



TWO
JOURNEYS

ACTS

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

ANDREW M. DAVIS

WITH JOEL W. HARFORD

© 2018 by Andrew M. Davis

Published by Two Journeys Ministry
414 Cleveland St,
Durham, NC 27701
www.twojourneys.org

Printed in the United States of America

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About the Author

Dr. Andrew M. Davis is the senior pastor of the First Baptist Church of Durham, North Carolina and the founder of Two Journeys Ministry. He holds a bachelor's degree from MIT, a Masters in Divinity from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is also a visiting professor of church history at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, a Council Member of The Gospel Coalition, and a trustee of the International Mission Board. He and his wife Christi have five children.

Books By Dr. Andrew M. Davis

- An Infinite Journey: Growing Toward Christlikeness, 2014.
- Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church Come Alive Again, 2017.
- Exalting Jesus in Isaiah, 2017.

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Preface to the Reader

One of the most important elements of a healthy Christian life is regular study of God's word. The Psalmist writes in Psalm 19:7-8 that *"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."* I yearn for Christians to reap the rich benefits of scripture study, and to grow in the knowledge and love of God's word through directly engaging with the biblical text. This is why I have chosen to publish bible study questions instead of commentaries. There are many valuable commentaries to help aid your study of scripture, and I recommend using them. For guidance on commentaries visit www.bestcommentaries.com.

However, the focus of this book is to engage you, the reader, and to challenge you to answer relevant questions based on the scripture.

I have in mind three types of users for this book: First, group bible studies. Most of these questions were written for my weekly men's bible study. I recommend that the leader use this resource to prepare beforehand, reading all the questions and picking only five to seven for discussion. Twenty questions would certainly be a lot of material to discuss! For the bible study, each participant could have a copy to follow along. Second, sermon preparation. Asking questions of the text can be very helpful for understanding the flow and point of a passage of scripture. Third, personal bible study. Again, you can gain valuable insights by asking questions of the text.

My hope for these bible study questions is that they would encourage and facilitate Christians' gathering together to study God's word. One day, as Habakkuk 2:14 says, *"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."* Critical to this prophecy in Habakkuk is our *knowing* about the Glory of God, and this is best achieved through the study of the bible. So let's do our part!

I challenge you, reader, to ask some friends, colleagues, classmates, or fellow church members to join you for a bible study. Ask God to open your eyes to understand the scripture (Psalm 119:18), and step out in faith to spread the knowledge of the Glory of God. May this book enrich your study of God's living and active word (Hebrews 4:12), and may the Lord Jesus Christ bless your bible studies!

Summary of Acts

The book of Acts continues the narrative of the Gospel of Luke from the ascension of Jesus Christ after his crucifixion and resurrection, and recounts the rapid spread of Christianity from a small sect of Judaism to a worldwide movement. Jesus told his disciples, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Luke unfolds the story of how the gospel of Jesus Christ did indeed spread from the city of Jerusalem to the surrounding cities of Judea, then Samaria, Syria, Asia Minor, Galatia, Macedonia, Greece, and finally even to Rome.

One of the major themes in Acts is the coming of the Holy Spirit in power to equip the people of God for ministry. The Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus, and in Acts chapter 2 God fulfilled the prophecies from long ago (Joel 2), that he would pour out his Spirit on all his people. The Spirit came with the sound of a mighty rushing wind and indwelt the believers, infusing them with boldness and power. Peter, who previously denied knowing Jesus during Jesus’ trial, now stood boldly and preached Christ crucified and resurrected! The Holy Spirit’s work in advancing the gospel magnified in Acts, as he empowers believers for ministry, directs the churches to missionary activity, brings doctrinal consensus in disputes, and gives boldness to individuals as they stand before the rulers proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ.

Another theme in Acts is the inclusion of the Gentiles into God’s unfolding plan of redemption. The first believers were Jews, understanding that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the pages of the Old Testament. However, God worked through Peter to bring the gospel to a Roman Centurion named Cornelius, and he came to faith in Jesus. Persecution drove believers out of Jerusalem, and in the Syrian city of Antioch, some Greeks came to faith in Christ. The Church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas out on missionary journeys, and God brought Gentiles to repentance in cities across the regions of Cyprus, Galatia, Achaia (Greece), Macedonia and Asia Minor, and churches were planted. Though it is not documented how the message of the gospel made it to Rome, by the end of Luke’s narrative it is clear that Christianity had spread all the way to the capital of the Roman empire!

Paul’s life and ministry takes a prominent place in the book of Acts. This is likely due to his radical conversion, his mission as Christ’s apostle to the Gentiles, and his weighty contribution to the New Testament through his letters. After an incredibly successful yet persecuted ministry, Paul goes to trial for his work in the propagation of the gospel. Luke has a keen interest in showing that Paul was an innocent man, guilty only of preaching the forgiveness of sins and the hope of a resurrection through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Acts does not conclude with the judicial verdict, nor with the end of Paul’s life. Rather, Luke ends his narrative with Paul under house arrest, yet boldly teaching on the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. In the same way, the history of the Church does not end with Paul and the apostles, but continues to this day as the gospel is proclaimed by faithful Christians and Jesus Christ is worshipped as Lord. The gospel has indeed spread from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth!

JUDEA, SAMARIA, THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

ACTS 1:1-11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What promise does Jesus give his disciples? How does Acts 1:8 serve as a theme verse for the entire book of Acts?
2. What is the significance of Jesus' bodily ascension into heaven?
3. What does the angels' promise teach us about the Second Coming of Christ?

II. VERSE BY VERSE:

CHRIST'S FORTY-DAY SEMINARY (VV. 1-5)

4. What is Luke's "former book"? How does Luke characterize the content of that book? (1)
5. Discuss verse 1, "I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach." Some call Acts not "The Acts of the Apostles" but the "Acts of Jesus Christ *Through* the Apostles." What do you think about this? How would you title Acts? (1)
6. Who is "Theophilus"? The word literally means "Lover of God." If this was not a real person, why do you think Luke chose that name for anyone who would read his accounts? (1)
7. What instructions did Jesus give His apostles after His resurrection? See also Luke 24:44-49. What was the focus of the instruction?
8. What else does Luke say Jesus did after His resurrection in verse 3? (3)
9. What does it mean that Jesus spoke about the "Kingdom of God"? How would you summarize the doctrine of the Kingdom of God? Note: The kingdom is also mentioned in Acts 1:6, 8:12, 14:22, 19:8, 20:25, 28:23, 28:31. In what way does the doctrine of the Kingdom represent the gospel message itself? (3)
10. What does verse 4 teach you about Christ's resurrection body? What does it teach you about Christ's discipleship methods? (4)
11. What is the topic of verses 4-5? How is the baptism that John gave compared with the baptism that Christ gives? See also Luke 3:16. What is the baptism of the Spirit? When did Jesus indicate that this baptism would happen? (4-5)

THE SPIRIT'S POWER FOR WITNESS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH (VV. 6-8)

12. What is the topic of verses 6-7? What is the connection between this question of the apostles and the topic He'd been discussing with them in verse 3? (6-7)
13. Why do you think verse 6 begins with the word "So"? What connection do you see between verse 5 and verse 6? What do you learn about the disciple's theology and expectations at this point? (6)
14. Do you think there is any connection between Jesus teaching in Luke 24:44-45 and Acts 1:3, and the apostles' question in verse 6? Why is this interesting? (6)

15. How does Christ answer their question about timing in verse 7? Does this give an indication that God has a yet future restoration of the Kingdom to Israel? How do you reconcile this with Paul's teaching in Ephesians 2:14-16 that Christ has made "one new man" out of Jew and Gentile? (7)
16. Why is it not for us to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority? What attitude should a Christian have toward time? See Matthew 24:42, 25:13. How does not knowing the exact time of Christ's return cause us to be diligent daily? How would it have changed church history if Christ had told them clearly that He would not return for at least two thousand years? (7)
17. Some people feel that Acts 1:8 is one of the greatest verses in the Bible? Do you agree? Why? (8)
18. What does verse 8 teach about the role of the Holy Spirit in witnessing? What is the nature of the Spirit's power here? Do you feel a need for that power? How effective would we be as evangelistic witnesses without the Spirit's power? (8)
19. What does it mean to be a "witness" for Christ? How were the apostles witnesses for Christ? How are Christians today witnesses for Christ? What are the similarities and differences? (8)
20. What is the geographical scope of Acts 1:8? Like the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20, this command seems to be given universally to every generation of Christians. Would you agree? If you are familiar with Acts, how does verse 8 give an outline and set the tone for the rest of the narrative? (8)

CHRIST'S ASCENSION TO HEAVEN (VV. 9-11)

21. What happened after Christ's last words in Acts 1? What do you think of Jesus' chosen way of leaving this world? What is the significance of the cloud? See Luke 9:34-35, Luke 21:27, Exodus 13:21, and Daniel 7:13 on clouds. (9)
22. Why were the apostles continuing to gaze up at the clouds? How does their posture represent the church's heart attitude toward the Second Coming? Why was this physical posture inappropriate, given the command in verse 8? (10)
23. Who were the men dressed in white? What promise did they give the apostles? What is the significance of the phrases "this Jesus" and "in the same way"? What does it teach you about the Second Coming? (10-11)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke begins his second book as a companion for his gospel. He sees the two books as telling one story about the mighty works of Christ. Also the theme of the book is set, the gospel will go to Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The apostles have been thoroughly trained by Christ and prepared; all they lack is the power of the Spirit and they will transform the world with their message. Their role is limited to one thing: witness. The Spirit will do the rest.

IN THE UPPER ROOM

ACTS 1:12-26

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What do these verses teach you about the early church?
2. How is it significant that Jesus' mother and brothers were in the Upper Room?
3. What insights do you gain about Peter's leadership?
4. Why did the apostles feel that Judas had to be replaced? What is the significance of their reasoning and of their method in replacing him?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

IN THE UPPER ROOM (VV. 12-14)

1. What do you think of the fact that Luke focuses on the Apostles, rather than the angels that spoke to them in verse 11? (12)
2. What does verse 12 teach you about Christ's ascension to heaven? How do you reconcile the location of the ascension with other accounts, such as the Great Commission passage in Matthew 28:16-20 which was given in Galilee? (12)
3. How important is the Mount of Olives in the Bible and in the life of Christ? See Matthew 24:3, Matthew 26:30, Luke 21:37. What does Zechariah 14:4 teach you about the Mount of Olives? (12)
4. Luke tells us the Mount of Olives was a "Sabbath's day journey" from the city of Jerusalem. Scholars tell us that was the distance a man could legally walk on the Sabbath and not be considered working: about three-quarters of a mile. Also note that the Mount of Olives is two hundred feet higher than Jerusalem, offering a magnificent view of the city. Thus, Jerusalem very much the focus here. Read Luke 24:47. Why is Jerusalem so important in this phase of the church's life? See Acts 1:4, 1:8, and also Isaiah 2:1-4. (12)
5. Where did they stay? What was this "upper room"? See Luke 22:12. Was it the same room in which they celebrated the Passover (Last Supper) with Jesus? (13)
6. Why does Luke list the names of the Apostles at this point? Do you notice anything about this list? Compare it with other such lists found in Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:14-19, Luke 6:13-16. (13)
7. What insight into the life of the Apostles and the early church does verse 14 give us? How would you characterize those who were there? What did they spent their time doing? What was the nature of their fellowship? (14)
8. How is it significant that Jesus' mother and brothers were in the Upper Room? Compare with John 7:5. (14)

CHOOSING A NEW APOSTLE (VV. 15-26)

9. What does verse 15 teach you about Peter after Christ's ascension? (15)
10. Do you find Luke's tracking of the size of the church significant? 120 here, 3000 added in 2:41, the number of men grew to 5000 in 4:4. Why does he only do it at the very beginning? (15)
11. What is Peter's method of argumentation and reasoning behind the need for Judas to be replaced? What do you learn from the Scriptures he quotes and how he uses them? (16-20)
12. Do you think the early church thought the number twelve was significant concerning the need for replacing Judas? See Revelation 21:14. How does the "Apostle" Paul fit into this round number of twelve? (16-20)
13. How do you reconcile this account of what happened to Judas with the other account of Judas's death? See Matthew 27:3-10? (18)
14. What requirements for the apostolic office are listed in 21-22? Why was it important for the apostle to have been there the whole time Jesus "went in and out among us"? See John 1:14, 1 John 1:1-3. (21-22)
15. According to Acts 1:22, what is the major function of an apostle? See Acts 2:32, 3:15, 5:32, 10:39. (22)
16. What do you learn from how the church went about its work in choosing Judas's replacement? Compare it with how the church at Antioch chose Barnabas and Saul for mission service in 13:1-3, and how they resolved the circumcision issue in Acts 15. (23-26)
17. What do they pray for? What does their prayer teach about God's sovereignty? About humanity? About how to make decisions? About Judas Iscariot? (24-25)
18. What method do they finally use to choose Matthias? Note Proverbs 16:33, Proverbs 18:18, Luke 1:9 and John 19:24. (26)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke gives us a glimpse into the life of the church after the Ascension of Christ and before the coming of the Holy Spirit. The church is assembled constantly for prayer, and they are all of one heart and mind. It is a small church, a believer's church, a church which includes some of Jesus' family. The only issue they have to resolve in Acts 1 is the selection of Judas's replacement. Peter seems to be the leader of the group, despite his sin in denying Christ, a testimony to the overwhelming grace and forgiveness flowing from Christ's cross. Peter leads them in this matter, reasoning from Scripture, from the events of Judas's death, and from prayer. The requirements of apostolic office are laid out, along with some insight into their function as eyewitnesses of Christ's life on earth. The church prays, and selects Matthias by casting a lot. This is a contrast with the Spirit-led church later in Acts 13 and 15.

PENTECOST: THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

ACTS 2:1-13

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the significance of the gift of the Holy Spirit?
2. What is the meaning of the speaking in tongues that the Spirit enabled?
3. How did the crowd react to the miracle, and what does this tell you about the power of the Spirit mentioned in Acts 1:8?
4. Why is it important that so many people from so many different nationalities were there to witness the gift of the Spirit?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (VV. 1-4)

1. Read Leviticus 23:15-21. What is the purpose of the feast of Pentecost? What were the Jews celebrating? Is there a spiritual fulfillment in the Passover and Pentecost? What is the spiritual significance of Pentecost, especially when viewed in light of Matthew 9:35-38? (1)
2. Verse 1 says, “they were all together in one place.” Who was together? Why do you think it was important that the Spirit was poured out when they were all together, rather than only on a few of them? (1)
3. How does Luke describe the actual coming of the Holy Spirit? What miracles are associated with the gift? (2-4)
4. Why do you think God chose the noise of a mighty rushing wind as the symbol of the coming of the Spirit? Note: In both Hebrew and Greek, the word for Spirit and wind are the same. See Ezekiel 37:9-14 and John 3:8. (2)
5. Why does Luke use the word “suddenly,” and what does that tell you about the experience? What physical posture were the people in when the Spirit came? What does their posture suggest about what they were doing? (2)
6. What was the second miracle associated with the Spirit’s coming mentioned in verse 3? Note that in both the first two miracles there is the phrase “like” or “appeared.” It was “as if” tongues of fire separated and came to rest on each of them. Why do you think the Spirit used this display to reveal His coming? (3)
7. What is the third miracle associated with the Spirit’s coming? What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? Is there a difference between being filled with the Spirit and being baptized with the Spirit? See 1 Corinthians 12:13, Romans 6:4-6, Galatians 3:27, then see Ephesians 5:18, Acts 4:8, 4:31, 13:9, 13:52.
8. There is immense controversy over the issue of “speaking in tongues.” Sticking strictly with Acts 2:4, what can you learn about what happened at that moment? Did everyone speak in tongues? Did they all speak at once? Note: “tongues” is usually translated “languages,” i.e. a system of human communication with

nouns, verbs, syntax, grammar, etc. This is directly proved to be the case in Acts 2:5-8. In context, were these “tongues/languages” heavenly prayers known only to God, or did other humans understand them? How should this inform our understanding of this gift? (4)

THE ASTONISHMENT OF THE CROWD (VV. 5-13)

9. How would you summarize the next section, Acts 2:5-13? Why do you think Luke includes it in his account? (5-13)
10. Why were these Jews from so many remote places staying in Jerusalem at that time? How does this providential occurrence fit in with God’s purpose in Acts 1:8? Were there any Gentiles there mentioned in Acts 2? (5)
11. What does the term “devout” tell you about these Jews? Does it help explain the overwhelmingly positive response to Peter’s evangelistic message? (5)
12. What was the effect of the “rushing wind” sound which directly benefits the advance of the Kingdom? (6)

Note: We will see this again in Acts: a miracle attracts a crowd and the apostles make the most of it by preaching the gospel to the amazed people. See also Acts 3:10-11; 14:11.

13. What was the precise nature of the miracle of tongues that amazed the crowd? How would you relate this to the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:9? If God has this power over language, why does He not do this every time? In other words, why does God not put Wycliffe Bible Translators permanently out of business, and forever end the need for four years of language training for missionaries? (6-8)
14. Why does Luke list out the various places these folks came from? How does it relate to Acts 1:8? Speculate as to how these converts would affect their home countries. (9-11)
15. What did they say the apostles were declaring? (11)
16. What question did the crowd ask at this point? (12)
17. What do you think of the others in the crowd who mocked them? Why do you think they related it to wine? Note the connection between the Spirit and wine in Luke 1:15 and Ephesians 5:18. See also Isaiah 28:1-13, and the connection with speaking in tongues Paul makes in 1 Corinthians 14:21-22. (13)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke gives the account of the momentous gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift Jesus had predicted (John 14:16-17, Luke 24:49). The Spirit comes with three divine signs: a supernatural sound (rushing wind) and sight (tongues of fire), and in communication (languages). The Spirit has come, and immediately a crowd is gathered ready to hear the message of the gospel.

THE PROPHET JOEL FULFILLED ACTS 2:14-21

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does Peter explain the amazing events of Acts 2:1-13?
2. What is the significance of Peter's extensive use of the OT in his sermon?
3. To what extent has Joel 2 been fulfilled, and what is yet to come?
4. What does "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" mean?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PETER'S DEFENSE AGAINST THE CHARGE OF DRUNKENNESS (VV. 14-16)

1. What is the significance of the fact that it is Peter speaking for the Eleven at this momentous point of the church's history? (14)
2. What title does he use here to address the crowd? What titles does he later use in verses 22 and 29? (14)
3. How important is preaching in the advance of the gospel throughout the book of Acts? What does this teach you about some who question the validity of preaching today? (14)
4. What charge does Peter have to refute here? (15)

Note: many times throughout the church's history, it has had to defend itself against slanderous accusations based upon misunderstandings. Tertullian's defense "Ad Nationes" written around A.D. 197 defended Christians against the charges of incest, infanticide, rebellion against the authority of the Roman Emperor, and orgies ("love feasts"), and from the charge that Christians were to blame for all calamities such as earthquakes, floods, fires, etc. The Emperor Nero blamed Christians for burning Rome, and the Apostle Paul himself faced many such slanderous charges. He even refutes one openly in Romans 3:8, and deals with many during his various trials.

5. How does Peter refute the charge in verses 14-16? Note: History tells us that most Jews would have been fasting until noon, and that only inveterate drunkards would be drunk this early. The first hour began at sunrise, so this was probably nine in the morning. (14-16)
6. Verse 16 says "But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel." How does this concept of fulfillment of prophecy fit into Peter's defense of Christianity in Acts 2? How should Christians today use fulfilled prophecy in our witness to an unbelieving world? (16)

THE PROPHECY FROM JOEL FULFILLED (VV. 17-21)

7. What is the main idea of the prophecy from Joel which has now been fulfilled on the day of Pentecost? (17-18)

8. Key people in the Old Testament received the gift of the Holy Spirit at certain times: The Israelites in the camp in Numbers 11:25-29; Balaam in Numbers 24:2; Othniel in Judges 3:10; Gideon in Judges 6:34; Jephthah in Judges 11:29; Samson in Judges 14:6, 14:9, and 15:14; Saul in 1 Samuel 10:10, 11:16, and 19:23; David in 1 Samuel 16:13; Saul's men in 1 Samuel 19:20; Amasai in 1 Chronicles 12:18; Azariah in 2 Chronicles 15:1; Jahaziel in 2 Chronicles 20:14; and Zechariah in 2 Chronicles 24:20; not to mention all the prophets, such as Ezekiel 2:2. What is the big difference here on the day of Pentecost? (17-18)
9. What types of people are receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit in 17-18? (17-18)
10. What verb does Joel (and Peter) use for the giving of the Spirit? How does this relate to Romans 5:5. (17)
11. What activities will come as a result of the pouring out of the Spirit as listed here in this prophecy? What does it mean to "prophecy?" (17-18)
12. Does the giving of the Spirit equally to both men and women necessarily erase any gender distinctions for service in the church? Talk about how God can pour out His Spirit equally on all believers and yet still have varying roles of authority and service in the church. (18)
13. Did all the signs referred to in Joel's prophecy actually take place on the day of Pentecost? Have these signs been fulfilled? Some point to the darkness on the day of Christ's death as recorded in Luke 23:44-45. What do you think? (19-20)
14. Sometimes hugely significant events in history are spoken of metaphorically with these kinds of heavenly signs. See Isaiah 13:9, Isaiah 34:1, and Amos 8:9. Do you think this is all that Joel's prophecy means? (19-20)
15. Others say these signs have yet to be fulfilled, and will happen at the end of the world. See Luke 21:11, 21:25-26, Matthew 24:29, and Revelation 6:12. Do you think this is the ultimate fulfillment of Joel's prophecy? (19-20)
16. What is "the day of the Lord", the "great and magnificent day"? This is a major theme in the Old Testament prophets. What does it signify here? (20)
17. How does Joel's prophecy conclude? How important is this for Peter's purpose in his sermon? Note that this is a very important verse for Paul as well in Romans 10:17. What does it mean to "call on the name of the Lord"? (21)

III. SUMMARY:

Peter begins his Pentecost sermon by defending the brothers against the charge of drunkenness by appealing to the prophecy from Joel of the pouring out of the Spirit. He states that this phenomenon was foretold by Joel and has now been fulfilled. He also states that the Spirit has now been poured out on all classes of people, and that more portents in the skies will precede the coming of the day of the Lord. He concludes the quote by the invitation, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

PREACHING CHRIST CRUCIFIED AND RISEN ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE
ACTS 2:22-36

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What approach does Peter use to preach Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected?
2. What is the theological significance of Peter's phrase, "The definite plan and foreknowledge of God"? How does it relate to their actions in Christ's death?
3. How does Peter argue that David could not have been speaking about himself in Psalm 16? Why is this significant? What does this teach you about Psalms?
4. How does Peter conclude his sermon?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PETER STATES THE FACTS OF THE CASE (VV. 22-24)

1. Up to this point, Peter has not mentioned Jesus Christ at all. What is the connection between verse 21 and verse 22? (21-22)
2. What historical facts does Peter cite in the case in verses 22-24? Why do you think Peter refers to Jesus as "Jesus of Nazareth"? (22-24)
3. What function did Jesus' miracles have, according to verse 22? Who did the miracles according to Peter's phraseology? (22)
4. Why does Peter appeal directly to their personal experience of Jesus' miracles in verse 22? Do you think their personal experience with Christ made them all the more ready to repent and believe in His name on the Day of Pentecost? (22)
5. Verse 23 has immense theological significance. What was the ultimate cause of Christ being delivered up to death? Note: "handed over" or "delivered up" is also used in Matthew 27:2, & 27:18; Matthew 27:26; and in Romans 8:32; to speak of the Jews, Pilot, and then God, respectively, handing over Jesus. How do you put all this together? Who really handed Jesus over to be crucified? How does Peter's statement in Acts 2:23 help explain it? (23)
6. What are the theological implications of Peter's phrase, "The definite plan and foreknowledge of God"? What is the "definite plan"? What foreknowledge does God have? What does this teach you about God's plan and will for the world? See Acts 4:28 in which Christ's death is ascribed to God's predestined plan. (23)
7. How does Peter's charge also teach human responsibility in the death of Christ? Does Peter believe the Jews were responsible and guilty for the death of Jesus? See also Acts 4:10. Does Peter believe the Jews were *solely* responsible? (23)
8. How important is the resurrection in the Apostolic preaching of the gospel? See Acts 2:31, 2:32, 3:15, 3:26, 4:2, 4:10, 4:33, 5:30, 10:40, 10:41, 13:30, 13:33, 13:34, 13:37, 17:3, 17:18, 17:31, 17:32, 23:6, 24:15, 24:21, 25:19, 26:8, 26:23. Twenty-four references to the resurrection from the dead! Why do the Apostles focus so much on this? How should this inform our preaching and evangelism? (24)

9. How does Peter describe the resurrection in 24? Why does he say that it was not possible for Jesus to be held by death? This is amazing! For us, it is impossible to escape the hold of death! Jesus “holds the keys of death,” Rev. 1:18. (24)

PSALM 16 QUOTED AND APPLIED (VV. 25-31)

10. How does Psalm 16 function in Peter’s sermon? How does Peter introduce the quotation? (25-28)
11. What title would you give the portion of Psalm 16 that Peter quotes here? What emotional tone does the Psalm have? (25-28)
12. How do these verses help explain Christ’s attitude of joy in Hebrews 12:2? How do they explain the infinitely deep significance of Jesus’ final statement from the cross in Luke 23:46, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit”? With what confidence did Christ die? (25-28)
13. What is Peter’s main point concerning Psalm 16 in verses 29-31? What one word in Psalm 16 makes his entire case? (29-31)
14. How does Peter say David knew what would happen in the future? What “oath” does Peter refer to? See 2 Samuel 7:11-13 and 2 Chronicles 21:7. (30)
15. What particularly did David see about the Christ in the future? (31)
16. What is the immense significance of this approach to Old Testament prophecies made concerning the descendants of David? Note: it is fashionable among even conservative OT scholars to read the “messianic” Psalms and prophecies as primarily having to do with their immediate fulfillment, and not about Christ. How does Peter’s insight here destroy that approach? (29-31)

CHRIST’S RESURRECTION PROCLAIMED, WITH A WARNING (VV. 32-36)

17. How does verse 32 fit into Peter’s message to Israel? (32)
18. What is the theological significance of Peter’s claim that Jesus has been “exalted to the right hand of God”? How does the quotation of Psalm 110:1 fit into that claim? The position of Christ at the “right hand of God” is also central in Acts 5:31, 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3 & 13, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2; and 1 Peter 3:22. What does this signify? (32, 34-35)
19. What is the warning implicit in the Psalm 110:1 quotation in verses 34-35?
20. How does Peter conclude his sermon? What does the word “Lord” mean to Peter here? What about the word “Christ”? (36)

III. SUMMARY:

Peter’s sermon is rich with both Old Testament prophecies and historical facts which serve as fulfillments of the prophecies. It is a masterful proof that Jesus of Nazareth is unquestionably Christ the Lord: His life alone fulfills the prophecies the Jews had cherished for centuries. Christ’s resurrection from the dead is the greatest proof and vindication of Christ there is.

