



BOOKS OF THE BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

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A C T S



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INTRODUCTION

The Book of Acts traces the growth of the Christian Church in the age of the apostles, particularly showing how Gentiles were incorporated into the Church.

AUTHORSHIP

The Book of Acts was written by the evangelist Luke as a companion and follow-up to the Gospel that bears his name.

PURPOSE

Luke focuses on the Lord Jesus Christ's commission in Acts 1:8, "You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." It shows how Christ worked through His servants, especially the apostles Peter and Paul, to fulfill that mission.

OUTLINE

For the purposes of this study, the Book of Acts will be divided into the following sections:

- 1.** Prologue (1:1–2)
- 2.** Peter and the Church's Foundation: The Gospel Spreads from Judea to Galilee and Samaria (1:3–14:28)
- 3.** The Jerusalem Council: Paul's Work Endorsed by Peter and James (15:1–35)
- 4.** Paul Carries the Gospel to the End of the Earth (15:36–28:31)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PROLOGUE (1:1–2)

Luke begins his second book with a brief note to Theophilus, the same recipient of his first book, the Gospel of Luke.

Read 1:1–2.

Q 1: What is Luke implying with the words “All that Jesus BEGAN to do and teach” (emphasis added)?

A 1: Jesus’ work was not finished when He ascended into heaven. The Book of Acts will show how He continued working His miracles and teaching His Gospel through His apostles by the power of the Holy Spirit.

PETER AND THE CHURCH’S FOUNDATION (1:3–14:28)

Roughly the first half of the Book of Acts focuses on the work of St. Peter and shows us how Jesus’ founded His Church.

The Church Is Born

Luke begins his second book with a brief summary of the forty days following Jesus’ resurrection, then gives special attention to the ascension, the same event which closed his Gospel.

Read 1:3–11.

Q 2: What kind of earthly kingdom were the apostles anticipating? Why is it important for us to understand that Jesus’ glorious earthly kingdom will only come after Judgment Day?

A 2: The apostles were hoping for the glorious reign of Christ on earth—an end of all suffering, oppression, and death. But that cannot happen while this sinful world remains. God allows this sinful world to remain to give time for sinners to hear the Law and Gospel and be brought to repentance and faith by the Holy Spirit.

The disciples seek a replacement for Judas Iscariot.

Read 1:12–26.

Q 3: How did the brothers leave room for Christ to decide who should replace Judas? How should this inform us when we call pastors and other church leaders?

A 3: The disciples prayed for Christ to work through the lot they cast to reveal whom He had chosen. We are wise to regard the call to the pastoral office (and teaching offices) in our congregations as Jesus Christ choosing whom He wants to be our leader. So we set aside our own personal motives and seek Christ's will and wisdom in fervent prayer. Then we show humility, loyalty, and obedience to that pastor whom Christ places over us.

During the Old Testament harvest feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit gives the disciples power to proclaim the one Gospel in many different languages.

Read 2:1–13.

Q 4: What is the significance of the various tongues when the whole audience would have understood the common Greek in which the New Testament was written?

A 4: It reflects God's genuine concern for individuals and His desire to extend His kingdom among all languages, nations, and peoples on earth.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter boldly addresses the Jews of Jerusalem, showing from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus is Israel's Lord and the Savior of all nations.

Read 2:14–41.

Q 5: Why did Peter use David's prophecy of Jesus' resurrection?

A 5: Many Jews thought that Jesus' crucifixion was proof that He was a fraud and blasphemer. Peter focused on Jesus' resurrection to assert that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Then when the people realized their guilt in crucifying Him, Peter showed how they could repent and be forgiven.

In the early days as the Church is growing rapidly, the believers take rather drastic steps to provide for one another.

Read 2:42–47.

Q 6: Why did the Jewish believers living near Jerusalem see a need to sell their possessions and property? What can we learn about our financial support for the mission of our church?

A 6: They wanted to support their brother and sister Christians who were in Jerusalem from distant corners of the Roman Empire but did not have the means to remain beyond the Feast of Pentecost. God has blessed us with money and possessions. We have the privilege to use those gifts to bring the Gospel to people who do

not yet know Christ and to care for their material needs just as Jesus healed the sick.

Peter and John Carry On the Work of Christ in Jerusalem

Peter and John give a lame beggar the greatest gift.

Read 3:1–10.

Q 7: How did two penniless disciples help this man?

