



how this study works

This study of Acts was written specifically for Highland Student Ministry as a way to study alongside the adults of Highland.

Each week is broken into 3 days of “homework.” Day 1 is focused on Comprehension of the text—asking, “What does this passage say?” Day 2, Interpretation, is full of questions to help the student process the information they read the day before and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, discern what the text actually means. Day 3 builds on the essential foundation laid by Comprehension and Interpretation. There will be challenging and heart-probing questions to help students see ways the principal Truth found in that passage can be incorporated into their daily lives.

In addition to the 3 days of homework, there is a Bonus day with multiple options for students who want to do more, go deeper, or use different approaches to studying the passage that week. There may also be links to videos or songs to encourage you throughout the week.

There is also a “Bonus Day” of homework for anyone who wants to not only go a little deeper, but may desire to put their creative side to work in studying Acts. If you love to draw or write poetry or listen to music, this day was written with you in mind! Take the foundations you learned in Days 1-3 and let your Redeemed Imagination run to the glory of the Lord!

This workbook is also loaded with resources such as links to videos, sermons, or podcasts from a variety of trustworthy teachers, including Highland’s own staff.

There are resources to help you not only work through Acts, but also equip you to study Scripture on your own in the future. The method used and outlined in this workbook, is one of many great ways to study on your own with the Holy Spirit as your main teacher.

It is our hope you will diligently invest your time and faith into participating fully in this study with your classmates (and the adults of Highland!). We encourage you to do the work as well as join with your classmates and teachers in discussing how the Holy Spirit is teaching and leading you. It is also highly encouraged to discuss what you are learning with your parents, especially if they are participating in the adult study of Acts as well.

bible study crash course

Your Mindset

How do you approach the Bible? What is your attitude or mindset when you open it?

Consider approaching it with the *respect* that you would approach a textbook AND the *strategy* of a great work of fiction.

When you pick up a textbook, you understand it was written by those who have first hand, expert knowledge of what's inside. The learner reads with the understanding he or she is NOT the center of the book, and submits to the wisdom of the authors. You understand there is a flow to it and there are building blocks on which each section builds to eventually establish a greater *understanding* in the student.

Even though the Bible is **NOT** fiction, when you pick up a great story or a mystery, you have a certain mindset. Depending on the genre, you might even begin reading with the understanding the story takes place in a context nothing like your own (i.e. Lord of the Rings or Harry Potter). When you understand this, you begin to see you must adjust your perspective according to the rules of the story, rather than adjusting the story to your "rules." Your senses are more aware and you are already reading with the posture of expectation to find clues and make connections—to see themes that weave beauty into a gripping narrative.

If we naturally approach other books in these ways, why do we approach the Bible like a fortune cookie or Aesop's Fables? Why do we think it's archaic and unapproachable? The Bible is far more reliable than even the most reputable text books, more intricately grand than any story ever told, and absolutely applicable to our lives today. We must adjust our understanding to *its* rules—and when we do, it comes alive to us.

Your Lens

There are many "lenses" through which you can read Scripture—often these are themes. But two of the most powerful lenses can be used like a magnifying glass you can flip back and forth to see different things more clearly. These two can be used for almost ALL of Scripture.

- Genesis: How does the story of creation, rebellion, the promise of a Hero, and hope of a new Kingdom help you understand other passages?
- Gospel: How does the story of The Rescuer, His life, death, resurrection, and Kingdom Rule help you understand other passages?




C.I.A.

1. Comprehension (a.k.a. "Observation")—70+% of your time; possibly boring but *MOST crucial* for building a firm foundation for next steps
 - a. What does it say?
 - b. Slow down and read repetitively.
 - c. Copy word for word or summarize.
2. Interpretation—20% of time
 - a. What does it mean?
 - b. What does this reveal about God?
 - c. What does this reveal about the Kingdom and how it works?
3. Application—10% of time
 - a. Considering what I learned about God in this passage, how does my life reflect (image) Him?
 - b. What does this look like in my life?
 - c. Are there practical actions the Holy Spirit is leading me to take? What are they?

Tips for "Comprehension/Observation" stage:


1. Copy an entire passage from an online source (i.e. www.biblegateway.com, etc.) and paste it into a blank document. Double or triple space and shift right margin over. Using different colored pens or pencils mark words or phrases that stand out. This allows you to go back and see important or repeated ideas quickly. Create a "key" of symbols that is meaningful to you. Just a FEW examples of symbols might be:

Back-peddle words 

Easter Eggs 

Hyperlinks 

Time 

God/LORD  (you can put a letter inside the triangle to distinguish between the Father, Jesus, and Spirit)

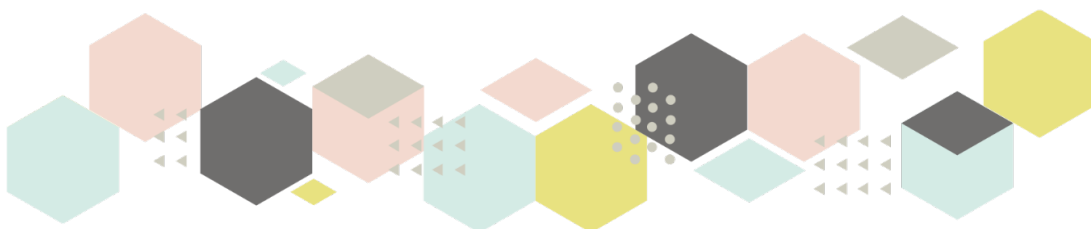
Geographical locations  (underline)

King/kingdom 

2. In the right margin, write down connections, ideas, or questions you have. (i.e. describe the Easter Eggs or Hyperlinks you found, count how many times specific words/phrases are repeated, definitions of words you looked up in an English dictionary, ideas which are compared/contrasted, thoughts or questions like: “that’s weird”, “why would Jesus do that?”, “what were they afraid of?”, “is there anything important about this location?”)

Terms

- **Context**—the Big Picture: who, what, when, where, why, how; what’s happening before and after; if you get this wrong it can be absolutely destructive (this is NOT an exaggeration!)
- **Genre/ Literary Style**—history, letters, poetry, prose, prophecy
- **Hyperlinks**—a direct quote from another place in Scripture
- **Easter Eggs**—an idea, image, or theme subtly planted by the author to connect you to the big picture of Scripture
- **Back-Peddle Words**—words that make you stop and point you backwards (context); i.e. Then, after, before, and, but, if, next, later, therefore, etc.
- **Themes**—big ideas which are woven throughout ALL of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation; i.e. Kingdom of God, image bearers, Garden, Temple, Messiah/Son of Man, rescue, royalty, covenant, sacrifice, marriage, children of God, redemption, trees, mountains, etc.) Note: all themes are also usually “Easter Eggs” but *not all* “Easter Eggs” are themes.
- **Translation**—a version of the Bible translated/transliterated from its original language into a modern language by a large team of legitimate scholars, usually “word for word” (i.e. ESV, NASB) OR phrase for phrase (ie. NIV)
- **Paraphrase**—a version of the Bible typically translated from a modern language into one or two people’s ideas or interpretations of the text in attempts to simplify/modernize text, often beautifully written and “devotional” in style, consider these to be commentaries, best used for supplementing *AFTER studying with a TRANSLATION* (i.e. The Message, New Living Translation)



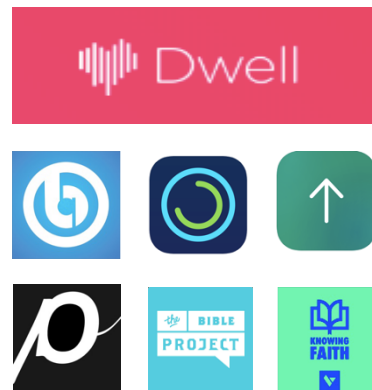
bonus resources

Websites:

- www.thebibleproject.com [free videos also on YouTube—particularly for Overviews for each book of the Bible]
- www.netbible.org [click on Constable's Notes]
- www.blueletterbible.org [study -> text commentaries; can also look up original languages]
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- ESV study notes
- NASB study notes

Apps:

- Read Scripture (by The Bible Project)
- Dwell Audio Bible (<https://dwellapp.io/>)
- Blue Letter Bible
- YouVersion Bible
- Breakaway Ministries
- Echo Prayer App (<https://new.echoprayer.com/>)
- Verses (Scripture Memory Help)
- Merriam-Webster's English Dictionary



Podcasts/Reliable Teachers:

- John Durham (and other staff!) at Highland Baptist Church
- *Passion City DC*/Ben Stuart (Also on YouTube)
- *Breakaway Ministries*/Timothy Ateek (<https://www.breakawayministries.org/>), Also on YouTube]
- <https://thebibleproject.com/#podcasts> (and YouTube)
- *Knowing Faith* (from The Village Church)
- *Exploring My Strange Bible* by Dr. Tim Mackie
- *Look at the Book* by Desiring God
- *Bible Recap*
- Other AMAZING teachers, authors:: Jen Wilkin, Matt Chandler, Timothy Keller, John Piper, Jackie Hill Perry, Rebecca McLaughlin



introduction to acts

Have you ever found yourself watching the second part of a movie series FIRST? What about reading the second book in a series before you read the first one? How did that go? Were you confused at all? If you went back and saw or read the first installment, did it allow you to appreciate the second one more?

