

Book of Act Bible Study
Introduction Discussion Questions

Why is it important to study history?

What struggles have you had studying history in the past?

How is the church of today comparable to the First Century AD church we have in the Book of Acts?

How is society similar to that culture? How is society different to the First Century AD Roman society?

Why is it important to study the Book of Acts?

For next week, read Acts Chapters 1-3

Acts Bible Study

Session 1

Key Concepts

Witnesses:

- 1) Speak to what they know to be true.
- 2) The witness is not of words, but of deed
- 3) Witness in Greek is the same word used for martyr, *martyr*

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 4-5)

Themes of Peter's Sermon:

- 1) Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament
- 2) Jesus the Messiah has come, Messianic prophecies fulfilled and the new age has dawned.
- 3) Jesus was born in the line of David
- 4) Jesus will return in glory.
- 5) Jesus alone is salvation.

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 17-18)

Characteristics of the Early Church

- 1) It was a learning church
- 2) It was engaged in fellowship
- 3) It was a praying church
- 4) It was reverent and in awe of God
- 5) God was at work in the church
- 6) It was a sharing church
- 7) It was a church engaged in worship
- 8) It was a happy church
- 9) The church was attractive to outside people

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 25-27)

Expectations of Miracles, 2 denials and 6 affirmations

Denials:

- 1) Peter denied the use of witchcraft, sorcery, magic, or mind over matter
- 2) Peter denied intrinsic worthiness of either the healer or healed man.

Affirmations:

- 1) Jesus healed the man
- 2) God gave Peter and John the gifts of faith, healing and miracle work.

- 3) Christ should be praised as the source of life
- 4) The miracle is a sign of the messianic kingdom
- 5) Christ should be exalted as the source of faith and the miracle
- 6) The miracle serves the Gospel message.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. B&H Publishing Group, 2017. (pg. 48-50)

Blessings of Repentance:

- 1) Total Forgiveness
- 2) Spiritual Refreshment
- 3) Universal Restoration.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. B&H Publishing Group, 2017. (pg. 53)

Key Bible Passages

Acts 1:1-11 – The Ascension of Jesus Christ - Luke 24:50-53

Acts 2:1-13 – Pentecost – Leviticus 23:21, Numbers 28:26

Wind – Ezekiel 37:9-10

Baptize with fire and Holy Spirit – Luke 3:16

Acts 2:14-21 – Peter’s Sermon – Isaiah 2:12-13, Amos 5:18 Zephaniah 1:7. Joel 2, 1 Corinthians 10:11, 2 Timothy 3:1, Numbers 11:29, Colossians 3:16, Romans 15:14.

Acts 2:22 – Deuteronomy 21:23, Psalm 16

Acts 2:33-36 – Psalm 110, Luke 20:41-44

Acts 3:1-10 – Need to care for people – Isaiah 1:11-20, Amos 5:21-24, Micah 6:6-8

Acts 3:11-16 – Spiritual gifts – 1 Corinthians 12:9-10

- Resurrection of things – Isaiah 35:6
- “Servant” – Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Mark 10:45

Session 1 Discussion Questions

Chapter 1

How does Acts 1:6-11 mirror 2 Kings:1-14? Where else and how does Elijah appear in Jesus’ ministry?

What is the mission Jesus gives the church? How does that look today?

Verse 1:11 – Why is this verse important? How do the faithful today live out this verse?

What do you know about Matthias? Why is having 12 apostles important?
What does chapter 1 tell us about the importance of Christian leadership?

Chapter 2

Why is it important to tie the Old Testament events to New Testament event?

What is the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues? What does it look like in the modern church?

Why is it necessary for Peter to align Christ with the Old Testament prophecy?

What is the mission change after Pentecost? Why is the change in the mission of the Apostles important?

How did the early church live? How would this be possible today, or is it impossible to replicate this?

What were the key activities of this first church? Are the key activities the same for the modern church? Should they be the same?

Chapter 3

Why are the miracles important in the early church? Have they stopped? Why or why not?

What do the miracles tell us about Christ?

How does Acts 3 demonstrate how to evangelize for Christ

Why is the reminder of Christ's return an important part of evangelism?

Bibliography

Barclay, William. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Westminster Press, 1955.

Merida, Tony. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. B&H Publishing Group, 2017.

Reid, Barbara E. "Acts of the Apostles: Introduction." In *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Abingdon Press, 2003.

Willimon, William. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988.

