A PASSAGE THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

Part Two "The Acts of the Apostles"



by J.S. Smith

The Acts of the Apostles Author: Luke • Date: 63 A.D.

The book is addressed to Theophilus, as Luke had also addressed his gospel account. Theophilus means "lover of God" in Greek and may, therefore, refer to an anonymous individual or someone who actually bore that good name. Effectively, the book is addressed to all of every age who love Jehovah and seek to understand the scheme of redemption and the pattern for the New Testament church.

The author is determined to be the beloved physician, Luke, one of Paul's traveling companions (Acts 16:10, 2 Tim. 4:11). Luke's scientific and analytical nature and education bring to bear a detailed study of every aspect of this history.

The purpose of this epistle is to complete a two volume historical set on the life of Christ and the church he built. Luke's gospel closes with an emphasis on Christ's ascension; Acts opens with an account of this event and its effect on the apostles.

At a loss as to what they should do now, two heavenly men and the Holy Spirit map out their first steps. The apostles refurbish their number and then begin taking the urgent gospel message to a dying world.

This book is actually *some* of the acts of *some* of the apostles. The greater number of them were not with Luke and so their work is more obscure to us.

Acts shows us the scheme of redemption at work as the preached gospel converts men to Jesus.

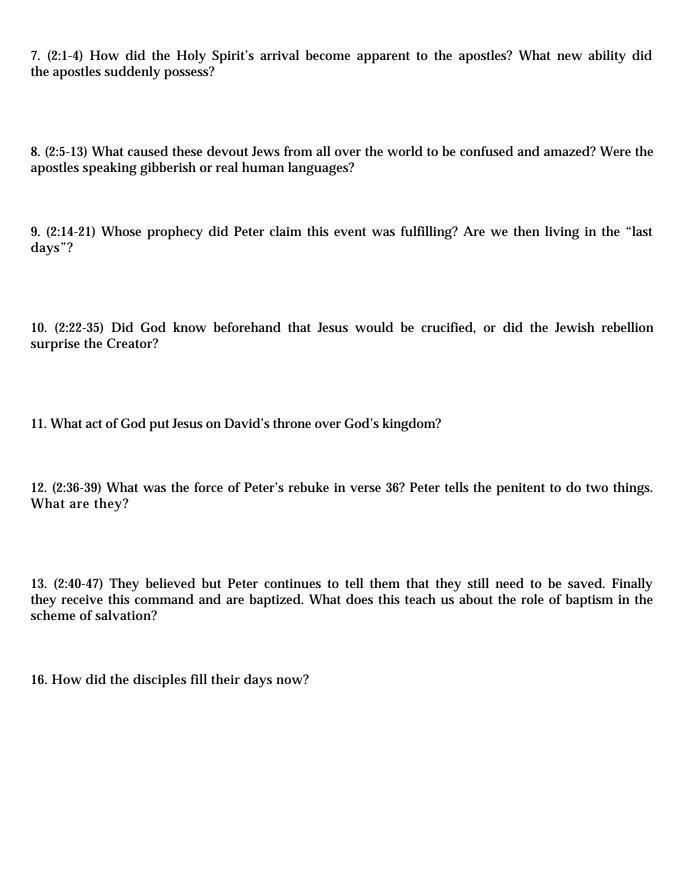
It is also valuable in that explains the nature, organization, work and worship of the church to which we claim to be a part.



Lesson 1: Ascension and Pentecost

Acts of the Apostles 1:1-2:47

1. (1:1-3) Who wrote the book of Acts? To whom was it addressed? What other book did he receive from this author?
2. (1:4-8) For what reason did Jesus instruct the apostles to remain in Jerusalem? Had he made this promise to them before?
3. (1:9-14) Why did the apostles stare into heaven at the Lord's ascension? What assurance did the two men in white give them?
4. (1:15-26) Was there scriptural authority for Peter to push for someone to succeed this apostle in his office? Where is it? Is there any authority for a successor to the other offices or even this one, once it was filled this time?
5. Of exactly what were the apostles to testify? Could someone who has not seen the risen Christ qualify as such a witness?
6. Which man was chosen to fill the vacant seat? How was he chosen? Who chose him?



