

**NT Survey – Acts of the Apostles**  
**Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School**  
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**Title and Author**

The Greek manuscripts of this book title it “Acts,” or “Acts of the Apostles.” Many commentators have properly named the book “The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles.” The Greek word translated “Acts” (*praxeis*) was often used to describe the deeds of great and famous men. The book describes the works of a number of prominent men (and the Holy Spirit) from the early church including the actions of Stephen, Philip, James, Barnabas, Peter, and Paul.

Early church tradition, manuscript annotations, and early church commentaries all indicate Luke’s authorship of Acts. There have been no credible reasons why Luke authorship should be challenged.

Luke was a Gentile and physician (Col 4:10-11, 14). In Colossians 4, Paul refers to Luke separately from the group of his fellow Jews. Also, early church tradition places Luke’s place of birth as Antioch, which explains how he met Paul and why much of the account in Acts is centered there. He is the only Gentile to pen NT scripture.

But Luke, **who was of Antiochian** parentage and **a physician by profession**, and who was especially intimate with Paul and well acquainted with the rest of the apostles, has left us, in two inspired books, proofs of that spiritual healing art which he learned from them. One of these books is the Gospel, which he testifies that he wrote as those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered unto him, all of whom, as he says, he followed accurately from the first. The other book is the Acts of the Apostles which he composed not from the accounts of others, but from what he had seen himself. Eusebius’ Church History

It appears from Acts that Luke began traveling with Paul about the time of Paul’s Macedonian vision in Acts 16 which occurred about AD 50 (note the change in pronouns in 16:10). He traveled with Paul right up until his martyrdom in Rome (2 Tim 4:0-11).

**Date of Writing**

Acts abruptly ends with Paul still in Rome, which indicates Luke wrote these books from Rome during Paul’s first imprisonment (AD 60-62). Acts does not record the persecution that began under Nero in AD 64. In addition, James was martyred in AD 62 and Luke would most likely have included this event if it occurred before he completed Acts. So, the most likely date is AD 60-62.

**Introduction**

Luke and Acts comprise a 2-volume sweeping history of the ministry of Jesus and the beginning of the Church age from the angelic proclamation of the coming of the Messiah and His forerunner to the Apostle Paul’s first imprisonment under house arrest in Rome.

The Book of Acts is the powerful and engaging account of the birth and growth of the Church. In Acts, Luke looks back to the purpose for writing his gospel:

<sup>1</sup>The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, <sup>2</sup>until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.

The ascension of Jesus, the closing episode in Luke, is also the opening events in Acts (v11). In Acts, Luke explains what Jesus continued to do through the Holy Spirit, keeping His promise in verse 8:

<sup>8</sup>but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

Luke addressed his works to “Theophilus”, which literally means “lover of God”. It is possible that this is actually a pseudonym to protect the identity of the addressee. In the gospel, the name is accompanied by a formal address (“most excellent”). This may signify that “Theophilus” was a well known Roman dignitary, perhaps one of those who had turned to Christ in “Caesar’s household” as denoted in Philippians 4 (Philippians was written about the same time as Luke).

<sup>22</sup>All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household. Phil 4:22

In Acts, Luke drops the formal “most excellent” possibly indicating that Luke had become better acquainted with Theophilus by the time he wrote Acts.

## **Outline**

The outline of Acts is found in 1:8. The book is broken down into witnessing in Jerusalem, witnessing in all Judea and Samaria, and witnessing to the remotest part of the earth.

<sup>8</sup>but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

- I. The Witness in Jerusalem (1:1-8:3)
  - A. Birth of the Church (1:9-47)
  - B. The Growth of the Church (3:1-8:3)
- II. The Witness in Judea and Samaria (8:4-12:25)
  - A. The Gospel to the Samaritans (8:5-25)
  - B. The Conversion of a Gentile (8:26-40)
  - C. The Conversion of Saul (9:1-31)
  - D. The Gospel to the Gentiles (9:32-12:25)
- III. The Witness to the Remotest Part of the Earth (13:1-28:31)
  - A. Paul’s First Missionary Journey (13:1-14:28)
  - B. The Jerusalem Council (15:1-35)
  - C. Paul’s Second Missionary Journey (15:36-18:22)
  - D. Paul’s Third Missionary Journey (18:23-21:16)
  - E. Paul’s Journey to Rome (21:17-28:31)

## Chronology the Apostolic Age

Date	Event
<b>Progress of the Early Church (AD 33)</b>	
Sun, 24 May 33	Pentecost (Acts 2)
33	Peter's second sermon before the Sanhedrin (Acts 3:1-4:31)
33	Death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 4:32-5:11)
33	Peter brought before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:12-42)
33	Seven men of good reputation selected (Acts 6:1-7)
33	Saul stoned Stephen (Acts 6:8-7:60)
<b>Expansion of the Early Church into Judea and Samaria (33 AD)</b>	
33	Saul's persecution of the church (Acts 8:1-3)
33	Philip's ministry in Samaria & Judea
<b>Expansion of the Early Church to the Ends of the Earth (33/34-100AD)</b>	
33/34	Saul encounters Jesus on the way to Damascus (Acts 9:1-21)
33/34	Saul went away to Arabia to be with the Lord (Gal 1:17)
36/37	Back in Damascus preaching Jesus (Acts 9:22-35)
36/37	Saul Goes to Jerusalem to become acquainted with the Apostles (Acts 9:26-29)
37	Saul Goes to Caesarea, then to Tarsus (Acts 9:30)
~41-43	Barnabas and Saul minister in Antioch for one year (Acts 11:19-26)
44	Apostle James martyred under Agrippa's persecution (Acts 12:2)
44	<i>James written by Jesus' brother</i>
47	Barnabas and Saul take the contribution for the brethren in Judea (Acts 11:30)
47	Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch with John Mark (Acts 12:24-25)
48-49	First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:1-14:28)
48	Barnabas and Saul set apart by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-3)
48	Ministry in Cyprus; Saul referred to as Paul (Acts 13:4-12)
49	Paul's ministry in Galatia: Perga (John Mark leaves), Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lycaonia, Lystra (perhaps Timothy converted), and Derbe (perhaps Titus converted) (Acts 13:13-14:20)
49	Paul returns to Antioch (Acts 14:21-28)
49	<i>Galatians written from Antioch</i>
49-50	Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-29)
49/50	Paul took Titus to Jerusalem (Gal 2:3)
49/50	Paul returns to Antioch (Acts 15:30-34)
50-52	Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36-18:22)
50	Dispute between Barnabas and Paul over Mark; Paul chooses Silas (Acts 15:36-40); apparently takes <i>Titus</i> along
50	<i>Timothy</i> joins Paul and Silas at Lystra (Acts 16:1-3)
50	Paul's Macedonian call at Troas (Acts 16:6-10)
50	Paul's ministry at Philippi (Acts 16:11-40), Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9), Berea (Acts 17:10-15), Athens (Acts 17:16-34), and Corinth (Acts 18:1-17)
~51	<i>1 Thessalonians written from Corinth</i>
~52	<i>2 Thessalonians written from Corinth</i>
53	Paul's journey to Antioch; stop at Ephesus (Acts 18:18-22)
53-57	Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23-21:26)
53	Paul's journey through Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23-28)
53	Paul's extended ministry at Ephesus [Churches at Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis "all who lived in Asia", founded though not by Paul; 19:10] (Acts 19:1-41)
55/56	<i>1 Corinthians written from Ephesus</i>
	Paul's journey through Macedonia (Acts 20:1-2)
56	<i>2 Corinthians written from Macedonia</i>
	Paul's three months in Greece (Acts 20:1-2)
56/57	<i>Romans was written from Corinth</i>
57	Paul's return to Jerusalem through Macedonia and then by sea (Acts 20:3-26)

