

Sunday School Member Quarterly

Fall 2022

Acts 1 – 14

Ye Shall Be Witnesses ...

Sunday School Lessons for Adults and Youth

Written by John O. Yates



Morningside

B A P T I S T C H U R C H

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Sunday School – 9:00 each Sunday Morning

Sunday School Lessons

September through November 2022

Acts 1 – 14

Ye Shall Be Witnesses ...

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Daily Bible Reading Guide

Read the following scripture passages each day and complete the learning activities in this book each week. This will prepare you for Sunday School class, and God will bless you as you read, study, and memorize His Word.

Week of August 29 – September 3

Mon: Acts 1; **Tues:** Luke 1:1-4; 24:44-53;

Wed: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; **Thurs:** Memorize Acts 1:8;

Fri: Zechariah 11:12-13; 14:1-7; **Sat:** Acts 1

Week of September 5 – 10

Mon: Acts 2; **Tues:** Joel 2:28-32; **Wed:** Psalm 16;

Thurs: Memorize Acts 2:21; **Fri:** Psalm 110; **Sat:** Acts 2

Week of September 12 – 17

Mon: Acts 3; **Tues:** Deuteronomy 18:15-19;

Wed: Romans 3:1-20; **Thurs:** Memorize Acts 3:19;

Fri: Romans 3:21-31; **Sat:** Acts 3

Week of September 19 – 24

Mon: Acts 4; **Tues:** Isaiah 28:14-17; **Wed:** Psalm 118;

Thurs: Memorize Acts 4:12; **Fri:** Psalm 2; **Sat:** Acts 4

Week of September 26 – October 1

Mon: Acts 5; **Tues:** Matthew 5:10-16;

Wed: Colossians 3:1-17; **Thurs:** Memorize Acts 5:41;

Fri: Romans 1:21-32; **Sat:** Acts 5

Week of October 3 – 8

Mon: Acts 6; **Tues:** Romans 12; **Wed:** 1 Corinthians 12;

Thurs: Ephesians 4:1-16; **Fri:** 2 Timothy 3; **Sat:** Acts 6

Week of October 10 – 15

Mon: Acts 7; **Tues:** John 3; **Wed:** Romans 10;

Thurs: Hebrews 11; **Fri:** 1 John 1; **Sat:** Acts 7

Week of October 17 – 22

Mon: Acts 8; **Tues:** 2 Timothy 4; **Wed:** Deuteronomy 18;
Thurs: Isaiah 53; **Fri:** Acts 21; **Sat:** Acts 8

Week of October 24 – 29

Mon: Acts 9; **Tues:** Acts 22; **Wed:** Galatians 1;
Thurs: Memorize Acts 9:4-5; **Fri:** Acts 26; **Sat:** Acts 9

Week of October 31 – November 5

Mon: Acts 10:1 – 11:18; **Tues:** John 14;
Wed: Romans 1:1-17; **Thurs:** Memorize Romans 1:16;
Fri: Ephesians 2; **Sat:** Acts 10:1 – 11:18

Week of November 7 – 12

Mon: Acts 11:19-30; **Tues:** Acts 12;
Wed: Matthew 21; **Thurs:** 1 John 5:1-15;
Fri: Acts 11:19-30; **Sat:** Acts 12

Week of November 14 – 19

Mon: Acts 13; **Tues:** Matthew 28; **Wed:** John 21;
Thurs: Memorize Acts 13:47; **Fri:** 2 Corinthians 5;
Sat: Acts 13

Week of November 21 – 26

Mon: Acts 14; **Tues:** Matthew 10; **Wed:** 2 Timothy 3;
Thurs: 2 Corinthians 11; **Fri:** 2 Corinthians 12;
Sat: Acts 14

**Coming Next Quarter
December 2022 – February 2023**

Acts, Part 2

Map



Introduction to Acts

Author: Luke

Date: Approximately A.D. 60

Luke: Luke is mentioned only three times in the New Testament. In Colossians 4:14, Luke is called “*the beloved physician.*” At the time of that writing, Luke was with the Apostle Paul during his first Rome imprisonment (A.D. 60). Luke is also named in Philemon 24, as a companion to Paul during this same imprisonment. In 2 Timothy 4:11, Luke is again with Paul in prison, this time during his second (and final) Roman imprisonment (A.D. 67). Beginning in Acts 16, the word “we” appears in the narrative. This lets us know that Luke accompanied Paul on his second and third Missionary Journeys, as well as his trip to Rome and his first imprisonment.

Acts is the second part of Luke’s two-part history of the ministry of Jesus Christ and the early church. Both of Luke’s books were written to a man named Theophilus, whose name means “*lover of God.*” We don’t know much about Theophilus, but the fact that Luke addressed him as “*most excellent Theophilus*” (Luke 1:3) is an indication that he may have been a Roman official.

Theme: The theme of the book of Acts may be taken from the words of Jesus in Acts 1:8. Jesus told the apostles to witness of Him in **Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria**, and to the **uttermost part of the earth**. That expansion of the Gospel is exactly what is presented in the book of Acts. In chapters 1 – 7 the believers spread the Gospel throughout **Jerusalem**, where many thousands of persons were saved (Acts 6:5). Chapters 8 – 10 tell about the spread of the Gospel throughout **Judea** and **Samaria**. The progress of the Gospel to the **uttermost part of the earth** begins in chapter 11 and continues throughout the rest of the book of Acts. The events described in the book of Acts cover approximately thirty years.

The Holy Spirit in Acts: The book of Acts is often referred to as “The Acts of the Apostles,” but some have called it “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is mentioned dozens of times throughout the book of Acts. The idea that the Holy Spirit of God would come to personally dwell within an individual was new to the early believers. In Old Testament times, God’s Spirit “came upon” an individual to empower him or her to do some special task for God. Jesus promised that after He left the earth He would send the Holy Spirit to “*abide with you forever*” (John 14:16). Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach the believers all things and cause them to remember His words (John 14:26).

When the Holy Spirit came upon and indwelt a certain group of people for the very first time, God caused some amazing things to happen. In chapter 2, the apostles and early disciples received the Holy Spirit. When they did, they proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ in other languages, such that all the foreign pilgrims who were in Jerusalem could understand. In chapter 10, the Gentiles first received the Holy Spirit. Just as in chapter 2, the Gentile converts spoke in other languages and glorified God, so that the believing Jews knew for certain that salvation was available to the Gentiles exactly as it was to the Jews. **The fact that certain believers were blessed with a supernatural ability to speak in other languages at the moment they received the Holy Spirit should not be taken as the norm for today.** These were special signs for special circumstances, and the attempted duplication of these signs caused great trouble for the church at Corinth.

Signs, Wonders, and Miracles: The book of Acts is full of signs, wonders, and miracles. God used these miraculous occurrences to prove to a watching world that the believers were His instruments and what they said about Him was true. The miracles gave authority to early believers and preachers. God did this same thing with Moses and other Old Testament figures before the Word of God was written down. Once the scriptures were preserved in written form, **they** provided authority. That is the way it is today. God does not have to perform miracles (though He may at any time) to prove the truth of the Gospel. The written Word of God, which is the complete

revelation of God to man, provides complete authority for the modern believer. Just as with the miracles of tongues described above, **the miracles, signs, and wonders done by the apostles are not to be considered the norm for modern preachers and believers.**

Prominent Persons in Acts: The obvious leader of the early disciples is the Apostle Peter. He is prominent throughout Acts 1 – 12. The ministry of the Apostle Paul is the focus Acts 13 – 28.