Lesson 2: Solomon's Porch

Acts of the Apostles 3:1-4:4

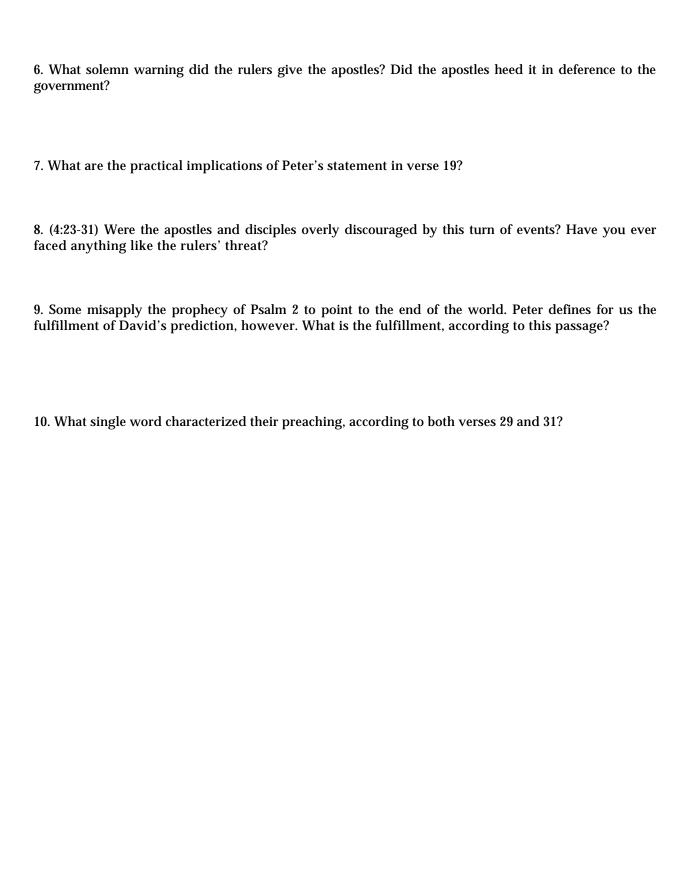
1. (3:1-10) Why was this man put daily at the temple gate? What did he ask of the Christians he encountered there? Is there any evidence to suggest this man was a member of Christ's church?
2. How did the apostles reply to his request? Why did they not take some money from the church treasury (2:44-45, 4:37) and give it to him?
3. How much time elapsed between Peter's healing and the man's recovery?
4. What impression did this leave on him? How did it impress the other people nearby?
5. (3:11-21) With what open accusation did Peter address his hungry audience? How were so many people partly responsible for this event?
6. Was their sin one of ignorance or blatant, intentional rebellion?

7. What is Peter's twofold command to them in verse 19? Define both terms.
8. (3:22-26) What had Moses predicted about those who rejected Jesus?
9. The covenant God made with Abraham involved three promises to the man. What were they (Gen. 12:1-3)? How was each fulfilled by God?
10. Was the message of Jesus designed to tolerate or eradicate sin?
11. (4:1-4) What three groups of men interrupted the sermon?
12. Can you find something in Peter's speech that would especially bother the Sadducees?
13. Where did the preachers spend that night? What did Peter later say about suffering this way (1 Peter 4:15-16)?
14. Did Peter's sermon have any good effect on the audience?

Lesson 3: Initial Jewish Hindrance

Acts of the Apostles 4:1-31

1. (4:1-4) Why was Peter in trouble?
2. (4:5-12) Knowing for what reason he was in this mess, did Peter change his message or his method to accommodate the rulers?
3. Verse 11 is an often repeated quotation that proves the crucifixion of Christ was foreknown to God long before the Jews rejected Jesus's earthly ministry. From where does this quote come? Of what is Christ the chief cornerstone?
4. (4:13-22) What piece of evidence was staring the rulers in the eye, proving that Peter and James had done something marvelous?
5. How would you characterize the rulers' handling of the gospel claims Peter was asserting?