For next week, read Acts Chapters 4-7

Acts Bible Study

Session 2

Key Concepts

Peter and John's Defense

- 1) Undeniable facts – a man was cured
- 2) Loyalty to God – Will choose to follow God over man
- 3) Personal Experience of Jesus Christ – Peter and John had no issue talking about what they saw and heard.

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 38)

Peter and John's reaction to the Sanhedrin's Order

- 6) Convinced of the power of God
- 7) Conviction of the futility of man's rebellion
- 8) Remembrance of Jesus and His suffering
- 9) Prayed for Courage
- 10) Received the gifts of the Spirit

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 39-40)

Justin Martyr, Apology 14:2-3

"We who once coveted most greedily the wealth and fortune of others, no place in common the goods we possess, dividing them with all the needy."

William Willimon. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988. (pg. 53)

Ananias and Sapphira

- Sham Holiness – not forced to sell, but gave less than they claimed
- Wanted the praise of Barnabas without his compassion
- Lied about their charity demonstrative sinful nature
- They were greed – same word as "to pilfer" and "embezzle"
- They were deceivers – it was a premeditated action
- They were Satan's instruments – Satan influenced their hearts
- They were spiritual grievers – they lied to the Holy Spirit.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 73-74)

Almsgiving in the Jewish tradition:

- *Kappah* – 2 officials collecting funds for the temporary and permanent need.
- *Tamhui* (trays) – house-to-house collection for those in pressing need.

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 50-51)

Biblical Leadership:

- 7) Rises to meet even mundane needs
- 8) Rises from below, not above
- 9) Ordination is an adaption to church leadership needs.

William Willimon. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988. (pg. 59)

Basis of Stephen's Condemnation

- Repeatedly rebelled against God
- Jewish people had amazing privileges, but still rebelled
- The people limited God to be their God, when God was the God of the universe
- The people and their leaders persecuted the prophets and killed the Son of God

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 60-61)

Notable Aspects of Stephen's Death

- 1) Courage – saw death as the gateway to Christ
- 2) Following Jesus' Example – forgave those killing him
- 3) Was at peace – described as falling asleep

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 62)

Key Bible Passages

Acts 4:10-12 – Peter's Reaction, compare to Luke 21:12-15

Acts 4:32 – Responsibility for the needy – Deuteronomy 15

Acts 5:1-11 – Compare with Luke 12:16-21.

Acts 5:12-16 – Compare with Matthew 5.

Acts 5:29-32 – Relations with Civil Authorities – 1 Peter 2:17

Acts 5:33-42 – Compare with Revelation 12:11-12.

Acts 6:1-2 – Importance of caring for widows

Ruth Psalm 68:4-6; 146:9

Job 29:13 Isaiah 1:17

Luke 7:11-15; 12:41-42; 18:1-8

James 1:27 1 Timothy 5:3-6

Acts 6:1-7 – Compare apostles to the pastoral role in 1 Timothy 3

Acts 6:1-15 – Stephen's trial compare to Matthew 26:57-68

Acts 7: 1-57 – Israel's Disobedience – Nehemiah 9

Acts 7:59-60 – Stephen's prayer – See Psalm 31:5

Session 2 Discussion Questions

Chapter 4

How does Peter's actions during the trial different from his actions during Jesus' trial?

What is the church's response to Peter and John's arrest?

What is the contemporary's church's attitude to persecution? What is the attitude toward prayer?

How does the Holy Spirit empower the church today?

Who are the Sanhedrin today?

Chapter 5

What are the differences between Joseph/Barnabas' actions and the actions of Anaias and Sapphira?

How does our relationship with possessions impact our relationship with God?

How does pride prevent people from coming to faith?

What is your understanding of angels and their work in God's world?

Why does the church rejoice in tribulation?

Chapter 6

What is the role of the pastor in the church today? How is responsible for the ministry and mission of the church?

How do outside biases influence how we care for the needy in our own churches?

How does the church adapt its leadership to meet needs?

Chapter 7

Did Stephen go too far in his condemnation?

What lessons can we take from Stephen's sermon?

What lessons can we take from Stephen's death?

How is the Paul the answer to Stephen's prayer? What does this tell you about how God works in this world?

Bibliography

Barclay, William. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Westminster Press, 1955.

Merida, Tony. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. B&H Publishing Group, 2017.

Reid, Barbara E. "Acts of the Apostles: Introduction." In *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Abingdon Press, 2003.

Willimon, William. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988.