Chronology of Acts: It is believed that the events of Acts 1 – 7 related to the growth of the Jerusalem church cover approximately two years, from A.D. 33 – 35. The expansion of the Gospel throughout Judea, Samaria, to the Gentiles, and into Syria (Acts 8 – 12) covers a period of about 11 years, from A.D. 35 – 46. The rest of the book of Acts, including Paul’s three Missionary Journeys, covers a period of about 15 years, from A.D. 48 – 63.¹

This quarter’s study deals only with Acts 1 – 14. These chapters begin with Jesus’ ascension and end with the conclusion of Paul’s First Missionary Journey. The title of this quarter’s study is ***Ye Shall Be Witnesses ...***

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An Impossible Task

Have you ever been given a seemingly impossible task? An impossible task is one that is so large or takes so long that it appears unattainable. If you've ever been assigned such a big job, you might have felt like giving up. After all, if the mission seems impossible, why even bother to try? Why waste your time?

Jesus Christ gave His followers a seemingly impossible task. Remember that Jesus' disciples spent three years watching His miraculous ministry, but all their hopes and dreams were dashed when He was cruelly executed. Three days later their hopes were renewed when Jesus miraculously arose from the dead. The disciples hoped Christ would stay with them forever, establishing His promised kingdom. Instead, Jesus left them and returned to heaven. Before He did, He gave them a seemingly impossible task. Read Acts 1 to learn about their impossible assignment.

Acts 1:1-2 Luke addressed this book to a man named Theophilus. The "*former treatise*" is the Gospel of Luke (see the **Introduction to Acts** on page 6).

Acts 1:3 How long was Jesus seen on earth after His resurrection?

For more infallible proofs of the resurrection, read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

Acts 1:4-5 Jesus told His followers to stay in _____. He said they should wait for the _____ of the _____. Jesus said they would be baptized with the _____ in a few days.

Acts 1:6-7 What did the disciples ask Jesus?

The disciples did not yet understand that Jesus' kingdom will not be established until **after** the completion of the Church Age (the time in which we now live) and the Tribulation (see Rev. 20:1-6).

Acts 1:8 What did Jesus promise they would receive?

When did He say they would receive this?

Here is the seemingly impossible task. Jesus said His followers were to be witnesses in

_____, _____, _____, and the _____ part of the earth.

It is important for us to understand what Jesus told His followers to do. They were to witness (tell others about Him) in the familiar city of **Jerusalem** and in their native region of **Judea**. Jerusalem and Judea contained people of similar cultural and religious backgrounds to the disciples. **Samaria** was a region populated by ethnic half-breeds and idol worshipers. Jews usually did not have any contact with the people of Samaria, but Jesus told His followers to take the Gospel to them, as well. The "***uttermost part of the earth***" meant that Jesus wanted the Gospel to go throughout the world, to people of every ethnic, cultural, and religious background. Jesus commanded His little band of followers to tell the **whole world** about Him. That was a seemingly impossible task, especially when we consider that the main mode of transportation in those days was walking!

Acts 1:9 What happened when Jesus finished speaking?

Acts 1:10-11 Two angels appeared and spoke to the disciples. What did they say?

Acts 1:12-14 The disciples returned to Jerusalem, just as Jesus had instructed (v. 4). According to verse 14, what did they do while they waited?

Acts 1:15-20 Peter told the disciples that a new apostle should be selected to replace Judas (see Matt. 27:3-10).

Acts 1:21-22 What qualifications must the new apostle meet?

Since no one now living followed Jesus from the time of His baptism through His ascension, there **cannot be any legitimate modern apostles.**

Acts 1:23-26 Two men met the qualifications. Who was chosen?

Concluding Thoughts: Jesus gave His followers a seemingly impossible task: to take the message of salvation available through Him to the entire world. They were to take the Gospel to people similar to themselves, as well as to people who were their natural enemies. They were to take the Gospel everywhere. (You will discover in next week's lesson that Jesus prepared some miraculous circumstances to help the young church begin their "impossible" mission.)

The modern church has been given the same task, to take the Gospel message of salvation to everyone on earth. God calls missionaries to take the Gospel to distant lands. Advances in technology make it possible to spread the Gospel worldwide.

What about you? You may never travel to distant lands or preach on TV, radio, or the Internet. What can you do to spread the Gospel? You can **start right where you are**, by witnessing to your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers – your "Jerusalem." Ask the Lord for an opportunity to share the Gospel with someone this week. You can use the plan of salvation printed on the back of this book as a guide.

Project: Memorize **Acts 1:8**. Who do you know that needs to hear about Jesus Christ? Make a point to talk that person this week.

A Miraculous Beginning

Do you remember the Persian Gulf War in 1991? Through months of preparation, we were warned that there would be terribly high casualties. Many people prayed for God’s intervention, and the war was won in a short time with very few casualties. Even the military leaders called the victory “miraculous.”

In last week’s lesson, we learned that Jesus gave His followers a seemingly impossible task: to take the Gospel message of salvation through faith in Jesus to the entire world. In this lesson we will see that God brought about some amazing circumstances and used miracles to enable His church to take a huge step toward accomplishing their task. Read Acts 2 to learn about it.

Acts 2:1 The day of Pentecost was a Jewish religious feast that came fifty days after Passover. Since Pentecost was a pilgrim feast, faithful Jews from all over the known world came to Jerusalem. The followers of Jesus were all together in one place.

Acts 2:2 What sound did Jesus’ disciples hear?

Acts 2:3 What sight did they see?

Acts 2:4 They were all filled with the _____ and began to speak with _____.

Acts 2:5 Who was in Jerusalem at that time?

Acts 2:6-8 What did the foreign Jews hear?

Acts 2:9-12 Those who heard the disciples represented virtually the entire known world, including Europe, Asia, and Africa. What was their reaction?

Acts 2:13 What did some people think of the disciples?

The believers spoke known, intelligible languages, not meaningless gibberish, as is the case in the modern tongues movement. This miracle of tongues was used by God to convince observers that the message about salvation through Jesus Christ was true. See “**The Holy Spirit in Acts**” and “**Signs, Wonders, and Miracles**” on page 7, and “**Tongues in Acts**” on page 15. The miracle of tongues gave Peter an opportunity to preach to the amazed crowd. His sermon is recorded for us in verses 14-36.

Acts 2:14-15 Peter got the attention of the crowd. He told them the disciples were not _____, since it was only the _____ hour of the day (9:00 a.m.).

Acts 2:16-21 Peter quoted from **Joel 2:28-32** (in the Old Testament) to explain the event the crowd witnessed. According to verse 21, “_____ shall _____ on the name of the _____ shall be _____.”

Acts 2:22 What showed that Jesus was approved by God?

Acts 2:23 Jesus was delivered by the _____ **counsel** (plan, purpose) and _____ of God. Jesus was crucified according to God’s plan, but the Jews were responsible for His death.

Acts 2:24 Jesus arose from the dead. Was it possible that death could hold Jesus Christ in the grave?

Acts 2:25-28 Peter next quoted King David, one of the most respected leaders in Jewish history. Peter quoted **Psalm 16:8-11**, which points to Jesus’ resurrection.