THE FIRSTFRUITS AND THE EARLY CHURCH

ACTS 2:37-47

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How do you explain the incredible response of the crowd to Peter's preaching?
2. What can we learn about evangelism from Peter's passionate persuasion?
3. What do we learn here about life in the early church, and what weaknesses in modern church life do they expose?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE PENTECOST FIRSTFRUITS: 3000 SOULS! (VV. 37-41)

1. How does Luke characterize the crowd's reaction? What does it mean that they were "cut to the heart"? What is the Holy Spirit's role here? See John 16:8. (37)
2. What is the significance of the question, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (37)
3. How does Peter answer that eternally important question? Compare his answer to Jesus' in John 6:28-29 & Matthew 19:16-17, and Paul's in Acts 16:30-31? (38)
4. What does it mean to repent? Do you feel that modern evangelism frequently leaves out a call to repent? Why is this so? Notice the high importance Jesus put on repentance in Mark 1:15, and John the Baptist did in Matthew 3:8. (38)
5. How do you understand Peter's answer, "Repent and *be baptized*"? Look also at Acts 9:18, 10:44-48, 16:14-15, and 16:31-33. What is significant about being immersed in water to signify conversion? Hint: see Romans 6:3-8. How does baptism symbolize identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus? (38)
6. What is the significance of the concept of "forgiveness of sins"? What would your life be like if there were no forgiveness of sins available? (38)
7. What does it mean to "receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"? Does everyone who repents and believes in Christ today receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? (38-39)
8. What does it mean when Peter says "for all who are far off"? What is the significance of this verse for the ongoing mission of the church? Do you think Peter understood the significance of his own statement? See Acts 10:44-48. (39)
9. What does it mean, "everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself"? What is the "call" referred to here? See Romans 8:28-30, and 1 Corinthians 1:24, 26. Who initiated the call? Thus, who is the author of our salvation? (39)
10. What does this teach you about preaching and evangelism? What do you think of exhorting/warning people over their souls? Do you find this easy or difficult? What would be the effect of preaching the gospel accurately but without any emotion, passion, warning or pleading? (40)
11. Who received baptism? What does it mean that they "received his word"? How does this passage show the power of God to transform sinner's hearts? (41)

LIFE IN THE EARLY CHURCH (vv. 42-47)

12. What four things are listed as central to the life of the early church? What is the significance of the verb “devoted”? (42)
13. How important is doctrinal instruction in the life of a church, and why do many undervalue this? How does the “apostles’ teaching” relate to Matthew 28:18-20? Was it enough for these folks just to become “converts”? Explain. (42)
14. “The fellowship” is closely connected with sharing, as seen in 44-45. What do 42, 44, and 45 teach you about sharing and unity in the early church? What do you find remarkable about this? Is this meant to be a pattern for the rest of the church? Do we see the same pattern now? Why, or why not? (42, 44-45)
15. Fellowship (also translated “participation”) has a wider meaning in 1 Cor. 1:9 & 10:16, 2 Cor. 6:14 & 13:14, Philippians 2:1, 3:10, 1 John 1:3, 1:6-7. What insight do these verses give you into the concept of “fellowship” in the early church?
16. What is the “breaking of bread”? What are some options of what it could mean? See verse 46. See also Acts 20:7-11, and Luke 24:30. What does “breaking of bread” mean in these instances? On the other hand, see also Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:20-27. (42)
17. What is the role of corporate prayer in the life of a healthy church? What does it mean to “devote yourself” to prayer? Is there a power and purpose in corporate prayer? See Acts 4:24-31. Also see Acts 6:4-6, 12:5, 12:12, 13:1-3. (42)
18. Do you think the church today gives similar focus to corporate prayer? If not, what explanation would you give for this change?
19. How is a certain fear and awe a healthy, positive thing for a church? What is the importance of the wonders and signs done through the apostles? (43)
20. What do you learn about church life from verse 46? See also 5:42 & 19:9. What would you think about going to church daily for bible teaching? Why do you think the early church was so eager for it and we are apparently not? (46)
21. What other description of the early church does Luke give in 46-47? As you see this, what areas do you think our modern churches need to grow in? (46-47)
22. Who gets credit for building the church in verse 47? See Matthew 16:18. (47)

III. Summary:

Peter concludes his sermon with a passionate appeal to the hearts of the hearers, who were pierced by his preaching. He promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to everyone who repented and believed. God turned their hearts, and three thousand were added to the church that day. Luke gives us incredible insight into the daily life of the early church as these new believers began a marvelous life together. At the center of that experience was the ministry of the word and prayer, as well as breaking of bread and fellowship. The church was lavishly generous and lavishly blessed daily with new people who were added to their number by the Lord.

PETER AND JOHN HEAL A FAMOUS BEGGAR
ACTS 3:1-10

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What purpose does this story serve in Luke's overall plan in Acts?
2. A few centuries ago, Thomas Aquinas went to visit the Pope in Rome. He caught the Pope unawares and found him counting out all his money. The Pope was abashed to be discovered doing his accounting. "I suppose I cannot say - along with the Apostle Peter - silver and gold have I none," he said. "No," replied Thomas Aquinas. "And neither can you say 'in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk'" What do you think of this story from church history and its commentary on modern church life?
3. What does this story teach you about the glory and power of Jesus Christ?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How does this account relate to Acts 2:43?
2. What were the circumstances and place of this great healing? (1-3)
3. What does verse 1 teach you about Peter and John's daily life? (1)

Note: The ninth hour was about three in the afternoon. Concerning, "the time of prayer," Josephus says that public sacrifices were offered in the temple "twice daily, in the early morning and about the ninth hour." This was in obedience to Exodus 29:39. A service of public prayer accompanied these two sacrifices, and there was a further service at sunset.

4. Why is it noteworthy that the beggar was crippled from birth? Why is it significant that he was placed there every day to beg from people going into the temple courts? (2)

Note: The temple gate called "Beautiful" led from the Court of the Gentiles (where anyone could go) to the Court of Women (where any Jew could go, including women). Josephus tells us this gate was made of bronze, but that its workmanship was so exquisite that the value of the gate far exceeded those with gold and silver plate coverings. See Josephus, Jewish War, 5.5.3.

5. Who initiated the interaction? How did John and Peter respond to the beggar? Why do you think Luke makes so much of the eye contact and personal attention between the beggar and the Apostles? (3-5)
6. What did the beggar expect to receive from Peter and John? What did he receive instead? (5)
7. What do you think of the fact that Peter was the one who spoke, not John. (4-6)

8. How do you understand Peter's statement "I have no silver and gold"? What is significant about that, especially in light of Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:34-35? See also Matthew 10:9-10. (6)
9. What is the relationship between Peter's statement, "What I do have I give you" and "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk"? How do you understand Peter's role in this miracle and that of Jesus? (6)
10. What does this miracle teach you about the power of the name of Jesus? See Acts 3:16, 4:7-12, 4:30, 19:5. But see also Acts 19:13 for another type of example. The "Name" of Jesus Christ is not a talisman or magic power incantation. (6)
11. Why did Peter grab him and help him to his feet? What happened when he did this? (7)
12. Since the healing was clearly done by God's power, God had the same power the day before the healing. Why didn't God heal the beggar when He had this power? Were there other beggars in Jerusalem that morning who were not healed? Why does this teach you about God's sovereignty? See John 9:3 and 11:4 to help answer this question.
13. What did the beggar do after Peter raised him to his feet? Why did he jump? Given the fact that he had never walked in his life, what do you think he was feeling at that moment? (8)
14. The text also says that he was praising God. Comment on the role of praise and thankfulness in this situation. Remember the ten lepers from Luke 17:16-18, and only one of them came back to praise God. (8)
15. What was the effect of the beggar's loud, noticeable, "unseemly" display in the temple court? (9-10)
16. Why was it significant that the people recognized this beggar? Comment on the strategic nature of this healing, and the fact that this man sat daily at the most Beautiful of all the temple gates.

III. SUMMARY:

Peter and John continued in the daily life of Judaism, and God used it to give them an opportunity to advance the Kingdom of Christ. They saw a famous beggar sitting at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they gave him something far better than silver or gold, for they healed him by the power of the Name of Jesus Christ. The beggar was overwhelmed with joy and was leaping and praising God, thus gathering a crowd for a gospel presentation.

PETER'S SERMON IN THE TEMPLE
ACTS 3:11-26

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the central point of Peter's sermon?
2. How does Peter use Old Testament prophecy to make his argument?
3. How does Peter tailor his message specifically to a Jewish audience?
4. What can you learn about evangelism from this sermon?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PETER FOCUSES ON CHRIST: GLORY FOR THE HEALING, CONVICTION FOR THE HEARERS (VV. 11-16)

1. What use does Peter make of the healing in Acts 3? What does this teach you about modern evangelism?
2. What was the reaction of the crowd to the healing? Why did the crowd react so strongly? (10-11)
3. How does Peter begin his message? What does he call the people? How does Peter tailor his message specifically to a Jewish audience? (12)
4. What is remarkable about his question, "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this?" (12)
5. What does Peter *not* want them to think concerning this healing in verse 12? (12)
6. Some modern groups practice "faith healing" and focus strongly on the piety and personal holiness of the healer. Indeed 2 Timothy 2:21 links usefulness in service to God with our personal holiness. How does Peter's statement about his personal piety *not* being the source of this healing serve as a counterbalance? (12)
7. To whom does Peter give the credit for this healing? Why does he use the title "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers..."? (13)
8. In what way did God the Father glorify God the Son by this healing? (13)
9. Why does Peter refer to Jesus as God's "servant"? See also Acts 3:26, 4:27, 4:30. See also Isaiah 52:13, 53:11; Matthew 12:18, 20:28; and Philippians 2:6-8. (13)
10. What is Peter's goal in verses 13-15 toward his audience? How does he go about accomplishing it? What does he say the Jews did? (13-15)
11. What role does the resurrection play in the case Peter makes throughout the message?
12. What is the purpose of verse 16 in the message? How does this verse give glory to Jesus Christ? (16)

13. What does verse 16 teach you about faith, its power and its origin? (16)

PETER CALLS FOR REPENTANCE AND FAITH BASED ON THE PROPHETS (VV. 17-26)

14. Does Peter “let them off the hook” in verse 17 after laboring so hard to convict them of sin in verses 13-15? Note that he also speaks of the ignorance of the leaders of the Jews, whom they later condemn clearly in Acts 4:27. (17)

15. How does ignorance reduce guilt in this case? Paul also speaks of his own ignorance of Christ in 1 Timothy 1:13, and Christ said “Father forgive them, they don’t know what they’re doing.” (17)

16. How does Peter use Old Testament prophecy in verses 18-25 to make his points? Why is this an especially powerful appeal to the Jews? (18-25)

17. What does Peter call the people to do in verse 19? (19)

18. What does Peter promise to them if they will repent? (19-20)

19. What does he teach of Christ in 21? What is the restoring of all things? (21)

20. What does Peter threaten to those who will not repent? How does this influence how we should warn people of the eternal consequences of rejecting Jesus? (23)

21. Read Deuteronomy 18:15-19. How does Christ fulfill the role of the Prophet? See also Hebrews 1:1-3. (22-23)

22. How does Peter sum up their Jewish heritage and connect it to Christ in verses 24-25? (24-25)

23. How were those particular Jews “sons of the prophets and of the covenant God made” with their fathers? Why is this a particularly strong appeal to that generation of Jews? (25)

24. What final prophecy does Peter refer to in this message? What is the context of that prophecy (Genesis 22:18)? Did Peter fully understand it, especially the “all peoples” part and the future salvation of the Gentiles? (25)

25. What is the significance of the word “first” in verse 26? See also Romans 1:16. (26)

26. How is repentance and the fruit in keeping with repentance essential to salvation, according to verse 26?

III. SUMMARY:

Peter preaches a powerful second sermon in Acts to a group of Jews in the temple, who have gathered as a result of God’s miraculous healing of a famous beggar. Peter gives all glory to God and to Christ for the healing, convicts them of their sin in rejecting Christ, and calls upon them to repent and believe the gospel. He bases his appeal on fulfilled prophecy and on the evidence of the resurrection.

PETER AND JOHN ARRESTED FOR HEALING A MAN
ACTS 4:1-12

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What consequences of the preaching in Acts 3 are displayed in Acts 4?
2. What is the significance of the fact the Peter is again preaching to the hardened enemies of Jesus Christ?
3. What encouragement does the incredible courage and boldness of Peter by the power of the Holy Spirit give you in your life of personal witnessing for Christ?
4. How significant is Acts 4:12 for pluralistic, post-modern America with its love for “tolerance”?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE ARREST OF PETER AND JOHN, AND THEIR BOLD PREACHING (VV. 1-4)

1. What is the context of Acts 4:1-12? How did the preaching of Peter in Acts 3 bring about the events of Acts 4?
2. Who approached Peter and John while they were preaching? What was their attitude toward Peter and John? Why did they have this attitude? (1-2)
3. Read Acts 23:6-8. What insight does this give you concerning why the Sadducees were offended at Peter’s message? (2)
4. What did these men do to Peter and John? What was the reason given for their arrest and imprisonment? (2-3)

Note: this is the first of a common fate for bold proclaimers of the gospel, one predicted by Christ in Matthew 10:17-19 and Luke 21:12, and fulfilled in Acts 8:3, 12:4, 16:23, 23:35, 24:27, etc. It has also been fulfilled throughout church history, as Christians have been constantly arrested and held in chains by governments like the Roman Empire.

5. What was the outcome of the preaching of Peter as listed in this account? (4)

Note: This is the last numerical indicator of the size of the church. From this point on, Luke merely makes general statements about the numerical growth of the church. See Acts 9:31, 16:5.

6. Someone once said “The persistent, bold and courageous proclamation of the gospel always results ultimately in two outcomes: 1) persecution, 2) conversions.” How is this illustrated in Acts 3-4? How have you experienced this in your own life? (1-4)

THE TRIAL AND PETER’S BOLD STATEMENTS FOR CHRIST (VV. 5-12)

7. What happened next in the account? Who met to decide Peter and John’s fate? When did it happen? (5-6)

8. Who were Annas and Caiaphas? See Luke 3:2, John 18:13, 18:24. How was this encounter for Peter so different from the last time he was near these men at the trial of Jesus? What happened to Peter that he now shows such courage? (5-6)
9. What did Annas and Caiaphas hope that killing Jesus would do to His movement? What do you think they thought about these bold apostles of Christ?
10. What question do they ask Peter and John? How is this question a perfect set-up for the gospel to be proclaimed? (7)
11. What does the text tell us about Peter as he preaches this message? Why is this significant? What is the connection between the filling with the Holy Spirit and boldness in the face of threatening governmental authorities?
12. How are Matthew 10:19-20 and Luke 21:12-15 fulfilled directly and clearly in this account? How does this encourage you?
13. How would you summarize Peter's answer? (8-12)
14. What is ironic about Peter's beginning comment in verse 9? Compare it with Jesus' statement in John 10:32. (9)
15. What is Peter's (and the Holy Spirit's) desire in his message? To whom does he point, and whom does he ultimately want to reach with this message? (10)
16. Why does Peter lay the blame for Christ's crucifixion at their feet? Was that deliberate? Do you think the rulers noticed? See Acts 5:28? (10)
17. How does Peter contrast their actions with God's, demonstrating them to be at enmity with God? (10)
18. How does Peter use the physical evidence of the healing to support their case? Notice that they feel the weight of this physical evidence greatly in verse 16! (10)
19. What Old Testament prophecy does Peter use to support his case? See Matthew 21:42-46 where Jesus used this exact same scripture (Psalm 118:22) to condemn the rulers and elders of the people. How does Peter directly apply it to these specific men in his message? What is the significance of Peter's concept? (11)
20. Acts 4:12 is one of the greatest single verses for evangelism. What does it say? What does it teach you about the "name" of Jesus and its role in salvation? Why does Peter say it is the only name by which we "must be" saved? (12)
21. How significant is Acts 4:12, for pluralistic, post-modern America with its love for "tolerance"?

III. SUMMARY:

Peter and John are arrested for preaching Jesus Christ and His resurrection. The next day, at their trial, Peter and John face Jesus' killers by the power of the Holy Spirit, and Peter gives an incredibly bold defense of their healing in Jesus' name.

THE CHURCH FACES PERSECUTION WITH PRAYER

ACTS 4:13-31

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the long-term significance of Peter's response to the command from the rulers that they stop preaching the name of Jesus Christ?
2. How does the church face the threat of persecution? What can the modern church learn from this early example?
3. What is the theological basis of the believers' prayer? What does this teach you about how the scriptures testify to Jesus Christ?
4. What is the outcome of their prayer meeting?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE SANHEDRIN COMMANDS AN END TO EVANGELISM (VV. 13-22)

1. What reaction did the Sanhedrin have to Peter's bold message? What reasons does the text give for this reaction? What is the significance of the statement that Peter and John were "uneducated, common men"? (13)
2. What does it mean "They recognized that they had been with Jesus"? What caused them to notice this? Was anything ominous about this recognition? (13)
3. What stopped the Sanhedrin from punishing them immediately? (14)
4. What was the problem over which they deliberated in verses 15-17? Why was this such a problem for them? (15-17)
5. Since they could not deny the miracle, given that the man was so well-known as a beggar, why did they not simply believe in Christ? What does this show you about the limitation of the converting power of miracles? (16-17)
6. Why did they not simply kill the disciples or put them permanently in prison at this point? See Matthew 21:24-27 for a similar dilemma they faced earlier. (16)
7. What was their big concern in verse 17? How were they going to accomplish it here? What about later? Did they accomplish it at all? Why not? (17)
8. What command did they give here in verse 18? With what authority did they make this command? See Matthew 23:2-3, Romans 13:1-3, Acts 23:3-5. (18)
9. How did Peter and John reply? Was it wise to tell the Sanhedrin that they would not be obeying the order? Was their reply pleasing to God? If so, what about Matthew 23:2-3 and Romans 13, cited above? What does this passage teach you about the limitations of human government? (19)
10. What does Peter mean in verse 20? Is this a matter of internal or external compulsion? See Jeremiah 20:9 for an internal compulsion; see 1 Corinthians 9:16 for an external compulsion; see 2 Corinthians 5:14 for compulsion which is probably both internal and external. (20)

11. How did the Sanhedrin end the meeting? How does 21-22 show the dilemma of the Sanhedrin. What are the opposing forces that cause their quandary? What should have been central in their thinking but is not mentioned? (21-22)

A POWERFUL AND SCRIPTURAL PRAYER MEETING (VV. 23-31)

12. What do Peter and John do upon their release? How does the church respond to the persecution? What does this teach you about healthy church life? (23-24)
13. What is the doctrinal basis of their prayer to God? On what aspects of God's nature and actions do they focus upon first? (24)
14. What scripture do they quote first? How are they applying this quote? What is the main thrust of Psalm 2, and how does it fit into this situation? (25-26)
15. How does the fact that the kings of the earth cannot stop the advance of Christ's Kingdom help encourage a church facing persecution? How is this prayer meeting applicable throughout all generations of persecuted Christians?
16. How does the early church here in this prayer meeting connect Psalm 2 with the direct events of their situation? (27-29)
17. What is the theological significance of verse 28? Notice that this is referring to "free choices" made by human beings in direct opposition to God! What had God predestined to take place? This word, "predestined" also occurs in Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:5, 11; and 1 Cor. 2:7. (28)
18. What does this prayer teach about God's "hand"? Why do you think they speak of God's "hand"? See also Isaiah 14:26-27. (28)
19. The "plan" of God ultimately determines the actions of the rulers. How do you understand the relationship between God's plan/will here in this text and the will of the rulers? (28)
20. What does the church pray for in verse 29? How relevant is this prayer in the evangelistic life of the church today? How relevant is it in your life? (29)
21. What else do they pray for? How relevant is this in the life of the church today? Why do you think they wanted to do miracles? (30)
22. What were the outcomes of the prayer meeting? What does it mean that the room was shaken? Why do you think God did this? What is the source of the evangelistic boldness in 31? See also Acts 1:8. (31)

III. Summary:

The Sanhedrin, unable to refute the incredible miracle done by Peter and John, and afraid of the people's reactions, commands Peter and John to stop speaking to anyone in the name of Christ. Peter and John boldly say they will continue to preach. After their release, they go back to the church and have a powerful prayer meeting in which they ascribe the events to the sovereign plan of God and ask for boldness and miracles to complete the job.

POWERFUL CHURCH LIFE, DISCIPLINE FOR SIN
ACTS 4:32-5:11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What insights does the end of Acts 4 give into the life and effectiveness of the early church?
2. Do you think it is possible for the modern church to duplicate this church life?
3. What is the difference between the “all things in common” approach to possessions in Acts 4 and communism of the 20th century?
4. What does this account of Ananias and Sapphira teach us about God, human nature, and the early church?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

A POWERFUL CHURCH, SACRIFICIAL AND BOLD (VV. 32-37)

1. How does this section here relate to the previous one in Acts 4:23-31? What do you see in the church life that helps explain the church’s unity? (23-31)
2. What does verse 32 teach you about the spiritual status of the congregation? Was it a mixed group or were they all believers? See also Acts 2:44, 4:4, 8:12, 14:23, 18:8 to see the “believers church.” Why is it important to understand that the church consists of only true believers in Jesus Christ? (32)
3. What else does verse 32 teach you about the early church? How do you account for this kind of unity seen verse 32? See John 17:21 and 17:23. (32)
4. Why do you think people are so hesitant to share their possessions? What can overcome that hesitation? Do you think verse 32 means that there was literally no private ownership of possessions? How would Acts 5:4 help refute this misunderstanding? (32)
5. What does verse 33 tell you about the early church? What does it mean to testify “with great power”? To what specifically did the apostles testify? (33)
6. What do you think it means that “great grace was upon them all”? What is “grace”? How do you think God’s grace was manifested in that early church? How does grace function in each of the following verses: Acts 20:32, 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, Ephesians 3:7-8, James 4:6, Hebrews 4:16, Titus 2:11-12? Each one is a different aspect of God’s abiding grace in our lives! (33)
7. What made verse 34 possible in the early church? Do you think verse 34 holds out the possibility of an end to world poverty? Why/why not? (34)
8. What caused the willingness of people to sell lands and houses for the relief of the poor? What did it signify? What does it teach you about the relationship between the people and the elders, and about church government today? (35)
9. Who was Joseph? What do you learn about him? How does he live up to his name in the course of the New Testament? (36-37)

GOD'S COMMITMENT TO PURITY: ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA (VV. 1-11)

10. How does Acts 5:1-11 connect to the previous section? How do the actions of Barnabas in Acts 4:37 contrast with those of Ananias in Acts 5? (1-11)
11. What did Ananias and Sapphira choose to do with their property? What is the significance of putting the money “at the apostles’ feet”? What does it mean? (2)
12. How did Peter answer Ananias? Compare this with 2 Kings 5:15-27? Where did Peter get his information? See also Job 31:4, 7:17-20, also Psalm 139:7-12. (3)
13. What role does Peter assign to Satan in this sin? How does Satan influence us to do evil? What sin does Peter charge Ananias with in verse 3? (3)
14. What does this teach you about the Holy Spirit? Many who deny the doctrine of the Trinity speak of the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force. How would this account, especially verses 3-4 help support the doctrine of the Trinity? (3-4)
15. How does verse 4 give us specific insight into what the sin was? Was the sin in holding back part of the money for themselves? Or something else? (4)
16. What insight does verse 4 give into the apostolic view of private ownership? How does it help us understand the “all things in common” of Acts 2 and 4? (4)
17. Does it shock you that God did this to Ananias? Why did Ananias pay such a high price for his lie, but many (perhaps including you), have committed similar sins but God was patient? Is there injustice on God's part? See Romans 9:15. (5)
18. What effect did Ananias’ death have immediately on the people there? What effect would such an event have on our churches today? (5)
19. Does all sin deserve immediate death from God? If so, why the procrastination in dealing with our sin? What insight does this story give us into James 4:15, “We ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live...’”? (5)
20. What happened to Sapphira? What is the significance of Sapphira’s separate trial and death? How important was her answer to Peter’s question in verse 8? (7-8)
21. How did Peter answer her and rebuke her? How can people agree to test the Spirit? What folly is it to take God on and risk His severe chastisement? (9)
22. How did the church react? Is this kind of fear of the Lord good? See Exodus 20:20 & Proverbs 1:7. How do you relate it to 1 John 4:18 & Romans 8:15? (11)

III. Summary:

Luke gives us another look inside the workings and heart of the early church. He mentions the power of the apostles in preaching the gospel, and he highlights the incredibly self-sacrificial generosity of the people in the way they handled their possessions. In direct contrast to the open, faith-filled generosity, Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property but deceitfully kept back part of the money for themselves and lied about it. God showed His zeal for the purity of the church and they fell down dead. The event caused fear in both church members and outsiders.