Lesson 4: One Heart and One Soul

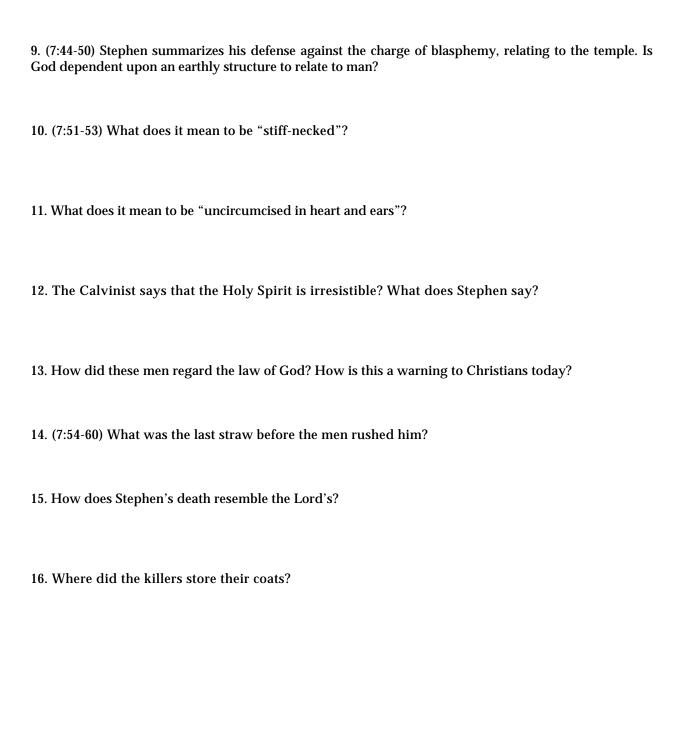
Acts of the Apostles 4:32-5:42

1. (4:32-37) Many people in denominations speak of "witnessing" as their attempts at teaching. The Bible gives the job of "witnessing" to a select group of people who had actually seen something they could testify about. What had the apostles and some others actually witnessed?
2. Where was the collection for the needy saints laid?
3. Why did the apostles give Joses his nickname?
4. (5:1-11) What possession did Ananias and his wife Sapphira sell? What did they do with the proceeds?
5. Was it permissible for them to give only a portion of their proceeds? What exactly was their sin?
6. What effect did this very unusual event have on the church?
7. How does this event affect our attitudes today?
8. (5:12-16) What was wrong with the people, that they could esteem the disciples highly but refuse to join their number?
9. (5:17-25) What did the apostles do once the angel released them from prison?
10. (5:26-32) Did the apostles intend to bring Christ's blood on the priests and council?

11. When had the priests commanded them not to preach Jesus anymore?
12. Did the apostles go silent for even a moment?
13. What are the implications of Peter's statement in verse 29 for us today?
14. (5:33-42) What is Gamaliel's other claim to fame (Acts 22:3)?
15. What was his advice to the council?
16. With what did the council send the apostles away? How did the apostles react?
17. Did they quit preaching after such an ordeal?

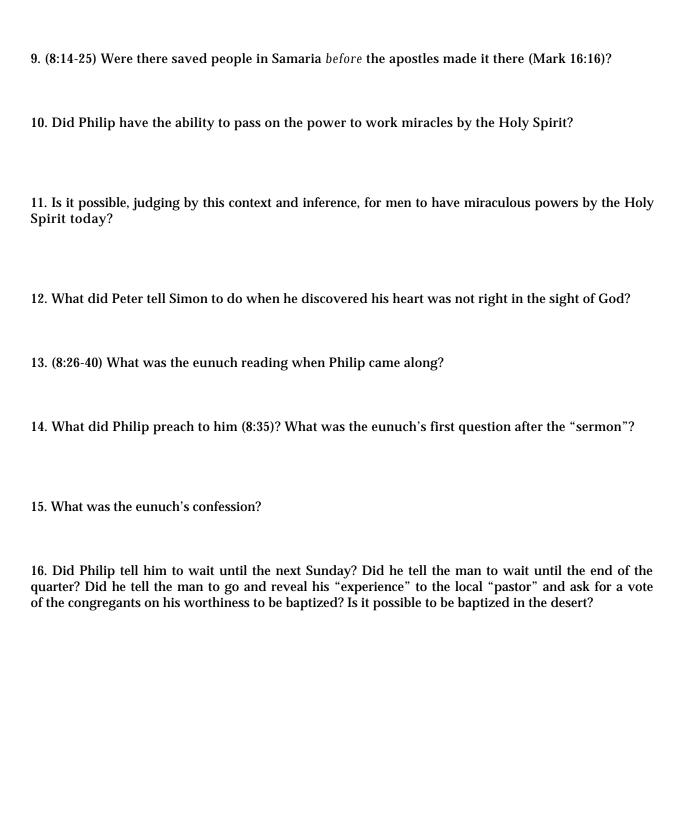
Lesson 5: The Martyrdom of Stephen Acts of the Apostles 6:1-8:3

