

Sunday School Member Quarterly

Winter 2022 – 2023

Acts 15 – 28

Spreading the Gospel

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

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for the Winter 2022 – 2023 quarter.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are taken
from the King James Version of the Bible.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Sunday School Lessons

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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 November 28 – December 3

Mon: Acts 15; **Tues:** Romans 3:9-30; **Wed:** Ephesians 2;
Thurs: Memorize Ephesians 2:8-9; **Fri:** Galatians 2:1-10;
Sat: Acts 15

Week of December 5 – 10

Mon: Acts 15:36 – 16:40; **Tues:** Hebrews 3; **Wed:** Exodus 7;
Thurs: Memorize John 6:44; **Fri:** Ephesians 6:10-20;
Sat: Acts 15:36 – 16:40

Week of December 12 – 17

Mon: Acts 17; **Tues:** Colossians 2; **Wed:** 2 Timothy 2;
Thurs: Memorize Acts 17:30; **Fri:** 2 Timothy 3; **Sat:** Acts 17

Week of December 19 – 24

Mon: Matthew 1; **Tues:** Luke 1:26-38; **Wed:** Luke 2:1-20;
Thurs: Isaiah 7:1-16; **Fri:** Isaiah 9:1-7; **Sat:** Matthew 1

Week of December 26 – 31

Mon: Acts 18; **Tues:** 1 Thessalonians 2;
Wed: 1 Corinthians 1; **Thurs:** Memorize Acts 18:9;
Fri: 1 Corinthians 2; **Sat:** Acts 18

Week of January 2 – 7

Mon: Acts 19; **Tues:** Proverbs 16; **Wed:** Ephesians 3;
Thurs: 1 Timothy 6; **Fri:** James 4; **Sat:** Acts 19

Week of January 9 – 14

Mon: Acts 20; **Tues:** Philippians 1; **Wed:** Ephesians 4;
Thurs: Memorize Acts 20:28; **Fri:** 2 Timothy 4; **Sat:** Acts 20

Week of January 16 – 21

Mon: Acts 21; **Tues:** Acts 8; **Wed:** 2 Corinthians 11;
Thurs: Memorize Acts 5:29; **Fri:** 1 Peter 5; **Sat:** Acts 21

Week of January 23 – 28

Mon: Acts 22; **Tues:** Acts 9; **Wed:** Rom. 10; **Thurs:** John 17;
Fri: Write your personal testimony; **Sat:** Acts 22

Week of January 30 – February 4

Mon: Acts 23; **Tues:** Romans 13; **Wed:** Matthew 23;
Thurs: Matthew 26:1-16; **Fri:** 2 Corinthians 5; **Sat:** Acts 23

Week of February 6 – 11

Mon: Acts 24:1-23; **Tues:** Acts 24:24 – 25:12;
Wed: Acts 4; **Thurs:** Romans 15; **Fri:** 2 Timothy 2;
Sat: Acts 24:1 – 25:12

Week of February 13 – 18

Mon: Acts 25:13-27; **Tues:** Acts 26; **Wed:** I Peter 3:12-22;
Thurs: Memorize Acts 26:23; **Fri:** Acts 25:13-27;
Sat: Acts 26

Week of February 20 – 25

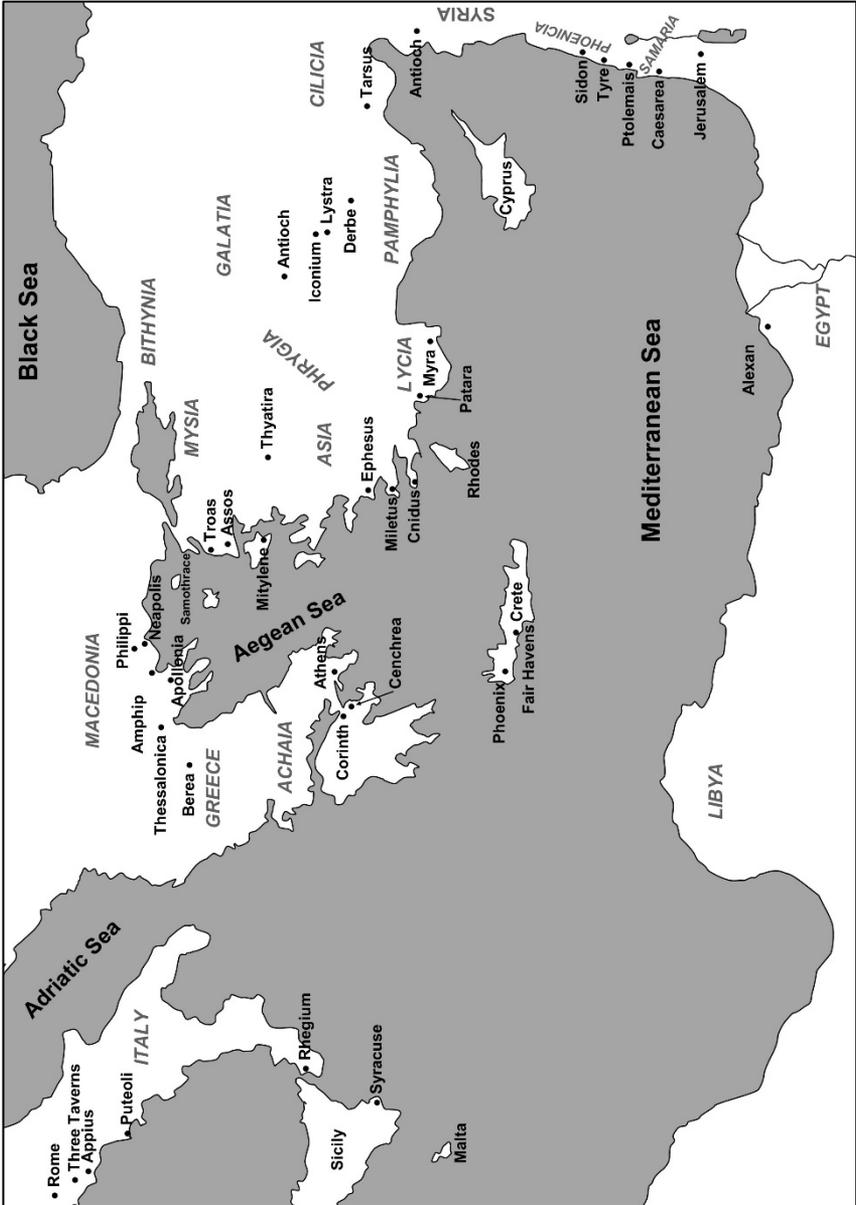
Mon: Acts 27; **Tues:** Acts 28; **Wed:** Proverbs 3;
Thurs: Memorize one of the promises listed on page 47;
Fri: Acts 27; **Sat:** Acts 28

Coming Next Quarter

March – May 2023

Psalms, Part 1

Map



Introduction to Acts

Author: Luke

Date: Approximately A.D. 60

Luke: The book of Acts was written by Luke, “*the beloved physician*” (Col. 4:14) and traveling companion of the Apostle Paul. Beginning in Acts 16, the word “*we*” appears in the narrative. This reveals that Luke accompanied Paul on his Second and Third Missionary Journeys, as well as his trip to Rome and his first imprisonment (A.D. 60; Col. 4:14; Philemon 1:24). Second Timothy 4:11 confirms that Luke was again with Paul in prison, this time during his second (and final) Roman imprisonment (A.D. 67).