For next week, read Acts Chapters 8-10

Acts Bible Study

Session 3

Key Concepts

Importance of Philip's ministry to the Samaritans

- 4) Bringing Christ to the Samaritans
- 5) Healing for past actions
- 6) Joy brought to the Samaritans that they did not know before

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 66)

Magic – can be defined as an attempt to control divine powers through the application of certain techniques or esoteric formulas.

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 69)

Simony – the buying or selling of ecclesiastical offices

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 68)

Key Lessons in Paul's Conversion

- 11) Salvation is by God's grace (1 Cor. 15:10)
- 12) Conversions involve a life-changing encounter with Christ
- 13) Conversions involve surrender to Christ
- 14) A blinding experience is a metaphor from moving from darkness to light
- 15) Sincerity alone does not save
- 16) Conversion involves receiving the Holy Spirit
- 17) God can save the worst sinners
- 18) When you become a new person, you have a new purpose
- 19) Conversion involves receiving a new family

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 136)

Peter's Witness – standard structure

- Proclaim
- Scriptural Proof
- Summons to repentance.

William Willimon. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988. (pg. 97)

Key Lessons in Paul's Conversion

- 1) Jesus sent and equipped by God with Spirit and Power
- 2) Jesus exercised a ministry of healing
- 3) They took Jesus and crucified Him
- 4) Jesus rose again
- 5) The Christian teacher and preacher are witnesses to the Resurrection
- 6) The result of all of this is the forgiveness of sins

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 87-88)

Key Bible Passages

Acts 8:10 – The Great Commission – Acts 1:8
Acts 8:5-13 – Gospel References to Samaritans
 Luke 10:25-37 Luke 17:11-19
 John 4:7-26 John 8:48
Acts 8:26-40
 Restrictions on Eunuchs – Deuteronomy 23:1
 Isaiah 53 Isaiah 56:3-8
Acts 9:1-9 – “Saul, Saul” – Genesis 22:11
 Genesis 46:2 Exodus 3:4
Acts 9:10-18 – “Here I Am” – Genesis 22:1, 1 Samuel 3:6, 8
Acts 9:23-25 – Go along with Galatians 1:18
Acts 9:26-31 – Barnabas – Acts 11:25-26, Galatians 1:21
Acts 10:1-8 – Cornelius comparison to Nicodemus –
 Luke 7:2-10
Acts 10:9-16 – Dietary Laws – Leviticus 11
Acts 10:44-45 – Compare language to Acts 2:17-18

Session 3 Discussion Questions

Chapter 8

What does the deliberate spreading of the church tell us about sharing our faith?

How does the preaching to the Samaritans fulfill Christ’s commission for the church?

Who are the modern-day Samaritans? Who are the modern-day Eunuchs?

Why is it important for the Holy Spirit to lead the church in reaching new people?

Why is Biblical knowledge important to witnessing for Christ?

Chapter 9

Why did God need to reach Saul/Paul in such a dramatic way?

What was the role of Anaias? Why was his role important in bringing Saul/Paul into the church?

How do we reach to people who used to be opposed to the church coming to faith?

Why are the Old Testament references important in Saul/Paul's conversion?

What was the role of Barnabas? Why is this role important in the church, even to today?

How does Saul/Paul's conversion compare to the conversion of Peter started in chapter 9?

Chapter 10

Why did Peter need to change?

How does chapter 10 reflect the fulfillment of Acts 1:18?

How is Cornelius' attitude show the work of the Holy Spirit?

What is it important that the Holy Spirit is poured out on the gentiles?

How can we copy Peter's model of sharing the faith with others today?

How did the shift to the ministry with the gentiles change the church?

Bibliography

Barclay, William. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Westminster Press, 1955.

Merida, Tony. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. B&H Publishing Group, 2017.

Reid, Barbara E. "Acts of the Apostles: Introduction." In *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Abingdon Press, 2003.

Willimon, William. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988.

For next week, read Acts Chapters 11-14

Acts Bible Study

Session 4

Key Concepts

Leadership in the early church

- 1) Apostles – successors to Jesus, global ministry focus
- 2) Elders – Set apart to be leaders in the local church
- 3) Prophets – Fore-tell the future and the will of God

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 96)

The Herod's of the New Testament:

Herod the Great – Herod of **Matthew 2**

Ruled from 41 BC – 1 BC

Married 10 times.

Herod Philip I

First husband of Herodias

Mentioned as “Philip” in: **Matthew 14:3; Mark 6:17; Luke**

3:19

Had no official office.