Acts 2:29-32 Peter said David is both _____ and _____ (v. 29). Jesus, on the other hand, God has _____ up (v. 32).

- Acts 2:33-35** Peter said Jesus is exalted at the right hand of the Father, but King David is not.
- Acts 2:36** Peter wanted there to be no misunderstanding. He told the Jews that Jesus, “whom _____ have crucified,” is “both _____ and _____.”
- Acts 2:37** Many in the crowd fell under deep conviction. What did they ask?
- Acts 2:38** What did Peter tell them?
- Acts 2:39** Who is the promise of salvation for (see also v. 21)?
- Acts 2:40-41** Peter continued preaching. What was the result?
- Acts 2:42** What did the new believers do?
- Acts 2:43** Before the completion of His written Word (the Bible), God used signs and wonders to give credence to the preaching of the apostles.
- Acts 2:44-46** The new believers were very unified, and they ministered to one another’s needs.
- Acts 2:47** What did the Lord do for the new church?

Concluding Thoughts: The Lord brought together Jews from all over the known world to Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost. On that day, He filled the disciples with the Holy Spirit, causing them to proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord and that He is alive. The Lord caused a miracle, in which all the foreign Jews heard the disciples speaking about Jesus in their native languages. This amazed the crowd, Peter preached a sermon, and thousands were saved. The foreign Jews who were saved later returned to their homes and told others about Jesus Christ. God used miraculous circumstances to quickly send the Gospel throughout the known world.

God has not lost His ability to use miraculous circumstances to accomplish His will. Do you need God’s miraculous power to enable you to reach some lost person? Ask Him to miraculously work out the circumstances in which that person will listen to and receive the Gospel message of salvation.

Project: Memorize **Acts 2:21**. Read your Bible every day, following the **Daily Bible Reading Guide** found on page 3. Come to Sunday School this Sunday.

Tongues in Acts

1. **Acts 2:**
 - a) This was obviously a miracle involving the speaking and/or hearing of **intelligible** foreign languages.
 - b) The purpose was to confirm the truth of the apostles’ message and to spread the Gospel to different language groups.
 - c) This gave Peter the opportunity to preach the Gospel (in harsh words, not “health & wealth”).
2. **Acts 10:44-48:**
 - a) “Tongues” is the same word used in Acts 2 – an **intelligible** language that magnified the Lord.
 - b) Like Pentecost, it was unexpected and unsought.
 - c) Like Pentecost, this marked the beginning of a new and startling development: God’s demonstration that salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit was for the Gentiles, as well as the Jews.
3. **Acts 19:1-7:**
 - a) Better translation is “when” you believed, not “since” (verse 2).
 - b) These were people who had an intellectual knowledge and had been baptized as John the Baptist baptized; they were not yet saved.
 - c) They prophesied, which implies intelligible preaching and speaking.

Meeting Real Needs

The situation is very common. You are waiting at a traffic light when you notice a man standing beside the road with a sign that reads: “Will work for food.” Or perhaps as you are walking out of a store or restaurant an individual approaches asking for money to buy gas, food, or baby formula.

The easiest thing to do in such situations is to hand the person a few dollars and go on your way. It soothes the conscience to help someone in need. When you hand out a few dollars, though, have you met the person’s **real** need, or only his **immediate** (and therefore **temporary**) need? Read Acts 3 to see how the early disciples handled such a circumstance.

Acts 3:1 Peter and John went to the Temple for prayer at 3:00 in the afternoon.

Acts 3:2-3 What did this lame man do every day?

There was no welfare in those days, and lame people couldn’t work. All he could do was beg.

Acts 3:4 What did Peter tell the lame man?

Acts 3:5 What did the lame man expect?

Acts 3:6-7 Did Peter give the man any money?

What did he do for the man?

Acts 3:8 The man was miraculously healed! Where did the man go and what did he do?

Acts 3:9-11 The people saw the man. How did they react?

- Acts 3:12** Peter again had an attentive crowd, so he began preaching. He told the crowd not to think he had healed the lame man by his own power.
- Acts 3:13** “The God of _____, and of _____, and of _____, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus.” What did the Jews do with Jesus?
- Acts 3:14** Who did the Jews choose over Jesus?
- Acts 3:15** Who were the Jews responsible for killing?
 What did God do with Jesus?
 The disciples described themselves as _____ of Jesus’ resurrection.
- Acts 3:16** How was the lame man healed?
- Acts 3:17-18** Peter said he knew that the Jews acted ignorantly when they killed Jesus. In delivering Jesus to death, they fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies.
- Acts 3:19** Peter told the people to _____ and be _____, so their sins could be _____ out.
- Acts 3:20-21** The Jews expected their Messiah to kick the Romans out of their land and establish His earthly kingdom based in Jerusalem. Peter told the crowd that Jesus had returned to heaven until the appointed future time for establishing His kingdom.
- Acts 3:22-24** Moses (Deut. 18:15-19) and the prophets foretold the coming of Jesus Christ.
- Acts 3:25-26** The Jews Peter addressed were descendants of the prophets and partakers of the covenant God made

with Abraham (Gen. 22:18). To whom did Jesus and the message of salvation come **first**?

Concluding Thoughts: Peter and John encountered a man with a very genuine financial need. The man was lame and could not work. The only way he could support himself was by begging for alms at the gate of the Temple.

In the view of some, Peter and John failed the lame man; after all, they did not give the man any money to meet his immediate need. Instead, they offered the man something far more valuable than money: physical healing and eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Think for a moment about the results of the fact that Peter and John ignored the man's temporal need and addressed his real need:

- The man received eternal life.
- Ultimately, he will never hunger or thirst again (John 6:35)
- The man could work to support himself and give alms to other lame and sick people.
- The bystanders took notice.
- Peter preached the Gospel to the crowd, and chapter 4 tells us that many were saved.

None of these things would have happened if Peter and John had done the easy thing and merely given the man money.

What is the lesson for us in this scripture passage? It is **not** that we should ignore immediate and temporary needs. Rather, we must learn to look past the urgent and temporal needs to see the real needs of those around us. Perhaps that person who unloads all his or her problems on you really needs a relationship with Jesus. We need to be ready to tell people about Him.

Project: When presented with personal needs this week, ask God to help you recognize the real needs and not just the surface ones. Try to meet real needs this week. Memorize **Acts 3:19**.

Persecution and Submission

How do you react when things get tough? What do you do when you are criticized, lied about, or experience some sort of opposition? There is a popular expression that says: “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” But for many of us, the first reaction to criticism or abuse is to whine, complain, and go off in a corner to lick our wounds.

In last week’s lesson a lame man was miraculously healed. Peter and John seemingly ignored the man’s temporal need of money, and offered him salvation and healing instead. As a result, Peter got to preach to a huge crowd and thousands of people were saved. That was wonderful, but as you read Acts 4 you will find that there were other, less pleasant, results of the lame man’s healing.

Acts 4:1-3 What happened to Peter and John as a result of Peter’s sermon?

Acts 4:4 How did many of those who heard Peter’s sermon respond?

Acts 4:5-7 The next day, Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish governing council in the land. What did they ask Peter and John?

Acts 4:8-9 What filled (or controlled) Peter?

Acts 4:10-11 Who was responsible for healing the lame man?

Peter identified Him as “Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye _____, whom God _____ from the _____.”

