Acts 1-12

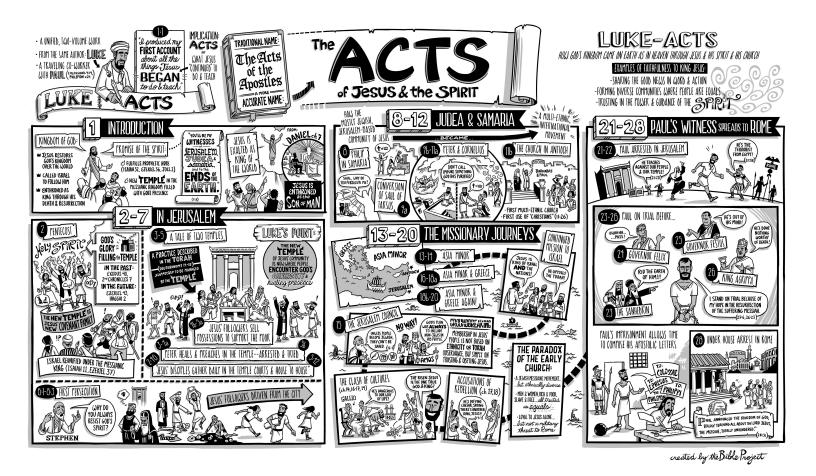


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Introduction to Acts¹

Acts

Acts is unique among the NT writings, in that its main purpose is to record a selective history of the early church following the resurrection of Christ. It is the second part of a two-volume work, with the Gospel of Luke being the first volume. Both books are dedicated to a person named Theophilus, and Acts 1:1 explicitly refers back to Luke's Gospel.

Author

Both the Gospel of Luke and Acts are anonymous, but the earliest discussions attribute them to Luke. The name "Luke" appears only three times in the NT: Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24. All three references are in epistles written by Paul from prison, and all three mention Luke's presence with Paul.

The earliest discussion of the authorship of Luke and Acts is from Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons in Gaul, writing in the late second century. He attributes the books to Luke, the coworker of Paul, and notes that the occurrence of the first-person narrative ("we") throughout the later chapters of Acts (starting at 16:10) indicates that the author of Acts was a companion of Paul and present with him on these occasions. These "we" passages in Acts are the key to the authorship of both Acts and the Gospel of Luke.

Colossians 4:14 indicates that Luke was a physician, and attempts have been made to bolster Lukan authorship by arguing that Luke and Acts use technical medical language. This does not seem to be the case, as Luke seems to have avoided technical language in order to communicate plainly to his readers, but his detailed description of illnesses perhaps reflects his interests as a physician (cf. Acts 28:8). In addition, all the external evidence refers to Luke as the author.

Other than the three NT references, nothing certain is known of Luke. Early traditions link him with Antioch, but that is probably based on the reference in Acts 13:1 to "Lucius," which is a Latin name. "Luke" is a Greek name, and both books are written in excellent Greek. His thorough acquaintance with the OT may reflect that Luke was a converted God-fearer (a Gentile who attended the Jewish synagogue) or Jewish proselyte (convert), though he could have gained his biblical knowledge after becoming a Christian.

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Date

Some scholars date Acts c. A.D. 70. This assumes that Acts was written after the Gospel of Luke (Acts 1:1) and that Luke used the Gospel of Mark as one of his sources (Luke 1:1–2). (Early tradition has Mark's Gospel written after Peter's death, which most likely occurred in the mid-60s.) Others date Acts in the 70s or 80s. They hold that the primary purpose of Acts was to give an account of how and where the gospel spread, rather than to be a defense of Paul's ministry (thus accounting for the omission of the events at the end of his life). Thus the gospel spread to "the end of the earth" (1:8)—that is, to Rome, which represented the end of the earth as the center of world power. But a number of scholars date Acts as early as A.D. 62, basing their view primarily on the abrupt ending of the book. Since Acts ends with Paul in Rome under house arrest, awaiting his trial before Caesar (28:30–31), it would seem strange if Luke knew about Paul's release (a proof of his innocence), possibly about his defense before Caesar (fulfilling 27:24), and about his preaching the gospel as far as Spain (cf. note on 28:30–31), but then did not mention these events at the end of Acts. It seems most likely, then, that the abrupt ending is an indication that Luke wrote Acts c. A.D. 62, before these events occurred.