Herod Antipas – Ruler of Galilee and Peraea

Second husband of Herodias

Consented to the death of John the Baptist

Also the Herod to whom Pilate sent Jesus for trial.

Archelaus – Ruler of Judea, Samaria, and Idumaea

Mentioned in **Matt 2:22**

Bad ruler, despised, and ultimately deposed.

Herod Philipp II – Ruler of Ituraea and Trachonitis

Mentioned in **Luke 3:1**.

Aristobulus – Son of Herod the Great and Murdered by Herod the Great.

Herod Agrippa – Son of Aristobulus

This is the Herod of **Acts 12**.

Had a son – Agrippa III – **Acts 25-26**.

Also daughters: Bernice – **Acts 25-26**.

Drusilla – wife of Felix in **Acts 24:24**.

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 95-99)

The church's mission team in Acts 13:

Barnabas – Jew from Cyprus

Lucius – From Cyrene in North Africa

Simeon – Jew with a Roman name

Manaen – A man with aristocratic and courtly connections.

Paul – Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 105)

Lesson from the interaction with Bar-Jesus and Sergius Paulus

- 1) Some people will be open to God's Word, like Sergius
- 2) Some people will be opposed to God's Word, like Bar-Jesus

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 182-183)

Breakdown of Paul's Sermon

- 1) Jesus is in the royal lineage of David
- 2) Jesus is the fulfillment of scripture
- 3) Through Jesus' forgiveness, deliverance is possible

William Willimon. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988. (pg. 124-125)

Main Points of Paul's Sermon

- 1) The coming of Jesus was the consummation of history
- 2) Paul argues men did not recognize the coming of God's Son in Jesus Christ.
- 3) In their folly, people rejected Christ, but God could not be defeated;
Resurrection is proof of God's work in the world
- 4) The Resurrection is the fulfillment of prophecy made to David
- 5) IN Christ one can find the liberating and forgiving power of God and be set free from condemnation.
- 6) The Good News is good for some and bad for those who disobey the summons.

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 111-113)

Paul's typical mission

- 1) Preach in the synagogue
- 2) Jews get stirred up
- 3) Mob unleashed on Paul

Williams Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 115)

Paul's church planting model

- 1) Apostolic Instruction

- 2) Pastoral Oversight
- 3) Trust in God

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 205)

Key Bible Passages

Acts 11:22-36 – Barnabas references

Acts 6:27

Acts 4:36-37

Acts 13:12-19 James, brother of Jesus

John 7:5

Mark:3:21

1 Corinthians 15:7

Acts 14:1-3 – Simeon – Luke 23:26

Acts 14:4-11 – Saul verses Paul Jesus – Elijah and priests of
Ba'al – 1 Kings 18:19-30

Acts 14:14-15 – Not preaching in Galatia – Galatians 4:13

Acts 14:16-41 – Paul's Sermon – Compare to Acts 2 Sermon

Session 4 Discussion Questions

Chapter 11

How do people place limits on the works of God?

How does the church operate in a religiously diverse community?

Why are leaders in the church called to different roles?

How can diverse backgrounds be a benefit for the church?

Chapter 12

In what ways do earthly rulers interact with the church today?

How is the trial of Peter similar to Jesus' trial?

What changes do you see in Peter's behavior now verses during the Passion?

What should be the church's reaction to persecution?

Chapter 13

What does the diverse background of the mission team in this chapter tell you about the early church?

Who opposed the church today? How do they compare to Bar-Jesus?

What does the departure of John Mark for Jerusalem tell you about the work of the church?

How does Paul's sermon compare to Peter's sermon in Acts 2?

Chapter 14

Just as local myths impacted the mission in Lystra, how does local culture and traditions impact the church's work in the world today?

Why is it important for the people of the church to work with one another?

Bibliography

Barclay, William. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Westminster Press, 1955.

Merida, Tony. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. B&H Publishing Group, 2017.

Reid, Barbara E. "Acts of the Apostles: Introduction." In *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Abingdon Press, 2003.

Willimon, William. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988.