A 7: When Jesus' name was proclaimed to this man, the Savior healed him of his lameness. With his strength restored, he could now work and support himself. Since all the people recognized this man, Jesus' name was honored and the crowds were receptive to the Gospel.

Peter shares the Good News of Jesus with the amazed crowd.

Read 3:11–26.

Q 8: Why did Peter point out the crowd's guilt in rejecting Jesus and calling for His death?

A 8: The only way to deal with our sins is to expose them through the Law, then wash them away in the blood of Christ, our Savior.

Though the once lame man stands healed before them, the religious authorities continue in unbelief.

Read 4:1–22.

Q 9: How did Peter respond to their demand that the apostles stop speaking?

A 9: Mindful that he must answer to God one day, Peter told them that he and all Jesus' followers must obey God, a gentle reminder that the Jewish authorities will one day be forced to answer to God for their ongoing disobedience.

Under growing pressure from the Jewish rulers, the apostles turn to the Lord in prayer.

Read 4:23–31.

Q 10: How did recalling God as Creator and Psalm 2 encourage the apostles and believers?

A 10: Satan would deceive us into thinking we face impossible odds—but God's Word resets our perspective, reminding us that our Lord is truly in charge.

The early Christian community was marked with incredible generosity.

Read 4:32–37.

Q 11: Why does generous offering flow out of Christ's love for us?

A 11: When we recognize our guilt and shame and then see how generously Christ poured out His lifeblood for us, it stirs us to show love to our brothers and sisters in Christ, who with us are the Bride of Christ.

A husband and wife place their reputation above honesty.

Read 5:1–11.

Q 12: Why would God take such drastic measures when the needy in the Church would benefit from their gift?

A 12: Ananias and Sapphira were free to give as much or little of their money as they chose. God would have been pleased with a smaller gift given freely. But the couple selfishly wanted to use their gift to impress people. God knows what is in our hearts and wants all of us give out of faith, gratitude, and love, not out of envy, compulsion, or selfish ambition.

Christ works a great number of miracles through Peter and His other apostles.

Read 5:12–16.

Q 13: Why did Christ give so many miracles in the apostles' day?

A 13: Jesus' public crucifixion led many Jews to the false conclusion that He was a fraud and fake. The multitude of miracles in Christ's name reminded the crowds of the many miracles He had performed before His death and gave elaborate evidence that He was alive again, just as the disciples were preaching.

Despite the miracles, the Jewish authorities increase their efforts to silence the apostles—trying God's patience in the process.

Read 5:17–42.

Q 14: What is the key for a Christian to faithfully hold to the faith when facing tremendous opposition?

A 14: Intense persecution should drive Christians to the Word and Sacraments, where God comforts us, restores our perspective on judgment and eternity, and empowers us for fervent prayer and faithful witness.

The Martyrdom of Stephen and Initial Spread of the Gospel

The apostles institute the office of deacon to solve the problem of unequal distribution of food to widows.

Read 6:1–7.

Q 15: Why is it significant that the seven deacons had Greek names?

A 15: The complaint was that Aramaic-speaking Jewish widows were getting preference over Greek-speaking Jewish widows. Selecting Greek-named deacons showed the apostles' wise sensitivity to preserve unity in the congregation rather than cause further divisions.

Stephen becomes the target of persecution.

Read 6:8–15.

Q 16: What false charges were brought against Stephen?

A 16: He was accused of treason against Judaism and the temple customs, and false witnesses were set up against him, just as had been done to Jesus.

Stephen recounts Israel's history of rejecting the messengers God sent.

Read 7:1–53.

Q 17: What is ironic about Stephen speaking about Israel's rejection of Moses?

A 17: The Jewish leaders accused Stephen of changing the customs that Moses had handed down—without ever realizing they were rejecting Moses by rejecting Jesus, the promised Christ Moses had prophesied.

Stephen displays Christlike love while being stoned.

Read 7:54–60.

Q 18: How could Stephen pray for forgiveness for those who persecuted him?

A 18: Jesus had stood trial before this same court and had been falsely accused and condemned—yet through Jesus' suffering and death, Stephen's salvation had been won. Jesus' love touched and changed Stephen's heart—and can change ours as well.

The Conversion of Paul and the Vision of Peter Pave the Way for Outreach to the Gentiles

Saul, a devout young Jewish man, sets out to stamp out Christianity.

Read 8:1–3.

Q 19: In what sense was Saul's zeal not the problem?

