

Bible Study: The Book of Acts

Overview: Although the Book of Acts does not mention the writer, the evidence from this book shows that it is the second one of a two volume set written by Luke the physician, the former treatise being the Gospel of Luke. The summary of the first volume was written in chapter 1:1-3 leading to the contents anticipated in the second volume. Both books were written to Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1) the name meaning “lover of God” or “friend of God”.

The main outline and theme of this book can be seen as a summary in 1:8: *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”* The Lord Jesus Christ had promised to build his Church (Matthew 16:16). It was the task of the disciples, who had been with Jesus during his earthly ministry, to bear witness to Jesus Christ having been eyewitnesses to his death and resurrection.

In Luke’s Gospel there is a record of *“all that Jesus began both to do and Teach”* when Jesus came as a man on the earth. In the Book of Acts there is the account of the Holy Spirit at work in and through the Church. Jesus Christ has continued to do and teach through the Church, his spiritual body as shown in **Mark 16:19-20**: *“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”* Everyone who believed in the Gospel was called to be witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. See also **Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:21-22**.

Luke records how the Church of Jesus Christ started at Jerusalem. It was entirely made up of Jewish believers. As time went on it became clear to the disciples that God had intended the Gentiles to respond to the Gospel, which Luke records particularly in Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles. Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled in the Gentiles trusting the Lord Jesus Christ (See Isaiah 42:1-6 and Isaiah 49:5-6). Simeon, a devout man had received the child Jesus in the temple. He gave this prophetic word: *“For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”* (**Luke 2:29-32**). That word has been fulfilled for the Gentiles. Paul in the letter to the Ephesians has shown that there was to be one people, all one in the Lord Jesus, Jewish and Gentile believers in the household of God, reconciled to God in one body by the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross, shed for the forgiveness of sins (**Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:1-6**).

Luke has given us an accurate historical account of the early church on its mission starting in Jerusalem and moving out to Samaria and Judea and further a field as far as Rome. He was not concerned about writing about the problems in the Church but to reveal how the Lord worked to send out his word through the disciples and to see many people saved. Luke has shown clearly the power of the Spirit at work to bring many people to receive the Gospel. He has not left out the suffering, persecution and opposition that the early disciples faced.

The Book of Acts could be divided into two parts: Chapters 1 to 12 focuses much on Peter’s ministry and chapters 13 to 28 in every chapter on Paul’s ministry. Within the Book of Acts it seems that the Gospel is presented to the Jewish people first (See **Romans 1:16**) but it is largely rejected (See **Romans chapters 9-11**). It may well be for this reason in chapter 28 where there is a significant verse that says: *“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it”* (**Acts 28:28**). Throughout Church history the Gentiles have received the Gospel worldwide up to the present day. In summing up this overview, as one writer put it: “Christ is the theme, the Church is the means and the Spirit is the power.”

Time Chart of Early Church

- AD 30:** The foundation of the Church established in Jerusalem (**Acts 1 and 2**).
- 32/35:** Conversion of Paul (**Acts 9**).
- 34/37:** Paul's first visit to Jerusalem (**Acts 9:26ff**).
- 45/46:** Famine relief sent to Jerusalem from Antioch (**Acts 11:27ff**). James put to death (**Acts 12:1-2**). Peter imprisoned but miraculously released (**Acts 12:3ff**).
- 46-47:** Paul's first missionary journey with Barnabas (**Acts 13 and 14**).
- 48:** Council at Jerusalem (**Acts 15**).
- 48-51:** Paul's second missionary journey with Silas (**Acts 15:36-18:22**).
- 50:** Paul arrives in Corinth (**Acts 18**).
- 53:** Start of Paul's third missionary journey (**Acts 18:23**).
- 54-57:** Paul stays in Ephesus (**Acts 19**).
- 57-58:** Paul in Greece (**Acts 20**).
- 58 (June):** Paul visits Jerusalem (**Acts 21**).
- 58-60:** Paul imprisoned at Caesarea (**Acts 24-26**).
- 60-61:** Paul appeals to Caesar and voyage to Rome (**Acts 27 and Acts 28:1-16**).
- 61-63:** Paul under house arrest in Rome (**Acts 28:16-31**).

The following events are not covered by Luke but significant in seeing the Church continuing to grow and spread.

64: The fire of Rome. Emperor Nero blamed the Christians for this fire. It is believed Nero started the fire as an excuse to put Christians to death.

67: Death of Paul in Rome.

66-70: Jewish revolt against the Romans leading to much destruction in Jerusalem. The temple was totally destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Many Jews were massacred and taken in to slavery. The Christians had left Jerusalem before its destruction.

Suggested way of attempting the bible studies

The intention of these bible study notes with questions was not to give a lengthy exposition and interpretation of this book, but to provoke everyone interested to read the scriptures and to attempt to think about the text. Time spent with others in a small group up to about twelve people who are willing to study the scriptures is of immense value where there is time to ask questions and give views on a particular text. The writer with all due respect does not accept that a bible study is simply a monologue where someone gives a word up to one hour with no questions. Bible study should be interactive where dialogue is encouraged leading to a closer fellowship with other believers and finding much blessing in learning more from God's word together.

It is helpful where possible to have someone leading the bible study who can facilitate in guiding the study possibly giving a short introduction up to fifteen minutes and adding questions to provoke discussion where necessary. If no one feels able to lead in the group or the group do not wish to have anyone leading, it is suggested that you read together the portion of scripture to study and then give a short time of about five to ten minutes for each person to think about what has been read before sharing what the scriptures reveal. Try to avoid just giving opinions but attempt to see what the Lord is revealing to you as a group during the bible study. Perhaps a bit of time should be allowed to give a concluding summary which helps to finish the study.

Starting the bible study with prayer and worship can be of benefit in leading to a stimulating time studying the scriptures together. An exhaustive concordance and any other relevant resources can be of value in contributing to the study.