For next week, read Acts Chapters 15-17

Acts Bible Study

Session 4

Key Concepts

3 Key points of the message to Antioch

- 1) Rejection of the circumcision requirement
- 2) Delegates from Jerusalem would deliver the message with oral commentary
- 3) Emphasized the Spirit-directed decision and the unanimous nature of the decision

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 214)

Timothy mentioned in the Bible:

From a Good family - 2 Timothy 1:5

As a messenger - 1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Thessalonians 3:2-6

With Paul while imprisoned - Philippians 1:1, 2:19;

Colossians 1:1; Philemon 1

Beloved son of Paul - Corinthians 4:17

Of same mind as Paul - Philippians 2:19

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 130)

Trinitarian nature of this call:

v. 6 – Holy Spirit preventing preaching

v. 7 – Spirit of Jesus preventing them from going to Bithynia

v. 6 – God the Father called them to Macedonia.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 230)

As Lydia was rich, we are reminded about the danger of possessions (**Luke 18:25**)

But the rich are not beyond hope, but are generous:

Zacchaeus – **Luke 19:10**

Good Samaritan – **Luke 10:30-37**

Cornelius – **Acts 10:2**

William Willimon. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988. (pg. 137)

3 charges against Paul and Silas:

- 1) Paul and Silas were troublemakers
- 2) Jason condemned for harboring the troublemakers
- 3) Paul and Silas and followers were acting contrary to Caesar's decrees – rebellion and treason.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 237)

Paul discovered by the Epicureans who believed:

- 1) Everything happens by change
- 2) Death was the end of it all
- 3) There were gods, but they were distant and did not care for the world.
- 4) Pleasure was the chief aim of man.

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 141)

Epicureans were basically materialists who saw everything as being by change and sought enjoyment above all else.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 251)

Paul also encountered the Stoics:

- 1) Everything is god
- 2) Everything was fated as everything was the will of god, therefore we do not need to care what happens.
- 3) Every so many years the world would disintegrate and start all over again.

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 141)

They were pantheists who reacted calmly to everything. They were fatalists and accepted the endurance of "pain".

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 252)

Paul's Points:

- 1) God is not made but is the Maker – idols cannot be worshipped by anything made by human hands (Barclay)
- 2) God has guided history – behind the rise and fall of nations.
- 3) God made man so that man longs for God.
- 4) Before Christ, God forgave human their mistakes in their search for God, but once Christ was known, no more excuses.
- 5) Judgment is coming – Christ is the judge.
- 6) The proof of Christ's preeminence is in the Resurrection.

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 143)

Key Bible Passages

Acts 15:1-5 – Covenant – Genesis 12:3

Acts 15:1-5 – Circumcision – Galatians 2:4

Acts 15:1-5 – God's Inclusive Grace – Romans 2:11

Acts 15:6-12 – Peter's Defense – Galatians 1:8-9

Acts 15:22-35 – Silas –

2 Corinthians 1:19

1 Thessalonians 1:1-2

2 Thessalonians 1:1

1 Peter 5:12

Acts 15:36-41 – John Mark – Colossians 4:10

2 Timothy 4:11

Philemon 24b

Acts 16:1-5 – Titus and Circumcision – Galatians 2:3,5

Acts 17:1-9 – Ministry in Berea -

1 Timothy 2:17-29

1 Thessalonians 3:1-2

Acts 17:10-15 – Paul Preaching – Isaiah 53

Acts 17:17-18 – Public Faith – Proverbs 1:20

Session 5 Discussion Questions

Chapter 15

How does changing a non-essential teaching impact the church as a whole?

Why is it important to have a body to give guidance on teachings and doctrine?

How should a teaching be transmitted to the church?

Why is it important James did not remove all of the Law of Moses from the church?

How do we handle conflicts within a church?

Chapter 16

What is the difference between Titus and Timothy? Why does it matter?

How did Paul determine the next steps in his mission?

Why is Philippi an important place for the church to find new followers?

Why is Lydia important for the church?

Why was the healing of the slave girl a problem for the community?

How should a Christians act while facing persecution or challenging situations?

Chapter 17

Why is Thessalonica important for the church?

How did the people react to Paul and Silas' work in Thessalonica? What does that tell us about how people in general react to the Gospel?

What was Paul and Silas' reaction to the conflict? How should a Christian act when a door is closed before us?

What philosophical grounds do we encounter as we seek to share the faith?

How do the people of Athens act like people we encounter today?

Bibliography

Barclay, William. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Westminster Press, 1955.

Merida, Tony. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. B&H Publishing Group, 2017.

Reid, Barbara E. "Acts of the Apostles: Introduction." In *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Abingdon Press, 2003.

Willimon, William. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988.

