Acts Part 2

Leader Guide

(NASB and ESV)

Paul, Jesus' Witness to the Gentiles

(Chapters 13–28)

Acts Part 2 Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)
© 2014 Precept
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37422

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Unless otherwise noted Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible®
© The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995.
Used by permission. www.lockman.org

Scripture quotations marked ESV are taken from ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®)
© 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

2nd edition (9/2021)

USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson**.

  Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.

- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide**.

  Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out

When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

PRINTED PAGE NO.	LESSONS	PDF PAGE NO.
1	LESSON ONE: Acts 13–14	5
7	LESSON TWO: Acts 15	11
13	LESSON THREE: Acts 16-17	17
19	LESSON FOUR: Acts 18–19	23
25	LESSON FIVE: Acts 20	29
31	LESSON SIX: Acts 21–23	35
37	LESSON SEVEN: Acts 24–26	41
43	LESSON EIGHT: Acts 27–28	47

To locate a particular lesson in the pdf, click on in the grey bar on the left side of the window. Bookmarks will appear for each of the lessons. Select the lesson you need.

© 2021 Precept

ACTS PART 2
LESSON 1
Leader Guide

Lesson emphasis:

- Acts 13–14
- Paul's first missionary journey

To begin this discussion, tell your group to look at the At a Glance chart and the map "Paul's Missionary Journeys." Then ask about the main verse, character, and events of Acts 1–12. You might also tell them to look at Day One in the lesson.

Acts 1:8—Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would come on the apostles
Receive power
Be Jesus' witnesses
In Jerusalem, Acts 2–7
Judea and Samaria, Acts 8–9
Remotest part / end of the earth, Acts 10–12

Peter is the main character in these chapters.

ACTS 13

<u>Verses 1-3</u>
How does this chapter begin? Who was where and what happened?
Continue to refer to the map as a visual aid for this discussion.

The church in Antioch in Syria
Verse 1 is a list of prophets and teachers including Barnabas and Saul.

While they were ministering to / worshiping the Lord, the Holy Spirit spoke to them.
The Spirit speaking to people in Acts was not unusual.

Ask your group if they listen to hear when the Spirit speaks to them. Tell them to look for this as they study the rest of Acts. The church today needs to listen as they did in Acts.

The Spirit told the prophets and teachers to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work He called them to do.

They fasted and prayed—also a key ingredient in Acts—and laid hands on the two and sent them away.

The work was what is called "the first missionary journey."

© 2021 Precept

Verses 4-12
Where did they go? What did they do?

> From Antioch they went to Seleucia to sail to Cyprus and landed at Salamis.
> Barnabas and Saul were witnessing about Jesus. John was their helper / assisted them.
>
> They proclaimed God's Word in the synagogues and throughout the whole island as far as Paphos.
>
> Saul, also called Paul, confronted a magician. Verse 9 specifically says Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit when he said the words in verses 9-11.

You might ask your group what they think of this kind of confrontation and what Peter did with Ananias in Acts 5 and Simon the magician in Samaria.

> Sometimes the Spirit leads to do this, but believers need to be sure it's the Holy Spirit and not just a fleshly desire.

What was the result in Paphos?

> The magician was blinded and the proconsul believed. He was amazed / astonished at the teaching.

Verses 13-41
Who became the main character? Where did he go? What did he do?

> Paul and his companions sailed from Paphos and went to Perga in Pamphylia, and then went on to Antioch in Pisidia. John returned to Jerusalem.
>
> On the Sabbath, they went to the synagogue. When asked if they had a word of exhortation / encouragement, Paul preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to them.
>
> > He began with Israel in Egypt and went through their history, commenting on David being a man after God's heart, doing His will.
> > From David, he told about the promise of Jesus, a Savior for Israel.
> > Then he moved to John's baptism of repentance.
> >
> > The Jews in Jerusalem condemned Jesus and asked Pilot to execute Him.
> > All that was to fulfill what God said.
> > Then God raised Jesus, and He appeared to His witnesses.
> >
> > Paul's message contained the same main points as the witnessing in Acts 2–12.
> > He repeated Jesus' resurrection and quoted from several of David's Psalms.
> >
> > He concluded with freedom, but not through the Law of Moses. And he gave them a warning from the prophets about not believing.

Verses 42-52
What were the results?

The people wanted to hear Paul and Barnabas again the next Sabbath. Some even followed them as Paul and Barnabas encouraged them to continue in God's grace, as opposed to the legalism of the Law.

But the next Sabbath when almost the whole city assembled / gathered to hear God's Word, some Jews were jealous. This was similar to what happened in Jerusalem in the early days of the church.

By contradicting the message of salvation, they judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. So Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles.

Verse 47 quotes from another prophet and was a specific command to Paul and Barnabas from the Lord. They were to go to Gentiles with the message of salvation to the ends of the earth. Relate this to Acts 1:8. Jesus' promise didn't just apply to the twelve.

The Gentiles rejoiced and glorified the Lord's word and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Compare this with Acts 2:38-39. Salvation is of the Lord.

The word spread throughout the whole region, and persecution followed it.
Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet and went to Iconium.

Luke 10:8-12
Jesus told the seventy / seventy-two He sent out to preach the word that if a city didn't believe, they were to wipe off the dust from their feet.

Throughout Acts, there were two responses to the witnessing: those who believed and those who didn't.

Ask your group what they learned from verse 52 and the cross-references about disciples.

The disciples, those who followed the Lord, were continually filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. (The ESV does not use the word "continually.")

Luke 14:26-33 and Mark 10:28-30
Jesus' said to be His disciple one must give up all his possessions / renounce all that he has and even his life. That is what it means to follow Him.

John 8:31
Those who continue / abide in His Word are truly His disciples.

How was this lived out by the disciples in Acts? Are Jesus' statements about His disciples still relevant for believers today? Give your group time to discuss application.

© 2021 Precept

Then ask what they learned from the references about the Holy Spirit.

Several places in Acts the term "filled with the Holy Spirit" or "full of the Spirit" is used. "Full of the Spirit" describes a person's character or spiritual state.

The seven chosen in Acts 6
Stephen in Acts 7
Barnabas in Acts 11

Galatians 5:22-23
This lists the fruit or character traits of the Holy Spirit in believers.
It describes one who is full of the Spirit.

Most of the places where "filled with the Holy Spirit" is used are connected with someone speaking.

Ephesians 5:18-21
Believers are instructed to be filled with the Spirit. Be controlled by Him. Speaking, singing, and giving thanks are also in this context—results of being filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 6:18
Believers are told to pray in the Spirit—be led by the Spirit in prayer.
Pray what He puts on our hearts.

Ephesians 4:30 and 1 Thessalonians 5:19
Don't quench or grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Sin grieves Him. To quench might refer to not listening to His leading.

Give your group time to discuss how well they listen to the Spirit and display His character.

Ask what they noted on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme for this chapter.

Holy Spirit set apart Barnabas and Saul, sent to Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia

ACTS 14

Verses 1-7
Where did Paul and Barnabas go? What happened?

In Iconium, as in Salamis and Pisidian Antioch, they went to the synagogue first.

NOTE: Iconium was in the Roman province of Galatia, as were Lystra and Derbe.

A large number of Jews and Gentiles believed. The unbelieving Jews stirred up trouble for the believers. It was the same as happened in several places.

An attempt was made to stone the apostles, referring to Paul and Barnabas. They fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia. In that region they preached the gospel.

Verses 8-18
What happened at Lystra?

Paul healed a man who had never walked. As a result, the people called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes. Those were the names of gods—Zeus the main god and Hermes the messenger god.

Paul took opportunity to witness to them and began with creation. This is the first, but not the last time, creation was part of the gospel message to Gentiles. It's because of the audience—they were pagan idol worshipers who had no knowledge of God.