Date	Event
57	Paul's arrest
57-60	Paul's Caesarean imprisonment
~58	<i>Gospel of Matthew written</i>
59/60	Paul's journey to Rome
60-62	Paul's first imprisonment in Rome
60-62	<i>Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon written from Rome</i>
60/61	<i>Gospel of Mark written</i>
61	<i>Gospel of Luke written</i>
62	<i>Acts written</i>
62	James, the Lord's brother martyred
62-65	Paul is released from Roman imprisonment and "Fourth Missionary Journey"; Apparently Paul visited several cities in which he had ministered including Ephesus, where he left Timothy, and traveled through Macedonia (northern Greece) from where he wrote 1 Timothy (1 Tim 1:3) and Crete where he left Titus (Titus 1:5). He then traveled to Nicopolis in Achaia (southern Greece) from where he wrote Titus (Tit 3:12).
62	<i>1 Timothy and Titus written after release from first Roman imprisonment</i>
63/64	<i>1 &amp; 2 Peter written from Rome</i>
64	Peter martyred
66-67	Paul visits Troas (2 Tim 4:13) where he was suddenly arrested and taken to Rome (second imprisonment in Rome); Paul sent for Timothy to "come before winter". Titus joins Paul in Rome before being sent to Dalmatia (2 Tim 4:10)
67/68	<i>Hebrews written</i>
67/68	<i>2 Timothy written from Rome</i>
68	Paul is martyred in Rome
68	<i>Jude written</i>
70	Destruction of Jerusalem
85	<i>Gospel of John written from Ephesus</i>
85-90	<i>1, 2, &amp; 3 John written from Ephesus</i>
95	John exiled to Patmos
95	<i>Revelation written by John</i>
96	John liberated after Domitian's death
96-100	John ministers in and around Ephesus
~100	Apostle John dies of old age

## Summary

### The Witness to Jerusalem (1:1-8:3)

This first major section of Acts contains the record of the founding of the church on the day of Pentecost and the church's witness in Jerusalem.

1:1-11 – Looking Back – Acts begins by looking back at Jesus' ministry and His final commands to His disciples before His ascension. Luke again addresses his history to Theophilus and reminds him of the content of his "first account" (i.e. the gospel of Luke). The first account was about all that Jesus "**began**" to do and teach. Luke made it clear that the Lord Jesus' work continues to this day.

Jesus presented Himself (not appearances, but presentations) to His disciples with many convincing proofs for a period of 40 days. They were commanded to not leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the promised Helper. The Holy Spirit would provide the power to fulfill the Great Commission.

Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives. When He had passed out of sight, two angels appeared beside the disciples and announced that Jesus who had been taken up from then into heaven, will come in just the same way as they had watched Him go into heaven

❖ **Look back on your life and identify the great things God has done for you!**

1:12-26 – Choosing Number Twelve – The disciples returned to Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. They were staying in the upper room which tradition says was owned by Mark’s father. The eleven disciples were:

Peter / James / John / Andrew

Philip / Thomas / Bartholomew / Matthew

James son of Alphaeus / Simon the Zealot / Judas son of James (Thaddaeus) / VACANT

With the disciples were the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and Jesus’ half-brothers. Jesus had many half-siblings: James, Joses, Judas, and Simon along with sisters (Mark 6:3). There were about 150 persons present in the upper room.

Peter takes the lead and begins with proclaiming God’s sovereignty, even in the betrayal of Jesus. He then says that they must have a replacement for Judas to again make twelve. It is possible that Peter was thinking of Jesus’ promise that the twelve would sit on twelve thrones in the messianic kingdom judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>28</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matt 19:28

Peter, under the direction of God, set the minimum requirements for number twelve: a man; had been with the disciples all the time of Jesus Ministry (baptism to ascension); and had witnessed the risen Christ. Two men were put forward: Joseph called Barsabbas (Justus) and Matthias. Since the Lord chooses His disciples, they prayed and then drew lots to determine the next apostle. Matthias was chosen. Drawing lots was an OT method for determining God’s will. After the indwelling Holy Spirit, there is no longer a need for this practice; this is the last time it is seen in Scripture.

<sup>33</sup>The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD. Pro 16:33

<sup>18</sup>The *cast* lot puts an end to strife And decides between the mighty ones. Pro 18:18

2:1-13 – Pentecost – The Holy Spirit’s descent on the Jewish feast of Pentecost signifies the birth of the church. Pentecost means “fiftieth”; it is the fiftieth day after Passover. It is the NT name for the Feast of Weeks (Ex 34:22–23) or the Feast of Harvest (Ex 23:16). The Spirit’s coming on that day was linked to the pattern of feasts in the OT.

<sup>22</sup>You shall celebrate **the Feast of Weeks, that is, the first fruits of the wheat harvest**, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. <sup>23</sup>Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. Ex 34:22–23

<sup>16</sup>Also ***you shall observe the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits of your labors from what you sow in the field***; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in *the fruit of your labors from the field*. Ex 23:16

Feasts/Festivals of the Nation of Israel – In Lev 23 God instituted seven annual feasts for the children of Israel. Two other feasts are instituted in the Bible: one in the OT and one founded between the testaments but referred to in the NT. The feast of Purim is established in the book of Esther (9:20-32) and commemorates when the Jewish people living in Persia were saved from extermination by Esther. The feast of Hanukkah was established between the testaments but was sanctioned by the NT where it is called the Feast of Dedication (also called the festival of lights) (John 10:22). Hanukkah commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrians in 165 BC and the rededication of the defiled temple. The seven festivals of Lev 23 are broken into two groups that correspond to the agricultural seasons of Israel. There are four spring festivals corresponding to the first rain and three fall festivals related to the latter rain. The seven feasts of Leviticus were:

1. Commemorative – looking back on what God had done for the nation of Israel.
2. Instructive – Teaching much about God and his faithfulness, holiness, and mercy.
3. Prophetic – Looking forward to the time of Messiah.

Passover (Lev 23:4-5) – Details of the Passover are given in Ex 11-12. This feast commemorates the 10<sup>th</sup> plague on Egypt when the Angel of Death passed over the people of Israel. This feast pointed to the death of the Messiah as the sacrificial Passover lamb.

<sup>7b</sup>For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. 1 Cor 5:7b

<sup>29</sup>The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

<sup>18</sup>knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 1 Pet 1:18-19

Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:6-8) – The Feast of Unleavened Bread began the day after Passover and commemorated God bringing Israel out of Egypt. Leaven signifies sin in the Scriptures (1 Cor 5:8). This feast pointed to the sinless sacrifice of the Messiah.

<sup>8</sup>Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

1 Cor 5:8

<sup>21</sup>He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor 5:21

<sup>5</sup>You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

1 John 3:5

First Fruits (Lev23:9-14) – This feast commemorated entrance into the Promised Land and God's provision in the harvest. The first products of the barley harvest were brought and offered to God on the morning after the Sabbath. This feast pointed to the resurrection of the Messiah. This feast occurred on the day after the Sabbath (i.e. Sunday, the day Jesus was resurrected).

<sup>20</sup>But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

<sup>23</sup>But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 1 Cor 15:20, 23

Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) (Lev 23:15-21) – Another "first fruits" festival of the wheat harvest. This feast occurred 50 days after the feast of Unleavened Bread. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost as the first fruits of the believers' inheritance (cf. 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14). Further, those gathered into the church on that day were the first fruits of the full harvest of believers to come.

<sup>5</sup>Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. 2 Cor 5:5

<sup>13</sup>In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup>who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory. Eph 1:13-14

Feast of Trumpets (Lev 23:23-25) – Called Israel to respond during the seventh month. This feast pictures the regathering of Israel at the second coming of the Messiah.

<sup>31</sup>"And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other. Matt 24:31

Day of Atonement (Lev 23:26-32) – This feast commemorates the nation’s need for atonement and pointed to a day of national cleansing for the nation of Israel at the Messiah’s second coming (Zech 12-13).