THE PERSECUTION ESCALATES
ACTS 5:12-42

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What are reasons for the explosive growth of the church described in Acts 5?
2. How is human sinfulness put on display in this section, especially on the part of the Sanhedrin?
3. How is God's grace put on display here in this passage of scripture?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE POWERFUL HEALING MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES (VV. 12-16)

1. Why do you think Luke makes so much about signs and wonders in the early chapters of Acts? Were miracles exclusively done by apostles in the early church? See Acts 6:8.(12-16)
2. What does verse 12 teach you about the miracles in the early church? Why do you think there was such a focus on the apostles here? Read 2 Corinthians 12:12. How does that verse help answer the question? (12)
3. What do you think were some reasons for verse 13? Does it relate to what happened to Ananias and Sapphira? (13)
4. How would you relate verse 13 and 14, and what does the connection of these two verses teach you about church growth? What does it teach you about one of the benefits of church discipline? (13-14)
5. What do verses 15-16 teach you about the extent and nature of the apostolic healing ministry? How does it give you insight into modern "faith healing" movements? (15-16)

ARREST, IMPRISONMENT, MIRACULOUS ESCAPE (VV. 17-26)

6. What motive does Luke give for persecution against the church? How does jealousy factor into the arrest of Jesus, the persecution in Acts, and Paul's strategy? See Matthew 27:18, Acts 13:45, and Romans 11:15, respectively. (17)
7. How did the Lord respond to the imprisonment of the apostles? See also Acts 12 and Acts 16. Why does God sometimes effect miraculous escapes for His servants, and sometimes lets them languish in prison for years? See also Hebrews 11:35 for a possible explanation of this. (18-20)
8. What command does the Lord give the apostles? What is the significance of His command to speak "all the words" or the "full message." See Acts 20:27. (20)
9. What were the apostles doing the next morning? What effect do you think the miraculous deliverance from prison had on the Jewish leaders and temple guards? What made it especially remarkable? (21-24)
10. Comment on how passive, fearful, and reactionary these "leaders" have become. (25-26)

11. When the report reached them that these men were standing in the temple court preaching Christ, what did they do? Why were the guards afraid to use force on the apostles? (25-26)

THE ACCUSATION AND PETER'S RESPONSE (VV. 27-32)

12. What accusation do these Jewish leaders make toward Peter and the other apostles? What is implied in the statement that the apostles “intend to bring this man’s blood upon us”? Were they denying responsibility? See Matthew 27:20-25. How has this attitude been on display among Jews as well? (28)
13. What explanation does Peter give for their disobedience of a command not to preach in Christ’s name? Why does Peter rehearse the facts of the gospel again to the Jewish leaders? What conviction do you find in Peter’s message? (29-32)

GAMALIEL'S SPEECH: FLOGGING, RELEASE AND JOY (VV. 33-42)

14. What brought such an extreme reaction from the leaders to Peter’s speech? See Matthew 23:34 and John 16:2 for Jesus’ prediction of this exact reaction. (33)
15. What do you learn about Gamaliel from Acts 22:3? What do you gather from Acts 5 concerning his role in the Sanhedrin? (34-40)
16. How would you summarize Gamaliel’s speech? What role do Theudas and Judas the Galilean play in his speech (what point is he trying to make)? What advice does he give concerning the apostles? (33-39)
17. What one possibility does Gamaliel admit in verse 39 that it seems no one else is even willing to face? (39)
18. How does history support Gamaliel’s basic point concerning Christianity, if it is from human origin? How does history actually oppose Gamaliel’s logic if it were applied to other world religions? (34-39)
19. Do you see anything odd (contradictory) in verse 40? Persuaded by Gamaliel, yet they flog the apostles and order them to stop preaching? What explanation do you think they would give for this? (40)
20. How did the apostles react to their dishonor and flogging? What enabled them to joyfully endure this kind of suffering? See also Matthew 5:11-12. (41)
21. What does verse 42 teach you about the apostolic ministry of evangelism? (42)

III. SUMMARY:

Persecution escalates as the apostles were arrested and put in prison, but the Lord miraculously led them out and they resumed preaching. Arrested “gently” by the fearful guards, they stood trial before the Sanhedrin. Peter answered them boldly, enraging the Jewish leaders who wanted to put them to death. Gamaliel, a renowned teacher of the Jews, persuaded them that this new cult (as he saw it) would soon die out if it was from men, but that it might also be from God. The Jews were partially persuaded, and chose only to flog the apostles rather than kill them. The apostles rejoiced at the privilege of suffering for Christ and resumed preaching.

THE SEVEN SERVANTS AND STEPHEN
ACTS 6:1-15

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the significance of the conflict in Acts 6 and the way the church resolved it?
2. What can we learn about church polity (government) from this passage?
3. What can we learn about roles in the Body of Christ from this passage?
4. How is Stephen a role model for Christians today?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

A PROBLEM SOLVED: THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SEVEN (VV. 1-7)

1. What information does verse 1 give us about the early church? (1)
2. What problem arose in verse 1? What was the “daily distribution”? Why was it vital in those days to distribute food to widows? See also 1 Timothy 5:3-16 for careful teaching on the church’s care for widows. See James 1:27 for exhortation to care for widows. (1)

Note: Hellenistic or Greek-speaking Jews were either converts to Judaism from the Greek world, or Jews who had been thoroughly absorbed into Greek culture so they didn’t speak the Hebrew (Aramaic) language. As a result they were probably looked upon as second-class citizen by the Hebrew Jews. What insight does this give you into the seriousness of this problem? (1)

3. Who initiated the solution to the problem? What was their first step in solving it? (2)
4. What did the apostles mean by, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables?” See also verse 4 for insight into their attitude. Were the apostles unwilling to serve in this humble way, or did they have another motive? What did the apostles feel was their primary calling? (2-4)
5. How does this attitude of the apostles relate to the various teachings on the diverse nature of ministries within the Body of Christ? See Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:14. Is there a need for this kind of division of labor today?
6. How do the apostles propose to resolve the problem? (3)
7. What is the significance of the fact that the church was to select the seven men? After the seven men were selected, what was the significance of the fact that they were presented to the apostles who prayed and laid their hands on them? (3, 6)
8. What does this teach you about church polity (government), and the dynamic between God-ordained leadership (apostles, in this case) and congregational authority/action? (3-6)

9. All of the names were Greek. Why do you think only Greek men were chosen? (5)
10. What was the final outcome of this problem according to the way Luke wrote the account? Note: Luke gives six statements of the advance of the church: 9:31, 12:24, 16:5, 19:20, 28:31. (7)
11. Why did Luke show us that the harmonious solution of this rancorous issue resulted in evangelistic growth? What does this tell you about the evangelistic power available for the modern church, especially in the area of church splits and conflicts? See John 13:35 and 17:21-23. Unity results in gospel advance! (7)
12. What is significant about the fact that a large number of priests became obedient to the faith? What does it mean to be “obedient to the faith”? (7)

THE POWER AND OPPOSITION OF STEPHEN’S MINISTRY (VV. 8-15)

13. What do you learn about Stephen in verses 8-15? How does Luke describe his character and ministry? (8-15)
14. What is significant about the fact that Stephen, not an apostle, did great signs and wonders among the people? (8)
15. Why did opposition arise to Stephen’s ministry? From whom did the opposition come? (9)
16. What does verse 10 teach about Stephen’s ministry? Note: we will see a small sample of his powerful teaching and reasoning from Scripture in Acts 7. (10)
17. Note that one of the regions mentioned from which the opposition arose was Cilicia. See Acts 21:39. Do you think it possible (even likely) that Saul of Tarsus debated Stephen and lost? How would this help explain Acts 8:1?
18. What did Stephen’s opponents do? What charges did they lay on him? (11-14)
19. What do you learn about the content of Stephen’s teaching from Acts 6? How does it relate to the book of Hebrews and to his message of Acts 7? (11-14)
20. What does verse 15 teach you about Stephen? (15)
21. In what ways is Stephen a role model for us today? What characteristics do you see in him?

III. SUMMARY:

A problem arose which threatened the stability and witness of the church: the Greek-speaking widows complained that they were being overlooked by the Hebrew-speaking church in the daily distribution of food. The apostles proposed a solution: the selection of seven worthy men to oversee the issue, so they (the apostles) could continue to concentrate on prayer and ministry of the word. As a result, the church continued its explosive growth. One of the seven was Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Luke gives us insight into his ministry and his hate-filled opponents.

STEPHEN'S BRILLIANT DEFENSE: PART 1

ACTS 7:1-29

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How do the charges against Stephen help explain the flow of his defense?
2. What is Stephen's main point and application of his sermon? How does it relate to Christ's statements in Matthew 21:33-46 and 23:33-39?
3. What major themes of Israel's history are highlighted?
4. What details of the interpretation of Israel's history emerge?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

LESSON FROM THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD: JOSEPH WAS REJECTED (VV. 1-16)

1. What general approach does Stephen take to his defense? In what way does Stephen gain for himself a hearing? (2)
2. What is Stephen trying to prove in his defense, and how does he do it? How does understanding the charges against him (Acts 6:11-14) help us understand?
3. Where and before whom does the trial take place? (6:12-15, 7:1)
4. What title does Stephen give to God? (2)
5. Why does Stephen start with the call of Abraham? What does he teach you about Abraham's call that perhaps wasn't as clear in the Genesis account? (2-3)

Note: one of the fascinations of Stephen's speech is the insight it gives into details of the Genesis account that would be unavailable any other way. Notice also this brings us into interpretive problems and some seeming contradictions that the faithful Bible scholar has to work hard upon in order to resolve.

6. Verse 4 presents a chronological difficulty. In Genesis 11:26-32, it seems that Abram left Haran at age 75, and his father Terah lived until 205, meaning that Terah lived another 60 years in Haran after Abram left. This seems different from Stephen's statement. How would you resolve this apparent difficulty? One option is that Terah's oldest son was actually Haran (the son), and that Abram wasn't born until Terah was 130. Thus when Abram was 75, Terah reached the age at which Genesis 11:32 said he died, 205, and then he left Haran. (4)
7. How does Stephen link this ancient history to their present situation in verse 4? Why do you think he does this? (4)
8. What main point does Stephen make in verse 5 and why? (5)
9. How do verses 6-8 set up the rest of his message? (6-8)
10. How do verses 9-10 lay the groundwork for Stephen's scorching rebuke in verses 51-53? What point is he making here? (9-10)
11. How is Joseph a type (pictorial prophecy) of Christ? (9-10)

12. As Stephen recites Israel's history, he shows how God used Joseph to save Jacob's family from the famine. He also sets the stage for the Exodus, fulfilling the prophecy Stephen referred to in verses 6-7. What is Stephen's main idea in reciting history, and how does it relate to Israel's present spiritual state? (11-15)
13. Verse 14 brings us another challenge. Stephen says seventy-five people came to Joseph in Egypt. The problem comes in comparing this with Genesis 46:27, Exodus 1:5, and Deuteronomy 10:22, which all give the number as seventy. Gleason Archer resolves it this way: "The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament that Stephen would have used) added the seven grandsons of the prime minister [Joseph] and omitted Jacob and his wife from the tally." How would you reconcile these texts? (14)
14. Verse 16 has two difficulties: 1) Stephen says that "they" were buried in Shechem, and it may seem like Jacob was included. This is a problem in that Genesis 50:13 says Jacob was buried in a cave in Machpelah. 2) More seriously, Stephen says that Abraham purchased the tomb in Shechem from Hamor for money. Joshua 24:32 says that Jacob had bought the tomb. How would you resolve these difficulties? Why is it important that they be resolved? A plausible explanation is that Abraham had bought the cave in Shechem originally (he built an altar there in Genesis 12:6-7), but that over time it reverted back to the occupying people of Hamor, thus necessitating a re-purchase by Jacob. (16)

LESSON FROM MOSES AND THE LAW: BOTH WERE REJECTED (VV. 17-43)

15. What is the main idea of the second section of Stephen's message, verses 17-43, on Moses and the law? How did the Israelites deal with them? Why is that question important for Stephen's defense?
16. What promise does Stephen refer to in verse 17? What does verse 17 teach you about the way God manages history and time? (17)
17. What role do verses 17-19 play in Stephen's argument and defense? How do they help prove the truthfulness of God's prophetic word? See also 6-7. (17-19)
18. What insights about Moses' training and upbringing do you get in 20-22? How do you reconcile Stephen's statement that Moses was "powerful in word" with Moses' own protest to God at the burning bush in Exodus 4:10? (20-22)
19. How does Stephen craft his comments about Moses to shape him like a type of Christ? What ways does he cast Moses in a savior-redeemer role? Why does he do that? (23-26)
20. What happened when Moses tried to reconcile the Israelites who were fighting? Why is this response by the Israelites absolutely vital in Stephen's overall defense, and his final rebuke in 51-53? How is the Israelites' response to Moses a type of the Jews' response to Christ? Note that Stephen goes back to this very statement "Who made you ruler and judge over us?" later in verse 35! (26-28)
21. What happened as a result of the Israelites' statement to Moses? (29)

STEPHEN'S BRILLIANT DEFENSE: PART 2
ACTS 7:30-8:1

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is Stephen's main point and application in his defense?
2. What major themes of Israel's history are highlighted?
3. What details of the interpretation of Israel's history emerge?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

LESSON FROM MOSES AND THE LAW: BOTH WERE REJECTED (VV. 17-43)

1. How does Stephen craft the call of Moses at the burning bush as a vindication of the one they had rejected? How does verse 35 strike a triumphant note of vindication? (30-35)
2. Why does Stephen stress that it was an angel who appeared to Moses in the flames of the burning bush? Note that the angel comes into Stephen's message three times: 30, 35, 38. Why is this significant? What does he say about the angel in these passages? (30, 35, 38)
3. Why do you think Stephen, on trial for his life, includes such details as Moses' reaction to the burning bush? (31)
4. What does Stephen say about Moses in verse 35? What roles did God give to Moses? How does that relate to Stephen's trial before the Sanhedrin? (35)
5. What does verse 36 contribute to Stephen's defense? How does it also point to Christ's ministry and vindication? How is Moses a type of Christ in 36? (36)
6. How does verse 37 also point ahead to the Christ? Read Deuteronomy 18:15-19 in context. See also Peter's use of this very prophecy in Acts 3:22-23. How does it contribute to Stephen's defense? (37)
7. What does Stephen call the Law of Moses in verse 38? What does the word "living" mean in this verse? See also Hebrews 4:12. How does this verse help show Stephen's attitude for the Law of Moses? (38)
8. How did the fathers respond to Moses' Law in the desert? Why is this point vital for the overall message he is laying out? What do verses 39-43 contribute to Stephen's defense, and prepare for his conclusion in verses 51-53? (39-43)
9. What does it mean when it says God turned away and gave them over to the worship of heavenly bodies? What does "gave them over" mean? See also Romans 1:24-28 for this idea. (42)

LESSON FROM THE TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE: TEMPORARY (VV. 44-50)

10. How was the temple a source of false security to the Jews? See Jeremiah 7:1-15, especially 7:4. How does the exile to Babylon relate to the future of the Jews of Stephen's time? See also Jesus' prediction in Matthew 24:1-2 and Luke 21:20-24.

11. What does verse 44 teach you about the tabernacle? What is the significance of the “pattern” that God showed Moses? What does Hebrews 8:1-2 mean by the “true tabernacle” and how does it relate to Stephen’s point? (44)
12. What is the significance of verse 48 in the flow of Stephen’s case? (48)
13. How does Stephen use Isaiah 66:1-2 in a powerful way to put the man-made temple in its place? (49-50)

STEPHEN’S APPLICATION: YOU ALWAYS RESIST THE HOLY SPIRIT (VV. 51-53)

14. How does Stephen apply his message? What is his conclusion? How does Jewish Biblical history echo Stephen’s accusation? (51-53)
15. Why does he use such inflammatory words here? What does this show you about Stephen? About the Holy Spirit? (51-53)
16. What does it mean to be “stiff-necked” with “uncircumcised hearts”? (51)
17. Who is the Righteous One in verse 52? How does Stephen compare the actions of their fathers with what they did to Jesus? (52)
18. What final accusation does Stephen make in verse 53? How does it relate to their accusation of him concerning the Law of Moses? What insight does Stephen give about the Law? See Galatians 3:19 and Hebrews 2:2 (53)

The Stoning of Stephen (vv. 54-8:1)

19. How did the Jews react to Stephen’s message? How is it different than the reaction of the people who heard Peter’s message in Acts 2:37? (54)
20. What happened in verse 55? Why does Luke tell us Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit at that moment? What did Stephen see? What is the significance of the posture and position of Jesus? (55)
21. What did Stephen say? How did they react at that point? (56-58)
22. What similarities do you see between Stephen’s final words and those of Christ? How does the manner of Stephen at his death show his character? (60)
23. Why do you think Luke mentions the laying of the clothes at Saul’s feet? What is the significance of Acts 8:1 as a final word to the death of Stephen? (58, 8:1)

III. SUMMARY:

Stephen gives his dramatic and compelling defense against the false charges of the Jews by showing that the Jews always resist the Holy Spirit and always persecute the saviors and deliverers God sends, and always disobey the word of God spoken through the prophets. This culminated in their rejection and murder of Christ, the Righteous One. They respond by stoning him to death, and his death brings great glory to God. He has a vision of the glorified Christ standing at the right hand of God to receive him. He dies sweetly forgiving his persecutors.

PERSECUTION AND THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN SAMARIA
ACTS 8:1-25

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the central lesson of this section, and why does Luke include it in Acts?
2. What effect does persecution have on the church?
3. What can we learn from the ministry of Philip in Samaria?
4. How do we explain the delay between the belief of the Samaritans and their receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

SAUL LEADS THE ATTACK ON THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM (VV. 1-3)

1. What do we learn about Saul's attitude concerning Stephen's death? Why does Luke tell us this? See also Acts 22:20, where Paul testifies about this. The word "approval" means to be in hearty agreement, that it was well-pleasing to him. (1)
2. What happened to the church in Jerusalem at that point? How does Luke describe the details of this first persecution? Note: it is important to understand the historical significance of this moment. This was the first step in the long, bloody march of the church persecuted by the government. It would come to include at least ten distinct persecutions by the Roman Empire, many by warlike barbarian tribal chieftains as Europe was being conquered for the gospel, many by Muslim rulers, many by totalitarian dictators and communist regimes, and many others. (1)
3. Why is it significant that the apostles were not scattered from Jerusalem? (1, 4)
4. Talk about the courage it took to bury Stephen and grieve openly for him. (2)
5. What does verse 3 teach you about Saul and his position with the Sanhedrin? How does it show his heart? How does Paul later speak about this phase of his life? See Philippians 3:6, 1 Timothy 1:13. (3)
6. What effect do you think it had on Saul to drag off men and women and put them in prison? Do you think there were children involved? Did Saul harden his heart against their cries? How would the cries and appeals of innocent men and women have helped convert Saul in the end? 3)

PHILIP'S MINISTRY TO SAMARIA (VV. 4-8)

7. What does verse 4 teach us about the effect of the persecution on the church as a whole? Who did the preaching in this verse? (4)
8. Who was Philip? Do you find it significant that, now that Stephen is dead, another of the "Seven" of Acts 6 gets raised up in his place? What does it teach you about the expendability of leaders in the church? (5)
9. Why was the movement of the church into Samaria significant? How do John 4:9 and Acts 1:8 both help answer this question? (5)

10. What was the focus of Philip's preaching? What does verse 6 teach us about the relationship between miracles and gospel preaching? (5-6)

11. What kinds of miracles did Philip do? What was the effect on the people? (7-8)

THE APOSTLES DEAL WITH SIMON THE SORCERER (VV. 9-25)

12. Who was Simon? How does Luke describe his life and effect on the people before Philip came? (9-11)

13. Why would Simon's career before Philip came make him want the power of the Holy Spirit? What was Simon's motive? (9-24)

14. What kind of adulation did the Samaritans give Simon? Do you think he really could do supernatural but evil things? How would you explain their astonishment? (9-11)

15. C. Peter Wagner has spoken of "power encounters" in which practitioners of evil demonic arts (like witch doctors) are powerfully displaced by the miracle-working power of the gospel. Would you characterize this encounter between Simon and the Gospel preachers as a "power encounter"?

16. What evidence does verse 12 give you for "believer's baptism"?

17. What was Simon's motive for being baptized and following Philip? What insight does Simon's case give you on relying on water baptism as "proof" of salvation? See verse 23. Was Simon "born-again"? It says he "believed," but note John 2:23-24. How do you understand the statement that Simon "believed"? (13)

18. What is the purpose of the account of the apostolic visit to Samaria? (14-17)

19. How do we explain the delay between the Samaritan's belief and their receiving the Holy Spirit? This is especially acute when we read in Romans 8:9, "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." (14-17)

20. What was Simon's response to the apostolic ministry in Samaria? What does it show about his heart and motives? (18-19)

21. How would you characterize Peter's response to Simon? Why was Peter so severe toward Simon? What insight does verse 23 give you into Simon's character? (20-23)

22. What do you make of Simon's response to Peter's stern rebuke and warning? Do you think Simon was genuinely repentant? (24)

23. What does verse 25 teach you about the apostolic ministry in Samaria?

III. SUMMARY:

Luke connects the death of Stephen with the first persecution against the church and shows how it actually advanced the gospel. This section is significant because it shows the power of the gospel to unite Jews and Samaritans, and the next step in fulfillment of Acts 1:8. It also teaches us more about the gift of the Holy Spirit.

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH
ACTS 8:26-40

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this passage teach us about evangelism?
2. What role does the word of God (specifically, predictive prophecy) play in evangelism?
3. What does this account teach us about water baptism?
4. What is the significance of this account for the world-wide spread of the gospel, from Jew only to Jew + Gentile?
5. What does this account teach you about the power and ability of the sovereign God to get a witness to the precise place and time where a seeker needs him?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. How did the Lord direct Philip in this passage? What different means did He use to give him his marching orders? Why do you think the Lord uses these different means? (26, 29)
2. What different forms of transportation does the Lord provide for Philip in this passage? (26-27, 39-40)
3. Did the angel tell Philip why he was being sent down the desert road? What does this teach you about the way the Lord leads us? (26)
4. How does Luke describe the man Philip met on the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza? (27)
5. Was this man a Jew or a Gentile? What is significant about his trip to Jerusalem? What does it teach you about him? How do you think he had heard about the God of the Jews? (27)
6. Ethiopia was a long way from Jerusalem, and is mentioned in some interesting ways in the Old Testament. Sometimes the Old Testament name for it was Cush. What do Jeremiah 38-39 (Eded-Melech); Psalm 87:4, Zephaniah 3:9-10 teach you about Ethiopia and Ethiopians (Cushites)?
7. What was the Ethiopian reading? Note: copies of the Scripture were all by hand, so the Isaiah scroll would have been very valuable. It also shows this man was able to read Hebrew and had a desire to know the word of God. (28)
8. What does verse 29 teach you about the Holy Spirit? (29)
9. How did Philip begin the encounter with this man? Apparently, the eunuch was reading out loud. What did Philip ask him? (30)
10. How did the eunuch answer Philip's question? What did the eunuch invite Philip to do? How does this give us a role model to follow in witnessing, especially in not forcing anything on unwilling or closed people? (30-31)

11. One of the key doctrines in the Christian faith is the perspicuity (essential clarity) of Scripture. This is defined by the Westminster Confession of Faith:
All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.
12. If the scripture is understandable, why did the Ethiopian eunuch need Philip to explain what he was reading? “Do you understand what you are reading?” “How can I, unless someone guides me?” Does the eunuch’s answer contradict the idea of the clarity of Scripture? Why or why not? (31)
13. What passage was the eunuch reading? Some have called Isaiah 53 the greatest Old Testament prophecy of Christ, but some scholars question whether it even refers to Christ. How does Acts 8 help Christians to interpret Isaiah 53? (32-33)
14. What does the prophecy Luke quotes say about Christ? How would you use this prophecy to preach Christ to someone? What about a Jewish person? (32-33)
15. What are the possible interpretations the eunuch presents to Philip? How does Philip deal with this? (34-35)
16. Note that Philip merely “began” with that passage of Scripture. What does this imply about the time they shared together? (35)
17. What happened after they had discussed Christ from these Old Testament Scriptures? Who initiated it in the account? (36)
18. What does this teach you about baptism? Should people who make a profession of faith be baptized immediately or made to go through a testing period first? What about children who make a profession of faith? How young can they be baptized? What passages would you use to make your arguments? (36)
19. Does verse 38 teach you anything about the mode of baptism? Immersion or sprinkling? (38)
20. What happened in verse 39? Is it a miraculous transportation of Philip or does it just seem that way in the text? What is the last we find of Philip? (39-40)
21. What is the eunuch’s lasting response and attitude? If the eunuch and Philip spent time studying the scriptures, they likely went from Isaiah 53 and continued studying. How would Isaiah 54:1 and 56:3-5 bring him great joy? (39)

III. SUMMARY:

Philip’s evangelistic ministry in the life of an Ethiopian eunuch is recounted, especially highlighting how Philip was supernaturally led to witness in just the right way to an honest seeker. The role of the Holy Spirit and of the human witness and of Old Testament Scripture are all emphasized.

