The Greek term is "Passover." The term "Easter" is another form of Astarte, one of the titles of the Chaldean goddess, the queen of heaven. This is one of the very few poor choices of words in the King James Version
"Smote" (12:7)	Struck, giving a blow with the hand - "He slapped the side of Peter."

Ordained (13:48)	Greek - "tasso" - not a reference to some immutable decree by God, but rather to a disposition of mind of the Gentiles at this point. The gospel had become a message directed at them and not just to the Jews. They had just been "appointed" as candidates in a sense and were of the mind to readily accept the good news. Quite a contrast to the Jews we read about in this passage.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who chose Saul and Barnabas for the mission journey?

2. What was the purpose of laying on of hands in 13:3?

3. By what other name do we know Elymas? What was Elymas? What did he attempt to do? What happened to him?

4. What is the significance of the name "Saul" and "Paul?"

5. Where was John Mark's home? Where did he leave Paul and Barnabas?

6. Where did Paul deliver his first sermon that we have recorded for us?

7. Why did the Jews fulfill the prophecies concerning Christ? (13:27)

8. What was Paul's point as he quoted Hebrews 1:5 in 13:41?

9. What does it mean to continue in the grace of God? (13:43)

10. Why did the Jews speak out against those things taught by Paul and Barnabas? (13:45)

11. How did Paul and Barnabas react to being expelled from Antioch?

12. Consider why the Jews would be envious of Paul and Barnabas. Discuss how envy often manifests itself. (13:45)

THE STUDY OF ACTS
ACTS 14:1-28

BRIEF OUTLINE: The First Missionary Journey Continues (Iconium; Lystra; Derbe; Return to Antioch in Syria)

PLACES TO MARK: Iconium; Lystra; Derbe; Cities of Lycaonia; Antioch of Pisidia; Pisidia; Perga in Pamphylia; Attalia; Antioch in Syria.

SYNOPSIS: Iconium was a center of travel in Paul's day, and was the "largest and most important city in that part of Asia Minor." The confirmation of the preaching by miracles was a far cry from the sensational emotionalism which characterizes "revivals" in the land today.

One significant lesson is considering the depth of hatred of the enemies of Paul. "Those who came from Antioch had journeyed 130 miles, and those from Iconium 40 miles, to maltreat a man who had not harmed them, but whom they hated without a cause. " (McGarvey).

After suffering the nearest thing to death at the hands of these enemies, Paul retraces his steps to their cities in order to confirm the churches. What must have been the thoughts of the enemy when they heard that a healthy Paul was back in town!

WORD STUDIES

"Evil affected" (2)	To embitter
"Assault" (5)	An actual onset, not a mere plot
"Despitefully" (5)	To insult; act with insolence; "to entreat shamefully"
"Vanities" (15)	Void of result; used here to refer to their idolatry
"Confirming" (22)	To make to lean upon; strengthen
"Tribulation" (22)	A pressing; pressure; anything which burdens the spirit
"Ordained" (23)	To stretch out the hand as when voting in an Athenian legislature assembly; to appoint by a show of the hand; to appoint, elect, choose, without regard to the method
"Commended" (23)	To put near; denotes to place with someone, entrust, commit
"Recommended" (26)	To give or deliver over

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Why were the Jews called "unbelievers?"

2. How did the Lord give testimony to His word?

3. What purposes did the unbelievers have in mind in their assault?

4. Was the flight of Paul and Barnabas a sign of weakness?

5. Where did the crippled man get his faith?

6. Who was Jupiter?

7. Who was Mercury?

8. What did Paul say that barely restrained the people?

9. What were the main aspects of the work of Barnabas and Paul as they made the return trip? (21-23)

10. Why did they return to Antioch in Syria?

11. How long did they remain there?

12. Why should there be a plurality of elders in a congregation?

THE STUDY OF ACTS
ACTS 15

BRIEF OUTLINE: The Jerusalem Conference (Dissension; Debate; Solution)

OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES: Acts 15:16,17 from Amos 9:11,12.