Summary notes of chapters of the Acts and questions

Study One:

1:1-11: The Ascension of Jesus Christ

1:12-26: The 120 brethren including the disciples of Jesus Christ wait in Jerusalem to receive the Holy Spirit.

Questions: 1) What proof does the writer give of the resurrection of Jesus Christ in **1:1-3**?

2) How did the disciples understand the kingdom of God? See **1:6**.

3) What did Jesus teach regarding the Kingdom of God in **1:3, 7-8**?

4) What does Jesus teach about baptism with the Holy Spirit?

See **1:5** and read also **Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33**.

5) What does **1:8** tell us about our responsibility as believers in Jesus Christ?

See also **Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:47-49 and John 20:21-23**.

6) What does **1:11** tell us about an event that will be fulfilled? See also **Zechariah 14:3-9**.

7) How did the disciples and other brethren spend their time waiting to be filled with the Holy Spirit? See **Acts 1:13-26; 2:1 and Luke 24:53**.

8) What are we told about Judas Iscariot? See **1:16-20, 25 and Matthew 27:3-10**.

9) How do we know that what happened to Judas was foretold in scripture?

See **1:20 and Psalm 69:25; 109:8**.

10) What qualified Matthias to be numbered with the eleven apostles? See **1:21-22, 26**.

11) What has happened to Jesus Christ at the Ascension and where is he now at the present time? See **1:9-10; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51**.

12) Is it true to say that the drawing of lots was a recognised way of knowing God's will?

See **1:23-26** and see also **Proverbs 16:33 and Jonah 1:7-17**.

Study Two:

2:1-13: The 120 Brethren were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

2:14-40: Peter preached the first message which brought 3000 souls to receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

2:41-47: The Church begins to grow in Jerusalem.

Questions: 1) Look carefully at **2:1-4** and consider what happened to the disciples on the morning of Pentecost. You may find these scriptures helpful if you discuss this event as a group.

See **Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 1Corinthians 12:12-14;**

Ephesians 4:1-6.

2) Is it true to say that the disciples of Jesus were speaking in known languages? See **2:5-13**.

3) Consider carefully how the multitude of visiting Jewish people reacted to hearing the disciples speaking in tongues.

4) What is Peter's explanation to the multitude when the disciples were speaking in tongues.

See **2:14-21, 39** and compare **Joel 2:28-32; Romans 10:13 and Revelation 6:12**.

5) Is there still part of Joel's prophecy cited by Peter in **2:17-21** still to be fulfilled?

See also **Isaiah 13:9, 10; 60:19-20; Joel 3:15; Amos 8:9; Matthew 24:29-30; Mark 13:24-26;**

Revelation 6:12; 8:6-13.

6) What characteristics were significant amongst the believers on the day of Pentecost in **2:1-4**?

See also **Acts 1:14; 2:44, 46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25 and Psalm 133:1-3**.

7) What did Peter reveal of who Jesus Christ is in **2:22-36**? Show what he emphasises in **verses 24, 30, 31, 32**.

8) What is meant by "pricked in their heart" in **2:37**?

9) How did early church life grow in Jerusalem from what is written in **2:41-47**?

10) What is a proselyte? See **2:10**.

11) Look carefully at **2:16-21** and consider when the last days could have started.

12) What is the meaning of the word "Pentecost" in **2:1**? See also **Leviticus 23:15-16**.

Study Three:

3:1-26: The healing of the lame man and Peter's word revealing the Lord Jesus.

4:1-22: Peter and John were arrested and brought before the Jewish council where they spoke boldly of Jesus Christ.

4:23-37: The believers pray together and give their possessions.

5:1-11: Ananias and Sapphira were put to death for lying to God.

5:12-16: Many signs and wonders were done by the apostles.

5:17-42: The apostles arrested and brought before the Jewish council.

Questions: 1) What did Peter make clear about how the lame man was healed? See **3:12** and see also **John 15:5**.

2) Who were the people Peter addressed in his message in **3:12-15** and what were the purposes of God for those people as shown in the message?

3) How did Peter prove to the Jewish people present that Jesus was their Messiah? See **3:19-26** and **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**.

4) Why were the Sadducees particularly upset by Peter's teaching of Jesus Christ in **4:1-2**? See also **Acts 23:8; Matthew 22:23; Mark 12:18** and **Luke 20:27**.

5) Read carefully **4:8** and show how this verse is a fulfilment of **Matthew 10:19-20; Mark 13:9-11; Luke 12:11-12; 21:12-15**.

6) Show the evidence that Peter and John were inspired by the Spirit. Read **4:8-14**.

7) Why was it significant to refer to Jesus as a stone in **4:11**? See also **Matthew 22:42-46;**

Mark 12:10-12; Luke 20:17-19; Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31; 2Samuel 22:2;

Psalm 18:2, 46; 118:22, 23; Isaiah 28:16; Daniel 2:31-45; Romans 9:32; 1Corinthians 1:23;

Ephesians 2:20; 1Peter 2:4-8.

8) What important principle was laid down in **4:19-20** and compare with **5:29** and **Daniel 3:16-18** and **6:10**?

9) How should we react to threats against us as believers in Jesus Christ? See **4:23-30**. It is helpful to read how Hezekiah, king of Judah, reacted in **Isaiah 37:14-20**. Notice the response from the Lord in both cases in reading **Acts 4:31-34** and in **Isaiah 37:21-22, 35-38**.

10) What do we know of church life from the passage **4:32-37**?

11) Give reasons why the Church was growing fast. See **4:31-37; 5:11-16** and **2:41-47**.

12) Read **5:1-11** and consider carefully why Ananias and Sapphira were punished so severely.

13) What evidence do we see of God's power at work in **5:12-16**?

14) Read carefully **5:17-28**. Show the reaction of the religious leaders towards the growth of the church.