<sup>10</sup>"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. Zech 12:10

<sup>25</sup>For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery--so that you will not be wise in your own estimation--that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; <sup>26</sup>and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." <sup>27</sup>"THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." Rom 11:25-26

Feast of Tabernacles (Feast of Booths or Feast of Ingathering) (Lev 23:33-44) – This feast commemorates Israel’s journey in the wilderness and pointed to the nation’s kingdom rest and reunion with the Messiah.

<sup>16</sup>Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. <sup>17</sup>And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. <sup>18</sup>If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. <sup>19</sup>This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. Zech 14:16-19

Spring Feasts				Inter-advent Period	Fall Feasts		
1	2	3	4		5	6	7
Passover	Unleavened Bread	First Fruits	Pentecost		Trumpets	Day of Atonement	Tabernacles
Fulfilled at Christ’s First Coming				Fulfilled at Christ’s Second Coming			

At the time that the Holy Spirit indwelt the disciples, they were also filled with the Spirit and manifested a sign gift of speaking in tongues to validate that something from God was happening. According to the account there were Jews from “every nation under heaven.” The unbelievers were amazed because they heard the disciples speaking in known languages from each of their nations.

The indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit is the act by which the Holy Spirit permanently (John 14:16-17; Eph 1:13-14) takes up residence in every believer (Rom 8:9; cf. Jude 1:19) at the moment of salvation (Eph 1:13-14; cf. Gal 3:2) from sin. Many NT passages describe the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (John 7:39; John 14:16-17; Rom 5:5; 8:9-11; 1 Cor 6:19; Eph 1:13-14; James 4:5; 1 John 2:27). The Holy Spirit is said to still be indwelling believers even if they are in sin (context of 1 Cor 6:19; cf. 1 Cor 3:1-2). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit should move us toward righteous living, because we are not our own (Rom 8:9-11; 1 Cor 6:19; cf. Rom 8:4; Gal 5:16).

The filling (Eph 5:18) of the Holy Spirit means being controlled by the Spirit. Believers are commanded to allow the Spirit to fill them (Eph 5:18) and this filling can be gained and lost repeatedly. Filling is equivalent to letting the word of Christ to richly dwell within (Col 3:16) and produces Christ-like words, reactions, and relationships (Eph 5:18-6:9, Col 3:16-22, Gal 5:22-23).

Sign gifts were temporary gifts during the foundational stage of the church. Once Scripture was completed there was no longer any need for the miraculous sign gifts (Cf. 1 Cor 13:8-10). Our goal for this study is not to study the Scriptural basis for the cessation of the sign gifts. We simply state that temporary gifts were given during the apostolic era in order to confirm the apostle's message (1 Cor 12:8-10; 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:3-4). With the NT complete there was no need to confirm the message that was once and all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

- healing (1 Cor 12:9): the ability to directly and immediately heal with touch or word as Jesus, the apostles, and those closely related to the apostles did.
- miracles/powers (1 Cor 12:10): the ability to intrude into the natural world in a supernatural way outside of natural laws.
- tongues/languages (1 Cor 12:10): the ability to speak in a language that has not been learned.
- interpretation of tongues (1 Cor 12:10): the ability to understand a language that has not been learned.
- revelatory prophecy (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11): the ability to speak directly the utterances of God as new revelation.

2:14-47 – Peter's Sermon – After some in the crowd were mocking and saying that the Spirit-indwelt and filled believers were drunk, Peter took his stand with the eleven and raised his voice and preached the gospel for the first time post-ascension. Luke makes it clear that the "denier" has been restored and is now filled with power to accomplish the Lord's work.

Peter started with explaining that the manifestation of the Spirit was prophesied in Joel. Then says that the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of the Messiah was prophesied as well. Jesus' death was not an accident, but was part of God's predetermined plan and with His foreknowledge. Peter presented Jesus as both "Lord and Christ-this Jesus whom you crucified."

The recipients of Peter's sermon were "pierced to the heart" – they were convicted of sin and the need for salvation through Jesus. Peter tells those who are convicted: "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." This passage does not teach baptismal regeneration because (from the VBC Bible Difficulties Notes):

1. Salvation is imparted to us by the grace of God, through our faith. No act on our part secures salvation, which is why Paul can say salvation is "not as a result of works that no man should boast" (Eph 2:8-9).
2. No specific act is necessary to accompany the gift of salvation. If a specific act such as baptism were required, then the plethora of verses that promise salvation upon belief would be misleading and incomplete at the least (John 3:16; John 6:47, Titus 3:5, etc, etc).
3. Luke earlier quotes Jesus as promising forgiveness on the basis of faith alone (Luke 24:47).
4. Luke later quotes Paul as promising forgiveness on the basis of faith alone (Acts 13:38; 26:18).
5. Peter, the same speaker, is later quoted by Luke as promising forgiveness on the basis of faith alone (Acts 10:43).
6. Acts 10:44-48 clearly describes Gentiles who have received the Holy Spirit, and thus were saved, before they were baptized. Therefore, baptism is not conditional for salvation.



7. Paul separates baptism from the Gospel in 1 Cor 1:17. If baptism is necessary for salvation, then we should expect Paul to be much more involved in baptism than he was. Paul considered baptism as part of the growth process which others serve, not the planting process that he served (cf. 1 Cor 3:6).
8. Acts 2:38 can be understood in either of two ways which blends it with the rest of Scripture:
  - a. The preposition “for” (eis in Greek) can mean “with a view to” or “on account of” or “on the basis of” or even “because of.” The word is used this way in Matt 3:11; 12:14; and Mark 1:4. With this understanding of the word “for,” Acts 2:38 could be understood to teach that baptism was being called for by Peter because they had been forgiven of sin, not in order to achieve the forgiveness of sin. However, this is not the common usage of this preposition and its normal meaning is “for.”
  - b. A better interpretation is to observe that the Greek words “repent” and “your” are plural while the imperative “be baptized” is singular, setting it off from the rest of the verse. Therefore the verb repent is connected to the forgiveness of your sins. The verse would then read something like, “Y’all repent for the forgiveness of all y’all’s sins and y’all will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and let each individual person be baptized.”

The result was that there were about 3000 people saved from their sins on this day. Afterwards, the new believers were changed and were living out their new faith in love to one another.

“<sup>42</sup>They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup>Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. <sup>46</sup>Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

The marks of a vibrant body of believers:

1. believers who are devoted to the Word of God
2. believers who are devoted to fellowship
3. believers who are devoted to remembering Christ’s sacrifice
4. believers who are devoted to prayer
5. believers bearing on another’s burdens
6. believers sacrificially loving one another
7. believers who are filled with the Spirit and therefore exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit
8. believers who have a positive lifestyle witness to unbelievers
9. believers who are dedicated to making disciples

❖ **Do I worship God and are therefore filled with the Spirit for power?**

❖ **Do I allow a failure to stop my usefulness for service to the Lord?**

3:1-10 – Healing a Lame Beggar (first miracle) – Peter and John were going to the temple at the 3 pm which was the hour of prayer when they came across a man who had been lame since conception. This man was carried daily to the gate of the temple to beg. When the man saw Peter and John go into the temple he began to beg. Peter fixed his gaze upon the man and said, “I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!” **The man was immediately, visibly, and completely healed.** He stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. This miracle confirmed the message that Peter was about to present.

3:11-26 – Peter’s Second Sermon – The healing of the lame man caused all the people to run together to Peter and John full of amazement. Peter was quick to give credit to God for the miracle. He then moves directly into presenting Jesus as the way to life. Peter exhorts the people to “repent and return, so that their sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” A content of the gospel message is the resurrection of Jesus (4:2). About 5000 men believed (4:4).

❖ **Am I quick to give credit to God?**

4:1-22 – Peter and John Arrested – As Peter and John were preaching the gospel, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came to them and arrested them. The next day the two were brought before the elders and scribes and high priests. But Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and with power spoke the gospel to them. “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” The rulers were amazed because they were uneducated and untrained men and yet spoke boldly the things of God. Since the confirmation of their message stood with them healed, the rulers could say nothing. The rulers ordered Peter and John to not speak in Jesus’ name, but they said that **whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge**; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.