Verses 19-23
Who are these verses about, and what happened?

Jews again began persecuting the apostles, even stoning Paul. They thought he was dead, but the disciples saw him get up and go back into the city.

Barnabas and Paul went to Derbe the next day where they made many disciples.
The severe persecution didn't stop God's Word from spreading or His apostles from taking it to places where it had not been.

Derbe is close to Antioch in Syria. But Paul and Barnabas didn't return the shorter way. They went back to all the churches and strengthened and encouraged the disciples in each to continue in the faith, even in tribulations.

They also appointed elders in all the churches as they went back to each one.

NOTE: This "missionary journey" probably took a year or more. The churches would have had time to grow in their understanding and spiritual maturity. So elders were appointed on the return trip instead of the first visit.

Verses 24-28
How does this chapter end?

Paul and Barnabas returned through Pisidia and Pamphylia speaking the Word in Perga. They sailed from Attalia and returned back to Antioch in Syria.

They gave the church a report of God opening for the Gentiles a door of faith.
And they spent a long time / no little time with the disciples there.

This was the end of the "first missionary journey."

© 2021 Precept

Ask what your group noted as a theme for this chapter on their At a Glance chart.

Possibly something like:
Paul and Barnabas in Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and back to Antioch

To end your discussion, you might ask what lessons for life they learned from Acts 13–14.

ACTS PART 2
LESSON 2
Leader Guide

Lesson emphasis:

- Acts 15

To begin this discussion, tell your group to look at the At a Glance chart. Then ask about the main verse, characters, and events of Acts 1–14.

Acts 1:8—Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would come on the apostles
Receive power
Be Jesus' witnesses
In Jerusalem, Acts 2–7
Judea and Samaria, Acts 8–9
Remotest part / end of the earth, Acts 10–12

Peter is the main character in chapters 1–12.

Saul was saved in Acts 9, and became the main character in chapters 13–14. Barnabas is also a main character in these chapters.

Tell your group to look at the map "Paul's Missionary Journeys" as a visual aid for this discussion.

The two of them went on the first "missionary journey" in Acts 13–14.

They returned to the church at Antioch, in Syria, and reported all the Lord had done among the Gentiles who were saved.

ACTS 15

<u>Verses 1-5</u>
How does this chapter begin? What happened?

Some men from Judea went to the church at Antioch teaching circumcision as necessary for salvation.

After Paul and Barnabas debated with them, several men from the church went to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about the issue.

Where did Paul and Barnabas go? What did they do?

They passed through Phoenicia and Samaria telling about the Gentiles' salvation and bringing joy to those people—who were also primarily Gentiles and Samaritans.

© 2021 Precept

When they arrived in Jerusalem, they reported / declared to the church, apostles, and elders what the Lord had done regarding the Gentiles on the "first missionary journey."

Then some believing Pharisees brought up circumcision and keeping the Law. They thought the Gentiles who had been saved should be required to do these things.

Verses 6-11
What happened in Jerusalem?

There was some debate and then Peter spoke about how the Lord chose him to take the gospel to the Gentiles first, referring to Acts 10.

There was no distinction between how the Gentiles were saved and how the Jews were saved. All are saved by grace.

Peter said the Jews had not been able to bear the yoke of the Law, and it was testing God to put those requirements on the Gentile believers.

How do the cross-references on Day Four relate to what Peter said here?

Romans 3:9-24
Paul wrote this letter several years after Acts 15.

He addressed both Jews and Gentiles in saying that all have sinned and no works of the Law can justify a person. The Law gives the knowledge of sin, but justification comes by grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 1:8-11
This was the last letter Paul wrote.
The purpose and grace of God save, not a person's works.

Titus 2 and 3
God's grace brought salvation according to His mercy. Believers are justified by His grace.

Galatians 3:19-28
This was the first letter Paul wrote.
The Law was not able to impart / give life. It was a tutor to lead to Christ (ESV—guardian until Christ came). Salvation is by faith in Him.

Lead your discussion back to Acts 15.
Verses 12-21
Who spoke, and what was said?

Paul and Barnabas told of the signs and wonders God did among the Gentiles—also like what had happened with the Jews.

Then James spoke. This was James, Jesus' brother, Galatians 1:18-19.

He commented on Simeon's report.

NOTE: John's brother, the apostle James, had been killed by Herod in Acts 12. Simeon was Peter; Simon was his name, and Jesus referred to him as Peter.

God took for Himself Gentiles, as part of a people for His name.
James supported this with quotes from the Prophets.

James's judgment was not to trouble the Gentiles who were turning to the Lord.

They should write for the Gentile believers to abstain from four things:
- Things contaminated / polluted by idols
- Fornication / sexual immorality
- What is strangled
- Blood

Why these four things? What did God say in the Law of Moses? Ask your group what they learned from the cross-references in Leviticus.

Leviticus 17:7-14
Neither Israel nor the aliens who lived among them—Gentiles who believed in God and lived as proselytes in Israel—could eat blood. If they did, they were cut off from Israel. Even in hunting animals, they had to drain the animal's blood before eating it.

Life is in the blood, so it was not to be eaten. It was only to be used to make atonement.

Leviticus 18:1-6, 20-26
Sexual relationship with a blood / close relative was forbidden; so were adultery, homosexuality, and sex with animals. These things are abominations to God.

Lead the discussion back to Acts 15. How does verse 21 fit the flow of thought?

Moses' Law was read in the synagogue every Sabbath in every city where the Gentiles were being saved. And there were Jews who preached Moses' Law.

The four things forbidden would help Gentile believers not offend the Jews in those places.

What do verses 22-29 describe?

The letter sent to the Gentiles from the Jerusalem apostles, elders, and church

It was sent by Judas and Silas with Paul and Barnabas to the church at Antioch.
It was addressed to the Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.

The Holy Spirit, apostles, elders, and Jerusalem church didn't want to burden them.

© 2021 Precept

Verses 30-35
What was the response?

When the letter was read to the church at Antioch, they rejoiced. It was encouragement to them.

While Judas and Silas were there, they encouraged and strengthened the church.
Then they were sent back to Jerusalem.

NOTE: Verse 34 which says that Silas stayed in Antioch is not in early manuscripts.

Paul and Barnabas and others continued preaching and teaching the Word in the church at Antioch.

You might ask your group why the Lord's Word needs to be continually taught to believers.

Give them time to discuss how the teaching in Acts has helped them be better Christians.

Verses 36-41
Who and what are these verses about? What happened and why?

Paul suggested to Barnabas a visit to the brothers in the cities they visited on their first "missionary journey."

They had a sharp disagreement because Barnabas wanted to take John called Mark.

Paul didn't want to take him because he deserted / withdrew from them on their first trip.

What do the cross-references say about Barnabas?

Acts 4, 9, 11, and 12
A man full of the Holy Spirit
A Levite from Cyprus
Called Barnabas by the apostles because it means "Son of Encouragement"

He took Saul, Paul, to the apostles and told them of how Saul had seen the Lord on the Damascus road. He brought Saul to the church at Antioch. The two of them took a contribution from Antioch to the elders in Jerusalem.
Barnabas was a prophet, teacher, and an apostle.

Colossians 4:10
Barnabas was also Mark's cousin.

Based on the cross-references about Mark, did Barnabas make a good choice?

Acts 12:11-12 and 1 Peter 5:13
Peter went to Mary's house after the angel brought him out of prison in Jerusalem.

She was the mother of John, also called Mark.
Peter also mentioned Mark in his letter and called him his son.

Philemon 1, 10-14, 22-24 and 2 Timothy 4:11
These are letters Paul wrote later.
Mark was a fellow worker, and he was useful to Paul for service / ministry.

Tradition says this is the Mark who wrote the Gospel of Mark.