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS

ACTS 9:1-19

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Saul's conversion is covered three times in the Book of Acts? See also the accounts in Acts 22:4-16 and 26:9-18.
2. What do the circumstances of Saul's conversion teach you about God? About conversion? About salvation? About God's sovereignty and human will?
3. What does this account teach you about Christ's relationship to His church?
4. How does Christ's statement to Ananias in verses 15-16 help explain the rest of Saul's (Paul's) life?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

CHRIST APPEARS TO HOSTILE SAUL ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS (VV. 1-6)

1. In what spiritual condition does the account find Paul at the beginning? (1)
2. What was Paul's mission? What does it show about his career in Judaism? (1-2)
3. Verse 2 calls Christianity "The Way." What does this teach you? What do you think is the origin of this name? See John 14:6 for help. See also Acts 19:9, 19:23, 22:4, 24:14, 24:22 for uses of this early name of Christianity. (2)
4. What happened to Saul? Where was he and what did he do at that time? What do you make of the fact that the encounter was begun with the flashing of a blinding light from heaven? Compare this to 2 Corinthians 4:6. (3-4)
5. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 6:16 that God dwells in "unapproachable light" and God told Moses in Exodus 33:20 that "no one can see me and live." What can you learn from the intensity of the light that Christ chose to use on that day, enough to blind but not enough to kill? (3)
6. Why do you think Saul fell to the ground? What is the significance of this? (4)
7. Who spoke to Saul at that moment? Do you find it significant that the Lord Jesus Christ chose to speak to Saul Himself? What did He say? (4)
8. How did Saul respond? Amazing paradox: "Who are you?" plus "Lord." Notice that Paul would later preach in Athens in Acts 17:23, "What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you." Paul also said in 1 Timothy 1:13, "I received mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief." How then is John 16:2-3 a commentary on Saul of Tarsus before his conversion? (5)
9. What do you think Saul must have felt as he heard the shocking words "I am Jesus"? How was this both devastating and thrilling to Saul at the same time? (5)
10. What do you make of the fact that Jesus says that Saul is persecuting *him*? How does it relate to the analogy of the "Body of Christ" used in Romans 12:4-5, 1 Corinthians 12:27, and Ephesians 4:12? (4)

11. What does verse 6 teach you about conversion and the Lordship of Christ? (6)

The Aftermath for Saul: Repentance, Fasting, and Prayer (vv. 7-9)

12. What does verse 7 teach you about the nature of the encounter between Saul and Jesus? Why do you think the Lord chose to do it this way? (7)

13. What effect did the light have on Saul? Notice that there may have been lasting physical problems with Paul's eyes. Paul refers to his illness in Galatia and the Galatians' willingness to pluck out their eyes and give them to him (Galatians 4:15) and Paul's statement in Galatians 6:11 about the large letters he used. (8)

14. Why do you think Paul did not eat or drink? Do you think he was in anguish over his soul? Or perhaps mourning over his sins? (9)

ANANIAS OBEYS THE CALL TO HEAL AND BAPTIZE SAUL (VV. 10-19)

15. What does the account teach us about Ananias? What did the Lord call Ananias to do? How did the Lord prepare the way for Ananias to go? (10-12)

16. What does the Lord tell Ananias about Saul? What is significant about this? (11-12)

17. How did Ananias respond to the Lord's call? Can you relate to Ananias's hesitation? How do you think Ananias got his information about Saul's mission to Damascus? (13-14)

18. In what way do verses 15-16 help explain the rest of Saul's (Paul's) life? (15-16)

19. How did the Lord calm Ananias's fears? (16-17)

20. What is Paul's mission going to be? What does it mean to carry Christ's name before the Gentiles? Do you find it significant that the Lord also speaks of the "kings" of the Gentiles? Notice that Paul would ultimately appeal to and stand before the ultimate King of the Gentiles, the Emperor Nero. See Acts 25:11-12, Acts 27:24, and 2 Timothy 4:16-17. (15)

21. What does verse 16 teach you about the Christian life? What does it teach you about Christ's role in and view of suffering? Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-29 for a catalogue of the partial (to that point) list of his earthly sufferings in fulfillment of this statement. (16)

22. What did Ananias do as a result of the Lord's call? What did he call Saul? Why is this significant? What did he tell Saul? (17-19)

23. What happened as a result of Ananias placing his hands on Saul? Do you think Saul received the Holy Spirit before or after he was baptized? (17-18)

24. What does verse 19 teach you about Saul, and about fasting? (19)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke gives us an earth-shattering account of the conversion of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, Saul of Tarsus.

SAUL'S CHANGED LIFE AND PETER'S POWERFUL MINISTRY
Acts 9:19-43

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does the change in Paul illustrate the effects of genuine conversion?
2. What impact did the conversion of Saul have on the church?
3. What can we learn today from Saul's example in evangelism and ministry?
4. What does Peter's ministry show you about Jesus Christ and His power?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

SAUL'S DRAMATICALLY CHANGED LIFE (VV. 19-31)

5. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. How does this section of Scripture demonstrate what Paul wrote there? (19-31)
6. What is the connection between this section and the Lord's original statement about Saul's life in verse 6? Or in verse 16?
7. What does verse 20 teach you about Saul's life immediately after conversion? Compare with 9:2. What is common in these two verses? What is different? (20)
8. How did Saul's ministry in the synagogues set a pattern for his future ministry? See Acts 13:5, 13:14, 14:1, 17:1-2, 17:10, 17:17, 18:4. What was the initial reaction to Saul's preaching in the synagogue? (21)
9. What does it mean that Saul "increased all the more in strength"? What was the nature of his ministry in verse 22? How does this remind you of Stephen? (22)
10. What was the reaction to Saul in Damascus? What explanation do you give for this extreme reaction? Compare this to Jesus in Nazareth in Luke 4:28-30. (23)
11. Why does Luke include Saul's escape from Damascus? What image does it give of Saul? What was the outcome of Saul's ministry in Damascus? (23-25)
12. What role did Barnabas play in Saul's life at this early stage? What does this tell you about gifts, and different roles in the body of Christ? How does Barnabas live up to his nickname, "Son of Encouragement" here? (27)
13. What was the next trial in Saul's life? How did the Lord deliver him from this one? Why do you think people were constantly trying to kill Saul? Martin Luther once said "Always preach in such a way that people will either hate you or hate their sins." Could this be an answer to this question? (28-30)
14. What effect did Saul's removal to Tarsus have on the church of Judea? What other descriptors does Luke give of the church's life at that point? How does it compare to your own local church? (31)

PETER HEALS AENEAS (VV. 32-35)

15. Note the significance of the shift of focus in Acts from Saul (Paul) in Acts 9 back to Peter from Acts 9:32-12:19. Why do you think Luke arranges his work

this way, focusing first on Peter, then on Paul, then back on Peter again, then on Paul for the rest of the book (Acts 13-28)?

16. What does this account teach you about Peter's lifestyle and ministry in those days? (32)
17. Whom did Peter visit? What is the significance of the fact that the believers were called "saints"? This is the second time this word is used in the New Testament, the first being Ananias's statement in Acts 9:13. (32)
18. How does Luke describe Aeneas's plight? How does Peter heal him? What is the significance of Peter's statement, "Jesus Christ heals you."? How does this relate to Peter's similar statement at the time of the healing of the beggar in the temple court in Acts 3:12-13? (33)
19. Why does Peter tell him to take care of his mat? Remember that Jesus also healed a paralyzed man and commanded him to carry his mat, which brought Him into trouble with the authorities on the Sabbath (John 5:8-13) (34)
20. What was the outcome of this healing according to Luke? What does this teach you about the purpose of healings in the book of Acts? What does it teach you about the life of Aeneas after the healing if everyone in that whole region saw him and turned to the Lord? How does this correspond to John 9:3? (35)

PETER HEALS DORCAS (VV. 36-43)

21. What does Luke tell us about Tabitha (Dorcas) and her ministry? (36, 39)
22. Why did they send for Peter? Do you think they expected him to raise her from the dead? Why didn't the disciples in Joppa raise her from the dead? What does this show you about the limitations of miracles in the apostolic era? (38)
23. What does verse 39 show you about the effect of Dorcas's ministry on the people? How does this encourage you about the significance of all Christians and their ministries, male and female, young and old? (39)
24. What procedure does Peter follow in praying for Dorcas? How does this remind you of Jesus in Luke 8:51-56? Do you think Luke is specifically showing the similarities between Jesus' healings and those of Peter? (40-41)
25. How would you characterize Peter's behavior in dealing with the believers in Joppa and with Dorcas? What descriptions would you give of his demeanor?
26. Once again, how does Luke show the outcome of this healing? How is it similar to the other accounts of healings we've already seen? (42)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke gives us further insight into the early sufferings of Paul, as well as the ongoing ministry of the Apostle Peter. Luke seems to be drawing similarities between Jesus' healing ministry and that of Peter. He shows us that compassion for Christ's people and the advancement of the gospel are the key reasons for the miraculous healings.

THE FIRST GENTILE CONVERTS TO CHRIST

ACTS 10:1-48

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the significance of this section in the book of Acts, in the history of the church, and in the history of redemption?
2. How does God work on both ends of the effort to bring Cornelius to Christ?
3. What can we learn about missions and evangelistic ministry see in this account?
4. How does Peter apply the vision of the sheet to Cornelius's situation, and what ramifications does this have for the future of the church?
5. Why is it important that the Holy Spirit clearly filled the gentile believers?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

GOD PREPARES CORNELIUS FOR PETER (VV. 1-8)

1. What does the account tell us about Cornelius? Why are these insights into Cornelius's character important? How does this relate to John 6:45? (1-4)
2. What role did Cornelius have in the Roman army? Why do you think God chose to work first through a centurion? See also Philippians 1:13. (1)
3. What happened to Cornelius that fateful afternoon? How does Cornelius's prayer life factor into this account? Does God hear the prayers of unconverted men? What does verse 4 teach? (3-4)
4. What do you think of Cornelius's heart for the poor? Why is this featured so prominently in the account? What does it teach you about Cornelius? (4)
5. What does the angel instruct Cornelius to do? Why doesn't the angel simply preach the gospel to Cornelius? Why does he want Peter to do it? See Galatians 1:8 and Revelation 14:6; but see also Romans 10:13-15. (5-6)
6. What did Cornelius do after the angel had gone? What do you think his messengers thought about Cornelius and his vision? (7-8)

GOD PREPARES PETER FOR CORNELIUS (VV. 9-16)

7. What happened in Peter's vision? What was the message/point of the vision? Why did Peter object so vigorously to the heavenly command and what does Peter's objection teach you about him? (10-14)
8. What is the significance of the response to Peter's objection? Why do you think the vision happened three times? (15-16)

PETER MEETS CORNELIUS'S MESSENGERS (VV. 17-23)

9. How did the vision of animals prepare Peter to meet Cornelius's messengers? Why do you think the Holy Spirit commanded Peter to go in verse 20? Why would Peter have been hesitant to go with them? See 10:28 and 11:2-3. (17-20)
10. What did the messengers tell Peter, and what was his response? (22-23)

PETER MEETS CORNELIUS (VV. 24-33)

11. What had Cornelius done in preparation for Peter's visit? What does this teach you about Cornelius's heart? What does it teach you about God's ways? (24)
12. What was Cornelius's initial reaction to Peter? How did Peter handle this? What did Peter first say to the crowd and to Cornelius when he went inside? (25-29)
13. How does Peter apply the vision of the sheet to Cornelius's situation, and what ramifications does this have for the future of the church? (28-29)
14. How does Cornelius relate his own experience to Peter? What do you notice about the way he describes the vision and his own readiness? (30-33)

PETER PREACHES THE GOSPEL TO CORNELIUS AND FRIENDS (VV. 34-43)

15. What lesson does Peter say that he's learned through this? Do you think this was hard for him to learn, especially in the case of a Roman soldier? (34-35)
16. How does Peter summarize the events of Jesus' life? How does Peter know that they have heard of these things? (37-43)
17. Why does Peter make so much of his status as an eyewitness of Christ's resurrection? What role do eyewitnesses play in the history of the gospel? (41)
18. What is the significance of Peter's statement that God has made Christ judge of the living and the dead? What role does this play in his gospel presentation? (42)
19. How does Peter finish his gospel presentation? Why would the presentation be inadequate without his final statement in 43? How does this affect you? (43)

GENTILE BELIEVERS BAPTIZED WITH THE SPIRIT AND WATER (VV. 44-48)

20. What does it mean that the Holy Spirit "fell on all who heard"? How did the Spirit's manifest His coming in sight and sound? (44-46)
21. What was the reaction of the circumcised believers who had come with Peter? Why did they react this way? (45)
22. What was the significance of the pouring out of the Spirit? What did it mean in Redemptive History? What did it mean concerning the soon to be hot issue of circumcision and Gentile converts? See Galatians 3:2. (45)
23. What action did Peter take at that point? What was his rationale? Does this teach you anything about the doctrine of baptism? (47-48)
24. Why did they ask Peter to stay? What do you think he spent his time doing? (48)

III. SUMMARY:

God prepared both a God-fearing Gentile to hear the gospel and a God-fearing Jew to bring it to him. This marks the beginning of the gospel advance into the Gentile world, and is a significant moment in Acts and in Christian history. Peter and Cornelius were each prepared by God then brought together. Peter entered Cornelius' home and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit fell on these gentiles and they believed in Jesus. Peter then ordered that they be baptized.

PETER DEFENDS HIS ACTIONS

ACTS 11:1-18

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Luke include such a detailed reiteration of the events of Acts 10? What is the significance of the fact that Luke allotted so much space to these details?
2. What does the attitude of the Jewish believers at the beginning of this chapter teach you about the nature of Jew-Gentile relations at the time, and the difficulties of incorporating Gentiles into the church?
3. What does the fact that the Jewish believers acquiesced to Peter's story and accepted the Gentiles' conversion teach you about them and the early church?
4. What is the theological significance of the statement in verse 18, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life"?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

5. What title would you give this section of scripture? (1-18)
6. What issue comes up right from the beginning of the section? (1-3)
7. What does the attitude of the Jewish believers here teach you about the nature of Jew-Gentile relationships? (3)
8. How does this account help explain Peter's later refusal to eat with Gentile believers and Paul's subsequent rebuke of him in Galatians 2:11-21?
9. How prominent is the issue of circumcision in verse 2-3? Why do you think it is so vital in this account? Does the issue of circumcision get resolved in this chapter? See Acts chapter 15. (2-3)
10. Why do you think Luke gives us such a detailed reiteration through the mouth of Peter in verses 4-15? (4-15)
11. Compare this account with Acts 10. What details does Peter add or leave out, and why? (4-15)
12. How does Luke introduce the recapitulation in verse 4? (4)
13. What role do you think the six brothers who went with Peter played in this controversy? Is there a good ministry principle you can learn from this? (12)
14. One of the significant additions to the account is found in verse 14. Notice that the two times that the angelic visit to Cornelius is related in Acts 10 (1-8, and 30-33), this statement is never mentioned. What does this teach you about the biblical narratives and about bible interpretation? Notice that there is some indication of this idea in Cornelius's statement in Acts 10:33. (14)
15. What is the theological significance of the angel's statement in verse 14, "He will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your

- household”? What does it teach you about Cornelius’s spiritual status before hearing the gospel? How does it show the gospel to be “the power of God for the salvation to everyone who believes” from Romans 1:16? (14)
16. What does the angel’s statement teach you about families and salvation? How did the angel know that the whole household would be saved? (14)
 17. What role does the coming of the Holy Spirit on these uncircumcised people play in this account? What does this teach you about the importance of the visible manifestation of the Spirit in the days of the early church? How could this help explain why we do not currently see the Spirit poured out in ways like that, but we are filled with the Holy Spirit when we believe in Jesus? (15-18)
 18. How does Galatians 3:2 relate to Acts 11?
 19. Why does Peter relate what happened to Cornelius and the Gentiles back to Jesus’ statement about the baptism of the Holy Spirit? See Acts 1:5. (16)
 20. Peter says, “And I remembered the word of the Lord.” Compare this to the reminding ministry of the Holy Spirit that Jesus spoke about in John 14:26. (16)
 21. What conclusion did Peter draw from the evident baptism of the Holy Spirit at that time? (17)
 22. Notice how powerfully Peter applied this insight: “Who was I, that I could stand in God’s way?” This is the very issue the Lord constantly had to struggle with in Peter’s life and in the life of the Jewish people (see Stephen’s accusation in Acts 7:51). Why are we so frequently out of step with what God is doing in the world? (17)
 23. What effect does this news that Peter relates about the coming of the Spirit have on the accusations of the circumcised believers? Were they satisfied? What is their emotional response to this account? (18)
 24. What is the theological significance of the statement “Then, to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life”? What does it teach you about God’s role in our repentance? See also 2 Timothy 2:25 which speaks of God possibly granting repentance to enemies of the gospel. (18)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke recounts in detail the same events of Acts 10, the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius and his family and friends. The context is a controversy Peter had with circumcised believers who accused him of violating Jewish custom by entering Cornelius’s house and eating with him. Peter carefully recounts the events and refers to the six brothers who went with him as eyewitnesses. The obvious sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit on these uncircumcised believers quieted their objections and resulted in praise and worship. God grants repentance as a gift, and Gentiles are among those receiving this gift.

THE FIRST GENTILE CHURCH ACTS 11:19-30

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this account serve Luke's overall purpose in the Book of Acts?
2. What does this account teach you about the advance of the gospel among Gentiles?
3. What do you learn here about healthy church life in the first century?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

OUTREACH TO GENTILES IN ANTIOCH (VV. 19-21)

1. What does Luke describe in verses 19-21? (19-21)
2. Who does the account focus on in verse 19? (19)
3. According to Acts 8:1, who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen?
4. What does this teach you about evangelism in the early church? Who did it?
5. Where did they travel? Note: Phoenicia is the coastline of the Mediterranean north of Palestine. (19)
6. What does Luke tell you about the target of their outreach? Why is this significant? (19)
7. How is verse 20 a radical step forward in the history of the church? How is it different from the cases of the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius? (20)
8. Who did the outreach in verse 20? (20)
9. How successful was it? (21)
10. What does verse 21 teach you about God's sovereignty in salvation? (21)

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE GENTILE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH (VV. 22-26)

11. How does the church leadership in Jerusalem respond to the astonishing success of the gospel among the Gentiles in Antioch? (22)
12. Why did the church in Jerusalem feel they had the need to send Barnabas? (22)
13. In what ways is Barnabas a good choice for the ministry in Antioch? See Acts 4:36-37, and Acts 9:27 for background. What does the account here tell us about him? (24)
14. What was the nature of Barnabas's ministry to the Gentile converts in Antioch? (23)
15. What do you think of the expression "When he came and saw the grace of God"? What "grace of God" did he witness there? What was Barnabas's

reaction to the grace? Suppose he had been of the more legalistic “Judaizer” group, would he have been as glad as he was? (23)

16. Notice the role of encouragement (exhortation) in Barnabas’s ministry there. The Greek word is the same as that in Acts 4:36 describing his nickname “Son of encouragement.” This word has a range of meaning relating to everything from warning to instruction to encouragement when people are down, to exhortation to get moving, to exhortation to keep doing some good thing, and others beside. What does he encourage them to do here? (23)
17. If the doctrine of “once saved always saved” is true, why do we have to be encouraged to “remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose”? (23)
18. What was the outcome of Barnabas’s ministry in verse 24? (24)
19. What major, significant act did Barnabas do next? How is this a major step in Paul’s call as Apostle to the Gentiles? Note: Tarsus is very close to Antioch. (25-26)
20. Why did Barnabas have to “look for” Saul? (25-26)
21. What was the nature of their co-operative ministry in Antioch? How long did it last? What was the outcome of it? (26)
22. What do you make of the fact that disciples were first called Christians in Antioch? (26)

PROPHETIC MINISTRY AND THE FAMINE DURING CLAUDIUS’S REIGN (VV. 27-30)

23. What do verses 27-30 teach you about church life in the first century? (27-30)
24. What do you learn about the way that the church in Jerusalem related to other churches? (27-30)
25. What do you learn about the gift of prophecy from these verses? (27-30)
26. How does verse 28 help to prove the historicity of Luke’s account? (28)
27. What practical problem arises in this section, and how does the church address it? See Proverbs 27:12. (28-30)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke describes the remarkable advance of the Gospel among Gentiles in Antioch and some aspects of the church life and ministry there. This is the beginning of the great harvest of Gentiles that has continued to this present day.

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON, HEROD STRUCK DOWN
ACTS 12:1-25

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does Peter's deliverance teach us about how God uses prayer?
2. How do we account for God's different dealings with James and Peter?
3. In what ways can persecution be both a blessing and a curse?
4. What does the account of Herod teach us about human nature and about God?
5. How does Herod's death show the truth of Isaiah's statement in Isaiah 40:6-8?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PERSECUTION, IMPRISONMENT, MIRACULOUS RELEASE (VV. 1-19)

1. How does Satan respond to the events of Acts 1-11? Was this unexpected? (1)
2. Who encouraged Herod's efforts in persecution? Why? (3)
3. How does the large number of soldiers given to guard one man highlight God's power to save? See Joshua 23:10 and Isaiah 37:36. (4)
4. How did the church respond to Peter's imprisonment? (5)
5. What does the "last minute" nature of Peter's deliverance teach us? What was Peter doing right before his execution? (6)
6. Was this a vision or an actual appearance of an angelic form? How can we tell? What did Peter think was going on? When did he realize that he was free? (7-11)
7. What three obstacles does God overcome to free Peter? (6, 7, 10)
8. What is the significance of the angel's command for Peter to dress himself? Remember John 21:18-19. Does the angel take an active or passive part in Peter's escape? (7, 10)
9. Why do you think God chose to be glorified by delivering Peter instead of through Peter's martyrdom? (11)
10. Where did Peter go after his escape? Why? What key action did Rhoda neglect in her joy at hearing Peter's voice? (12-14)
11. What does the response in verse 15: "it is his angel" mean? (15)
12. What is interesting about the response of the disciples to Rhoda's news, considering that they had just been praying for Peter? Why were they surprised? See Ephesians 3:20. (16)
13. Why did Peter not stay with the Christians? Is it right to hide from persecution and danger? Judges 6:11, 2 Sam. 17:17-22, and Acts 9:25. (17)
14. What was the response of the soldiers to the discovery of Peter's disappearance? What about Herod? (18-19)

THE DEATH OF HEROD AGRIPPA: ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS (VV. 22-23)

Josephus gives a very exact account of Agrippa's death which lines up with Luke's:

On the second day of which shows [Agrippa] put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theater early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another, (though not for his good,) that he was a god; and they added, "Be thou merciful to us; for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature." Upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. But as he presently afterward looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him; and fell into the deepest sorrow. A severe pain also arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. [Five days later, he was dead.] Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 19.8.2

15. As you compare Luke's account to that of Josephus, what do you notice? Does this give you a sense of the accuracy of Luke's account?
16. What circumstances led to Herod's speech to the crowd? What did Tyre and Sidon want from Agrippa? How do their motives govern their actions? (20-21)
17. How would you characterize their statement in verse 22? What is the difference between encouragement and flattery? What purpose did their flattery serve? (22)
18. Read Proverbs 27:21. What does that mean? How this demonstrated in Acts 12?
19. What happened after Herod heard the praise of the crowd? Would you call this a sin of omission or commission? Why did the angel of the Lord strike Herod down? What does this teach you? (23)
20. Why do you think the account mentions worms? What is the purpose of this in God's judgment on Herod? (23)
21. Why is it so important that we glorify God for all our achievements and accolades? Why is God so motivated to strike down this kind of self-worship? How does this relate to Romans 1:21?
22. What application or warning can we take from this account for our lives?

THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL (VV. 24-25)

23. How is verse 24 a fitting end to the entire chapter? Why does Luke want us to know this? See also Acts 6:7 & Acts 9:31 to see the church growth. (24)
24. What service does verse 25 refer to? Why does Luke include this? (25)

III. SUMMARY:

Persecution, including the death of James and imprisonment of Peter, forces the Christians to prayer. God hears and responds with power, miraculously freeing Peter from prison by an angel. Conversely, Herod is struck down for his vainglory.