❖ **Who do I place first in my obedience: God or men? Do I give reverence to God or Men?**

4:23-35 – Body Dynamics – When released, they went to the other believers and reported all that had happened. The believers praised and prayed with one accord. They praised God for His sovereignty, and asked for boldness to proclaim His word with confidence while He moves among them. And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

<sup>32</sup>And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one *of them* claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. <sup>33</sup>And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales <sup>35</sup>and lay them at the apostles’ feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

❖ **How do I live out body dynamics?**

4:36-5:11 – Disciples Contrasted – Luke now gives two specific examples of the caring for one another spoken about in 4:34-35. Luke first introduces the reader to Barnabas who will become a significant figure in Luke’s account. Barnabas is a first example in Acts of Luke introducing an important new character first as a minor character, one who appears and quickly disappears. Philip (6:5) and Saul (7:58; 8:1, 3) are similarly introduced before they assume important roles in the narrative. Barnabas’ name was Joseph and he was a foreign-born Levite. The apostles had nicknamed him Barnabas meaning “Son of Encouragement”. He sold some land and gave all the proceeds to the apostles for the care of the brethren.

Luke contrasts Barnabas with Ananias and his wife Sapphira. They sold property and lied about how much they received in order to keep some for themselves. It was not sin to keep some back as Peter says, but they pride fully presented the gift as if they were being sacrificial. It is interesting that the Holy Spirit through Peter says that both “Satan filled his heart to lie to the Holy Spirit” and that he “conceived this deed in his heart”. They were fully responsible. God judged Ananias and he fell dead right there. His wife came in three hours later and was judged as well and fell dead.

The result was that “great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.”

❖ **Do I lie to the Holy Spirit?**

5:12-42 – Works and Persecution of the Apostles – Not just the lame man was benefiting from the authenticating miracles of the apostles; at the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people. The result of the authenticating miracles were that many believers in the Lord were constantly being added to their number.

The high priest and Sadducees were filled with jealousy and arrested the apostles and placed them in jail. During the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said, “Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life.” Upon hearing this, they entered into the temple about daybreak and began to teach. In the morning, they were arrested again and brought before the high priest and Council. Peter and the apostles answered when questioned: “We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.” The Council intended to kill the apostles, but Gamaliel wisely stated: “for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.

The apostles were flogged and ordered to not speak in the name of Jesus and released. They went on their way rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for Jesus’ name. They continued obeying the Lord and teaching and preaching in the temple and from house to house.

6:1-7 – Choosing Deacons – The apostles needed assistants to be put in charge of ministry tasks so that they could devote themselves to prayer and teaching the word. They chose seven men who were:

1. of good reputation
2. full of the Spirit and wisdom
3. trustworthy to be placed in charge of the task

The men were chosen and were dedicated for service through the laying on of hands. The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

❖ **Am I maturing and exhibiting the character of elders and deacons (1 Tim 3 and Tit 1)?**

6:8-7:60 – Stephen’s Ministry and Death – The deacon Stephen was full of grace and power and performing great wonders and signs among the people. Some Jews rose up to argue with Stephen, but were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. Some false charges were trumped up against him and he was brought before the Counsel. The Counsel fixed their gaze on Stephen and everyone saw his face like the face of an angel.

Stephen addresses the Counsel and gives a defense that places the accusation of killing all the prophets and not obeying the law back on them. They were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. But Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit and gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. When they heard this they rushed at him as one and drove him out of the city and began stoning him. **Stephen, full of the Spirit, was able to forgive those that were committing his own murder.** Saul is introduced as one who was taking care of the robes of those who were stoning Stephen.

❖ **If I am not forgiving people, what is true?**

8:1-3 – Saul’s Persecution – Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. On the day of Stephen’s stoning, a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

## The Witness in Judea and Samaria (8:4-12:25)

Those that had been scattered by Saul's persecution went about preaching the word.

8:4-40 – Philip's Ministry – Philip went to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. The crowd was giving attention to what he was saying as God confirmed the message with signs and wonders. Philip was baptizing those that believed. Those that believed had not yet received the Holy Spirit because in this early apostolic age the Spirit was given by the laying on of hands by the apostles so that the new believers were associated with the apostles. A man named Simon, previously a magician, followed along with Philip. When Peter and John came, Simon wished to buy the power to impart the Spirit in order for all the people to give him attention. Peter tells Simon to take his money with him into hell. The apostles taught the Samaritans for some time and on the way back to Jerusalem they preached the gospel in many villages.

Philip is then directed by the Holy Spirit to go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza. On the road he met an Ethiopian eunuch who had come to Jerusalem to worship. This account of Philip preaching the gospel presents a pattern for witnessing opportunities:

1. Philip was available (v27)
2. Philip was Spirit filled (v29)
3. Philip was obedient (v30)
4. Philip has a proper opening to begin the conversation (v30)
5. Philip preached specifically concerning Jesus (v35)
6. Philip followed up on a profession of faith (v36-38)

As Philip was baptizing the eunuch, the Spirit snatched him away and was brought to Azotus and he kept preaching the gospel to all that cities on his way to Caesarea.

Philip was the first Jewish Christian in Acts to evangelize a Gentile who lived in the uttermost part of the earth. Presumably, the eunuch returned home and became one of the earliest Gentile witnesses and missionaries in Africa.

### ❖ **Am I sharing the gospel (the natural outflow of being filled with the Spirit)?**

9:1-31 – Saul's Conversion – Saul was breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. On his way to Damascus he is met by the Lord Jesus and struck blind. He was led by the hand to Damascus and was there for three days fasting and praying.

The Lord spoke to a disciple named Ananias in a vision, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." Ananias went to Saul and the Lord healed him and filled him with the Holy Spirit and he was baptized. Immediately, Saul began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues. He kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ. Saul escapes Jews who were plotting to kill him by being lowered through an opening in the wall in a large basket.

Paul travels to Jerusalem and Barnabas takes him to the apostles and he continued to speak out boldly in the name of Jesus. When the Jews tried to kill Saul, some of his brethren learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

9:32-10:48 – Peter’s Ministry – Peter was traveling through the regions of Judea and Galilee and Samaria and came to the saints who lived in Lydda (between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean). There he met Aeneas who had been paralyzed for 8 years and healed him. All who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him and they turned to the Lord.

In Joppa, a disciple named Tabitha (Dorcas) who abounded in deeds of kindness and charity fell sick and died. Peter raised Tabitha from the dead and it became well known all over Joppa and many believed in the Lord. Peter stayed many days in Joppa with a tanner named Simon.

In Caesarea, a centurion named Cornelius received a vision to send for Peter who was in Joppa with Simon. In Joppa, Peter receives a vision that he is no longer to hold to the Law. The men that Cornelius had sent found Peter and journeyed back to Caesarea with him. Cornelius had a large crowd of relatives and close friends gathered to hear all that Peter had been commanded by the Lord. So Peter preached the gospel to Gentiles and while preaching, they believed and the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

11:1-18 – Inclusion of the Gentiles in the Church – Peter reported to the apostles and brethren what had happened with Cornelius. When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.”

11:19-30 – Ministry in Antioch – The believers who were scattered due to the persecution in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, they preached the gospel to Jews only. But some began speaking to the Greeks also and a large number of them believed and turned to the Lord. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch to minister to the new believers. Barnabas was a “good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.” He went to Tarsus to find Saul and brought Saul to Antioch where they stayed for a year and taught considerable numbers. The believers were first called Christians in Antioch.