A 19: Saul's zeal was misdirected at this point in his life. Since it was not focused on God's mercy and love in Jesus Christ, it resulted in self-righteous hatred of those he felt were blaspheming God. When Jesus revealed His zeal by cleansing the temple (John 2:14–17), He focused His energy on upholding God's love and concern for all nations, which was being tarnished by the sellers and moneychangers.

Scattered by persecution, Stephen's fellow deacon preaches to the Samaritans.

Read 8:4–8.

Q 20: Why was Philip's ministry among the Samaritans so crucial to Christ's command to make disciples of all nations?

A 20: Samaritans were the Jews' nearest neighbors. To witness to them required overcoming deep hatred, distrust, and prejudice. It was the first step toward fulfilling Christ's command to take the Gospel to the Gentiles of all nations.

The apostles follow Philip to Samaria.

Read 8:9–25.

Q 21: Why did the Holy Spirit come on the Samaritans only when Peter laid his hands on them and not when Philip baptized them?

A 21: Philip was a deacon, not an apostle. God was upholding the special office of apostle, Christ's hand-chosen leaders through whom He founded His Church.

Philip passes the Gospel on to North Africa.

Read 8:26–40.

Q 22: How did Philip's witness to the Ethiopian make it clear that the Gospel was to fill the world?

A 22: The Holy Spirit led Philip to the very chariot that carried an important official from Ethiopia. This ensured that both the Jews living in Africa and the Ethiopians would hear the Gospel.

Jesus confronts Saul on the road to Damascus.

Read 9:1–19a.

Q 23: What does Saul's conversion say to those who fear that becoming Christian will change them completely?

A 23: Saul was not changed so much as redirected. His intellect and zeal remained intact—but now he turned from serving Jewish traditions to serving Jesus Christ. Coming to faith does not alter a person's personality, just their direction in life.

Saul immediately begins proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues.

Read 9:19b–22.

Q 24: How did Saul confound the Jews?

A 24: Saul used Old Testament messianic prophecies to prove that Jesus was the promised Christ. Though the Jews confronted him with counterarguments, Saul's understanding grew, and his arguments became so powerful that those who opposed him were unable to dispute him.

Unable to prove Saul wrong, the Jews of Damascus seek his life.

Read 9:23–25.

Q 25: What is the common pattern of opposition that we see in Saul’s case?

A 25: When Saul’s opponents were unable to refute the Gospel, yet still refused to repent and believe in Christ, they turned to threats and finally violence to silence him. This is exactly how the Hebrews had treated the Old Testament prophets and how the Jews had treated Jesus.

Saul flees to Jerusalem and finds Christians there are suspicious of him.

Read 9:26–31.

Q 26: How was Barnabas pivotal to Saul’s ministry?

A 26: Barnabas vouched for the authenticity of Saul’s conversion and overcame their suspicions.

Jesus works two great miracles through Peter.

Read 9:32–43.

Q 27: What was the result of these deeds of kindness that Jesus worked through Peter?

A 27: The people of the towns were amazed at the miracles and became open to the Gospel, and many believed in Jesus.

The Lord prepares a Roman centurion to hear the Gospel.

Read 10:1–8.

Q 28: What does it mean that Cornelius was “devout” and “feared God”?

A 28: Cornelius accepted the Old Testament faith and therefore believed God’s promise to send the Messiah. He was now commanded to send for Peter to learn about that Messiah.

The Lord uses a vision to prepare Peter to visit the Gentile Cornelius.

Read 10:9–33.

Q 29: Why was it necessary for Christ to give Peter this vision?

A 29: Peter was a devout Jew who separated himself from food and people he considered unclean. Christ used this vision to break through Peter’s barrier against Gentiles—and set an example for other Jewish Christians who would hear of this incident. *What people do you have a mental barrier against?*

Prepared by the vision, Peter shares the Gospel with Gentiles.

Read 10:34–43.

Q 30: Why did Peter close his message with the words, “To Him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name”?

A 30: Cornelius, his household, and his friends who had gathered in his house believed the Old Testament prophets. Peter appealed to this faith and, like Paul, used these Old Testament prophecies to prove that Jesus was the Messiah and Savior.

The Holy Spirit falls on the Gentiles.

Read 10:44–48.

Q 31: Why was the powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit important?

A 31: It provided undeniable evidence that Christ wanted the Gospel to go out to the Gentiles and silenced those Jewish believers who thought there was no room for Gentiles in the Church.