15) Show how the apostles were not prepared to compromise in being faithful witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. See **5:29-32, 40-42**.

16) Read **5:34-40**. Did Gamaliel's advice reveal true wisdom or is it unwise and dangerous?

17) In view of what happened to the apostles in **5:40-42**, what should be our response to suffering? See also **Matthew 5:10-12; Luke 6:22-23; Philippians 1:29;**

2Thessalonians 1:4; 1Peter 4:12-13.

Study Four:

6:1-7: The appointment of seven men to oversee the daily ministrations to the widows.

6:8-15: The arrest of Stephen.

7:1-60: Stephen's message to the Jewish Council followed by his death.

Questions: 1) What is known about Stephen in **chapter 6**?

2) What is meant by "serve tables" in **6:2**?

3) What does **6:2-4** teach us about God's calling on our lives? See also **Ephesians 2:10**.

4) What did "the twelve" (**6:2**) believe they were called to do? See **6:4**.

5) What qualified these seven men to look after the daily ministrations in **6:3**? See also **1Timothy 3:8-13**.

6) What is significant about the apostles laying hands on the seven men in **6:6**?

Study Four continued:

7) Compare **6:7** with **Isaiah 55:10-11**.

8) What charges were brought against Stephen in **6:9-14**?

9) What promise was fulfilled in **6:10**? See also **Luke 21:15**.

10) What does the face of Stephen reveal regarding his relationship with God in **6:15**?

See also **Exodus 34:29-35**.

11) What evidence do we see in **Chapter 7** of God's purposes for Israel?

12) Show how Stephen in **chapter 7** proved from the scriptures that Israel was guilty of much sin.

13) Read carefully **7:55-56**. Where is Jesus Christ at the present time? See also **Matthew 22:44; Mark 14:62; 16:19; Acts 2:33-34; 5:31; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1Peter 3:22**.

14) What can we learn from Stephen's attitude to his persecutors in **7:54-60**? Compare Stephen's prayer to that of Jesus Christ on the cross in **Luke 23:34 and 46**.

15) What do you notice about Jesus Christ in the vision Stephen had of him in **7:55-56**?

16) What is understood by the title "Son of Man" given to Jesus Christ in **7:56**?

Study Five:

8:1-4: The scattering of many believers as a result of persecution.

8:5-25: The gospel preached in Samaria.

8:26-40: Philip is led by the Holy Spirit to an Ethiopian who received Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

9:1-30: The conversion of Paul and his immediate testimony in Damascus and his visit to Jerusalem before being sent to his home city of Tarsus.

9:31-43: The Church built up. Aeneas healed (**9:32-35**) and Tabitha rose to life again (**9:36-42**).

Questions: 1) Show how the persecution of the Church became a blessing.

See **8:1-4** and also **11:19-21**.

2) What is known of Saul in **8:1-3 and 9:1-2**? See also **Acts 22:4, 19; 26:9-12; 1Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13, 14, 23; Philippians 3:5, 6; 1Timothy 1:13**.

3) What happened in the city of Samaria as a result of Philip's preaching of Christ?

See **8:5-8, 12, 13**.

4) What is known of Simon in Samaria? Did he become a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ?

See **8:9-11 and 18-24**.

5) What happened to the believers in Samaria when the apostles laid their hands on them and prayed for them? See **8:14-17 and 22:12-16**.

6) Why did the apostles remain in Jerusalem? See **8:14 and 9:27**.

7) What can we learn from Philip's obedience to go to bring the good news to an Ethiopian eunuch in **8:26-40**?

8) What is known about the Ethiopian eunuch in **8:27-39**?

9) Why was the conversion of Paul of great importance to Luke in view of the detail shown in the text **9:1-31**? See also **22:1-30 and 26:1-32**.

10) How did the believers refer to themselves in **9:2**?

See also **19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22 and John 14:6**.

11) Show the evidence of Saul's conversion to knowing Jesus Christ as his Saviour in **9:3-30**.

12) What effect did Paul's conversion have on the Jewish community in Damascus and later in Jerusalem? See **9:23-25, 29**.

13) What is known of Ananias in Damascus in **9:10-18**? See also **22:12-16**.

14) Why were the disciples in Jerusalem unwilling to accept that Paul had become a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? See **9:26**.

15) What can we learn from Barnabas' attitude towards Paul? See **9:26**.

16) Why did the brethren in **9:30** send Paul away to Tarsus? See also **22:17-21**.

17) In view of what is written in **9:31**, what was happening in the Churches?

18) Show the response in Lydda (**9:32-35**) and then in Joppa (**9:36-42**) after the miracles Peter did in these cities.

Study Five continued:

19) What is known of Tabitha's Life in **9:36-42**?

20) Consider carefully what Peter did to bring healing to Aeneas and to raise Tabitha in **9:34, 40, 41**. Compare what Peter did to what Jesus did in the raising of three people back to life. See **Matthew 9:25; Mark 5:40-42; Luke 7:15, 16; 8:54, 55 and John 11:41-44**.

21) What is significant about Peter staying with Simon the Tanner at Joppa in **9:43**? See also **10:1-48**.

Study Six:

10:1-48: Cornelius and other Gentiles receive the word of God in Caesarea after Peter was sent to bring them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

11:1-18: Peter reports back to Jerusalem of the Gentiles receiving the word of God.

11:19-30: New believers in Antioch being taught by Saul (Paul) and Barnabas.

12: 1-19: Peter arrested and released from prison in Jerusalem.

12:20-23: Death of Herod Agrippa 1.

12:24-25: The Church continues to grow.

Questions: 1) What is known of Cornelius? See **10:1-8, 22, 23; 11:13, 14**.

2) In view of Cornelius needing to hear the gospel in **10:1-8**, does God answer the prayers of unbelievers?