The book of Acts is the second in a two-part series. It was written as a continuation of the Gospel Luke, so it is written in such a way that the author fully expects that you have read or understand (to an extent) the events which took place in his first book.

Hopefully, you are somewhat familiar with the content of the gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Hopefully, you know the story of the Jewish people and the fulfillment of their longing for a Hero to rescue them. Hopefully, you know about how Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, lived a life without any stain of sin or evil, performed miracles of healing, was executed on a cross, rose again after three days, and appeared to hundreds of His followers—all so that He could rescue the hearts of those who would receive Him.

That's foundational, but we can go deeper. We can go back farther. In the beginning when God lived and walked face to face with humanity, sin and death entered the world. God made a promise that a Rescuer would come and destroy the enemy who orchestrated the rebellion. As the storyline progressed we saw failure after failure of humanity, so by the time we finally get to the gospels (like Luke), we read about Jesus, His message, and His mission.

As we read the gospels, it is crystal clear that more than ANYTHING else, Jesus announced and taught about the Kingdom of God. As He did this, He was also on a mission to fulfill what sin and death had left void. He fulfilled every short coming had by the Old Testament "heroes." He fulfilled the "law" perfectly. He fulfilled every prophecy made about Him. He fulfilled the penalty of death owed by every single human and offered to grant that fulfillment to anyone who would follow Him. And He fulfilled the perfect picture of what it looks like to not only be a citizen of the Kingdom He was announcing, but also what it looks like to be the King of that Kingdom.

As if there could be anything more incredible, His act of fulfilling every broken part of the story did something else. Because He was the complete fulfillment of what humanity was supposed to be in the beginning, He was the first New Human—a new Adam. His resurrection established the beginning of the renewal of creation, and Acts is the account of seeing this renewal take place. One teacher even called the book of Acts "the reset button" of creation.

As we begin our journey through the book of Acts together we need to establish a bit of important context to help you start off on the right foot. Please take a look at the profile provided. Then read on to see how this study is set up, the method which it uses to study Scripture, and a few other tips.

Profile of Acts

author:

the Holy Spirit leading Luke, the Physician, a friend to and co-missionary with Paul; he is a Gentile Follower of Jesus, very detailed, intelligent, had virtually unlimited access to Jesus's closest friends and followers

genre:

Historical Narrative

date:

early 60s A.D. (in addition to many other proofs, this is thought to be an accurate date because there is no mention of the death of Paul, the persecution of Christians by Nero, nor the Jerusalem Temple being destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.), it generally covers a time frame of about 30 years

purpose:

scholars believe there are many, but in general it is to encourage believers by providing detailed accounts of the work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit through the Church

themes:

reset of creation/Humanity, "witnesses" to the Gospel, the constant presence of the Holy Spirit, awe/wonder, obedience to the Holy Spirit, the Church, names

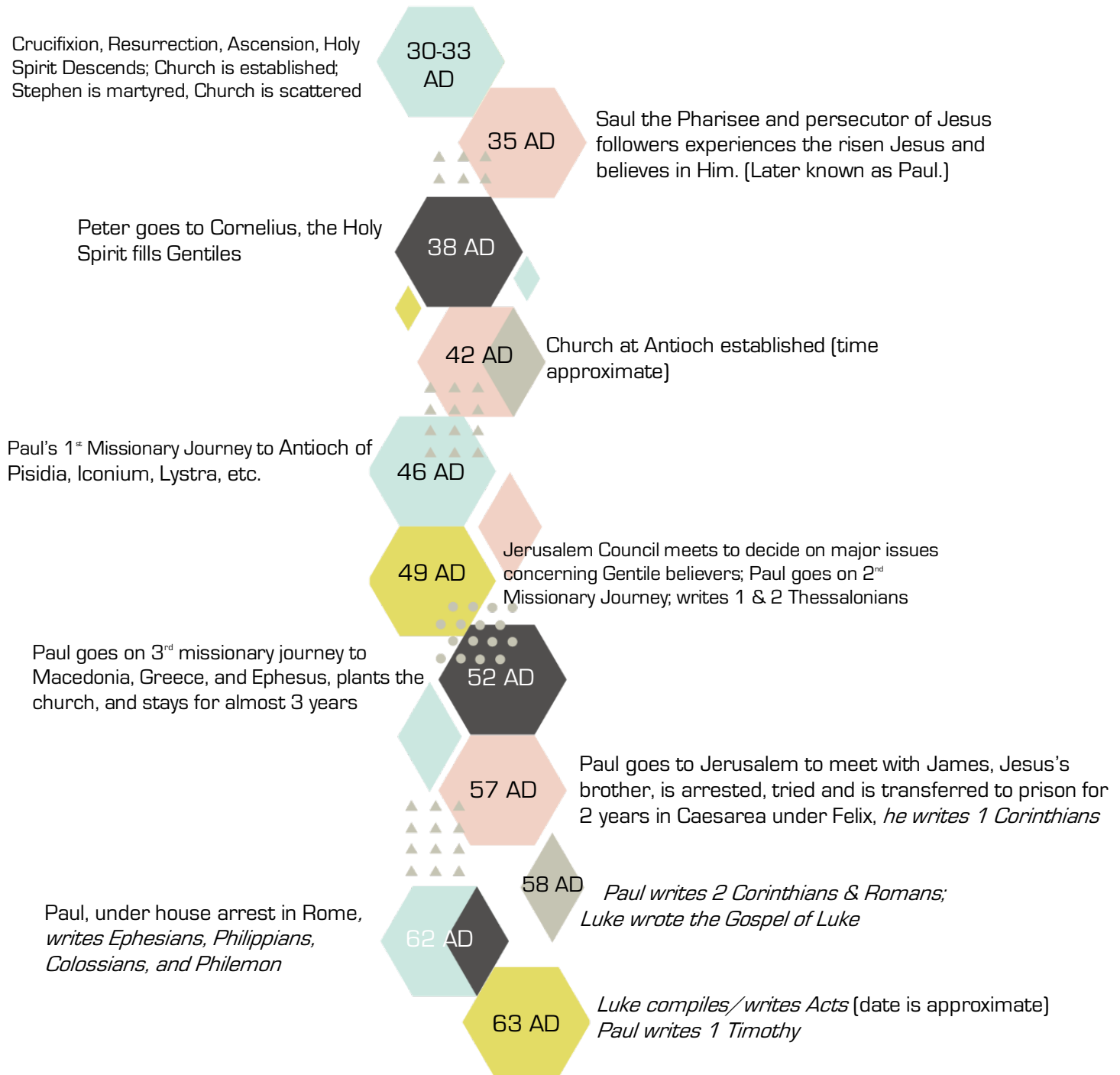
bonus:

the 2nd in a 2 Part literary work Luke-Acts, Luke wrote more of the NT than any other author; some people call it "Acts of the Apostles" but a more accurate title would be "Acts of Jesus and the Holy Spirit", 3rd longest book in the N.T.

resources:

Dr. Tom Constable, BibleProject, Knowing Faith Podcast, Dr. Darrell L. Bock

Timeline of Acts



A more detailed Timeline is available at the end of this workbook.

Main Resources for Timeline: ESV Study Bible, Acts Exegetical Commentary by Darrell L. Bock

lesson one: acts 1

I'm not sure about you, but I've always found the book of Acts to be kind of intimidating, especially if I'm supposed to figure out how to be a "good Christian" and "apply it to my life." It always seems easier to jump over to one of the New Testament letters because there's usually some sort of instruction of what to do or not to do. At least that way I know when I'm purposefully disobeying, right?

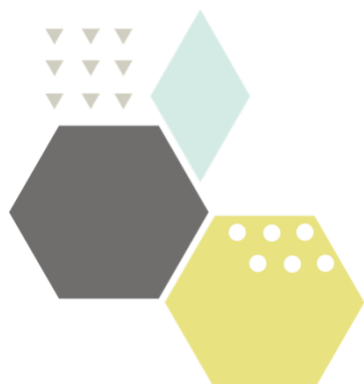
Historical Narrative is a bit more challenging, but just because it's challenging doesn't excuse us from digging deep and trusting that:

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Guess what. In Greek "all" means "all." All Scripture is breathed out by God.