PLACES: Phoenicia; Samaria; Jerusalem; Antioch; Cyprus; Syria; Cilicia

PEOPLE: Certain men; Paul; Barnabas; Church; Apostles; Elders of Jerusalem; Pharisees; Peter; James; Judas surnamed Barsabas; Silas; Mark

SYNOPSIS: In chapter 15, a meeting is held in Jerusalem to attempt to settle the issue of Gentiles coming into the church. The question was, "Did they have to obey the Law of Moses before they could become Christians?" Some of the Jews were teaching that unless a man was circumcised after the Law of Moses, he could not be saved. The Jerusalem conference was convened to decide the matter, and hopefully, bring the schisms in the church together.

After probably much debate, the leaders of the church reached the conclusion stated in Acts 15:28,29. They had decided, as directed by the Holy Spirit, that circumcision was not necessary. Still, as we will see in our study of the rest of the New Testament, the issue was not settled and Judaizing teachers continued to cause trouble for the Gentiles and the apostle to the Gentiles.

WORD STUDIES

"Visit" (14)	Show concern
"Residue of men" (17)	Nations other than the Jews
"It pleased Silas" (34)	This verse is left out of many texts. Perhaps it was interjected at a later date to explain the presence of Silas in verse 40, although the "some days" of verse 36 would have given Silas time to go to Jerusalem and return.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Was the delegation from Judea authorized by the apostles to teach as they did? What did they teach?

2. Who decided that a group should be sent to Jerusalem?

3. Who raised objection to the work of Paul and Barnabas?

4. Assuming that Galatians 2 is a parallel account of the events of Acts 15, how many meetings took place in Jerusalem on this occasion? (Galatians 2:2). Who was involved in the meetings?

5. What arguments did Peter use to persuade the council of the vanity of circumcision? What arguments did Paul and Barnabas use? Which did James use? From where did James quote Scripture?

6. Were those of the circumcision allowed to express themselves in the meeting?

7. What is the significance of the observation of verse 21?

8. What men were chosen to go to Antioch?

9. What "burden" was finally laid upon the Gentiles (verse 29)? Are these restrictions binding upon us today? Is the first one in conflict with Paul's teachings about meat offered to idols in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8?

10. By whose authority was the decree to the Gentiles issued (28)?

11. How were Paul and Barnabas described in the letter sent to Antioch?

12. According to Galatians 2, was there any further trouble in Antioch about the relationship between Jews and Gentiles? Who was involved?

13. Why do you think the Jews were having difficulty accepting the abolition of the Law?

14. Is the Jerusalem conference in any way similar to denominational councils and conferences that guide religious bodies today?

THE STUDY OF ACTS
ACTS 15:36-16:40

BRIEF OUTLINE: The Beginning of the Second Journey (The workers involved; Asia Minor churches; New work in Europe)

PLACES TO NOTE: Derbe; Lystra; Phrygia; Galatia; Mysia; Troas; Samothracia; Neapolis; Philippi; Thyatira.

PEOPLE: Timotheus; Paul; Silas; Lydia; A certain damsel; Her masters; Magistrates; The jailer; Serjeants.

SYNOPSIS: The second journey began with what could have ultimately led to a horrible division in the body of Christ. Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement about whether or not John Mark should accompany them on the trip to edify the churches. Both of these faithful brethren proceeded to do God's work in spite of the contention. We hear no more of Barnabas in the book of Acts. In later years, Paul writes of Barnabas (1 Corinthians), and mentioned in very kind terms the relationship that had developed between him and Mark. (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11)

This part of the journey also was the beginning of the apostle's work in Europe. the gospel obtained a strong foothold in Philippi as a result of the preaching, the honest hearers and the defeat of the persecutors. Later, one of Paul's most tender and warm letters was written to the Philippians church.

WORD STUDIES

"Contention" (15:39)	Literally a sharpening, hence, a sharpening of the feeling, or action; denotes an incitement, a sharp contention. Cf. Hebrews 10:24
"Assuredly gathering" (16:10)	Literally to make to come together; concluding
"Wont" (13)	To hold by custom
"Resorted" (13)	To come together
"Divination" (16)	Word applied to diviners or soothsayers; regarded as inspired by Apollo
"Soothsaying" (16)	Used only here in the NT to point out the difference of the source of the revelation received by the apostles and the heathen "diviners."