Acts is the second installment 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 is revealed in the words of Jesus recorded 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.

Chronology of Acts: The events described in 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 15 – 28. The study begins with the Jerusalem Council meeting (to decide if Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to be saved) and ends with Paul preaching the Gospel freely while a prisoner in Rome. Through the book of Acts we see that the Gospel of Jesus Christ reached from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and the farthest reaches of the western world. The title of this quarter’s study is *Spreading the Gospel*.

Paul’s Letters Related to Events in Acts

Galatians – Written from Antioch before the Second Missionary Journey, but after the Jerusalem Council – Acts 15:35

1 & 2 Thessalonians – Written from Corinth during the Second Missionary Journey – Acts 18:11

1 Corinthians – Written from Ephesus near the end of Paul’s three-year stay there – Acts 19:21-22

2 Corinthians – Written from Macedonia after Paul left Ephesus – Acts 20:2

Romans – Written from Corinth during the Third Missionary Journey – Acts 20:3

Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon – Written from Rome during Paul’s first imprisonment there – Acts 28:30

1 Timothy and Titus – Written after Paul’s release from his first imprisonment in Rome

2 Timothy – Written at the very end of Paul’s life, shortly before his execution, during his second imprisonment in Rome.

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Are Works Needed for Salvation?

Since the earliest days of humanity, people have tried to **do things** to make themselves right with God. Once a religious man came to Jesus (Matt. 19:16) and asked, “*What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?*”

Even in our modern times, confusion still exists over the question, “Are works needed for salvation?” Most religious groups teach that they are. In this lesson, we will see how the early church dealt with this question, and find God’s answer as revealed in the Bible.

The fourteenth chapter of Acts ended with Paul and Barnabas back at their “home base” of **Antioch** in Syria (see the **Map** on page 6) after completing their First Missionary Journey.

Acts 15:1 Some men came from Judea to Antioch, teaching:
“Except ye be _____ after the manner
of Moses, ye cannot be _____.”

There were believers in Antioch who were Gentiles, and therefore had never been circumcised. The intent of these men from Judea was that a person could not be saved unless he **first** became a Jew.

Acts 15:2-3 Having seen many Gentiles saved during their missionary travels, Paul and Barnabas disagreed. Why did they decide to go to **Jerusalem**?

What did they do along the way?

Acts 15:4-5 The church, apostles, and elders received Paul and the others. What did some of the believers who were Pharisees insist?

Acts 15:6 Who got together to decide this question?

Acts 15:7-8 Peter reminded the group that God had previously told him to take the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10). What did God do to show that Gentiles could be saved in exactly the same way as Jews?

Acts 15:9 In terms of salvation, there is no _____ between Jews and Gentiles

Acts 15:10-11 The **yoke** referred to in verse 10 is the Law. Neither Jews nor Gentiles are able to perfectly live up to God's standard (see Rom. 3:23). "But we believe that through the _____ of the Lord _____ we shall be _____, even as _____."

Acts 15:12 Everyone listened as Paul and Barnabas told about Gentiles being saved during their missionary trip.

James now took the floor. This was not the Apostle James, who had already been killed by King Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1-2). This James was the half-brother of Jesus, who would later write the New Testament book of James.

In Acts 15:13-18, James reminded the apostles and elders that God chose Israel from among all the nations to be His special people. Through the Old Testament prophets, God revealed that Gentiles ("*the residue*" in v. 17) would be included in His plan of salvation. God has always had a plan, from the beginning of the world.

Acts 15:19 What was James' judgment in the matter?

Acts 15:20 James said Gentiles did not have to be circumcised **before** they could be saved, but they should abstain from the following **after** they were saved:

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

Acts 15:21 Gentile Christians needed to follow these standards to avoid offending the Jews, who lived in all the cities where Gentiles were being saved.

Acts 15:22 How did the apostles, elders, and the whole church react to James' recommendation?

Acts 15:23-29 They wrote their decision in a letter and sent it, along with some of their own men, to Antioch.

Acts 15:30-31 How did the Antioch church react to the decision?

Acts 15:32-35 The Gospel was preached even more than before. Paul wrote **Galatians** during this time in Antioch.

Concluding Thoughts: Faced with the question of whether Gentiles must be circumcised before becoming Christians, the early church settled the issue once and for all: works are **not** needed for salvation. They clearly taught that **salvation is God's work**, which cannot be earned by any human effort or works. In other words, salvation is a gift of grace, not the result of trying to be a good person.

There are thousands of religions in the world. The difference between Christianity and all those religions and is that they emphasize human effort, while the Bible says we can only be saved by God's activity on our behalf (Eph. 2:8-9). According to the Bible, salvation is by **grace** alone, through **faith** alone, in **Jesus Christ** alone. Good works will not get you to heaven.

Have you trusted Jesus for salvation, or are you trying to "work" your way to heaven? If you've never accepted Christ's gift of salvation, read the verses printed on the back of this book, then turn from your sins and place your faith in Jesus. Please do it now.

Project: Memorize **Ephesians 2:8-9**. Ask several people this week what a person must do to go to heaven. Tell them what the Bible says about salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Open Doors and Open Hearts

Have you ever been inside a prison? Perhaps you have seen a documentary on television about prisons and life behind bars. There is one thing that really stands out about prisons: the **doors**. Prisons have many doors. Most are big, thick, and strong. There's one more thing that stands out about prison doors: they are **locked**.

The locked doors at a prison keep those inside from getting out. They also keep people who are outside from getting in. Just as a door can be tightly locked to prevent anyone from entering, sometimes the hearts of people are closed and locked.

In today's lesson we will learn about the beginning of Paul's Second Missionary Journey, and the kinds of hearts and doors he faced.

Acts 15:36 What did Paul suggest that he and Barnabas do?

Acts 15:37-41 Barnabas traveled with Paul on his First Missionary Journey (Acts 13 – 14). John Mark was Barnabas' nephew, who deserted Paul and Barnabas during their earlier journey (Acts 13:13). Barnabas wanted to bring him on this next trip, but Paul refused, so they parted company. Barnabas and Mark went to **Cyprus**, while Paul and Silas went through **Syria** and into **Turkey** (see the **Map** on page 6).

Acts 16:1-3 Who did Paul meet in **Derbe** and **Lystra**?

Paul circumcised Timothy so he would not be offensive to the Jews. Timothy's salvation was not in question, but circumcision allowed him to go with Paul into the Jewish synagogues.

Acts 16:4-5 What happened to the churches Paul visited?

Acts 16:6-10 The Holy Spirit led Paul and his companions through central Turkey, all the way to the northwest coast. Paul had a vision, calling him to come to the region of _____ (see **Map** on page 6).

Acts 16:11-13 Paul and his party sailed across the Aegean Sea and came to **Philippi** (the place for which the New Testament book of Philippians is named). Since there was no synagogue there, they met with the Jews at the riverside on the Sabbath day.

Acts 16:14-15 Who did they meet there?

What did God do to her heart?

After Lydia was saved, she was _____.

Acts 16:16-18 There was a demon-possessed slave girl in Philippi. How did she make money for her owners?

What did Paul do for her?