So as we begin this new adventure of working through Acts together there are a few things we need to keep in mind about this book and how to study it.

1. The main characters of Acts are Jesus and The Holy Spirit
2. Always be looking for repeated ideas and words (this includes looking for major themes)
3. Keep in mind there is a difference between Descriptive text and Prescriptive text. Descriptive is simply telling us about the event or person. Prescriptive is usually providing more direct instruction. This is a MAJOR point to consider because Acts is Historical Narrative. We can still learn from both, but it is very important to understand and identify them.



day one :: comprehension

- Pray, thanking God for a new semester of HSM and opportunity to study Acts together. Ask Him to teach and reveal Truths about His Kingdom to you.
- Read or listen to Acts 1. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to grasp a basic understanding of what the text is saying.

1. For whom is Luke writing this account and why is he writing it? (v.1)

2. What was Luke's first account about? (v. 1-3)

3. What did Jesus speak to His followers about for 40 days following his resurrection? (v.3)

4. Why did Jesus want them to stay in Jerusalem after He returned to Heaven? (v.4-5)

5. What did Jesus call his followers in verse 8 and where would they do this? (v. 8)

6. List all those who were present according to verses 13-14.

7. How does verse 14 describe their relationship? What were they devoted to?

8. Who ultimately replaced Judas among the apostles? (v. 26)

day two: interpretation

- Pray, thanking God for His Word. Ask Him to teach and reveal Truths about His Kingdom to you.
- Read or listen to Acts 1. (Look for repeated words and themes!) and answer the following questions to begin to discover what this passage means.

1. Look up Luke 1:1-4 and compare it with Acts 1:1-3. What was Luke's hope and intention for writing to Theophilus in the Gospel of Luke? (Luke 1:4)

2. Read Acts 1:4-5 and compare it to Luke 24:48-49. Who is the Father sending?

3. According to John 16:7, what does Jesus say about this coming Promised One?

4. What did the disciples want to know in Acts 1:6 and what was Jesus's answer?

5. Read Luke 24:44-49 to help provide more context. Does it appear that the disciples fully understood Jesus's meaning of the Kingdom of God? (What was the extent of their vision as contrasted with Jesus' vision of the Kingdom?)

6. How does Acts 1:6-9 compare with Matthew 28:16-20? Is there overlap? What attributes of God do these verses reveal to us?

7. As the disciples went through the process of replacing Judas, what were the requirements for filling that role? How did their process of making this decision demonstrate both wisdom and trusting God's sovereignty?

day three: application

- Pray, asking God to show you how this week's passage should impact your life today. Pray for your brothers and sisters in HSM, that the Holy Spirit would speak clearly to them today.
- Read or listen to Acts 1. (Look for repeated words and themes!) and answer the following questions.

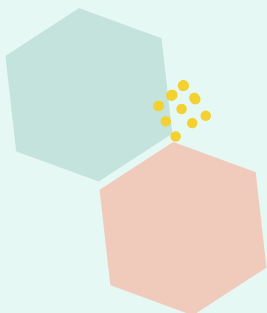
1. Whose Kingdom are you more concerned with fulfilling—your own kingdom or the Kingdom of God? Does your lifestyle and do your moment by moment choices demonstrate to which Kingdom you are more loyal? Explain.

2. Where does your devotion manifest itself—in prayer, seeing Scripture fulfilled, and being in one accord with other believers OR are you more devoted to people and ideas not aligned with God's Kingdom? Why?

3. Are you trying to live out this devotion in your own power or with the power of the Holy Spirit? If you are trying to do these things in your own power, do you find yourself becoming frustrated or unfulfilled? Explain.

bonus days: read, listen, write, or draw

- Pray thanking God for His generous invitation to join Him in His eternal mission and for providing the gifts and guidance you need to do that well. Pray for wisdom for yourself and for your HSM brothers and sisters.
- Read or listen to Acts 1. (Look for repeated words and themes!) and answer the following questions.
- Is there anything in this passage you don't understand or have trouble believing? It's ok! Write out your questions and your doubts. Pray about them. After wrestling with it a while, take your questions to your parents, one of the HSM leaders, or an adult whom you trust.
- In the space below, write out a poem, song, or prayer of response to this week's passage.
- If you enjoy drawing, illustrate one or two of the following concepts in the space below:
 - the Ascension of Jesus
 - the Word or Gospel moving out on a map of Jerusalem, Judea, and the ends of the earth
 - casting of the lots (kind of like dice)



- Dig Deeper: Read the following passages and describe any similarities or differences you find.

| Acts 1:6-11 | Daniel 7:13-14 | Matthew 28:16-20 | Mark 16:15, 19-20 | Luke 24:50-53 |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | | | | |

What does this reveal to you about God, His character, His plan, or His Kingdom?

Songs:

Forever by Bethel

To Those Who Wait by Bethany Dillon



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

lesson two: acts 2

This week we are studying one of the most famous events recorded in the New Testament. We are also officially introduced to a main character in the Bible who has been actively working since before creation, but not often mentioned—the Holy Spirit.

Because on the surface the Holy Spirit may not be as clearly seen as Jesus, sometimes we simply don't know what to do with Him, and as a result, serious misunderstandings or misconceptions develop. We even begin to speak inaccurately about Him. Here are a few important facts made clear *by Scripture* to help clear up some of the confusion.* *

HE is a HE—NOT *an* it

HE is forceful—NOT *a* force

HE is powerful—NOT *a* power

HE is God and Lord—a *person* for relationship, intimacy, fellowship, and communion

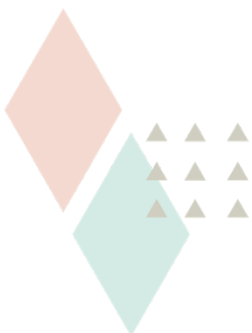
He is God, and He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We see Him in the Old Testament, although a little more subtly. He was there, in the beginning hovering over the chaotic and dark waters of a formless earth.

He *was* instrumental in bringing peace and order to that chaos—and He *still* brings peace and order, even to the chaos that churns in our own hearts.

He *was* the guide and giver of true wisdom to the prophets, priests, and kings—and He *still* guides and gives us that true wisdom as we fulfill our new, restored roles in His Kingdom.

Press into Him this week. Ask Him to bring you peace, to teach you, and to give you wisdom.

* * J.T. English



day one :: comprehension

- Pray, thanking God for His promise that He would be with us always. Ask for focus as you study today.
- Read or listen to Acts 2. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to grasp a basic understanding of what the text is saying.

1. What day was it and where were all of the disciples? Describe what happened. (vs. 1-4)

2. There were others in Jerusalem who heard this commotion. How are they described, where are they from, and what was their response to what was happening? (vs. 8-12)

3. When Peter stands up to explain what was happening, he quotes two different Old Testament passages. Summarize what Peter (quoting Joel) says about the last days.

4. Peter unashamedly preached the Gospel that Jesus of Nazareth came, performed mighty works, wonders, and signs, was killed, and raised from the dead. According to verse 37 how did this truth affect those who heard? What did Peter tell them to do in response?

5. To what were the believers devoted and what was the response of every soul? (vs. 42-43)

6. Describe what the daily lives of these believers looked like according to verses 44-47.

day two: interpretation

- Pray, thanking God for His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit will give you wisdom as you spend time in His Word today.
- Read or listen to Acts 2. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to begin to discover what this passage means.

1. Read the following passages and summarize them in the space below.

Genesis 11:1-9

2 Chronicles 7:1-3

2. How do the passages you summarized above help your understanding of what God was doing in Acts 2:1-12?

3. When Peter quotes Joel and announces that God would pour out His Spirit on humanity, what should we expect to see as a result of the Spirit's activity?

Ezekiel 36:22-28

John 15:26

John 16:13

Romans 8:1-8

4. How do we see these passages manifested in the response of those who heard Peter's testimony about Jesus? (vs. 37-41)

day three: application

- Pray, asking God to show you how this week's passage should impact your life today.
- Read or listen to Acts 2. (Look for repeated words and themes!) and answer the following questions.

1. If you belong to Jesus, you have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit [Acts 2:38-39]. Like Peter, you will be called to give testimony of Jesus to those around you who may be confused by what they've heard. Do you believe and rely on the Holy Spirit to give you the words to say [Joel 2:28 and John 14:26]? Why or why not? What are practical ways you can partner with the Holy Spirit as He trains you to testify and prophesy about the truth of Jesus?