"Serjeants" (35)	Men (Lictors) who carried out orders of the Magistrates (Governor, or Civil Commander); especially by scourging or beheading

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Which is more important - leading sinners to Christ, or edifying the saints?
2. What was it about John Mark that led to the contention between Paul and Barnabas?
3. Which disciple was at Lystra?
4. What was it that Paul and Silas delivered to the churches?
5. In verse 10, the word "we" appears. Who joined the apostle here?
6. What did these Christians do on the Sabbath? Why?
7. What do you know about Lydia's business, home and religion?
8. Why was Paul grieved at the words of the damsel?
9. What was so upsetting to the girl's masters after she was whole?
10. What law(s) did the Magistrates break?
11. What do we learn about Paul and Silas' reaction to persecution?
12. What did the jailer mean when he asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
13. How did Paul answer his question?
14. Why was the jailer baptized at the time of the night?
15. What shocked the Magistrates?
16. What lessons can be learned in regard to Paul and Silas' contention about John Mark?
17. How many of the infants in Lydia's and the jailer's households were baptized? Why?

STUDY IN ACTS
ACTS 17

OUTLINE: Paul and Silas at Thessalonica; The work at Berea; Paul in Athens.

SYNOPSIS: Paul's work in Macedonia was difficult as we can see from chapters 16 and 17. In Philippi, Paul and Silas were cast into prison. Now, in Thessalonica, they are forced to leave town because of a riotous crowd of rabble, and then in Berea they are forced to leave because of the Jews who came down from Thessalonica for the exclusive purpose of harassing the evangelist.

One can understand the concern Paul felt for the congregation at Thessalonica as it is expressed in the epistles by that name. How could such new babes in Christ cope with the persecution that was fore-shadowed in the treatment of Jason? How would they fare against the envious Jews? Did they know enough? Were they strong enough? All of these questions must have haunted Paul, and so as he was in Athens, he felt compelled to send Silas and Timothy to learn of the situation in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:1-6).

One can imagine the feelings Paul must have experienced as he walked through the streets of the most noted city of pagan idolatry. Perhaps a mixture of anger and pity as he noted the pathetic sight of an altar to the "Unknown God." He had to tell them about God and the Son He had sent to redeem mankind, but his message fell on the ears of a people who viewed the gospel as simply a new and different religion of equal value to any other religion of the day. Many laughed at talk of a resurrection from the dead, but some listened and wanted to hear more. Paul gladly obliged and the gospel displayed its power even in the top of Mars Hill before a panel of polytheists.

WORD STUDIES:

"Alleging" (3)	Suggesting
"Rulers of the city" (6)	For a long time this was another instance wherein Luke has been called into question by liberal scholars. The term "politarch" translated "rulers of the city" in the KJV occurs nowhere in Greek literature, and so it was assumed that Luke was in error. However, once again the inspired writer was cleared by archeologists who unearthed an arch in the modern city which made mention of "politarchs." In addition, seventeen inscriptions have now been found making mention of that title.
"Epicureans" (18)	Followers of Epicurus who taught that pleasure was the chief thing to be gotten out of life.

"Stoicks" (18)	Followers of Zeno who taught on the "stoa" or porch, thus the term "stoic." They believed that pleasure was evil. They believed in self-mastery and hardness.
"Babbler " (18)	Lit., "seek-picker." The charge is that Paul had merely chanced upon an interesting concept.
"Areopagus" (19)	Either a judicial council or simply the place called Mars Hill.
"Too superstitious" (22)	The phrase is neutral in gender and can be understood in either a good or a bad sense. Considering the occasion, the ASV is probably correct in interpreting the word "very religious."
"Winked at" (30)	Winked at; overlooked; looked beyond; did not see.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Where did Paul customarily go to preach when he entered a town?
2. What two points did Paul make to the Thessalonians in verse 3?
3. What caused the unbelieving Jews to oppose Paul?
4. Whom did Paul enlist to help?
5. Who was Jason? What happened to him?
6. Why were the Bereans more noble than those of Thessalonica?
7. Who was with Paul at Berea?
8. What was the most popular past-time in Athens?
9. Who was the "Unknown God" of whom the Athenians were ignorant?
10. Has God been more tolerant in times past than He is now? Are all men amenable to the laws of God?
11. Why was the doctrine of the resurrection so laughable to the Athenians?
12. What similarities do you see between Athens then, and our society today?