Acts 16:19-24 Why were the girl's owners upset that the demon was cast out of her?

What happened to Paul and Silas?

Acts 16:25 What were Paul and Silas doing at midnight?

Acts 16:26-29 What did God do to the closed prison doors?

What did the jailer try to do to himself?

Why do you think the jailer was trembling?

Acts 16:30 What did the jailer ask?

Acts 16:31 How did Paul and Silas answer the jailer?

Acts 16:32-34 Paul and Silas shared the Gospel with the jailer and his family. They were all saved and baptized. The jailer then took Paul and Silas (his former prisoners) to his home and fed them.

Acts 16:35-40 In the morning, the city leaders decided to release Paul and Silas. It was a crime to beat or imprison a Roman citizen (such as Paul) without a proper trial. Rather than let the people of Philippi think that Christians were criminals and troublemakers, Paul demanded that his name and reputation be cleared. They were released, after which they encouraged the believers at Lydia's house and then left Philippi for their next destination.

Concluding Thoughts: God opened the door for Paul and his companions to come over from Turkey to Macedonia. God opened Lydia's heart, and she received the Gospel. Her life was eternally changed because God opened her heart. Her entire family was saved, too. God opened the doors to the Philippian jail. In so doing, He also opened the heart of the Philippian jailer. His life was eternally changed, as were the lives of his entire family. These things happened because **God opened hearts and opened doors.**

This is not unique to New Testament times. Even today, God must open a person's heart before that person can understand or believe the Gospel (John 6:44; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:8-9). That is why some people do not respond to the Gospel. We need to pray that God will open the hearts of those to whom we witness.

Project: Memorize **John 6:44**. Ask God to open the hearts of your lost friends. Do the **Daily Bible Readings** (pages 4-5).

Philosophy or Christianity?

How would you define the word **philosophy**? What is your philosophy of life? What philosophy do you live by? Is there a difference between philosophy and Christianity?

A philosophy is a guiding principle or foundational reason for doing something. Our nation has traffic laws, including speed limits, because we have an underlying belief (philosophy) that traffic laws result in safer roads and fewer accidents. In the strictest sense, a religion is a philosophy of life based on an approved standard of behavior. Is Christianity just another philosophy, or is it something different? In Acts 17, Paul encountered some philosophers.

Acts 17:1-4 Paul and his companions (Silas, Timothy, and Luke) went from **Philippi** to **Thessalonica** (see the **Map** on page 6). This is the city to which the New Testament books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians were written. Where did Paul go to preach about Jesus?

What was the result of his preaching?

Acts 17:5-10 What did the unbelieving Jews do?

Where did the believers send Paul and Silas?

Acts 17:11 Paul preached to the Jews in **Berea**. What did the Bereans do daily?

Do you study your Bible daily?

Acts 17:12-15 The Jews from Thessalonica came and stirred up the people of Berea against Paul. Where did the believers send Paul?

Acts
17:16-18

Paul was troubled by the rampant idolatry in Athens, so he preached about Jesus in the synagogue and in the marketplace. He caught the attention of some philosophers. **Epicureans** wanted nothing but pleasure; experience was their god. **Stoics**, on the other hand, tried to be indifferent to pleasure or pain.

Acts
17:19-20

What did the philosophers want Paul to do?

Acts 17:21

The people of Athens gave all their time to nothing “but either to _____ or to _____ some _____ thing.”

Acts
17:22-23

Paul said that the people of Athens were very _____ people. They even had an altar dedicated to an _____ god.

Acts
17:24-25

What did God make?

To whom has God given life?

Acts
17:26-27

God has made of _____ all nations of _____. God has determined the lifespan and size of every nation.

Acts 17:28

“For in Him we _____, and _____, and have our _____.”

Acts 17:29

Since we are God’s offspring, what should we realize about Him?

Acts 17:30

What does God command **everyone** to do?

Acts 17:31

God has appointed a day to do what?

The fact Jesus rose from the dead assures us that He will judge the world.

Acts 17:32 What two different reactions did Paul get to his message about the resurrection of Jesus?

Acts 17:33-34 Some believed the Gospel and were saved.

Concluding Thoughts: Paul encountered philosophers in Athens, whom he told about the Lord Jesus Christ. Some were fleshly and indulgent, denying themselves no physical pleasure. Others believed all emotion and pleasure were bad. The two groups held very different philosophies, but they had one important thing in common: they were more interested in learning and arguing about philosophies than in having a life-changing relationship with Jesus.

Philosophy is still popular in our day. Many claim to be Christians, but in reality, they think Christianity is no different from any other philosophy or religion. They might study or even teach “religion,” but they have never experienced true salvation through Jesus Christ. For those people, like those Paul preached to in Athens, the study of Christianity is just another mental exercise.

Christianity is not just another religion or philosophy. It is not just a list of “dos” and “don’ts” to live by. Christianity is all about having a **personal, saving** relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the creator of your life (Acts 17:24), the sustainer of your life (Acts 17:25), and the only One who can give you eternal life (Acts 17:28). He commands you to repent of your sins (Acts 17:30). He will one day judge the world, which He proved by rising from the dead (Acts 17:31).

Will you turn to Jesus for salvation right now? Read the verses printed on the back of this book, repent of your sins, and trust Jesus Christ to save you.

Project: Memorize **Acts 17:30**. If you have questions about receiving Christ as your Savior, call your Sunday School teacher. He or she will be glad to help you.

The Birth of Jesus Christ

December 25 is the day we call “Christmas Day.” For centuries, it has been the date Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. In recent decades, however, Christmas has simply become a day most people enjoy as a **holiday** from work, a chance to get together with **family** members, and a time to exchange **gifts**. Retailers love Christmas because they make lots of money.

Jesus Christ isn’t mentioned much anymore. In fact, the word “Christmas” is quickly disappearing in favor of more politically correct names such as “winter holiday.”

The world may forget the real reason the Christmas holiday was instituted, but God’s people must not. It’s called **Christ**mas because we celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, which forever changed the course of human history. If Jesus had not been born, we would all be doomed to hell. Read Matthew 1:1-25 to celebrate Jesus and thank Him for coming into our sin-darkened world.

Matt. 1:1 “The book of the _____ of Jesus Christ.” The Old Testament is the story of Adam and his descendants (Gen. 5:1). The New Testament is the story of Jesus and His children.

Matt. 1:2-5 Jesus’ earthly ancestry goes back to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and through the tribe of Judah. The Boaz and Ruth named here are the persons described in the Old Testament book of Ruth.

Matt. 1:6 “And Jesse begat _____ the king.”

Verses 7-17 describe the rest of Jesus’ family tree. This was Jesus’ **legal** genealogy, through His earthly stepfather, Joseph (see v. 16).

Matt. 1:18 “Now the _____ of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother _____ was _____ to Joseph, before they _____, she was found with child of the _____.”

The word **espoused** is similar to our word “engaged,” but **much** stronger: espousal was legally binding and required a legal divorce to break. Basically, an espoused couple was legally married, but not yet living together or having any physical contact.

Who was the Father of Mary’s child?

Matt. 1:19 What did Joseph want to do when he learned of Mary’s pregnancy?

Matt. 1:20 Who appeared to Joseph?

What did he tell Joseph?

Who did he say was the Father of the child?