2. Last week we read that the disciples were devoted to prayer and to one another [Acts 1:14]. This week we also read they were devoted to the apostle's teaching, to fellowship, to breaking of bread and to prayers. The word for "devoted" means ***steadfastly continuing***. They were loyal and persevered in these things because they were characteristic of God's Kingdom.

If you consider yourself to be a Kingdom Citizen, are you fully devoted to these things as well? If not, follow the trail of bread crumbs of what you spend most of your time, energy, and affections pursuing. What do they lead to? What or whose Kingdom are you *truly* devoted to? Is the Holy Spirit calling you to a change in your devotion? Explain.

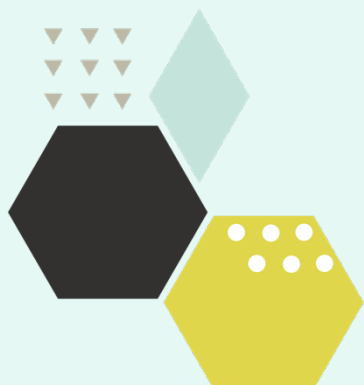
3. Verse 43 says that "awe came upon every soul". Are you in awe of Jesus and His Kingdom? Why or why not? If not, what are some things that might be hindering your sense of awe? What are some things you can do to cultivate awe of Jesus?

bonus days: read, listen, write, or draw

- Pray, thanking God for His generous invitation to join Him in His eternal mission of sharing the Gospel of the Kingdom. Pray for wisdom for yourself and for your HSM brothers and sisters.
- Read or listen to Acts 2. (Look for repeated words and themes!) and answer the following questions.
- Is there anything in this passage you don't understand or have trouble believing? It's ok! Write out your questions and your doubts. Pray about them. After wrestling with it a while, take your questions to your parents, one of the HSM leaders, or an adult whom you trust.
- Watch this sermon from 8/8/2021 by Pastor John as he preaches on how the Holy Spirit uses the Church in the great Arc of Redemption.
- Write out a poem, song, or prayer of response to this week's passage in the space provided.
- If you enjoy drawing, illustrate one or two of the following concepts in the space provided:
 - Flames above the heads of the disciples
 - Any images described in Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:17-21)
 - Sacrificial generosity



Pastor John
Holy Spirit



- Dig Deeper:
 - Stop and think about the experience of the disciples. What do you think they thought or felt? If you experienced these things how would you feel? What would your response be? Take some time and journal about these prompts.
 - Read Leviticus 23:15-22 and Numbers 16:9-12. This is the Feast of Weeks—50 days after Passover. It became known as Pentecost. Was this a sad Feast or a Feast of rejoicing? How were the people of Yahweh specifically told to treat each other at this time? Do you see any connections between the Old Testament instructions and the first Pentecost after Jesus's resurrection?
 - Look at all of the regions listed in Acts 2:5-12 and circle or highlight them on the map provided on the next page. What is significant about this list. What does this reveal to you about God, His character, His plan, or His Kingdom?





[illegible]

lesson three: acts 3

When was the last time you felt deep amazement or wonder? Was it when you heard that song or saw someone make an impossible catch to win the game? Maybe chills ran down your spine, your heart started beating faster, or you got goose bumps because something you saw or experienced literally created a physical response in your body. That response was paired with something emotional as well. Would you describe your feelings or thoughts as joyful, afraid, or overwhelmed? Really try to think of a time you experienced this wonder—or awe.

Toward the end of last week's lesson we read about how "awe came upon every soul" of the new followers of Jesus. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "awe" as *an emotion variously combining dread, veneration, and wonder that is inspired by authority or the sacred*.

It is very significant to note how often awe, wonder, or amazement is mentioned as this new Jesus movement gains traction.

In chapter one we saw the disciples in awe of Jesus ascending into Heaven, fulfilling ancient Jewish prophecy before their eyes. In chapter two we saw the Holy Spirit filling the disciples with power to speak in other languages and gifts to heal. This week's study is no different. We will continue to read about ways the Holy Spirit enabled Jesus's followers to do incredible and miraculous acts.

People definitely had significant reactions to these miraculous works, but something interesting to note is that it is when the Gospel of Jesus is proclaimed, then there is a greater response. Acts 2:40-47 actually describes their awe as a result of hearing the apostles' teaching, the fellowship they had together, the meals shared around a table, and praying together. It is only AFTER all this that the signs and wonders are mentioned.

What usually makes you feel awe? Do you experience it when you hear the Gospel or when you pray with brothers and sisters in Jesus? If not, consider why this may or may not be the case. And as you continue to read and study Acts, be on the lookout for this theme of awe or wonder and how it is paired with proclaiming the Gospel and fellowship between believers.

day one :: comprehension

- Pray, thanking the Holy Spirit for His constant presence. Ask Him to teach and reveal Truths about His Kingdom to you.
- Read or listen to Acts 3. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to grasp a basic understanding of what the text is saying.

1. List all of the characters described in this passage.

2. What were Peter and John doing? Where did this incident take place? (vs. 2-3)

3. How often did this man lay at the Beautiful Gate in the Temple? (v.2)

4. What did Peter say to the man asking for help? What was the outcome? (vs. 4-8)

5. How did everyone respond to this event? (vs. 9-11)

6. What sin did Peter accuse the men in the temple of committing? (vs. 14-15) What did he challenge them to do in response? (v. 19-20)

day two: interpretation

- Pray, thanking God for His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit will give you wisdom as you spend time in His Word today.
- Read or listen to Acts 3. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to begin to discover what this passage means.

1. If Peter and John were going up to the Temple to pray as was custom, who were the other people in the Temple who heard Peter's sermon? (Hint: what event was taking place during this time?)

2. Why is it significant that the man who was lame sat at the gate *daily* and that he was later recognized by all the people in the Temple?

3. To whom did Peter give credit for this miracle? (v.13) In verses 22-26, Peter then appeals to Moses as evidence for the One who does these signs and wonders. Why was it important for Peter to be so specific in the way he described the Miracle Worker?

4. Despite the fact that Peter had just called the "Men of Israel" murderers, he calls them brothers and pleads with them to repent from their ignorance. Peter tells them a time of refreshing and restoration is coming through Jesus of Nazareth. Read Genesis 12:1-3 and then take another look at Acts 3:25-26. Why did God want to bless Abraham and his children?

5. Who was the One whom God used to ultimately bless the whole world? Who was He sent to rescue first? (v.26) Read Exodus 19:5-6. What is significant about the role God desired them to fulfill as it relates to what's happening in Acts?

day three: application

- Pray, asking God to show you how this week's passage should impact your life today.
- Read or listen to Acts 3, and answer the following questions. (Look for repeated words and themes!)

1. When you experience something exciting and wonderful that you really can't take credit for, how quick are you to give glory to Jesus? Why? Is something keeping you from telling others about His work in your life? If so, what is it?

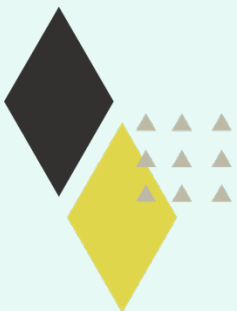
2. Peter understood the audience to whom he was speaking, and He shared the Gospel in a way that was meaningful to them [without compromising its Truth]. When you share the Gospel with people around you, are you able to recognize ways to share in which it is meaningful to their background? Why or why not? Are there any practical ways you can partner with the Holy Spirit to learn how to do this better?

3. When Peter testified to the powerful works of Jesus to the Jews in the Temple, he didn't avoid telling them what they were guilty of [killing Jesus and rejecting the very Messiah they prayed for]. He was honest about calling out their sin, but then showed love by calling them brothers and told them the hope of restoration that Jesus can bring.

When you share the Gospel do you tend to focus on one aspect more than the other? Are you afraid to speak truth about sin and only focus on the hope that Jesus can bring? Or do you spend more time telling people about their sin and ignore the grace and joy Jesus offers? Why do you think this is? Do you need to work on presenting a more complete Gospel to those around you?

bonus days: read, listen, write, or draw

- Pray, thanking God for His generous invitation to join Him in His eternal mission of sharing the Gospel of the Kingdom. Pray for wisdom for yourself and for your HSM brothers and sisters.
- Read or listen to Acts 3. (Look for repeated words and themes!) and answer the following questions.
- Is there anything in this passage you don't understand or have trouble believing? It's ok! Write out your questions and your doubts. Pray about them. After wrestling with it a while, take your questions to your parents, one of the HSM leaders, or an adult whom you trust.
- In the space below, write out a poem, song, or prayer of response to this week's passage.
- If you enjoy drawing, illustrate one or two of the following concepts in the space below:
 - The Temple or the "Beautiful Gate"
 - Peter taking the lame man's right hand
 - Peter preaching



- Dig Deeper: Jesus once preached and taught the Jews in the same place Peter and John did in this week's passage. Read John 10:22-42 and work through the following questions.
 - Go through it carefully, asking things like who, what, when, where, and how. [Hint: The Feast of Dedication is Hannukah, a celebration of God's faithfulness and miracles.]