STUDY IN ACTS
ACTS 18

OUTLINE: Paul in Corinth (Work; Paul reports to Antioch/Begins 3rd journey; Apollos)

SYNOPSIS: We conclude that Timothy joined Paul in Athens for a time, but must have left him alone again before Paul came to Corinth (1 Thessalonians 3:1-6; Acts 18:5). The apostle to the Gentiles then was probably a bit lonesome and frustrated by the reception of the gospel in Athens. In 1 Corinthians 2:3 Paul says, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." This helps us to understand the import of his vision in Acts 18:9,10. Paul needed that exhortation.

In Corinth, Paul again goes first to the Jews and incites their anger at the preaching of Jesus. Gallio's reaction shows us how the Romans viewed trouble between the Jews and the Christians. He thought their dispute was over matters involving just another religion. It was not a matter to be resolved by the state, therefore, he cared not how the problem was settled.

Apollos, who became quite prominent in Achaia enters the picture in Acts 18 as an eloquent preacher who proclaimed what he know of the truth with all boldness. He was corrected by Aquila and Priscilla, who were friends of Paul, and went on his way doing a great work in the kingdom.

WORD STUDIES:

"Wrought" (3)	Worked. The plural indicates that the work was, or became, a corporate operation.
"Pressed in the spirit" (5)	Most reliable texts have "logo" instead of "pneuma." The preferred reading is "word" and not "spirit." the meaning is either that Paul felt compelled to reason with the Jews, or that he was free to do so to a greater extent after the arrival of Timothy and Silas.
"Joined hard" (7)	Next to; having joint boundaries.
"Eloquent" (24)	Capable of using language with fluency, force, grace and aptness.
"Mighty in the scriptures" (24)	Powerful in his knowledge and use of the word.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Who were Aquila and Priscilla? Why were they in Corinth?

2. How did Paul support himself in Corinth? Would it have been wrong for him to be supported by the congregation? Why did he choose to be self-supporting? (1 Corinthians 9).

3. What effect did the coming of Timothy and Silas have on the preaching of Paul?

4. Who was Justus? Where was his house? Was he a believer?

5. Who was Crispus? What effect did his conversion have on the work at Corinth?

6. What message did Paul receive from the Lord in a vision?

7. How long was Paul at Corinth?

8. Who was the deputy of Achaia during Paul's stay?

9. What charge was brought against Paul on this occasion? How did Gallio react? Why?

10. Who was Sosthenes? Why was he molested? Who did it?

11. Was it wrong for Paul to have taken a vow? What kind of vow was he under?

12. Where were Aquila and Priscilla left? Why do you suppose they were left there?

13. Why did Paul refuse to stay at Ephesus on this occasion?

14. What was the purpose of Paul's third missionary journey?

15. Who was Apollos? What kind of preacher was he? Was he a false teacher?

STUDY IN ACTS
ACTS 19

BRIEF OUTLINE: The work in Ephesus

SYNOPSIS: A door of opportunity was opened unto Paul at Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16: 8,9), and it is obvious by the remarks he makes to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, and to the congregations as a whole in the epistle by that name, that the church at Ephesus held a special place in the heart of Paul.

Paul says in Corinthians that he had many adversaries in Ephesus, and no doubt, he had in mind Demetrius as one of those adversaries. Demetrius had been opposing Paul's efforts long before the incident recorded in this chapter. Regardless of the many adversaries, the borders of the kingdom very rapidly encompassed the city of Ephesus, and the kingdom of darkness (as evidenced by the burning of the books) suffered another defeat. The sons of Sceva were scoundrels trying to make merchandise of the name of Jesus, but thanks to their efforts and subsequent failure, the name of the Son of God was again glorified and many more believed. Satan's demons had possessed a man, but God used even these vile beings to serve Him, much to the dismay of Satan.

WORD STUDIES:

"School of Tyrannus" (9)	A lecture hall bearing the name of Tyrannus, which was a rather common name at that time.
"Vagabond Jews" (13)	Akin to Gypsies, traveling about claiming to be exorcists.
"Fifty Thousand Pieces of Silver" (19)	(Drachma; Denarius) - one piece of silver was equivalent to about a day's wage. This helps us understand the tremendous impact of the gospel on this pagan city.
"Diana" (24)	Diana of the Ephesians was a union of the Greek Artemis with the Semitic Ashtoreth. Her image was supposed to have fallen from heaven and some have suggested that her image was indeed a meteorite whose form vaguely resembled that of a woman with many breasts as was the case of Diana. The temple of Diana was considered one of the seven wonders of the world, and was quite an imposing site on the bank of the Cayster.
"Theatre" (29)	An amphitheatre which some estimate could have held as many as 56,000 people.

