



ACTS

The ACTS of the risen
Jesus, through the Spirit,
among His disciples to
the ends of the earth.

this study belongs to



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome	1
Introduction Bible Study Methods	2
Key Words Index	6
Plot Map	8
Cast of Characters	10
Bookmark	18
Week 1 Acts 1:1-26	26
Week 2 Acts 2:1-47	34
Week 3 Acts 3:1-4:31	42
Week 4 Acts 4:32-5:42	50
Week 5 Acts 6:1-7:60	58
Week 6 Acts 8:1-40	66
Week 7 Acts 9:1-43	74
Week 8 Acts 10:1-11:18	75
Week 9 Acts 11:19-12:25	76
Answer Keys	78
	80

WELCOME

We are so excited that you have decided to join us on the journey through the book Acts. At Stonegate, we believe the single greatest tool to increase our enjoyment of Jesus and train us to make disciples is the Bible. And we believe one of the best ways to engage the Bible is in community.

Our prayer is that through this study your enjoyment of Jesus would be fanned from a spark into a flame. The primary goal of Bible study is worship. And our hope is that as you see Jesus and His work through His word; you will experience transformation (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Acts is the story of the good news of Jesus turning the world upside down. It isn't just sharing a few details of what happened after Jesus' resurrection; it is the outpouring of God's redemptive plan on the earth. We are still experiencing the shock waves of that outpouring today. Traditionally, people have referred to Acts as the "Acts of the Apostles" but a more accurate description would be, "The Acts of the risen Jesus, through the Spirit, among His disciples to the ends of the earth." While less catchy, it lets us know that same Spirit at work in a band of Jesus followers in Acts is the same Spirit moving among 21st century disciples today. Our hope in this study is you will grow in an appreciation for the world-altering moment Acts was while igniting faith that God is still on the move in you and around you today.

In this study we will be using what is commonly referred to as Bible Study Methods or, BSM. Bible Study Methods is a method of studying the Bible in three stages: Observation, Interpretation, and Application.



INTRODUCTION TO BIBLE STUDY METHODS



Bible Study Methods is not the only way to study the Bible, but it is one of the most comprehensive. Using the old analogy of giving someone a fish versus teaching someone to fish – this Bible study teaches fishing so that we can feast. It trains us to feast on God's word to know Him better through it. Our sincere hope is that after this study, you would feel confident to approach any book of the Bible with the Holy Spirit, a notebook, and a pen and continually be encouraged by the richness of God's word.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This method of study has three stages: **Observation**, **Interpretation**, and **Application**. We suggest working on this study 3- 5 times a week. On the first session, read through your text twice and do the Observation section in your homework. On a second session, write down questions you have and answer as many as you can with the tools we give you. This session tends to be the longest, so if you have time, you can do this more than one day. Finally, journal and pray through your application questions last.

Let's briefly look at what each of those stages entails and how we'll be practicing them as we study Acts.

We've also created short videos that further explain and walk through our Bible Study methods. You can find these on our **Stonegate Women's Resources** page at stonegate.church/womens-resources or by scanning the QR code here.



OBSERVATION

what does the passage say?

The first stage of BSM is making sure we know what the passage actually says.

Observation forces us to slow down and notice instead of assuming we know what the passage says. Though it sounds simple, it requires a lot of practice and patience to only consider “**what does this passage say?**”. We more naturally rush into what value or significance a passage has in our own lives. But this crucial step is the foundation for accurately understanding and applying God’s word to our lives.

Here’s how to Observe a text so you know what it says:

Read your text for the week all the way through at least once; twice is even better. Reading a whole text gives you a fuller picture of what’s going on and may answer initial misunderstandings or questions.

Notate details in your text. Sometimes we misread a text or miss what’s happening because we’re overlooking details. Notating specifics in your text can help you understand what’s happening. Here’s a few things to notice and notate in your text:

Words

- Repeated words/phrases – they can give you a hint for the main idea of a passage
- Pronouns – clarifying who pronouns refer to helps us know what’s happening.
- Connecting Words – these words will help us see the relationship between two ideas or phrases: and, just as, even so, but, yet, so that, for this reason, if-then, etc.
- Lists and Series – noticing a list of words gives us a clue to look into the list more. Sometimes words in a list are in a certain order on purpose, sometimes they build on each other, sometimes they’re contrasted.
- Verbs (including verb tenses) – Noting verbs tells us who is doing actions, what they’re doing and to whom. It’s also a quick way to find commands.
- Confusing Words or Phrases – Mark these and you can look them up later.
- Key Words – key words will tell you the important events or themes of a passage. In this study, we’re giving you key words for the book of Acts and their definition on the Key Word Index Page on page _____. Look for these and notate them every time you read!

People, Places and Events

Since Acts is a story, noting people, places and the turns of events are essential to understand what the passage is saying. In this study, you have a **Cast of Characters** tool on page _____ to fill out as you go. Just like a beloved novel or movie, knowing these characters will help the story come alive! You will also have maps throughout the study to know where these events took place so you can get a scope of the story and make modern-day connections. We’ve also created an **Acts Plot Map** tool on page _____. On this page you can write major events of Acts so that you can quickly understand the story of Acts.

Summarize your passage in your words. It can help our understanding if we try to summarize what we just read. It will expose the gaps where we're not sure and can solidify what we have learned. Try summarizing your passage in a few sentences by writing it, telling a friend or a child or even just say it out loud in the car or as you get ready.

You'll have a notes page to write down anything you notice as you read. Remember, nothing is too simple or too obvious to write down! Think of yourself as a detective taking in every detail you can. The more you see, the more accurately you'll be able to interpret what those details mean and what it means for your life.



INTERPRETATION

what does the passage mean?

The second stage of BSM starts asking questions about what things mean and a why it matters. Interpretation is the process of discovering what is significant in your text and its connection to other themes in the scripture.

The stronger your observation, the better your interpretation will be. If you rush into interpretation without truly knowing what your text says, your understanding will be colored by your presuppositions—what you think or feel, or what other people have said—rather than what God's Word actually says.

Here's how to Interpret a text so you can understand what it means:

Questions - the most natural thing that comes out of observing a passage is questions. For example, in Acts 1 some natural questions might be “Who is Theophilus and what was the first book?” Or “I think I remember somewhere else where it talked about being baptized with the Spirit, where is that?” Interpretation doesn't always feel like a separate step from observation, because interpretation flows out of observation. Begin interpreting by writing down all your questions. In your homework you'll have space to write your own questions and we've included some to get you started as well.

Answers: After you've written all your questions, start looking for some answers using these tools:

Context

The context is the text's environment. Most poor Bible interpretation is due to overlooking the context. Seek to understand the verses before and after your text. Try to follow the author's flow of thought through the whole chapter or book. The book also has a historical and cultural context it occurs in. It's important to understand what the original author was communicating to the original audience. We need to fight against our tendency to read the Bible from a 21st-century American perspective and rather put ourselves in the shoes of the author, seeking to understand the Bible from their perspective for their audience.

Cross References

The best way to interpret the Bible is with the Bible. We do this by looking up cross-references. These are simply other passages in the Bible that are related to the verses we are studying. Some of your Bibles have cross-references listed in the margin already. If it doesn't, use a free app/website like the Blue Letter Bible or Bible Gateway. In this study, we will occasionally have cross-references listed for you to look up as part of the homework.

Dictionaries

It's amazing how helpful looking up English words in the dictionary can be. If you're unclear on a word, look it up! There are also many Bible dictionaries online to help us understand who key people are (e.g. Abraham, Melchizedek) and what key words mean (e.g. atonement, sanctification) as defined in the Bible.

You can try free resources like Blue Letter Bible or Bible Gateway to find Bible Dictionaries. We have included a Key Word Index Page on page ____ that includes key words in the book of Acts along with their definition from a Bible Dictionary.

Commentaries

Sometimes, even after you've read the context of your passage, looked up relevant cross-references, and looked up words, you still can't find an answer. This is when commentaries are helpful! There are many free resources online where you can search for a topic or passage and get great insight from different authors. We recommend Blue Letter Bible and Bible Gateway.

Over time and with the help of others, we all learn to ask more questions about the Bible as we read and we learn how to find answers to those questions.



APPLICATION

what does the passage mean for me?

The last stage of Bible Study Methods is **application**, taking our passage and looking at what it means for us, personally.

This is usually the first thing we want to know when we read the Bible. However, trying to answer that question first renders a very shallow and “me-centered” understanding of the Bible. Observation and interpretation will rightly shape our understanding of the passage and will steer us away from wrongly applying God’s word to ourselves and others.

Since the goal of Bible study is a transformed life and a deep, abiding relationship with Jesus Christ, our application should start in the heart – issues like trust, belief, rebellion or idolatry.

Reading should lead us to repentance, turning from sinful thoughts, feelings and actions, and turning to Jesus’ life, death and resurrection for us. In all our reading, the goal is to come near to Jesus (John 5:40), to know Him and be changed by Him.

Here’s how you can begin to apply the passage to your life:

Prayer

Pray through your passage and ask the Spirit to search you and show you where He would like to bring light and freedom (Psalm 139:23-24). Write down what you are convicted of in your homework.

Repentance

Repentance is a sign of spiritual vitality and growth. When we read the Bible, and the Spirit lives in us, naturally, He will expose and convict us. This isn’t a bad thing, this is a normal, good thing that God has come near and is bringing light into your life. In repentance, we aren’t making promises about never doing it again because we can’t keep that promise. In repentance we agree with God that our attitude or action was contrary to Him, and confess our wrong, and turn away from it. But it doesn’t stop there. Repentance also turns to Jesus! In turning to Jesus we embrace the truth of the gospel that our sinful actions and attitudes have already been paid for and we are forgiven! We remember and believe we are God’s children, and that He is faithful to continue to transform us. In this study you will be given different gospel promises to remember in the application homework.