Matt. 1:21 “And she shall bring forth a _____, and thou shalt call His name _____.” What did the angel say this Son would do (see also Luke 19:10)?

Matt. 1:22 Why was all this done?

Hundreds of years earlier, God spoke through His prophets to foretell these miraculous events. Read Isaiah 7:14.

Matt. 1:23 Who would give birth to this Child?

Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. He had an earthly mother (Mary), but he had a Heavenly Father. If Jesus had been born of an earthly mother and an earthly father, He couldn’t be God. **The virgin birth is one of the foundational doctrines of Christianity:** if Jesus was **not** born of a virgin, then He **wasn’t** God and He **couldn’t** save anybody from their sins.

Matt. 1:23 What does the name **Emmanuel** mean?

Matt. 1:24 What did Joseph do?

Matt. 1:25 The word **knew** refers to having sexual relations (“*And Adam **knew** Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain*” – Gen. 4:1). How did Joseph treat Mary?

What did he name the baby?

Concluding Thoughts: Jesus’ birth was foretold hundreds of years before it took place, and it happened just as God said it would. Jesus is God and He has always existed, but He came into our world through the womb of a virgin named Mary. Jesus Christ is the **God-Man** – all God and all man.

Why did Jesus come? He came to “*save His people from their sins.*” Jesus Christ, the God-Man, put Himself in our place by taking the penalty of our sin upon Himself on the cross. Since He paid the price for our sin, He offers forgiveness and new life to anyone who wants it. That’s why we celebrate His birth at Christmas.

Do **you** know Jesus Christ as your **personal** Savior? If not, please read the verses printed on the back of this book, confess your sin to God, ask Him to forgive you, and ask Him to save you. If you place your trust for eternity in Jesus Christ, you will have the best Christmas ever!

Project: Look for opportunities this week to tell people about the true significance of Christmas.

Merry Christmas!

Converts and Controversy

There is an old expression that says all you have to do to make some people mad at you is **breathe**. Indeed, if you try to be completely obedient to God, somebody is bound to get angry with you and oppose you. Stephen experienced that back in Acts 6 and 7.

We have been learning about Paul's Second Missionary Journey. He left **Antioch**, traveled through Turkey, and crossed over into northern **Greece**. In last week's lesson he contended with the philosophers in **Athens**. In this week's lesson we will learn about the end of Paul's Second Missionary Journey and the beginning of his Third Missionary Journey.

Acts 18:1 **Corinth** was a very wicked and immoral place. It was adjacent to a major seaport and was a hub for north-south traffic in Greece (see the **Map**, page 6).

Acts 18:2-3 Paul met a believer named Aquila and his wife Priscilla. Why were they in Corinth?

What was their occupation?

Acts 18:4-5 What did Paul do every Sabbath day?

What message did he preach to the Jews?

Acts 18:6 What did Paul do when the Jews opposed him?

The Jews rejected the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so Paul took that message to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:16).

Acts 18:7 Paul preached in the home of a man named Justus, who lived **next door** to the Jewish synagogue.

- Acts 18:8** What important person was saved?
- Acts 18:9** God spoke to Paul in a vision. What did He say?
- Acts 18:10-11** What promise did God make to Paul?
How long did Paul stay in Corinth?
Paul wrote **1 & 2 Thessalonians** during this time.
- Acts 18:12-13** The Jews were very angry with Paul and made a unified attack against him. They brought him before Gallio, the Roman deputy of the region. What did they accuse Paul of doing?
- Acts 18:14-16** What did Gallio do about the charges the Jews brought against Paul?
- Acts 18:17** The Gentiles (Greeks) were angry at the Jews for causing such an uproar. What did they do?
- Acts 18:18** Paul started home to Syria, taking Aquila and Priscilla with him.
- Acts 18:19** Paul and his companions went to **Ephesus**. Where did he go when he arrived in Ephesus?
- Acts 18:20-21** What did the Jews in Ephesus want Paul to do?
Why did he say he couldn't stay?
- Acts 18:22** This verse marks the end of Paul's Second Missionary Journey. He sailed to **Caesarea**, went up and greeted the church in **Jerusalem**, and then went home to _____ (see **Map**, p. 6).
- Acts 18:23** What did Paul do next?

This marks the beginning of Paul's Third Missionary Journey.

Acts 18:24 Apollos, a Jew born at _____, came to _____.

Acts 18:25 Apollos was an expert in the Old Testament, and he was a dynamic teacher, but he wasn't saved.

Acts 18:26 Who took him in and shared the Gospel with him?

Acts 18:27-28 Apollos traveled to the southern region of Greece (in which Corinth was located) and powerfully preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Concluding Thoughts: The Gospel was spreading rapidly throughout the known Roman world. Paul preached in **Corinth** (Greece) and **Ephesus** (western Turkey), and later began another preaching tour through central **Turkey**. Through the preaching of Paul, Aquila and Priscilla, and Apollos, many people were saved. The new converts included both Jews and Gentiles. Even the ruler of the Jewish synagogue in Corinth received Jesus!

As we have already seen, in most places Paul preached, controversy and unrest arose. This fact should remind us that there will always be enemies of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Matt. 5:11; 2 Tim. 3:12).

If you try to tell others about Jesus, some people may get mad at you. If you try to wholeheartedly live for Christ, some will think you're crazy. The fact remains, however, that we are supposed to be spreading the Gospel, regardless of the controversy that may result. Are you willing to do that?

Project: Memorize **Acts 18:9**. Who do you know that needs to hear about Jesus? Tell that person about Him this week. Use the verses printed on the back of this book as a guide.

Pride and Money

Pride and money are two very powerful motivators. Human history and today's news and social media proves that people will do just about anything for money. They will kill, steal, lie, and behave immorally for money. People even use religion for money.

Pride makes people do bad things, as well. Many of the same things listed above are done to make or preserve an "image." Some people are too proud to hear and receive the Gospel message of salvation through Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, **hell is full of people who were too proud to admit that they were wrong, and Jesus is right.** Pride will get you into trouble.

In this week's lesson, the Apostle Paul runs into big trouble. He was opposed by people who cared more about money and pride than the truth. Read Acts 19 and answer the following questions.

Acts 19:1-2 Paul came to **Ephesus** (see the **Map** on page 6), where he found some men who identified themselves as disciples. He asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit. How did they answer?

Acts 19:3 These men were followers of John the Baptist.

Acts 19:4 Paul explained that John led his followers to be baptized as a symbol of their repentance. Who did John the Baptist tell his followers to believe in?

Acts 19:5-7 The men were saved and _____ in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The men spoke with other languages when they were saved, undoubtedly announcing and rejoicing that salvation is available through Jesus. This miraculous sign proved that their experience was genuine (see Acts 2:4-6; 8:14-17; 10:44-48).

- Acts 19:8** How long did Paul preach in the synagogue?
- Acts 19:9-12** The Jews got angry with Paul, so he continued his preaching in another location. What miracles did God do to prove that Paul was His messenger?
- Acts 19:13** Some traveling Jewish exorcists came to Ephesus. Whose name did they use to cast out demons?
- Acts 19:14-16** What happened when Sceva's seven sons did this?
- Acts 19:17** Whose name was magnified?
- Acts 19:18-20** Numerous new believers came and confessed their sins. Many of them had previously practiced magic. What did they do with their books of spells and incantations?