"Town Clerk" (35)	Not merely a secretary for another officer, but, the most influential person in Ephesus. He drafted decrees, had charge of the money, was the power in control of the assembly, and communicated directly with the Proconsul.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Where was Apollos when Paul arrived at Ephesus?

2. What was the difference between John's baptism and the baptism of Jesus?

3. Were the disciples at Ephesus "re-baptized" or simply baptized?

4. How long did Paul teach in the Synagogue before taking a group from there to start another church? Why did Paul leave the Synagogue? Where did he go?

5. How widespread was the effect of Paul's work in Ephesus?

6. What was "special" about the miracles performed by the hands of Paul at Ephesus?

7. Who was Sceva? What did seven of his sons attempt to do?

8. How did the evil spirit respond to the efforts of the seven sons of Sceva? How did this affect the people of Ephesus? Why?

9. Where did Paul want to go after visiting Jerusalem?

10. Who was Demetrius? Why was he concerned about the preaching of Paul?

11. Why were Gaius and Aristarchus taken by the mob?

12. Why was Alexander not permitted to speak?

13. What reasoning did the Town-Clerk use to calm the assembly and disperse the crowd?

14. What was the Town-Clerk's fear?

STUDY IN ACTS
ACTS 20

BRIEF OUTLINE: Continuation of the third journey (Macedonia/Greece/Troas/Miletus/Farewell to Ephesians elders)

SYNOPSIS: Acts 20 is much more than a list of stops on the third missionary journey. Of all the speeches Paul gave in his life, the one to the Ephesian elders must have greatly affected Luke, for he seldom gives as much detail and pathos in recording this one. We ought to be impressed by the farewell address, especially in light of the fact the church in Ephesus is no more (Revelation 2:1-7).

WORD STUDIES:

"Break bread" (7)	A reference to the Lord's Supper. Cf. Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 10:10; 11:24
"Broken bread" (11)	An ordinary meal - Acts 2:46; 27:35
"Minding" (13)	To be about to; to intend
"Shunned" (27)	Cf. 20:20. To draw back; withdraw; perhaps a metaphor from lowering a sail and so slackening the course, and hence of being remiss in holding the truth
"Grievous" (29)	Heavy, burdensome
"Perverse" (30)	To distort, twist - Matthew 17:17; Luke 9:41; Philippians 2:15

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What did Paul do before leaving Ephesus?
2. Who waited for Paul at Troas? Who sailed to Troas with him?
3. Why did they tarry seven days?
4. Where were the disciples when they ate the meal described in verse 11?
5. How did Paul go to Assos?
6. Why was Paul hurrying to go to Jerusalem?
7. Describe Paul's work in Ephesus.

8. What was Paul's attitude toward the suffering he knew he would encounter?

9. Why was Paul free from the blood of all?

10. To whom was the admonition of verses 28-32 specifically given?

11. How did Paul know that Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive?"

12. Why were these elders grief-stricken?

STUDIES IN ACTS
ACTS 21

BRIEF OUTLINE: Paul's journey to Jerusalem

SYNOPSIS: Paul tells the Ephesian elders, "You shall not see my face anymore." It would seem that he had a good idea as to what awaited him, and perhaps, his statement in Acts 19:21 about seeing Rome is also an indication that he knew what was ahead of him when he reached Jerusalem. Still, this man of God did not falter in his desire to reach the lost. As he told those who tried to persuade him to avoid Jerusalem, he was "ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

When Paul entered Jerusalem, he was greeted warmly and then met with James and the elders. It seems that many of the Jewish Christians were upset about some things they had heard concerning Paul. The talk was that Paul was teaching people to forsake Moses and refrain from practicing anything that had to do with Judaism. This situation prompts Paul to take the advice of these men and be "at charges" for four men who had been defiled during the course of a vow. Did Paul sin in so doing? Was it an error in judgment? We are inclined to believe the incident at the temple was simply an example of what Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 9:20. It was an exercise in futility, religiously, but Paul did not contradict himself by endorsing observance of what was, in reality, no more than Jewish custom.