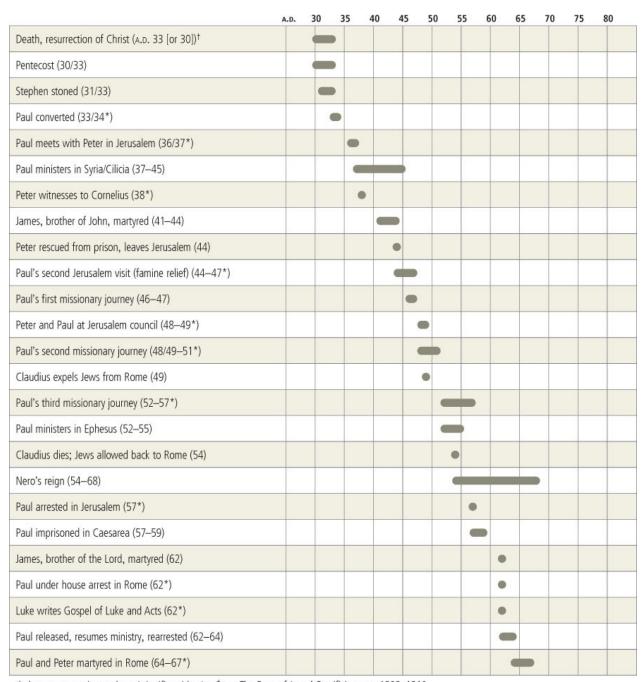
Theme

In Acts, believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ among both Jews and Gentiles, and in doing this they establish the church. In addition to this, Acts explains how Christianity, although it is new, is in reality the one true religion, rooted in God's promises from the beginning of time. In the ancient world it was important that a religion be shown to have stood the test of time. Thus Luke presents the church as the fulfillment and extension of God's promises.

Text

The early manuscripts of Acts have a greater variety of readings than any other NT book. This is reflected in the ESV footnotes that provide alternative readings, as well as the absence of whole verses in some instances (8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29). The greatest diversity is shown by a group of manuscripts that scholars refer to as the "Western text," an early version of Acts that is about ten percent longer than the other texts. Its main difference from the others is in providing additional detail and smoothing out the narrative. No standard English translation follows the Western text. Some of its more interesting readings are provided in the ESV footnotes, such as the note about the hours when Paul preached in the hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus (19:9).

Timeline



^{*} denotes approximate date; / signifies either/or; † see The Date of Jesus' Crucifixion, pp. 1809–1810

Distinctive Features

Though Acts has much in common with the Gospels, it has a number of unique features. One of these is its genre: it is the only NT book that tells about the ministry of the apostles, hence its traditional name, "The Acts of the Apostles." It deals primarily with two of them, Peter and Paul. Often Luke shows how events in their ministries parallel each other and the ministry of Jesus as well. Among the unique features of Acts are the frequent summaries, where Luke provides a broad generalization about the life of the church at a particular time or place, such as the common life after Pentecost (2:42–47), the early Christian sharing of goods (4:32–35), and the apostolic miracles (5:12–16). Sometimes the summaries are much briefer, such as the single verse that sums up Paul's ministry of more than two years in Ephesus (19:10). Luke's usual method of presenting the Christians' ministry is more "episodic," highlighting individual incidents that illustrate their work, giving it greater liveliness and interest. For instance, at Ephesus this includes the conversion of some disciples of John the Baptist (19:1–7), the "backfiring" exorcism of the sons of Sceva (19:13–16), and the riot occasioned by the silversmith Demetrius (19:23–41).