For next week, read Acts Chapters 18-20

Acts Bible Study

Session 6

Key Concepts

The three stages of Paul's ministry

- 1) Support: Paul is devoted to God's word, funds support Paul from other churches (Likely Macedonia churches, see Philippians 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 11:9) Silas and Timothy brought support mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 3:6-7
- 2) Opposition: When the Jews started to oppose his teachings, Paul would shift to the gentiles, following Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezekiel 3:16-19; 33:1-9)
- 3) Faithfulness: Titus Justus, a God-fearer, came to faith and opened his home next to the synagogue to give a place for Paul to preach to the faithful, upsetting the leaders of the synagogue.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 270-271)

The Lessons from Aquilla and Pricilla:

- 1) Always mentioned together
- 2) Priscilla had influence on the family and mentioned first 4 of the 6 times. Like Lydia, she may have been influential in the early church
- 3) The couple was mobile – Aquilla from Pontus on the Black Sea, later moving to Rome, then to Corinth. Later they would moved to Ephesus before returning to Rome.
- 4) Had a Christ-centered passion and willing to risk all for Christ.
- 5) Hospitable – opening their homes to others.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 266-267)

The talking in tongues and the prophesying were outward signs of internal spiritual work. The normal response is repentance and faith in Christ.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 284)

Paul purposed to go to Jerusalem, as Jerusalem had many poor Christians and Paul wanted to take them a collection for them from the Gentiles.

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 157-158)

Paul's farewell speech. Key points:

- 1) Spoke fearlessly
- 2) Lived independently
- 3) Face the future gallantly.

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 166)

Paul expected to never be present with the church again, so he reminds them:

- 1) God appoints elders
- 2) God paid a high price for the church
- 3) Character needs to match teaching.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 316-317)

There is a need to watch out for oneself and the church – wolves are at hand. This is done in both personal and mutual accountability.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 317)

Key Bible Passages

Acts 18 – Paul working his Trade - 1 Thessalonians 2:9, 2 Thessalonians 3:7-8; Acts 20:34, 1 Corinthians

4:12; 2 Corinthians 11:7

Acts 18 – Priscilla and Aquilla - Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19

Acts 18 – Nazirite Vow – Numbers 6:1-21

Acts 19 – Indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Believers - John 14:17; Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 3:1-5;

Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 3:16; Ephesians 4:30

Acts 19 – Collection for the Poor in Jerusalem - 1 Corinthians 16; 2 Corinthians 9; Romans 15:25-26

Acts 20 – Christian Worship - 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; 1 Timothy 4:13

Acts 20:10 - Resuscitations by embrace - 1 Kings 17:21-24; 2 Kings 4:34

Acts 20:10 – Accounts of other Healings - Luke 7:11-17, John 11:1-44; Acts 9:36-41
Acts 20 – Festival of Weeks - Exodus 19:1; Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Acts 2:1
Acts 20 – Accountability - 1 Timothy 4:6; Acts 14:23; James 5:14

Session 6 Discussion Questions

Chapter 18

Why is it important religious leaders understand the value of work?

What advantages does planting a church in Corinth have for the church as a whole?

How are Priscilla and Aquilla good examples for the church?

What would Apollos be like in the contemporary world?

Chapter 19

Why do believers need empowered by the Holy Spirit?

What are exorcisms? Are they still needed today?

How does the church witness to being one in the body of Christ today?

How does the church impact the economy today?

What is the reaction of the society around us when the church impacts the society?

Chapter 20

How is encouragement part of Christian ministry?

Why are miracles important in the Apostolic age?

What are the important parts of a Christian service?

Why is character important in a Christian?

What dangers are present for the church today?

How can we hold one another accountable without being judgy?

Bibliography

Barclay, William. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Westminster Press, 1955.

Merida, Tony. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. B&H Publishing Group, 2017.

Reid, Barbara E. "Acts of the Apostles: Introduction." In *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Abingdon Press, 2003.

Willimon, William. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988.

For next week, read Acts Chapters 21-24

Acts Bible Study

Session 7

Key Concepts

4 Signs of Christians Fellowship:

- 1) Hospitality – Seen in Tyre, Ptolemais, Caesarea, and eventually Jerusalem.

Paul would stay at homes of disciples. Hospitality itself means “love of strangers”
Involves the spirit of welcome and the sharing of resources.

- 2) Sharing Affection – physical, visible and affectionate
Seen in the weeping, embracing, etc.

- 3) Praying together.