Peter's visit to the Gentile Cornelius is criticized by some Jewish Christians.

Read 11:1–18.

Q 32: How did Peter silence the criticism of those who felt it was wrong for Jews to associate with Gentile sinners?

A 32: After Peter recounted the visions he had received from the Lord and how the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles, it was very clear that this visit was from Jesus, and they accepted it as God's will and marveled that He would reach out to Gentiles with such grace and mercy.

The Gospel begins its spread from Jews to Gentiles.

Read 11:19–30.

Q 33: Who were the Hellenists?

A 33: In the time between the Old and New Testaments, the Jews came under heavy pressure to adapt the language and culture of the Greeks. A great division arose between those Jews who adopted Greek ways (Hellenists) and those who refused (Jews). Having already adopted Greek ways, Hellenists were much quicker to share the Gospel with Gentiles than the Jews were.

One of Jesus' Twelve is put to death.

Read 12:1–5.

Q 34: Who was this King Herod?

A 34: He was grandson of King Herod the Great, who tried to kill the child Jesus after the Wise Men visited. He was nephew to Herod Antipas, who ordered John the Baptist to be beheaded, and brother to Antipas's wife Herodias.

Q 35: What did James's martyrdom indicate to the other apostles?

A 35: They could not avoid persecution, yet Christ would guard them in the faith and guide them home to heaven when their earthly work was complete.

Peter is rescued from death.

Read 12:6–19.

Q 36: What encouragement did Peter’s rescue give the early Christians?

A 36: This demonstration of Christ’s power reminded them He was present to guard and keep them no matter how hopeless their situation seemed.

God punishes King Herod.

Read 12:20–25.

Q 37: What encouragement could King Herod’s death have offered persecuted Christians?

A 37: God treasures His children, and He does not let those who refuse to repent and believe cause them suffering and death without consequence.

The Holy Spirit begins the wider Gospel ministry to the Gentiles.

Read 13:1–3.

Q 38: Why is God’s call to ministry so important?

A 38: When God calls servants, He gives them authority and the power of the Holy Spirit to bless their work in His kingdom.

Barnabas and Saul encounter opposition and belief in Cyprus.

Read 13:4–12.

Q 39: Why did God strike Elymas the magician with blindness?

A 39: God struck Elymas with blindness to make him aware of his own spiritual blindness and to show the proconsul that he should listen to Barnabas and Saul, not to Elymas.

We see a sample of Paul’s missionary technique and preaching in the Jewish synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia. Notice that John Mark abandons them in 13:13. This will become crucial when Paul wants to set out with Barnabas on a second missionary journey in chapter 15.

Read 13:13–52.

Q 40: How did Paul go about preaching the Gospel to Jews and converts to Judaism in the synagogue?

A 40: He started with Old Testament history, recalling the exodus and conquest of Canaan, then moved to the kingdom era and God’s promise to raise up one of King David’s descendants to be the Messiah.

Then Paul showed how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies and won our salvation through His suffering, death, and resurrection.

Jewish opposition arises after preaching success in Iconium.

Read 14:1–7.

Q 41: After staying for a long time, what made Paul and Barnabas leave Iconium?

A 41: They learned of the rulers' plot to stone them. Early Christians did not recklessly move headlong toward martyrdom; when God gave them opportunity, they moved on to the next towns.

With no synagogue in Lystra, God works a miracle to give Paul and Barnabas the occasion to preach the Gospel.

Read 14:8–18.

Q 42: How did the pagan inclination of the people of Lystra get in the way of them receiving the Gospel?

A 42: Instead of being moved to listen attentively to Paul and Barnabas because of the miraculous sign, the crowd thought of them as gods and tried to offer sacrifices to them.

Unbelieving Jews from the previous two towns stir up trouble in Lystra.

Read 14:19–23.

Q 43: How did the fervor of the unbelieving Jews reflect Paul's early life?

A 43: Their great zeal and murderous hatred against the Christians moved them to follow Paul and Barnabas to the neighboring city. It is ironic that Paul was stoned for the Gospel, just as he had earlier consented to the stoning of Stephen, even holding the garments of those who stoned Stephen.

Q 44: What is surprising about Paul's reaction to the stoning?