3) Why was the angel not allowed to preach the gospel to Cornelius? See **10:5, 6**.

4) What had happened to Peter when scripture says "*he fell into a trance*"? See **10:10 and 11:5**.

5) What did Peter mean by "*unclean*" in **10:14**?

6) What is the Lord revealing to Peter in **10:11-15** and in **11:5-9**? Compare these scriptures with **Romans 3:22, 23; 10:12, 13; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 2:14-18**.

7) Why was the vision shown to Peter three times in **10:16**? See also Genesis **41:32**.

8) What confirmation did Peter receive to know that the vision he had seen was from God? See **10:19-23 and 11:11-14**.

9) What had Peter realised God was doing in **10:34, 35**?

10) Is it true to say that Jewish believers needed to understand that God had granted Gentiles repentance to life? See **10:44-48 and 11:18**.

11) How did Peter fulfil the great commission as shown in **Matthew 28:19, 20** in view of what is written in **Acts 10:44-48 and 11:15-18**?

12) Who were "*the circumcision*" in **11:2** and what did they believe? See also **15:1**.

13) Why were "*the circumcision*" so upset with Peter in **11:2, 3**?

14) What did "*the circumcision*" come to understand in **11:18**?

15) Is it true to say from scripture that Barnabas was a mature believer in the Lord? See **11:22-26** and also **4:36, 37; 9:27; 15:36-39**.

16) How did Paul spend his time in Tarsus until Barnabas asked him to come to Antioch in Syria? See **11:25-26**.

17) Why were the believers called Christians in Antioch and was it a good name for believers? See **11:26; 26:28 and 1Peter 4:16**.

18) What does **11:27-30** teach us about giving? See also **2Corinthians 9:1-15**.

19) Why did Herod persecute the Church in **12:1-3**?

20) What is the result of persecution of the Church? Read **12:1-4, 24**.

21) Why was Peter so much at peace in prison? See **12:5-7** and compare with **John 21:18, 19**.

22) Do we learn something about prayer in **12:5, 12-16**?

23) Why were the brethren slow to believe that their prayers were answered in **12:15**?

24) Is there evidence that believers have a guardian angel in view of **12:15**?

See also **Psalms 91:11-12; Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:14**.

25) Why was Herod Agrippa 1 severely punished by God? See **12:21-23**.

Study Seven:

The first Missionary Journey of Paul with Barnabas: **Chapters 13 and 14.**

13:1-13: Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the Holy Spirit from Antioch in Syria to begin preaching the gospel in Cyprus from Salamis to Paphos.

13:14-51: Paul and Barnabas in Antioch in Pisidia where Paul preached the gospel in the synagogue.

14:1-28: Paul and Barnabas continued their journey to preach the gospel in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe before they visited again all the cities back to Perga before returning to Antioch in Syria.

Questions: 1) What evidence do we have that Paul and Barnabas were called out to a Missionary journey? See **13:1-4.**

2) What do we know of the church leadership in Antioch in Syria? See **13:1-3.**

3) What is known of Elymas the sorcerer in **13:6-11?**

4) Why did Sergius Paulus believe the word of God? See **13:7-12.**

5) Why did John Mark depart from Paul and Barnabas in Perga in Pamphylia? See **13:13 and 15:38.**

6) Who were the people that Paul spoke to in the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia on the Sabbath day? See **13:14-16, 26.**

7) What did Paul reveal of Jesus Christ in his message in the Synagogue? See **13:16-41.**

8) What is shown of the gospel given by Paul in the Synagogue in **13:16-41?**
See especially verses **26, 32, 38, 39.**

9) Show how the Jews and the Gentiles received Paul's message in **13:42-50.**

10) What kind of persecution did Paul and Barnabas experience at Antioch in Pisidia and how did they respond to it? See **13:44-52.**

11) What was the response to the gospel preached by Paul and Barnabas in the synagogue in Iconium? See **14:1-6.**

12) Why was the cripple in Lystra healed? See **14:7-10.**

13) How did the people of Lystra react to the miracle in **14:11-13?**

14) How did Paul and Barnabas restrain the people in **14:14-18?**

15) What opposition did Paul receive in Lystra in **14:19, 20** and how did he and Barnabas respond?

16) What did Paul and Barnabas do to make sure they had confirmed the souls of the disciples in all the cities (Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch and Perga)? See **14:21-25** and see also

Colossians 1:28, 29 and 2 Timothy 3:11-13.

17) What did Paul and Barnabas report back to the church in Antioch in Syria? See **14:26-28.**

18) Consider the missionary strategy that Paul and Barnabas took up to reach many souls for Jesus Christ during this first missionary journey.

Study Eight:

15:1-35: The council of Jerusalem made a decision regarding the matter of circumcision and sent out a letter to the churches elsewhere.

15:36-41: Paul and Barnabas have a disagreement over John Mark.

Questions: 1) Read carefully **15:1-35** and consider how significant the council of Jerusalem was in seeing the Church grow.

2) What did some Jewish believers of the Pharisees teach regarding circumcision? See **15:1-5 and Galatians 2:1-10.**

3) What evidence do we see in **15:3, 4, 6-18** that the Gentiles were becoming believers in the Lord Jesus Christ?

4) Show that putting yourself under the Law of Moses is an attack on the gospel.

See **10:43; 15:9-11; Galatians 2:11-16; 5:1-6; Ephesians 2:8, 9, 14-16; Colossians 2:16, 17 and Hebrews 10:1.**

5) What did Peter mean by "yoke" in **15:10?** See **Galatians 5:1-6.**

Study Eight continued:

- 6) What were the Gentile believers requested to do from what was decided at the council of Jerusalem? See **15:19, 20**.
- 7) What does **15:21** mean?
- 8) Who was involved in the decision made for the Gentile believers in the Church? See **15:12, 22**.
- 9) Why did the Church in Jerusalem send Judas and Silas along with Paul and Barnabas to the believers in Antioch in Syria? See **15:22, 32**.
- 10) Is there evidence that the letter sent to the Gentile believers in Antioch in Syria was inspired by the Holy Spirit? See **15:23-29**.
- 11) What do we know about the Church in Antioch in Syria in **15:30-35**?
- 12) Is it true to say that the Church in Jerusalem and elsewhere was autonomous (independent and self governing)?
- 13) Did God allow such a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas to work out for good? See **15:36-41** and also **4:36; 9:27; Colossians 4:10; 2Timothy 4:11 and Philemon 23, 24**.