Acts 4:12 Is salvation available through anyone other than Jesus (compare John 14:6)?

- Acts 4:13** What did the Sanhedrin recognize about Peter and John?
- Acts 4:14** Why couldn't the Sanhedrin deny that the miracle had taken place?
- Acts 4:15-18** What command did they give Peter and John?
- Acts 4:19** How did Peter and John respond?
- Acts 4:20** "For we cannot but _____ the things which we have _____ and _____."
- Acts 4:21-22** The Sanhedrin threatened Peter and John and then let them go. Why didn't they punish them further?
- Acts 4:23** Peter and John returned to the other disciples and told all that had happened.
- Acts 4:24** The disciples didn't go off in a corner to lick their wounds. Instead, they prayed and turned the situation over to God. Acts 5:41 reveals that they actually **rejoiced** when they were persecuted.
- Acts 4:25-26** These verses are quoted from **Psalm 2:1-2**. The early Christians saw their persecution as fulfillment of those verses.
- Acts 4:27-28** What did the conspiracy of Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the Israelites actually do?
- Remember that the death of Jesus was in accordance with God's plan (Acts 2:23).
- Acts 4:29-30** The believers asked God to take notice of the persecution they were experiencing. Did they ask Him to make it stop?

What did they ask?

Acts 4:31 The believers were totally submissive to God's will, even to the point of accepting their persecution. God showed His approval of their submissive attitude by shaking the place and answering their prayer to speak the Word boldly.

Acts 4:32-35 The believers were very unified, and the apostles continued to preach boldly. How did the Christians meet one another's needs?

Acts 4:36-37 What did Barnabas do to help meet the needs of his fellow believers?

Concluding Thoughts: The early Jerusalem church suffered persecution, but they endured it prayerfully, joyfully, and confidently. Their attitude showed submission to God's will for their lives. Their unity was another evidence of a submissive spirit, and they also demonstrated submissiveness toward one another by selling their possessions to meet each other's needs.

Peter and John were obediently doing God's will when they were arrested and thrown in jail. How would you react in a situation like that? How do you react to criticism and opposition? If you grumble, complain, and feel sorry for yourself, you may actually be speaking against God's will for your life.

Are you submissive to God and to others? Do you willingly give of your resources to help other believers who have legitimate needs? Ask God to forgive you of sin in the areas of complaining, pride, and selfishness. Thank God for any opposition or criticism you may be experiencing (see 1 Thess. 5:18).

Project: Memorize **Acts 4:12**. Read the scriptures in the **Daily Bible Reading Guide** (see page 3) every day.

Truth or Consequences

Truthfulness is no longer a cherished virtue in our society. Many people view telling the truth as far less of a priority than success or getting their way in life. In other words, our culture believes truthfulness is nice, but if it gets in the way of your personal agenda, just go ahead and lie. After all, everybody does it, from the President all the way down to the ordinary citizen.

A popular TV game show of a previous era was called “Truth or Consequences.” In this week’s lesson we will encounter two people who refused to tell the truth. They lied to the Lord and paid a very heavy price at the Lord’s hand. Not telling the truth definitely carried serious consequences.

You will also discover that the early believers refused to tell anything **but** the truth, and as a result they suffered abuse and persecution at the hands of men. For the early church, telling the truth sometimes carried serious consequences, as well.

Acts 5:1-2 Following the example of Barnabas and others (Acts 4:34-37), Ananias and Sapphira sold some land. How much of the money from the sale did they bring to the apostles?

Acts 5:3 _____ filled Ananias’ heart to _____ to the _____ . Ananias was filled with Satan, while the other believers were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 5:4 To whom had Ananias lied?

Acts 5:5-6 What happened to Ananias?

How did those who heard about his death react?

- Acts 5:7-8** Ananias' wife Sapphira arrived three hours later. Peter gave her the opportunity to tell the truth or to join in her husband's lie.
- Acts 5:9-11** What happened to Sapphira?
How did the church and others react to her death?
- Acts 5:12-14** The apostles did many more _____ and _____. Many more people were saved and added to the church, but many lost people were afraid to have anything to do with the church.
- Acts 5:15-16** Sick and demon-possessed were brought to the disciples. What happened?
- Acts 5:17-18** What did the high priest do and why?
- Acts 5:19-20** What happened during the night?
What did the angel tell the apostles to do?
- Acts 5:21** Did the apostles obey the angel?
The high priest convened the Sanhedrin and sent for the apostles to be brought from the prison.
- Acts 5:22-24** What happened that perplexed the high priest and the other religious leaders?
- Acts 5:25-26** What report did they receive about the apostles?
Why did the guards arrest the apostles "without violence?"
- Acts 5:27-28** Amazingly, the high priest didn't ask how the apostles got out of prison. What did he ask?

- Acts 5:29** How did Peter answer the question?
- Acts 5:30-32** Peter reminded the Jews that they were responsible for Jesus' death, but God exalted Him as Messiah.
- Acts 5:33** What was the reaction of the Sanhedrin?
What did they want to do to the apostles?
- Acts 5:34-39** A Pharisee named Gamaliel urged the Sanhedrin to leave the apostles alone.
- Acts 5:40** The Jewish leaders agreed with Gamaliel. What did they do to the apostles?
- Acts 5:41** How did the apostles react to their cruel treatment at the hands of the Sanhedrin?
- Acts 5:42** What did the apostles do thereafter?

Concluding Thoughts: God will not tolerate liars (Rom. 1:25-32; Rev. 21:8). If you are a liar, confess that sin to God right now, and beg Him for mercy and forgiveness. Then change your ways and **quit lying**.

The apostles spoke the truth about Jesus Christ and suffered for it. Unlike most of us, however, they didn't complain about their treatment. They **rejoiced** to be counted worthy to suffer for Jesus' name. Have you suffered a little ridicule or abuse because you are a Christian? Do you complain and throw yourself a pity party, or do you rejoice like the apostles? Confess your sin and commit to telling the truth about Jesus, regardless of the consequences.

Project: Memorize **Acts 5:41**. Don't compromise in any area, either to benefit yourself or to protect yourself from ridicule.

Ministry and Hatred

Have you ever sincerely tried to do what was right, only to face criticism for your actions? Criticism, griping, and complaining are so common today, it seems like all you have to do to be criticized is **breathe!** The early church experienced criticism and persecution for almost everything they did.

Thus far in our study of the book of Acts, the Jerusalem church has been very unified (see Acts 2:44-46, 4:32-35, 5:42). In today's lesson, however, we will learn about the first dissension and dispute within the church. We'll see how the early church dealt with this problem and what happened as a result. Finally, we will learn that the Jewish religious leaders unleashed more persecution upon the early church.

Acts 6:1 The church at Jerusalem had grown to a great size (see Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4). It included **Hebrews** who were natives of Judea, as well as **Grecians** who were Jews from other parts of the world. The Grecians had adopted much of the Greek culture. There was an ethnic division within the church, which resulted in murmuring. What did the Grecians complain about?

Acts 6:2 The apostles called the church together. What did they tell the church?

Pastors and ministerial staff persons are sometimes distracted from their most important tasks in order to settle disputes and meet the expectations of their church members. These apostles understood that their most vital work was to study and teach the Word of God, while other gifted believers could carry out the day-to-day ministry (see 1 Cor. 12:3-11 and Eph. 4:11-16).