A 44: Though severely injured, Paul returned to the city in which he had been stoned and went on to the two cities from which the unbelieving Jews had followed him. His goal was to comfort and encourage believers there who would face this fierce opposition. His severe injuries were an eloquent testimony to the sincerity of his faith—and a warning of the hateful opposition Satan would raise against Christians when he could.

Barnabas and Paul return to Antioch and report on all the Lord did through them.

Read 14:24–28.

Q 45: How did this first missionary journey of Barnabas and Paul help advance the Great Commission to take the Gospel to the end of the earth?

A 45: The fruits of Barnabas and Paul's mission trip encouraged the believers in Antioch to support further mission journeys.

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL: PAUL'S WORK ENDORSED BY PETER AND JAMES (15:1–35)

Paul's Missionary Work Sparks Controversy

Must Gentile believers convert to Judaism to be saved?

Read 15:1–5.

Q 46: What solution did the Church in Antioch seek when this dispute remained unresolved?

A 46: They sent a delegation with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles and elders.

Paul's Missionary Work Evaluated

The apostles and leaders of the Church gather at the Jerusalem Council to resolve a critical dispute.

Read 15:6–21.

Q 47: What was the decision of the apostles and elders?

A 47: Recognizing that we are saved by God's grace alone without works of the Law, they did not require Gentiles to be circumcised or follow the Law of Moses but asked them to follow a few rules to avoid offending Jewish believers.

The Council Sends a Letter to the Churches

The council sends representatives to the Gentile believers with a letter reporting the council's agreement.

Read 15:22–35.

Q 48: Why were the Gentiles comforted by the letter?

A 48: The validity of their faith had been recognized, as well as their position as children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

PAUL CARRIES THE GOSPEL TO THE END OF THE EARTH (15:36–28:31)

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Paul and Barnabas separate and multiply into two missionary teams.

Read 15:36–41.

Q 49: Why did Paul and Barnabas separate?

A 49: Barnabas (son of encouragement) wanted to bring Mark along for another chance. Paul did not think that was wise. Neither gave in, so they went their separate ways, thus multiplying the mission teams going out.

Paul adds Timothy to his missionary team.

Read 16:1–5.

Q 50: Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised when he had so strenuously objected to Gentile converts being forced to be circumcised back in chapter 15?

A 50: When Jewish believers insisted that someone must be circumcised, Paul refused. But when he was free and knew Timothy's circumcision would make him better able to serve Jewish believers, Paul consented.

God directs Paul to preach in unexpected territory.

Read 16:6–10.

Q 51: What was the result of Paul's missionary journey going further east than he had planned?

A 51: The next step in Jesus' commission was fulfilled as the Gospel moved out from Asia to a new continent, Europe.

Though strangers in a strange land, God quickly provides Christian brothers and sisters to Paul and his companions. Notice the pronouns change in this section from "they went" to "we went." The author, Luke, has joined Paul's second missionary journey.

Read 16:11–15.

Q 52: What change of strategy did Paul employ when he found no synagogue in Philippi?

A 52: He went outside the city to the riverside, where he figured people would come together in a place of prayer.

Paul and Silas's act of kindness is repaid with beating and imprisonment.

Read 16:16–24.

Q 53: Why did Paul's exorcism of the demon bring on such a severe reaction?

A 53: The slave girl's owners were angry because they lost their income, so they falsely accused Paul and Silas of advocating unlawful customs. Paul and Silas were illegally punished by the city rulers.

Though His messengers are locked in stocks in jail, Christ opens a door for the Gospel in the jail.

Read 16:25–34.

Q 54: How did Paul and Silas's positive reaction to the injustice they suffered set up the chance to share the Gospel?

A 54: They could have sat sullen and angry about being mistreated; instead, they shared the joy of their salvation in song. The other prisoners listened and did not run for freedom when the earthquake broke open the jail. Paul kept the jailer from killing himself, and he and his family were baptized.

Paul and Silas demand to be escorted from jail by the rulers.

Read 16:35–40.

Q 55: Why did Paul and Silas feel it was important to assert their rights as Roman citizens?

A 55: The city rulers had abused their role and could have gotten in deep trouble for it. In an effort to humble them and make them more receptive to the Gospel, Paul let them know they had done wrong.

Great opposition arises from Jews in Thessalonica.

Read 17:1–9.

Q 56: What caused the Jews in Thessalonica to throw the city into an uproar?

A 56: Deep down it was caused by jealousy (see v. 5) that Paul and Silas were gathering believers from some of the Jews, many God-fearing Greeks, and many leading women.