When we get saved, we should get rid of the things of the devil.

- Acts 19:21** Paul planned to go back through **Macedonia** and **Achaia** (both in Greece). After that, he planned to go to _____, and then to _____. Paul wrote **1 Corinthians** while he was in Ephesus.
- Acts 19:22-23** Paul sent two of his helpers ahead while he stayed behind in Ephesus. What happened after that?
- Acts 19:24** Demetrius was a silversmith who made lots of money making and selling idols of the goddess Diana, who was beloved by the people of Ephesus.
- Acts 19:25-26** Demetrius called together the other silversmiths. Why didn't he like Paul?
- Acts 19:27** Demetrius said Christianity was putting them out of business. What other complaint did he have?

Acts 19:28-31 Demetrius and the silversmiths stirred up the whole city. The riotous crowd seized two of Paul's companions. Why didn't Paul appear before the angry crowd?

Acts 19:32-33 There was great confusion. Who tried to defend himself and the Jews?

Acts 19:34 The angry crowd refused to hear Alexander. What did they shout repeatedly for two full hours?

Their civic pride was at stake. The Ephesians cared more about their reputation than the truth.

Acts 19:35-41 A city official quieted the crowd, bragged on their worship of Diana, and sent them all home.

Concluding Thoughts: People will do almost anything for their pride or for money. Demetrius the silversmith didn't care about the truth of the Gospel. He probably didn't care about worshipping Diana, either. All he really cared about was making money.

The people of Ephesus were too proud of their reputation and standing in the region to listen to the truth.

What about you? Will you sacrifice your convictions for money? Is money more important to you than being right with God?

What about the area of pride? Are you too proud to admit you're a sinner in need of a Savior? Is your reputation more important to you than being right with God? These are serious questions. Be honest with yourself and with God.

Project: Look for examples in the media this week of people doing bad things for money or out of pride. Determine to do right, regardless of what it might cost you in money or reputation.

A Serious Warning

Have you ever received a serious warning? When you were a child, your parents probably gave you some serious warnings. You might have been told, “Be careful, that stove is hot,” or “Don’t touch the power saw, you could cut your finger off.” When you learned to drive, your parents probably gave you serious warnings about the dangers of the road.

Why did your parents give you such serious warnings? They did it because they loved you and wanted to protect you from harm. In this week’s lesson we will learn about a very serious warning Paul gave to some of his beloved Christian brothers.

Acts 20:1-5 Paul planned to go back through Greece and then to Jerusalem (Acts 19:21). He wrote **2 Corinthians** and **Romans** during this time. Paul took several companions with him and started toward Jerusalem.

Acts 20:6-9 Paul preached to a group of believers at **Troas** (see the **Map** on page 6). What happened to Eutychus?

Acts 20:10-12 What did Paul do about Eutychus?

Acts 20:13-16 Paul and his companions worked their way south along the west coast of Turkey. Why was he in a hurry to get to Jerusalem?

Acts 20:17 Who did Paul call to come and meet with him?

Acts 20:18-19 Paul reminded the Ephesian elders how he had served God among them. He served the Lord with _____ of mind, and with many _____, and _____.
Who was always lying in wait to attack Paul?

- Acts 20:20-21** Paul taught _____, and from _____ to _____. He testified about Jesus Christ both to the _____ and to the _____.
- Acts 20:22-23** What did Paul say awaited him in Jerusalem?
- Acts 20:24** How did Paul feel about the dangers ahead?
- Acts 20:25-27** Paul had served faithfully, with a clear conscience.
- Acts 20:28** Why was it important that the Ephesian elders should take heed to themselves and their church?
- Acts 20:29** Paul said the church would face attack. How did he describe those who would attack the church?
- Acts 20:30** He also said there was danger from within the church. What did he say would happen?
- Acts 20:31** What did Paul tell the elders to do?
- How, and how often, had he warned them?
- Acts 20:32** In whose care did Paul place them?
- Acts 20:33-34** Paul said he had coveted no one's _____, or _____, or _____. He worked to support himself (Acts 18:3).
- Acts 20:35** Paul quoted Jesus as saying: "It is more blessed to _____ than to _____."
- Acts 20:36-37** Paul prayed with them. How would you describe this farewell?

Acts 20:38 What saddened the Ephesian elders the most?

They walked with him all the way back to the ship.
Paul was on his way to Jerusalem!

Concluding Thoughts: Paul gave of his time by spending the entire night preaching to the believers in Troas. Preaching and fellowship were more important to him than sleep.

Paul also took time from his busy travel schedule to meet with the leaders of the church of Ephesus. Why did he do that? He did it because he loved them deeply. Paul spent three years in Ephesus, so he undoubtedly developed some very close friendships. Friendships among Christian brothers and sisters are very close.

Paul shared his heart with the Ephesian elders and gave them some serious warnings. He warned them about false teachers that would come against them (from inside as well as outside the church). He told them to be alert and watchful against false doctrine. Why did he do this? He did it because he loved them.

Much like a parent warns his or her child, our spiritual leaders give us warnings of spiritual danger. Your Sunday School teacher and Pastor give you warnings about how to live your life and things to avoid. They do this because they love you.

Just as a child can heed or ignore his or her parent's warnings, **you can either heed or ignore the spiritual warnings you receive.** If a child ignores his parent's warnings, he will get hurt. If you ignore the warnings of your spiritual leaders, you will get hurt, too. The choice is yours. Will you heed the warnings you receive?

Project: Memorize **Acts 20:28**. Listen for spiritual warnings this week and heed those warnings. Do the **Daily Bible Readings** (pages 4-5) every day and come to Sunday School this Sunday.

Submit to God's Will

Are you completely submitted to God's will?

That question may seem pretty easy to answer, sitting in the safety and comfort of your home with plenty of food to eat and a choice of clothes to wear. Sure, you're submitted to God's will!

Put yourself in the Apostle Paul's place. God told him to go to Jerusalem, after which he would go to Rome. Just as surely as God told him that, He also told Paul that bonds and afflictions awaited him in Jerusalem (Acts 20:23). What would you do? Would you go on following God's leadership, or would you run? Read Acts 21 to find out what Paul did.

Acts 21:1-3 Paul and his friends sailed from the southwest coast of Turkey to **Tyre** (100 miles north of Jerusalem on the Mediterranean coast – see the **Map** on page 6).

Acts 21:4 What did the believers in Tyre ask Paul?

Acts 21:5-7 Paul and his group continued their journey.

Acts 21:8-9 The group arrived in **Caesarea** (see the **Map** on page 6). With whom did they lodge?

Acts 21:10-11 What did Agabus do?

What did he tell Paul?

Acts 21:12 What did everyone do when they heard what Agabus told Paul?

Acts 21:13 Paul said: "I am ready, not to be _____ only but also to _____ at _____ for the name of the _____."

Acts 21:14-17 Did Paul go to Jerusalem, despite all the warnings?

Acts 21:18-19 Paul told James and the elders how God was saving Gentiles through his ministry.

Acts 21:20 How did James and the others react to the news that Gentiles were being saved?