- Do you see any similarities? Describe any overlap you might see between these two events.

- What does this reveal to you about God, His character, His plan, or His Kingdom?

- In light of what you've learned about God's character, plan, and Kingdom, how can that impact your life today?

Songs:

Awe + Wonder by The Belonging Co
Zion by Joshua Aaron and Aaron Shust



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



lesson four: acts 4

Luke was very concerned with expressing certain details when he wrote his accounts of Jesus. (Do you remember why he was writing to Theophilus to begin with?) Some of the details he was particularly generous in sharing were names of people. In fact, if you simply search the word “name” in the ESV you’ll find that Luke used the word “name” more than any other writer in the New Testament. In both of his volumes, the word “name” appears 95 times. Only John’s writings (the Gospel of John, 3 John, and Revelation) are second and add up to be 56.

Okay, okay so why is this important?

The theme of “Names” in the Bible is critically important to watch for (yes, even “boring” old genealogies!). First, it’s because Yahweh is the first “namer” and when someone names something else, it demonstrates ownership or authority over it. It’s also important because God cares for us individually. Scripture says He knows our names. Names (especially in Scripture) have specific meanings. It is also important to take note of when names are missing. The authors of Scripture often intentionally will leave out names—especially when that character sets him or herself up against God. Names matter.

Out of the 62 times the theme appears in Acts, 35 of them are specifically referencing the name of Jesus. Just naming Jesus alone in Acts is still more than any other New Testament book using the word “name” in any sense at all.

Remember in Acts 2 when we compared the Apostles being empowered to speak in different languages to the event at Babel? What was one of the main reasons God scattered the people and confused the languages to begin with? Genesis 11:4 tells us they wanted to “make a name” for themselves rather than taking Yahweh’s image and glory all over the earth. As the Apostles preached in different languages, what were they proclaiming? The name of Jesus. Not their own. Not their nation. Not their leaders. Not their enemies. They proclaimed the name of Jesus.

As you study this week, be on the lookout for the theme of “names”. Consider what names your life proclaims, not only in your words, but your actions, your time, and even your thoughts. Are you proclaiming your name? The name of groups you are loyal to (or even dislike)? OR are you boldly proclaiming the name of Jesus and His Kingdom?

day one :: comprehension

- Pray, thanking God for His sovereignty and ask for focus as you study today.
- Read or listen to Acts 4. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to grasp a basic understanding of what the text is saying.

1. List the people who approached Peter and John. How does Luke describe how they felt about what they were teaching the people? (vs. 1-2)

2. What happened to Peter and John? (v. 3)

3. What was the result of those who heard the word and believed? (v. 4)

4. List those who questioned Peter and John about the healing of the lame man. (v. 5)

5. When the rulers and elders questioned them, what was Peter's response? (vs. 8-12)

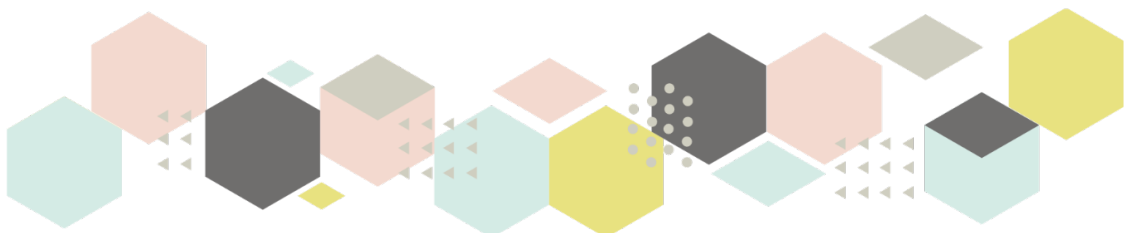
6. What was the response of the rulers and elders? What did they command them not to do in verse 18? (vs. 13-22)

7. When Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what happened, what did they do? (vs. 23-30)

8. What happened to the place and to the hearts of those who were present after they prayed together? (v. 31)

9. How are the believers described in verses 32-34?

10. How did the love and devotion the believers had for one another manifest itself in their daily lives? (vs. 34-37)



day two: interpretation

- Pray, thanking God for His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what the passage means and what it tells us about Jesus.
- Read or listen to Acts 4. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to begin to discover what this passage means.

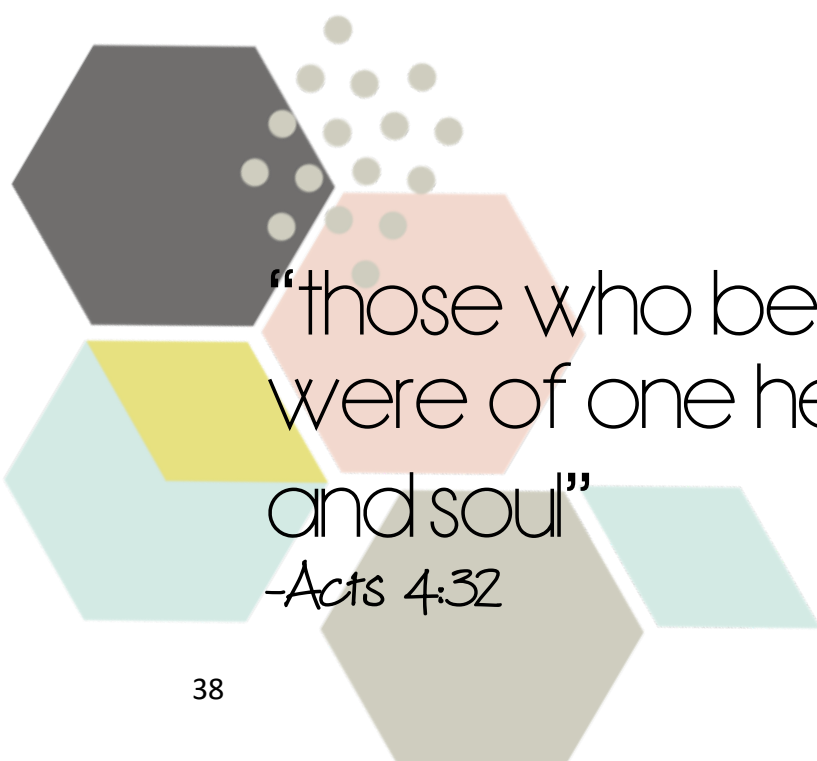
1. Keeping in mind the time of year it was, what had taken place in the months leading up to this time, and what Peter and John were teaching, why were the priests, captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees so annoyed? (For extra help with Sadducees see Matthew 22:23.)

2. Read John 18:12-14 and write down any extra information you find about Annas and Caiaphas. How do you think Peter and John might have felt standing before these leaders only a few months after Jesus stood before them?

3. Peter responded boldly to them through the power of the Holy Spirit. How were the rulers and priests described in verse 13? Why do you think they would simply allow Peter and John to be released with such a simple reprimand? (Hint: vs. 4, 13, and 21)

4. When the believers gathered back together, it isn't unreasonable to assume they were afraid of the same men who plotted to crucify Jesus. But in their fear, they drew from the Hebrew Scriptures to find the words to pray. Read Psalm 2 through the lens of these believers who were choosing to believe in the sovereignty of God over the human rulers and authorities who stood against them. Did they ask God to remove the threats or to change the circumstances? What did they pray for? How did God answer them? (v.31)

5. What does being filled with the Holy Spirit and walking in boldness have to do with generosity? Why is it imperative that Jesus's name be attached to this kind of generosity?



“those who believed
were of one heart
and soul”
-Acts 4:32

day three: application

- Pray, asking God to show you how this week's passage should impact your life today. Pray for your brothers and sisters at HSM. Pray for your and their wisdom and boldness.
- Read or listen to Acts 4, and answer the following questions. (Look for repeated words and themes!)

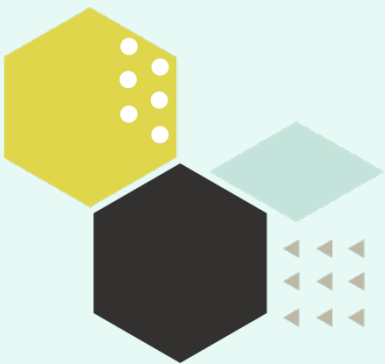
1. Those who stood opposed to Peter and John were able to recognize their boldness, their wisdom, and the fact that they had been with Jesus. When people disagree or even oppose you what do they see? Do they recognize a boldness that comes from the Holy Spirit, a wisdom that goes beyond your own capabilities, and the fact that you are “with Jesus”? Why or why not? If others do not see these qualities in your life, what might need to happen in order for that to change?