PAUL AND BARNABAS AND THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY ACTS 13:1-12

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What is the significance of this passage in the Book of Acts and the flow of Redemptive History?
2. How is the Church at Antioch a model for all local churches to follow?
3. How does God glorify Himself in the events at Cyprus?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

SAUL AND BARNABAS SENT OFF BY THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH (VV. 1-3)

1. What do you learn about the church at Antioch in verses 1-3? (1-3)
2. What is the significance of the multiplicity of teachers at Antioch? How does it line up with the doctrine of the Body of Christ, and of church leadership? (1)
3. How did the call of Barnabas and Saul to missionary work come? (2)
4. What is the role of fasting in the life of an individual Christian? In the life of a congregation? (2)
5. What does this section of Scripture teach you about the Holy Spirit? (2, 4)
6. How do you think the Spirit communicated His will to the church?
7. Why is fasting and prayer reemphasized in verse 3? (3)
8. What other “sending” actions are done in verse 3? (3)
9. How is the Church at Antioch a model for all local churches to follow?

THE MINISTRY IN CYPRUS (VV. 4-12)

10. What does it mean that they were “sent out by the Holy Spirit”? (4)
11. Seleucia is a port city near Antioch. How would you compare and contrast their attitude to that of Jonah, who also went down to a port city, paid his fare and went aboard? (4)
12. Why did they choose to go to Cyprus first? Remember that the founders of the church in Antioch were men from Cyprus and Cyrene (Acts 11:20), and that Barnabas himself was from Cyprus. See Acts 4:36. (4)
13. What was their strategy on landing in Salamis? Why do you think they began at the Jewish synagogue? Note: Romans 1:16 says “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Thus the “synagogue first” approach was their regular pattern throughout their missionary journeys. See verse 14 of this chapter, as well as 14:1. (5)
14. What else do you learn from verse 5? Note: John is John Mark, at whose house the prayer meeting of Acts 12 was held. He was Barnabas’s cousin (Colossians

- 4:10) and would later be the source of great conflict between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:37, 39.
15. Notice how Luke skips their ministry throughout the whole island of Cyprus. The text merely says they traveled through the whole island. What happened when they got to Paphos? (6)
 16. What do we learn about Bar-Jesus (Elymas)? What do we learn about Sergius Paulus? (6-8)
 17. C. Peter Wagner speaks of the “power encounter” in which missionaries display supernatural power in the name of Jesus to confront the powers of wickedness and put them to flight so that onlooking lost people can be saved. How does that happen in this account? (9-11)
 18. Why is Luke careful to tell us that Paul was “filled with the Holy Spirit” when he spoke so sharply against Elymas and condemned him to blindness? What does this teach you about the Holy Spirit? (9-11)
 19. Is Paul displaying the “fruit of the Spirit” here? How would you reconcile Paul’s strong words to Elymas with the “Spirit-filled life”? (9-11)
 20. What other important fact do we learn in verse 9? Does the verse mention a name change? (9)
 21. What is the significance of the expression “son of the devil”? Notice that Jesus also uses this concept in John 8:44. (10)
 22. What happened after Paul spoke these sharp words? (11)
 23. What does this encounter teach you about dealing with open enemies of the gospel? (8-12)
 24. What was the outcome of this incredible miracle? What possible benefits could come as a result of a Christian proconsul? What does this teach about the power of the gospel? (12)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke describes a major turning point in the history of the church, the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas. They are sent out by the church at Antioch with fasting and prayer, and they travel to Cyprus. There they have a “power encounter” with Elymas the sorcerer and strike him blind. The onlooking proconsul Sergius Paulus believes the gospel as a result.

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT PISIDIAN ANTIOCH
ACTS 13:13-43

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What do you learn about evangelism and the message of the gospel from Paul's sermon in Pisidian Antioch?
2. How does this message enforce the relationship between history and the gospel?
3. How does Paul support his preaching from the Old Testament scriptures? Why does Paul use so much of a "promise-fulfillment" approach in this message?
4. What does the initially positive response teach you?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE INVITATION TO PREACH (VV. 13-15)

1. What significant thing does Luke tell us happened in verse 13? See Acts 15:36-41 for the fallout. (13)
2. What did Paul and Barnabas do when they reached Pisidian Antioch? (14)
3. What do you learn about synagogue life from verse 15? (15)
4. Do you look on the gospel as a "word of encouragement"? Note: the word is *paraklesis* which is related to the word for Comforter in John 14-16. It has a range of meaning, from "consolation" to "exhortation" to "encouragement" to "warning." How is the gospel all of these? (15)

SERMON SECTION I: THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS (VV. 16-22)

5. Why do you think Paul is giving the Jews a recounting of their own history, which they knew so well? (16-22)
6. To Whom does Paul address at the beginning of his message? Do you think it is significant that he addresses not just Jews but God-fearing Gentiles? (16)
7. How does Paul begin his sermon? Why do you think he begins with the patriarchs, and specifically God's election of the patriarchs? (17)
8. In what way did God exalt or bless or prosper or make great the people of Israel during their stay in Egypt, especially in that they were slaves? How is this "exaltation" a fulfillment of the promise to Abraham? (17)
9. What does Paul say about the relationship of the Jews to God and He to them? (17-20)
10. What is the purpose of recounting the history of the Kingship leading up to David? (20-22)

SERMON SECTION II: THE HISTORY OF JESUS (VV. 23-31)

11. How does Paul shift in Section II to discuss Jesus? How does Paul link Christ to Section I of his message? (23, 34)

12. What role does John the Baptist play in this message of Paul's? (24-25)
13. How does Paul characterize the gospel in verse 26? (26)
14. Why does Paul mention so prominently the Jewish rejection of Jesus in verses 27-29? What other theme does Paul weave into this Jewish rejection? (27-29)
15. How does the resurrection of Christ and the witnesses to this resurrection factor into the message? (30-31)

SERMON SECTION III: RESURRECTION PROCLAIMED & PROVEN (VV. 32-37)

16. What is the "good news" (lit. gospel) that Paul is telling the Jews? Why do you think Paul uses so much of a "promise-fulfillment" motif in this message? (32)
17. How does Psalm 2 relate to the resurrection? Do you see the connection? (33)
18. Likewise, do you see the connection of Isaiah 55:3 to the resurrection? (34)
19. The connection of Psalm 16 is the easiest to see. How does this verse cinch the argument Paul is making? Notice that Paul is using the same argument that Peter did on Pentecost. See Acts 2:25-31. (35-37)
20. How does the fact that David's body decayed help prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ? (36-37)
21. What does Paul mean by "For David after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep"? What does this teach you about your life? (36)

SERMON SECTION IV: APPLICATION TO THE JEWISH HEARERS (VV. 38-41)

22. How does Paul apply his sermon? As you look out across this application section, and indeed throughout the whole sermon, what commands does Paul give his hearers? How would you characterize the statements he makes from the beginning to the end? What does this teach you about evangelism? (38-41)
23. What is the good news, according to verses 38-39? How is this good news for you personally? (38-39)
24. What warning does Paul give at the end and how does he support it? (40-41)
25. Note the contrast of verse 32 "We bring you the good news" and verse 40 "Beware..." What does this teach you about the gospel? Compare with 2 Corinthians 2:15-16. (32)
26. How do these Jews in the end fulfill the threat of Habakkuk 1:5? (45, 49-51)

THE INITIALLY POSITIVE REACTION (VV. 42-43)

27. How do you account for the initial reaction to Paul's message? (42-43)
28. What does it mean to "continue in the grace of God"? (43)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul and Barnabas preach the gospel boldly and powerfully in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, and meet with an initially positive reaction.

THE GOSPEL IN ANTIOCH AND THEN ICONIUM
ACTS 13:44-14:7

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does the reaction in Antioch to the gospel teach you about human responses to the gospel? What does it teach you about missions?
2. How can you benefit from considering the way Paul and Barnabas responded to persecution?
3. What elements of effective gospel preaching are on display in Iconium?
4. How does the mixed Jewish response to the gospel in Iconium help explain the issues and doctrines of Romans 9-11?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE GOSPEL BOTH HONORED AND REJECTED AT ANTIOCH (VV. 44-52)

1. Why did so many people in Pisidian Antioch turn out the next Sabbath to hear the word of the Lord? Did this crowd include Jews and Gentiles alike? What is the significance of this? (44)
2. Why do you think the Jews were filled with jealousy? What do the following verses teach you about Jewish jealousy of Christ and of Gentile believers: Deuteronomy 32:21, Matthew 20:15, Matthew 27:18, Romans 10:19, Romans 11:11-14, Acts 5:17, Acts 17:5? (45)
3. How did Paul and Barnabas answer them? Why does Luke say they answered them “boldly”? Notice Paul says Isaiah spoke to the Jews “boldly” in Romans 10:20. Why did it take boldness to deal with the issue of Jewish opposition to Gentile believers in the Messiah? (46)
4. What is Paul’s main point in his answer to the hostile Jews? What does he mean by “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you”? What does he mean by “you...judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life”? (46-47)
5. What is the theological significance of this Jewish rejection of the gospel? (See Romans 9-11)
6. Read Isaiah 49:5-7. What does it mean, “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and bring back the preserved of Israel”? Who is speaking to whom? What does it mean, “I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth”?
7. How does the quotation of Isaiah 49:6 explain Paul’s actions in turning to the Gentiles? Note: Paul and Barnabas said “For so the Lord has commanded us...” and then quotes God’s statement to Christ. How is God’s statement to Christ a command for the church? (46-47)
8. What was the Gentile reaction to Paul and Baranabas’s statement? What does it mean that they glorified the word of the Lord? See 2 Thessalonians 3:1. Does the Lord have power over whether or not His word is honored? (48)

9. What does verse 49 teach you about the spread of the gospel at that time? How does this verse give you insight into Romans 15:23? (49)
10. How did the Jews operate and organize the persecution against the gospel? What is the significance of Paul and Barnabas “shaking the dust off” against Pisidian Antioch? See Matthew 10:14-15. (50-51)
11. What do you make of verse 52? See also Philippians 4:11. Would this describe you? How could suffering persecution for the gospel give you joy? (52)

POWERFULLY EFFECTIVE PREACHING IN ICONIUM (VV. 1-7)

12. How does this section connect with the previous one (Acts 13:44-52)?
13. Why did they go to the Jewish synagogues first? What was the outcome of their preaching? How do you explain the fact that the “great multitude” of believers were Gentiles, if Paul and Barnabas were preaching at a synagogue? (1)
14. Luke says they “spoke in such a way that a great number...believed.” How do you reconcile the need for persuasive preaching with God’s sovereignty in salvation? Should we strive for great preaching? Should we rely on God’s sovereignty? How do we do both? See 1 Corinthians 3:6-7. (1)
15. What happened in verse 2? What does it mean that they “poisoned their minds” against the brothers? How do verses 1-2 relate to Romans 11:7 & 9:22-24? (1-2)
16. What is the role of signs and wonders in verse 3? How did they serve as a witness to validate the gospel Paul and Barnabas preached? See Hebrews 2:4. (3)
17. Why is division so frequently the result of faithful gospel preaching? See Luke 12:51-53; also John 7:12, 7:43, 9:16, 10:19 (4)
18. What caused the apostles to flee the city? Do you see the providence of God protecting them here? Is it ok to flee persecution or should we be willing to stand and suffer? See Matthew 10:23 for guidance. (5-6)
19. What did they do after fleeing? Do you find their perseverance remarkable? How do Colossians 1:28-29 and 1 Corinthians 15:10 help explain this amazing perseverance? See also Acts 14:19-21. (7)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul and Barnabas continue a powerful preaching ministry in Antioch, resulting in the two sure signs of a Spirit-empowered evangelistic endeavor: conversions and persecution. The church is established in Asia Minor at the cost of persecution, as Paul and Barnabas are expelled. Paul and Barnabas give their marching orders: “I will make you [Christ] as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” This is the story of Acts and of the church since then. After being expelled from Pisidian Antioch, Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel powerfully and effectively in Iconium. The Lord confirmed the message with signs and wonders. The outcome is reported: a great multitude of conversions and bitter opposition. So Paul and Barnabas fled and carried on their ministry in Lystra.

THE MIRACLE AT LYSTRA
ACTS 14:8-20

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this passage teach you about human nature?
2. What does this passage reveal about the power of God?
3. What does Paul mean when he says, “In past generations, he [God] allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways”?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE MIRACULOUS HEALING & THE CROWD’S REACTION (VV. 8-13)

1. What role does the miraculous healing of the crippled man have in the preaching of the gospel at Lystra? (8)
2. What was the man doing before Paul healed him? (8)
3. What does it mean that Paul “saw that he had faith to be healed?” How do you explain this? (9)
4. What is the connection between faith and healing here? How do you understand that connection?
5. How did the healing occur? (10)
6. How did the crowd react to this healing? What did they think happened? (11)
7. What do you learn about this pagan religion from this experience? Note: “Divine visitations” were very common in Greek religion. Zeus was especially fond of taking on a human appearance and having trysts with beautiful human women. How does this aspect of pagan religion help explain Pontius Pilate’s fear of Jesus in John 19:7-9?
8. Which gods did they identify with the missionaries? Note: Zeus was the King of the gods, Hermes usually the fleet-footed messenger of the gods. (12)
9. After the people had identified which god each of them was, what happened next? How does this reveal what Paul later wrote about in Romans 1:21-23? (13)

THE ANGUISHED PREACHING OF PAUL AND BARNABAS (VV. 14-18)

10. When Paul and Barnabas understood what the people were doing, how did they react? What does this show you about their heart? (14-15)
11. How do they try to turn the people from their idolatry? What do they say about the Lycaonian religion? (15)
12. What do they teach about God in verse 15? Why do they start with the doctrine of creation? (15)

13. What does Paul mean when he says, “In past generations, he [God] allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways”? He also taught the same thing in Acts 17:30. How do you understand this? (16)
14. What does verse 17 teach you about God’s “common grace”? Note: “common grace” is the name theologians give to the good gifts God lavishes on people all over the world, whether they acknowledge Him or not. Another clear teaching of this is in Matthew 5:44-45. What does this teach you about God?
15. Why does Paul call common grace a “witness,” saying God has not left Himself without a witness? (17)
16. How could you use verse 17 to witness to an unbeliever who is bitter against God for some tragedy (perhaps the loss of a parent early in life, etc.) in his/her life, and who feels God is cruel? (17)
17. What does verse 18 teach you about human nature? (18)

THE FICKLE CROWD: FROM WORSHIP TO MURDER (vv. 19-20)

18. What shocking development happened next in the account? (19)
19. What does this teach you about human nature? (19)
20. What precipitated this attack on Paul? How does this give you an insight into the amazing nature of Paul’s love in Romans 9:1-3? (19)
21. How do you explain Paul’s amazing survival of being stoned? Some commentators relate it to Paul’s account of being “caught up to the third heaven,” in 2 Corinthians 12:2. See also Paul’s listing of his sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11:25. (19-20)
22. What does verse 20 teach you about Paul’s determination in preaching the gospel? How do you account for this amazing perseverance? See Colossians 1:28-29 (20)
23. How does Paul’s perseverance in the midst of suffering and his determination to preach the good news, encourage and challenge you in your Christian witness?

III. SUMMARY:

Paul and Barnabas have a remarkable taste of the depravity of the human heart and its immense fickleness in Lystra as a crowd goes from one extreme (worshiping Paul and Barnabas) to the other (trying to murder Paul). Only the grace of God in Christ can save sinners! Paul and Barnabas preached that gospel with power there, and at least one man had faith to believe.

PAUL AND BARNABAS STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

ACTS 14:21-28

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach us about Paul and Barnabas's concern for the local church? How can we emulate that concern?
2. What can we learn here about local church government?
3. What kind of tribulations face us as we journey to heaven? Why did Paul and Barnabas tell the churches ahead of time?
4. What example do Paul and Barnabas give us of pastoral ministry in this section?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

STRENGTHENING NEW CHURCHES (VV. 21-23)

1. How successful was Paul and Barnabas's first missionary journey? See the evidence in Derbe (Acts 14:2), Iconium (Acts 14:1), and Antioch (Acts 13:48-49). (21)
5. Why did Paul and Barnabas return to the cities they had been in earlier? What kind of courage did it take to return, given the way they'd left Lystra (Acts 14:19), Iconium (Acts 14:4-6), and Antioch (Acts 13:50)? (21-22)

Note: Paul's intense and overwhelming concern for the churches he planted is a major theme in his epistles. We see it as the crowning "weakness" in his listing of his apostolic sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11:28-29, as what caused him the most agony. We see it in Galatians 4:19-20 as Paul says he is in the "anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed" in them. We see it in Acts 15:36, when Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are." The clearest passage of all on this amazing concern Paul had, however, is in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-3:13. Read those two chapters. Comment on Paul's emotions and actions toward that church he planted.

6. What did Paul and Barnabas do for the disciples in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch to strengthen them? (22)
7. What does it mean that they encouraged them to continue in the faith? Why do believers need this encouragement? What means do you have in your life to receive encouragement in your faith and also to encourage others in their faith? (22)
8. Why do Paul and Barnabas specifically mention the great tribulations the disciples would face to enter the Kingdom of God? Why did they mention these

sufferings ahead of time? Why did Christ mention them ahead of time in John 16:1-4, 33? (22)

9. How does this warning relate to 1 Peter 4:12-18? Why are the righteous “scarcely saved” (1 Peter 4:18)? Why does Paul speak of “entering the Kingdom of God”? Weren’t the disciples already in the Kingdom of God? (22)
10. What else did Paul and Barnabas do in these churches to help strengthen them? What are “elders”? See Titus 1:5-11. Note that there was a plurality of elders in each church? Why is this significant? (23)
11. How were the elders selected and set in their position in this case? How does this happen in Titus 1:5? What does this teach you about church government? Does the fact that Paul and Barnabas “appointed” elders undercut the concept of congregational autonomy? (23)
12. How are godly elders a gift of God to a church? See Hebrews 13:17.
13. What did Paul and Barnabas do to establish these elders in each congregation? (23)
14. What does it mean that they “committed them (the churches) to the Lord in whom they had believed?” (23)

RETURNING AND REPORTING IN ANTIOCH (VV. 24-28)

15. What did Paul and Barnabas do on their return trip to Antioch? (24-25)
16. Why do you think they returned to Antioch? Why not stay in Asia Minor with these new churches and shepherd them? (24-26)
17. As they looked back on the work they had accomplished, what thoughts do you think were going through their minds? What moments stuck out? What achievements? What pains?
18. How did they report the outcome to the church at Antioch? What does verse 27 teach you about the way Paul and Barnabas spoke of their achievements? (27)
19. What does it mean when it says that God had “opened a door of faith to the Gentiles”? (27)
20. What does verse 28 teach you about Paul and Barnabas’s relationship to the church at Antioch? (28)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul and Barnabas retrace their steps in Asia Minor, strengthening the new churches in each community where they had preached the word of the Lord. They prepared them for persecution and appointed elders in each church. Finally, they returned to their home, sending church in Antioch and reported all that God had done through them in this incredible missionary journey.

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL ON CIRCUMCISION: PART 1

ACTS 15:1-11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Luke give so much space to this Council in Jerusalem? What is the significance of this council and of the issues they discussed?
2. Why is this issue of circumcision's role in the gospel so vital in the Christian faith?
3. What are the arguments *for* circumcision being required of Gentile converts?
4. What are the arguments *against* circumcision being required of Gentile converts?
5. What is the significance of the way the church went about solving this key doctrinal issue (namely, apostles and elders meeting to discuss it and render decisions for the church to obey)?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

BACKGROUND

1. Read Genesis 17:9-14. What does God require of Abraham in this passage? What is the significance of the words “throughout their/your generations” in verses 9 and 12, and “your offspring after you” in verse 10, and especially “an everlasting covenant” in verse 13. Do not these verses imply that circumcision was a permanent requirement for the Jewish people?

Note: On the one hand, the Hebrew word translated here “everlasting” is used in Genesis 3:22 to refer to everlasting life, in Genesis 9:12 to refer to the everlasting sign of the rainbow to Noah, and in Genesis 21:33 to refer to God as the Everlasting God. In Exodus 15:18 it is used to say that God will reign forever and ever. On the other hand, it is also used in Exodus 12:14 to refer to the Passover as a “statute forever,” in Exodus 27:21 to refer to the burning of the oil lamps in the tabernacle, and Exodus 29:9 to state that the priesthood of Aaron is a “statute forever.” So if the word “everlasting” is tied to circumcision, it will also be tied to many aspects of the Old Covenant, which the Book of Hebrews says has been superseded by Christ's perfect priestly ministry. Finally, the word is used to forbid the eating of blood or fat in Leviticus 3:17. This is interesting because Jesus declared all foods clean in Mark 7:19.

2. Read Exodus 4:24-26. What does it teach you about circumcision?
3. Read Galatians 2:11-21. The issue the Jerusalem council was deciding went deeper than merely the potential necessity for Gentile circumcision. Rather, the core of the debate was whether the Gentiles had to keep the Law of Moses. It really has to do with the answer the Church would give to the question of the Philippian jailer: “What must I do to be saved?” The Circumcision Party advocated obedience to the whole Law of Moses, including circumcision. Circumcision was merely a doorway into a whole understanding of salvation that Paul utterly rejects in Romans 4 and Galatians 1-6. See Galatians 5:3.

THE CONTROVERSY OVER CIRCUMCISION (VV. 1-5)

4. What event precipitated this whole controversy? How is this similar to what happened in Galatia with Peter? See Galatians 2:12 What were these men teaching in Acts 15:1? (1)
5. How did Paul and Barnabas react? What did the church do to resolve it? (2)
6. What do Acts 15:2 & 6 teach you about early church polity (government)? What is the significance of the way the church solved this key doctrinal issue? (2, 6)
7. What happened along the way as Paul and Barnabas traveled up to Jerusalem? What does this teach you about the early church, and about Christian fellowship? (3)
8. What happened when Paul and Barnabas arrived at the church in Jerusalem? How were they received? (4)
9. Who stood up to oppose Paul and Barnabas? What does verse 5 tell you about them? What does this teach you about the significance of circumcision for the whole of the Christian life and for the doctrine of salvation? (5)
10. How do you think the history of the church would have been different if the Council at Jerusalem had decided to require Gentiles to become Jews by circumcision and by obedience to the Law of Moses? How would it have affected evangelism and missions among the Gentiles for two thousand years?

THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS CONSIDER THE MATTER (VV. 6-11)

11. This is the first deep doctrinal dispute recorded in church history. What does the fact that there are doctrinal disputes in the church post Pentecost teach you?
12. What points does Peter make in his presentation? Given that Peter is considered to be the first “pope” by the Roman Catholic church, what do you find significant about Peter’s role in resolving this controversy?
13. What is the centerpiece of Peter’s argument concerning what God has done among the Gentiles? How does God purify the heart? (7-9)
14. Why would requiring the Gentiles to obey the Law of Moses after they had received the Holy Spirit be “putting God to the test”? (10)
15. How does Peter argue from the history of the Jews concerning the Law of Moses? How is the Law a yoke that “neither we nor our father have been able to bear”? See also Galatians 6:13. (10)
16. How did Jesus handle the yoke of the Law of Moses? Was Jesus circumcised on the eighth day? See Luke 2:21. How does Jesus’ obedience relate to our salvation?
17. What is Peter’s conclusion in this matter? What does he say saves both Jew and Gentile? What is the contrast in this issue? Law vs. Grace, Faith vs. Works. (11)
18. Does Peter’s speech end all discussion? (11)

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL ON CIRCUMCISION: PART 2

ACTS 15:12-35

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What arguments do Barnabas, Paul, and James use to argue against requiring circumcision?
2. Why does James advocate the restrictions he does in verse 20, and are these restrictions still binding on us today?
3. How do we reconcile these restrictions with the freedom to eat meat sacrificed to idols that Paul teaches in Romans 14?
4. What do you learn about authority in the early church from this chapter?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

BARNABAS, PAUL, AND JAMES MAKE THEIR CASE (VV. 12-21)

1. What do Barnabas and Paul share with the Council? How is their testimony useful in the decision? How does it relate to Peter's testimony concerning Cornelius in Acts 11:15-18? How does it relate to the question Paul asks the Galatians who are tempted to submit to works regulations in Galatians 3:2? How do the signs and wonders among the Gentiles add to this discussion? (12)
2. What do verses 13-21 teach you about James's role in the early church? Compare with Galatians 1:19, 2:9, and 2:12. (13-21)
3. How does James argue? What evidence does he cite? (13-21)
4. What is the significance of the fact that God took from the Gentiles, "a people for his name"? How does this impact the Jews? How does this idea relate to Romans 9:24-29? (14)
5. How does the quote from Amos 9:11-12 support James's viewpoint? (16-18)
6. What does it mean that God will return and rebuild David's fallen tent? (16)
7. What is the effect of the rebuilding of David's fallen tent? Who are the "remnant"? See Romans 9:28-29 and Romans 11:5. (17)
8. How does James apply this quote to the issue at hand? Why does he feel that they should not "trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God"? How would requiring circumcision and total obedience to the Laws of Moses make it difficult for the Gentiles? (19)
9. What is the significance of the words, "Therefore, my judgment is..." Is James the one who makes the final decision? Note: It is making judgments on ethical issues based on scripture that is, in my opinion, the difference between teaching and prophecy. In prophecy, the prophet has nothing to judge or decide, but merely must accurately render the word of the Lord as the Lord has spoken it. A teacher, however, must make judgments on a text, discerning what it says and how it is to be applied. (19)

10. Why does James advocate the restrictions he does in verse 20, and are these restrictions (some or all) still binding on us today? How does verse 21 help explain James' reasoning? (20-21)
11. How do you reconcile these restrictions with Paul's teaching on the freedom of a Christian in eating meat sacrificed to idols which Paul advocates in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8, and 1 Corinthians 10:25? Perhaps some of the answer is given in the larger context of these quotes, in which Paul argues for believers not to flaunt their freedoms in such a way that someone else is caused to stumble. See Romans 14:21, and 1 Corinthians 8:4-13. How do these passages help explain this regulation? (20)
12. What kinds of issues of Christian freedom would be similar today? How should we understand Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 today, since meat sacrificed to idols is not an issue any longer?