Study Nine:

The Second Missionary Journey of Paul: **16:1-18:22**.

16:1-10: Paul and Silas departed from Antioch in Syria to strengthen the churches already planted in Phrygia and Galatia and reached Troas.

16:11-40: Paul and Silas brought the word of God to Philippi where Lydia, a seller of purple cloth, was converted. They were imprisoned but able to bring the gospel to the jailer who was converted with all of his family.

17:1-34: Paul preached the word of God in Thessalonica (**1-9**), Berea (**10-15**) and Athens (**16-34**).

18:1-17: Paul taught the word of God in Corinth for eighteen months.

18:18-22: Paul returned to Antioch in Syria via a brief visit to Ephesus.

Questions: 1) What is known of Timothy in **16:1-3**?

2) Why did Paul circumcise Timothy? See **16:3**.

3) Why had Eunice, Timothy's mother, a Jewess, not seen to it that Timothy was circumcised?

4) What lessons do we learn of God's guidance in view of where Paul and team were led to go in **16:6-12**?

5) What is significant about Philippi? See **16:12-40**.

6) How does Lydia receive the gospel? See **16:14, 15**.

7) What is meant by "*she constrained us*" in **16:15**? See **Luke 24:29**.

8) What is meant by the "*spirit of divination*"? See **16:16-18**.

9) How does **16:19** show that the slave girl was delivered from an evil spirit?

10) Is it true to say that the slave girl had believed in Jesus Christ as her Saviour? See **16:16-19**.

11) What were the accusations against Paul and Silas in **16:19-24**?

12) Show how God was at work through Paul and Silas in **16:25-36**.

13) Why did the jailer want to kill himself in **16:27**?

14) What privilege did Paul and Silas have in both holding Roman citizenship?

See **16:37-39; 22:25-29 and 25:10, 11**.

15) What did Lydia and her household learn of God's comfort in **16:40**?

See also **2Corinthians 1:3-6**.

16) Read carefully **17:1-9** and consider the response to the word of God preached by Paul in Thessalonica.

17) What did Paul preach in the synagogue in Thessalonica for three Sabbath days in **17:2, 3**?

18) Is there evidence that many Jews in Thessalonica were prepared to be subject to a Gentile king and not to Jesus Christ? See **17:7 and John 1:11**.

19) What was the attitude of the Jews in Berea towards the word of God? See **17:10-12**.

20) What were the Athenians and strangers interested in doing with much of their time?

See **17:18-21**.

Study Nine continued:

- 21) Read carefully **17:22-31** and show how Paul preached the gospel to very largely a Gentile crowd in Athens.
- 22) What is the response to Paul's message in **17:32-34**?
- 23) What had happened to the Jewish people in **18:2**?
- 24) In **18:3** how did Paul support himself? Should all preachers and teachers have a job or occupation rather than just preaching the word of God full time? See also **1Corinthians 9:6-15** and **2Corinthians 11:6-10**.
- 25) What did Paul particularly stress in preaching to the Jews in Corinth? See **18:4-6**.
- 26) Why was it necessary for Paul to stay eighteen months in Corinth? See **18:7-11**.
- 27) Why did the Greeks beat up Sosthenes rather than Paul in **18:17**?
- 28) Why was Paul so concerned to keep particularly Jewish customs as implied in **18:18, 21**? See also **Numbers 6:1-21** and **1Corinthians 9:19-23**.

Study Ten:

The Third Missionary Journey of Paul: **18:23-20:38**.

18:23: Paul departed from Antioch in Syria to pass through Galatia and Phrygia to strengthen the churches.

18:24-28: Apollos spoke the word of God in the synagogue in Ephesus and then in Achaia.

19:1-41: Paul stayed two years in Ephesus until all that lived in the region, Jews and Gentiles, had heard the word of God. There was opposition to the gospel from the silversmiths (**19:23-41**).

20:1-6: Paul was in Macedonia and then in Greece.

20:7-38: Paul spoke to the disciples in Troas (**20:7-12**) and then continued his journey to Jerusalem. He exhorted the Ephesian elders to keep the word of God faithfully (**20:13-38**).

Questions: 1) What evidence is there to show that Apollos was a gifted bible teacher?

See **18:24-28; 2Corinthians 1:12; 3:4-6**.

2) What did Aquila and Priscilla expound to Apollos to know "*the way of God more perfectly*"?

See **18:26**.

3) Read **chapter 19** carefully. What is known about Ephesus?

4) How did Paul and his team bring the gospel to the people in Ephesus and to the area beyond?

See **19:1-20**.

5) What did some disciples need to know from Paul in **19:1-7**?

6) What was the response of the Jews towards the gospel which Paul preached in the synagogue for three months? See **19:8-9**.

7) How was God working in Ephesus in **19:11-20**?

8) What can we learn about evil spirits from **19:13-17**?

9) Show that **19:18, 19** is an example of practical repentance.

10) Why were the silversmiths so upset by Paul's ministry? See **19:23-28**.

11) What was known of the goddess, Diana (Artemis)? See **19:24-28, 35**.

12) Why did the disciples refuse to let Paul go into the theatre? See **19:30, 31**.

13) Why was Alexander in **19:33, 34** unable to stop the uproar?