Ask Questions

It can be hard to apply a story to our lives; narrative feels different than a letter that tells us how to live like Philippians. But we can learn to take the truth of a story and apply it to our lives, consider some of these questions to help you apply your passage:

- Does this passage show I have some wrong concepts of who God is?
- Is there something worth marveling at in God or worshipping Him for?
- Is this passage revealing a truth about God or the Gospel that I need to trust in?
- Is this passage exposing a lie I am believing?

- Does this passage confront prejudice, or bitterness I have with other people?
- Does this passage uncover a longing I have that isn't filled?

Each week the guide will also include specific application questions to pray through.

Take Action

Each week you will be given a small activity as part of the application homework. Our goal is to be doers of the word, not just hearers (James 1:22-25). We encourage you to check in with other group members or friends about doing this activity or even doing it together! And if God gives you other ideas on ways to take action, do it, and invite others to do the same!



KEY WORDS INDEX

BAPTIZED BAPTISM	The act of being immersed in water that symbolizes a believer's identification with Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. It signifies a spiritual cleansing from sin, a new life in Christ, and a commitment to follow Him. It also represents a public declaration of faith and an entrance into the Christian community.
BELIEVE	More than just acknowledging something as true; it's a deep trust and reliance on God, through Jesus Christ, that motivates action and shapes one's life.
CHURCH	A local assembly of believers who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior, working together to live according to Jesus' teachings and the practices described in the New Testament.
GOSPEL	The gospel is the good news concerning Christ and the way of salvation.
HOLY SPIRIT	Third person of the Trinity, co-equal with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit's role is to empower believers, guide them, and reveal God's presence and truth.
JESUS NAME OF JESUS THE NAME	In the book of Acts, the name of Jesus is not merely a label, but a powerful symbol representing His person, authority, and saving work. Calling on His name is presented as essential for salvation and is linked to the proclamation of the gospel to all nations.
PRAY PRAYER PRAYING	Communication with God, expressing a relationship through various forms like praise, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.
REPENTANCE	A crucial turning point involving a change of mind and turning away from sin towards God, leading to forgiveness and salvation. It's not just about feeling sorry, but about a deliberate change in direction and a commitment to a new way of life focused on Jesus.

**RESURRECTION
RAISED**

Christian resurrection has two definitions: 1. the event in which Jesus Christ returned to life 3 days after his death. 2. the resurrection event in which dead people will be brought back to life before the day of final judgment.

SAVED

Primarily refers to spiritual salvation, which includes forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and the promise of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. It's not just about physical deliverance or escaping earthly hardship, but rather a transformation of one's relationship with God.

**SUFFERING
(PERSECUTION)**

An unavoidable part of following Jesus, often linked with proclaiming the gospel. Suffering in the book of Acts becomes a catalyst for proclaiming the gospel in new places.

**WITNESS
WITNESSES**

A witness is someone who testifies to their experience with Jesus Christ, either through personal encounter or by sharing what they have heard and seen. This testimony is crucial for spreading the gospel and establishing the truth of Christianity.

**WORD
WORD OF GOD
SCRIPTURE**

Includes both the Old and New Testament and the gospel that spread through the preaching and proclaiming of the early church. God's Word empowers believers, convicts hearts, and brings about transformation.

PLOT MAP

each week, record events here on your plot map

ACTS 1

Jesus' Ascension (Acts 1:9-11)

ACTS 6

ACTS 7

ACTS 2

ACTS 3

ACTS 4

Peter and John Arrested (Acts 4:1-4)





ACTS 9

ACTS 10

ACTS 11

ACTS 8

ACTS 5

ACTS 12

James is Martyred (Acts 12:1-2)

answer key

WEEK 1

CAST OF CHARACTERS

answer key

	NAME OF PERSON	VERSE REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION
WEEK 3			
WEEK 4			

CAST OF CHARACTERS

answer key

	NAME OF PERSON	VERSE REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION
WEEK 5			
WEEK 6			
WEEK 7			

answer key

[illegible]

WEEK 9

STUCK?
Head to page
____ for the Cast
of Characters
Answer Key!

BSM BOOKMARK

Here's a bookmark with the Bible Study Methods at a glance— rip this page out, cut out the bookmark, and keep it with you as you study. We've even included an extra one so you can share it with a friend!

BIBLE STUDY METHODS

OBSERVE

what does the text say?

Read your text all the way through.

Notate details like:

Words:

- Repeated words/phrases
- Pronouns
- Connecting words
- Lists and Series
- Verbs
- Confusing words or Phrases
- Key words

People, Places and Events

Summarize your passage in your words.

INTERPRET

what does the text mean?

Ask Questions

Seek Answers using:

- Context
- Cross References
- Dictionaries
- Commentaries

APPLY

what does the text mean for me?

Pray

Repent

Ask heart questions

Take action

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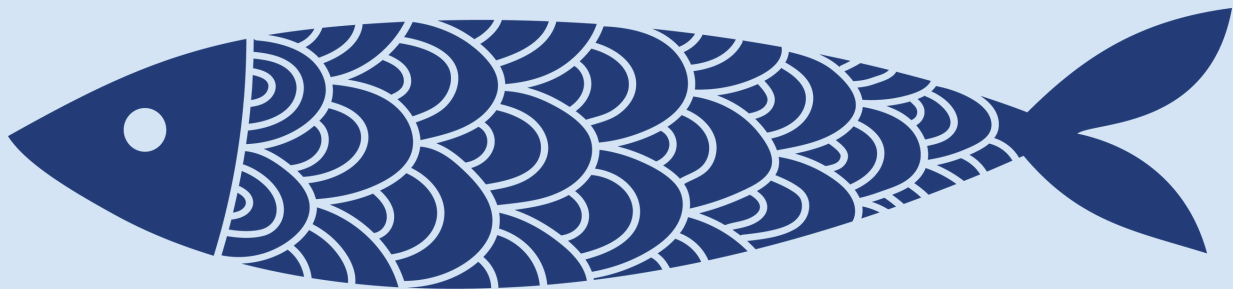
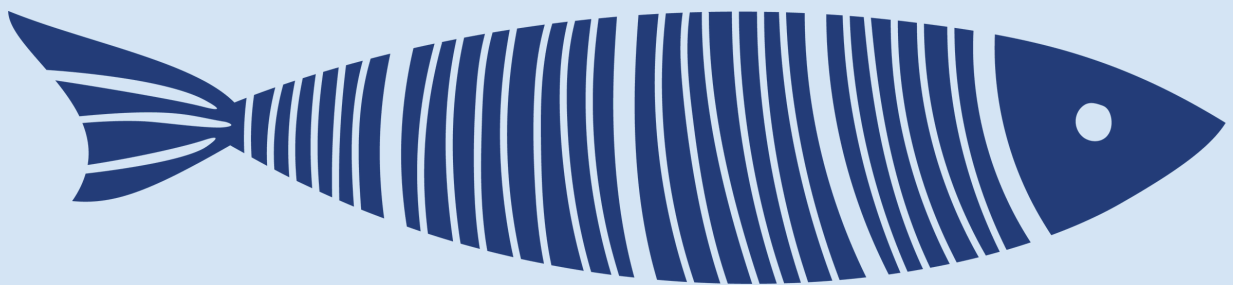
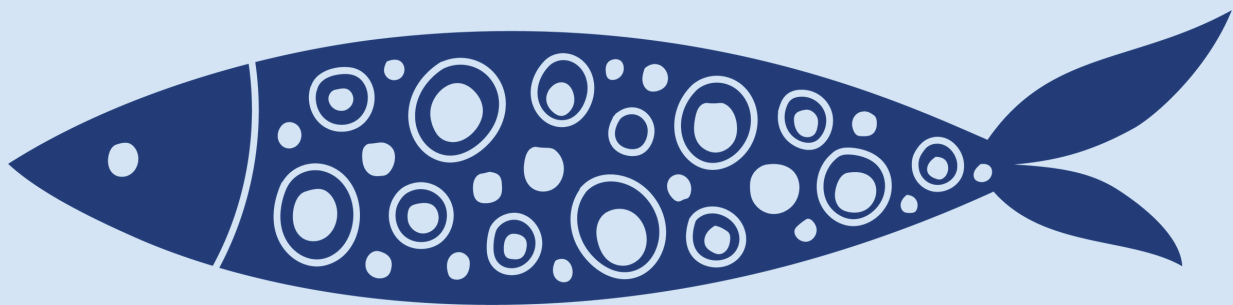
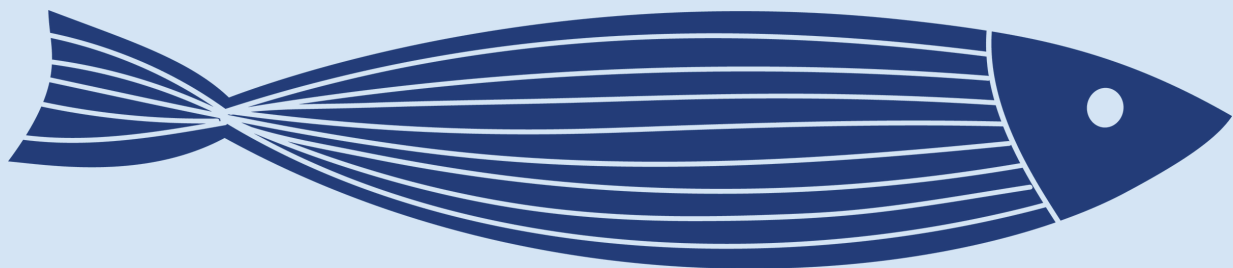
Take action



GOD HAS CREATED, CALLED,
AND GIFTED WOMEN FOR THE
CHURCH'S FLOURISHING AND
THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL.