What was the result of the sharp disagreement in Acts 15:39-41?

The missionaries went in two different directions.
Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus, while Paul and Silas went through Syria and Cilicia.

NOTE: Make sure your group doesn't add to what the text says about the disagreement.

Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart and ask about a possible theme for Acts 15.

Church debate, letter to Gentiles; Paul and Barnabas disagree

To end this discussion, ask what they've learned about how to handle dissension and debate within the church among Christian brothers. Give them time to discuss application.

© 2021 Precept

ACTS PART 2
LESSON 3
Leader Guide

Lesson emphasis:

- Acts 16–17

To begin this discussion, tell your group to look at the At a Glance chart and the map "Paul's Missionary Journeys" as visual aids for this discussion. Then ask about the main points of Acts 13–15.

Acts 13–14
Paul and Barnabas went on the first "missionary journey" to Cyprus, Pamphylia, and Pisidia.

They returned to the church at Antioch, in Syria, and reported all the Lord had done among the Gentiles who were saved.

Acts 15
The church leaders in Jerusalem agreed on a letter to be sent to Gentile believers. It was addressed to the churches in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.

The letter encouraged and strengthened the Gentile believers when it was read in the Antioch church. Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch teaching God's Word.

ACTS 16

Verses 1-5
Where did Paul and Silas go and why?

Derbe and Lystra—two of the places Paul and Barnabas went in Acts 14
Delivering the decrees from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem—the letter of Acts 15
Strengthening the churches in the faith, so they grew spiritually as well as numerically

Timothy was a disciple there whom Paul wanted to take with him.
The brothers in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of Timothy.

His mother was a believing Jew, but his father was a Greek. Because people in the area knew that and some of them were Jews, Paul circumcised Timothy.

What do the cross-references tell about Timothy?

1 and 2 Timothy
These are letters Paul later wrote to Timothy.

Paul referred to the young man Timothy as his son in the faith.

© 2021 Precept

His sincere faith in God was nurtured by his grandmother and mother who had sincere faith before him. From his childhood he had known / been acquainted with the sacred writings—the Scriptures—that are able to give the wisdom that leads to (ESV—make you wise for) salvation through faith which is in Jesus.

Timothy followed Paul's example and continued in the faith.
Close to the end of his life, Paul called Timothy to come to him and bring Mark.

1 Corinthians 4:17
Again Paul wrote that Timothy was his child in the Lord. By the time of Paul writing this letter, he sent Timothy to this church to remind them of Paul's ways and teaching in Christ.

Philippians 2:19-23
Paul wrote about Timothy again as an example of a servant who was genuinely concerned for the church. Timothy had proven his worth in serving Paul.

Hebrews 13:23
The author of Hebrews referred to Timothy as a brother. He was released from prison. He joined in Paul's suffering for the gospel.

Lead your discussion back to Acts 16.
Remind your group to look at the map as they discuss the rest of this lesson.

Verses 6-10
What do these verses teach about the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit led Paul and his companions where they were to go.
Relate this to Acts 13:2-4 and Acts 1:8. It was the Spirit's work, and He led.

The Holy Spirit forbade them to speak the word in Asia, and the Spirit of Jesus didn't permit / allow them to go into Bithynia.

When they were at Troas, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia calling them to come there. Their conclusion was that God called them there to preach the gospel.

Ask your group how they are led in the work or ministry God has called them to. Do they need to be more sensitive to the Spirit?

What is the significance of the pronoun change between verses 8 and 10?

It seems that Luke, the author of Acts, joined Paul and his associates at Troas.

Verses 11-15
Where did they go, and what happened?

From Troas to Samothrace

The following day to Neapolis
Then to Philippi, a leading city in Macedonia
Evidently there was no synagogue there. So Paul and associates went to where they thought they'd find a place of prayer.

God opened Lydia's heart to respond / pay attention to Paul's message.
She and her household were all saved and baptized.

Verses 16-24
Who else did they encounter? What happened?

A demon-possessed slave girl followed them for many days.
Paul commanded the demon to leave the girl, and it did. The power is in Jesus' name.

Paul and Silas were publicly beaten and then put in prison because of the accusation brought by the girl's masters who suffered loss of profit from her fortune-telling.

Verses 25-34
What happened in the prison?

Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Relate this to Ephesians 5:18-21.

As Peter was released from jail in Acts 5 and 12, they were released from their chains / bonds by an act of God. They remained in the prison until the jailer brought them out. Then he and his household were saved.

There was a reason God sent them to the prison, and when the reason was accomplished He wanted them out of the prison.

Ask your group how that compares with their lives. Do they see the reasons why God sends certain circumstances into their lives?

Verses 35-40
How does this chapter end?

The city magistrates wanted to release Paul and Silas secretly, but they declared they were Romans citizens and said they wanted the magistrates to come release them.

Paul and Silas could have declared their citizenship before being beaten and imprisoned, but they didn't. Had they done that, they might not have been sent to the prison. But God had someone in the prison He wanted saved.

© 2021 Precept

The magistrates begged / asked Paul and Silas to leave the city, and after encouraging the brethren / brothers at Lydia's house, they left.

It seems, from the change in pronouns again, that Luke stayed in Philippi.

Ask what your group noted as a possible theme for this chapter on their At a Glance chart.

Paul and Timothy, to Philippi; Lydia and jailer saved

ACTS 17

Verses 1-9
Where did they go next? And what happened?

They went through Amphipolis and Apollonia and then came to Thessalonica.
The Jews had a synagogue there, and Paul went there first as was his custom.

He reasoned from the Scriptures with the Jews about the Christ suffering and being raised from the dead. He told them the Christ was Jesus.

There is a contrast in verses 4 and 5 about the response—some were persuaded and some were jealous and attacked.

Jason welcomed / received Paul and Silas and suffered because of it.

NOTE: The "pledge" (NASB) in verse 9 that Jason gave was bond/ bail. The ESV says "money as security."

You might ask your group what they have observed as repeated contrasting results of the gospel being preached. Is it the same now?

Verses 10-15
Where were Paul and Silas sent? What was the response there?

Berea
The Jews there were noble-minded (ESV—noble) as they received the word and examined the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul and Silas said was true.

Many believed along with some prominent Greeks (ESV—Greeks of high standing).

But the Jews from Thessalonica came there and stirred up trouble. Paul was sent to Athens, while Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. But Paul commanded Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible.

Why does it seem that Luke stayed in Philippi and Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea?

To encourage, teach, and strengthen the new believers

Verses 16-21
What happened in Athens?

Paul observed / saw the city full of idols and his spirit was provoked.

He was doing the usual—reasoning in the synagogue on the Sabbath and daily in the market place.

Ask your group what they learned about the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.
Also ask about the definition of "idle babbler" (ESV does not use the word "idle.")

They thought Paul might be one of those who made his living by telling things he had picked up somewhere else. But he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

They brought him to the Areopagus to hear the new teaching. Verse 21 tells why.

Verses 22-31
What was Paul's message, and how does it compare with the others in Acts?

Paul began with God as Creator because the Athenians were idol worshipers who had not heard even about God, much less His Son Jesus.

Acts 3, 4, and 13 were messages to Jews who already knew about God. So the main emphasis quickly went to Jesus' death and resurrection.

Acts 14 was also to an audience of idol worshipers, and it began with God as Creator.

Verse 30 called them to repentance, which is repeated in other gospel presentations.
Jesus is not named in verse 31, but He is called a Man who will judge the world.

NOTE: Some in your group might remember Acts 10:42 as the other place it says Jesus will judge. This was when Peter witnessed to the Gentiles at Cornelius's house.

Verse 31 tells about Jesus' death and resurrection—the main points of the gospel.
These are the points repeated in all of the witnessing.

Verses 32-34
How does this chapter end?