1. (6:1-7) Within what two groups was the dispute? What was it over?
2. What solution did the apostles suggest to the church?
3. How successful was their evangelization of Jerusalem?
4. (6:8-15) What sect disputed with Stephen?
5. Could they refute his arguments for the gospel? What tactic did they employ in their failure?
6. (7:1-8) Stephen first calls Abraham as a witness. What was the sign of his covenant with God?
7. (7:9-16) Next he calls Joseph. How did God provide for Israel through Joseph?
8. (7:17-43) How did Stephen's accuser's forefathers treat Moses?



Lesson 6: Philip the Evangelist Acts of the Apostles 8:4-40

1. (8:4-8) Why were so many Christians being "scattered"?
2. Were the dispersed and displaced now hiding their dangerous beliefs? What were they doing with their time?
3. What had been Philip's duty in the Jerusalem church (6:5)?
4. Where did he go when the persecutors dispersed his brethren?
5. Did he have the ability to work miracles? What was the purpose of the miracles (Mark 16:20)?
6. In Samaria, was Philip going to an easy field (cf. John 4:5-9)?
7. (8:9-13) What was Philip preaching in Samaria?
8. What was Simon's occupation? Why was he compelled to stay close to Philip?



Lesson 7: The Conversion of Saul

Acts of the Apostles 9:1-43

1. (9:1-9) What was Saul's occupation?	
2. What appeared to him on the road to Damascus?	
3. How did the personage identify himself to Saul?	
4. What does the phrase "hard to kick against the goads" mean?	
5. What was the effect of this event on Saul, physically and emotionally?	
6. (9:10-19) Whom did Jesus appear to next? Why?	
7. What was this man's reaction?	
8. Did Jesus have a life of leisure prepared for Saul?	
9. Were Saul's sins washed away before he was baptized (cf. Acts 22:16)?	

10. Did faith alone save Saul? Did prayer alone save him?
11. (9:20-22) What was Saul's new job? How did people react?
12. (9:23-31) How do we know that Saul was preaching well?
13. Why did the Jerusalem church refuse him at first? Who was responsible for establishing his character and faith?
14. (9:32-35) What was the effect of the healing of Aeneas?
15. (9:36-43) What does Luke say about Dorcas?
16. What happened to her?

Lesson 8: The Conversion of Cornelius

Acts of the Apostles 10:1-48

1. (10:1-8) How does Luke describe Cornelius?
2. If God does not hear the prayer of sinners (John 9:31), why was he listening to Cornelius?
3. (10:9-16) Why did Peter object to the vision's command to kill and eat the animals?
4. What did God ultimately mean when he said to Peter, "What God has cleansed you must not call common"?
5. (10:17-23) The Holy Spirit was giving Peter this ground breaking development in pieces. The first piece was his vision; the second piece was the instruction to go with some men; the third piece was whom these men represented. Whom did they represent? Why did he want Peter to come?
6. (10:24-33) How had Cornelius prepared for Peter? What grave error did Cornelius make when Peter arrived?

7. What did Cornelius want to hear from Peter?
8. (10:34-43) Is God a respecter of persons? How does he judge men worthy of election to grace and salvation?
9. Briefly summarize Peter's very brief sermon.
10. (10:44-48) Consider Acts 11:15: about how long had Peter been speaking when the Holy Spirit fell on them?
11. How were the Jews affected by this spectacle?
12. Of what event did Peter think, upon witnessing the baptism of the Holy Spirit here?
13. Judging from the context and your knowledge of the Jews' disdain for Gentiles, even considering them second-class Christians in the future, why do you suppose the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles in this way?
14. What is Peter's last command here?

Lesson 9: The Conversion of Gentiles

Acts of the Apostles 11:1-30

1. (11:1-3) What does the phrase "those of the circumcision" mean?
2. Why were they upset with Peter?
3. (11:4-18) At what point in Peter's sermon did the Holy Spirit fall on these Gentiles in Peter's audience?
4. How does faith come (cf. Rom. 10:17)?
5. What did the Holy Spirit's arrival on the Gentiles prove to Peter?
6. Were the men of the circumcision convinced by Peter's testimony?
7. (11:19-21) Why were so many Christians compelled to leave Jerusalem? What benefit to the gospel did this dispersion have?
8. What limitation was upon their evangelism? Who broke that limitation? Was God supportive?