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INTRODUCTION

WHO WROTE ACTS?

Luke

Gentile

Physician (educated)

Became a believer probably during Paul's ministry

Missionary companion with Paul

WHO WAS ACTS WRITTEN TO?

Theophilus (name means God-lover)

Likely a patron

Written for the benefit of the church at large in its time (and ours)

WHAT'S THE POINT?

"The Acts of the risen Jesus, through the Spirit, among His disciples to the ends of the earth."

Acts is the continuation of the story Luke started that shows the ministry of the gospel by the risen Jesus through the Spirit among His followers from Jerusalem, through Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO SEE?

The fulfillment of the promise of the Spirit

The first model for Jesus-followers and the church

Prayer

Evangelism

Community

Connection of the miraculous with the name of Jesus

Way of Salvation articulated - repent, believe, and be baptized

Tension of Gentile salvation

Persecution and suffering

The spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth

TEACHING NOTES



WEEK ONE

acts 1:1-26

Acts 1:1-26

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, **2** until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. **3** He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

The Ascension

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” **7** He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” **9** And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. **10** And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, **11** and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

15 In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, 16 “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. 17 For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” 18 (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 “For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

“May his camp become desolate,
and let there be no one to dwell in it’;
and “Let another take his office.’

21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” 23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

OBSERVATION

what does the passage say?

Read the text all the way through.

Mark up the text, noting some of the elements from the observation page on page _____.

Write any people you find on the Cast of Characters chart on page _____.

HINT!
there
are **22**

Write these events on your Acts Plot Map on page _____ in chapter I.

Jesus' Ascension (Acts 1:9-11)

Matthias Chosen (Acts 1:15-26)

Summarize the passage in your words.

REMEMBER

The goal of **observation** is to slow down. Sometimes we miss what's happening because we're overlooking details. Notating specifics can help bring clarity!

INTERPRETATION

what does the passage mean?

In this section, write down any questions that have come up for you as you read and marked up your text. Try to answer as many of your questions and the given questions below.

YOUR QUESTIONS

REMEMBER

Use the tools of context, cross-references, dictionaries, and commentaries!

1. Luke recounts the same moment at the end of his gospel in Luke 24:44-53. Read that account and write down the similarities.

2. Both in Luke and Acts the disciples are told to wait for the **“promise of the Father”**.
What does He mean by that?

3. Did you know the Old Testament has prophecies about the Holy Spirit being poured out?
Read these verses and write down what you learn from these prophecies:

Joel 2:28-31

Ezekiel 39:25-29

Isaiah 32:15-20

Zechariah 12:10

4. There are a couple criteria given for finding Judas' replacement in verses 21-23. What are they?
Why do you think these were the criteria given and why did that matter?

APPLICATION

what does the passage mean for me?

Write down ways the Holy Spirit convicted, challenged or encouraged you through the passage.

Hint:
there
are
22!

YOUR CONVICTIONS, CHALLENGES & ENCOURAGEMENTS

1. Write down what you know and what you've been taught about the Holy Spirit. Include concepts and perceptions you may have.

2. How has your church background (or lack thereof) contributed to your understanding of the Holy Spirit?

3. Verse 14 says **“these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer”**. What role does prayer play in your current community of fellow believers? What would it look like for you to begin to make a regular habit of prayer with other believers?

4. Jesus was betrayed by Judas and also lost him to suicide. Have you ever thought about Jesus in this way? Have you been betrayed by someone? Have you lost someone in a tragic way? Have you ever considered that Jesus knows what this feels like? Take time to talk to God today about those things you’ve experienced and invite Him into that with you.

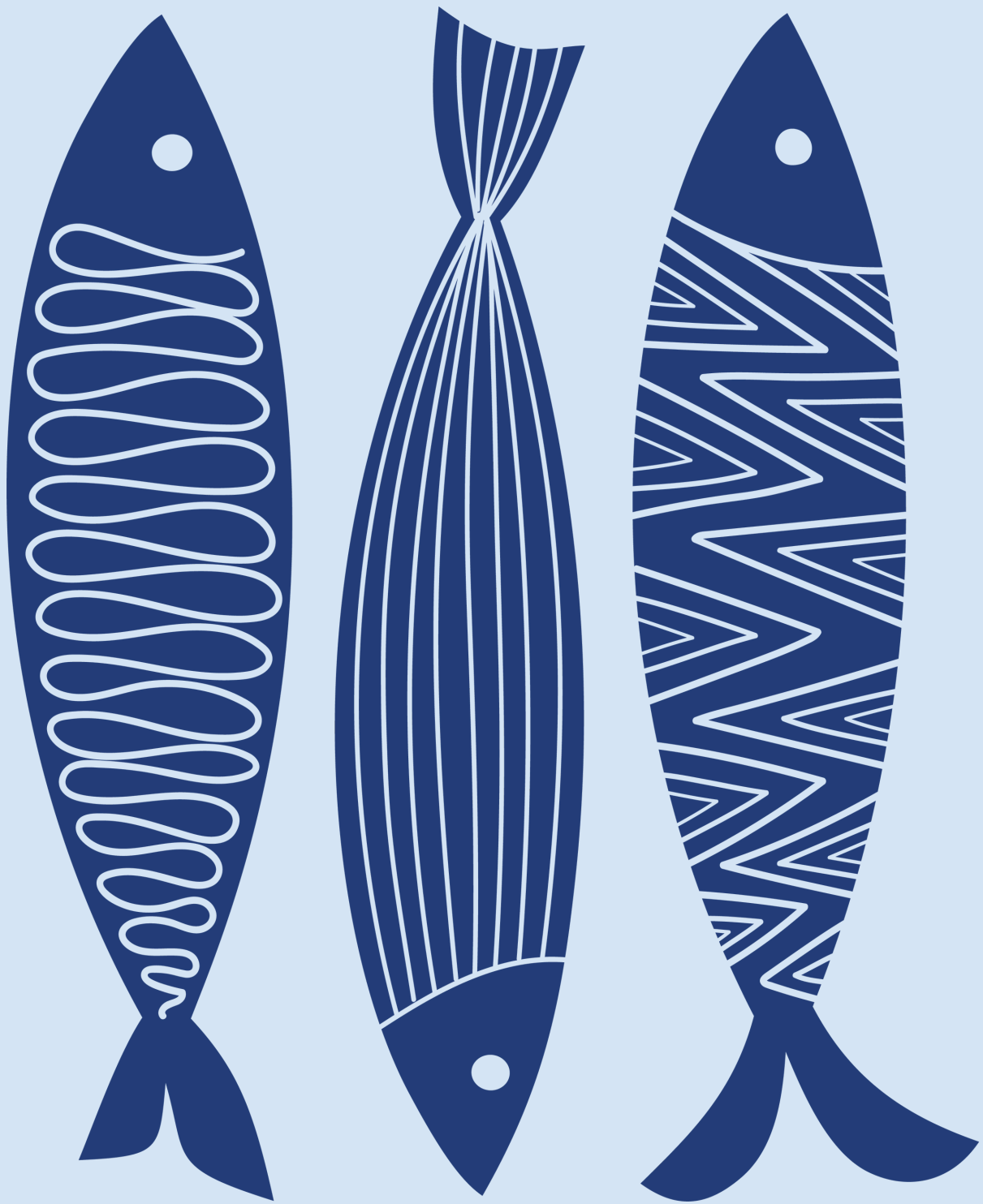


ACTIVITY
TO TRY
THIS WEEK

With 2-3 friends make a commitment to either:
1. Attend one prayer service at Stonegate together this week or 2. Commit to a time to get together this week and pray with one another.


TEACHING NOTES





WEEK TWO

acts 2:1-47



Acts 2:1-47

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. **6** And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. **7** And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? **8** And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? **9** Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, **11** both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” **12** And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” **13** But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. **15** For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. **16** But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

17 “And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,

and your old men shall dream dreams;

18 even on my male servants and female servants

in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above

and signs on the earth below,

blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

20 the sun shall be turned to darkness

and the moon to blood,

before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

21 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 25 For David says concerning him,

“I saw the Lord always before me,

for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;


26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;

my flesh also will dwell in hope.

27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,

or let your Holy One see corruption.





28 You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

29 "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

"The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit at my right hand,

35 until I make your enemies your footstool."

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

The Fellowship of the Believers

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. **43** And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. **45** And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. **46** And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.



OBSERVATION

what does the passage say?

Read the text all the way through.

Mark up the text, noting some of the elements from the observation page on page _____.

The people in this section are generalized like “men of Israel” or “Parthians”. Feel free to mark these in your text but we’re not going to include them in our chart.

Write these events on your Acts Plot Map on page _____ in chapter 2.

Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13)

Peter’s First Sermon (Acts 2:14-41)

Highlight all occurrences of the word “**together.**”

In verses 42-47 there is an incredible paragraph describing the habits and behaviors of the earliest church. Write down all those descriptions here.

Summarize Peter’s sermon in your own words.



INTERPRETATION

what does the passage mean?