Fleeing Thessalonica, Paul and Silas bring the Gospel to Berea.

Read 17:10–15.

Q 57: Why does Luke say the Jews of Berea were more noble than those of Thessalonica?

A 57: The Bereans were willing to listen and search the Scriptures to see if what Paul was saying about Jesus fulfilling all those prophecies

was true. The Thessalonians stubbornly sought to stir up trouble without searching God's Word.

Paul waits in Athens.

Read 17:16–21.

Q 58: Besides the synagogue, where else did Paul preach the Gospel in Athens?

A 58: He preached in the marketplace every day, which raised enough curiosity to have him invited to the Areopagus, where the Athenians and foreigners gathered to hear new ideas.

Paul shares the Gospel in the Areopagus.

Read 17:22–34.

Q 59: Why does Paul begin with an idol to an unknown god and teach them about the Creator rather than beginning from the Old Testament?

A 59: Since the Athenians do not know the Old Testament and its many prophecies of the coming Christ, Paul cannot speak about the many prophecies Jesus' fulfilled. Instead, he meets the Athenians where they are, and speaks of God as the Creator who saved His creation and calls us to repent. *How might you use Paul's example to share your faith with a friend who was not brought up in church?*

Paul faces Jewish opposition in Corinth.

Read 18:1–17.

Q 60: Usually, when Jewish opposition arose against Paul, he was quickly driven from the area. How was he able to stay in Corinth a year and a half?

A 60: Jesus wanted Paul to stay put so he could establish the Corinthian Church, so He appeared in a vision and told him to stay there, and Jesus provided him with many supporters.

Paul returns to Antioch, concluding his second missionary journey.

Read 18:18–23.

Q 61: Why didn't Paul stay long in Ephesus when the people there requested him to?

A 61: Paul eventually came back and stayed a long time. But for now, he wanted to get back to Antioch to report to those who supported his mission trips. He swiftly made his way back to Antioch, reported on the events of his second missionary journey, then set back out on his third journey, revisiting many of the congregations founded in his first and second missionary journeys on his way to Ephesus.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Apollos begins preaching.

Read 18:24–28.

Q 62: Why is Apollos significant?

A 62: He was a believing Jew, very fervent in faith. He was open to instruction from Christians who knew more than he, received Christian Baptism, and was a powerful preacher and defender of the faith in the region of Achaia, especially the city of Corinth.

Paul spends two years preaching in Ephesus.

Read 19:1–10.

Q 63: What was the difference between John's Baptism and Jesus' Baptism?

A 63: Like the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, John's Baptism promised forgiveness from the Messiah who was coming, whose way John had prepared. Jesus' Baptism reflects the Messiah who had actually come and was now giving that forgiveness and the Holy Spirit and His gifts—chief of which is faith in Christ.

Traveling Jewish exorcists learn the power of Jesus' name.

Read 19:11–20.

Q 64: What was a traveling exorcist?

A 64: People who practiced various forms of magic filled Ephesus, including these Jewish brothers who traveled through, promising to drive out demons for a price. Seeing the power and authority of the apostles, they thought they would be able to use Jesus' name in a spell. But having no true faith in Christ, they were powerless when they fell under demonic attack.

Demetrius unites Ephesus's silversmiths together against Paul.

Read 19:21–41.

Q 65: Why did Demetrius feel it was necessary to stop Paul's work?

A 65: He saw many Ephesians were forsaking the false gods and believing in Jesus Christ. He knew the sales of silver shrines for Artemis (the pagan goddess of the city) would continue to fall off, endangering their trade unless Paul was stopped. He stirred up the craftsmen and they, in turn, the city. By God's grace, a wise city official defused the tense situation.

Paul and his companions begin their trip to Jerusalem.

Read 20:1–6.

Q 66: How did Paul encourage the Christians he visited along the way?

A 66: They faced great difficulty and hostility from both Jews and Gentiles because of their faith. By preaching the Gospel to them, Paul reminded them of the glorious eternal future awaiting them—even if they had to endure some fiery trials in this brief life before then.

Paul raises a young man from the dead.

Read 20:7–16.

Q 67: Was Eutychus dead, or did he only appear dead?

A 67: He died from his fall. Paul said “Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him,” not to say he was severely injured but still alive, but to let everyone know his life would soon be restored.

Paul gives a farewell speech to the pastors of Ephesus.

Read 20:17–38.