- 4) Discussing Important Decisions together

God’s Will is not a private matter, seen in debating in Tyre and Caesarea whether Paul should go on to Jerusalem.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 326-328)

Barrier between the Court of Gentiles and Court of Woman stated:

“No man of alien race is to enter within the balustrade and fence that goes round the Temple, and if anyone is taken in the act, let him know that he has himself to blame for the penalty of death that follows.”

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 171-172)

This passage is Pauls’ defense against the accusations of the mob.

- 1) Description of Pauls’ raising as a zealous Jew (**vv 3-5**)
- 2) Pauls’ encounter with Jesus (**vv 6-11**)
- 3) Anaias and his help (**vv. 12-16**)
- 4) Pauls’ vision in the Temple (**vv 17-21**)

William Willimon. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988. (pg. 166)

Acts 22: 5 – Paul attempts to Clarify

- 1) Anaias not wearing his religious garb, meaning this is not a regular meeting
- 2) Paul doesn’t know who gave the command to strike him
- 3) Paul couldn’t seek clearly
- 4) Because of Paul’s journey, he did not know Anaias.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 351)

Governor was Felix, in year 5 of his governorship after 2 years in Samaria.

Had been born a slave.

Brother of Pallas, a favorite of Nero who got Felix his free status and governorship.

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 183-184)

Felix had been married three times to 3 different princesses

1st – Unknown

2nd – granddaughter of Anthony and Cleopatra

3rd – Drusilla, daughter of Herod Agrippa I

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 184)

Causes of the Arrest:

- 1) Paul was a troublemaker and pest, Paul linked with insurrectionist.
Rome could not stand disorder
- 2) Paul was a leader of a Nazarene sect, a messianic movement. Rome leery of the chaos and disorder of false messianic movements.
- 3) Paul defiled the Temple; to defile a priest was to defile the Temple.
Priests were Sadducees, Roman collaborators

Tertullus calling on Felix to rule for the pro-Roman party.

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 185)

Felix was not unkind to Paul, but he had some personal issues

Drusilla, wife of Felix and daughter of Herod Agrippa I had been married to

Azizus, King of Emesa, but was seduced by Felix and a magician and Atamos to leave Azizus for Felix.

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 187)

Key Bible Passages

Acts 21 – Agabus and prophetic acting - Isaiah 20:3-4; Jeremiah 13:1-11; Jeremiah 27:3; Ezekiel 4;

Ezekiel 5:1-4; 1 Kings 2:29-31

Acts 21:1-15 – Hospitality Required - Titus 1:8; Romans 12:13

Acts 21:20-26 – Role of Jewish Law in Christianity - Romans 10:4; Romans 14-15; 1 Corinthians 8-10

Acts 22:1-10 – Paul's status as a Jew - 2 Corinthians 2:22; Philippians 3:4-5.

Acts 22:11-21 – Paul's Mission from Ananias - Acts 9; Galatians 1

Acts 22:12-16 – “God of our ancestors” – Exodus 3:15-16

Acts 23:2 – Ananias breaking law – Leviticus 19:15

Acts 23:3 – Speaking ill of rulers – Exodus 22:28

Acts 23:11 – Jesus Reassures Paul - Acts 19:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:17-18; Hebrews 13:5

Jewish riots against Paul's ministry - Acts 13:50; Acts 14:2, 5, 19; Acts 16:22; Acts 17:5, 13;

Acts 19:23-29, 37-40

“Can anything good come from Nazareth?” – John 1:46

Session 7 Discussion Questions

Chapter 21

Why is hospitality an important part of Christianity?

How does the church show hospitality today?

What debates on church customs and teachings do we have today?

How do we practice accountability in our church?

Why is it important to keep the moral law portion of the Law of Moses? Should we keep it at all?

How do we let passion rule our actions in the faith today?

Chapter 22

How do we handle confrontation in our efforts to witness to the faith?

How do we stress the role of Jesus in the church?

Why was it important that Paul was a Roman citizen?

How does Paul's status as a Roman citizen help his mission to spread the gospel?

Chapter 23

Why did Paul address the Sanhedrin as “brothers”?

How did the Sanhedrin violate their own laws?

How did Paul divide the Sanhedrin against one another?

How does Jesus reassure Paul? How does Jesus reassure us today?

What can we learn from the Roman protection of Paul?

What does this chapter tell us about the relationship between the church and the state?

Chapter 24

What is the difference between Paul instigating a riot and the riot forming in response to Paul's ministry?