- Acts 6:3** The apostles told the church to select seven men to carry out this ministry to the widows. What three qualifications did they tell the church to look for?
- Acts 6:4** What did the apostles promise to do?
- Acts 6:5** “The saying _____ the whole _____.” There was again unity within the church.
- Acts 6:6** The church brought these men before the apostles. What did the apostles do?
- Acts 6:7** The results of this systematic plan of ministry were tremendous. The Word of God _____, and the number of the disciples _____. Amazingly, many of the Jewish _____ also accepted Jesus Christ! When God’s people seek to minister to one another in an orderly, organized fashion, God blesses. That is why we carry out our ministry through the organized system called the Sunday School.
- Acts 6:8** In addition to ministering to widows, what else did Stephen do?
- Acts 6:9** Stephen’s ministry to Grecian widows (who were Christians) drew criticism from the Grecian Jews in Jerusalem.
- Acts 6:10** What were the Grecian Jews unable to do?
- Acts 6:11** Stephen’s enemies conspired to make false charges against him. They said he blasphemed (spoke against) _____ and _____.

- Acts 6:12** What did Stephen’s enemies do next?
- Acts 6:13** What kind of witnesses did they produce?
They accused Stephen of speaking against the Temple and the _____.
- Acts 6:14** What other charges did they bring against Stephen?
- Acts 6:15** When the Jewish council members looked upon Stephen, how did he appear?

Concluding Thoughts: Stephen was standing before the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews. This was the same group that tried Jesus, and before whom Peter, John, and the other apostles had already appeared (Acts 4 and 5).

Stephen faithfully served God under the authority of his local church, but he got in trouble. The Bible says we **will** face criticism and opposition for serving Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 3:12). Someone will certainly criticize or oppose you if you devote your life and energies to serving God. Expect it, and don’t be surprised by it, but most importantly, **don’t let it stop you from serving Jesus.**

Another lesson from this week’s study is that the church cannot function properly if the members expect the pastors to do all the work. The church is a group of born-again, spiritually gifted persons, ministering to one another’s needs. If you are physically able, but you are not involved in ministry through your Sunday School class or some other church ministry, then you are **holding back** the progress of your church. Talk to your Sunday School teacher or some other leader this week to find out how you can get involved in ministering to others.

Project: Get busy serving God through your church. Read your Bible every day, and come to Sunday School and Worship.

Can You Accept the Truth?

Some people don't want to hear the truth. Have you ever told the truth to someone, but that person totally rejected it? That happens sometimes when you share the Gospel with a lost person.

In last week's lesson we learned that Stephen was arrested by the Jews and brought before the Sanhedrin. He was accused of speaking against Moses, God, the Temple, and the Law. In this lesson we will read about Stephen's defense to those charges.

Acts 7:1 What did the high priest ask Stephen about the charges (Acts 6:13-14) against him?

Acts 7:2-5 Stephen began his defense by telling about Abraham. To whom did God promise to give the land of Israel?

Acts 7:6-8 God told Abraham about Israel's future time in Egypt, and then gave him the covenant of _____ . The covenant was passed down from Abraham to _____ , then _____ , and then to the twelve _____ .

Acts 7:9-16 How did Joseph get to Egypt?
What brought all the Israelites to Egypt?

Acts 7:17-22 When the time grew near for Israel to be delivered from Egypt, God raised up _____ .

Acts 7:23-29 How old was Moses when he went to his brethren, the Israelites?
Why did he flee from Egypt?

Acts 7:30-33 What did Moses see, and who did he hear?

Acts 7:34 What did God tell Moses?

Acts 7:35-36 Even though the Jews rejected Moses, God sent him to be their _____ and _____.

This was central to Stephen's defense. The Jews **rejected** Moses (Acts 7:27), whom God had chosen to be their leader. In the same way, the Jews **rejected** Jesus, who was in fact their Messiah. Stephen was accused by the Jews of speaking against Moses, so he used the Jews' rejection of Moses in his defense.

Acts 7:37 Whose coming did Moses predict?

Acts 7:38-43 Stephen reminded the Sanhedrin that the Israelites continually rebelled against Moses and disobeyed the first commandment (Ex. 20:3).

Acts 7:44-50 Stephen was accused of speaking against the Temple (Acts 6:13), so he gave the Sanhedrin a brief history lesson on the Temple.

Acts 7:51 What did Stephen call the Jewish religious leaders?

Who did he say they always resisted?

Acts 7:52-53 Stephen reminded them that the Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of Jesus. What did he say their ancestors did to those prophets?

Acts 7:54 What was the reaction of the distinguished members of the Sanhedrin to Stephen's words?

Acts 7:55 Stephen was not concerned. What did he see?

Acts 7:56-57 What did Stephen say?

How did the Jewish religious leaders react?

Acts 7:58 What did they do to Stephen?

The Jewish leaders took off their long flowing outer garments. Where did they lay them down?

Acts 7:59 What did Stephen pray?

Acts 7:60 What did Stephen ask of God before he died?

Concluding Thoughts: Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, preached a wonderful message to the Jewish religious leaders. He told them the **truth** that Moses and the prophets foretold the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. He reminded them that other Jews rejected God in the past. He told them the **truth** about Jesus, so they could repent of their sins and accept Him as their Lord and Savior.

The Jewish religious leaders totally **rejected the truth**, and even killed Stephen, making him the first Christian martyr. Did their rejection make Stephen's message untrue? No, his message was **true**, whether they received it or rejected it. Regardless of whether they accepted Stephen or not, his message was **true**. The message that Jesus Christ is Lord and the only way to have eternal life is **true**, no matter whether people receive it or reject it.

What about you? Have you accepted the truth of that message and accepted Jesus Christ, or have you rejected the truth like the Jewish religious leaders did? Your acceptance or rejection won't change the truth, but it will change **your** eternal destiny.

Project: Turn to Jesus for salvation. Read the simple plan of salvation printed on the back of this book. Call your Sunday School teacher if you have questions.

The Gospel Goes to Judea and Samaria

Do you remember Acts 1:8? Just before His ascension, Jesus Christ gave His followers some instructions. He told them to witness about Him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.

Thus far in our study of Acts, we have learned about the growth and development of the Jerusalem church. Many thousands have been saved, but most have stayed in and around Jerusalem. The early believers were very close and very united. They were involved in something totally new, and they experienced some opposition. It was only natural for them to cling together.

It was time, though, for the Gospel to spread outside Jerusalem. God used persecution to drive many believers out to the regions of Judea and Samaria.

Acts 8:1-2 What happened to the church?

Where did many of the believers go to escape persecution?

Acts 8:3 What did Saul do to the Christians?

Acts 8:4 What did the scattered believers do?

Acts 8:5-8 Where did Philip go to preach the Gospel?

The Jews hated the Samaritans, and avoided contact with them. The Samaritans received the Gospel, however, and many miracles were done.

Acts 8:9-11 Idolatry and paganism had deep roots in Samaria. Simon, a magician, was highly respected there.

Acts 8:12-13 Many believed and were baptized, including Simon. What was Simon most interested in?

Acts 8:14-17 Peter and John came to Samaria to investigate. They prayed that the Samaritans would receive the Holy Spirit just as the Jews had. What happened?