Q 68: What did Paul tell the Ephesian pastors?

A 68: First Paul reminded them of the risks he took and the suffering he endured to share the Gospel in Ephesus. Then he encouraged the pastors to follow his example and preach boldly and faithfully to the Ephesians, knowing there would be opposition but reminded that Christ would be with them.

Despite several warnings, Paul continues toward Jerusalem.

Read 21:1–16.

Q 69: Was Paul reckless or foolish to go up to Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit warned him through so many people of what would happen there?

A 69: The Holy Spirit had constrained Paul before, preventing him from going where he had planned to go in 16:6–7. The Holy Spirit made it quite clear to Paul the suffering that would happen in Jerusalem, and Paul went willingly in faith.

Paul Goes to Rome

In Jerusalem, James wants to dispel false rumors swirling against Paul.

Read 21:17–26.

Q 70: How did James propose for Paul to prove the rumors untrue?

A 70: Paul was rumored to be a traitor to Judaism by teaching the Jews outside of Judea that they could stop observing Jewish customs. To avoid building a wall that would hinder witness to Jews or causing a

divide among Jewish Christians, he joined other Jewish Christians in Moses' ceremony of purification and paid for their expenses.

Jews from Asia falsely accuse Paul of bringing Gentiles into the temple courts and stir up a mob.

Read 21:27–36.

Q 71: How did the Romans intervene and save Paul from the Jewish mob?

A 71: The tribune, the military officer in charge, brought along at least two centurions and their troops (approximately one hundred troops per centurion) to arrest Paul, put him in chains, and remove him from the crowd. This prevented a riot and gave Paul the chance to bring the Gospel to the emperor in Rome.

Paul speaks to the Jewish people.

Read 21:37–22:21.

Q 72: How was Paul able to get the crowd to quiet down and listen to the story of his conversion to Christ?

A 72: Paul spoke in Hebrew. He could have spoken in Greek, but that language had already become associated with Gentiles. Speaking in Hebrew allowed him to build a camaraderie with his audience.

After Paul mentions being sent to the Gentiles, the Jews try to kill him again. The Roman tribune prepares to interrogate him.

Read 22:22–29.

Q 73: What made the tribune change his behavior toward Paul so drastically?

A 73: Roman citizenship guaranteed certain rights, including not being chained or beaten for questioning before being found guilty of a crime. Since Jesus was a Jew and not a Roman citizen, Pilate had no such concerns about having Him flogged. *Which legal rights and protections does our country grant Christians as we share and live out our faith?*

Paul speaks to the Jewish Council.

Read 22:30–23:11.

Q 74: How did Paul divide the high court?

A 74: Paul knew the makeup of the Jewish high court. It was made up of Pharisees, who believe in the resurrection, heaven, and angels, and Sadducees, who reject them all. Paul only needed to declare he was on trial for his belief in the resurrection. The Pharisees and scribes came to his defense and turned against the Sadducees, making any attempt to push for Paul's execution impossible. It opened the door for Paul to go on to Rome.

Paul learns of a Jewish plot to kill him.

Read 23:12–22.

Q 75: How was Paul’s nephew a vital part of God’s plans for Paul?

A 75: It is likely the tribune would have believed the chief priests’ request was sincere. If Paul’s nephew had not revealed the plot, Paul would likely have died. This instance is similar to the angel warning the Wise Men not to return to Herod, who wanted to kill the child Jesus.

Paul is taken by night from Jerusalem to Caesarea under heavy military escort.

Read 23:23–35.

Q 76: Why did the tribune go to such lengths for Paul?

A 76: The tribune was responsible for protecting a Roman citizen. He might also have been bending over backward to keep Paul from having reason to tell the governor that he had bound Paul in chains and prepared to flog him. Notice the lie in his letter: “I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen.” He was afraid his governor would discover he had mistreated a Roman citizen.

Paul and his accusers give their testimony to Governor Felix.

Read 24:1–21.

Q 77: How did Paul assert his innocence?

A 77: Paul stated that his accusers had presented no evidence, then reported on his actions and movements—how he was in Jerusalem to bring an offering and how he was not disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd. *When is it good to defend yourself, and when is it best to trust God to vindicate you?*

Felix keeps Paul under house arrest for two years.

Read 24:22–27.

Q 78: Why did Felix not reach a legal verdict?