WORD STUDIES:

"Break" (13)	Crush together; break off. They were trying to weaken Paul's conviction.
"Be at charges" (24)	Incur expenses; spend. Paul was to pay for sacrifices, etc., associated with this ceremony for the men.
"Egyptian" (38)	Josephus makes mention of an Egyptian in Ant. XX:8,6, and Wars II; 13,5, who was a false prophet who gathered a following outside Jerusalem claiming that he would cause the walls to tumble and then his followers could take the city. This group was attacked by Felix and the survivors hid themselves. This may be the incident to which Claudius (23:26) refers.

QUESTIONS

1. What did the disciples at Tyre tell Paul? Describe the farewell scene from Tyre.

2. What did Agabus prophesy concerning Paul's fate? What other prophecy did Agabus make earlier in Acts 11:27ff?

3. How did Paul's friends react to this prophecy? How did Paul react?

4. Who was Mnason? What did he do for Paul's company?

5. What had Paul been accused of teaching concerning the Law of Moses?

6. What advice did James and the elders give Paul? Did he follow this advice?

7. Who stirred up the people? What did they cry out against Paul? Why did they conclude that Paul had polluted the "holy place?"

8. What was the crowd going to do to Paul? What stopped them?

9. Why was Paul being taken to the castle?

10. Who did the chief captain think Paul was? Why did he change his mind?

STUDIES IN ACTS
ACTS 22:1-23:10

OUTLINE: Paul's Defense: The first speech and its result (22:1-29); The second speech and its results (22:30-23:10).

SUMMARY: This section of Acts has many important lessons for us to learn and heed.

1. Paul could identify with the accusers in their religious training;
2. Paul had irrefutable evidence that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of God;
3. Paul immediately resolved to surrender to this glorified Lord;
4. The reality of the vision and the truth of Paul's need for baptism were confirmed by the miracle performed by Ananias;
5. Paul proves he was not saved on the road to Damascus;
6. Paul was willing to testify before those who stoned Stephen, but God had another mission for him - and Paul obeyed;
7. The accusers were content to listen until they heard more than they would stand; thus proving their own stubbornness;
8. It is not improper to exercise one's lawful rights as proved by Paul's claim to be a Roman citizen;
9. A most important attitude to be taught from birth is that one should live before God "in all good conscience," thus providing a basis for submission to truth whenever it is learned;
10. No one is beyond rebuke when the law of God is violated or ignored;
11. We must use wisdom in combating the enemies of God, as when Paul made a comment causing division among his accusers.

WORD STUDIES:

"Perfect manner" (3)	Exactness; precision; from a word which means to inquire carefully
"Estate" (5)	Presbytery; a body of elders
"Chosen" (14)	To take into one's hand; to determine; appoint beforehand (Acts 3:20; 26:16)
"Whited" (23:3)	Dust; lime; denotes to whiten; whitewash
"Perceived" (23:6)	To know by experience and observation

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. How did Paul get the people's attention?

2. What did he say about his background?

3. Describe the character of Ananias.

4. Why did Ananias call Saul "brother?"

5. What was the message Ananais had for Saul?

6. Where was Paul saved? How was he saved?

7. Where was it that Saul's testimony would not be received?

8. Why did they think that Paul was not worthy to live?

9. What part did the Chief Captain play in all of this?

10. Who was the High Priest?

11. Was Paul wrong in his reply to this man?

12. How did the apostle create a problem for his accusers?

STUDIES IN ACTS
ACTS 23:11-24:27

BRIEF OUTLINE: Paul before Felix (The plot to kill Paul - 23:11-22); The Guarded Transport (23:23-33); Paul's Hearing Before Felix (23:34-24:22); Paul placed under house arrest (24:23-27).

SYNOPSIS: One detail that stands out in this lesson is the way Paul is treated by the Roman government. A Centurion is told by the prisoner, Paul, to take his nephew to the Chief Captain. Certainly, this was an unusual response by an officer to a prisoner's request. Next, we find Claudius not only hearing the nephew out, but acting with unmerited force to protect Paul. Finally, the governor not only allows Paul almost complete liberty, but also visits with this prisoner on a regular basis.

In contrast with the kind treatment Paul received at the hands of the Romans, is the plot of the Jews to kill him. One can scarce imagine how such a man as Paul could evoke the hatred necessary for forty to vow to neither eat nor drink until such time as they had killed him.

What greater tragedy in scripture is there than the story of a man who hears and rejects the simple, but powerful, gospel? Felix trembled but, as far as can be ascertained, went into eternity delaying his response until "a convenient season."