14) Is there evidence that Paul had others working with him in Ephesus? See **19:22, 29; 20:4**.

15) What is significant about the town clerk's word to the assembly in **19:35-41**?

16) Read carefully **20:7-12** where Paul was having a dialogue with the brethren and consider what they may have discussed throughout the night. Please note that the Greek word for "preaching" in **20:7, 9** is "*dialegomai*" meaning to say thoroughly, to discuss (in argument and exhortation), to dispute, to preach (to), to reason (with), to speak.

17) Why did Eutychus fall asleep in **20:9-12**? Could there be spiritual reasons why Eutychus fell asleep in an important meeting?

18) Compare **20:16, 22-24** with **Luke 9:51-53** and show what Paul had decided to do.

19) Read **20:17-38**. Is it true to say that Paul was a faithful servant of the Lord?

Compare **20:33** with **1Samuel 12:3-5**.

Study Ten continued:

20) What does it mean when Paul said: "*I am pure from the blood of all men*"? See **20:26**

Compare with **Ezekiel 3:18-21; 33:8, 9.**

21) What was the responsibility of the overseers of the church in Ephesus? See **20:27-31.**

22) What did Paul warn the church leaders of Ephesus to be prepared to deal with in **20:29-30?**

23) Who appoints the overseers of the church? See **20:28.**

24) Looking thoroughly at **20:31-35**, what kind of life style should be seen in spiritual leaders?

See also **1Timothy 3:1-15 and Titus 1:5-9.**

Study Eleven:

Paul in Jerusalem: **21:1-23:35.**

21:1-16: Paul continued his journey to Jerusalem despite warnings not to go.

21:17-40: Paul was received gladly by the brethren but arrested seven days later.

22:1-21: Paul testified to the Jews of his encounter with Jesus Christ.

22:22-30: Paul was examined by the chief captain and then brought before the Jewish Council (The Sanhedrin).

23:1-11: Paul spoke out to reveal who is. As a result dissension arose in the Jewish Council.

23:12-35: Paul was taken to Caesarea to escape the plot against his life.

Questions: **1)** Do you think it was unwise for Paul to go to Jerusalem because of the dangers he faced? See **21:4, 11-14 and 20:22-24.**

2) Why did Luke mention the four daughters of Philip in **21:9?**

3) What did thousands of Jewish believers continue to practise of their customs? See **21:20-24.**

4) Why did James and the elders ask Paul to purify himself? See **21:20-26.**

5) What were the Gentile believers requested to observe in **21:25?**

6) Do you think James and the elders in Jerusalem were right in asking Paul to take a vow in view of the trouble it caused? See **21:20-32.**

7) What were the accusations that the Jews made against Paul in their attempt to kill him? See **21:27-30.**

8) What languages could Paul speak? See **21:37-40.**

9) What was known of Paul's background before he was converted to Christ?

See **21:39; 22:3-5, 19, 20; 23:6** and also **Philippians 3:4-6.**

10) What has Paul stressed about Ananias that he wanted the Jews to take notice of in **22:12-16?**

11) What is significant about Paul receiving his commission in the temple?

See **22:17-21 and Isaiah 6:1-13.**

12) Why did the Jews cease to listen to Paul when he mentioned the word "Gentile"?

See **22:21 and 1Thessalonians 2:14-16.**

13) What legal rights had Paul and show how he could use them? See **22:25-29.**

14) Why did the high priest command Paul to be slapped on the mouth in **23:1-5?**

15) Why did Paul react the way he did after being slapped on the mouth? See **23:3-5.**

See also **Leviticus 19:15; Ezekiel 13:10-23; Matthew 23:1-39; Luke 11:39-52.**

16) Why did such a dissension occur between the Pharisees and the Sadducees? See **23:6-10.**

17) In what way do you think the Lord encouraged Paul when he came to him in prison in **23:11?**

18) What was the curse the forty Jewish men had put upon themselves? See **23:14-22.**

19) Why was the Roman commander so determined to protect Paul in sending him to Caesarea?

See **23:23-35.**

Study Twelve:

Paul in Caesarea: **Chapters 24, 25, 26.**

24:1-27: Paul was brought for trial before Felix, the Roman Governor, and was given the opportunity to speak to him of his faith in Jesus Christ.

25:1-12: Paul was put on trial before Festus.

25:13-22: Festus consults King Agrippa of Paul's case.

25:23-26:32: Paul gave his defence before King Agrippa.

Questions: 1) Look carefully in **24:2, 3, 27**. Is there evidence that Felix was trying to keep in favour with the Jews?

2) What were the accusations that Tertullus brought against Paul? See **24:2-9**.

3) What was Paul's response to the accusations against him? See **24:10-13**.

4) What was Felix not prepared to face up to after conversations with Paul? See **24:25**.

5) Read carefully **24:26, 27**. Do these verses show Felix to be an evil man?

6) What could Paul agree with his accusers theologically in **24:14, 15**?

7) Is it true to say that Festus wanted to keep the Jews happy? Read carefully **25:1-9**.

8) What was Paul's answer to the Jewish accusations against him? See **25:7, 8**.

9) How did Paul use his legal right to avoid going to Jerusalem? See **25:10-12, 21**.

10) What did Festus perceive to be the difference in what Paul believed from that of his accusers? See **25:19**.

11) Why did Festus make Paul's case known to King Agrippa? See **25:13, 14, 24-27**.

12) Show from **26:2, 3, 27**, that Agrippa was well educated in the Jewish religion.

13) What does Paul stress to King Agrippa about his calling from the Lord? See **26:16-18**.

14) What is clearly God's plan for the Gentiles? See **26:16-18, 20-23**.

15) What should be the fruit of repentance? See **26:20**.

16) How was Paul obedient to God's call in **26:19, 20**?

17) Show that Paul was preaching according to the Jewish scriptures. See **26:22, 23**.