Aga bus, a prophet from Jerusalem, prophesied that there would be famine all over the world. This took place in the reign of Claudius. And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

❖ **Am I preaching the gospel to my neighbors?**

❖ **Do I use the means God has given me to care for other believers?**

12:1-19 – Herod’s Persecution – Herod began persecuting the church and laid hands on some in order to mistreat them. James, the brother of John, was put to death with the sword. This pleased the Jews, so Herod arrested Peter also and intended to have him put to death after the Passover. The church was “fervently” praying for Peter. An angel rescues Peter from prison and he goes to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark. A group of believers were gathered at Mary’s house and were praying. They were amazed that Peter was there. Peter described to the group how the Lord had led him out of the prison. Peter had the group report the events to James (Jesus’ half brother) and the other brethren in Jerusalem, but Peter prudently left and went to another place.

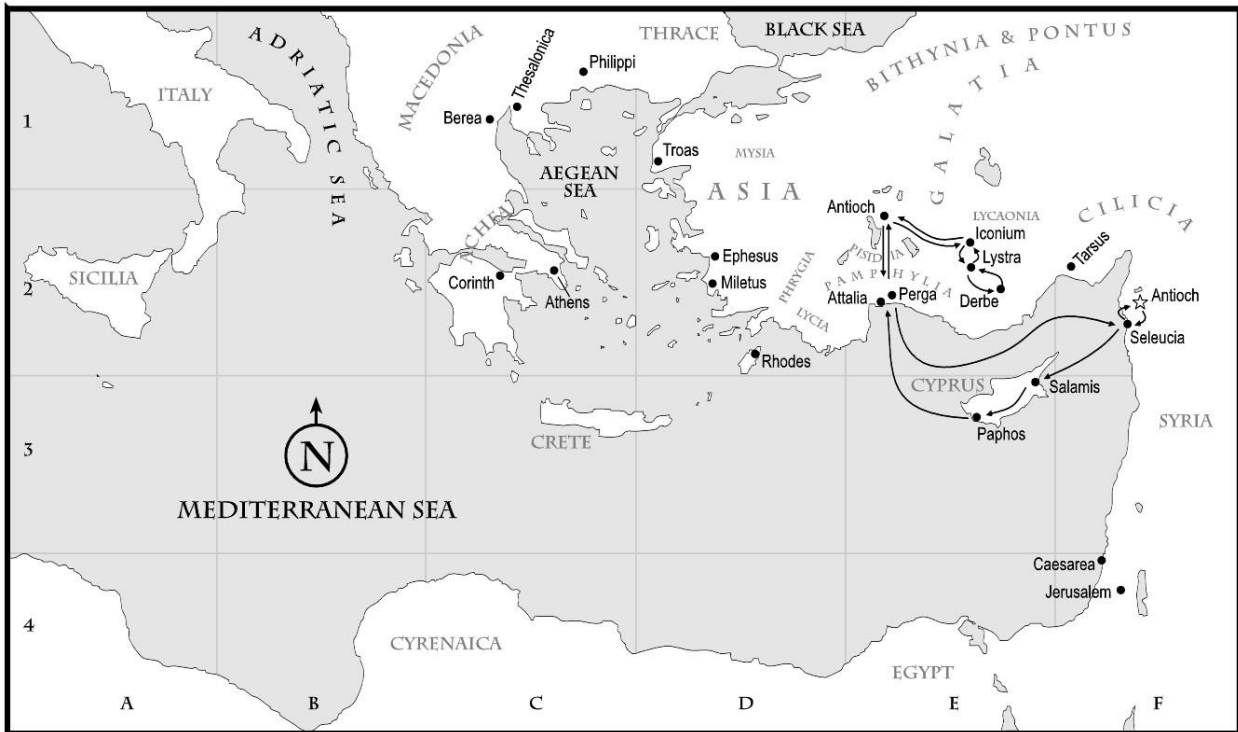
12:20-23 – Death of Herod – Herod dies because he did not give God the glory for his eloquent speech, but took it for himself. He was eaten by worms.

12:24-25 – Continued Growth – Despite opposition from within and without, the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied. After delivering the relief offering to the apostles in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch with John Mark (Barnabas’ cousin – Col 4:10). Saul is introduced here again as Acts transitions to his ministry as the focus for the rest of the book.

## The Witness to the Remotest Part of the Earth (13:1-28:31)

### First Missionary Journey (13:1-14:28)

The first missionary journey begins in Antioch where Saul and Barnabas and others were ministering to the Lord (all “ministry” is ultimately to the Lord). The Holy Spirit set Barnabas and Saul apart for the work He called them to do. The ministry team in Antioch fasted and prayed and laid hands on them and sent them away on their journey.



From classic.net.bible.org

13:1-43 – To the Jews First – Saul, Barnabas, and John Mark head to Cyprus and proclaimed the word in the synagogues. On the island, a false prophet opposed the missionaries to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Paul (v9) was filled with the Holy Spirit and struck the false prophet blind and the proconsul believed being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.

The missionaries set out to the mainland and reach Pisidian Antioch and on the Sabbath entered the synagogue. The synagogue officials asked them if they had a word of exhortation for the people. Paul stood up and preached Jesus. As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.

#### ❖ **Paul always cared about new believers maturity, do I?**

13:44-51 – To the Gentiles – On the next Sabbath, nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. Jealous Jews contradicted Paul and blasphemed. Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.” Paul now becomes the apostle to the Gentiles.

When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many **as had been appointed to eternal life believed**. The word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region and the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

#### ❖ **Am I filled with joy, why or why not?**

14:1-28 – Iconium, Lycaonia, Lystra, Derbe, Antioch – In Iconium, a large number of both Jews and Greeks believed, but there also arose a great deal of resistance toward the apostles. Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands. When the resistance moved to deadly persecution, they fled to the surrounding region and continued to preach the gospel.

At Lystra, Paul heals a man lame from birth. The crowds want to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas because they believed them to be Greek gods. In contrast to Herod, Paul and Barnabas showed their horror and desire to be viewed as men like all others (sinners in need of salvation).

❖ **Does my life point to Jesus or myself?**

Jews from Antioch and Iconium came to Lystra and won over the crowds and stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city. The crowd assumed Paul was dead (“supposing him to be dead”) which was incorrect. However, he may have been healed from the wounds since he got up and entered the city and the next day went to Derbe.

In Derbe, they preached the gospel to the city and made many disciples. They then returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” They also appointed elders in every church.

They then continued on their journey back to Antioch from which they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had accomplished. When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they spent a long time with the disciples.

❖ **Do I share what God is doing in and through me with other believers, making sure He gets the credit?**

The Jerusalem Council (15:1-35)

15:1-5 – The Problem – Some men came down from Judea and began teaching that circumcision was required for salvation. Paul and Barnabas rallied to the defense of the truth and had great dissension and debate with the false teachers. The Antioch church determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others would go to Jerusalem and consult with the apostles and elders. As they went to Jerusalem, they described in detail the conversion of the Gentiles and were bringing great joy to all (Jews and Gentiles alike) the brethren. When reaching Jerusalem, they reported all that God had done with them in bringing the gospel to the Gentiles. Some Pharisees who had believed stood up and said that it was necessary to circumcise the Gentiles and direct them to observe the Law of Moses.

❖ **Am I filled with joy when I hear about how believers are born again?**

15:6-18 – The Discussion – The apostles and elders came together (in place and Spirit) to look into the matter. After much debate, Peter said clearly that God shows no partiality and that salvation is by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus. James agrees with Peter.