Again there is a contrast in the response.
Some sneered / mocked at the resurrection.
Others wanted to hear more.
Some joined Paul and believed.

Ask about a possible theme for this chapter.

Paul to Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens

© 2021 Precept

Give your group time to share what they've learned about witnessing or presenting the gospel.

ACTS PART 2
LESSON 4
Leader Guide

Lesson emphasis:

- Acts 18–19

To begin this discussion, ask your group if they have seen any patterns in Acts. And if so, what?

> Elements of witnessing or gospel message—Jesus' death and resurrection, repent
> Paul and others went to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles.
> Opposition followed the gospel, but God's word kept spreading.

Tell them to look at the At a Glance chart, the map "Paul's Missionary Journeys," and the chart "Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after His Conversion" as visual aids for this discussion. Then ask about the main points of Acts 13–17.

> Acts 13–14
> Paul and Barnabas went on the first "missionary journey."
>
> Acts 15
> The church leaders in Jerusalem agreed on a letter to be sent to the churches in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. The letter encouraged and strengthened the Gentile believers when it was read in the Antioch church.
>
> Acts 16–17
> Paul and Silas began the second "missionary journey." Paul also took Timothy with them. They got to Philippi where Lydia and a jailer and their households were saved. Luke had joined the team, but it seems he stayed in Philippi.
>
> Then people were saved in Thessalonica and Berea. Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea, and Paul was in Athens alone witnessing to Jews and Gentiles there.

ACTS 18

<u>Verses 1-17</u>
Where did Paul go after Athens? What are the events? Who was involved?
Ask about the cross-references when relevant.

> Paul went to Corinth where he met Aquila and Priscilla. Aquila was a Jew and native of Pontus, and he and his wife had recently left Italy because of Claudius's command. They were tent-makers, and Paul stayed with them. Paul probably worked with them. The text does not say Aquila and Priscilla were believers when they met Paul.

© 2021 Precept

Every Sabbath Paul reasoned in the synagogue, but when Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, he devoted himself completely to (ESV—was occupied with) the Word.

Maybe because they worked to support the three of them, or they might have brought a gift from another church.

Philippians 4:10-19 tells where some of Paul's support came from—a church.

Some Jews opposed, so he left them and went to the house next to the synagogue. Crispus, the synagogue leader / ruler and his household / family believed. According to verse 17, it appears that Sosthenes, maybe the synagogue leader / ruler who took Crispus's place, also believed.

The Lord appeared to Paul one night and told him He had many people in the city and no one would attack him for harm. He was in Corinth over a year and six months.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5
Although he said he was in weakness, fear, and trembling, he spoke the word of Jesus Christ crucified in demonstration of the Spirit and power.

When the Jews brought Paul before the judgment seat / tribunal, Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, interrupted and drove them away. They then began beating Sosthenes.

Gallio did not join the Jews in trying to stop Paul's witnessing; he was unwilling to judge in matters of Jewish law. However, he also did not stop the Jews from beating Sosthenes in front of him. Gallio wasn't interested in judging matters of Jewish law so he drove the Jews away, but he didn't stop them from beating Sosthenes in front of him.

At any relevant point in your discussion, give time for your group to talk about application.

Verses 18-23
Where did Paul go, who was with him, and what happened? Discuss cross-references.

He was headed for Syria, probably for his home church in Antioch.
Priscilla and Aquila were with him when he sailed from Cenchrea.

There he cut his hair because of a vow, maybe referring to a Nazirite vow, Numbers 6:1-5.

Paul sailed to Ephesus where he left Priscilla and Aquila.

1 Corinthians 16:19
According to the chart "Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after his Conversion," this letter was written when Paul was in Ephesus on his third missionary journey. By that time Aquila and Priscilla had a church in their house there, and they sent greetings to the church at Corinth.

Romans 16:3-5
According to the same chart, this letter to the church at Rome was written from Corinth on Paul's third missionary journey. He sent greetings to Prisca and Aquila and the church in their house in Rome. They had risked their necks for Paul's life. The Gentile churches sent thanks to this believing Jewish couple.

2 Timothy 4:19
This was Paul's last letter written from prison in Rome. In it he greeted Prisca and Aquila who were evidently where Timothy was at that time.

Lead your discussion back to Acts 18:20. How did Paul answer the people of Ephesus when they asked him to stay longer?

He said he would return if the Lord willed it. Compare this with Acts 16:6; Ephesus was in Asia.

Paul sailed for Caesarea and went up to the church, which might refer to the Jerusalem church. Then he went back to Antioch. That ends the second "missionary journey." Verse 23 begins the third. Paul went through the Galatian region and Phrygia again, strengthening the disciples.

Verses 24-28
Who and where are these verses about?

Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, went to Ephesus. He was eloquent and mighty / competent in the Scriptures, and spoke in the synagogue. He taught accurately about Jesus, but only went as far as John's baptism. Therefore, his message included repentance, but didn't include Jesus' death and resurrection.

Priscilla and Aquila spoke to him privately and explained more fully the way of God.

This is a good example of how to correct someone.

They evidently told him about Jesus' death and resurrection. Since Apollos had only known the truth up to John's baptism, he had not believed in Jesus' death and resurrection and was not saved until he knew and believed those facts.

When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, where Corinth was, the believers encouraged him to go and even wrote a letter telling the Corinthian disciples to welcome him. There he demonstrated / showed by the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

What do the cross-references about Apollos say?

1 Corinthians 3:1-6 and 16:12
Paul and Apollos had both been to Corinth as the Lord's servants. Paul planted; Apollos watered; God caused / gave the growth.

© 2021 Precept

Titus 1:1, 4-5; 3:13
Paul left Titus on the island of Crete to set things in order (ESV—put what remained into order) and appoint elders in every city. He directed Titus to help Zenas and Apollos on their way.

You might ask your group how they view people who come and go while teaching the Lord's Word.

Ask what they noted as a possible theme for this chapter on their At a Glance chart.

Paul in Corinth, to Antioch, Galatia and Phrygia; Apollos at Ephesus

ACTS 19

Verses 1-7
What continues in this chapter?

The third missionary journey which began in chapter 18

Paul went to Ephesus and met twelve men who were called disciples—followers or learners. They were disciples of John's baptism. Evidently, they heard Apollos teach before Priscilla and Aquila met him and explained the whole gospel. Paul was most likely aware of this because he asked them if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed. Receiving the Holy Spirit indicates salvation.

When he told them about Jesus, then they were baptized in His name and received the Holy Spirit as Paul laid his hands on them. Then they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Those twelve men were saved that day.

Ask your group what they learned from Acts about receiving the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.

NOTE: Watch your time and don't allow your group to get into a debate about tongues. Just stick with what the text of Acts says.

Acts 2:1-4, 7-11, 14-16, 37-41
This was the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Jews.

They spoke with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. They spoke about God's mighty deeds / works. The tongues were the languages of the people there in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

Peter told those who heard his witness to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name for forgiveness of sins and they also would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise of the Holy Spirit is for those Jews there, their children—other Jews, and those far off—Gentiles, as many as the Lord calls to Himself. Therefore, all the Lord calls receive the Holy Spirit as those on the day of Pentecost.

Those who heard Peter's message and received his word (verses 37-41), therefore, received the Holy Spirit. The text does not say they spoke in tongues.

Acts 8:14-21
The next group of people to receive the Holy Spirit was the Samaritans. They believed, were baptized in Jesus' name, but the Holy Spirit didn't fall on them until Peter and John prayed and laid hands on them.

NOTE: Some in your group might remember that the delay was probably because Peter was not there when they believed. Jesus gave Peter the keys of the kingdom, Matthew 16.

This text does not say the Samaritans spoke in tongues.