2. How can praying Scripture and remembering God's sovereignty help you when you are afraid? Read Paul's prayer for the Ephesian church in Ephesians 1:15-23. Take note of what he prayed for specifically. What do you pray for first—a change in circumstances or wisdom and boldness to face it head on in His immeasurable power?

3. How generous are you with the resources you've been given? Why or why not? If you are generous, evaluate your heart. What is the motivation of your heart behind your generosity? Are you generous for “your name” and your glory or are you generous for the name of Jesus alone?

bonus days: read, listen, write, or draw

- Pray, thanking God for His generous invitation to join Him in His eternal mission of sharing the Gospel of the Kingdom. Pray for wisdom for yourself and for your HSM brothers and sisters.
- Read or listen to Acts 4. (Look for repeated words and themes!) and answer the following questions.
- Is there anything in this passage you don't understand or have trouble believing? It's ok! Write out your questions and your doubts. Pray about them. After wrestling with it a while, take your questions to your parents, one of the HSM leaders, or an adult whom you trust.
- In the space below, write out a poem, song, or prayer of response to this week's passage.
- If you enjoy drawing, illustrate one or two of the following concepts in the space below:
 - Chains, representing Peter and John's arrest
 - Stylistically write or draw some of the names of God—Jesus or Yeshua being the central name
 - Hands praying
 - Hands sharing



- Dig Deeper:
 - Count how many times the theme of “name” appears in this chapter and write it below. How many times is it referring to Jesus? How many times referring to others?

- Read Acts 4:23-31 and then Psalm 2. Why do you think the disciples chose this Scripture to pray at that moment?

- List 2-3 people you know right now that might have some needs—physical, relational, emotional, spiritual, etc. Brainstorm some ideas for how you (and your family or some other believers) might be able to meet some of those needs. Pray about them and then try to follow through on at least one. Do this in the name of Jesus.

Songs:

His Name is Jesus by Phil Wickham

Sovereign Over Us by Aaron Keyes

The Gathering by Caedmon's Call



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lesson five: acts 5 & 6

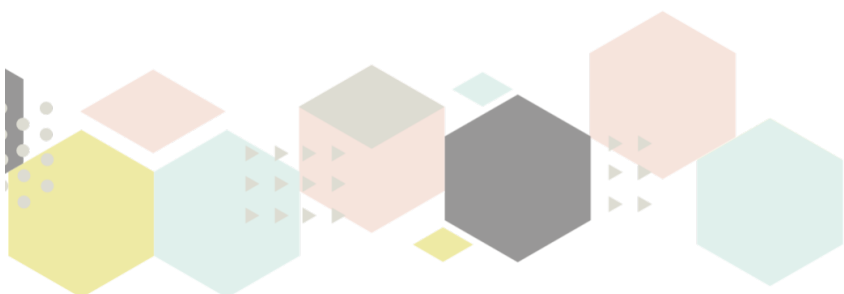
In the last lesson, Luke introduced us to a new character who will prove to play a very significant role in Acts—Barnabas. The placement of his introduction is actually very important to understanding why some very alarming things are about to happen. It is important to remember that when Luke wrote this, he didn't divide it into chapters nor verses, so try to read this week's passage as one continuous document.

This week is going to be a challenge on multiple levels. Not only will you be confronted with difficult events, but the length of reading this week is more than before. Please don't give up. Pray and press in. The Holy Spirit has important things to teach us. Trust Him with your time, your understanding, and that He will teach you.

At the end of last week's lesson we read verse 32 which said, "the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul." Luke is emphasizing to us how close this early community of believers was, so close that sacrificial generosity became the norm. Those who didn't follow Jesus were recognizing and seeing the incredible things that were happening. The reputation of the Jesus Community grew and was respected by many. While the community not perfect, the way of life was beginning to reflect what God's Kingdom was intended to look like.

This week Luke will finally give us a word to describe this Kingdom community—the church. The Greek word for church is *ekklesia*. It is made of two words—*ek* and *kaleo*—and when combined, the new word means "those who are called out of the world and to God."

What a beautiful picture this definition gives us! This is far cry from a building made of wood and stone. As you read (and from now on), keep this true meaning in mind whenever you see or hear the word "church".



day one :: comprehension

- Pray, thanking God that He is still a miracle worker. Ask Him to teach and reveal Truths about His Kingdom to you.
- Read or listen to Acts 5 & 6:1-7. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to grasp a basic understanding of what the text is saying.

1. Summarize Acts 5:1-11.

2. What continued to take place in Solomon's Portico (in the Temple)? (vs. 12-16)

3. What happened to the apostles as a result of the miracles and new believers?

4. Who released them from prison and what did he command them to do? (vs. 19-21)

5. How did their captors respond? (vs. 21-26)

6. What did Peter say to the council? (vs. 29-32)

7. Who is Gamaliel and what did he say to the council? (vs. 34-39)

8. What did the council do to the apostles and what was their response? (vs. 40-42)

9. Summarize Acts 6:1-7, including a list of all those chosen to serve the fellowship of believers.

10. What was the result of this work? (6:7)

day two: interpretation

- Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you wisdom as you spend time in His Word today, and teach you more about His character.
- Read or listen to Acts 5 & 6:1-7. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to begin to discover what this passage means.

1. What does Acts 1:24 remind us? With this in mind, compare or contrast the following people according to the passages given:

| Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37) | Ananias (Acts 5:1-6) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | |

(For a more in-depth look at what happened to Ananias and Sapphira please look at the Bonus Day this week.)

2. Again we see Peter and the apostles relentlessly preaching the Gospel not only to the Jewish people in the Temple, but also to those who have arrested them and want them stopped. What is the consistent pattern of what Peter and the others are saying. (Hints: Acts 2:22-41; 3:11-26; 4:5-11; 5:27-32)

3. According to verse 33, how did the Jewish leaders respond to everything the Apostles were doing and saying? Look back at 5:14. Why might there be such a stark difference in the responses of these groups?

4. As the community of believers grew, a legitimate concern arose. How did the Apostles respond to the concerns and what does this say about their character and leadership? Look at Acts 6:3. What were the requirements for recruiting the newest servant leaders?

5. As the Apostles and the new servants were able to be more intentional in both the Spiritual needs of the people as well as the physical/ everyday needs of the people what was the result? Write out the three specific things mentioned in Acts 6:7. What do you find unique about the last group mentioned?

1.

2.

3.

day three: application

- Pray, asking God to show you how this week's passage should impact your life today.
- Read or listen to Acts 5 & 6:1-7, and answer the following questions. (Look for repeated words and themes!)

1. Take a serious inventory of your heart. Do you relate more to Barnabas or to Ananias and Sapphira? Why? Who would you rather look like? What are some practical ways you can participate with the Holy Spirit to move toward a Kingdom life of generosity, sincerity of heart, and integrity?

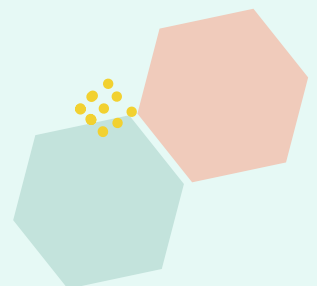
2. As a believer in and follower of Jesus, you have been given the Holy Spirit as your comforter and teacher (John 14:26). This also means you are considered to be a Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) or even a Priest in His Kingdom (1 Peter 2:5,9). Is your life marked by sacrificial generosity, unity with other believers, and a passion for sharing the Gospel? Explain your answer.