The Samaritans were the first group outside of Judaism to be saved. The fact that they received the Holy Spirit in the presence of Peter and John showed the apostles that **salvation is available to anyone**, regardless of religious background or social standing. It also showed the Samaritans (whose heritage was one of rebellion) that they must **remain under the apostles' authority**.

Acts 8:18-19 What did Simon want?

Acts 8:20-24 Simon was actually a counterfeit believer who wanted to do miracles for selfish gain.

Acts 8:25 Where did Peter and John preach?

Acts 8:26 Where did the angel tell Philip to go?

Acts 8:27-29 Philip obeyed, and traveled over forty miles to encounter a man in a chariot. The man was treasurer of Ethiopia, but he worshipped the God of Israel and read the Jewish scriptures.

Acts 8:30-31 He was reading the book of Isaiah (chapter 53, verses 7-8). What did he ask Philip to do?

Acts 8:32-34 What did the man ask Philip about the scripture?

Acts 8:35-36 Philip preached to him about Jesus, and the man asked if he could be baptized.

Acts 8:37-38 Salvation is required **before** baptism. The man was saved and then he was baptized.

Acts 8:39 The Spirit snatched Philip away. The man went home, taking the Gospel to Ethiopia.

Acts 8:40 Philip went north along the Mediterranean coast, preaching the Gospel to that part of Judea.

Concluding Thoughts: The Lord used persecution to cause some believers to leave Jerusalem and take the Gospel to Judea and Samaria. The apostles learned that salvation through Jesus Christ was available even to religious and ethnic outcasts like the Samaritans. The Gospel also went to an Ethiopian. He was a follower of Judaism, but the fact that he was a eunuch meant he could never really become a full-fledged Jew. There are no such restrictions on Christianity, however. The Ethiopian confessed Christ and was saved, instantly becoming a full-fledged Christian. We also learned about Simon, a religious fake who wanted to exploit Christianity for his own personal gain.

What does this lesson have to teach us? First, we must learn that **salvation through Jesus Christ is available to anyone**, regardless of his or her religious, social, or ethnic background. The Bible says that **all** have sinned (Rom. 3:23). That includes everyone on earth, regardless of their race or ethnic background. The Bible further says that **there is no other way to be saved**, except through faith in Jesus Christ (John 14:6 and Acts 4:12).

What about you? Have you ever genuinely turned from your sin and trusted Jesus Christ to save you? The inclusion of Simon in this week's lesson reminds us that there will always be spiritual counterfeits around the church. They attach themselves to the church for what the church can do for them, rather than because of genuine salvation. If you're a counterfeit, please read the plan of salvation printed on the back of this book, confess your sin, and ask Jesus to save you right now.

Project: If you've just trusted Christ, tell someone the good news.

From Persecutor to Preacher

Have you ever known of someone who seemed beyond the reach of the Gospel? Who do you think would be the last person on earth to renounce his or her beliefs and background, accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? Can you think of someone who absolutely hates the Lord, hates the church, and hates Christians?

In this week's lesson we will learn that God can touch and save **anyone**, regardless of how much he or she might hate the Gospel. Read Acts 9 and answer the following questions.

Acts 9:1 How does this verse describe Saul?

Acts 9:2 The “**way**” was an expression of disgust for the church. Why was Saul going to Damascus?

Acts 9:3-4 God miraculously interrupted Saul's plans. What did Saul see and hear?

Acts 9:5 Saul asked who was speaking to him. The voice answered: “I am _____, whom thou _____.”

Acts 9:6 Saul asked the Lord what to do. What was he told?

Acts 9:7-9 How did the others in Saul's party react to all this?

Saul was blind. He was led into Damascus where he waited three days.

Acts 9:10-12 There was a believer at Damascus named Ananias. What did God tell Ananias to do?

Acts 9:13-14 What was Ananias' reaction to these instructions?

- Acts 9:15** God told Ananias that Saul was a “_____ vessel.” To whom did the Lord say Saul would take the Gospel?
- Acts 9:16** What else would God reveal to Saul?
- Acts 9:17-19** Ananias obeyed God. Saul received his sight, was baptized, and stayed with the believers in Damascus.
- Acts 9:20** What did Saul do after his salvation?
- Acts 9:21** Why were people amazed to hear Saul preaching about Jesus Christ?
- Acts 9:22-24** Saul was highly educated in the Old Testament scriptures (see Acts 22:3). He confounded the Jews at Damascus, proving that Jesus is the Christ. What did they plot to do to Saul?
- Acts 9:25** How did Saul escape Damascus?
- Acts 9:26-27** Why were the disciples in Jerusalem afraid of Saul?
Who believed in Saul and took him to the apostles?
- Acts 9:28-29** Saul preached boldly and confronted the Grecians, the same group that had arranged Stephen’s death. What did they want to do to Saul?
- Acts 9:30-31** To escape death, Saul was sent to his hometown of Tarsus. The churches had peace and grew.
- Acts 9:32-35** Peter went to Lydda (23 miles northwest of Jerusalem – see the **Map** on page 5). God healed a crippled man, and many people were saved.
- Acts 9:36-38** A Christian woman at Joppa (11 miles from Lydda) died. The disciples there sent for Peter.

Acts 9:39-41 What happened to the dead woman?

Peter had witnessed Jesus raise people from the dead (see Mark 5:40-42).

Acts 9:42-43 This miracle became known throughout Joppa, and many more people were saved.

Concluding Thoughts: Saul was the early church's greatest enemy. He hated the church and did all he could to destroy it. He went to Damascus to arrest Christians and bring them to Jerusalem.

When Saul went to Damascus, he wasn't looking for Jesus. He thought he was right with God, and he thought the followers of Jesus were God's enemies. He viewed himself as righteous. He had no interest in Christ, but God sovereignly intervened in his life. God interrupted Saul's plans, knocked him flat, and caused him to turn to Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. After that, the man who was the church's greatest enemy became her greatest advocate. Saul (later known as the Apostle Paul) preached throughout the known world, and God used him to write much of the New Testament. What a dramatic change!

No one is beyond the reach of the Gospel. If you know someone who hates the Gospel or is persistently resistant to the Gospel, don't give up. God can still touch that person when he or she least expects it. We sometimes "give up" on people, but **God can save anyone**.

Who have you "given up" on? Do you have a prospect for your class that seems hopeless? Ask God to intervene in that person's life, and save him or her.

Project: Invite that "hopeless" prospect to Sunday School this week. Read your Bible each day. Memorize **Acts 9:4-5**.

The Gospel Goes to the Gentiles

Just before His ascension, Jesus told His followers that they were to witness about Him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). Through the first nine chapters of the book of Acts, we have seen the spread of the Gospel throughout Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. People all over the region heard and received the news that Jesus is Lord – the only true Savior. **Jewish** people, that is.

The Jews knew from the Old Testament that they were God’s chosen people; God had established a special covenant with them. As a result, the Jews viewed Gentiles (non-Jews) as unclean and unsuitable to associate with. Faithful Jews avoided all contact with Gentiles: they would not go into a Gentile’s house or eat with a Gentile, lest they be ceremonially unclean and disqualified from partaking in Jewish religious rituals (see John 18:28-29).

It was natural then, that the early church assumed salvation through Jesus was **only** available to Jews. They were about to learn, however, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for **all** people.

Acts 10:1-2 Cornelius was a Roman centurion, who had forsaken idol worship to follow the God of Israel.