THE COUNCIL'S LETTER TO GENTILE CONVERTS (vv. 22-35)

13. Who decided to send the letter to the Gentiles? What does this teach you about early church government? (22-23)
14. Why did they also decide to send messengers with Paul and Barnabas? See verse 27. (22, 27)
15. What is the main idea of the letter? (24-29)
16. How does the letter begin? Why do they deal with the issue that men went out without their authorization? (24)
17. What does verse 24 teach you about the effect of false teaching? (24)
18. Why does the letter say good things about Paul and Barnabas? (25-26)
19. What do you think of the phrase, "...it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." What does this teach you? (28)
20. They call the restrictions of verse 29 "requirements" or "essentials." What would happen if some Gentiles decided not to obey these "requirements"? (29)
21. What did the messengers do with the letter? How was it received? (30-31)
22. What do we learn about Judas and Silas in verse 32? (32)
23. How does the account end? What was the end result of the Jerusalem Council? See also Acts 16:4-5 for more on this. What does this fruit teach you about resolving doctrinal controversy? (33-35)

III. SUMMARY:

The Jerusalem Council decides not to require circumcision or obedience to the Law of Moses, but does lay some restrictions on Gentiles for (it seems) the sake of not causing Jewish brothers to stumble and to become disgusted with their new Gentile brothers. The end result of the Jerusalem Council was peace, unity, and fruitfulness.

**PAUL AND BARNABAS SPLIT, PAUL BEGINS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY
ACTS 15:36-16:5**

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does the division between Paul and Barnabas teach you about human nature? What insight do you gain about the Apostle Paul?
2. What can we learn about Christian relationships from this?
3. What can we learn from Paul about discipleship and mentoring in his relationship with Timothy?
4. What is the significance of the fact that Paul circumcised Timothy, despite the ruling of the Council in Jerusalem that people do not have to be circumcised?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL AND BARNABAS QUARREL AND PART COMPANY (VV. 36-41)

1. Why do you think Paul wanted to go back to the Gentile towns where they had earlier preached the gospel? Remember Paul's constant concern over the churches displayed in 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:13 & 2 Corinthians 11:28-29. (36)
2. What did Barnabas want to do? Why do you think he wanted to take John Mark? What insight does Colossians 4:10 give on this question? (37)
3. What was Paul's response to Barnabas's desire? Why did Paul respond this way? Remember what had happened in Acts 13:13 on the earlier mission trip. (38)
4. What does Paul's behavior in this encounter teach you about him?
5. How is Barnabas' desire here consistent with his track record and nickname "the Son of Encouragement"? His actions with Saul (Paul) right after he was converted (Acts 9:27), and his recruiting Paul to Antioch in Acts 11:22-26 show Barnabas to be a stimulator and developer of Christian leaders. (37)
6. What ended up happening? Who do you think was right and who was wrong? Notice in 2 Timothy 4:11, at the end of his ministry, Paul felt differently about Mark. Also, Peter called him his "son" (1 Peter 5:13), and this connection probably resulted in *The Gospel of Mark*, which many scholars believe was Peter's account and the first inspired Gospel ever written. Do these facts seem to vindicate Barnabas and not Paul? What do you think? (39-41)
7. How is it encouraging to you that God can reclaim a failure like Mark and make something great out of him? How did he also do that with Peter and Paul?
8. If Barnabas was right and not Paul, notice also that Paul was right to rebuke Barnabas over separating from Gentiles in Galatians 2:13. What does this teach you, that each of these great men of God needed a correction from the other?
9. Compare Paul's actions here with his words in Philippians 2:1-5, Philippians 4:2-3, and Ephesians 4:1-3. What do you make of this? (39)
10. How did this split hurt the church? How did God use it for good? (40-41)

PAUL AND SILAS BEGIN THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY (VV. 1-5)

11. Why do you think Paul wanted to return to these towns where he and Barnabas had been earlier? See Acts 15:36. (1)
12. Lystra was the place where Paul and Barnabas had healed a lame man and where the people had wanted to offer sacrifices to them, and where also Paul had been stoned and left for dead in Acts 14:8-19. What did Paul find this time when he returned to Lystra? (1)
13. What is the significance of the fact that Timothy seems to have been a disciple before Paul got to town? What role did Timothy's mother have in his life as a Christian? See 2 Timothy 1:5 & 3:14-15 for some background. (1)
14. What else do we learn about Timothy's family? What is the significance of the fact that Timothy's father was not a believer? How do you think that affected Paul's role in Timothy's life? See Philippians 2:22 and 1 Corinthians 4:17, as well as 1 Timothy 1:2, 1:18 and 2 Timothy 1:2. (1)
15. What does verse 2 teach us about the Christian community in that region? What does it teach about Timothy's character? What does it teach about the role of a good reputation in being invited to higher levels of service? (2)
16. Why do you think Paul wanted to take Timothy along on the journey? What can we learn about discipleship from Paul's relationship with Timothy? Philippians 2:22 shows the nature of their relationship, while 1 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Thessalonians 3:2 & 6, and Philippians 2:19 show the number of times Paul sent Timothy as his representative to the churches. Comment on this role. (3)
17. Why do you think Paul circumcised Timothy despite the ruling from the Jerusalem Council? Note: The poignancy of the proximity of verse 3 to verse 4 is heightened when you realize what decisions they were giving all the churches to obey, that the Gentiles turning to God do not need to be circumcised. What reason does Luke give in the text? Was this a theological requirement or a missionary strategy? If it was a missionary strategy, how did it help Paul's work in the region? See 1 Corinthians 9:20-22 for insight on Paul's strategy. (3-4)
18. What is significant about the language of verse 4? What does this show you about the relationship between the Jerusalem council and the local churches? (4)
19. What was the end result of their ministry? What is the significance of this summary statement? Parallels are found in Acts 6:7, 9:31, 11:24, and 19:20. (5)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke records a painful encounter between Paul and Barnabas in which they parted company over whether or not John Mark should join them. History seems to have vindicated Barnabas's gracious demeanor over Paul's strictness. Luke describes the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey, the beginning of his relationship with Timothy, and the growth of the churches in the wake of the Jerusalem Council's decision on circumcision.

LED BY THE SPIRIT TO PHILIPPI
ACTS 16:6-15

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach us about the leadership of the Holy Spirit?
2. What is the significance of the Macedonian man's plea, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us'?
3. What does Lydia's conversion show you about the grace of God?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

BACKGROUND

Macedonia is the home of Philip of Macedon, the empire-building Greek King who was in the process of subduing the Greek city-states under his rule when he died. Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia, was named for him. But his son was the real empire builder: Alexander the Great! He rode eastward to conquer the whole world, he gained the whole world by age 32, and never lost a single battle. But he was unable to conquer himself, and he died as a result of alcohol poisoning after a bout of prodigious and arrogant drinking. Jesus said, "What would it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?" Now, in a vision, a man of Macedonia is pleading with a traveling Jew named Paul to "Come and help us!"

THE SPIRIT'S CALL TO EUROPE (VV. 6-10)

4. The general movement of Paul and his companions is north-eastward through modern Turkey. They tried to go eastward, toward Asia, but the Holy Spirit stopped them. Why do you think the Spirit forbid them from preaching the word in Asia? (6)
5. What does verse 6 teach you about the Spirit's sovereignty over the gospel and over salvation? Were there not lost people eastward in Asia? How do you account for the Spirit's prohibition? (6)
6. How do you think the Spirit communicated His will to Paul and his companions? (6-7)
7. What does this section teach you about the leadership of the Spirit in our daily lives and ministries?
8. Troas (full name was Alexandria Troas. Alexander left dozens of "Alexandrias" in his wake, not just the most famous one in Egypt) was a port city just across the Aegaen Sea from Greece. The Spirit had boxed them in and they were waiting on Him for guidance. How did the guidance come? (9-10)

9. What kind of “help” did the man from Macedonia ask for? Amazing! The world conquering Macedonians begging for help from such a dusty, small, humble Jew like Paul! (9)
10. What conclusion did Paul and his companions come to after the vision? Why do you think the vision came to Paul alone? (9-10)
11. What subtle change in grammar do you notice between verses 6-8 and verse 10? What is the significance of this change? (10)

THE WORK BEGINS IN PHILIPPI: LYDIA’S CONVERSION (VV. 11-15)

12. Navigation was notoriously difficult in Paul’s day. The ships tried to stay close to the shoreline if possible. What do you learn about their voyage in verse 11? (11)
13. Philippi was clearly the leading city of the region of Macedonia, as Antioch was the leading city of the eastern Roman empire in Paul’s day, and Jerusalem the leading city of the Jews. What does the fact that Paul and his companions always went for the cities show you about missionary strategy? (12)
14. What did Paul do once he got to Philippi? How is it different from what he usually did once he got to a new city? What does this show you about Philippi? (13)
15. Who did Paul meet outside the city gate at the river? Comment on the fact that the first two accounts Luke gives of Paul’s ministry in Europe concerned women (Lydia, and the demon-possessed girl of verses 16-19). What does this teach you about the role of women in redemptive history? (14)
16. What does Luke tell us about Lydia? Do you think she was wealthy? (14)
17. What does verse 14 teach you about the grace of God in salvation? Specifically what does it teach you about God’s role in the human heart at the moment of saving faith? Notice the three key figures in verse 14: 1) The Lord who opens the heart; 2) Paul who preaches the message; 3) Lydia who responds in faith. (14)
18. What did Lydia invite Paul and his companions to do in verse 15? What is significant about this? What does it teach you about “house churches” in the early church? (15)
19. It says that Lydia’s household was baptized. Do you think Paul preached to them first? See verses 29-32 to help answer that question. (15)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke gives the account of the beginning of Paul’s missionary work in Europe with the thrilling events of the vision that brought him to Philippi and Lydia’s conversion.

TRIUMPH OF GRACE IN A PHILIPPIAN JAIL

Acts 16:16-40

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does the attitude of joy in suffering displayed by Paul and Silas help you in your struggle for contentment and against complaining?
2. What do the three individuals Luke focuses on in Philippi (Lydia, the slave girl, the Philippian jailer) teach you about the grace of God in salvation?
3. What do we learn about salvation from the experience of the Philippian jailer and his family?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED FORTUNE-TELLER (VV. 16-18)

1. Who did Paul and his companions meet as they were going to the place of prayer? What does Luke tell us about her? (16)
2. What does verse 16 teach you about money and religion in ancient Greece? Is the making of large amounts of money in occultist practices or false religion still an issue today? See 2 Corinthians 2:17 & 1 Thessalonians 2:5. Comment on this. What do these verses teach you about greed and money in ancient religion? (16)
3. The slave girl had a demon who enabled her to convincingly give fortunes. Is it possible for a demon to know the future? In a universe where only God is sovereign over the future, and uses His unique ability to predict the future as one of the main evidences of His uniqueness compared to the idols (see Isaiah 41:22-24), how do you understand this girl's ability to predict the future? (16)
4. What does Luke say the girl was doing with Paul and his companions? Was the girl speaking falsehood? What is the significance of the phrase "servants of the Most High God"? What was so distressing about what this girl was doing? (17)
5. What was Paul's reaction to what this slave girl was doing? How long did he let it go on? Why do you think he did not cast the demon out sooner? (18)
6. What does verse 18 teach us about the power of the name of Jesus Christ? (18)

SUPERNATURAL CONTENTMENT, POWER, AND SALVATION (VV. 19-34)

7. What does the reaction of the slave girl's owners show about human nature? What should they have done when she was released from her demon? (19)
8. What accusation did these wicked slave owners make against Paul and Silas? How did they seek to turn the judges and crowd against them? (19-21)
9. How do you think Paul and Silas felt at the pain and indignity of verses 22-23? Why was there such an extreme reaction to Paul and Silas's "crime"? How would you have felt? Do you think they had a sense of injustice at this? (22-23)
10. What did the jailer do to Paul and Silas? Does the text speak of his attitude toward them or of any mistreatment the jailer gave to Paul and Silas? (24)

11. How is verse 25 astonishing? How does it relate to Paul's teaching on being content every situation? See Philippians 4:10-13. What was the source of this supernatural joy? How did it make the jailer's salvation possible? (25)
12. Why do you think Luke mentions that the other prisoners were listening to them? Would they also have listened if they had been loudly protesting their innocence or complaining? See Philippians 2:14-16 for the link between not complaining and evangelism. (25)
13. What happened next? Do you think Luke expects us to find a link between the hymn-singing of verse 25 and the supernatural earthquake of verse 26? What was very unusual about this earthquake? (25-26)
14. What did the jailer do when he heard the earthquake? What did he assume when he saw the doors opened? Why was he about to kill himself? (27)
15. What does verse 28 teach you about Paul's and love for his enemies? (28)
16. How did the jailer act after the earthquake? Why was he trembling with fear? What is the significance of the fact that he fell down before Paul and Silas? (29)
17. The Philippians jailer's question of verse 30 is the single most important question a human soul ever faces. Why is this true? (30)
18. Why does the jailer ask this specific question to these specific people (Paul and Silas)? What role do you think their hymn-singing played in this? (30)
19. What is the answer given by Paul and Silas? Is this a complete answer, or do they have to explain more to the jailer? What does the fact that they teach jailer more about Christ teach you about evangelism? See Romans 10:13-15. (31)
20. Do verses 31-34 help or oppose the idea of infant baptism? Supporters of infant baptism point to the "household baptisms" as "proof" of infant baptism. Is this account better evidence for believer's baptism or infant baptism? Why? (31-34)
21. How does this show the power of the gospel to change enemies into friends? What changes do you see in the jailer? What evidence of his conversion? (33-34)
22. What does this account teach you about complaining in your own life? Have you faced trials at a similar level to Paul and Silas? If not, why complain? Wouldn't praising be better?
23. Why did Paul require that the magistrates come get them personally and escort them out? What pull did Paul have, that made the magistrates afraid of what they had done to him? Why did Paul neglect to mention this earlier? (35-39)
24. What did they do before leaving town? Why? (40)

III. Summary:

Luke tells of the triumph of Paul and Silas over suffering and bitter complaining resulting in the spectacular conversion of the Philippian jailer and his family.

PAUL IN THESSALONICA AND BEREIA
ACTS 17:1-15

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach you about the courage and perseverance needed to be lastingly fruitful in the gospel ministry?
2. How are the Bereans an example for all people?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THESSALONICA (VV. 1-9)

3. What do we learn about Paul's usual mission strategy from verses 1-2? (1-2)
4. What did Paul do in the Jewish synagogue? How long did he do it? (3)
5. What does verse 3 teach you about the link between Christ and the Old Testament? (3)
6. Luke says that Paul "reasoned with them from the Scriptures." What does that expression mean to you? How do we reason with unbelievers from the Scriptures? What does it teach you about evangelism? (2-3)
7. One of the points Paul was seeking to make was that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. Why do you think this was such a stumbling block for the Jews to accept? (3)
8. Was Paul successful in his ministry in Thessalonica? How so? (4)
9. What was the nature of the persecution Paul faced in Thessalonica? Who started it? Why? (5)
10. What do you think it was like for Paul to face so many riots, mobs, crowd rage, and passion? How would that have affected you if you were the focus of it? Amazingly, in Acts 24:5 they accused Paul of "stirring up riots all over the world" when actually it was the Jews who stirred them up again and again. See Acts 17:5, 17:13, 21:28-30. Greeks stirred up the riot in Ephesus, 19:28-29. (5)
11. Who was Jason, and what happened to him? How does this relate to the rewards Jesus offered to any who will give even a cup of cold water to Christ's messengers? See Matthew 10:40-42. (6-9)
12. What accusation did the Jews make against Paul and his companions? (6-7)
13. They said that Paul had literally "turned the world upside-down." What do you think of that expression? How is the gospel of Jesus Christ revolutionary in human society? (6)
14. What do these verses teach you about the devil's schemes in attempting to stop the gospel advance? (6-9)

BEREA (vv. 10-15)

15. Why did the brothers in Christ send Paul and Silas away at night? (10)
16. What does verse 10 tell you about Paul? About his commitment to Jewish evangelism? (10)
17. What does Luke tell us about the character of the Bereans? (11)
18. How are the Bereans a good example for any person who hears teaching from the word of God? (11)
19. With what attitude did the Bereans study the Scriptures? How does this convict or encourage you? (11)
20. Was Paul successful in Berea? What was the nature of the evangelistic fruit there? (12)
21. What was the nature of the persecution? Who caused it? What was the outcome? (13-15)
22. Why do you think Paul decided to be separated from Silas and Timothy? Do you think this was a trial for Paul? (14-15)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul preached the gospel in Thessalonica and Berea, resulting in both conversions and persecutions.

PAUL IN ATHENS: PASSION AND PERSUASION
ACTS 17:16-34

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does Paul's reaction to the idolatry of Athens motivate us to compassion and missions?
2. What challenges does Paul meet and overcome in Athens?
3. How does Paul's gospel approach to the Athenian philosophers differ from his approach to Jews?
4. What doctrinal truths does Paul proclaim to these super-intelligent pagans? What does he say about God?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL'S PASSION AND PERSUASION IN ATHENS (VV. 16-21)

5. What does verse 21 teach you about Athens? What was Athens known for? (21)
6. How does Paul react to the idols he saw in Athens? Why do you think there were so many idols? Why the multiplication of gods and shrines? (16)
7. What did Paul do as a result of the distress he felt at the Athenians' idols? What are the two locations of Paul's reasoning and persuasion? What kind of mission fields do each of these places represent? (17)
8. What reaction did the Athenian philosophers have to Paul and his message? Did they think well of him or poorly? Were they angry at him and ready to stone him? Do you think they were open to Paul's message? (18-20)
9. What was the center of Paul's preaching in Athens? How does this line up with 1 Corinthians 2:1-2? (18)
10. Why did they bring Paul to the Areopagus? Why did they want to hear Paul preach? What insight does 21 give you into answering this question? (19-21)

PAUL'S PREACHING IN ATHENS (VV. 22-31)

11. How does Paul begin his message? How could you imitate Paul's strategy in verse 23 in your evangelism? How does their alter "to the unknown god" show that God has not left himself without a witness in every land. (22-23)
12. Why do you think Paul begins his presentation of "the unknown God" with a declaration about creation? How important is the doctrine of creation to the gospel? What does this teach you about reaching people in other cultures? (24)
13. What is the significance of the phrase "Lord of heaven and earth"? (24)
14. Why does Paul state that God does not live in temples built by human hands? Why are there so many temples and shrines around the world? Why is it vital that we understand what Solomon said at the dedication of his temple, "Heaven, even the highest heaven, cannot contain Him"? (24)

15. Paul's next statement is shocking, "nor is he served by human hands as though He needed anything..." What does Paul mean by this? Doesn't Paul call himself a servant of Jesus Christ? In what sense is God not served by human hands? Why is this concept vital for proper understanding of our Christian lives? (25)
16. What doctrine is supported by Paul's statement that God Himself "gives to all mankind life and breath and everything"? How is Paul making a connection to these pagan philosophers? How is he finding common ground with them? (25)
17. Verse 26 may be one of the most important statements in this entire sermon. What does he claim for Almighty God here? How does this verse shatter any possibility of "theistic evolution" of man, namely that God used evolution to create the human race? (26)
18. What is the significance of Paul's statement that God "determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling..."? What insight into the doctrine of providence does this give you? How do you relate divine sovereignty and human responsibility in this verse? Does this relate to human empires, to the extinction of human tribes, to the Roman Empire, and to America's future? (26)
19. What was God's motive in exercising this kind of sovereign control over the spread and timing of the human race? What does Paul mean when he says "He is not far from each of us"? (27)
20. What do you think about Paul quoting their own pagan poets to make his point? Does this teach you anything about evangelistic methodology? How much can we use elements of truth in popular culture to reach people for Christ? What are the dangers of it? (28)
21. How does Paul apply the truths he's laid out so far? What is he really attacking in this sermon? (29)
22. What does it mean that "The times of ignorance God overlooked"? What does God call all people to do now? What warning is implied in verses 30-31? (30-31)
23. What elements of the gospel does Paul focus on in his presentation? What do we learn about the importance of Christ's resurrection in the proclamation? (31)

THE REACTION TO PAUL'S MESSAGE (VV. 32-34)

24. How did the crowd react to his message? What especially did they react to? How is human pride revealed in their reaction? (32)
25. Was there an opening for Paul to continue his ministry among them? What does this teach you in evangelism? What was the final outcome of Paul's gospel ministry in Athens? Was it a large harvest of souls or a small one? Why do you think it went that way? (32-34)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul preaches the gospel in an amazing way to Athenian philosophers, describing a sovereign creator God who calls on idolaters to repent.

PAUL'S MINISTRY IN CORINTH
ACTS 18:1-17

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What insights into Paul's character does this section give?
2. What is the significance of God's statement to Paul, "I have many in this city who are my people"?
3. How does God encourage and protect Paul in this section? What encouragement does that give you in evangelism?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL THE TENTMAKER (VV. 1-5)

1. Corinth was a strategically located city, straddling a narrow isthmus which connected the Peloponnese to the rest of Greece. Thus trade could be accelerated by going through Corinth and avoiding sailing around the entire Peloponnese. Corinth was a prosperous city, but also a decadent one. What did Paul do when he first arrived in Corinth? (1-4)
2. Who were Aquila and Priscilla? What does Luke tell us about them? (1-3)
3. What is the significance of Paul's tentmaking work in this passage? Please read also passages in which Paul refers to working with his own hands and supporting himself (Acts 20:33-35, 1 Thessalonians 2:9, 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10). What is Paul's mentality about work in these passages? When did he do his tentmaking work? (3)
4. In 2 Thessalonians 3:9, Paul makes it clear he had a right to financial support from the churches he was planting. He makes the same case in 1 Corinthians 9:7-15. What does Paul say there (especially 1 Cor. 9:14) about financial support for those who labor in the word. See also 1 Timothy 5:17-18. If Paul had a right to financial support from the Corinthian church, why didn't he use it?
5. What does verse 4 teach you about Paul's evangelistic and apologetic strategy with the Jews and Greeks? What is the role of reasoning and persuasion? (4)
6. How does 2 Corinthians 11:7-9 shed light on Paul's commitment to devote himself to preaching and teaching the word? What did the coming of Silas and Timothy have to do with Paul's decision to devote all his time to ministry? (5)

PAUL PREACHES CHRIST IN CORINTH (VV. 5-8)

7. What was Paul's approach to preaching in Corinth? See also 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Do you think there was any connection between Paul's experiences in Athens and his commitment to spurn human philosophy in Corinth, as he describes so powerfully in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2? (5)
8. What happened in the Jewish synagogue when Paul preached? What was Paul's response to the rejection of the Jews? What is the significance of Paul shaking out his clothes in protest? See Nehemiah 5:13, & Matthew 10:14. (6)

9. When Paul said “Your blood be on your own heads. I am innocent.” What did he mean? Compare with Romans 1:14-15. What is Paul’s “obligation” in Romans 1:14? How does it relate to you and your life as a gospel messenger? (6)
10. Why did Paul say, “From now on, I will go to the Gentiles”? How do you think that affected the hostile Jews? See Romans 11:13-14 for Paul’s strategy. What does Paul say there that relates to his bold proclamation here in verse 6? (6)
11. What did Paul do after leaving the Jewish synagogue? What do we learn about Titius Justus here? Why was it significant for Paul to stay at the home of a Gentile and make it his base of ministry? (7)
12. Who was Crispus? What does his conversion teach you about God’s present stance toward the Jewish nation? See Romans 11:1. What effect did Crispus have on his fellow Corinthians? (8)

THE LORD ENCOURAGES AND PROTECTS PAUL (VV. 9-77)

13. What happened in verse 9-10? What do you think the Lord was trying to do by speaking to Paul in this way? (9-10)
14. What does this teach you about Paul, and the effect of the trials on him? Sometimes we think of Paul as some kind of other-worldly figure or a man made of iron. Does the Lord’s encouragement to Paul here teach you anything about Paul’s sufferings? (9-10)
15. What does this encouragement teach you about the Lord and His ministry to His servants who are boldly serving Him? (9-10)
16. What specific things does the Lord say to encourage Paul? (9-10)
17. What does it mean when He says “I have many in this city who are my people”? See also Acts 13:48, which says “As many as were appointed to eternal life believed” See also 2 Timothy 2:10. What does that passage say, and how does it relate to the Lord’s statement in verse 10?
18. What is the connection between verses 9-10 and verse 11? (11)
19. What happened next? Why did the Jews make such an attack on Paul? What was their approach? How did it turn out? (12-17)
20. How is verse 12-17 a fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to Paul?
21. Gallio probably sat on the “bema” (judgment seat) that Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 5:10 regarding Christ’s judgment of us. What was Gallio’s decision in this matter? (14-16)
22. What did the Jews do after Gallio threw them out of court? (17)

III. Summary:

Luke describes Paul’s ministry in Corinth, and how the Lord protected Paul and enabled him to be fruitful.