How does Paul defend himself? What does this tell us about how we should defend our faith?

How does Paul's status as a Roman citizen help in him this trial?

How does Paul's status as a Roman citizen help the spread of the gospel?

Bibliography

Barclay, William. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Westminster Press, 1955.

Merida, Tony. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. B&H Publishing Group, 2017.

Reid, Barbara E. "Acts of the Apostles: Introduction." In *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Abingdon Press, 2003.

Willimon, William. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988.

For next week, read Acts Chapters 21-24

Acts Bible Study

Session 8

Key Concepts

Two dominant Themes:

- 1) Paul magnifies the cross and resurrection
- 2) Paul insists that this new faith is an extension of Judaism.

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 371).

Discussion on Resurrection

- Pharisees only needed to believe that Jesus was resurrected as they already believed in resurrection
- Sadducees would need to reverse course on resurrection belief first, then believe in Jesus' resurrection
- Gentiles had to start at even discussing resurrection

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 371).

Substance of Paul's Message:

- Called men to repent – literally to change one's mind
Involves sorrow and resolve
- Called people to turn to God
- Called people to match deeds to repentance

Proof of repentance is in the actions.

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 196-197)

Application of Paul's Witness (Chapter 26):

- 1) Address unbelievers respectfully (vv. 1-3)
- 2) Express what it was like not to believe (vv. 4-11, 14)
- 3) Aim to exalt Jesus, not oneself (vv. 12-15)
- 4) Share the need for and the benefit of the gospel (vv. 16-18)
- 5) Stick to the message of Resurrection and call to repentance based on scripture (vv. 19-23)
- 6) Rely on the help that comes from God (v. 22)
- 7) Make specific application boldly (vv. 24-28)
- 8) Be prepared for rejection and ridicule (v. 24)
- 9) Pray for the people you're evangelizing (v. 29)

Tony Merida. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. Holman Reference, 2017. (pg. 376-378).

Sea giving both life in death in scripture:

Genesis 1:6-10

Noah (Genesis 6-9)

Revelation 21:1

William Willimon. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988. (pg. 183)

Christians are never alone:

- Cloud of witnesses
- Understanding that they belong to a world-wide fellowship
- God is always present; The Risen Lord is with us

William Barclay. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster Press, 1955. (pg. 209)

Key Bible Passages

Acts 25 – Paul’s Commission – Acts 9:15

Acts 26 – Aristarchus – Colossians 4:10, 14

Acts 27:33-38 – Food in Luke’s Accounts

Luke 9:16 – Feed of 5000; Luke 22:19 – Last Supper; Luke 24:30 – Jesus in Emmaus

Acts 28:7-10 – Banquet - Luke 14:21-24; Colossians 3:11

Acts 28:16-29 – Ministry to Jews in Rome – Romans 11

Acts 28 – Companions in Rome

Luke and Aristarchus – 2 Timothy 4:11

Timothy – Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1; Philemon 1

Tychicus – Ephesians 6:21

Epaphroditus – Philippians 4:18

Mark – Colossians 4:10

Acts 28:31 – Fulfillment of Commission – Acts 1:8

Session 8 Discussion Questions

Chapter 25

How is it helpful to retell ones witness again and again to new people?

Why is important for Paul to appeal to Caesar to continue his mission?

What does the constant change in rulers tell us about the church's interaction with the state?

Chapter 26

How do we tell our witness to other people?

What lessons can you take from how Paul shares his faith?

Why do you think Paul was trying to convert Herod Agrippa II?

Is it possible to learn too much?

Where do we find the line between the importance of learning about God and sharing the good news about Jesus Christ?

Chapter 27

What help is Julius to Paul during this journey?

How is Paul able to avoid fear in the face of death?

How did God assist Paul in this journey?

How can a religious action impact everyday activities?

How does the biblical theme of reversing roles play out in Paul's journey in chapter 27?

Chapter 28

How do the Maltese demonstrate hospitality?

In what ways does Paul continue to minister in Malta? In Rome?

How does Paul follow his ministry practices while in Rome?

How does Luke finish *Acts*?

How does this ending fulfill Christ's commission to the church in Acts 1:8?

Bibliography

Barclay, William. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Westminster Press, 1955.

Merida, Tony. *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts*. B&H Publishing Group, 2017.

Reid, Barbara E. "Acts of the Apostles: Introduction." In *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Abingdon Press, 2003.

Willimon, William. *Interpretation: Acts*. John Knox Press, 1988.