In this section, write down any questions that have come up for you as you read and marked up your text. Try to answer as many of your questions and the given questions below.

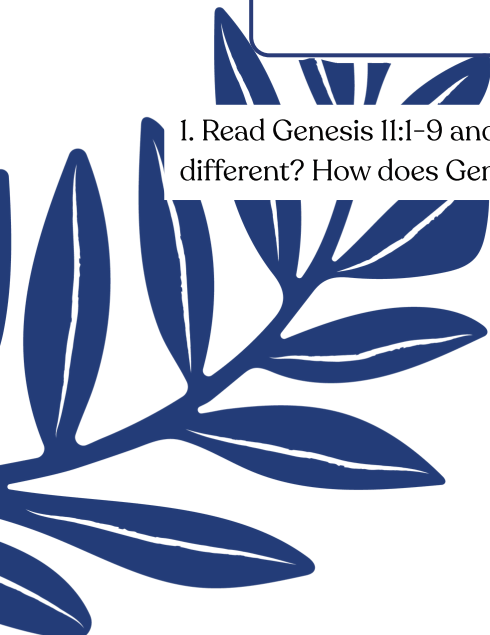
Remember to use the tools of context, cross-references, dictionaries, and commentaries.

YOUR QUESTIONS

REMEMBER

The best tool to interpret the Bible is the **Bible!** Looking up cross references helps us get a fuller understanding of our passage and can help us connect different parts of the Bible.

1. Read Genesis 11:1-9 and compare it with Acts 2:1-11. How are these passages similar? How are they different? How does Genesis 11 help you see the significance of Acts 2?



2. Look up all of Peter's Old Testament quotes: Joel 2:28-32, Psalm 16:8-11, Psalm 110:1 and describe the point he is making with each reference.

Joel 2:28-32

Psalm 16:8-11

Psalm 110:1

3. Find both occurrences of the word **“witness”** in this passage. Look up a definition for the word “witness” and write it down. How does that help you understand this passage more?

4. Read Acts 2:5-13. On the map below, circle all the countries or areas where Jews have come from who were present at Pentecost.



APPLICATION

what does the passage mean for me?

Write down ways the Holy Spirit convicted, challenged or encouraged you through the passage.

Hint:
there
are
22!

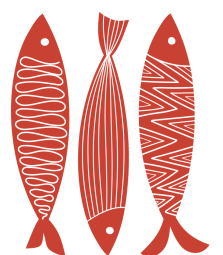
YOUR CONVICTIONS, CHALLENGES & ENCOURAGEMENTS

1. What's something new you learned about Jesus? Take time to thank him for that.
2. Reread 2:42-47. Look back at your list of descriptions from the observation section. Which things on that list describe you? Which things don't describe you? What needs to change for your life to match this list more?

ACTIVITY TO TRY THIS WEEK

This week find one way to show hospitality to someone in your group and "break bread" with them. You can do dinner but you can also do something as simple as getting coffee or grabbing lunch. The goal is to take the time to connect meaningfully. Both of you share what God's been teaching you lately.

TEACHING NOTES





WEEK THREE

acts 3:1-4:31

Acts 3:1–4:31

The Lame Beggar Healed

3 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. **2** And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. **3** Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. **4** And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us.” **5** And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. **6** But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” **7** And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. **8** And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. **9** And all the people saw him walking and praising God, **10** and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Peter Speaks in Solomon's Portico


11 While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. **12** And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: “Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? **13** The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. **14** But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, **15** and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. **16** And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

17 “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, 20 that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, 21 whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. 22 Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’ 24 And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. 25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ 26 God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.”

Peter and John Before the Council

4 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

5 On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, 6 with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders



9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. 14 But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. 15 But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, 16 saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” 18 So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” 21 And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. 22 For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

The Believers Pray for Boldness

23 When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, **25** who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,

“Why did the Gentiles rage,
and the peoples plot in vain?

26 The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers were gathered together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed’—

27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **28** to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. **29** And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, **30** while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” **31** And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

OBSERVATION

what does the passage say?

Read the text all the way through.

Mark up the text, noting some of the elements from the observation page on page _____.

Write any people you find on the Cast of Characters chart on page _____.

HINT!
there
are **5**

Write these events on your Acts Plot Map on page _____ in chapters 3 and 4.

Acts 3

First Public Healing by the Apostles in the name of Jesus (Acts 3:1-10)

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

Acts 4

Peter and John Arrested (Acts 4:1-4)

Bold Prayer in the Face of Opposition (Acts 4:5-22) (Acts 4:23-31)

Highlight all the occurrences of the word **"name"**.

In verses 42-47 there is an incredible paragraph describing the habits and behaviors of the earliest church. Write down all those descriptions here.

Summarize Peter's sermon in your own words.

INTERPRETATION

what does the passage mean?

In this section, write down any questions that have come up for you as you read and marked up your text. Try to answer as many of your questions and the given questions below.

Remember to use the tools of context, cross-references, dictionaries, and commentaries.

YOUR QUESTIONS

REMEMBER

Repeated words in a section are clues to what is important!

1. There are 5 references to “**name**” in this chapter. Why do you think the name of Jesus is being emphasized here?

Miraculous healings carry a significant prophetic history for the Jewish people in Acts. Read these cross-references. What do they have in common? Isaiah. 35:5-6, Jeremiah 31:8, Zephaniah 3:19-20 and Micah 4:6-7.

Do these shed light on why Jesus' name is used in connection to this miraculous healing?

2. What does 3:22 mean? Check out Deuteronomy 18:15-18.

3. There are 3 references to Jesus' resurrection. What's the connection between these references and mentioning the Sadducees in 4:1? Look up Matthew 22:23 for some help.

How does this help you understand the leader's anger and opposition?

APPLICATION

what does the passage mean for me?

Write down ways the Holy Spirit convicted, challenged or encouraged you through the passage.

Hint:
there
are
22!

YOUR CONVICTIONS, CHALLENGES & ENCOURAGEMENTS

1. List all the descriptions and additional titles for Jesus in this section. Take time to pray and thank Jesus for being all these things and ask God to help you understand how significant they are.

2. In 4:29-31, the believers pray for boldness as God heals. How would you rate your boldness on sharing God's word to others? What do you think it would look like for you to live more boldly speaking God's word?



This week, use Acts 4:29-31 to pray for boldness in your life and the lives of believers you know!

TEACHING NOTES





WEEK FOUR

acts 4:32-5:42

Acts 4:32-5:42

They Had Everything in Common

32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. **33** And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. **34** There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold **35** and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. **36** Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, **37** sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Ananias and Sapphira

5 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, **2** and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. **3** But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? **4** While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." **5** When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. **6** The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

7 After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. **8** And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." **9** But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."

10 Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. **11** And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.


Many Signs and Wonders Done

12 Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. **13** None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. **14** And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, **15** so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. **16** The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

The Apostles Arrested and Freed

17 But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy **18** they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. **19** But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, **20** "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." **21** And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.

Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council, all the senate of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. **22** But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, **23** "We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside."



24 Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to. **25** And someone came and told them, “Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.” **26** Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. **27** And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, **28** saying, “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us.” **29** But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. **30** The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. **31** God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. **32** And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

33 When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. **34** But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. **35** And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. **36** For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. **37** After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. **38** So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; **39** but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice,

40 and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. 42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.



OBSERVATION

what does the passage say?

Read the text all the way through.

Mark up the text, noting some of the elements from the observation page on page _____.

Write any people you find on the Cast of Characters chart on page _____.

HINT!
there
are **4**

Write these events on your Acts Plot Map on page _____ in chapter 4 and 5.

Acts 4

Generosity of Christian Community (Acts 4:32-37)

Acts 5

Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)

Signs and Wonders Increase (Acts 5:12-16)

Second Arrest and Angelic Escape (Acts 5:17-42)

Highlight all the occurrences of fear in this section.

Mark the motives and feelings of those who opposed the believers.

There are two moments of opposition to the early church in this section. What are they?
What is the outcome of both?

Summarize this section in your own words.

INTERPRETATION

what does the passage mean?

In this section, write down any questions that have come up for you as you read and marked up your text. Try to answer as many of your questions and the given questions below.

YOUR QUESTIONS

REMEMBER

Use the tools of context,
cross-references,
dictionaries, and
commentaries!

1. List out the descriptions and characteristics of the church in 4:32-35. How is their unity connected to their behavior here?

2. The story of Ananias and Sapphira is very difficult. Why do you think this happened this way? One of the keys to helping us understand Acts is that there are exceptional moments happening in the church at this point and this is one of them. To further help your study, check out this free article!



3. Read verses 5:40-42. Why do you think the apostles responded this way?

What more do you learn about persecution from: 1 Peter 4:13-14, and Philippians 3:10-11?

APPLICATION

what does the passage mean for me?

Write down ways the Holy Spirit convicted, challenged or encouraged you through the passage.

Hint:
there
are
22!

YOUR CONVICTIONS, CHALLENGES & ENCOURAGEMENTS

PSALM 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! (ESV)

1. Can you remember a time where you sensed God was clearly telling you to do (or not do) something specific? What were your feelings then? Did you obey? What happened after?