PAUL'S CO-LABORERS FOR CHRIST: PRISCILLA, AQUILA, APOLLOS
ACTS 18:18-28

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section of scripture demonstrate the mercy of God?
2. What does this section reveal about Paul's character and missionary methodology?
3. What does the case of Apollos (who taught about Jesus accurately from the Old Testament and John's Baptism) teach you about God's wisdom in redemptive history?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL'S HOMEWARD JOURNEY WITH HIS NEW COMPANIONS (VV. 18-23)

1. Why did Paul leave Corinth? Was he expelled from the city? What does this show you about the mercy of God as revealed in verse 9-10? (18)
2. Paul's voyage to Syria was across the Aegean Sea, obviously a dangerous journey in those days. Why do you think Paul wanted to go to Syria? (18)
3. Who was with Paul? What do we know about them? (18)
4. Do you think it is significant that Priscilla is usually listed ahead of Aquila in the Scripture? (18)
5. Why did Paul have his hair cut off? See Numbers 6:2, 5, 18, and Acts 21:24. What is the significance of this action? Cenchrea is right near Corinth, and probably was Paul's jumping off point for the voyage across the Aegean. (18)
6. What did Paul do when he got to Ephesus? Why do you think he left Priscilla and Aquila to go into the Jewish synagogue? (19)
7. What was the response of the Jews in the synagogue? (20)
8. Why do you think Paul declined to spend more time with them? (20)
9. Compare Paul's promise to return with James 4:13-15 and with 2 Corinthians 1:16-17. (21)
10. Where did Paul go after leaving Ephesus? What does it mean when it says "He went up and greeted the church"? What church does it refer to? Where did he go next? Why did he return there? (21-22)
11. After leaving Antioch, where did Paul go next? People often speak of Paul's three missionary journeys, and this is the beginning of the third. (23)
12. What was the effect of Paul's ministry according to Luke? (23)

APOLLOS (VV. 24-28)

13. What does Luke tell us about Apollos? Where did Paul meet him? (24)
14. How do you explain verse 25? How was it possible for Apollos teach about Jesus accurately without having heard any of the events of his life, but only the Baptism of John? (25)
15. What does Luke tell us about his manner of teaching, his style? (25-26)
16. What did Priscilla and Aquila do when they heard him? (26)
17. Given that Priscilla was a woman, did her explanation of the way of the Lord more adequately violate the precept that a woman not teach or have authority over a man in 1 Timothy 2:12? Why or why not? (26)
18. What does Luke tell us about Apollos's ministry in Achaia? What help did the Christians in Ephesus give him as he began his ministry? (27)
19. What was the nature of Apollos's preaching ministry in Achaia? (28)

III. SUMMARY:

The latter part of Acts 18 covers some details about the travels of the Apostle Paul, and the start of his third missionary journey. We also meet Apollos, who becomes a valuable asset in the advance of the Gospel.

PAUL FULFILLS HIS PROMISE AND MINISTERS IN EPHESUS
ACTS 19:1-22

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach about the gift of the Holy Spirit?
2. How does the Apostle Paul demonstrate his character and methodology here?
3. How do the miracles connected with this ministry glorify Christ? What role do they play in the advance of the Kingdom?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL AND SOME DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (VV. 1-7)

1. How does Paul's return to Ephesus relate to Acts 18:19-21? (1)
2. Who did Paul find when he returned to Ephesus? In what sense were they "disciples"? (1)
3. What does Paul learn when he questions these "disciples"? What does Paul's approach to them teach you about dealing with people spiritually? (1-4)
4. Why do you think Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit? How does that serve as an accurate diagnosis of spiritual condition? What was their answer? How do you explain their current belief and spiritual state? (2)
5. What do verses 3 and 4 teach about John's baptism?

Note: They did not say they were baptized by John, but only "into John's baptism." It is possible that some of John's disciples took his basic message of repentance out abroad, without teaching much (if any) about the Christ whose way John had come to prepare. In John 3:23-30, John the Baptist has to set some of his own disciples straight on the greatness and superiority of Christ. It may be that some of John's own disciples did not get that message and traveled around baptizing people in John's name.

6. What was the response of these disciples of John when they heard Paul preach Christ? What happened after they believed? (5-7)
7. What is the significance of Paul placing his hands on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit? (6)
8. Some who believe in baptismal regeneration (that water baptism is required for salvation) point to this case as a prime example. The Holy Spirit didn't come on them until after they were baptized. What do you make of this argument? (6)
9. What does this whole encounter teach you about the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the relationship between the Spirit and our assurance of salvation?

PAUL'S MINISTRY AMONG JEWS AND GENTILES (VV. 8-10)

10. What do you learn from these verses about Paul's preaching ministry to the Jews: *where* he preached, *what* he preached to them, *in what manner* he preached, *how long* he preached, *how successful* was his preaching? (8-10)

11. How does this section fit with Paul's other attempts to minister to Jews, and his explanation of the Jewish response to the gospel in Romans 9-11, especially Romans 11:7? (8-10)
12. What did Paul do when the Jews became obstinate? How does that relate to Romans 11:13-14? (9)
13. What do you think of the fact that Paul taught Gentile believers daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus? How long did he do this? What do you think the effect of all this doctrinal instruction was in the Ephesian church? See Acts 20:20, 27, 31 for a description of Paul's teaching ministry in Ephesus? See also Revelation 2:2 for a description of the church in years after Paul. (9)
14. What is amazing about verse 10? How does this relate to Romans 10:18? How do you account for such a widespread dissemination of the word of God? (10)

MIRACLES AND THEIR MIGHTY EFFECTS (VV. 11-20)

15. What do you learn about Paul's ministry in verses 11-12? How does Luke describe these miracles? What made them "extraordinary"? What is the significance of the fact that they were "extraordinary"? (11-12)
16. How do you think modern false teachers and religious showmen and con artists could make use of Paul's example here? Do you know of any such "artifact" healing ministries like this one? (11-12)
17. What is the significance of the amazing story of the seven sons of Sceva? What does it teach you about the power of Christ through Paul? (13-16)
18. What does this teach you about the power of demons? Why didn't their attempt at exorcism work? How does this relate to Matthew 7:22-23 & 12:24-27? (13-16)
19. What was the effect of this story on the people of Ephesus? How do miracles like this one cause the name of Christ to be held in high esteem? What is the benefit of that to the Kingdom of Christ? (17)
20. What is the point of verses 18-20? Why did these people burn their sorcery scrolls? What does this signify? Why did Luke tell us the monetary value of the scrolls? How do verse 18-19 give us a display of true repentance? (18-19)
21. What was the final effect of these things? (20)

PAUL DECIDES TO GO TO JERUSALEM AND ROME (VV. 21-22)

22. What does Luke tell us about Paul in verses 21-22? Why did Paul want to go to Jerusalem and Rome? How does it fit with his original call in Acts 9:15? (21-22)
23. Why do you think Paul decided to go to Macedonia and Achaia first? What do you learn about Paul's helpers here? (21-22)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke describes Paul's powerful ministry of preaching, teaching and miracles in Ephesus, together with the fruit that came about as a result.

OUSTED BY RIOTS, THE MINISTRY CONTINUES

Acts 19:23-20:12

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What are some lasting principles about persecution and the world's opposition to the gospel that come from the account of the riot in Ephesus?
2. What does Paul's late-night and lengthy teaching time teach you about Paul's ministry? How is Paul an example role modeling and disciple-making?
3. What does the miracle with Eutychus teach you about Paul and his ministry?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE ROOT ISSUES THAT CAUSED THE RIOT (VV. 23-27)

1. Who was Demetrius, and what does Luke tell us about him? What is the root of his opposition to the gospel? What does this show us about the obstacle of money in the advance of the gospel? How does greed play a role here? (23-27)
2. How is idolatry at the root of both the religious as the business aspects of Demetrius's opposition? See Ephesians 5:5, Colossians 3:5.
3. What does Demetrius do to try to stop Paul? What was his fear? What do you learn about Paul and his ministry through Demetrius? (25-27)

THE VIOLENT PASSIONS STIRRED BY IDOLATRY (VV. 28-34)

4. What was the reaction of the workmen? Why did they react this way? How did the riot start, and why did they grab Gaius and Aristarchus? (28-29)
5. What happened in the theater? How would you describe the assembly? (32-34)
6. What did Paul want to do? What does this show you about him? Why did his friends stop him? What does this teach you about courage and wisdom in missions and evangelism? (30-31)
7. What does the fact that officials in the province sent him word begging him not to venture into the theater show you about Paul and his ministry? (31)
8. What does the episode with Alexander show you about attitudes toward the Jews in the ancient world? (33)
9. Why was the crowd so frenzied and passionate? What are the roots of this? Do missionaries still face these kinds of passions in various lands? (32-34)
10. What does the two-hour chant about Artemis teach you about idolatry, the human soul, and the psychology of a crowd? (34)

THE RIOT ENDS WITHOUT INCIDENT (VV. 35-41)

11. How did the riot end? What approach did the city clerk use to stop it? (35)
12. Do you think the clerk was Christian? Did he speak the truth? How did God use him to stop the riot? (35)
13. What does this section teach you about idolatry and superstition? (35-36)

14. What counsel does the city clerk give concerning dealing with Paul and his companions? What did the city clerk fear? What does this show you about Roman justice? (37-41)

PAUL AND HIS TRAVELING COMPANIONS (VV. 1-5)

15. How do you think Paul encouraged the disciples of Ephesus? Why do you think the ministry of encouragement is so vital in the Christian life? Notice that this is what he also did for the people in Macedonia in verse 2. (1-2)

16. What do you make of the fact that Paul stayed in Greece for three months? What do you think he spent his time doing there? (3)

17. What does the fact that the Jews made a plot against Paul as he was about to sail teach you about Paul, the Jews and the Christian life? (3)

18. Who is listed in verse 4? What is the significance of these men? What was Berea (Sopater's city) known for? What does Acts 19:29 and Colossians 4:10 teach you about Aristarchus? What does Romans 16:23 and 3 John 1, 5-8 teach you about Gaius? What do you learn about Tychicus from Ephesians 6:21-22 and Colossians 4:7? What about Trophimus in Acts 21:29 and 2 Timothy 4:20? (4)

19. Many of the references in question 18 speak of Paul sending his disciples to other places. Here Paul sends them on ahead to Troas. What does this teach you about Paul's style of leadership and his approach to ministry? (5)

EUTYCHUS (VV. 6-12)

20. What do you learn about early church life from verses 6-7? Especially note the day of the week that the church met. Why is this significant? Why Sunday? (6-7)

21. What do you learn about Paul's teaching ministry from the story about Troas and Eutychus? (7-11)

22. Why does teaching play such an important role in the growth of the church in Acts? What abiding principle does it teach you about church life even today?

23. Is there an indication in the text that Paul's lengthy teaching session in the upper room of Troas was unusual? (7)

24. Why do you think Luke mentions the fact that there were many lamps in the room? How does that connect to what happened to Eutychus? (8)

25. How did Paul handle the situation when Eutychus was picked up dead? What does the miracle teach you about God, Paul, and the early church? (10)

26. What did Paul do after the miracle? What effect did this occasion have on the church at Troas? (11-12)

III. SUMMARY:

The Ephesians, spurred on by the twin idolatry of Artemis and greed, started a riot against Christianity, which ended without incident. Paul went on to Troas teaching and preaching, and raised a young man who had died at their meeting.

PAUL'S FAREWELL TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS

ACTS 20:13-38

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this amazing address to the Ephesian elders teach you about Paul's view of the church, leadership, suffering, teaching, servanthood, and courage?
2. How would full implementation of these principles change your church?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Paul decide not to visit Ephesus again? (16)
2. Why did Paul send for the Ephesian elders? What does this teach you about his vision of ministry and of the "universal church"? (17)
3. What does the word "elders" mean in this context? What does it teach us about early church life and structure? See also Titus 1:5-7 & Philippians 1:1. (17-18)
4. Some people make a distinction between elder, overseer, and pastor/shepherd. How does verse 17 coupled with verse 28 address this issue? (17, 28)
5. How does Paul begin his farewell address? Why does he discuss how he lived among them? What aspects of his life among them does he highlight? (18-21)
6. Paul frequently reminds people of his way of life in Christ. What does this teach you about his approach to disciple-making and church planting? (18-21)
7. Do you think it ironic that Paul would talk about his own humility so positively? How would you define humility? Why is it important in Christian ministry? (19)
8. What were the plots of the Jews? Why were they such a trial to Paul? (19)
9. How could Paul's statements in verses 20 & 27 be considered the centerpiece of pastoral ministry? What is Paul claiming? Why do many pastors "shrink back" from preaching the "whole counsel of God" to their congregations? (20, 27)
10. What does verse 21 teach you about the content of Paul's message? How are repentance and faith in Christ ongoing needs even for the mature Christian? In what way do they characterize the whole Christian life, not just the start? (21)
11. What does Paul mean by "I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the spirit"? It is especially poignant that the Spirit is compelling him to go, while at the same time warning him that prison and hardships are waiting for him. What do you make of this? What do you learn from the fact that Paul says, "not knowing what will happen to me"? How does this describe a life of faith? (22-23)
12. Verse 24 is one of the greatest personal statements Paul ever made. Describe attitude based on these declarations. What does it mean that Paul considers his life worth nothing to him except in reference to him finishing his race? (24)
13. Do you have a clear sense of a personal "race" the Lord has laid before you, a personal task the Lord has given you to accomplish? If not, what should you

- do? Is this sense of a personal mission from the Lord only for people like Paul? How does Paul describe the task the Lord Jesus gave him? (24)
14. What bombshell does Paul drop on the Ephesian elders in verse 25? How does he know this to be true? What is “preaching the kingdom”? (25)
 15. Compare verse 26 to Ezekiel 33:1-11, Acts 18:6 and Romans 1:14-15. What do these teach you about Paul’s sense of duty and responsibility in the matter of the gospel? Do you have a sense of that duty? Have you proclaimed the gospel to your family and friends, such that you are clear of your responsibility? (26)
 16. What enabled Paul to feel clear of his responsibility? What did Paul mean by “I did not shrink back” from preaching the whole counsel of God? (26-27)
 17. Why do the elders need to “pay careful attention to themselves”? See also 1 Timothy 4:16. What does Paul tell Timothy to watch closely in that verse? (28)
 18. What does it mean to “care for” the church of God? Why does Paul remind them that God bought it with His own blood? How does this remind them not to think too highly of themselves, but as under-shepherds below Christ? (28)
 19. How does the phrase “...church of God which He obtained with his own blood” help support the doctrine of the deity of Christ? (28)
 20. What is the significance of “pay careful attention ... to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers?” What does it teach us about ministry? (28)
 21. What warning does Paul give them in 29-30? If the “savage wolves” rise up from within the Ephesian flock, what does that mean the elders will have to do to protect the flock? What is the nature of the wolf-like attack? (30)
 22. What does verse 31 show you about the seriousness of the threats against the church and the need for constant vigilance among the pastors? (31)
 23. As Paul concludes his farewell address, what does Paul mean by “I commend you to God”? What does he mean by “word of his grace”? What does he say about the word? (32)
 24. What point does Paul make in 33-35? Why is the pattern of visible hard work so important for elders of a church? Why is coveting so dangerous? (33-35)
 25. How is Jesus’ statement “It is more blessed to give than to receive” such a powerful one for the daily Christian life? (35)
 26. What do they do to say goodbye? How does their passion for Paul speak well of his ministry among them? (36-38)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul gives a timeless farewell to the elders of the Ephesian church, holding up his own ministry as a pattern for them to follow, and charging them seriously about the dangers that they would face.

TO JERUSALEM!
ACTS 21:1-36

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What aspects of Paul's character and sense of mission are on display here?
2. How does this section display the dynamics of church life, of love for brothers in Christ, and of mutual ministry?
3. What does this section teach us about the gift of prophecy?
4. What insight into Paul's sufferings does the account of his arrest give? What does it teach you about the hatred of his enemies?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL'S DETERMINATION TO GO TO JERUSALEM (VV. 1-15)

1. Why do you think Luke includes the details of Paul's travels to Jerusalem? (1-8)
2. What is the history of the church at Tyre? See Acts 11:19. Compare with Jesus' statements about and ministry in Tyre in Luke 6:17, Matthew 11:21-22, and Mark 7:24-31. From Acts 21, how would you describe the church at Tyre? (3-6)
3. How do you reconcile the fact that the Holy Spirit warns Paul about sufferings awaiting him in Jerusalem (4, 11) yet compels him to go (19:21, 20:22-23)? If the Spirit wanted Paul to go to Jerusalem, why does it say in verse 4 that the Christians in Tyre were "through the Spirit" warning Paul not to go? (4)
4. What did the church at Tyre do when it was time for Paul to leave? What does this show you about Christian love and fellowship? (5-6)
5. Next, Paul went to Caesarea, and stayed at the home of Philip. See Acts Chapter 8 for more on this Philip. What does the title "Philip the Evangelist" tell you about this man? What else do we learn about Philip from this passage? (8-9)
6. What do these verses teach you about the gift of prophecy in the early church? Why do you think God ordained that there would be female prophets but not female teachers of men? See 1 Timothy 2:12-13. What is the difference? (9-11)
7. How does Agabus use his prophetic gift here? Again, why does the Spirit warn Paul so dramatically of his future suffering? See John 16:1-4 and 16:32-33. (11)
8. What does the church's reaction to Agabus's prediction teach you about them? How does Paul respond to their outpouring of emotion? What does this teach you about his character and sense of mission? See also Acts 20:24. (12-13)

PAUL ADDRESSES THE PROBLEM OF THE MOSAIC LAW BY A RITUAL PURIFICATION (17-26)

9. How was Paul greeted by the church at Jerusalem? (17-20)
10. What insight do Acts 24:17 and Romans 15:26 give to Paul's arrival as well? How does this line up with the command the "pillars of the church" (James, Peter, John) had given Paul in Galatians 2:9-10? (17-20)

11. Why does Luke mention that they went to see James? What does this teach you about James's role in the early church? Luke also mentions that "all the elders" were present, but he doesn't mention any other apostles. What does this teach you about church leadership in Jerusalem at this point in church history? (18)
12. As in Acts 15, Paul reported what God did among the Gentiles through his ministry. Why do you think he did this? Compare with Romans 15:15-19. (19)
13. How did James and the elders respond to Paul's report? What concern did they have about his ministry in Jerusalem? What is the basis of their concern? Would Paul would have urged Jewish parents not to circumcise their sons? (20-22)
14. What advice do James and the elders give Paul concerning his reputation among the Jews of Jerusalem? Read Numbers 6:1-21, and Acts 18:18. What insight does this give you into the advice James and the elders gave Paul? (23-24)
15. Did Paul take the advice of James and the elders? What does this teach you about Paul? How does it relate to 1 Corinthians 9:19-22? What important ministry principle do you learn from Paul here? (26)

PAUL FALSELY ACCUSED AND ARRESTED BY THE JEWISH MOB (VV. 27-36)

16. What happened to bring about Paul's arrest? Who accused him of what? What did the Jews from Asia say Paul was teaching? Note that it is very similar to what Stephen was accused of teaching in Acts 6:11-14! (27-29)
17. What misunderstanding led to Paul's arrest? Do you think Paul would have brought a Gentile into the temple area? Compare with Paul's teaching on Jew-Gentile relationship in the church in Ephesians 2:14-16. Do you think Paul's understanding of how Christ has abolished the spiritual barrier between Jew and Gentile in the spiritual temple (Christ) would have resulted in him taking uncircumcised Gentiles into the temple in Jerusalem? Why or why not? (29)
18. What happened next? How would you have felt if you saw a riot started because of you? Why do you think Paul was at the center of so many passionate demonstrations and riots? (30)
19. What role did the Romans play in this arrest? Why do you think Luke so frequently shows Roman authorities acting kindly to Paul? (31-32)
20. What was the Roman commander trying to determine as he arrested Paul? Why was it so difficult for him to get accurate information? What does this teach you about what the scene was like at that moment? (33-34)
21. Why did the soldiers have to carry Paul? Why do you think the crowd was so filled with hatred toward Paul? How would you have reacted to this? (35-36)

III. Summary:

Despite knowing that he would suffer greatly, Paul was compelled by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem. He was received by the church leaders in Jerusalem, but a mob of Jews attacked him and beat him until the Romans rescued him.

PAUL'S ADDRESS TO THE MURDEROUS MOB IN JERUSALEM

Acts 21:37-22:30

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. How does Paul's courageous address to this murderous mob in Jerusalem encourage you in the Christian life?
2. What are some of the key details about Paul's own account of his conversion that give new insights when compared to Luke's earlier account in Acts 9?
3. Why do you think the crowd reacted so poisonously to Paul's mention of the Gentiles? What warning is there for us as believers in Christ?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE MOB (vv. 37-40)

1. What is the context of Paul's address to the mob? See Acts 21:17-36 for answer.
2. What does the tribune's question to Paul show about his knowledge of the situation? What does it reveal about the political situation in that era? (37-38)
3. How does Paul answer the Roman commander's question? Why do you think Paul wanted to speak to the murderous mob? (39)
4. What does Paul do to get the crowd's attention? Why do you think Luke makes so much of Paul's use of Aramaic? (21:40; 22:2)

Paul Defends Himself and Proclaims Christ (vv. 1-21)

5. What do you think was Paul's goal in addressing this mob? (1)
6. What was the reaction of the crowd to Paul's use of Aramaic? How does Paul seek to connect with the Jews at the beginning of his defense? (1-3)
7. Why do you think Paul makes so much of his Jewish heritage, especially of his zeal for the law and his training under Gamaliel? Compare this passage with his self-assessment in Galatians 1:13-14 (3)
8. How does Paul's stunning change of life (from Christianity's number one persecutor to Christianity's number one proponent) give evidence of the truth of the gospel? (3-5)
9. Why does Paul make so much about his persecution of the church? How severe was that persecution? (4-5)
10. Verses 6-11 are the second account of Paul's conversion on the Road to Damascus. Compare and contrast Paul's version with Luke's in Acts 9:3-8. How do we account for the differences? (6-11)
11. How does Paul's testimony magnify the gospel and bring glory to Jesus? (6-11)
12. How does Paul describe Ananias? Why do you think he uses this description in this particular situation? How does Ananias's healing of Paul's blindness help prove the truth of the gospel? (13)

13. How does Ananias' (and Jesus') encounter with Paul help explain Paul's subsequent course of action (i.e. a life of gospel proclamation)? (13-16)
14. Paul's recounting of Ananias's commissioning words to Paul give some insights that were not available earlier in Acts. 9. What are they? (14-16)
15. What does Paul describe in verses 17-21? Why do you think this encounter was not reported earlier in Acts? What happens in this encounter? (17-21)
16. Why do you think the Lord warned Paul that the Jews in Jerusalem would not accept his testimony? Why do you think Paul told this to the riotous mob? (18)
17. Why did Paul tell the Lord about his past life of persecuting Christians? What does this show you about Paul's view of his own conversion? (19-20)
18. What did the Lord tell Paul he was going to do? Why is this noteworthy? (21)
19. What was the murderous mob doing as they listened to Paul's testimony?

ROMAN CITIZENSHIP DELIVERS PAUL FROM FLOGGING (VV. 22-30)

20. What one word threw the mob into a frenzy? What does this show you about their mentality at this point? What did the mob want to do to Paul? (22)
21. What is the danger of nationalism? How do the Jews show it here? What are other examples of Jewish hatred for Gentiles in Scripture?
22. How does Luke paint the scene? What does he use to show the frenzy of the Jewish mob's desire to destroy Paul? (22-23)
23. What did the Roman commander do to Paul at that moment? Why do you think he was about to flog Paul? What does it show you about Roman justice? (24)
24. How does Paul use his citizenship to stop the flogging? How does this relate to his earlier experience in Philippi? See Acts 16:37-40. (25)
25. How does Paul's citizenship as a Roman help him in his mission? What do you learn about Roman citizenship in this passage? (25-29)
26. Why was the tribune so alarmed about what he'd done to Paul? (29)
27. Compare this account with Paul's statement on citizenship in Philippians 3:20-21. Why was the tribune more afraid to flog a citizen of Rome unjustly than a citizen of heaven? Which would ultimately bring more punishment? (29)
28. What did the commander do next with Paul? Why? (30)

III. SUMMARY:

Paul sought to defend his life and preach the gospel of Christ before a maniacal, nationalist mob of Gentile-hating Jews. They were quiet through all the details of his personal testimony until he mentioned one word: Gentiles. Then they sought to kill him. Paul defended himself also from unjust flogging by telling the Roman commander he was a citizen of Rome.