18) What was the response of Festus and King Agrippa to Paul's testimony? See **26:24**.

19) Why was Paul not released even though King Agrippa and Festus had agreed that he was innocent? See **26:31, 32**.

20) What evidence from **chapters 24 and 25** has shown Jewish hatred towards Paul?

21) Read again **chapters 24, 25, 26** and show how Paul continued to be God's ambassador.

Study Thirteen:

Paul's Journey to Rome: Chapters 27 and 28.

27:1-44: Paul was put on a ship that sailed to Myra in Lycia and then on another ship sailing to Italy. The ship was hit by a storm which to a shipwreck on an island called Malta.

28:1-10: Paul and all that were shipwrecked were treated well by the islanders of Malta.

28:11-31: Paul arrived in Rome to remain there two years in his own rented house to receive many people who heard the word of God.

Questions: 1) In what ways was Paul treated well by the centurion on the ship?

See **27:1-3, 43; 28:14.**

2) Who was known to have accompanied Paul on his journey to Rome? See **27:1, 2.**

3) Why was it dangerous to sail on the Mediterranean Sea at the time? See **27:4-15.**

4) Did Paul have any knowledge of the sea when he gave his warning not to continue the voyage from Fair Havens but to stay there during the winter? See **27:9-11 and 2Corinthians 11:25, 26.**

5) What were the reasons that determined the centurion's decision to continue the voyage from Fair Havens to Phenice (AV)/Phoenix (NKJV)?

6) Show the possible effect of the storm on Paul and others on the ship in **27:16-20.**

7) What was known of the morale of the ship's company in view of **27:20** saying "*all hope that we should be saved was then taken away*"?

8) Why could Paul speak confidently of being kept safe through the storm? See **27:21-26.**

9) Show how Paul's council was respected during the time of the storm up to the shipwreck.

See **27:21-38.**

10) Why did the soldiers advise the killing of the prisoners? See **27:42 and 12:19.**

11) What were the blessings Paul and others received on the island of Melita (Malta).

See **28:1, 2, 7-10.**

12) What did the people of Melita believe about Paul when they saw a viper/snake hang on his hand? See **28:3-6.**

13) How was Paul a witness to the Lord Jesus Christ on the voyage to Rome even though there is no record of him preaching the gospel openly on the journey to Rome?

Read carefully **27:1-44 and 28:1-15.**

14) What evidence do we have of the Church being already healthy in Italy?

See **28:12, 15, 30 and Romans 16:1-20.**

15) How did fellowship with other believers help Paul in the final stage of his journey to Rome?

See **28:14, 15.**

16) How do we know Paul was under house arrest and not kept in prison in **28:16-20?**

17) What did Paul teach to the Jews in Rome? See **28:17-23.**

18) What was Paul's final word to the unbelieving Jews? See **28:24-29 and Isaiah 6:9, 10.**

19) What do you think Paul preached to all the people who came to see him in **28:31?**

20) Is there evidence that the gospel was made known to many Roman soldiers whilst Paul was under house arrest for two years? See **28:16, 20; Ephesians 3:1; 6:20; Philippians 1:7, 13; Colossians 4:18; Philemon 18.**

Colossians 4:18; Philemon 18.

21) Who did Paul have fellowship with whilst he was under arrest in Rome? See **27:2;**

Philippians 1:1; 4:18; Ephesians 6:20, 21; Colossians 1:1; 4:9-12, 14; Philemon 9, 10.

22) Read through again **27:1-44 and 28:1-15.** What was the purpose for Luke writing such a lengthy section about a voyage and a shipwreck?

Miscellaneous Questions

The following questions are included for further individual study but can be attempted in a group study if the group believe they can benefit from studying one or more of the questions.