2. How would you describe your sense of fear toward God?

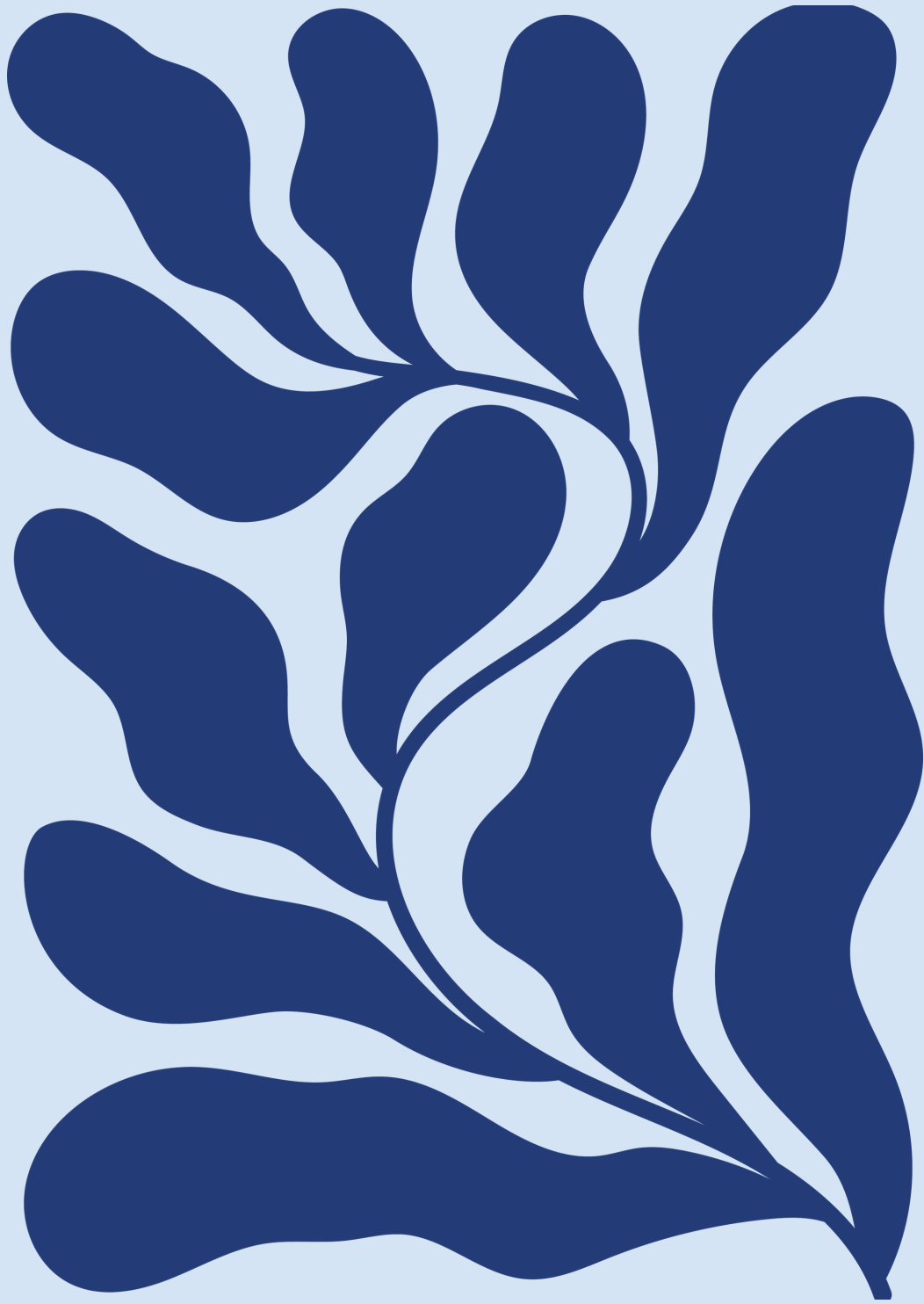
3. Our obedience to God is often met with opposition. Is there a step of obedience you're not taking because you're afraid of the of the pushback you'll get? Share that with a friend and ask them to pray for you to have the courage to **"obey God rather than men."**



This week, think of 5 people who encourage your walk with God that you are close to. Take time to pray for them this week. Also, think of 5 people who don't yet follow Jesus and pray for God to move in their life. Add all these names to your "My Cast of Characters List" on page _____.

TEACHING NOTES





WEEK FIVE

acts 6:1-7:60



Acts 6:1–7:60

Seven Chosen to Serve

6 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. **2** And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. **3** Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. **4** But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” **5** And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. **6** These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Stephen Is Seized

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. **9** Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. **10** But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. **11** Then they secretly instigated men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” **12** And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, **13** and they set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place

and the law, ¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.” ¹⁵ And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.


Stephen's Speech

⁷ And the high priest said, “Are these things so?” ² And Stephen said:

“Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ³ and said to him, ‘Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.’ ⁴ Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living. ⁵ Yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child. ⁶ And God spoke to this effect—that his offspring would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. ⁷ ‘But I will judge the nation that they serve,’ said God, ‘and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.’ ⁸ And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

⁹ “And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him ¹⁰ and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household. ¹¹ Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food. ¹² But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers on their first visit. ¹³ And on the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. ¹⁴ And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all.





15 And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, 16 and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

17 “But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt 18 until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph. 19 He dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive. 20 At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house, 21 and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. 22 And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.

23 “When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. 25 He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. 26 And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?’ 27 But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ 29 At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

30 “Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord: 32 ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.’ And Moses trembled and did not dare to look.

33 Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. 34 I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.’


35 “This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. 37 This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.’ 38 This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us. 39 Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron, ‘Make for us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ 41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. 42 But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets:

“Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifices,
during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?

43 You took up the tent of Moloch
and the star of your god Rephan,
the images that you made to worship;
and I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.’

44 “Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen.





⁴⁵ Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers. So it was until the days of David, ⁴⁶ who found favor in the sight of God and asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷ But it was Solomon who built a house for him. ⁴⁸ Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says,

⁴⁹ “Heaven is my throne,

and the earth is my footstool.

What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord,

or what is the place of my rest?

⁵⁰ Did not my hand make all these things?’

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³ you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

The Stoning of Stephen

⁵⁴ Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.



OBSERVATION

what does the passage say?

Read the text all the way through.

Mark up the text, noting some of the elements from the observation page on page _____.

Write any people you find on the Cast of Characters chart on page _____.

HINT!
there
are **8**

Write these events on your Acts Plot Map on page _____ in chapter 6 and 7.

Acts 6

Deacons Chosen, including Stephen and Philip (Acts 6:1-7)

Stephen's Ministry and Arrest (Acts 6:8-15)

Acts 7

Stephen's Sermon (Acts 7:1-53)

Stephen's Martyrdom (Acts 7:54-60)

Saul Introduced (Acts 7:58)

Who is in the audience of Stephen's speech?

Stephen gives an incredible history of God's dealings with Israel from Abraham through the prophets! Did you learn anything you didn't know before from his history?

What new character is introduced at the end of chapter 7?

Summarize this section in your own words.

INTERPRETATION

what does the passage mean?

In this section, write down any questions that have come up for you as you read and marked up your text. Try to answer as many of your questions and the given questions below.

Remember to use the tools of context, cross-references, dictionaries, and commentaries.

YOUR QUESTIONS

REMEMBER

Reading to find the **tone** or **feeling** of a text like anger, tension, or sadness helps us experience this story in a more realistic and accurate way.

1. What tone or feeling do you sense in this section? What words or phrases showed you that?

2. Why is the audience so angry?

3. Why is Stephen upset with the people?

4. Why does Stephen give this lengthy speech?

5. What is the promise or "**time of the promise**" that Stephen mentions in 7:17? (Remember to use your tools of context, cross-references and commentaries to find this!)

6. Stephen calls the people "**stiff-necked**" in 7:51. This isn't the first time they are called this, read Exodus 32:9, 33:3-5, 34:9. Write down how in each of these circumstances how Israel was being "**stiff-necked**".

APPLICATION

what does the passage mean for me?

Write down ways the Holy Spirit convicted, challenged or encouraged you through the passage.

Hint:
there
are
22!

YOUR CONVICTIONS, CHALLENGES & ENCOURAGMENTS

1. At the beginning of this chapter, there is a dispute between Hellenistic (Greek) and Hebrew (Jewish) believers that Greek widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of goods. This kind of subtle neglect because another group isn't **"our"** people was even in the early church. Take time to ask God to help you be aware of the needs of others who aren't part of your everyday life.

2. Look up the word “**stiff-necked**” in a dictionary. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you ways you may be stiff-necked towards Him.

3. What arenas of your life feel “**off-limits**” to God? These are usually places we feel we need to control, protect, or keep away from God and others. Is it issues with your marriage, your kids, your budget or other ways you live your life?

ACTIVITY

TO TRY
THIS WEEK

This week, on a sheet of paper, write down the “big buckets” of your life: work, marriage, children, grandchildren, friends, etc. If you have specific issues in those buckets write those down with them. Then take time to pray through and surrender each of those to God and let go of control of them and ask God to move into those things on your behalf.

TEACHING NOTES





WEEK SIX

acts 8:1-40

Acts 8:1–40

Saul Ravages the Church

8 And Saul approved of his execution.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. **2** Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. **3** But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Philip Proclaims Christ in Samaria

4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. **5** Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. **6** And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. **7** For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. **8** So there was much joy in that city.

Simon the Magician Believes

9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. **10** They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” **11** And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. **12** But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. **13** Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

¹⁴ Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, ¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶ for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." ²⁰ But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²² Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³ For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." ²⁴ And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

²⁵ Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. ²⁷ And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." ³⁰ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.



32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.

33 In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth.”

34 And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” **35** Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. **36** And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” **38** And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. **39** And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. **40** But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

OBSERVATION

what does the passage say?

Read the text all the way through.

Mark up the text, noting some of the elements from the observation page on page _____.

Write any people you find on the Cast of Characters chart on page _____.