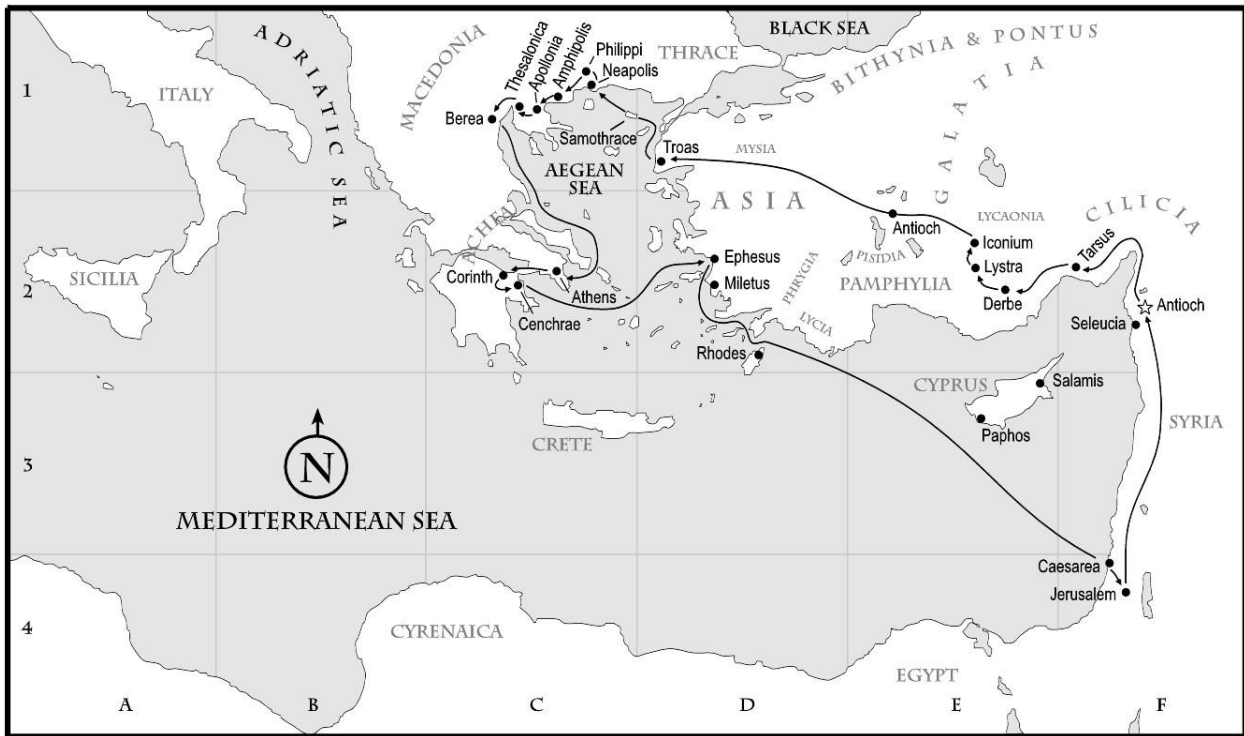
15:19-35 – Conclusion – James and Peter resolved the doctrinal issue of the means of salvation, then they turned to practical matters of fellowship. The Jews were not to “trouble” the Gentiles who were turning to God, but also the Gentiles were not to “trouble” the Jewish believers by exercising their freedom to the detriment of their Jewish brothers. All was to be done in love.

❖ **Am I careful to not cause brothers to stumble (Rom 14)?**

Paul and Barnabas delivered the letter to the congregation at Antioch. Paul, Barnabas, and Silas stayed in Antioch, teaching and preaching **with many others also**.

## Second Missionary Journey (15:36-18:22)

Paul wanted to return and visit the brethren in every city in which they proclaimed the word of the Lord to see how they were doing.



From classic.net.bible.org

15:36-40 – Disagreement – Barnabas had desired (persistently) to take John Mark on this journey, but Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along because he deserted them on the first journey. The two disagreed so sharply that they separated from one another. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus. Paul chose Silas and traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

The question arises as to who was right, Barnabas or Paul. Although the Scripture does not explicitly say, the weight of the evidence favors Paul. He was an apostle, Barnabas was not. Therefore, Barnabas should have submitted to Paul's apostolic authority. Also, Paul and Silas, but not Barnabas and Mark, were commended by the church (v40). Finally, Barnabas should have realized that it would have been unwise and difficult to have Mark along if Paul did not trust him.

Although they apparently never again ministered together (this is the last mention of Barnabas in Acts), we know Paul and Barnabas eventually reconciled their differences, because Paul later wrote approvingly of Barnabas's ministry (1 Cor 9:6). Even John Mark, the cause of all the trouble, later became one of Paul's valued co-laborers (Col 4:10; Philem 24; 2 Tim 4:11). He also became a close associate of the apostle Peter (1 Pet 5:13) and was privileged to write one of the four gospels. Barnabas did a remarkable job in helping to turn around the life and ministry career of his young cousin.

MacArthur NT Commentary: Acts

- ❖ **Do I submit to authority?**
- ❖ **Am I committed to other believers?**

16:1-13 – Macedonian Vision – At Lystra, Paul meets a disciple named Timothy who was well spoken of by the brethren. Paul took and circumcised Timothy so as to not cause a stumbling block when seeking to preach to the Jews in the region. As they passed through the cities, they delivered the apostle's teaching so the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily. The team was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia so they turned north, but were prevented to go into Bithynia by the Spirit of Jesus so they went straight on to Troas. At Troas, Paul had a vision and concluded that God had called them to preach the gospel in Macedonia. They ended in the Roman colony of Philippi and sought to share the gospel.



16:14-21 – First Convert in Europe – A woman named Lydia came to listen to Paul and the “Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.” She then shared the gospel with her household and all were baptized. The missionaries stayed with her in Philippi. Paul is annoyed by a demon possessed slave girl who casts out the demon. The slave’s masters seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the city authorities.

16:22-40 – Paul and Silas Imprisoned – Paul and Silas were stripped and beaten with rods with many blows and thrown in prison. The jailer was ordered to guard them securely so he put them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in stocks. After being beaten and in stocks, at about midnight the two were praying and singing hymns of praise to God with the prisoners listening to them. Paul and Silas are freed by an earthquake. The jailer was about to kill himself supposing all the prisoners had escaped. He asked them, “what must I do to be saved?” They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. The jailer showed that true repentance had occurred by caring for Paul and Silas and immediately being baptized.

❖ **Can I sing praises to God in the midst of difficult situations?**

17:1-9 – Thessalonica – They arrive in Thessalonica and for three Sabbaths reasoned with the Jews from the Scriptures giving evidence that Jesus is the Messiah. They were staying at the house of Jason. The Jews formed a mob and attacked the house of Jason and dragged him before the city authorities. Jason gave them a pledge from Jason and released him.

17:10-14 – Berea – From Thessalonica, the brethren sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. The Bereans received the word with great eagerness examining the Scriptures daily to see whether what Paul was saying was so. The Thessalonians went to Berea and agitated and stirred up the crowds against Paul. Paul was sent away and Silas and Timothy remained. The brethren escorted Paul to Athens where Paul commanded that Silas and Timothy were to come to him as soon as possible.

❖ **Do I receive the word with great eagerness and examine the Scriptures daily?**

17:15-34 – Athens – As Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens, his spirit was provoked within him seeing the idol worship all around. He was reasoning in the synagogues and market place every day. Some philosophers took him to the Areopagus to listen to him because all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new. Paul preaches his sermon on Mars Hill. Some scoffed at him; others believed.