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What assurance did the Lord give Paul the night following the confusion before the Council in chapter 23?

2. What vow did the Jews in Chapter 23 make? How many took this vow? Whom did they enlist as accomplices? What did they want these men to do?

3. How did Paul learn of the plot? How did Claudius learn?

4. What measures did Claudius take to protect the prisoner, Paul?

5. Where was Paul taken? Why? What had happened the last time Paul was in Caesarea?

6. Why did Felix decide to hear Paul's case after learning that he was from Cilicia?

7. Who came down from Jerusalem to accuse Paul? Who was Tertullus?

8. How would you characterize the opening remarks of Tertullus?

9. What charges did Tertullus make against Paul?

10. How did Paul respond to the charges? What did he tell Felix about his religious beliefs? What critical point did Paul make about his accusers? (Acts 24:18-20)

11. What decision did Felix make after hearing both sides?

12. What was the nature of Paul's imprisonment?

13. Who was Drusilla? Who was her father?

14. What did Paul preach to this Roman governor? How did Felix respond?

15. Discuss the reaction of Felix to the preaching of the gospel.

STUDIES IN ACTS
ACTS 25:1-26:32

BRIEF OUTLINE: Paul's defense before Festus and Agrippa

SYNOPSIS: Our present lesson is a continuation of Acts which shows how Paul took the gospel to Rome as a prisoner. This part of the imprisonment took place at Caesarea.

We will focus on the primary people of this section:

Porcius Festus - Roman Governor who succeeded Felix in the province of Judea. Festus did at his post, and was followed by Albinus (Circa A.D. 62).

Paul - The "apostle born out of due season" who did much of his work among the Gentiles after a period in which he led severe persecutions against Christ and the church.

King Agrippa - Also known as Herod Agrippa II - was the son of the infamous Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12). He received the title "king" in A.D. 53, and eventually was over a large portion of Palestine. He took the side of Rome against the Jews later, and saw his nation defeated. He died at Rome in A.D. 100, at the age of 73.

Bernice - The daughter of Herod Agrippa I and the sister of Herod Agrippa II. She was a very wicked woman who lived with her brother as his wife. In her life she was "married" several times and lived in adultery with several other men as well.

Augustus - the "Augustus" - Latin equivalent to "Caesar." This term refers, therefore, to the Emporer. At that time, the Emporer was the corrupt Nero. He was born in A.D. 37, and died at his own hand in A.D. 68, only 31 years old. He began ruling in A.D. 54, and after a few peaceful years, Nero's life devolved into a horrible tragedy of sin and its consequences.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Where did the Jews want the trial of Paul to be? Why?

2. What is said about the charges against Paul?

3. What was Paul's view of a trial at Jerusalem?

4. What was the decision about Paul's appeal to Caesar?

5. Who left Paul in bonds?

6. What did Paul affirm about Jesus?

7. What did the Jews want to do with Paul?

8. Why was Paul happy to answer for himself before such an one as Agrippa?

9. Should Agrippa have been amazed at the possibility of one being raised from the dead?

10. What had Paul done against Jesus of Nazareth?

11. Why did Jesus appear to Paul? What doesn't He appear miraculously to every sinner?

12. What was the response of Festus to all of this?

13. Did Agrippa believe the prophets? Did he live by their teachings?

14. Why wasn't Paul set free?

15. Do you believe that Agrippa was sincere in Acts 26:28? Why do you think so?

STUDIES IN ACTS
ACTS 27,28

BRIEF OUTLINE: Paul Goes To Rome (Shipwrecked; Melita; Rome)

SYNOPSIS: As early as Acts 19, Paul expressed his desire to go to Rome and he wrote the church at Rome telling them of this desire (Romans 15:23,24). The Lord had assured Paul that he would go to Rome (Acts23:11), and now Paul's prayers were about to be answered as he boarded the ship heading for Italy. McGarvey points out in his commentary, "This was brought about, not by any miraculous interposition, but by a providential combination of circumstances. The machinations of the Jews, the avarice of Felix, the indecision of Festus, the prudence of Paul, and the Roman statute for the protection of citizens, had very strangely, yet very naturally, combined to fulfill a promise of God made in answer to prayers."