In Acts 21:20-24, James and the elders gave Paul some advice. They told him there were many Jewish Christians in the Jerusalem church who were still committed to obeying the Old Testament Jewish Law. These Jewish believers had received reports that Paul taught people to abandon and neglect the Jewish Law. The elders knew these charges were false, but they told Paul that many in the church believed them. They knew the church would want to hear from Paul, and that those who were zealous for the Law would cause trouble. The elders told Paul that there were four men in the church who had taken Jewish vows. At the conclusion of such vows, the men were required to make some costly offerings at the Temple. The elders suggested that Paul purify himself (since he had been associating with Gentiles) and pay the expenses for the men to complete their vows. This would be done publicly and would demonstrate that Paul was not an enemy of the Law. In Acts 21:25 they repeated their earlier ruling (Acts 15:20, 29), so the Gentile Christians who were with Paul would know that they were not expected to keep the Law. Paul, on the other hand, was Jewish, so it would be offensive to some if he neglected the Law.

Acts 21:26 Did Paul follow their advice?

Acts 21:27-29 What did the Jews from Asia do?

They accused Paul of defiling the Temple by bringing a Gentile into it. This charge was false.

Acts 21:30-31 A riot broke out. What did the Jews intend to do to Paul?

Acts 21:32 Who saved Paul's life?

Acts 21:33 Agabus' prophecy (Acts 21:11) was fulfilled.

Acts 21:34-36 The Roman commander tried to find out what the problem was, but the crowd was too violent.

Acts 21:37-38 What did Paul ask?

Why did this surprise the Roman commander?

Acts 21:39-40 What did Paul ask to do?

Concluding Thoughts: What did Paul do when faced with certain danger? Did he obey God, or did he listen to his friends who were trying to protect him? Why do you think he obeyed God and walked right into danger, rather than run and hide?

The Apostle Paul was a man completely submitted to God's will. He knew from experience that it was always better to obey God than to obey man (Acts 5:29). Paul knew that doing things the Lord's way was always better than doing things his way. He also understood an important truth: a Christian who is obedient to God is indestructible until God's work for him on earth is finished. If God had work for Paul to do and he was submissive to God's will for his life, then **nothing could hurt him, stop him, or kill him.**

These truths apply to us, too. Every day we face the choice of obeying God or men. We face the choice of following God or running from Him. As long as we are obedient to God, we are indestructible until His work for us on earth is completed.

Submit yourself to God's will (James 4:6). Express that submission to Him right now in prayer.

Project: Memorize **Acts 5:29**. Obey God at every opportunity this week. Ask the Lord to help you obey Him.

Faithful in Spite of Hostility

Have you ever faced any hostility for being a Christian? Has anyone ever been ugly to you because of your faith in Christ? Have you been ridiculed or made fun of because of your beliefs? How did you respond to such hostility?

The Apostle Paul was an amazing man; but we must remember that he was completely human, just like you and me. Throughout his ministry people opposed him, put him in prison, and tried to kill him. Yet he never backed down in the face of hostility. As a matter of fact, any time he got a chance, he preached about Jesus.

In Acts 21, Paul was caught by an angry Jewish mob in Jerusalem. They wanted to kill him, but the Romans intervened. Paul was in chains and held by Roman soldiers. He asked the Roman tribune for permission to speak to the bloodthirsty crowd. Read Acts 22 and answer the following questions to learn what Paul did.

Acts 22:1-2 What did Paul do that got the crowd quieter?

Acts 22:3 Paul first told his background, to prove that he was a Jew. He was born in _____, but brought up in _____ at the feet of _____ (a very famous rabbi; Acts 5:34-39). He was taught the Law and was _____ toward God.

Acts 22:4-5 What had Paul done in the past that proved how committed he was to the Jewish Law?

Under whose authority did he do this?

Acts 22:6-7 Paul told why his life changed so dramatically. What happened to him on the road to Damascus?

- Acts 22:8 Who spoke to Paul?
- Acts 22:9-10 What did Jesus tell Paul to do?
- Acts 22:11-13 Paul was taken into Damascus, where a man named Ananias came to him with a message from God.
- Acts 22:14-15 Paul next told the crowd why he preached about Jesus Christ throughout the world. What did God tell Paul to do?
- Acts 22:16 God told Paul to be baptized in Jesus' name. True baptism always **follows** salvation.
- Acts 22:17-18 Paul told the crowd that he returned to Jerusalem. What did God tell Paul?
- Acts 22:19-20 What did Paul tell the Lord?
- He thought the drastic change in his life would prove to the Jews that Christianity was for real.
- Acts 22:21 Where did the Lord tell Paul to go, and to whom?
- Acts 22:22-23 The Jews became furious; they wanted to kill Paul right then. Why do you think Paul's last comment made them so angry?
- Acts 22:24 The Romans rescued Paul and took him into their fortress. How did they plan to learn the truth?
- Acts 22:25-26 Paul was a Roman citizen because his father held Roman citizenship (v. 28). What did Paul ask?
- Acts 22:27-28 How had the chief captain obtained his Roman citizenship?

Acts 22:29 Why was the chief captain (tribune) afraid?

Acts 22:30 What did he want to learn?

Who did he call to examine Paul?

The Sanhedrin (“*their council*”) was the “Supreme Court” of the Jewish people. Remember that Jesus had a “trial” before this group, as well as Peter and John (Acts 4), the Apostles (Acts 5), and Stephen (Acts 7). How do you think they will feel about Paul?

Concluding Thoughts: Did Paul back down when confronted with an angry, bloodthirsty mob? Did he deny teaching in the name of Jesus Christ? Did he hire a clever lawyer from the ACLU to defend him on the grounds that his civil rights and his right to freedom of expression were violated?

When Paul faced hostility, he did what he had always done: he preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He didn’t back down or deny Jesus (as Peter once did – Matt. 26:69-75). Paul was **faithful**.

Paul told the angry mob what Jesus Christ had done for him. He shared his personal testimony, telling them:

1. What his life was like before meeting Jesus – Acts 22:3-5
2. How and when Jesus saved him – Acts 22:6-16
3. How Jesus made his life different – Acts 22:17-21

We should follow Paul’s example when we face hostility.

When someone is angry or hostile toward your faith, tell them:

1. What your life was like before you got saved
2. How and when Jesus saved you
3. How your life has been different ever since

Project: Write your personal testimony using the three points described above. Look for an opportunity to share your testimony with someone this week, especially if you face hostility.

The Fruits of Religion

We live in a world that says all religions are equal. The prevailing sentiment in our society is that it doesn't matter what religion you follow, as long as you are sincere in your beliefs. As a matter of fact, many people today get angry if members of one religious group try to make converts from other religious groups.

There is a lot of talk about religion or "faith" today. We sometimes hear about members of one religious group killing members of another. Is that what religion will do for us? Will it cause us to hate and kill people who believe differently. What are the results (or fruits) of following a religion?

In this lesson, we will learn about Paul's appearance before the highest religious body in Judaism. Remember that the Roman tribune brought Paul before the Sanhedrin to find out why the Jews wanted to kill him (Acts 22:30). As this hearing unfolds, we will see some fruits of religion on display.

Acts 23:1 Paul looked the group over. Since he was raised as a Pharisee, he probably knew some of these men. How did he say he had lived?

A good testimony is a valuable thing. If you live right, you will have influence on others.

Acts 23:2 What did the high priest order to be done to Paul?

Acts 23:3 What did Paul say to the high priest?