- 1) What evidence is there to show that Luke was the author of the Acts? See **Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3; 3:2; 8:6-7; 9:33,37; 14:8; 16:10-17; 20:5-6, 13-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-38; 28:8-9 and Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 13-24.**
- 2) What can we learn from the Book of Acts how to preach the gospel? The following texts are helpful to read: **2:14-40; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; 7:1-53; 10:34-43; 13:16-41; 14:15-17; 16:30-32; 17:22-31; 22:1-21; 24:14-21; 26:1-29; 28:25-29.** Consider carefully who is listening to the word of God being given in each text.
- 3) What suffering and opposition did first century the believers in Jesus Christ experience? See **Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-42; 6:9-15; 7:51-60; 8:1, 3; 9:1-2; 12:1-6; 13:45-46, 50; 14:19; 16:19-24; 17:5-10; 18:6; 19:9, 23-34; 21:28-36; 22:22-25; 23:12-22; 24:1-9; 25:1-11.**
- 4) Where did the early Christians meet together? Is there evidence in the Book of Acts that they built special places to assemble together for worship? See **Acts 5:41-42; 12-12-17.**
- 5) Study carefully the prophecies in the Book of Acts. See **Acts 1-11; 2:16-21; 3:19-26; 11:27-30; 17:30-31; 20:18-31; 23:11; 27:21-25.**
- 6) What do we understand of the ministry of the apostle in the Book of Acts?
- 7) Look carefully at what is known of the ministry of Peter in **chapters 1-12** and Paul in **chapters 13-28.** Show the similarities and differences in their ministries.
- 8) Make a list of the significant events in the Book of Acts which led to further expansion of the Church. The following references will help: **Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:12-16; 6:7; 9:31, 42; 11:21, 24; 12:24; 14:1; 15: 22-31; 16:4-5;28, 30-31.**
- 9) How do you think Luke received the information he needed to write this reliable Book of Acts?
- 10) The word of God in **Hebrews 4:12** is regarded as a sword that can divide people from one another. Show how the word of God was used as a sword in the Book of Acts. See **14:1-5.**
- 11) Show in the Book of Acts that the Church was generous and willing to give to needy people. See **2:44, 45; 4:32-37; 6:1; 9:36-43; 11:29, 30.**
- 12) How important in the Book of Acts was the role of angels in ministering to the believers? See **1:10, 11; 5:19, 20; 8:26; 10:3-7; 12:7-10; 23; 27:23 and Hebrews 1:14.**
- 13) How significant were the recurrence of visions given to Paul at particular times in his life? See **9:46; 22:6-10; 26:13-19; 16:9, 10; 18:9, 10; 22:17-21; 23:11; 27:23, 24.**
- 14) What does the Book of Acts teach about the person and work of the Holy Spirit?
The following references will be helpful to read: **1:2, 5, 8, 16; 2:2-4, 17, 18, 33, 38; 4:8, 31; 5:3, 9, 32; 6:3, 5; 7:51, 55; 8:14-17, 29, 39; 9:31; 10:19, 38, 44-48; 11:12, 15-17, 24, 28; 13:1-4, 9, 52; 15:8, 28; 16:6, 7; 19:1-7; 20:23, 28; 21:4, 11; 28:25.**
- 15) The Book of Acts shows us how to spread the gospel and to fulfil the great commission. Can you identify the strategy and what is omitted from the plan?
- 16) What is known of the ministry of the prophet in the Book of Acts? See **11:27-30; 13:1; 15:32; 21:9-14; 1Corinthians 12:28, 29; 14:29-40 and Ephesians 4:11.**
- 17) Make a list of the miracles in the Book of Acts. Consider whether God is still doing miracles today in view of Jesus being the same yesterday, today and forever (**Hebrews 13:8**).
- 18) What does the Book of Acts teach on prayer? See **1:13, 14, 24-26; 2:1-4, 42; 3:1; 4:24-33; 7:60; 8:15-17; 9:17, 18; 10:4, 9-20; 12:5, 12; 13:1-3; 16:16, 25; 20:36; 28:8, 9.**
- 19) Consider carefully where the gospel was preached throughout the Book of Acts. You may find it helpful to make a list of places and who were the people who heard the word of God.
- 20) Show how the name of Jesus Christ had authority in the Book of Acts. See **2:21, 38; 3:6; 4:7-12, 17, 18, 30; 5:28, 40-42; 8:12, 16; 9:14, 15, 21, 27, 29; 10:42-48; 15:14-17, 26; 16:18; 19:5, 13-18; 21:13; 22:16; 26:9.**

Bibliography

- BAXTER, J. Sidlow:** *Explore the book*. Zondervan; first printing of six volumes in one 1966. ISBN 0-310-20620-0
- HARPER'S BIBLE COMMENTARY.** Copyright 1988: The Society of Biblical Literature. ISBN 0-86-065541-0
- HENRY, Matthew:** *Commentary in one volume*. Copyright 1960: Marshall, Morgan and Scott. ISBN 0-551-05010-1
- JOSEPHUS, Flavius:** *The works of Josephus: The Antiquities of the Jews; the Wars of the Jews and Dissertations*. Publisher and ISBN are not known.
- KELLER, Werner:** *The Bible as History*. Copyright 1956: Hodder and Stoughton. ISBN 965-359-008-1
- LION:** *Handbook of the Bible*. Copyright 1973: Lion Publishing. ISBN 0-85648-320-6
- MACDONALD, William:** *Believers Bible Commentary*. Thomas Nelson Publishers: Copyright 1995 by William MacDonald. ISBN 0-8407-1972-8
- MARSHALL, Rev F:** *Acts of the Apostles* (Revised version) with Introduction and notes. George, Gill and Sons Ltd: ISBN not known.
- MARSHALL, I Howard:** *Acts*. Copyright I Howard Marshall 1980. Inter-Varsity Press: ISBN 0-85111-8747: paperback edition.
- MEYER, F B:** *Bible Commentary complete in one volume*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, Wheaton, Illinois. Fourth printing March 1987: ISBN 0-8423-4250-8
- NEW BIBLE COMMENTARY** Copyright 1970 Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, England ISBN 0-85110-615-3
- NEW TESTAMENT SERIES:** *Geared for Growth Bible Series* both written by Esma Cardinal.
- 1) *The early church: A study on Acts 1-12*. Copyright: WEC International. Published in 2002 by Christian Focus Publications ISBN 0-908067-36-4
 - 2) *World Evangelisation: A study on Acts 13-28*. Copyright: WEC International. Published in 2004 by Christian Focus Publications ISBN 1-84550-005-9
- PAWSON, J David:** *Unlocking the Bible Omnibus*. Published in Great Britain in 2003 by Harper Collins Publishers; copyright David Pawson. ISBN 0-716666-4
- PEAKE'S:** *Commentary on the Bible*. T.C and E.C Jack, Ltd 1924.: ISBN not known.
- SMITH'S:** *Bible Dictionary Revised Edition*. Published by Holman Bible Publishers: ISBN 0-87981-489-6 (Paper Edition)
- STERN, David H:** *Jewish New Testament Commentary*. Copyright 1992 David H. Stern. Jewish New Testament Publications ISBN 965-359-008-1
- STRONG, James:** *Strong's Complete Word Study Concordance*. Copyright 2004: AMG Publishers. First printing September 2004: ISBN 0-89957-126-3
- WALWOORD, John F:** *The Prophecy Knowledge Book*: Victor Books; copyright 1990 by Scripture Press Publications. ISBN 0-89693-509-4
- WIERSBE, Warren W:** *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Victor Books; copyright 1989 by SP Publications, Inc ISBN 0-89693-659-7

Copyright: Richard A. Peacock 2010

Under the terms of this copyright readers are permitted and encouraged to replicate and distribute this material so long as the original authorship is acknowledged and is accepted that the author is not liable for any damage incurred by such activities nor is liable for the conduct, the doctrinal stance or financial affairs of those parties engaged in those activities