Acts 10:44-48
The gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles while Peter was speaking his message. They spoke in tongues and exalted / extolled God before they were baptized. The tongues showed the Jewish believers with Peter that the same thing happened to the Gentiles as had happened to the Jews on Pentecost. The tongues were the same as at Pentecost.

Verses 8-20
What happened at Ephesus?

Paul went to the synagogue for three months, then when some were becoming hardened and disobedient (ESV—became stubborn and continued in unbelief), speaking evil of the Way, he went to the school / hall of Tyrannus where he reasoned daily for two years. All in Asia heard the Word of the Lord. Compare this with Acts 16:6 and 18:21. God's time for Asia to hear His Word from Paul was not until this time.

God did extraordinary miracles by Paul in this city of exorcists, evil spirits, and magic. The name of Jesus was magnified. His word grew / increased mightily and prevailed.

Ask your group to think about what can prepare them to face evil.

Verses 21-22
What were Paul's plans? Also ask about 1 Corinthians 16.

To go to Macedonia and Achaia, then Jerusalem and Rome
He sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia while he stayed in Asia.

1 Corinthians 16:1-12, 19
Corinth was in Achaia. Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus that he would go through Macedonia before coming to them. He intended to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost. And he might spend the winter in Corinth.

He said Timothy might also go to Corinth, but Apollos would not be going at that time.

Paul wanted the Corinthians to collect a gift to be sent to the Jerusalem church.

© 2021 Precept

They should select men to take it, and he might also go with them.

Verses 23-41
What happened at Ephesus?

Paul's teaching that gods made with men's hands are not gods disturbed Demetrius, a silversmith. His business making silver shrines of the goddess Artemis suffered because of Paul's teaching. He was also concerned that the temple of Artemis might be regarded as worthless / counted as nothing and the world not worship her.

For two hours the crowd shouted "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" in the theater. The town clerk quieted them because they were in danger of being accused of / charged with a riot.

Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, are named as Paul's traveling companions. Not only did Paul suffer persecution, but they did also.

Ask what they noted on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme for this chapter.

Paul in Ephesus for two years

To end your discussion, ask your group what they learned from studying Paul's travels—what he did, how he did it, and the people connected with him. Ask what they learned about the Lord's provision and how His Word spread and about discipling people.

ACTS PART 2
LESSON 5
Leader Guide

Lesson emphasis:

- Acts 20

To begin this discussion, tell your group to look at Day Three in the lesson. And ask what they noted on the list they made from Acts 2:41-44.

Awe, wonders, and signs
Believers together, all in common
Sharing for needs
Praising God
Favor with people
Lord adding daily to the number saved

Tell them to look at the At a Glance chart, the map "Paul's Missionary Journeys," and the chart "Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after His Conversion" as visual aids for this discussion.

Then ask what the references on Day Three in Acts 11–18 say about the church at Antioch.

Acts 11:19-30
When the gospel went to Antioch, a large / great number turned to the Lord.
Barnabas was sent to the church at Antioch from the church at Jerusalem.
He encouraged / exhorted the church and considerable numbers / a great many people were brought to the Lord.
Disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.
They sent a contribution for the relief of (ESV—sent relief to) brothers in Judea.
Most in Antioch were Gentile believers, and those in Judea were Jewish believers.

Acts 13:1-4
The church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey.

Acts 15:22-35
The debate over Gentile believers keeping the Law began at this church. And the apostles and elders in Jerusalem sent the letter first to the Gentile believers at Antioch.

Acts 18:18-23
Paul ended his second missionary journey at this church and began the third one.

According to Acts 19:21-22, what were Paul's plans? This was at the beginning of the lesson.

After being in Ephesus for at least two years, he planned to go through Macedonia and Achaia, then on to Jerusalem and after that to Rome.

© 2021 Precept

ACTS 20

Verses 1-12
What are these verses about?

> Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia where, on his 2nd journey he had planted churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. Then he went to Greece for three months to visit more churches planted on his 2nd journey; Corinth is in Greece. Then when a plot was formed / made against him, he went back through Macedonia. He was heading back to Syria.

How do the cross-references in 2 Corinthians and Romans relate?

> 2 Corinthians
> According to 9:2-4, this letter was probably written from Macedonia.
> Paul and Timothy had gone through much affliction in Asia to the point of facing death.
>
> Paul had been to Troas, and hoped to meet Titus. But Titus met him in Macedonia.
> Titus had been to Corinth and brought Paul an encouraging message from there.

NOTE: Many commentators think this short trip to Troas was during Paul's third missionary journey between Ephesus and Macedonia.

> The churches of Macedonia were taking a collection to be sent for support / relief of the saints in Jerusalem.
>
> Titus went to Corinth asking for a similar gracious work / act of grace among that church, which had been prepared for over a year.
>
> Paul planned to go to Corinth and didn't want their offering to be unprepared (ESV—not to be ready) when he arrived.
>
> Romans 15
> Since Paul had reached Corinth and received their contribution by the time he wrote this, he probably wrote this letter there.
>
> He said the span of his ministry at that point in time was from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum, northwest of Macedonia.
>
> He told of his plans to go to Rome, but he had been prevented / hindered. He planned to go to Spain and visit Rome, too.
>
> Paul was on his way to Jerusalem taking the contribution from Macedonia and Achaia, Greece, to the poor saints there, 15:26. Corinth is in Achaia.

Give time for your group to discuss how this applies to them.

Lead your discussion back to Acts 20.

You might ask your group what cities they remember being in Macedonia, and the places where the people are from in verse 4. Also ask if they noticed "us" and "we" beginning in verse 5. What does that indicate?

There were several men named who traveled with Paul, men who helped spread the word of God and disciple believers.

Luke joined Paul at Philippi. It seems he was left there in Acts 16:10-11.

What happened at Troas?

Paul and his companions spent a week there.

Paul taught until midnight, and even later, when a young man Eutychus fell out of a window because he fell asleep listening to Paul. Eutychus was dead, but Paul went to him and said his life was in him.

They continued talking until daybreak.

Verses 13-16
What happened in these verses? You might ask why God put so much of the travel detail in these chapters about the missionary journeys.

Luke and the others sailed to Assos to meet Paul who had traveled by land from Troas.
From Assos to Mitylene to opposite Chios to Samos and Miletus
From Mitylene to Miletus, each segment took a day.

NOTE: Some names refer to cities, some to islands. He was probably on what's called a "coastal" ship that stays close to land and makes only short trips from port to port. Later they got on a larger "ocean going" ship.

These men who were building God's church in many cities did not have an easy time of it. Their travel wasn't easy and took a long time.

You might ask your group how they view serving God. Is it like what the men in Acts did?

Why didn't Paul want to spend time in Asia?

He wanted to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost. He was carrying a gift for the church there.

Verses 17-38
What are these verses about? Discuss cross-references also.

Paul sent for the Ephesian elders to meet him in Miletus.

NOTE: It's about 30 miles from Ephesus to Miletus.

© 2021 Precept

Verses 19-21, he reminded them of how he served the Lord while with them and what he had taught.

Verses 22-24, he was going to Jerusalem and the Holy Spirit testified to him that bonds / imprisonment and afflictions awaited him there. But his life belonged to the Lord Jesus, and he referred to the ministry he had received from Him to tell the gospel of grace.

Compare this with 2 Corinthians 6, 7, and 11.

Verses 25-27, they would not see him again. He was innocent of blood because he told the whole purpose / counsel of God. Relate this to Ezekiel 3 and 2 Corinthians 2:14-17..

Verses 28-31 contain a warning. Be on guard for yourselves and the flock. Be alert.

2 Timothy 3:1-17 and Titus 1:9-11, 16
Men who hold to a form of godliness will deceive people, upsetting whole families. They must be silenced.