HINT!
there
are **3**

Write these events on your Acts Plot Map on page _____ in chapter 8.

Church is Persecuted and Scatters (Acts 8:1-4)

Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:5-25)

Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24)

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)

What was the result of the persecution that broke out? (Hint, verse 4)

What countries or regions are in this section?

Summarize this section in your own words.

INTERPRETATION

what does the passage mean?

In this section, write down any questions that have come up for you as you read and marked up your text. Try to answer as many of your questions and the given questions below.

YOUR QUESTIONS

REMEMBER

Use the tools of context,
cross-references,
dictionaries, and
commentaries!

1. What is the significance to naming Judea and Samaria in 8:1? (Check out Acts 1:8)

2. Read Luke 9:51-56 and John 4:5-9. How do these verses show you the significance of God moving so powerfully through Phillip?

3. Why would it have been important for the apostles to witness Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit in a way similar to the experience of believers in Jerusalem on Pentecost (8:14-17)?

4. What would a Gentile eunuch likely experience coming to the temple in Jerusalem?
(Hint: Deuteronomy 23:1)

5. Why do you think Luke really zooms into the story of the Ethiopian Eunuch?

Read Psalm 68:31, Psalm 87:4 and Isaiah 56:3-8. What specific prophecies are coming true in the story of the Ethiopian eunuch? (Note that Cush is the ancient name for the territory of the Ethiopians).

APPLICATION

what does the passage mean for me?

Write down ways the Holy Spirit convicted, challenged or encouraged you through the passage.

Hint:
there
are
22!

YOUR CONVICTIONS, CHALLENGES & ENCOURAGEMENTS

1. At the beginning of this chapter, a deadly persecution is actually the catalyst for growth in the church. Can you remember a time in your life when a really painful or hard thing actually worked to bring you closer to God? Is there anything painful in your life now that needs this reminder?

2. Take a look at the names of the people who do not yet follow Jesus that you put in **“My Cast of Characters”** and pray now for a **“Phillip”** moment with them so you can share the good news of Jesus with them. Ask God to make you ready and aware of that moment.

3. What kinds of people are difficult for you to love? Are there types of people you feel like are beyond Jesus? Take time to pray about this and ask God to show you His perspective on those people and give you His love for them.



This week, on a sheet of paper, write down places you frequent. It could be the grocery store, a gym, a park, your workplace, etc. Then take a few minutes to pray over these places that God would move in the lives of people there.

TEACHING NOTES





WEEK SEVEN

acts 9:1-43

Acts 9:1-43

The Conversion of Saul

9 But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest **2** and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. **3** Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. **4** And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" **5** And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. **6** But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." **7** The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. **8** Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. **9** And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." **11** And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, **12** and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." **13** But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. **14** And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." **15** But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. **16** For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." **17** So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; 19 and taking food, he was strengthened.

Saul Proclaims Jesus in Synagogues

For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. 20 And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” 21 And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?” 22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.

Saul Escapes from Damascus

23 When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, 24 but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, 25 but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

Saul in Jerusalem

26 And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. 28 So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. 30 And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

The Healing of Aeneas

32 Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. 35 And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

Dorcas Restored to Life

36 Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. 37 In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. 38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay." 39 So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. 43 And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.

OBSERVATION

what does the passage say?

Read the text all the way through.

Mark up the text, noting some of the elements from the observation page on page _____.

Write any people you find on the Cast of Characters chart on page _____.

HINT!
there
are **4**

Write these events on your Acts Plot Map on page _____ in chapter 9.

Conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1-19)

Saul Begins Preaching (Acts 9:20-31)

Peter's Miracles (Acts 9:32-43)

Highlight every location in this section and mark them on the map on the next page.

Create a timeline of Saul's conversion and include any mentions of time (i.e. "many days later"), places and people.

Summarize this section in your own words.



INTERPRETATION

what does the passage mean?

In this section, write down any questions that have come up for you as you read and marked up your text. Try to answer as many of your questions and the given questions below.

YOUR QUESTIONS

REMEMBER

Use the tools of context,
cross-references,
dictionaries, and
commentaries!

1. In verses 4-5, Jesus tells Paul that he is the one being persecuted. Now, reread verses 1-2 in light of this. Describe the connection between Jesus and his people?

How does Jesus understand himself in light of his people? (For reference, look up: 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 5:29-30, Colossians 1:18)

2. There are several phrases that appear in verse 31 describing the church: **“peace,” “built up,” “the fear of the Lord,”** and **“the comfort of the Holy Spirit.”** How are all these phrases related? What is the result?

3. This is not the first time Peter witnessed someone being brought back from death. Read Mark 5:35-43. What is similar between this miracle and Peter’s miracle. What is different?

4. Peter does 2 miracles in this section. What is the result of each (v. 35, 42)? How does this inform your view of the miraculous and its purpose?

APPLICATION

what does the passage mean for me?

Write down ways the Holy Spirit convicted, challenged or encouraged you through the passage.

Hint:
there
are
22!

YOUR CONVICTIONS, CHALLENGES & ENCOURAGEMENTS

1. Who is the least likely person you know to be saved? Pray for them this week and ask God for a Saul-Paul conversion. If God can save him, He can save anyone!
2. Part of Paul's transformation was a season of helplessness, where he was utterly dependent on the other believers in his life. Reflect on your own life. Have you experienced a season like this? What was the result? Are you resistant to being dependent on other believers? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY TO TRY THIS WEEK

This week, as you go to the places you frequent. Take a moment to pray before you go in that God would make you aware of people who might need help or encouragement and that you might be bold to pray with someone and share Jesus with them if the opportunity presented itself.

TEACHING NOTES





WEEK EIGHT

acts 10:1–11:18



Acts 10:1–11:18

Peter and Cornelius

10 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, **2**a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. **3**About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, “Cornelius.” **4**And he stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. **5**And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. **6**He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.” **7**When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, **8**and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

9The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. **10**And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance **11**and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. **12**In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. **13**And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” **14**But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” **15**And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.” **16**This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. **17**Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate **18**and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there.

19 And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. 20 Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.” 21 And Peter went down to the men and said, “I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?” 22 And they said, “Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.” 23 So he invited them in to be his guests.

The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. 24 And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. 26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am a man.” 27 And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. 28 And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. 29 So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me.”

30 And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing 31 and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’ 33 So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”





Gentiles Hear the Good News

34 So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, **35** but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. **36** As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), **37** you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. **39** And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, **40** but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, **41** not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **42** And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. **43** To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

44 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. **45** And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. **46** For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, **47** “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” **48** And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

Peter Reports to the Church

11 Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, ³ “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” ⁴ But Peter began and explained it to them in order: ⁵ “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. ⁶ Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. ⁷ And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ ⁸ But I said, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ ⁹ But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ ¹⁰ This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. ¹¹ And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. ¹² And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³ And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; ¹⁴ he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ ¹⁵ As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷ If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?” ¹⁸ When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”



OBSERVATION

what does the passage say?

Read the text all the way through.

Mark up the text, noting some of the elements from the observation page on page _____.

Write any people you find on the Cast of Characters chart on page _____.

HINT!
there
is **I**

Write these events on your Acts Plot Map on page _____ in chapter 10 and 11.

Acts 10

Cornelius' Vision (Acts 10:1-8)

Peter's Vision (Acts 10:9-16)

Gentiles Receive the Spirit (Acts 10:17-48)

Acts 11

Peter Embraces Gentile Believers (Acts 11:1-18)

List the instructions of the Spirit in this section.

How many times does the divine voice repeat instructions to Peter?

How many times is Peter's vision/dream described?

What group of people does Peter share the gospel with? What happens right after they hear the good news?

Summarize this section in your own words.

INTERPRETATION

what does the passage mean?

In this section, write down any questions that have come up for you as you read and marked up your text. Try to answer as many of your questions and the given questions below.

YOUR QUESTIONS

REMEMBER

Use the tools of context,
cross-references,
dictionaries, and
commentaries!

1. God had a purpose for setting Israel apart and creating a law for them and it was more than just a list of rules to keep. Read Leviticus 11:45-47, Exodus 19:4-6, Deuteronomy 4:5-8 and Jeremiah 33:8-9. What purpose do you see for God's people keeping God's words?

2. In light of the law given in Leviticus 11, why do you think the divine voice repeats itself to Peter?

3. Why was Peter's dream and the timing of it important?

4. Look back at Acts 1:8 - what is happening in this section that reflects Jesus' words promise from chapter 1? Why is this significant?

Check out Genesis 12:3, Isaiah 49:6, Isaiah 60:3, Zechariah 2:11, and Luke 2:30-32 to help!

APPLICATION

what does the passage mean for me?

Write down ways the Holy Spirit convicted, challenged or encouraged you through the passage.

Hint:
there
are
22!