Acts 23:4-5 The other Sanhedrin members were shocked that Paul spoke harshly to the high priest. What did Paul say in his defense?

Paul quoted Exodus 22:28.

Acts 23:6 Paul knew the Sanhedrin was divided between Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees believed in resurrection and other supernatural things, but the Sadducees were liberals who denied such things (see v. 8). Paul said: “I am a _____.” He said he was called into question because of his belief in the _____ of the dead.

Acts 23:7-8 What happened after he said that?

The distinguished and dignified members of the Sanhedrin began arguing (loudly) about their religious differences.

Acts 23:9 The Pharisees and Sadducees hated Paul and wanted to put him death, but they actually hated each other **even more!** What did the scribes (who were Pharisees) say about Paul and his beliefs?

Acts 23:10 What did the captain fear would happen to Paul?

Where did he take Paul?

Acts 23:11 The Lord spoke to Paul that night while he was in the prison. What did He promise Paul?

Acts 23:12-15 What did some of the Jews plot to do?

How committed were they to carrying out their plot?

Acts 23:16-21 How did word of the murder plot get to the Roman tribune?

Acts 23:22-24 The Roman tribune believed the report, so he planned to send Paul away to the Roman governor in **Caesarea** (see **Map**, p. 6). He sent a guard detail of **470 soldiers and horsemen** to escort Paul!

Acts 23:25-30 The Roman tribune (Claudius Lysias) wrote a letter to the governor (Felix), explaining why he was sending Paul to him.

Acts 23:31-33 The soldiers delivered Paul safely to Caesarea.

Acts 23:34-35 When did Governor Felix say he would hear Paul?

Concluding Thoughts: The members of the Sanhedrin were very religious. In fact, they were the religious leaders of Judaism. Did the high priest want to hear what Paul had to say? No, he had him beaten when he had barely begun speaking. Did the Pharisees and Sadducees want to learn the truth from Paul? No, they wanted to argue among themselves over their differing beliefs. Did the chief priests and elders want to assure that Paul had a fair trial? No, they actually helped with a plot to murder him.

Religion can result in hate. That has been true throughout the history of mankind. Cain killed Abel because of religious differences. The Crusaders and Conquistadors killed those who disagreed with them. We've seen the same thing in Ireland, Nazi Germany, and the Middle East.

True Christianity is not a **religion**; it is a **relationship** with a Person: Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Christianity is motivated by **love**. Paul was not moved by hatred, selfishness, or pride. He was driven by the love of Jesus Christ to tell others about how they could be saved through trusting in Jesus (2 Cor. 5:14-20).

Religion won't do you any good; but genuine Christianity will make an eternity's difference in your life. Turn away from religion and turn to Jesus Christ for salvation. Read the verses printed on the back of this book to find out how.

Project: If you hear someone talking about religion this week, try to tell them about salvation through Jesus Christ.

Bold and Fearless

Two weeks ago, we learned about Paul’s brave and straightforward defense before the angry Jewish mob that wanted to kill him. In last week’s lesson, Paul stood before the Jewish religious leaders. As a result of a murder plot by the Jews, Paul was sent out of Jerusalem for safekeeping. He was held in **Caesarea** (see the **Map** on page 6), awaiting trial before the Roman governor, Felix.

It would be a scary thing to stand before high government leaders who had the power either to execute you or turn you over to your accusers (who would certainly kill you). How do you think you would handle it? Would you be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ? What if your accusers brought in a highly skilled lawyer to make their case against you? What would you do? Seek a plea bargain?

In this week’s lesson we will learn how the Apostle Paul handled just such a situation. Read Acts 24:1 – 25:12.

Acts 24:1 Five days later, the high priest and other Jewish elders went to Caesarea to bring their charges against Paul. Who did they bring with them?

Acts 24:2-4 Tertullus began by trying to butter up Felix.

Acts 24:5-6 Tertullus made his charges against Paul. He said Paul was a _____ fellow, a mover of _____, a ringleader of the sect of the _____, who also _____ the Temple. He said the Jews were planning to judge Paul by their Law. Was that true?

Acts 24:7 What lie did he tell about captain Lysias?

Acts 24:8-9 Did the other Jews agree with Tertullus’ lies?

- Acts 24:10-11** Paul began by saying he was happy to speak before Felix. How long had it been since he arrived in Jerusalem?
- Acts 24:12-13** What did Paul say about the charges against him?
- Acts 24:14** Paul confessed to being a Christian, but said he worshipped the same God as the Jews.
- Acts 24:15-16** What was Paul's hope?
How did he live his life?
- Acts 24:17-21** Paul told about being seized in the Temple by the Jews from Asia. He challenged the Jews at the hearing to prove any wrongdoing on his part. What did he admit he did before the Sanhedrin?
- Acts 24:22-23** Felix didn't pass judgment, but kept Paul in jail.
- Acts 24:24-25** Felix brought his wife to hear Paul talk about faith in Christ. What did Paul talk to them about?
How did Felix react to this?
- Acts 24:26** Why did Felix send for Paul often?
- Acts 24:27** A new governor, Porcius Festus, replaced Felix. Why did Felix leave Paul in prison?
- Acts 25:1-3** Governor Festus went up to Jerusalem. What did the high priest and leading Jews ask him to do?
Why did they ask this?
- Acts 25:4-6** Festus refused, telling them to bring their charges against Paul before him at Caesarea.

Acts 25:7-8 The Jews brought serious charges against Paul, but couldn't prove them. What did Paul say?

Acts 25:9 What did Festus ask Paul, and why did he ask it?

Acts 25:10 Where did Paul say he should be judged?

Acts 25:11 Was Paul willing to accept just punishment?

Finally, he said: "I _____ to _____."

Acts 25:12 Festus conferred with his advisors. What judgment did he make in Paul's case?

Concluding Thoughts: Paul was faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, even when standing before high government officials. Even though a slick lawyer brought false charges against him, he stayed true to the Lord. He calmly and clearly asserted his innocence and made sure the governor understood the real reason the Jews hated him. In fact, when he repeatedly appeared before Governor Felix, he preached the Gospel to him.

Paul had boldness and confidence that came from a close personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul spent time with the Lord and the Lord gave him assurance of His protection (Acts 23:11).

Perhaps we would have more boldness if we devoted the time necessary to have a close personal relationship with the Lord. Maybe our lives are just too busy to spend meaningful time in God's Word, the Bible. Paul received assurance from the Lord, and we can, too, **IF** we spend time in the Bible and in prayer. Spend time with the Lord in prayer. Study the Bible and ask God to speak to you through it.

Project: What can you change about your schedule to allow more time in the Bible and prayer? Do those things this week.

Witnessing Always

It has happened to most of us. You have a chance encounter with a person in a store or restaurant, or with one of your coworkers on the job. That person makes a statement or asks a question that could give you an opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Inside you experience a tugging to witness to that person, along with uncertainty if this is the proper time or place. Fear of an accusation of workplace harassment may enter into this.

What did you do? Did you witness to the person right then, or did you tell yourself it wasn't a good time? You may have intended to witness to the person at a later date. Did you ever do it?

One characteristic that stands out about the Apostle Paul is that he witnessed at every opportunity. It didn't matter if he was talking to lowly people or to kings. It didn't matter if he was preaching in a synagogue, or on trial for his life. If Paul had an opportunity to speak, he witnessed about Jesus Christ. Let's see how he did it.