9. (11:22-24) How did the church at Jerusalem react to the sharing of the gospel across racial lines?
10. What is Barnabas's record for encouraging Christians?
11. (11:25-26) Mormonism holds that disciples were called Christians as early as 73 B.C. (Alma 46:13-15). What does the Bible say?
12. Is there any other proper name by which the first disciples were called?
13. Is there any precedent for calling a disciple after a man (Peter, Apollos, Luther), an event (Baptist, Pentecostal), or a system (Methodism, Presbyterian, Christian Science)?
14. (11:27-30) How did the Antioch Christians show their gratitude to the Jerusalem church?

Lesson 10: Imprisonment of Peter Acts of the Apostles 12:1-25

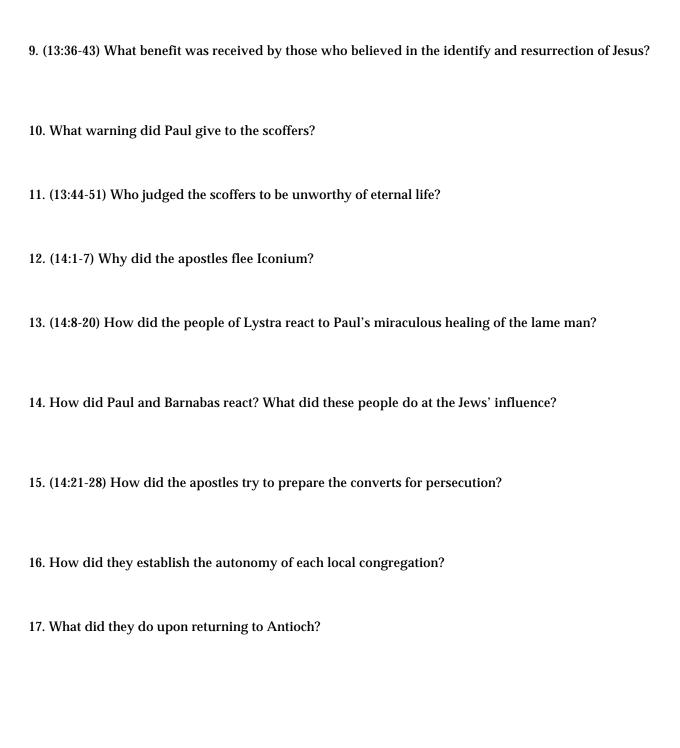
1. (12:1-4) Why was Herod harassing the church?
2. Why did Herod need four squads of soldiers to guard one prisoner (Acts 5)?
3. (12:5-11) What was the church doing while Peter sat in prison?
4. How might the church today engage in a similar activity?
5. How was Peter set free?
6. What was "the expectation of the Jewish people"?
7. (12:12-19) To where did Peter go after the angel left him?
8. How did Rhoda react?
9. Do you think these Christians doubted their prayer for Peter could be answered in this way?
10. Were the soldiers to blame for Peter's release? What was to happen to them anyway?

- 11. (12:20-23) Why did the people of Tyre and Sidon need Herod's favor?12. How did they attempt to impress Herod and win his favor?
- 14. (12:24-25) Whom did Barnabas and Saul enlist as a fellow-laborer?