3. In 2-3 sentences, write out the full Gospel message. Feel free to use Peter's examples to help you build a framework.

4. Does your life reflect the description given in Acts 6:3 and are you willing to serve like the men listed in this passage? Why or why not? Do you ever find yourself thinking the everyday, practical, even "unglamorous" Kingdom jobs are beneath you? If so, confess this and ask the Holy Spirit to give you humility in whatever tasks you have been given. Find someone or somewhere to sacrificially serve this week that won't bring you glory or attention. Write someone's name and/or a task you might be able to serve this week.

bonus days: read, listen, write, or draw

- Pray, thanking God for His generous invitation to join Him in His eternal mission of sharing the Gospel of the Kingdom. Pray for wisdom for yourself and for your HSM brothers and sisters.
- Read or listen to Acts 5 & 6:1-7. (Look for repeated words and themes!) and answer the following questions.
- Is there anything in this passage you don't understand or have trouble believing? It's ok! Write out your questions and your doubts. Pray about them. After wrestling with it a while, take your questions to your parents, one of the HSM leaders, or an adult whom you trust.
- In the space below, write out a poem, song, or prayer of response to this week's passage.
- If you enjoy drawing, illustrate one or two of the following concepts in the space below:
 - A field
 - Peter's shadow
 - The 7 Deacons



- Dig Deeper:
 - Read the following passages, summarize what is happening, and make more comparisons.

| Nadab and Abihu [Sons of Aaron, some of the first priests of Israel after the Exodus] | | |
|---|--------------------|------------------|
| Exodus 24:9-11, 17-18 | Exodus 28:1, 40-43 | Leviticus 10:1-3 |
| | | |

| | Nadab and Abihu | Ananias and Sapphira |
|--|-----------------|----------------------|
| What experience had they had with the Lord? | | |
| What was special about their roles in the Kingdom they now found themselves in? | | |
| What was the root issue of their sin and who was the ultimate judge of that sin? | | |
| How seriously does God consider the deceit and hypocrisy of “priests” or leaders in His Kingdom? | | |

- Acts 5:12-33 is a parallel story to what we see Jesus doing in John 10:22-40. Peter and the apostles are performing miracles, preaching the Gospel, and having conflict with the Jewish leaders in the same place that Jesus had preached and had serious conflict with some of the same group. Describe all the similarities and differences you see. Explain what you learn about God, His character, and His Kingdom.
- Acts 5:33-42 gives the account of a wise Pharisee named Gamaliel. While we do not know if he ever believed in or followed Jesus, it is clear in this situation he has great wisdom which is evidence of years of sincere study and love of the Hebrew Scriptures. (This is one of the few accounts where the Pharisee comes across as almost a “good guy”!) Read what advice he gives to the angry council and consider how this advice might still be helpful to us today. Write down your thoughts.



Songs:

Fellowship So Deep by Caedmon's Call

Agnus Dei/Worthy by Third Day

Miracles by Jesus Culture

student connection teaching notes: acts 5 & 6:1-7

[illegible]

lesson six: acts 6:8-15, 7 & 8

Last week's lesson was full of miraculous events—some frightening and some exciting. We learned about how seriously God takes lying to Him and the maligning of His Kingdom. We saw the Holy Spirit working so powerfully through the Apostles that even their shadows were healing people. We also read of the thrilling rescue of the Apostles from prison by an angel.

Luke showed us that even practical ministry is crucial in the community of believers; and how it is critically important to place leaders of wisdom, integrity, prayer, and full of the Holy Spirit to oversee even the most “mundane” tasks. He introduced us to several of them, some of which we will learn more about this week.

As you study, look for the theme of “witness.” This is a theme that actually runs all through Acts, so try to be aware of it as you study. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines “witness” as:

one that gives evidence, one asked to be present at a transaction so as to be able to testify to its having taken place

So far we have seen countless witnesses on behalf of Jesus, His resurrection, His ascension, and His Kingdom. We will see a new type of witness arise this week. The Greek word for this witness is *martus*—in English, *martyr*. His story is powerful.

Know that once again there is a lot to read this week. Make the time. Pray and trust that the Holy Spirit will enable you to not only work through these passages, but that He will use the principles to transform you to look more like Jesus, be a more effective witness, and serve His Kingdom better.

day one :: comprehension

- Pray for extra focus today as this week is a longer passage. Pray for your brothers and sisters at HSM as well.
- Read or listen to Acts 6:8-15, 7 & 8 (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to grasp a basic understanding of what the text is saying.

1. How is Stephen described in Acts 6 verses 5, 8, and 10?

2. Who rose up against Stephen and what three things did they do according to 6:9-14?

3. Summarize Stephen's sermon to the high priest and other Jewish leaders. (7:1-53) And how is his physical appearance described in 6:15?

4. What did Stephen call the Jewish leaders in Acts 7:51? What did he accuse them of in 7:52-53?



5. In verse 55 what did Stephen call Jesus and what was Jesus doing? How did the leaders react and what did they do to Stephen? (7:54-60)

6. What new character are we introduced to in Acts 8:1-3 and what was he doing?

7. As a result of Saul's efforts, what happened to the church in Jerusalem?

8. Briefly summarize the three parts to Philip's story found in Acts 8:4-40.

1.

2.

3.



day two: interpretation

- Praise God for His Word and that all of it is important to His story of redemption. Ask Him to teach and reveal Truths about His Kingdom to you.
- Read or listen to Acts 6:8-15, 7 & 8. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to begin to discover what this passage means.

1. Considering the consistency in the way the Gospel was shared by Jesus, Peter, and Stephen, would you say the Old Testament is still important and valuable to sharing the Gospel? Why or why not?

2. Why is it significant that Stephen called the Jewish priests and leaders “stiff necked” and “uncircumcised in heart”? (Hint: Exodus 32:8-10) Why did the Council lose their minds in rage when Stephen called Jesus “the Son of Man”? (Hint: Daniel 7:9-14)

3. Why is it significant that Philip went to Samaria? How bad must things have been in Jerusalem for him to flee to Samaria? How did they respond to Philip preaching the Gospel to them?

4. Compare and contrast Philip and Simon the Magician.

| | Philip | Simon |
|--|---------------|--------------|
| To whom did he desire to point others? | | |
| Why did the Samaritans pay attention to him? | | |
| Did he believe in Jesus? | | |
| What was the state of his heart before God? | | |
| How did he view power? | | |

5. What do you notice about Philip's responsiveness to instruction that he receives from both the angel and the Holy Spirit? What was the result of his obedience?

6. What was unique about the man Philip found reading a copy of Isaiah? (His position, power, etc.) What was his response to Philip's question and what kind of attitude does he seem to be demonstrating? How did he respond after he was baptized and Philip miraculously disappeared?

7. The Holy Spirit's "finger prints" are all over this fascinating story of Philip. What do all these miraculous events testify to regarding the Spirit and how He works? Consider some of the verbs used to describe the Spirit's activity.

day three: application

- Pray, asking God to show you how this week's passage should impact your life today.
- Read or listen to Acts 6:8-15, 7 & 8, and answer the following questions. (Look for repeated words and themes!)

1. Look back at how Stephen is described in Acts 6 verses 5, 8, and 10. Can your life be characterized by these statements? Why or why not? What is preventing you from living a life characterized by faith, grace, power, wisdom, and being filled with the Holy Spirit?

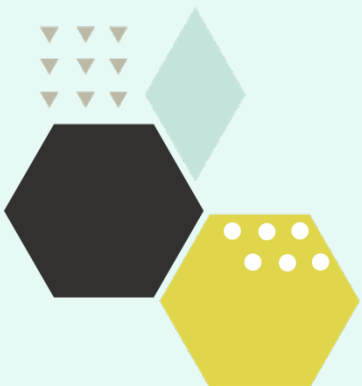
2. We see Jesus, Peter, Stephen, and Philip using the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) constantly when sharing the Gospel. How well do you understand the OT and able to communicate the overall story of Jesus? Why do you think this is? If you are unfamiliar with how the Gospel actually begins in the OT, what are some practical ways you can begin to equip yourself to share a more complete picture of the story of Jesus?

3. Consider Simon the Magician. Verse 13 says he believed and was baptized, yet he still didn't really understand the One in whom he was baptized. While this may simply be a demonstration of being immature in his new faith, it appears that he believed in the power and mostly wanted what Jesus could give him. Do you ever find yourself simply wanting Jesus because of what He might be able to give you? Like Simon trying to buy the Holy Spirit, how are you trying to earn your desires from Jesus? How did Peter describe this heart position?

4. Consider Philip and his obedience to every instruction he was given in Acts 8:26-40. How was Philip able to be so responsive and obedient? Was he just naturally inclined to obey? What about you? Are you as eager to obey when the Holy Spirit leads you? Why or why not? Read Ephesians 2:1-10 to help with your answers.

bonus days: read, listen, write, or draw

- Pray, thanking God for His generous invitation to join Him in His eternal mission of sharing the Gospel of the Kingdom. Pray for wisdom for yourself and for your HSM brothers and sisters.
- Read or listen to Acts 6:8-15, 7 & 8. (Look for repeated words and themes!) and answer the following questions.
- Is there anything in this passage you don't understand or have trouble believing? It's ok! Write out your questions and your doubts. Pray about them. After wrestling with it a while, take your questions to your parents, one of the HSM leaders, or an adult whom you trust.
- In the space below, write out a poem, song, or prayer of response to this week's passage.
- If you enjoy drawing, illustrate one or two of the following concepts in the space below:
 - Stephen's face like that of an angel's
 - Coats and robes laying at the feet of Saul
 - Samaritans or the Ethiopian Official being baptized



- Dig Deeper:
 - Look back over the story of Stephen found in Acts 6. Are there any other points of the story that remind you of other events in the New Testament?
 - Read Luke 24:13-27 (especially verse 27) and briefly compare it to the way Peter preached the Gospel in Acts 2,3 and 4. Then take it one step further and compare it to Stephen's sermon.

| Jesus on the Road | 3 of Peter's Sermons | Stephen's Sermon |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| | | |

- Look at how Stephen is physically described in Acts 6:15. Read Exodus 34:29-35. What happened to Moses's appearance after being in the presence of Yahweh? In Stephen's speech to the council what did he point out about the way Moses was treated by the people? (7:35-39) How was Stephen ultimately treated? Write down any and all thoughts you have about connections or patterns you might see in these passages.
- Think about this the Ethiopian Official and compare his response to the Gospel to Simon's response to the Gospel. What does it seem like attracted each of these men to Jesus? To whom do you relate more?