YOUR CONVICTIONS, CHALLENGES & ENCOURAGEMENTS

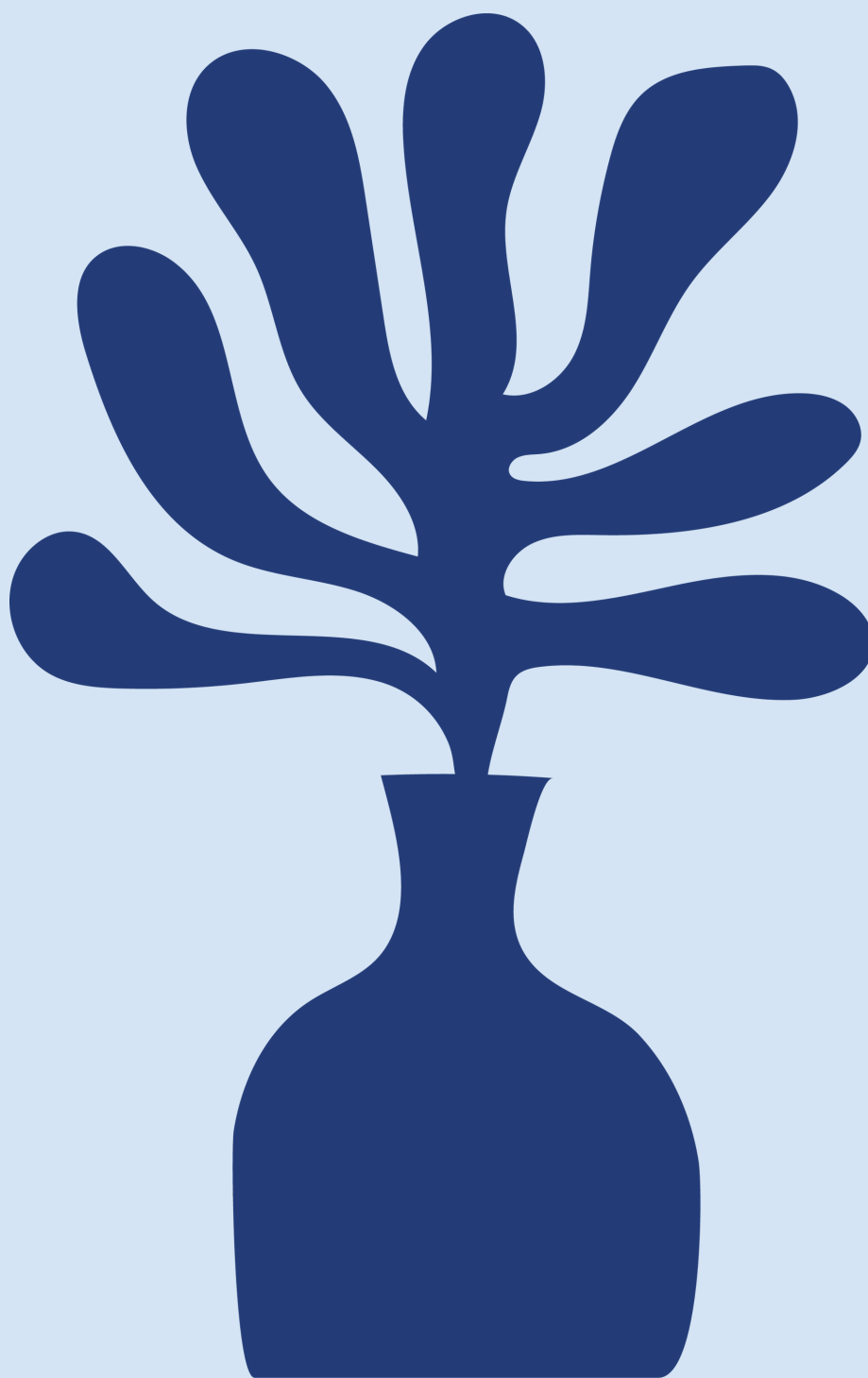
1. Acts challenges us to examine our assumptions about people and groups that we overlook and may think are beyond the grace of God. This section reminds us that we were those people far from God and without hope. Read Ephesians 2:12-22 and worship and praise Jesus for what you read in there!

ACTIVITY
TO TRY
THIS WEEK

This week, take a look at your “My Cast of Characters” list and pray over the people you know who are far from Christ using Ephesians 2:12-22.

TEACHING NOTES





WEEK NINE

acts 11:19-12:25

Acts 11:19-12:25

The Church in Antioch

19 Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. **20** But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. **21** And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. **22** The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. **23** When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, **24** for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. **25** So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, **26** and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

27 Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. **28** And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). **29** So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. **30** And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

James Killed and Peter Imprisoned


12 About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. **2** He killed James the brother of John with the sword, **3** and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. **4** And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people.

5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

Peter Is Rescued

6 Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. 8 And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." 9 And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. 10 When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. 11 When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

12 When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. 13 And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14 Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. 15 They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" 16 But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed. 17 But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place.



18 Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. **19** And after Herod searched for him and did not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time there.

The Death of Herod

20 Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. **21** On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. **22** And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" **23** Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last. **24** But the word of God increased and multiplied.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark.

OBSERVATION

what does the passage say?

Read the text all the way through.

Mark up the text, noting some of the elements from the observation page on page _____.

Write any people you find on the Cast of Characters chart on page _____.

HINT!
there
are **6**

Write these events on your Acts Plot Map on page _____ in chapter 11 and 12.

Acts 11

The Church in Antioch Grows (Acts 11:19-30)

Acts 12

James is Martyred (Acts 12:1-2)

Peter Imprisoned and an Angel Frees Him (Acts 12:3-19)

Herod Dies (Acts 12:20-23)

The Word and the Church Spread (Acts 12:24-25)

Who is the audience mentioned in verse 20?

List the descriptions of Barnabas in this section

How long did Barnabas and Paul stay in Antioch?

Note all the supernatural interventions in this section.

Summarize this section in your own words.

INTERPRETATION

what does the passage mean?

In this section, write down any questions that have come up for you as you read and marked up your text. Try to answer as many of your questions and the given questions below.

YOUR QUESTIONS

REMEMBER

Use the tools of context,
cross-references,
dictionaries, and
commentaries!

1. What is the shift being described in II:19-26 and why is it significant?

2. Read Acts 8:1-17. Write down the similarities you see from this chapter and Acts 11:19-26.

3. Why do you think Luke expressly mentions the things done by the Spirit or the angel of the Lord? Why not just describe them as events, why does Luke tell us who is behind it?

APPLICATION

what does the passage mean for me?

Write down ways the Holy Spirit convicted, challenged or encouraged you through the passage.

Hint:
there
are
22!

YOUR CONVICTIONS, CHALLENGES & ENCOURAGEMENTS

1. Barnabas could have taken offense at the salvation happening among the Hellenists but instead he's filled with joy! Haven't we all failed to be a Barnabas? Is there any place in your life right now where God is moving, just not how you visioned? Take time to talk to God about that today and ask him to transform your heart into one of joy.

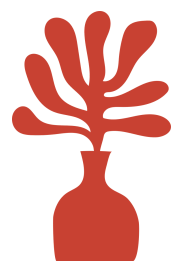
2. In this section, believers are treated violently, James is killed, Peter is supernaturally delivered from prison and Herod dies. There is a complex swirl of God's supernatural protection and His allowance of great loss and pain. Have you experienced this kind of complexity? How have you felt about this before and what are your thoughts about God in that? What kind of comfort does it bring to you that early believers experienced the same complexity and while they grieved James, they got back Peter?

ACTIVITY

TO TRY
THIS WEEK

This week, attend a prayer service with a friend or a few friends and pray for God to move supernaturally into anything that seems impossible! It could be a relationship, issues in our city or nation or even conflict globally! Engage in earnest prayer and ask God to move like He has in Acts 12!

TEACHING NOTES





ANSWER KEYS



PLOT MAP

answer key

ACTS 1

Jesus' Ascension (Acts 1:9-11)

Matthias Chosen (Acts 1:15-26)

ACTS 6

Deacons Chosen, including Stephen and Philip (Acts 6:1-7)

Stephen's Ministry and Arrest (Acts 6:8-15)

ACTS 2

Pentecost
(Acts 2:1-13)

Peter's First Sermon
(Acts 2:14-41)

ACTS 3

First Public Healing by the Apostles in the name of Jesus (Acts 3:1-10)

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

ACTS 4

Peter and John Arrested (Acts 4:1-4)

Bold Prayer in the Face of Opposition
(Acts 4:5-22) (Acts 4:23-31)