The shipwreck might seem unfortunate, but consider the good that resulted. Paul caused 276 people on board that to ponder the question of whether or not Jehovah was the True God of Heaven. Paul had warned them of the danger they would face if they took the voyage at that time. He told them of a vision he had seen in the night. Wouldn't the fulfillment of the prophecies make believers of them all? Consider, also, the impact of that wreck on the inhabitants of Melita. How many were believers when Paul left the island? Finally, Paul reached Rome. He mentions in his letter to the Philippians that there were saints in the household of Caesar (Philippians 4:22). If Nero had not been a raving maniac, who can tell what might have come from Paul's imprisonment? Acts comes to a close with Paul bearing witness at Rome (Acts 23:11).

WORD STUDIES (KJV):

"The Fast" (27:9)	Generally agreed that this is in reference to the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29ff; 23:26,27). This would place the time of the voyage around September or October.
"Tempestuous" (27:14)	"Tuphos" from which we get "typhoon."
"Undergirding" (27:17)	Ropes were wrapped around the hull to add strength to the timbers.
"Fathom" (27:28)	About six feet.
"Under Color" (27:30)	Pretense, pretext. An attempt to sneak off the ship.
"Melita" (28:1)	Known today as Malta.

"Barbarous" (28:2)	Not barbarian as we would understand it, but simply "foreign." The Greeks called everyone who didn't speak Greek "barbarians."
"Honors" (28:10)	The word was often applied to payment for professional services.
"Castor/Pollux" (28:11)	Tutelary deities of sailors.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. What was the name of the Centurion in charge of Paul? How did he treat Paul?
2. What do we know about Aristarchus?
3. What kind of ship did they board at Myra?
4. What warning did Paul issue at Fair Havens? Why was it not heeded?
5. What was the Euroclydon?
6. When was all hope of being saved taken away?
7. What message did the angel of God deliver to Paul?
8. What did the sailors attempt to do when they feared the ship being broken up by the rocks? How was their plan foiled? Why did Paul think their presence so vital?
9. How many people were on the ship? How many survived?
10. What did the soldiers want to do with the prisoners? Why were their plans not carried out?
11. What had the inhabitants done in preparation for the people coming ashore?
12. What astounding thing happened while Paul was putting wood on the fire? What did the people of Melita think?
13. Who was Publius? What did Paul do for his father?
14. What reason did Paul give to the chief Jews of Rome for being bound with a chain?
15. Why did the Jews want to meet with Paul the second time?

16. What did Paul use to persuade them concerning Jesus? What does this tell us about the importance of knowing the Old Testament?

17. What caused this second meeting to be concluded?

18. What was Paul doing at the close of Acts? Did he have much response to the gospel in Rome?

19. Did Paul appear before Caesar (Nero)?

STUDIES IN ACTS
REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the disciples concept of the kingdom before Jesus' ascension?

2. In what manner will Jesus come again?

3. What were the qualifications of an apostle?

4. How did Peter show Jesus was the Christ?

5. What are the three "C's" of Peter's sermon in Acts 2?

6. According to Acts 4:13, Peter and John were _____ and _____ men. In what way? Why were Peter and John bold?

7. What had Ananias and Sapphira done that was so wrong? Are we guilty today of the same thing? How?

8. Why do you think they were punished so quickly?

9. What was the charge brought against Stephen?

10. What was Israel's continual sin?

11. Why do you think the early church was scattered by persecution?

12. When did Saul of Tarsus receive salvation? Give Scripture.

13. What was the purpose of Peter's vision in chapter 10?

14. The paradox of the disciple's prayer concerning Peter in Acts 12 is seen in what factor?

15. Why did Paul turn unto the Gentiles to preach the gospel?

16. God did not leave Himself without witness to Himself in what way?

17. What was the agreement reached concerning the Jew and Gentile in reference to the Law of Moses?

18. In what chapter is found the "Macedonian" call? What is the Macedonian call?

19. Where did Paul do a lot of his preaching and teaching?

20. Demetrius was a silversmith, and one who caused a lot of problems. What was his problem?

21. Show the chief doctrinal differences between Pharisees and Sadducees.

22. What were the charges brought against Paul as he stood before Felix? How did Paul answer the charges?

23. How does the book of Acts end?

SCRIPTURES TO MARK: 3:22,23; 4:12; 5:32,42; 7;55; 9:31; 11:26; 17:6,11,31; 20:28