13. Why did the angel strike Herod dead?

Lesson 11: Paul's First Evangelistic Tour Acts of the Apostles 13:1-14:28

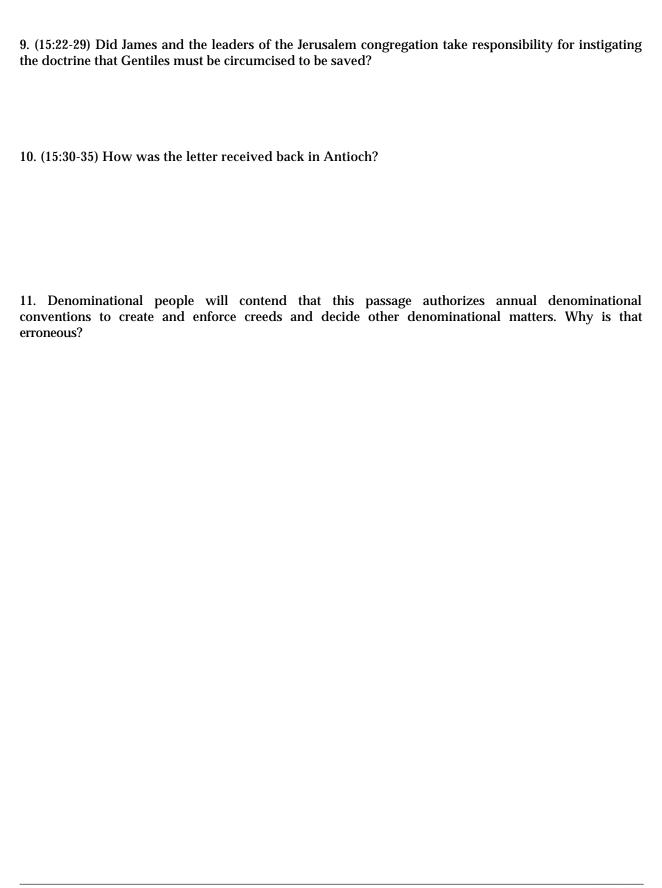
1. (13:1-12) Name the two evangelists whose work this part of Acts describes. Who is their assistant?
2. How do Luke and Paul describe Elymas Bar-Jesus?
3. What helped convince Sergius Paulus that Paul was honest?
4. (13:13-25) What happened to John?
5. Where did Paul find his next audience?
6. (13:26-35) What does Paul claim the rulers of Jerusalem ignored in killing Jesus?
7. How did God beget Jesus, according to verse 33?
8. Christ's resurrection fulfilled his own prophecy in Matthew 16:18. What was that prophecy?



Lesson 12: Conflict Over Circumcision

Acts of the Apostles 15:1-35

1. (15:1-5) What doctrine were the Judean teachers bringing to Antioch? Of what Jewish sect were the Judean teachers? Why was this teaching particularly unwelcome in Antioch (11:19-21)?
2. What position on this doctrine did Paul and Barnabas take? How did they propose to handle the dispute?
3. (15:6-12) What evidence did Peter present to prove that circumcision was not necessary for Gentiles to gain God's approval?
4. Were Peter, Paul and Barnabas teaching that men should not be circumcised?
5. (15:13-21) To what prophet did James appeal in his reasoning? What did this prophet add to dispel the controversy?
6. James did feel that four prohibitions should be observed by Gentile converts. List them. 1. 2. 3. 4.
7. The conclusions of this study are very far-reaching. What place did circumcision now hold in the law of the kingdom of Christ (cf. Gal. 5:1-6, Col. 2:11-12)?
8. Were Jews forbidden by this study to circumcise their sons?



Lesson 13: The Macedonian Call

Acts of the Apostles 15:36-16:40

1. (15:36-41) What was Paul's next trip? What caused friction between him and Barnabas?
2. What is the composition of the two preaching pairs?
3. (16:1-5) Whom did they meet in Derbe? Describe him.
4. (16:6-10) What kept them from entering Bithynia? What beckoned them to Macedonia instead?
5. (16:11-15) What did they do upon arriving first in Philippi?
6. How was Lydia converted?
7. (16:16-24) Describe the slave girl Paul encounters next.

8. How did her owners react when Paul exorcised the spirit?
9. What sentence did the magistrates issue?
10. (16:25-34) What were the preachers doing at midnight?
11. How were they released from their bonds?
12. How did the jailer react to this scene? What stopped him?
13. What did the jailer immediately ask Paul and Silas? What did Paul answer him?
14. How did the jailer show his penitence? Why didn't they wait until an official church assembly to baptize him? Why didn't they take a vote on his "experience"?
15. How many infants were members of his household?
16. (16:35-40) Why did Paul object to being released in the morning by the magistrates?

Lesson 14: Greece

Acts of the Apostles 17:1-18:23

1. (17:1-9) Where did Paul find an audience upon arriving in Thessalonica? What was his lesson about?
2. Some people today claim this passage shows that Christians should continue to keep the Sabbath according to the law of Moses. What do the following passages indicate about the Sabbath?
• Exodus 31:12-17:
• Numbers 15:32-36:
• Numbers 28:1-2, 9-10:
• 2 Corinthians 3:4-8:
3. Who opposed Paul in Thessalonica? Why? What did they do?
4. (17:10-15) What does Luke say about the Bereans?
5. (17:16-34) What provoked Paul's spirit in Athens? What did he do about it?
6. What was the hobby of the Athenians?
7. Whom did Paul proclaim to them?
8. What comment does Paul make about God's accessibility?