Acts 10:3-6 At 3:00 one afternoon, an angel appeared to Cornelius. What did the angel tell him to do?

Acts 10:7-8 What did Cornelius do?

Acts 10:9-13 About noon the next day, Peter was praying in Joppa. What did he see in his vision?

What did the voice tell him to do?

Acts 10:14 Why did Peter resist this instruction?

Remember that Jewish dietary laws were very strict. Some animals were ceremonially “unclean,” and Jews were forbidden from eating them.

Acts 10:15 What did the voice tell Peter?

Acts 10:16-18 This happened _____ times. While Peter tried to figure out the meaning of this vision, the men sent by Cornelius arrived and asked to see Peter.

Acts 10:19-23 The Holy Spirit told Peter to go with the men.

Acts 10:24-27 Peter and some other believers traveled the 33 miles to Caesarea (see **Map** – page 5) to meet Cornelius.

Acts 10:28-29 Peter reminded Cornelius that it was _____ for a Jew to associate with a Gentile. What did he say God had shown him?

Acts 10:30-33 Cornelius told Peter why he had sent for him.

Acts 10:34-43 Peter had learned that “God is no _____ of _____” (v. 34). He preached to them about Jesus, telling them that _____ believes in Him shall receive _____ of sins (v. 43).

Acts 10:44-48 What happened to these Gentiles?

These Gentiles in Caesarea were saved and received the Holy Spirit, just like the Jews did in Acts 2. The Jewish believers were astonished because they didn’t expect Gentiles to be saved just like they were. The word translated **tongues** here is the exact same word used in chapter 2; it means **languages**, not unrecognizable gibberish. God did this miracle to show that salvation through Jesus is available to everyone, including both Jews and Gentiles. Peter

vividly illustrated this truth by commanding that these new Gentile believers be baptized, signifying full acceptance into the church. Peter came to understand the fact that the church consists of both Jews and Gentiles (see Eph. 2:11-18).

Acts 11:1-3 When the apostles and other believers in Jerusalem heard about this, they were upset and questioned Peter.

Acts 11:4-17 Peter told them all that had happened.

Acts 11:18 How did they respond to the news that God would save Gentiles, just as He had Jews?

Concluding Thoughts: There is only one way of salvation, and His name is Jesus Christ (John 14:6). There isn't one method for the Jews and another for the Gentiles; neither is there one method for white people and another for other ethnicities. **There is one Gospel for all people** of all nationalities, tongues, races, and religious backgrounds. As such, we must not exclude anyone from our evangelistic outreach efforts. We must also welcome all people into our churches, providing they have genuinely turned from their sin and placed their total trust in Jesus to save them.

Do you know someone of a different national, ethnic, or religious background who needs to know that forgiveness and salvation are available through Jesus Christ? If you do, why don't you go and talk to that person about Jesus Christ this week? If you are a genuine Christian, the same God who saved you can save that person. If you're unsure how to witness to that person, ask your Sunday School teacher or another mature believer to go with you.

Project: Memorize **Romans 1:16**. Thank God that the Gospel is not limited to certain ethnic groups. If it had been, **you** might have been left out! Invite someone to Sunday School this week.

A New Name and Miraculous Deliverance

We have already learned about the Gospel's spread throughout Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. In last week's lesson we learned about the Gospel going to the Gentiles. The last part of the assignment Jesus gave the church (Acts 1:8) was to take the Gospel to the uttermost part of the earth. We will see the beginnings of that mission in this week's lesson.

We will also be reminded that God is sovereign. He will not permit his servants to be hurt or hindered in their service to Him, until their work on earth is complete. Finally, we will see that God can sovereignly stop anyone from taking His rightful place as the only person in the universe worthy of worship.

Acts 11:19 As a result of the persecution that followed Stephen's death, some of the believers traveled north out of Israel. To whom did they preach?

Acts 11:20-21 At Antioch (in Syria), some of the believers also preached to the Grecians. What was the result?

Acts 11:22-24 When the Jerusalem church heard about this, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. What did he encourage the believers there to do?

Acts 11:25-26 Barnabas traveled to Tarsus, found Saul, and brought him to Antioch (see the **Map** on page 5). They stayed there for an entire year, preaching and teaching. What new name was given to the believers in Antioch?

This is a significant development. For the first time the followers of Jesus Christ, now consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, had a name and an identity separate from Judaism. They were no longer just a sect of the Jews; the **Christians** were now separate.

Acts 11:27-30 The Christians in Antioch took a collection for the relief of the believers in Judea. They sent the offering by the hand of _____ and _____.

Acts 12:1-2 What did King Herod do to the Apostle James (the brother of the Apostle John)?

Acts 12:3-4 Why did Herod imprison Peter?

Herod placed Peter under the direct guard of **16 soldiers**. What did he intend to do after Passover?

Acts 12:5 What was the church doing while he was in prison?

Acts 12:6-7 What happened during the night?

Acts 12:8-10 The angel miraculously freed Peter from prison, but Peter wasn't sure if this was real or only a vision.

Acts 12:11 What did Peter realize?

Acts 12:12-16 Peter went to a house where he knew believers would be gathered, praying for him. What was the response of the Christians in the house?

The believers were praying for Peter's release from prison, but were astonished when their prayer was actually answered. Are we ever guilty of not really expecting an answer to our prayers?

Acts 12:17-19 Peter told the believers what had happened to him. The James mentioned here is the half-brother of Jesus and author of the New Testament book of James. What happened to the soldiers?

King Herod left Jerusalem and went to Caesarea.

Acts 12:20-23 Herod made a speech in Caesarea. Afterward, the people worshipped him as if he were a god, and he accepted their worship. What happened to Herod?

Acts 12:24 Herod, who killed James and tried to kill Peter, was dead. What happened to the Gospel?

Acts 12:25 Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29-30), so they returned to Antioch. Who did they take with them?

Concluding Thoughts: What are you praying for? Are you praying for a sick loved one to be healed? Are you praying for a lost friend to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? Are you praying for God to help you do well on an assignment at work or an upcoming test at school? Are you praying for a job or a spouse?

Do you really expect God to answer your prayer? Or will you, like the believers who prayed for Peter, doubt that God will answer and then be absolutely amazed and astonished when He does?

We should be people of prayer. We must not doubt God's ability to answer our prayers, provided we pray in accordance with His will (1 John 5:14). God can do far more than we could ever dream possible (Eph. 3:20).

Also, remember that God will not allow men to be worshipped as gods for very long, without destroying them (Ex. 3:3-5). God is the one true God, and He is worthy to be praised (Rev. 4:8-11). Worship God this week, thanking Him that He is worthy of praise.

Project: Start a prayer list if you don't already have one. Ask God to show you things you should pray for each day. Ask God to answer those prayers. Expect to receive answers to your prayers. Do the **Daily Bible Readings** this week (see pages 3-4) and come to Sunday School and Worship on Sunday.

Missionaries

Jesus outlined His plan for the expansion of the Gospel in Acts 1:8 – the Gospel was to spread throughout Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and then proceed to the uttermost part of the earth. In the first 12 chapters of Acts the Gospel went to Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. It also went to the Gentiles, and in last week’s lesson the Gospel spread into Syria. Remember that there were many foreign Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost who received Christ and took the Gospel back to their native lands. Many Christians were scattered abroad because of persecution, but there had not yet been any intentional effort to reach the uttermost part of the earth.