18:1-17 – Corinth – Paul then leaves Athens and goes to Corinth. He found Aquila and Priscilla, Jews having recently come from Italy because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. They were tent-makers, the same as Paul, so he stayed with them and worked, reasoning in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

❖ **Do I work hard at providing for my family AND ministry?**

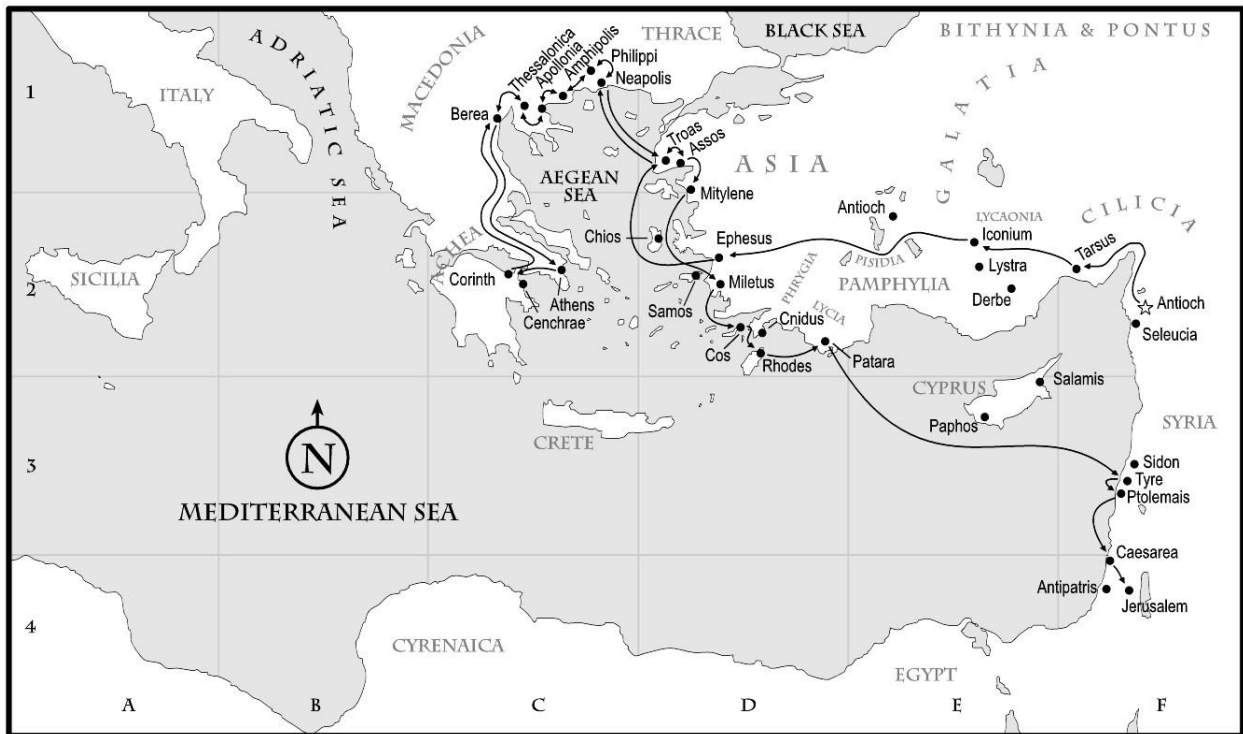
When Silas and Timothy met up with him, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. The Jews resisted and blasphemed. From now on Paul went to the Gentiles. Paul settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

18:18-22 – Journey Home – Paul heads home by sea taking Priscilla and Aquila with him. At Ephesus he left his friends. He was asked by the brethren there to stay a longer time, but did not consent. He promised to return if God wills. When he landed in Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church then went home to Antioch.

❖ **Am I willing to give up my own desires for spiritual expediency?**

### Third Missionary Journey (18:23-21:16)

Paul spent some time at Antioch, but then left and headed west to strengthen the disciples. This is Paul's third missionary journey.



From classic.net.bible.org

18:24-28 – Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus – Luke recounts Aquila and Priscilla's experiences in Ephesus with Apollos. Apollos was a Jew of Alexandrian birth who was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. He was familiar with John's ministry and had repented and trusted in the Messiah, yet his theological understanding was slightly inaccurate. Priscilla and Aquila gently corrected this great teacher and took him aside privately. Apollos was a man of great humility to be taught by a lowly tent maker. He desired to go to Achaia (Corinth) so the brethren in Ephesus sent a letter to the disciples to welcome him. He greatly helped the believers in Corinth by powerfully refuting the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

#### ❖ Do I strive to have correct theology? Am I teachable? ?

19:1-12 – Paul at Ephesus – While Apollos is at Corinth, Paul comes to Ephesus and finds some men who had not been baptized. He baptized them and laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit and demonstrated the sign gifts. At Ephesus, Paul enters the synagogue and preached the gospel for three months until resistance grew. He then took the disciples and withdrew from the synagogue and reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus. This was most likely a lecture hall that the owner made available to Paul for his preaching/teaching ministry. An ancient copy of Acts adds that the time was 11am-4 pm. This was normally siesta time when people rested before resuming work after the heat of the day subsided.

Paul powerfully preached the gospel for two years with the result that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul confirming the message of the gospel.

#### ❖ Paul's ministry was regular and extended, what about me?

19:13-20 – The Seven Sons of Sceva – The seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest errantly thought that simply naming Jesus could overcome demons. They were wrong. The demon said, ““I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”” The demon possessed man attacked all seven and overpowered and humiliated them. This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified. Those who had turned to the Lord put away their false religion. The word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.

19:13-41 – Paul Purposes to go to Jerusalem then Rome – At this point in his ministry Paul began to focus his attention on taking the gospel to Rome. Luke recorded the events that led up to his arrival there to show how Jesus extended His church to the center of the Roman (Gentile) world. Paul sends Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia and he stays in Asia.

A riot breaks out in Ephesus because the silversmiths were losing money from people turning to the Way. The crowd is quelled by the town clerk.

20:1-12 – Macedonia and Greece – After the riot in Ephesus, Paul exhorts the brethren and leaves for Macedonia on to Greece, all the while exhorting the disciples. This route took him in the opposite direction of Jerusalem. He went this way to take up a collection for the poor believers in Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-28; 1 Cor 16:1-8; 2 Cor 8-9).

He spent three months in Greece when a plot formed against him by the Jews as he was getting ready to set sail for Syria so he went by land back through Macedonia to Troas. At Troas, Paul preached on Sunday until midnight when a boy named Eutychus fell asleep and fell from a third story window and died. This disturbed the service, but Paul fell on the boy, embraced him, and healed and raised him from the dead. Afterwards, the disciples held a communion service and Paul continued to preach until daybreak.

❖ **How hungry am I to hear the Word of God preached?**

20:13-16 – Troas to Miletus – Paul meets his traveling companions at Assos, joining them on the boat. They sailed past Ephesus so he would not have to spend time in Asia. Paul would have been ministry bound to care for the brethren at Ephesus. His goal was to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost.

❖ **When I meet people is the first thought how I might minister to them?**

20:17-38 – Farewell to the Ephesian Elders – Paul called the Ephesian elders to him to bid them farewell. This is an incredibly applicable section detailing Paul’s ministry philosophy/practice:

- He was with the Ephesians the whole time in Asia.
- He served the Lord with humility and tears and trials.
- He did not shrink from declaring anything that was profitable.
- He taught publically from house to house.
- He preached an uncompromising gospel.
- He was sold out to finish the race well.
- He did not shrink from declaring the whole purpose of God.
- He was concerned about the continued spiritual welfare of the church.
- His service was not about money.
- He worked hard to provide for his own needs and have extra to share.
- He imparted his life to those he ministered to and they loved him dearly.
- He was devoted to prayer.

❖ **What is my philosophy/practice of ministry and how did I come up with that?**

21:1-26 – To Jerusalem – They sailed to Tyre where they stayed with the brethren who also warned him about going to Jerusalem. Paul ministered to families and the families went out to the edge of the city to pray with him and bid him farewell. At Caesarea they stayed at the home of Philip the evangelist who was one of the seven. A prophet named Agabus prophesied that Paul would be bound in Jerusalem and handed over to the Gentiles. Paul was committed to finish the journey to Jerusalem. The group arrives in Jerusalem and tells James and the elders all that God had done among the Gentiles through Paul’s ministry.

❖ **Do I tell of the great things God has done for/through me?**

Paul’s Journey to Rome (21:27-28:31)

21:27-22:30 – Paul’s Arrest – Paul is seized at the temple and falsely accused of bringing a Gentile into the temple. The crowd pulls him out of the temple into the court of the Gentiles where he is beaten. Roman soldiers come and break up the crowd and take custody of Paul. The Roman commander thought Paul to be an Egyptian terrorist. Paul speaks to him in Greek and shows him that he is not this man. Paul wanted to speak to the crowd and the commander allows this. He speaks to the crowd in Hebrew and the crowd listens intently (“And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet.”).