PAUL'S TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN
ACTS 23:1-11

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think of Paul's behavior concerning the high priest? What does it teach you about Paul?
2. How did Paul demonstrate the following traits in his trial: anger, humility, boldness, shrewdness, courage?
3. What is the role of conscience in the Christian life? Why is it important to maintain a clear conscience and what are the limits of a clear conscience?
4. What does Paul demonstrate about submission to God-ordained authority in this account?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

1. According to Acts 22:30, why was Paul tried before the Sanhedrin?
2. What do you think of Paul's opening statement to the Sanhedrin? Why do you think Luke tells us that Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin while proclaiming his innocence? (1)
3. What is the conscience? What is the significance of Paul's claim to have fulfilled his duty to God in all good conscience to that very day? Was this true even during the time of his persecution of the church? (1)
4. Why do you think Paul so frequently appeals to his own clear conscience? See Acts 24:16, Romans 9:1, 2 Timothy 1:3, and 1 Corinthians 4:4. Why is it so important to, as Paul says in Acts 24:16, "take pains to have a clear conscience toward God and man"? (1)
5. What insights does 1 Corinthians 4:4 give on the limitations of conscience?
6. Why do you think Ananias reacted so violently to Paul's declaration of innocence by commanding that he be struck? (2)

Note: Ananias was high priest for eleven or twelve years from A.D. 47 on. From Josephus we learn that he was one of the worst defilers of the office ever. He regularly confiscated the tithes and offerings that should have gone to the common priests (*Antiquities* 20.9.2) and thereby became incredibly wealthy. He made free use of violence and assassination to further his goals. He was pro-Roman (obviously, or else he could never have obtained or held that office of High Priest), and in the end he was assassinated by Zealots, dragged from an aqueduct where he was trying to hide.

7. How did Paul respond to Ananias's command to strike him on the mouth? How would you describe his outburst? How does it compare to Christ's response to the man who struck him on the mouth during his trial? See John 18:22-23? Do you think Paul sinned in this outburst? (3)

8. What is the significance of the phrase “you whitewashed wall”? How does it relate to Christ’s term “whitewashed tombs” concerning the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:27. (3)
9. What does Paul claim about the command to strike him? How does it point out Ananias’s hypocrisy? (3)
10. What do you make of verses 4-5, in which the people standing near Paul rebuke him for insulting the high priest? Some commentator’s think Paul was speaking sarcastically when he said “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest,” in effect saying “Anyone who acts like Ananias is not truly God’s high priest.” Other’s think Paul was quickly retracting his angry insult, acknowledging his error before it got worse, and that Paul’s poor eyesight meant he could not see Ananias clearly. What do you think? (4-5)
11. What is the significance of the scripture Paul quotes? What does it show about his attitude of submission to God-ordained authority? See Romans 13:1-5. (5)
12. What did Paul do next and why? What does this teach you about Paul, his boldness, his shrewdness, his political savvy? (6)
13. What happened as a result of Paul’s declaration that he was a Pharisees and he stood on trial because of his belief in the resurrection of the dead? Was that the only reason that Paul was standing on trial before the Sanhedrin? Was it not more accurately because of his belief in the deity and Messiahship of Christ and the validity of the New Covenant, with all the changes in Jewish religion that it brought? (6-7)
14. What does verse 8 teach you about the difference between the Pharisees and Sadducees? (8)
15. What does the violent uproar in the Sanhedrin teach you about the Jews of Paul’s time? Did the Pharisees who stood up and supported Paul also thereby claim to believe in Christ? (9)
16. Why did the Roman commander remove Paul from the Sanhedrin? (10)
17. Why do you think the Lord appeared to Paul in a vision that night? Note that Luke says the Lord “stood by Paul.” What is the significance of this language? Compare it to 2 Timothy 4:16-18. What does it teach you about the Lord’s promise found in Hebrews 13:5, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” (11)
18. How does the Lord’s faithfulness to Paul that night give you courage to be a faithful witness in your own generation?

III. SUMMARY:

Luke describes Paul’s trial before the Sanhedrin in which Paul declares his clear conscience. He shrewdly divides the council by claiming to be a Pharisee on trial for his faith in the resurrection of the dead.

A PLOT THWARTED BY GOD'S PROVIDENCE

ACTS 23:12-35

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach about the providence of God—His sovereign control over everyday events?
2. If God is sovereign over everyday events as He is shown here, why do any of His servants suffer and die as a result of evil plots?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

THE PLOT DESCRIBED (VV. 12-15)

1. How does this whole section (verses 12-35) relate to the promise Christ made to Paul in verse 11?
3. What is the time frame for the plot to kill Paul? When did the plot happen relative to Paul's trial before the Sanhedrin? (12)
4. What does verse 12 teach you about the way Paul's enemies felt about him? (12)
5. Why did the conspirators bind themselves with such a serious oath—not to eat or drink anything until they had assassinated Paul? (12)

A possible illustration of this is the way Hernan Cortez, the Spanish Conquistador commander, ordered that the ships that had brought them to the New World be burned in full view of his soldiers.

Note: One translation says they were placing themselves under a curse if they failed to kill Paul.

6. What does the fact that this level of human commitment failed to achieve its goal teach you about the sovereignty of God? See Daniel 4:35 and Isaiah 40:22-24. (12)
7. Why do you think Luke told us that more than forty men were involved in the plot? (13)
8. How did the conspirators involve the chief priests and elder of the Jews? What does this teach you about chief priests and elders of Israel? (14-15)

THE PLOT UNCOVERED (VV. 16-22)

9. Whom does God use to thwart this serious and well-thought-out plot? (16)
10. What key piece of information about God's sovereignty is missing in verse 16? What is behind the scenes concerning Paul's nephew? (16)
11. What did Paul do when he heard what his nephew was telling him? (16-17)
12. How did the commander respond to Paul's nephew? What does this show you about the commander? What does it show you about Paul's reputation among the Romans? (18-19)

13. How does the fact that Paul seems to have built a good reputation among the Romans who were holding him captive affect the way you live your life in front of unbelievers in your family, workplace, neighborhood, everyday life?
14. What do you learn about the plot from the nephew? What kind of young man is this nephew? (20-21)
15. What advice did the commander give to the nephew? What was the reason for it? (22)

THE PLOT THWARTED (VV. 23-25)

16. What actions does the commander take to thwart the plot? (23-30)
17. Why does he want Paul transferred from Jerusalem to Caesarea? When does he want to transfer him? (23)
18. What do you think of the number of soldiers the commander dispatched to protect Paul? What does this teach you? (23-24)
19. What does the letter the commander, Claudius Lysias, wrote to Governor Felix teach you about Paul? About the Jews? About the Romans? (26-30)
20. How do you think Luke, in writing the Book of Acts, got hold of the letter Claudius Lysias wrote? How does this shed light on Luke's historical approach in writing? See also Luke 1:3-4.
21. If Claudius Lysias felt that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or imprisonment (verse 29), why was Paul still being held? What does that teach you about Roman justice? (29)
22. How did Paul arrive at Caesarea? What happened when he got there? (31-35)
23. How do the lessons of this account (God's sovereign providential control over everyday events for the protection of His people and the advance of His Kingdom) give you courage and boldness in your life and ministry for Christ?

III. SUMMARY:

The next day after Paul stood trial before the Sanhedrin, a group of more than forty fanatical Jews bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink anything until they had assassinated Paul. But God moved in sovereign providential control over the events and uncovered the plot (through Paul's nephew) and got Paul transferred to Caesarea. This story is a link in the chain in which Luke explains possibly to a Romans audience how it is that Paul came to Rome to stand trial.

PAUL'S TRIAL BEFORE FELIX
ACTS 24:1-27

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What do the accusations against Paul show you about the nature of persecution in this world?
2. How does Paul defend himself? How does he defend the gospel?
3. Why did Felix become afraid? What does his postponement of faith show you about the human heart?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

TERTULLUS AND THE JEWISH ACCUSATION AGAINST PAUL (VV. 1-9)

1. Where does the trial of Paul before Felix take place? Who among the Jews was there to prosecute Paul's case? What is the significance of the fact that the High Priest himself was there? (1)
2. Who was Tertullus? The name implies that he was Roman. Why do you think the Jews hired this man to press their case? (1)
3. What do you think of Tertullus' speech? Paul speaks against human wisdom and rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Read that passage and explain why Paul refused to use smooth talk and speaking devices? He also speaks against the use of flattery in Romans 16:18 and 1 Thessalonians 2:5. What example of smooth talk and flattery do you see in Tertullus? (2-4)
4. What is the essence of the case Tertullus is making against Paul? What charges are the Jews bringing against him? What is ironic about the charge that Paul was stirring up riots? Who started the riots in Lystra (Acts 14:19), Thessalonica (Acts 17:5) and Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-31)? What does this teach you about the nature of the persecution the devil stirs against the servants of God? (5-6)
5. How did the Jewish leaders also seek to accuse Paul? Why do you think this appeal would have been difficult for Felix to resist? (8-9)

PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIMSELF AND OF THE GOSPEL (VV. 10-21)

6. What contrast do you see between Paul's introductory comments and those of Tertullus? What does this teach you about Paul? (10)
7. How does Paul defend himself against the accusation that Paul is a "ringleader" who is constantly stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world? (11-13)
8. What is the significance of Paul's statements "you can verify" and "neither can they prove..."? To what is Paul appealing here? (11-13)
9. How does Paul defend the gospel? Do you think Paul was tempted to deny Christ or his connection to "The Way"? (14-16)
10. What is the importance of Paul's desire to keep his conscience clear before God and man? How does the fact that there will be a resurrection of both the

righteous and the wicked cause Paul to make this commitment to keep his conscience clear? How would understanding that commitment help you in your own personal daily life? (16)

11. What is Paul's defense against the charge that he had defiled the temple? (17-18)
12. Paul returns to the issue of stirring up trouble (riots) all over the world by speaking of the Jews from Asia who were actually responsible. What is his point in mentioning them? (19)
13. Paul very cleverly mentions the division in the Sanhedrin, which never came to any verdict on Paul. How does this point help Paul's case? (20-21)

FELIX'S REACTION TO THE GOSPEL (VV. 22-27)

14. What do we learn about Felix in verses 22-27? What assessment can you make about the man himself? (22-27)
15. What is the significance of the fact that he was well familiar with "the Way"? Does that help Paul or hinder him? (22)
16. What decision does Felix make concerning Paul in verse 23? Is a decision to postpone a decision still a decision? (23)
17. What does verse 23 teach you about Paul's life in prison? What does it show you about Felix himself? (23)
18. Who was Drusilla and what is her role in this story? What was the purpose of the private hearing Felix had with Paul? What did they discuss? Why do you think Paul chose those topics? What does this teach you about an approach to evangelism? (24-25)
19. What kinds of things do you think Paul mentioned in conjunction with "righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment"? (25)
20. What was Felix's reaction to Paul's words? Why do you think he reacted that way? How is it similar to Pilate's reaction to Jesus? See John 19:8. (25)
21. What decision did Felix make about the gospel in verse 25? Why do you think he made this decision? What does verse 26 teach you about his motives? (25-26)
22. What is tragic about the whole case of Felix and the gospel? What does it say about human nature and the typical reaction of sinners to the gospel? (25)
23. Do you think Felix thought Paul was actually guilty? On what do you base your answer? If Felix did not think Paul was guilty why did he not release him? (27)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke describes Paul's trial before Felix, and Felix's private hearing of the gospel from Paul, as well as Felix's fear of judgment, his postponement of faith, his greed for money and his desire to please the Jews. All of this added up to more years of imprisonment for Paul and eventually a trial before Caesar.

PAUL'S TRIAL BEFORE FESTUS
ACTS 25:1-22

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Do you sense any possibility that Paul might have been frustrated at his circumstances at not being acquitted and released by Felix? How does Paul's demeanor in all of this help you face frustrations of your own?
2. What is the significance of Paul's appeal to Caesar? How does it relate to Christ's promise in Acts 23:11, "so you must testify also in Rome"?
3. How do you see the providence of God in the various trials of Paul?
4. How do you see the selfishness and sin of men?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL'S TRIAL BEFORE FESTUS (VV. 1-12)

1. How does Acts 25:1-12 relate to Acts 24:27?
2. Why did Festus go up from Caesarea to Jerusalem? Who did he meet with there? (1-2)
3. Why do you think the Jewish leaders were so urgent about presenting their charges against Paul to Festus? What does it show you about their feelings concerning Paul? (2-3)
4. Why do you think they hated Paul so much? How does it relate to John 15:18 and 17:14?
5. What specifically was the nature of their request to Festus? Why did they make this request? (3)
6. Why do you think Festus would have been eager to do a favor for the Jews? See also Acts 24:27. It seems that later (verse 9) he was very willing to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem. Why do you think he didn't yield to their request immediately here in verse 3-5?
7. What does Festus suggest as a counter-proposal? (4-5)
8. What is significant about the fact that Festus convened Paul's trial immediately upon arriving at Caesarea? Was this the usual pattern? See verse 17. (6)
9. What does verse 7 teach you about Paul's Jewish adversaries? Why do you think Luke makes so much about the fact that the Jews had no evidence for their accusations? (7)
10. How does Paul defend himself against their charges? (8)
11. What does Festus ask Paul to do? Why does he make this request? (9)
12. What points does Paul make against going back to Jerusalem? (10-11)

13. Why do you think Paul was so vigorously against going back to Jerusalem? (10-11)
14. What does this section teach you about Paul's character? (10-11)
15. What is the significance of Paul's appeal to Caesar? How does it relate to Christ's promise in Acts 23:11, "so you must testify also in Rome"? How does it relate to Agrippa's later statement about him in Acts 26:32? (11)
16. Why do you think Festus was so eager for Paul to go Caesar? (12)
17. How does the extended nature of Paul's trials before the Romans help you gain perspective on your own trials?

FESTUS CONSULTS WITH AGRIPPA ABOUT PAUL (VV. 13-22)

18. Having agreed to Paul's request, what new problem now faces Festus? (25-27)
19. How does Festus think Agrippa can help him with his problem? (25-27)
20. What does Festus think about the charges against Paul? Why is he at a loss concerning how to judge Paul? (16-19)
21. What does this section teach you about Roman justice?

III. SUMMARY:

Paul's trial by Roman authority under the accusation of Jewish leaders enters its next phase: the trial before Festus. Festus doesn't know what to do with Paul so he consults with Agrippa.

PAUL STANDS BEFORE AGRIPPA
ACTS 25:23-26:32

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Luke includes this account of Paul's trial before Agrippa?
2. What was the foundation of Paul's defense?
3. How does the account of Paul's conversion here differ from the ones in Acts 9 and Acts 22? How do you account for the differences?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

FESTUS SEEKS SOMETHING TO WRITE (VV. 23-27)

1. How does Luke set this hearing in context? When did it happen? Who was there? (23)
2. Why does Festus want Agrippa to hear this case? What practical problem does he have that he wants Agrippa to solve? (24-27)
3. What problem with Roman justice do we see with his statement that Paul had done nothing worthy of death? (25)

PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA AND FESTUS (1-23)

4. What general approach does Paul use to defend himself here? (1-23)
5. Why is Paul glad to make his defense before Agrippa? How does it help him that Agrippa has such knowledge of Jewish matters? (2-3)
6. What part of his own life does Paul cover in verses 4-8? (4-8)
7. How is the fact that Paul was a member of the strictest sect (Pharisees) a help in his defense? How does the fact that Paul has been so dramatically converted give evidence to the truthfulness of the gospel? (4-5)
8. What is the "hope in the promise made by God to our fathers"? How does Paul say it led to his trial? (6-7)
9. Paul raises his testimony to another level in verses 9-11. What part of his own life does he cover there? (9-11)
10. Paul mentions that, when they were put to death he cast his vote against them. What insight does this give you into Paul before his conversion? What insight does it give you into the way the Jews went about persecuting the early church? (10)
11. Paul gives his conversion account in verses 12-18. It is the third time this account has been given. Why do you think Luke puts such emphasis on this conversion story? (12-18)
12. There are significant differences between this narrative and the two earlier ones (9:1-19, 22:1-21). One of the key differences is in verse 14: "It is hard for you to kick against the goads." A goad was a sharpened stick fixed on the back of a

- plough which trained a beast of burden (an ox) not to kick back at the master. What were the goads in Saul's life? What were they teaching him to do? What does Christ's statement teach you about His compassion for persecutors? (14)
13. To what ministry does Christ call Paul? How does He describe it? (16-18)
 14. What is the significance of the statement, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision?" (19)
 15. How does Paul's costly and faithful obedience challenge you in your life?
 16. Paul talks about repentance resulting in deeds. What is the connection between repentance and a lifestyle change? (20)
 17. What reason does Paul give for the Jewish opposition to Paul's ministry? (20-21)
 18. How does Paul summarize his message and ministry in verses 22-23? What does this teach you about the value of studying and teaching the Old Testament scriptures? (22-23)

THE REACTION OF AGRIPPA AND FESTUS TO PAUL'S DEFENSE (24-32)

19. What reaction does Festus have to Paul's defense? Why do you think he had this reaction? How does Paul handle this reaction? (24-26)
20. How does Paul reach out to King Agrippa? What does this teach you? How does meditating on Paul's boldness before Agrippa give you boldness to declare the gospel and urge people to repentance? (26-27)
21. How does Agrippa respond to Paul? (28)
22. What do you make of Paul's reaction to Agrippa in verse 29?
23. How does the account end? Why do you think Luke included Agrippa's statement to Festus? (30-32)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke relates Paul's dramatic trial before Festus and Agrippa. Paul stood boldly and wished to even persuade Agrippa to become a Christian. Agrippa resisted, but it was a powerful testimony to the progress of the gospel.

THE SHIPWRECK ACTS 27:1-44

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Luke include this lengthy account?
2. What is significant about the geographical, nautical, and historical detail in this account?
3. How does God use the storm and shipwreck to put Paul's character on display?
4. How are the mysteries of divine sovereignty and human responsibility interacting in verses 22-24 and verse 31?
5. What can we learn from Paul about the ministry of encouragement?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL BEGINS THE LONG VOYAGE TO ROME: TO CRETE VIA MYRA (vv. 1-8)

1. What is the significance of the "we" and "us" in this account?
2. Who was responsible for Paul? What do we learn about him? What is the nature of Paul's relationship with the centurion in this account? (1, 3, 6, 11, 31, 43)
3. What does verse 3 teach you about Julius? What does it teach you about the needs of prisoners at that time? (3)
4. How does Luke's narrative help us understand ancient travel? (4-8)
5. What was the nature of their travel from Myra to Crete? Why do you think Luke makes so much of the intense difficulty of the travel? (7-8)

The Howling Northeaster Strikes (vv. 9-20)

1. Verse 9 stands as a foreshadowing in Luke's account. What is the danger? What does Paul do about it? What does Paul's action show about him? (9-10)
2. Why did the centurion not take Paul's advice? What reasons are there for them to take such a risk and sail so late into the stormy season? (11-12)
3. What happened to convince the ship captain and centurion to try for Phoenix, a better winter port? How was this circumstance misleading? (13)
4. Without warning, a strong wind struck the ship with extreme violence. What was the effect on the ship? Why did they just give way to the wind? (14-15)
5. What does Luke mention in verse 16? What measures did the sailors take to keep the ship afloat? (16-19)
6. The sandbars of Syrtis were quicksands off the coast of Africa, west of Cyrene. They were actually a long way from this threat. What does that show you about their situation? What did they do to stop their progress to Syrtis? (17)
7. What does the expediency of throwing out all cargo show you? (19)
8. What was the outcome of all their efforts? What caused them to despair? (20)

PAUL ENCOURAGES THE OTHERS (vv. 21-26)

9. How dire was the situation when Paul finally spoke up? Why does Paul remind them of his earlier advice, which they failed to take? (20-21)
10. What happened to give Paul his courage? How does he use that to encourage the others? Why do you think the Lord sent an angel to encourage Paul? (23)
11. What is the significance of the statement "...the God to whom I belong and I worship..."? See also Daniel 6:16, 20-22. (23)
12. How does Acts 27:24 relate to Acts 9:15, and 23:11? Do you see a progression here? (24)
13. Why does the angel say "God has granted you all those who sail with you"? How were they given to Paul? How was it grace? (24)
14. What is the significance of verse 25, Paul's affirmation of faith in God? What does this teach you about faith? (25)
15. What final warning does Paul give? Why does he give it? (26)

The Shipwreck on Malta (vv. 27-44)

16. How did the sailors know they were about to run aground? What did they do as a result? (27-29)
17. What does verse 30 teach you about human nature? (30)
18. How does Paul react to the situation? What happened as a result of Paul's warning? (31-32)
19. How do you reconcile Paul's warning in verse 31 with the previous promise that none of the people on board the ship would be lost in the storm (22-25)? What insight does this give you into the complex relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility? What insight does it give you into the purpose of warnings in the Christian life? (31)
20. Describe Paul's ministry to these suffering people in verses 33-38? What does this show you about Paul? About leadership? About encouragement? (33-38)
21. How did the final shipwreck come about? What do you think of the level of detail Luke includes in this account? (39-41)
22. Why did the soldiers want to murder the prisoners? Why does the centurion prevent them from carrying out their plan (42-43)
23. What was the final word on this shipwreck? How did this fulfill God's word to Paul? What does it teach you about God's power and His promises? (44)

III. SUMMARY:

Luke gives a very detailed description of the shipwreck that resulted in Paul and his companions landing in Malta. Luke highlights Paul's courageous and faith-filled leadership in this extreme trial.

PAUL IN MALTA AND ROME

ACTS 28:1-16

I. MAIN QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach you about human nature, especially seen in the attitude of the Maltese to the Apostle Paul?
2. What does the time on Malta show about Paul? Why does Luke include this?
3. What does Paul's warm reception in Rome teach you about the body of Christ? What does this account teach you about Paul's ministry to the Jews? How does it display some of the themes of Romans 9-11?
4. What do you make of the way the Book of Acts ends, with Paul preaching the gospel under house arrest, but his case unresolved?

II. VERSE BY VERSE QUESTIONS:

PAUL ASHORE ON MALTA (VV. 1-10)

1. What does Luke tell us about their reception on the Island of Malta? How did the Maltese treat them? (1-2)
5. What was Paul doing to help? What does the incident of the viper teach you about providence? What about human nature? How is this situation the same thing in reverse from Lystra in Acts 14:8-20? (3-6)
6. What view of "justice" or providence did the Maltese voice? This is similar to the view taken by Job's friends about the cause of his sufferings, and the ones Jesus warned in Luke 13:1-5. Why is it difficult to read providential events as proof of right or wrong standing with God? (3-6)
7. Are you ever prone to judge someone by circumstances like the Maltese did with Paul? What are some of the problems with judging someone harshly because of suffering or well because of success?
8. Why do you think God allowed this viper to bite Paul? What effect did it have on Paul's ministry in Malta? (3-6)
9. What is the significance of the reception Publius gave Paul, as well as Paul's healing ministry in Malta? How did this advance the cause of the gospel? (9-10)
10. Why is a good reputation among unbelievers important for the advance of the gospel? See 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 1 Timothy 3:7, 5:14, 6:1, Titus 2:3-8, etc.

ARRIVAL IN ROME (VV. 11-16)

11. What reception do Paul and his companions get from the brothers at Rome? What does this teach you about the progress of the gospel in Rome? What does it teach you about the Body of Christ? (14-15)
12. What does the fact that Paul was given his own home in Rome and allowed to live by himself with a soldier to guard him show about the way the Roman authorities viewed Paul? (16)

PAUL'S MINISTRY IN ROME UNDER GUARD (VV. 17-30)

13. What is Paul's immediate concern as he arrives in Rome? Why do you think he was so concerned about the Jews? What is Paul's initial message to the Jews? What does he claim in verses 17-18? (17-18)
14. What is Paul careful to clarify in the matter of his appeal to Caesar? Why is he concerned that the Jews know he wasn't there to bring any charges against the Jews who falsely accused him? (19)
15. What does Paul mean by, "It is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain"? (20)
16. What does the initial response of the Jewish leaders in Rome to Paul show about their attitude toward him? Toward Christianity? (21-22)
17. Why do you think that so many people were talking against "this sect"? See Luke 2:34-35. (22)
18. What was Paul's next step with his Jewish countrymen? How did the meeting get arranged? Where was it? (23)
19. What was Paul's approach in persuading the Jews that Jesus was the Christ? How long did he spend on it? What Scriptures do you think Paul used to persuade the Jews? (23)
20. How does verse 24 sum up the ministry of both Jesus and Paul to the Jews? (24)
21. What is the significance of Paul's final statement to the Jews? What does he quote? Why do you think this one passage from Isaiah 6:9-10 is so significant in the New Testament? See Matthew 13:13-15 and John 12:39-40. How does it explain the Jewish reaction to the gospel? (26-27)
22. Compare Acts 28 to 2 Corinthians 3:12-16 in understanding Jewish opposition to the Scriptures that predict Christ. How does that passage explain it? How does Romans 9 seek to explain this same problem?
23. What is the significance of verse 28 in the ministry of Paul and the history of the church? (28)
24. What measure of freedom does Paul have in Rome? Why do you think he's there for two years without having his case resolved by the emperor? (16, 30)
25. How does the Book of Acts end? What do you make of this ending? (30-31)

III. Summary:

Luke describes Paul's brief but fruitful ministry in Malta, and his journey to Rome where he is well-received by the Roman Christians. Luke ends his account of the growth of the early church with Paul's ministry to the Jews in Rome. Rome is the center of the Gentile world, but it is to Jews that he first ministers there. Paul ends by warning his people not to forsake God by forsaking the gospel of Christ. Acts ends with Paul boldly and without hindrance preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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In Romans 4:3 the Apostle Paul asks one of the great methodological questions Christians should always ask: “*What does the Scripture say*”? This question reveals the crucial understanding that the foundation of truth and knowledge is God’s word. ***Bible Study Questions*** will help you grow in your understanding of the scriptures by asking you questions and challenging you to then answer the questions from scripture. Each bible study contains broad questions concerning the major themes of a passage, and then verse by verse questions to focus on the details.

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