The great missionary advance of the Gospel was about to begin. The year was probably A.D. 48, about 15 years after Christ’s resurrection. The time had come to reach out to the world.

Acts 13:1-2 What did the Holy Spirit tell the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch?

Acts 13:3 The church commissioned **Barnabas** and **Saul** as **missionaries**, and sent them out.

Acts 13:4-5 They sailed to Cyprus, Barnabas’ native land (see the **Map** on page 5). Who was with them?

Acts 13:6-8 On Cyprus they encountered a Roman official and a sorcerer. What did this sorcerer try to do?

Verse 9 is the first time Saul is called by his Roman name, **Paul**. From now on he will only be called Paul. He also appears to be the leader of the missionary endeavor from this point.

Acts 13:10-12 What happened to the sorcerer?

How did the Roman official respond?

- Acts 13:13-14** Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark left Cyprus and sailed to the southern coast of Turkey. When they arrived there, John Mark left and went home to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas traveled 120 miles north to a city called Antioch (this is a different Antioch from the one mentioned previously in the book of Acts – see the **Map** on page 5).
- Acts 13:15** Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath day. What did the leaders of the synagogue invite them to do?
- Acts 13:16-22** Paul recounted Israel’s history from their time in Egypt up to the time of King David.
- Acts 13:23** What did Paul say about Jesus?
- Acts 13:24-26** Paul said the “_____ of this _____” had been sent to the Jews and God-fearers (v. 26).
- Acts 13:27-37** Paul said the death and resurrection of Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament.
- Acts 13:38** Through Jesus is “_____ of _____.”
- Acts 13:39** By Jesus all that _____ are _____. Can the Law of Moses do that?
- Acts 13:40-41** Paul quoted **Habakkuk 1:5**, warning them not to fulfill that prophecy by rejecting the Gospel.
- Acts 13:42-44** How many people came together the next Sabbath to hear Paul preach God’s Word?
- Acts 13:45** What caused the Jews to oppose Paul?

Acts 13:46 Since the Jews weren't interested in hearing the Gospel, to whom did Paul turn his attention?

Acts 13:47 Paul quoted **Isaiah 49:6**, saying that salvation was available to the whole world, not just to the Jews.

Acts 13:48 Who believed the Gospel?

All the elect (Rom. 8:29-30, Eph. 1:4-5, 1 Pet. 1:2, Rev. 17:8), believed the Gospel and were saved.

Acts 13:49-52 The Gospel spread through the region, but the Jews stirred up powerful people who expelled Paul and Barnabas from the area. What attitude did Paul and Barnabas have (see Acts 5:41)?

Concluding Thoughts: The Gospel continued to spread farther from Jerusalem, including Cyprus and modern-day Turkey. The remainder of the book of Acts tells about its spread throughout the known world. For 2,000 years the Gospel has been spreading. As Paul said in Acts 13:47, the Gospel is the **only** true message of salvation for everyone on earth.

Aren't you thankful for Christian missionaries? If you are a Christian, you owe your salvation to some missionary at some point in Christian history. Unless you can trace your biological family and Christian heritage back to the early church in Israel, your salvation is the result of someone taking the Gospel to a foreign land and telling people about Jesus Christ.

Take a moment right now to thank God for Christian missionaries. Pray for people who are serving as missionaries around the world. Ask God if He wants **you** to be a missionary.

Project: Memorize **Acts 13:47**. Be a missionary – tell someone the Good News about Jesus Christ this week.

Acceptance and Rejection

Have you ever had a day when it seemed everything was going your way, and everyone treated you with love and acceptance? You've probably had other days when everything seemed to go wrong, and you felt like everyone was out to get you. Have you ever had both of those experiences on the **same** day? Those are certainly extremes of emotion!

In this week's lesson, we will see that Paul and Barnabas continued their Missionary Journey in central Turkey. While there, they experienced the height of acceptance and adoration, but also the extreme depths of rejection. Read Acts 14 to learn all about it.

Acts 14:1 In last week's lesson Paul and Barnabas were thrown out of Antioch. They traveled about 70 miles southeast to Iconium, and went to the Jewish synagogue. A _____ of Jews and Greeks believed and were saved.

Acts 14:2-5 The city was divided. What did the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles plan to do to Paul and Barnabas?

Acts 14:6-7 Paul and Barnabas learned of the plot to kill them, so they fled to Lystra (18 miles south of Iconium; see the **Map** on page 5). What did they do there?

Acts 14:8-10 In Lystra they encountered a man who had been crippled from birth. What happened?

Acts 14:11-12 What did the people say about Paul and Barnabas?

The people spoke in their native language, which Paul and Barnabas did not understand.

Acts 14:13 Thinking they were gods, the pagan priest brought animals to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 14:14 What did Paul and Barnabas do?

In Judaism, tearing one's clothing was a sign of great blasphemy (Matt. 26:65) or grief.

Acts 14:15-17 Paul and Barnabas said they were not gods, but men. They said they had come to tell the people to turn from idolatry to serve the true and living God, the Creator of everything.

Acts 14:18 Were they able to stop the crowd from sacrificing to them as if they were gods (contrast Acts 12:21-23)?

Acts 14:19 Unbelieving Jews came from Antioch and Iconium. What did they do to Paul?

Acts 14:20 Paul's attackers thought he was dead. Was he?

Note that Paul got up and went right back into the city, where his attackers were. Where did he and Barnabas go the next day?

Acts 14:21 After preaching the Gospel in Derbe, Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps, going back through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.

Acts 14:22-23 Why did Paul and Barnabas go back through those cities?

Paul's actions reveal his heart of concern for the new converts he had reached in those cities. In each city there were people who wanted to kill Paul. By retracing their steps through these cities of central Turkey, they traveled nearly 300 miles. If they had gone directly to the coast rather than back through those cities, they could

have saved themselves almost 200 miles of travel. Besides this, when they were in Derbe, Paul's hometown of Tarsus was less than 100 miles away. Rather than take the easy way, Paul went back through those towns to help establish and build up the churches he had planted there. He deeply cared about the new Christians.

**Acts
14:24-28**

Paul and Barnabas returned to their starting point (Acts 13:1-3), at the city of Antioch in Syria (see the **Map** on page 5). They told the church everything God had done, including how He had opened the _____ of faith to the _____ (v. 27). Paul's First Missionary Journey was completed.

Concluding Thoughts: Some people Paul and Barnabas encountered on their missionary travels accepted the Gospel, and a few even wanted to worship them as gods. Other people hated the Gospel and tried to kill Paul. That is the way it goes with spreading the Gospel: there are some folks who accept the Gospel joyfully, but there are others who get mad at you for telling them about Jesus. It has been that way since the beginning of Christianity.

Don't let rejection stop you. Contact a prospect for your Sunday School class this week. Talk to a lost friend or work associate about Jesus Christ. Paul was stoned and left for dead, but he didn't let that stop him. Don't let a little rejection stop you, either. Remember, everywhere Paul went, some people happily received the Gospel. Someone you encounter will do the same.

Project: Share the Gospel with someone this week. If you need help, ask your Sunday School teacher. Perhaps you could go with him or her to visit a prospect for your class or a lost friend. Don't let rejection slow you down. Be sure to pick up a *Sunday School Member Quarterly* for the Winter quarter, so you can begin the **Daily Bible Reading Guide** on Monday.