Songs:

The Story by Jimmy Needham

Though You Slay Me by Shane and Shane

Spirit Lead Me by Influence Music



This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

lesson seven: acts 9

In Acts 7 and 8, Luke gave us a teaser of someone who is absolutely terrifying and the source of serious persecution in the Jesus community. He introduced us to a young man named Saul. He hated Jesus and His disciples. He vehemently opposed anyone who wanted to proclaim the name of Jesus. But why? Why is this guy so adamant about hunting down Jesus's disciples and wanting to imprison or kill them?

This is actually a crucially important question that deserves to be looked at. We learn in other Scripture that Saul was a Pharisee—a brilliant and passionate one. He loved the Scriptures and he loved the Jewish faith. In fact, it is very likely he sincerely loved Yahweh, but he was spiritually blind to the fact that he was actually opposing Yahweh when he opposed Jesus.

Think about it from his perspective. What had he JUST heard Stephen say right before they killed him? Stephen reminded all of them of the humiliating truth that the Jewish people had betrayed Yahweh when they worshipped other gods and as a result Yahweh allowed them to be conquered and taken into Babylon. After hundreds of years (and still many great struggles) the Jewish people had returned “home” to the Promised Land, rebuilt the Temple, and were able to somewhat worship Yahweh again.

Saul wanted to prevent his people from repeating this betrayal of Yahweh through worshipping this new god—Jesus of Nazareth. The name, story, and worship of Jesus had been spreading like wildfire, and Saul was willing to do *anything* to stop that fire from spreading.

This week continue to consider the themes of witnesses of Jesus and His Kingdom, the name of Jesus, awe and obedience. Also be on the lookout for some old characters to reenter the story. This is one of the most significant and well known stories in all of Scripture. Don't miss its power and significance for our lives even today.

day one :: comprehension

- Pray for focus and eyes to see what the Holy Spirit wants you to see today.
- Read or listen to Acts 9. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to grasp a basic understanding of what the text is saying.

1. At the beginning of chapter 9, what was Saul's attitude toward the disciples and what did he do? (vs. 1-2)

2. Describe what happened to Saul while he was on the road to arrest Jesus followers. (vs. 3-9)

3. Who did the Lord send to help Saul and how did he respond to his assignment? (vs. 10-19)

4. Where did Saul go to proclaim the Gospel? (v. 20)

5. What was the response of the Jews who heard Saul proclaiming Jesus to be the Messiah and what affect did that have on Saul? (vs. 20-22)

6. What did the Jewish leaders plot to do to Saul and how did he escape? (vs. 23-25)

7. What happened when Saul tried to join the disciples in Jerusalem? Who stepped in to advocate for Saul? (vs. 26-30)

8. How does verse 31 describe the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria at this time?

9. In verses 32-43 we read about two miracles performed by Peter. Briefly summarize what happened in each situation.

1.

2.

day two: interpretation

- Pray, thanking God for who He is and for His faithfulness. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal clear meaning and the glory of Jesus to you as you study.
- Read or listen to Acts 9. (Look for repeated words and themes!)
- Answer the following questions to begin to discover what this passage means.

1. In Acts 9 we continue reading about Saul and find out about his encounter with Jesus resulting in a complete transformation of not only his heart, but also his life's mission. Read the following passages and write down any extra information you find out about Saul (who later goes by the name Paul).

Philippians 3:3-7

Acts 22:3

Galatians 1:11-24

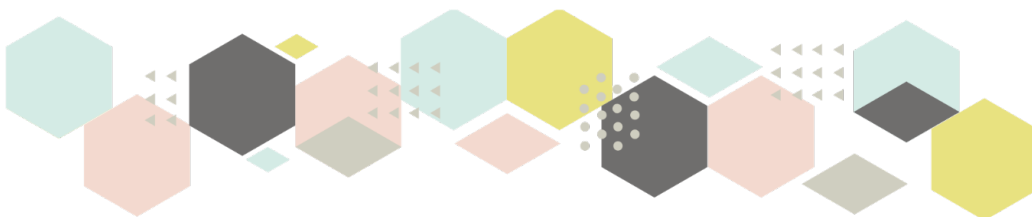
2. When the Lord instructed a man named Ananias to help Saul, he questioned the Lord's instructions. How did God respond to his question? Did he scold Ananias for doubt or disobedience? Did He decide to use someone else? Why do you think God responded this way?

3. In verse 14 God generously provides Ananias with insight to His plan for Saul. What is that plan? Did it include a promise that Ananias would remain safe if he obeyed? Why is this plan for Saul so unique? (Read Ephesians 3:1-6 to help with your answer.)

4. What is the pattern you notice when it comes to Saul as he preached the Gospel with boldness in both Damascus and Jerusalem?

5. How is Tabitha (also named Dorcas) described in verses 36 & 39? Describe how her community responded to what happened to her.

6. What was the result of both of the miracles performed by Peter in Acts 9? (vs. 35 & 42)



day three: application

- Pray, ask the Holy Spirit how He is calling you to respond to this week's passage and how it should impact your life today.
- Read or listen to Acts 9, and answer the following questions. (Look for repeated words and themes!)

1. This week we read about how Saul's life was set on a certain path, but when he encountered the risen Jesus, he was radically transformed and his life placed on a completely new trajectory. If you have encountered Jesus and have received Him as your Lord and King, has your life been set on a different trajectory than before? Why or why not? If you are on this Kingdom Path, how does this new trajectory pursue what is different from what the world values?

2. We saw Ananias receive instruction and then ask the Lord a question before obeying. The Lord graciously answered him. This reveals a sincere and humble heart—one that did not understand what he was being asked to do, but God knew Ananias's willingness to obey regardless of the effect it had on his own life.

Have you ever felt the Lord telling you to do something you didn't understand or were afraid to do? How did you respond? If you brought your questions, were they humble and sincere or were you prideful and stubborn? Are you willing to obey Jesus regardless of the outcome? Who is the One who is able to help you and comfort you in your obedience?

3. Acts 9:31 tells us that the church had peace and was being built up—that it multiplied and grew because the church walked in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to walk in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit? Use the following passages to help you: Psalm 103:11-19, John 14:25-31.

Are you (as a follower of Jesus and part of the Church) experiencing peace and being built up? Why or why not? How are you walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, particularly in community? If you are not experiencing this, spend some time praying to the Holy Spirit for His guidance and wisdom in this.



bonus days: read, listen, write, or draw

- Pray, thanking God for His generous invitation to join Him in His eternal mission of sharing the Gospel of the Kingdom. Pray for wisdom for yourself and for your HSM brothers and sisters.
- Read or listen to Acts 9. (Look for repeated words and themes!) and answer the following questions.
- Is there anything in this passage you don't understand or have trouble believing? It's ok! Write out your questions and your doubts. Pray about them. After wrestling with it a while, take your questions to your parents, one of the HSM leaders, or an adult whom you trust.
- In the space below, write out a poem, song, or prayer of response to this week's passage.
- If you enjoy drawing, illustrate one or two of the following concepts in the space below:
 - A great light from the sky
 - Saul being lowered over a wall in a basket
 - Peter helping Dorcas up



- Dig Deeper:
 - Read Acts 7:58-8:3, then read Acts 22:3 and Acts 5:33-39. Compare and contrast how Saul is described [before his transformation] to his first teacher. What do you think about these observations? Do you have a wise teacher with whom you've disagreed, and even blatantly did the opposite of what they believed was best? Describe the situation and the outcome.
 - Keeping in mind that Luke wrote both the Gospel of Luke AND Acts, read Luke 1:5-23. Compare Ananias's questions in Acts 9:10-19 to when Zachariah questioned the angel in Luke. Why do you think one received a serious consequence for his questions while the other was given more information to help encourage him?

Songs:

Be Thou My Vision by Shane and Shane
Awake My Soul by Hillsong



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.