2 Peter 2:1-3 and Jude 3-4
False teachers will be among believers, and they'll secretly introduce destructive heresies. They creep in unnoticed. They deny the Master—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 32-35, he commended them to God and His word of grace for building them up. He reminded them of his hard work when he was there.

What does this passage teach about elders? Also discuss cross-references.

The Holy Spirit makes them overseers to shepherd God's church.
They are to be on guard for (ESV—pay careful attention to) themselves and for / to the flock.

1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9
The office of overseer, a fine work / noble task
Some men desire this work.

These qualifications are almost the same as in Titus 1:5-9.
1 Timothy 3:5—they take care of God's church.
Titus 1:9—They should be able to exhort / give instruction in sound doctrine and to refute / rebuke those contradicting.

1 Timothy 5:17-22
Elders who rule well are worthy of honor, double honor. They are to preach and teach.

Accusations / admitting charges against elders are not to be taken lightly—only on the basis / evidence of two or three witnesses. But those who continue / persist in sin are to be rebuked before all.

"Do not lay hands upon anyone *too* hastily" (ESV—"Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands") seems to refer to appointing elders prematurely.

1 Peter 5:1-5
Peter also wrote about elders, as he was an elder.
They are to shepherd the flock, like Paul told the Ephesian elders.
Oversee with eagerness and be examples to the flock.

Younger men (ESV—you who are younger) are to be subject to the elders, and all are to live in humility.
Jesus is the Chief Shepherd.

How does Acts 20 end in verses 36-38?

After talking to the elders at Miletus, Paul prayed with them.
They were grieving because they wouldn't see him anymore.

Ask what your group put on the At a Glance chart as a possible theme for this chapter.

Paul in Macedonia and Greece, with Ephesian elders at Miletus

If you have time, ask how chapter 20 compares with Acts 2:41-47. Does it seem that the church at the time of Acts 20 was continuing what was begun in the early church? What about today?

You can end your discussion by asking your group about Ephesians 2:10. How does this relate to the people in Acts? How does it apply now?

© 2021 Precept

ACTS PART 2
LESSON 6
Leader Guide

Lesson emphasis:

- Acts 21–23

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they've learned from Acts that they can put into practice in their lives.

> Elements of witnessing or the gospel message—Jesus' death and resurrection, repent
> Opposition followed the gospel, but God's word kept spreading
> Following the Holy Spirit's leading
> How to disciple

Tell them to look at the At a Glance chart, the map "Paul's Missionary Journeys," and the chart "Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after His Conversion" as visual aids for this discussion.

Then ask about the main points of Acts 13–20.

> Acts 13–14
> Paul and Barnabas went on the first "missionary journey." They were sent from the church at Antioch in Syria.
>
> Acts 15
> The church leaders in Jerusalem agreed on an encouraging letter to Gentile believers to be sent to the churches in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia.
>
> Acts 15:40–18:22
> Paul and Silas went on the second "missionary journey."
>
> Acts 18:23–20:38
> Paul was on his third "missionary journey." His plans were to stay in Ephesus for a while, then go to Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem, and Rome.
>
> He went to Macedonia and Achaia—Greece, then met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus. Luke was with Paul.

According to the chart "Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after his Conversion," what was the year?

> It was approximately A.D. 56, about twenty years after Paul had been saved.

© 2021 Precept

ACTS 21

Verses 1-16
What do these verses tell about Paul's travel? Tell your group to look at the map.

> From Miletus to Cos, Rhodes, Patara, and Tyre
> That was not easy travel.
>
> They stayed at Tyre seven days, and disciples there told Paul not to go to Jerusalem.
> The Spirit had let these believers know that bad things would happen to Paul in Jerusalem.
>
> But the Spirit had led Paul and was directing him to Jerusalem, Acts 19:21 and 20:22-23.
> He also knew from the Spirit that bonds / imprisonment and afflictions awaited him there.
>
> They stayed with believers in Ptolemais also. Then they got to Caesarea and stayed with Philip the evangelist who was one of the seven from Acts 6 and 8.
>
> A prophet, Agabus, who had prophesied of a famine in Acts 11:28, foretold of Paul being bound by the Jews in Jerusalem who would hand him over to the Gentiles, the Roman authorities.
>
> Paul knew what awaited him. And according to verse 13, he was willing to go to Jerusalem anyway. He was willing to die for the Lord just as he had lived for him.
> Compare this with what Jesus knew according to Luke 9.

Ask your group what application they saw in these verses. Give time for discussion of it.

Verses 17-26
Who did Paul see first in Jerusalem? What happened?

> James and the elders of the Jerusalem church
>
> They glorified God when they heard about Paul's ministry to the Gentiles.
>
> But they also warned him about Jewish believers zealous for the Law and how they might respond to Paul when they knew he was in Jerusalem.
>
> It was the elders' direction which put Paul in the temple so the others would see him there complying with the Law.

Verses 27-40
What happened when Paul went to the temple? Tell your group to look at the "Temple Mount Diagram" at the end of the lesson for a visual aid.

> Jews from Asia were also there and stirred up the people to the point of beating Paul.

They thought he had taken a Gentile into the temple.
He was rescued by a Roman commander / tribune and taken into the barracks for safety.
He asked to speak to the Jewish people, and the commander let him speak on the stairs/ steps.
They quieted down to listen, and then Paul spoke to them in Hebrew.

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart, and ask about a possible theme for Acts 21.

Paul to Jerusalem; Jews beat him

ACTS 22

How does this chapter continue the narrative of events?

This is what Paul said to the crowd in Jerusalem.

He started with his relationship to them—his Jewish heritage and training.
Then he told of how he persecuted the Way.

They listened as he told of seeing Jesus on the road to Damascus.

This chapter gives more information than Acts 9 of what was said to him then, and of what happened the first time he returned to Jerusalem. The Lord told him the Jews would not listen to his testimony about Him.

It wasn't until he mentioned going to the Gentiles that they cried out for his death.

He would have been mistreated more, scourged / flogged by the Romans, had he not said he was a Roman citizen.

The next day the Roman commander / tribune brought Paul before the Jewish Council to find out why they had accused Paul.

Ask your group if they have been falsely accused and punished for something.

How did they handle it?

What have they learned from Paul's example?

Give time for them to discuss what they've learned from studying Acts.

What is a theme for this chapter?

Paul spoke to the Jerusalem crowd

© 2021 Precept

ACTS 23

Verses 1-10
What happened in these verses?
Also ask what your group learned about Ananias and the Sadducees and Pharisees.

> After Paul's first statement, the high priest had him struck on the mouth. Then he spoke directly to the high priest about God striking him and his violation of the Law.
>
> This high priest, Ananias, was appointed by Herod Agrippa II and ruled for twelve years. He was greedy and cruel and killed by Jews in A.D. 66.
>
> Verse 6 tells Paul's strategy before the Council. He said he was a Pharisee and was on trial because of the resurrection. Then some of the scribes of the Pharisees claimed they found no fault in him.
>
> The Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection. That was one difference between them and the Pharisees.
>
> Dissension developed in the Council and the commander / tribune had Paul taken into the barracks.

Give your group time to discuss what they learned about these two religious sects. Also, ask if there are religious people like that now.

Verses 11-15
What is the contrast in these verses?

> The Lord told Paul he would testify about Him in Rome as he had in Jerusalem.
>
> More than forty Jews took an oath to kill Paul, but they didn't succeed because of the Lord's plan.

You might ask your group whose plans they trust.

Verses 16-30
What happened as a result of the plot to kill Paul?

> His nephew heard it and reported it to Paul and then to the commander/ tribune.
>
> The commander sent 200 soldiers, spearmen, and 70 horsemen with Paul to Caesarea that night with a letter to the governor, Felix. The soldiers took him as far as Antipatris that night. The next day, the soldiers returned to Jerusalem and the horsemen delivered Paul and the letter from the commander / tribune to Felix in Caesarea.