Acts 25:13 Who came to **Caesarea** to visit Governor Festus?

This Agrippa was King Herod Agrippa II, the great grandson of Herod the Great. He was a Jew.

Acts 25:14-21 Festus summarized the events of Paul's arrest, imprisonment, and appeal to Caesar (Acts 21 – 25).

Acts 25:22-23 Agrippa agreed to hear Paul. Who was present for this hearing?

Acts 25:24 Festus told Agrippa about Paul's case. What did the Jews want to happen to Paul?

Acts 25:25 Did Festus think Paul was guilty of a crime?

- Acts 25:26-27 Why did Festus want Agrippa to hear Paul?
- Acts 26:1-3 Paul began speaking. Why did he say he was happy to speak before Agrippa?
- Acts 26:4-5 Paul told about his strict upbringing as a Pharisee.
- Acts 26:6-7 He said he was imprisoned because he believed the Old Testament promises about the Messiah.
- Acts 26:8 What did Paul ask Agrippa?
- Acts 26:9-11 What did he tell Agrippa about?
- Acts 26:12-15 What else did he tell Agrippa?
- Acts 26:16 What did Jesus say He was going to do with Paul?
- Acts 26:17-18 Jesus told Paul He would send him to the **Gentiles**. Jesus would use Paul to _____ their eyes, turn them from _____ to light, and turn them from the _____ of _____ unto God. Gentiles would receive _____ of their _____, and _____ among all those who are saved through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Acts 26:19-21 Paul was obedient to God's instructions. Who tried to kill Paul?
- Acts 26:22 To whom did Paul witness?
- Acts 26:23 **Jesus died and rose again so we could be saved.**
- Acts 26:24-25 What did Festus think about Paul?
- Acts 26:26-27 Paul said Agrippa knew about the death and resurrection of Jesus. What did he ask Agrippa?

Acts 26:28 How did Agrippa answer Paul?

Agrippa was not really on the verge of accepting Christ. A better translation of his statement would be, “*With these few words are you trying to make a Christian out of me?*”²

Acts 26:29 What did Paul desire for Agrippa and the others who heard him?

Acts 26:30-32 Agrippa and Festus discussed Paul’s case privately. What did they conclude about him?

Concluding Thoughts: The Apostle Paul was not intimidated as he spoke before Governor Festus and King Agrippa. Rather, he witnessed boldly to these men who held his fate in their hands.

Paul once again witnessed by sharing his personal testimony, telling what Jesus had done for him. He used the same outline for his testimony that he used when speaking to the bloodthirsty mob in Jerusalem (Acts 22). He told the king and the governor:

1. What his life was like before meeting Jesus – Acts 26:4-12
2. How and when Jesus saved him – Acts 26:13-18
3. How Jesus made his life different – Acts 26:19-23

Paul witnessed at every opportunity. We need to follow his example. Will you ask the Lord to help you see and respond to witnessing opportunities? Will you make a commitment to witness every time the Lord gives you an opportunity? Tell the Lord those things right now.

Project: Memorize **Acts 26:23**. Who do you need to witness to? Make a point to do it this week.

² *New Scofield Reference Bible*, Copyright © 1967 by Oxford University Press, Inc. Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 1998, Parsons Technology, Inc.

Promises Kept

Can you think of a promise God made in the Bible? The Bible is full of them. It's good to discover and read God's promises. More important than **reading** God's promises, however, is **trusting** them. Do you trust the things God has promised you in the Bible?

The Apostle Paul learned through many years of experience that God's promises can be trusted. He had faced bitter opposition, imprisonment, and beatings, but God saw him through all those hardships. God promised that Paul would be arrested in Jerusalem and turned over to the Romans (Acts 21:11), and He even promised that Paul would preach the Gospel in Rome (Acts 23:11). Paul continually trusted in the promises of God.

Acts 27:1-8 Paul and other prisoners were committed to the care of a Roman centurion for their trip to Rome. They traveled by ship to **Crete** (see the **Map** on page 6).

Acts 27:9-13 Paul urged them to remain at **Fair Havens**. Did they follow Paul advice?

Acts 27:14-15 What happened?

Acts 27:16-19 What did the sailors do to try to save the ship?

Acts 27:20 "All _____ that we should be _____ was then _____."

Acts 27:22 What promise did Paul make concerning the safety of everyone on the ship?

Acts 27:23 How did Paul know this?

Acts 27:24 What promise did the angel reiterate to Paul?

Acts 27:25 Why did Paul believe the promise?

Acts 27:26 What did he say would happen to them?

The storm continued for 14 days! Finally, they were nearing land.

Acts 27:33-34 Paul urged them to eat. What did he promise?

Acts 27:35 What did Paul do in the presence of everyone?

All 276 people on board ate, after which they threw the remaining food overboard to lighten the ship. The ship ran aground on a sand bar and began to break apart.

Acts 27:42 What did the soldiers advise about the prisoners?

Acts 27:43 Why **didn't** the centurion follow their advice?

Acts 27:44 Did God keep His promise?

They discovered they were on the island of **Malta** (150 miles south of the southern tip of Italy – see the **Map** on page 6).

Acts 28:3-6 What happened to Paul?

Acts 28:7-10 What miracles did God do through Paul?

After three months on Malta, they continued their journey to Rome.

Acts 28:16 Where was Paul kept under guard?

Acts 28:17-23 Who did Paul call to meet with him?

He preached to them about Jesus (v. 23)

Acts 28:24 How did the Jews respond to the Gospel?

Acts 28:25-27 The Jews disagreed among themselves about Jesus. Paul quoted Isaiah 6:9-10 concerning them.

Acts 28:28 Paul wanted the Jews to understand that “the salvation of God is sent unto the _____, and that they will _____ it.”

Acts 28:30 How long did Paul live in his rented house in Rome?

He wrote **Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians,** and **Philemon** during this time in Rome.

Acts 28:31 What did he preach and teach about?

Throughout Paul’s ministry he was opposed, threatened, attacked, and run out of town by unbelieving Jews. In Rome, however, Roman guards protected him, so he could preach about Jesus “with all _____, no man _____ him.”

Concluding Thoughts: God promised that no one would perish in the shipwreck, and they didn’t. He promised that Paul would preach in Rome, and he did. Jesus promised that His followers would witness of Him “*in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth,*” and they did.

Paul was in Rome, the capital of the world, freely preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ without hindrance or fear of attack.

God keeps His promises! We can trust whatever He has promised.

The Lord has made many precious promises to us in the Bible. Here are just a few of them:

Proverbs 3:6

Jeremiah 33:3

Malachi 3:10

Matthew 6:33

Luke 6:38

Luke 12:32

John 14:3

Romans 10:13

Hebrews 13:5

James 4:7

1 Peter 5:6-7

Revelation 22:7, 12, 20

Do you believe God keeps His promises? Tell Him that right now, expressing your faith and trust in Him to do just as He promised.

Project: Select one of the promises listed above (or another one of your choosing) and memorize it. Trust that promise as it applies to your life. Tell someone this week about God’s promises.

Be sure to pick up a *Sunday School Member Quarterly* for the new quarter and begin the **Daily Bible Reading Guide** on Monday.