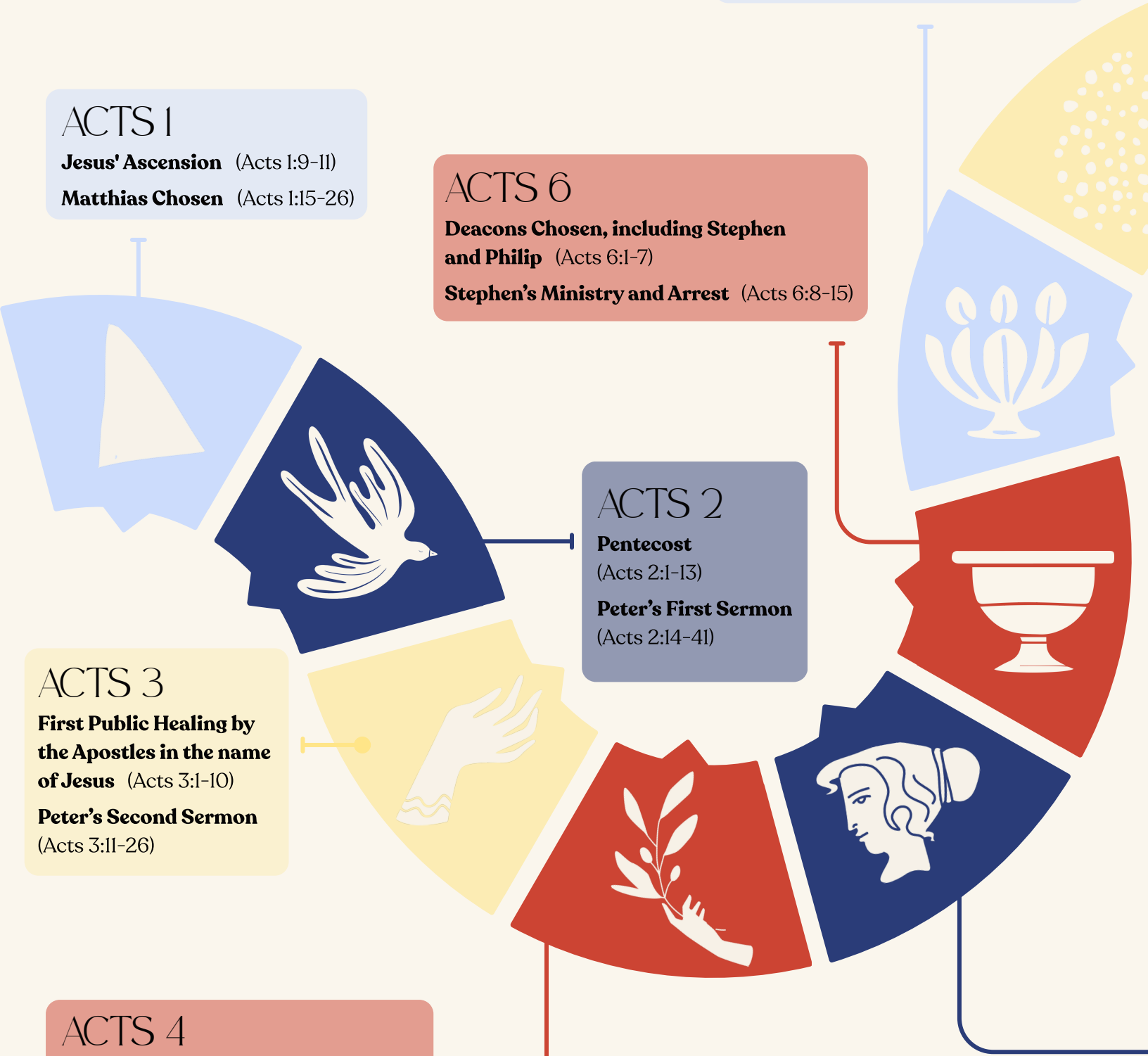
Generosity of Christian Community
(Acts 4:32-37)

ACTS 7

Stephen's Sermon (Acts 7:1-53)

Stephen's Martyrdom (Acts 7:54-60)

Saul Introduced (Acts 7:58)



ACTS 9

Conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1-19)

Saul Begins Preaching (Acts 9:20-31)

Peter's Miracles (Acts 9:32-43)

ACTS 10

Cornelius' Vision (Acts 10:1-8)

Peter's Vision (Acts 10:9-16)

Gentiles Receive the Spirit (Acts 10:17-48)

ACTS 11

Peter Embraces Gentile Believers
(Acts 11:1-18)

The Church in Antioch Grows
(Acts 11:19-30)

ACTS 8

Church Scattered (Acts 8:1-4)

Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:5-25)

Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24)

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch
(Acts 8:26-40)

ACTS 5

Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)

Signs and Wonders Increase (Acts 5:12-16)

Second Arrest and Angelic Escape (Acts 5:17-42)

ACTS 12

James is Martyred (Acts 12:1-2)

Peter Imprisoned and an Angel Frees Him
(Acts 12:3-19)

Herod Dies (Acts 12:20-23)

The Word and the Church Spread
(Acts 12:24-25)

COMING
SPRING
2026

CAST OF CHARACTERS

answer key

WEEK 1	NAME OF PERSON	VERSE REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION
	JESUS	1:1–11; 2:22–36; 3:13–26; etc.	Resurrected Messiah who commissions the apostles and ascends to heaven.
	PETER	1–12 (frequent)	Leader of the apostles; preaches at Pentecost and performs miracles.
	THEOPHILUS	1:1	Recipient of Acts (and Luke’s Gospel). Fellow Jesus follower whom Luke knows and is writing for.
	“I” (LUKE)	1:1	Author of Luke and Acts.
	THE HOLY SPIRIT	1:5–8; 2:1–4; 4:31; etc.	God’s presence empowering the church for witness and mission.
	JOHN	1:5	John the Baptist, forerunner to Jesus, baptized in water to prepare the way for Jesus.
	TWO MEN	1:10	Two angels in robes explaining to the disciples what was happening.
	JOHN	1:13; 3:1–11; 4:1–23; 8:14	Apostle and companion of Peter in early ministry.
	JAMES	1:13	One of the original 12 disciples, present at Pentecost.
	ANDREW	1:13	One of the original 12 disciples, present at Pentecost, Peter’s brother.
	PHILLIP	1:13	One of the original 12 disciples, present at Pentecost, disciple of John the Baptist.
	THOMAS	1:13	One of the original 12 disciples, present at Pentecost, the one who doubted but touched Jesus’ scars.
	BARTHOLOMEW	1:13	One of the original 12 disciples, present at Pentecost.
	MATTHEW	1:13	One of the original 12 disciples, present at Pentecost, tax collector.
	JAMES (SON OF ALPHEUS)	1:13	One of the original 12 disciples, present at Pentecost.
	SIMON THE ZEALOT	1:13	One of the original 12 disciples, present at Pentecost.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

answer key

	NAME OF PERSON	VERSE REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION
	JAMES (SON OF ALPHEUS)	1:13	One of the original 12 disciples, present at Pentecost.
	THE WOMEN	1:14	Probably the women who were also at Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, possibly Mary of Magdala, Joanna, Martha and Mary, Lazarus' sisters.
	MARY	1:14	Jesus' mom
	JESUS' BROTHERS	1:14	Brothers, who formerly didn't believe him.
	JUDAS ISCARIOT	1:16–20	Former apostle who betrayed Jesus and died by suicide.
	MATTHIAS	1:23–26	Chosen by lot to replace Judas Iscariot among the Twelve.
WEEK 3	MAN LAME FROM BIRTH	3:1	Man lame from birth sitting at the Beautiful Gate, healed by Peter and John. His healing allowed Peter to preach the gospel again to a large crowd.
	ANNAS	4:5	High Priest in Jerusalem, from the priestly family.
	CAIPHAS	4:5	Priest in Jerusalem, from the priestly family.
	JOHN	4:5	High Priest in Jerusalem, from the priestly family.
	ALEXANDER	4:5	High Priest in Jerusalem, from the priestly family.
WEEK 4	BARNABAS	4:36	AKA Joseph, Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus whose name means 'son of encouragement.' He sold a field to support the apostles, became an early church leader, and encouraged and assisted Paul.
	ANANIAS (JERUSALEM)	5:1–10	Husband of Sapphira who lied about money and died.

	SIMON THE ZEALOT	1:13	One of the original 12 disciples, present at Pentecost.
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

answer key

	NAME OF PERSON	VERSE REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION
	SAPPHIRA	5:1-10	Wife of Ananias who also lied and died.
	ANGEL OF THE LORD	5:19; 8:26; 10:3; 12:7-10	Heavenly messenger who guides and delivers.
	GAMALIEL	5:33, 22:3	From the council of the Pharisees, a teacher of the law. Mentored the apostle Paul.
WEEK 5	PROCHORUS	6:5	5 of 7 believers chosen to oversee the equitable care of widows in the community.
	NICANOR	6:5	5 of 7 believers chosen to oversee the equitable care of widows in the community.
	TIMON	6:5	5 of 7 believers chosen to oversee the equitable care of widows in the community.
	PARMENAS	6:5	5 of 7 believers chosen to oversee the equitable care of widows in the community.
	NICOLAUS	6:5	5 of 7 believers chosen to oversee the equitable care of widows in the community.
	STEPHEN	6:5-7:60	Deacon and first Christian martyr.
	PHILIP	6:5; 8:4-40	Evangelist who preached in Samaria and to the Ethiopian eunuch.
	SAUL (PAUL)	7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1-30; 11:25-30	Persecutor turned apostle after encountering Jesus.
WEEK 6	SIMON THE SORCERER	8:9-24	A magician in Samaria who believed in Jesus but later tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit from Peter.
	THE ETHIOPIAN EUNICH	8:27-39	A high official from the royal court of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. Likely a convert to Judaism, he heard the good news of Jesus from Philip on his journey home, believed, and was baptized immediately.
WEEK 7	ANANIAS (DAMASCUS)	9:10-17	Disciple who healed Saul's blindness in Damascus.

SIMON THE ZEALOT 13 One of the original 12 disciples, present at Pentecost.

WEEK 9

CAST OF CHARACTERS

answer key

NAME OF PERSON	VERSE REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION
AENEAS	9:32–35	Paralyzed man healed by Peter.
TABITHA (DORCAS)	9:36–42	Beloved disciple in Joppa raised to life by Peter.
SIMON THE TANNER	9:43	Peter stayed with him in Joppa for many days while telling them the gospel after raising Tabitha from the dead.
CORNELIUS	10:1–48	Roman centurion who became the first recorded Gentile convert.
AGABUS	11: 28	Prophet from Jerusalem, prophesied famine in the region and the disciples planned a relief fund for those living in Judea.
JAMES (ZEBEDEE)	12:1–2	Apostle and brother of John, martyred by Herod.
HEROD AGRIPPA I	12:1–23	King who persecuted the church and was struck down by God.
MARY (JOHN MARK’S MOTHER)	12:12	Host of a Jerusalem house church.
JOHN MARK	12:12, 25	Companion of Barnabas and Paul; later gospel writer.
RHODA	12:13–15	Servant girl who recognized Peter at the door.