This chapter ends with Paul imprisoned in Herod's Praetorium in Caesarea waiting for his accusers to come there for this hearing before Felix.

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart again and ask about a chapter theme.

Paul before Jewish council, plot to kill him, taken to Caesarea

To end your discussion, you can ask what they learned from their study of this lesson.

Paul knew what waited for him in Jerusalem, but he was willing to go.
He knew he was headed for Rome, but the circumstances of getting there were hard.

Is obedience to the Lord worth it?

© 2021 Precept

ACTS PART 2
LESSON 7
Leader Guide

Lesson emphasis:

- Acts 24–26

To begin this discussion, tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and "Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after his Conversion" and ask what Acts 13–23 are about.

> Acts 13–14
> The first "missionary journey"
>
> Acts 15
> The church leaders in Jerusalem met and sent a letter to Gentile believers
>
> Acts 15:40–18:22
> The second "missionary journey"
>
> Acts 18:23–21:17
> The third "missionary journey"
>
> Acts 21:18–23
> Paul was beaten by Jews in Jerusalem at the temple complex, and then he spoke to the crowd there. He went before the Jewish Council, there was a plot to kill him, and he was taken to Caesarea.

According to the chart "Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after his Conversion," what was the year?

> It was approximately A.D. 56, about twenty years after Paul had been saved.

ACTS 24

<u>Verses 1-9</u>
How does this chapter begin?

> Paul was kept in Herod's Praetorium, or the governor's official residence, in Caesarea for five days.

At this point, you might ask what your group learned about Felix.

> As governor, he was corrupt and used his power to repress.

© 2021 Precept

When all involved were before Felix, what took place?

Tertullus flattered Felix, then presented the accusations against Paul:

Stirred up dissension / riots among all Jews throughout the world

A ringleader of the Nazarenes

Tried to desecrate / profane the temple

He also accused Lysias the commander / tribune of violence when taking Paul from the Jews.

Verses 10-21
Who spoke to whom and when?

Felix nodded for Paul to make his defense of the accusations, and he spoke.
He also addressed Felix first, before making his defense.

It had been no more than twelve days since the events beginning in Acts 21:27, when Paul had gone to the temple.

What did he say?

He went to Jerusalem to worship, and the accusers did not find him causing a riot / stirring up a crowd or even in a discussion / disputing with anyone at the temple, in a synagogue or the city.

NOTE: Someone in your group might remember that Jews from Asia saw Trophimus from Ephesus and assumed Paul had taken him into the temple.

And they stirred up the crowd to beat Paul.

In verse 13, he said they couldn't prove their charges / what they brought up against him.

Verses 14-16 seem to answer the accusation regarding being a ringleader of the Nazarenes, but Paul referred to the Way.

Verses 17-21 address what he was doing in the temple when the Jews from Asia saw him.
He came to Jerusalem to bring alms to his nation—which might refer to the contribution from Macedonia and Achaia for the Jerusalem church.

He came to present offerings, and while doing these things they found him purified and in the temple.

Then Paul moved to what happened when he was before the Jewish Council in Jerusalem.
For one statement he was sent to Felix—a statement about the resurrection.
It was the second time he spoke of the resurrection in his defense.

Ask you group what they learned from the cross-references about the resurrection.

Daniel 12:1-3
The Jews, Daniel's people, who are written in the book will be rescued / delivered from the time of distress / trouble and many will be raised to everlasting life, and others to disgrace / shame and everlasting contempt.

John 5:24-29
People who believe in Jesus have eternal life, and don't come into judgment as they have passed out of death into life. The Son of Man has life in Himself.

A time is coming when all the dead will rise; those who did good—to life, and those who committed evil—to judgment. The good deeds come after believing in Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:1-22
By the time of Acts 24, Paul had already written this letter to the Corinthians. In it he addressed what some were saying about the resurrection.

If there is no resurrection:
Christ has not been raised
Scripture is not true
Faith is in vain
Believers are still in their sins

Resurrection gives life from the dead. In Christ, all who believe will be made alive.

Romans 4:22-25
Paul had already written this letter to the church at Rome, the church he had not yet visited. Believers are justified by Jesus' resurrection. He paid for transgressions, and believers are justified.

Give time for your group to discuss how these truths apply to them.

Lead your discussion back to Acts 24:22-27. What was Felix's response to Paul's defense?

Since he had an exact / accurate knowledge of the Way, Felix put off his decision until the commander / tribune Lysias would come to Caesarea and tell what happened. Until then, he gave Paul some freedom while in his custody.

Paul was given opportunity to witness about Christ to both Felix and his wife. But when he spoke about righteousness, self-control, and judgment, Felix was frightened / alarmed and sent him away.

Felix spoke with Paul often for two years, hoping for a bribe from Paul.

Then Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and he left Paul in prison as a favor to the Jews.

© 2021 Precept

Ask what your group noted on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme for this chapter.

Paul in Caesarea before Felix the governor

ACTS 25

Verses 1-12
Who and what are these verses about? Ask what your group learned from their study.

Festus went to Jerusalem and heard the charges against Paul. The Jews wanted Paul brought to Jerusalem so they could ambush and kill him.

But Festus had the accusers come to Caesarea. When they did, they couldn't prove the serious charges they had against Paul.

Paul's defense was that he had not committed offense against the Law, the Jews, the temple, or Caesar.

Like Felix, Festus wanted to favor the Jews so he asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem to stand trial there. Paul answered in verses 10-11.

He had done no harm against Jews, as Festus knew.
So he was where he ought to be—before Caesar's tribunal.

His reasoning was that if he had done wrong or was worthy of death / for which he deserved to die, he was willing to die. But if he had done nothing of what the Jews accused, then he could not be handed over to them. He appealed to Caesar.

Festus conferred with his council and agreed to send Paul to Caesar.

How do Acts 9:15-16 and 23:11 compare with Paul's appeal to Caesar?

The Lord told him he would bear His name before:
- Gentiles
- Kings
- Israel

He told Paul he would witness / testify about Him in Rome.

At this point you might ask your group what they have learned about how to deal with people who falsely accuse them. Ask what they learn from Paul's example of trusting the Lord.

Verses 13-27
Who came on the scene and what happened in Caesarea?

Several days later King Herod Agrippa II and his sister Bernice arrived there.

Festus asked Agrippa to help him with writing charges against Paul to send to Caesar.

The Jews' charges would not stand before Caesar because they were about Jewish law and Jesus—a dead man Paul said was alive.

Agrippa asked to hear Paul the next day.

Festus told Agrippa that Paul had committed nothing worthy of death, regardless of the charges against him.

Ask what your group learned about Agrippa.

Herod Agrippa II was the last of the Herodian family to reign, A.D. 53-100. The Roman emperor Claudius made him king. He was son of Herod Agrippa who had killed James in Acts 12. Drusilla and Bernice were his sisters, and most think he and Bernice had an incestuous relationship.

What is a possible theme for this chapter?

Paul and Festus; King Agrippa to Caesarea

ACTS 26

Verses 1-23
What did Paul say to Agrippa?

Jesus had told Paul he would witness to kings. Paul began his defense by saying he was fortunate to be speaking to Agrippa.

Paul stated that Agrippa was an expert in / familiar with Jewish customs and questions / controversies.

Paul told more about his life before Agrippa than he had before Felix.
He also stated his reason for being there differently from before.

Verse 6 is about the promise made to the Jewish fathers—the promise of the resurrection. Acts 13:32-39, Jesus' resurrection

Then he brought up the name of Jesus and how He appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus. Jesus told him it was hard to kick against the goads—something like a cattle prod.