Lesson 15: Ephesus Work Acts of the Apostles 18:24-20:38

1. (18:24-28) How does Luke describe Apollos?
2. How did Priscilla and Aquila handle his deficiency?
3. How did Apollos handle the Jews in Achaia?
4. (19:1-10) Did these disciples receive the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit when they obeyed the baptism of John? When they obeyed the baptism of Jesus? When?
5. (19:11-20) How did an evil spirit respond to the exorcism attempts of the seven sons of Sceva?
6. How did the magicians bear fruits worthy of repentance?
7. (19:21-27) What was the complaint leveled against the Way by Demetrius? How did the people respond to his speech?
8. (19:35-41) Who put an end to the riot? How?
9. (20:1-16) What did the disciples do on the first day of the week? Why is this significant?

10. What happened to Eutychus?
11. (20:17-27) Who met Paul in Miletus? How could Paul claim that he was innocent of the blood of al men (verses 26-27)?
12. (20:28-35) What word does Paul use that is evidently interchangeable with elders? How does be compare their work to an occupation involving animals?
13. What warning did he give these men?
14. What quotation does Paul make from Jesus? What is the meaning of this statement?
15. (20:36-38) What made these men weep?

Lesson 16: Jewish Danger Acts of the Apostles 21:1-40

1. (21:1-6) Where was Paul going and why was he in such a hurry (20:13-16)? Why did Paul's ship land at Tyre?
2. What discovery led Paul to remain at Tyre for a week? What was the attitude in his departure from there?
3. (21:7-14) Whom did Paul and his companions meet again in Caesarea? Why is this man noteworthy?
4. What was the prophecy of Agabus?
5. How are Paul's words here somewhat like those of Christ before the crucifixion (John 12:27-28)?
6. (21:15-25) How did the Jerusalem elders react to news that many Gentiles were becoming God's elect?
7. Why then did they express concern to Paul about his work among the Gentiles?

8. What did the Jerusalem elders suggest Paul do to assuage the concerns of the Hebrew saints?
9. Did this suggestion indicate that the Jerusalem elders had changed their minds about the relationship between Gentiles and the law of Moses?
10. (21:26-29) Of what did the Asian Jews accuse Paul?
11. (21:30-36) What prevented them from killing Paul right then?
12. Did the riotous Jews immediately respect the authority of the Roman soldiers and cease afflicting Paul?
13. (21:37-40) Who did the commander think Paul was?
14. What request did Paul then make of the commander?
15. What two languages did Paul speak?

Lesson 17: Paul's Sanhedrin Defense

Acts of the Apostles 22:1-23:22

9. How did the chief priest respond? What did Paul say? Why did he then apologize?
8. What claim does Paul make as his speech begins? How can this be reconciled with his record as a zealous persecutor of saints?
7. (22:30-23:11) Before whom is Paul now being interrogated?
6. What claim did Paul make that troubled the Roman soldiers?
5. (22:22-29) What made the crowd cease listening to Paul and demand his death?
4. (22:17-21) Why did Jesus send Paul out of Jerusalem?
3. (22:12-16) What did Ananias tell Paul in Damascus?
2. (22:6-11) What affect did this light and the message Paul heard have on him?
1. (22:1-5) How does Paul describe his life before obeying Jesus?

10. What realization shaped Paul's strategy in dealing with this crowd?
11. What prophecy does Paul receive once back in his barracks?
12. (23:12-21) What oath did some of the Jews take the next day?
13. Who foiled their plot? How?