❖ **Do I try to meet people where they are to share the gospel with them or do I expect them to conform to me?**

Paul preaches his testimony. The crowd gets unruly when he stated that Jesus sent him to the Gentiles. The Roman commander was going to examine Paul by scourging when Paul announces that he is a Roman. The commander was afraid because he had put a Roman in chains and came very close to scourging him. Paul is released and the Roman commander calls together the chief priests and all the council and Paul is brought and sat before them.

❖ **Am I ready to give my testimony at opportune times?**

23:1-11 – Paul before the Council – Paul looks intently at the Council and addressed them formally, evidently intending to give his testimony again to the Sanhedrin. Paul begins by saying that he has done nothing wrong and has lived his life in accord with God’s revealed will. Paul’s claim to uprightness so incensed Ananias that he ordered a soldier to strike him on the mouth in direct violation of God’s law.

Paul recognized that he could not get a fair trial in a court that did not even observe their own law, so he changed his tactics. He sees that there are Sadducees and Pharisees present and calls himself a Pharisee and that he is on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead. A riot breaks out and the Roman commander intercedes and saves Paul. The next night, the Lord stood at his side and said, “Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.”

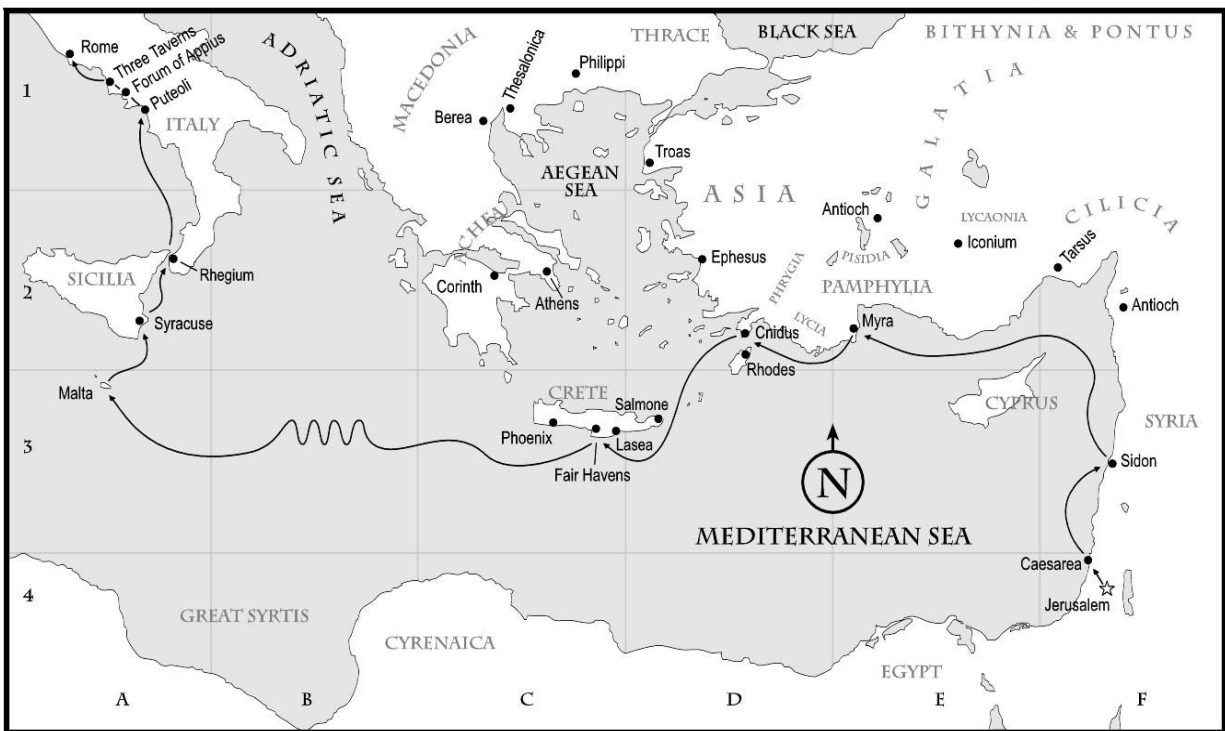
23:12-35 – Murder Conspiracy – Forty Jews bind themselves with an oath to not eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. Paul’s nephew hears of the ambush and tells the Roman commander who takes Paul away to Caesarea to the governor Felix. The commander sends Paul away with a guard and orders his accusers to appear before Felix with their charges. This begins a two year imprisonment in Caesarea during which Paul presents the gospel to governors and a king.

24:1-27 – Paul before Felix – Five days after Paul arrives in Caesarea, the high priest arrives with some elders and an attorney. The attorney accuses Paul before Felix. Paul expertly defends himself before Felix. Felix put off the accusers and ordered that Paul be kept in custody and yet have some freedom and allowed any of his friends to minister to him. During the next two years, Felix would often send for Paul and converse with him. After two years, Felix was succeeded but left Paul imprisoned to do the Jews a favor.

25:1-22 – Paul before Festus – Felix ruthlessly quelled a riot in Caesarea. The Jews protested to Nero and Felix was replaced by Porcius Festus. Festus immediately went up to Jerusalem to meet with the Jewish leaders who brought charges against Paul. Two years has not lessened their hatred for Paul. Eight to ten days later Festus went to Caesarea and held a tribunal where the Jews brought charges against Paul. Paul sees that the tribunal is not going well and appeals to Caesar for a trial which was the right of every Roman citizen.

25:23-26:32 – Paul before Agrippa – Agrippa is the son of Herod Agrippa I who had executed James the brother of John. He was the grandson of Herod the Great who tried to kill the baby Jesus. Agrippa was the king over the territory northeast of the Judea. He lived in Caesarea Philippi. Agrippa and his sister Bernice came to congratulate Festus on being appointed governor of Judea. Agrippa was half Jewish and was known to be an expert in Jewish customs so Festus wanted to discuss the matter of Paul with him to clarify the charges that were going to accompany Paul to Rome.

Paul gives his defense to Agrippa and Festus recounting his testimony. Agrippa and Festus agree that Paul has done nothing worthy of death or imprisonment and may have gone free if he had not appealed to Caesar. But that was not God’s sovereign plan.



From classic.net.bible.org

27:1-44 – Paul Sent to Rome and Shipwrecked – Paul and his companions are sent to Rome in the custody of a centurion. This chapter stresses God's sovereign control over circumstances to bring His will to pass, specifically that Paul should minister in Rome. The action packed episode displays Paul as a leader in the midst of difficult circumstances. MacArthur lays out seven leadership principles from this event:

1. A leader is trusted.
2. A leader takes the initiative.
3. A leader uses good judgment.
4. A leader speaks boldly God’s Word with authority.
5. A leader strengthens others; calmness, confidence, and optimistic trust in God reassures others.
6. A leader never compromises his absolutes.
7. A leader leads by example.

❖ **Am I concerned about the influence I have on others?**

28:1-10 – Malta – The group is now safe on Malta. The native (simply those that are not of Greek descent and culture) Phoenicians showed the shipwrecked company extraordinary kindness. Paul is bit by a poisonous snake. He is not harmed, but instead healed. Paul's peace (simply shaking the serpent off his hand into the fire) shows his absolute trust in God's faithfulness to execute His promises. Paul heals many on the island while the group spends three months on Malta.

28:11-31 – Paul in Rome – Paul continues his journey to Rome. In Rome, he calls together the leading Jews of the city to explain that the charges against him were not true. The group of Jews wanted to come back and hear about the Way. Some were being persuaded by the things spoken by Paul, but others would not believe.

Paul stays by himself in his own rented quarters with a soldier chained to him for two full years in his own rented quarters. He was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

This concludes the book of Acts, but not the story of all that Jesus began to do and teach. He continues to change lives today and build His church until He comes.

❖ **Are we about the missionary business that is described in Acts?**

### **Homework**

Read Romans