Jesus told Paul about his appointment as a minister / servant and witness and that He was sending him to the Gentiles to

Open their eyes
Turn them from darkness to light, from Satan's dominion / power to God's
so that they receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance / place

© 2021 Precept

Acts 13–26 tells about much of that being fulfilled.

Paul spoke to Agrippa about repentance and fulfillment of the Prophets and Moses.
Christ suffered.
He was raised from the dead.
He was the first to proclaim light to Jews and Gentiles.

At this point, you can ask what your group has learned about witnessing and giving testimony about Jesus from Acts.

Verses 24-32
What was the response to Paul's defense?

Festus said Paul was out of his mind.
Agrippa said Paul might persuade him to be a Christian.

They agreed he had done nothing worthy of / to deserve death.
He would have been set free if he'd not appealed to Caesar.

But Jesus had told Paul he would testify about Him in Rome.

What is a possible theme for this chapter?

Paul's defense before Festus and Agrippa

To end this discussion, you might ask what your group learned about God's promises and how He keeps them.

ACTS PART 2
LESSON 8
Leader Guide

Lesson emphasis:

- Acts 27–28

To begin this discussion, tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask what Acts is about: the theme, purpose, and key verse. Or you can do this after discussing Acts 27–28.

Acts 1:8 is the key verse and contains the theme and purpose statement.

Jesus told His apostles that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came on them and they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the remotest part / end of the earth.

Ask what segments they observed in Acts.

Acts 1:8

Acts 1–7	Jerusalem
Acts 8–9	Judea and Samaria
Acts 10–28	remotest part / end of the earth

Jews and Gentiles

Acts 1–9	Jews
Acts 8	*Samaritans*
Acts 10–28	Gentiles

Main characters

Acts 1–12	Peter	
Acts 1–7	to Jews	
Acts 8	to Samaritans	
Acts 10	to Gentiles	
Acts 13–28	Paul	
Paul's missionary journeys		
Acts 13–14		The first
Acts 15:40–18:22		The second
Acts 18:23 and 20:38		The third
Acts 21–28	Paul in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Rome	

Tell them to look at the chart "Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after his Conversion." According to the chart, what was the year at the beginning of Acts 27?

It was approximately A.D. 59, more than twenty-five years after Paul was saved.

© 2021 Precept

ACTS 27

Tell your group to look at the map "Paul Sails from Caesarea to Rome" a visual aid for the rest of this discussion.

Verses 1-8
What happened in these verses? Be sure to show on the map the locations in this chapter.

Luke and Aristarchus were with Paul all the way to Rome.
Julius the centurion saw that Paul was cared for.

The ship sailed along the coast of Asia and got to Sidon the next day.
At Sidon, Paul was allowed to go to his friends.

Then they sailed close to Cyprus and encountered winds that were contrary / against them.
After sailing along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, they landed at Myra in Lycia.

They changed ships there and headed to Italy. It was slow and difficult sailing for many days because of the wind. They sailed under the shelter / lee of Crete close to Salmone.
Then they came to Fair Havens near Lasea.

Verses 9-12
What do these verses say about the journey?

NOTE: Verse 9, "the fast" might refer to the Day of Atonement which is in the fall of the year.

Paul advised against leaving Fair Havens on the island of Crete.
Since the harbor wasn't suitable for wintering, the pilot and captain decided to sail.
They wanted to winter at Phoenix on the island of Crete.

Verses 13-20
How did the journey continue in these verses?

A violent / tempestuous wind caught them as they tried to sail along Crete, so they were driven along by the wind. They passed Clauda and Syrtis. The next day, they threw the cargo off the ship, and on the third day in the violent wind, they threw the tackle overboard.

They abandoned hope of being saved after many days of not seeing sun or stars in the storm.

Verses 21-26
What happened next?

Paul spoke to them again telling them they should have listened to him.
An angel told him not to be afraid because he would stand before Caesar.
He also encouraged them by saying God had granted their lives.
But they would run aground on a certain island.

How might Acts 19:21 and 23:11-12 have helped Paul on this dangerous journey?

The Lord told him that he would witness in Rome.
At certain times of difficulty the Lord spoke encouraging words to Paul.

Ask your group how the cross-reference in Ephesians can encourage them in difficult times or situations. Give time for them to discuss application.

Ephesians 2:10
Just as God prepared good works for Paul to accomplish, He did the same for all believers.

Lead the discussion back to Acts 27 and ask what happened in verses 27-32.

It was the fourteenth night of the storm in the Adriatic Sea when they neared land.
The sailors were trying to escape in the ship's boat.
Paul told the centurion they needed to stay in the ship to be saved.

Verses 33-38
What did Paul do to encourage the men on the ship?

At dawn, he encouraged the men to eat something and told all 276 of them that not one would perish. He thanked God, and after eating the men threw the wheat overboard.

Verses 39-44
What happened at daybreak?

A bay was sighted, so they wanted to drive the ship onto a beach if they could but instead hit a reef which was breaking up the ship. When some wanted to kill the prisoners, the centurion saved Paul and the others.

Verse 44 says they all were safe on land. What Paul had told them was fulfilled.

Ask about a chapter theme for Acts 27.

Paul sailed from Caesarea; storm and shipwreck

You can ask your group how much they trust the Lord's words of encouragement in hard times. And give them time to discuss how they can encourage others in difficult situations.

ACTS 28

Verses 1-10
Where were Paul and the others? What happened there?

They were on the island of Malta, and the native people there were kind to them.

© 2021 Precept

Paul was not harmed when bitten by a viper, and then he healed Publius's father.
Publius was the leader of the island, and after his father was healed all the sick came to Paul for healing.

They were there three months.

Verses 11-16
Where did they go next? What happened in these verses?

Syracuse for three days
Rheguim a day later
Puteoli on the second day
Believers were there, and Paul and Luke stayed with them seven days.

Rome
Christian brothers there heard about them and came from the Market / Forum of Appius and Three Inns / Taverns to see Paul and Luke. When Paul saw them, he was encouraged. The believers along the way were helping Paul as all believers now need to help and encourage one another.

Paul was allowed to stay alone with the soldier who guarded him.

Verses 17-31
Who did Paul call? What happened with them?

He called the leading Jews and explained why he was in Rome. They had not heard about him, but were interested in "this sect." They knew it was spoken against everywhere; that was probably referring to the Jews who spoke against "the Way."

They set a day and large numbers of them came to Paul to listen to his views.
He testified about the kingdom of God and Jesus—from the Law and Prophets.

He quoted Isaiah 6:1-13 about those who would not believe. The Lord told Isaiah to speak to the people, Israel, but they would not listen. But he was to speak until the Lord brought destruction on them, yet there will be a remnant remaining.

Compare this with Romans 11, which Paul had written before this time in Rome.

Although most of Israel has rejected their Messiah, God has not rejected them.
There is a remnant of them who believe—in Paul's day and now.

Their rejection led to the gospel going to the Gentiles, as seen in Acts.
But it's only a partial hardening until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

When the Deliverer comes, all Israel at that time will be saved. God's promises to them still stand.

How does Acts end?

> Paul was in Rome for two years in his quarters, welcoming all who came to him. He preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> God kept his promise to send Paul to witness in Rome.

NOTE: Many think Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke and Acts from Rome sometime during the two years Paul was in prison there.

Ask about the theme of this chapter, so your group can complete their At a Glance chart if they didn't do it before the discussion. ☺

> Paul to Rome, met with Jews there

To end your discussion, ask what Paul had written in Philippians.

> Philippians 1:7-26
> This is one of the letters Paul wrote from prison in Rome. His life was completely given to do Christ's work. To live is Christ, and to die is gain. He was confident that he would go to Philippi again.

Ask your group if that is true of how they view their lives. Also give them time to share what they've learned from studying Acts.