Lesson 18: Paul's Defense Before Felix

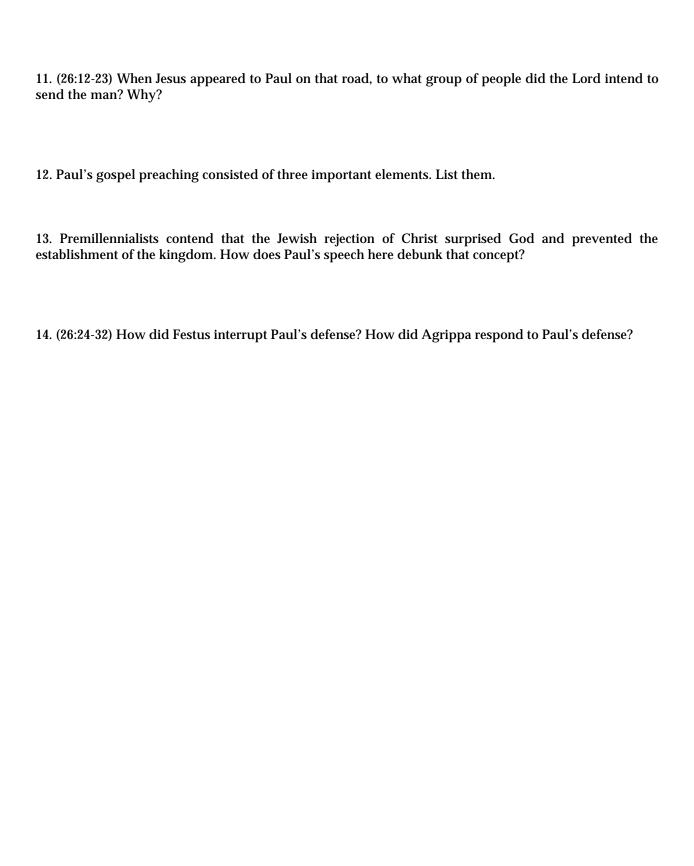
Acts of the Apostles 23:23-24:27

1. (23:23-35) Why did Claudius Lysias call for so many people to accompany Paul to Caesarea?
2. With what violation of Roman law was Paul charged? Why was he in custody?
3. What reason did Felix give for delaying Paul's hearing?
${\it 4. (24:1-9)}\ Who\ were\ Paul's\ accusers\ that\ came\ down\ from\ Jerusalem\ for\ his\ hearing?\ What\ charge\ did\ they\ levy?$
5. (24:10-16) Why did Paul express gratitude that Felix was judging him?
6. Did Paul confess all the charges against him? What did he confess and what did he deny?

7. For what reason did Paul always strive to be inoffensive in conscience toward God and men?
8. (24:17-21) What charge did he make against the Asian Jews who brought all this trouble on him?
9. What one statement did he recognize could have bothered his accusers?
10. (24:22-23) For whom did Felix now adjourn the proceedings? How was Paul to be treated in the interim?
11. (24:24-26) What is peculiar about Drusilla?
12. What three things did Paul preach about to them?
13. How did Felix react?
14. (24:27) What happened when Felix left office?

Lesson 19: Defense Before Agrippa Acts of the Apostles 25:1-26:32

1. (25:1-12) What was the plot of the Jewish high priest and the chief men? Is this proper behavior for men in their position?
2. In what three areas did Paul claim innocence to Festus?
3. Why did Festus ask him about facing these charges in Jerusalem?
4. What were Paul's opinions of the death penalty?
5. How did Paul escape the ill-fated return to Jerusalem?
6. (25:13-22) Festus tells Agrippa what is truly the heart of the Jews' problems with Paul. What is it?
7. (25:23-27) Festus reveals his concerns about sending Paul on to Caesar. What are they?
8. (26:1-3) Why was Paul glad to stand before Agrippa?
9. (26:4-11) To what sect of Judaism did Paul belong before obeying Christ? How would you characterize this sect?
10. How does Paul characterize his profession before he obeyed the gospel?



Lesson 20: Paul's Roman Sojourn Acts of the Apostles 27:1-28:31

1. (27:1-12) How did the commander, Julius, treat prisoner Paul?
2. What was Paul's prediction regarding the fate of the voyage? Whose advice did the centurion value more?
3. (27:13-26) How did Luke feel when sight of the sun and stars was lost for many days?
4. What did the angel tell Paul?
5. (27:27-38) How did Paul stop the crew from sneaking away from the ship?
6. How many people were on the ship?
7. (27:39-44) What was the plan of the soldiers when their ship was wrecked? What did the centurion advise instead?

8. (28:1-10) On what island were they shipwrecked?
9. How could Paul survive a snake bite like this (cf. Mark 16:17-18)?
10. How was Paul received by Publius and the rest of the islanders?
11. (28:11-22) Where did Paul and his companions find brethren? How were they received by them?
12. How did the Romans Jews receive Paul?
13. (28:23-29) What did Paul preach to them?
14. How did Paul characterize his audience?
15. (28:30-31) How did Paul spend the next two years?

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