A 78: Felix was a cruel ruler who caused much conflict in Judea, eventually leading to the Jewish revolt in AD 66. Much like Herod seeking a miracle from Jesus, Felix was seeking a bribe from Paul, knowing that Paul had come to Judea with a sizable contribution gathered from the churches of Asia Minor. Paul was able to leverage Felix’s greed to give him an extended period of time to preach the Law and Gospel. (Similarly, John the Baptist had extended time to talk with Herod Antipas in Mark 6:17–20.)

Paul faces further injustice and Jewish plots.

Read 25:1–12.

Q 79: How was Festus's action similar to Pilate's?

A 79: Festus saw that the Jews could not prove their charges against Paul, just as Pilate saw no grounds for a charge against Jesus. But both leaders wanted to do favors for the Jewish leaders, so they did not set the innocent men free. When Paul saw that Festus had decided to send him to Jerusalem, where the Jews would ambush and kill him, Paul used his right as a Roman citizen to appeal his case to Caesar's court. Jesus had no such appeal. In our guilt and sin, we appeal to God's mercy for Jesus' sake.

Festus seeks help to formulate charges against Paul.

Read 25:13–27.

Q 80: How was it obvious that Festus knew Paul was innocent?

A 80: Festus didn't want to pass the Jewish accusations along to the emperor intact; that would make him look incompetent. But the charges were so obviously false that he needed help from Agrippa to make the case look worthy of Caesar's time.

Getting Oriented: Herod Agrippa II was the son of Herod Agrippa I, who had the apostle James executed in Acts 12:1–2. He was great-grandson of Herod the Great, who murdered the boys of Bethlehem following Jesus' birth in Matthew 2:16–18. Bernice was Agrippa II's sister, with whom he was involved in an incestuous affair.

Paul describes his past as a Pharisee, a zealous persecutor of Christians.

Read 26:1–11.

Q 81: What was the central point of Paul's defense/witness to Agrippa?

A 81: Paul focused everything on the resurrection of the dead—ultimately fulfilled in Jesus' resurrection—then went on to describe his zealotry in trying to stamp out Christianity.

Paul describes his conversion and mission.

Read 26:12–32.

Q 82: Why did Paul mention his conversion and mission in such depth to Agrippa and Bernice?

A 82: Paul was using the facts of the Jewish religion and sects with which Agrippa and Bernice were familiar to share with them how Jesus fulfilled it all so they might believe.

Paul sails toward Rome.

Read 27:1–12.

Q 83: Why didn't the centurion listen to Paul's advice not to sail since it was so late in the season?

A 83: Paul was not a sailor by trade, but a tentmaker. The soldier trusted the judgment of the people who operated and owned the ship over Paul's, probably figuring they would be more concerned about the ship safely reaching its destination than trying to make a quick profit. But Paul had experience with sailing—having already endured three shipwrecks (2 Corinthians 11:25).

Paul encourages the crew and passengers, who lose hope after two weeks of a violent storm.

Read 27:13–38.

Q 84: How did Paul encourage the people on board the ship?

A 84: He shared his faith in God, spoke of the angel who appeared to him, shared God's promise to spare the lives of all on board, and ate in front of them—encouraging them to eat too.

The ship breaks up.

Read 27:39–44.

Q 85: Why was God's promise to save all the lives centered around Paul's life?

A 85: If not for the centurion protecting Paul's life, all the prisoners would have been put to death by the guards to keep them from escaping.

Paul ministers on the island of Malta.

Read 28:1–10.

Q 86: How did the bite of a poisonous serpent open a door for Paul to share the Gospel?

A 86: Though Paul went through the pain of being bitten and was falsely judged by the natives at first as a murderer, then as a god, Christ healed the chief official's father, then many other sick through him, enabling Paul to share the Gospel with authority.

Paul's journey ends in Rome.

Read 28:11–16.

Q 87: How did the visit by Paul's Christian brothers give Paul courage?

A 87: Paul might well have felt alone going to trial. But these fellow Christians reminded him that God had made him part of a family and perhaps showed him the result of the perilous work he had done—his preaching had not been in vain.

Paul shares the Gospel with Jews and Gentiles in Rome.

Read 28:17–31.

Q 88: How did Paul's two years in Rome fulfill Jesus' promise to send the Gospel "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8)?

A 88: Paul's house arrest gave him freedom to share the Gospel with large crowds of Jews and Gentiles; many of those who heard would believe and carry the Gospel with them throughout the Roman Empire and beyond.