The most distinctive feature in Acts is the speeches or sermons, constituting nearly a third of the total text of Acts (see chart). Ten of these are major: three by Peter (2:14–36; 3:11–26; 10:34–43), one by Stephen (7:1–53), and six by Paul. Three of Paul's are defense speeches in Jerusalem and Caesarea (22:1–21; 24:10–21; 26:1–29). The other three consist of one speech on each of Paul's missionary journeys, each to a different type of assembly: to Jews on his first journey (13:16–47), to Gentiles on his second (17:22–31), and to Christians on his third (20:18–35). Many shorter testimonies run throughout Acts (e.g., 5:29–32; 14:15–17). All are primarily a witness to Christ in one form or another. Much of the theological material of Acts is to be found in these speeches. Another distinctive feature of Acts is its journey narratives. Often these are only lists of stopping places or ports that are passed by (e.g., 16:6–8; 20:14–15; 21:2–3). These give the impression of the Christian missionaries being constantly on the move and are the main reason for giving Paul's ministry the label of "journeys." In fact, that label best applies to the first of Paul's missions (chs. 13–14). The others consisted mainly of more lengthy stays in the major cities (e.g., Corinth, Ephesus).

Key Themes

The major themes of Acts can be placed under the general category of "witness," as set forth in the thematic verse (Acts 1:8).

1. The witness is worldwide—Judea, Samaria, the "end of the earth."	1:8
2. The witness is inclusive of all kinds of people: Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans, the physically handicapped, pagan mountain people, a prominent merchant woman, a jailer and his family, Greek philosophers, governors, and kings.	chs. 2-5; 8:4-40; 10:1-11:18; 14:8- 18; 16:11-15, 25- 34; 17:22-31; 24:24-27; 26:1-29
3. The witness is guided by the providence of God, who preserves his witnesses for their testimony through all sorts of threats: murderous plots, angry mobs, storms at sea, and constant trials before the authorities, to name only a few.	4:5-22; 18:12-16; 19:23-41; 23:12- 22; 24:1-23; 27:21-26
4. On the other hand, faithful witnesses must be prepared to suffer, even to die for their testimony to Christ.	5:41-42; 7:54-60
5. The power behind the witness is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is granted to all believers, both male and female, whom he empowers for witness. The Spirit guides witnesses in moments of special inspiration and is behind every advance in the Christian mission.	1:8; 2:1–13, 18, 38; 4:8; 7:55; 8:17; 10:44; 13:2–12; 19:6, 21
6. In the early days, the witness was often accompanied by "signs and wonders," the "wonders" being the miracles worked by the apostles, which served as "signs" pointing to the truth of the gospel. Miracles usually opened a door for witness.	e.g., ch. 3

7. Effective witness demands the unity of the church.	2:42-47; 4:32-37; 5:12-14
8. A key component of the witness is the resurrection of Jesus. For the Jews the resurrection demonstrated that Jesus was the promised Messiah. For the Gentiles it pointed to his role as judge and established their need to repent.	1:22; 2:22–36; 17:30–31
9. Acceptance of the message borne by the witnesses depends both on human response and on the divine sovereignty behind the response.	e.g., 2:47; 11:18; 13:48
10. The OT Scriptures point to the death and resurrection of Christ, and the prophecies that point to Christ and to his followers must be fulfilled (1:16).	(Numerous OT citations in the sermons of Acts illustrate this point.)
11. The witness to the gospel calls for a response. Most speeches in Acts end with some sort of invitation. Representative of this is Paul's exchange with Agrippa II.	26:27–29
12. The response called for is repentance of one's sins in the name of Christ, which brings forgiveness of sins.	e.g., 2:38
13. Witnesses must always maintain integrity before the world. In Acts this is illustrated by the many remarks from the authorities about the Christians giving no evidence of any wrongdoing.	18:12–15; 23:29; 25:18; 26:31–32

14. Christian witnesses continue the ministry that Christ "began" (1:1). This is illustrated throughout Acts with the many implicit parallels between the experiences of the apostles and those of Christ: his miracles, the forebodings of his journey to Jerusalem, the cry of the angry Jewish mob for his death, and his trial before the governor and the king.	20:36–21:16 (cf. Luke 9:22; 13:31– 34; 18:31–34); 21:36; 22:21 (cf. Luke 23:18); 24:1– 26:32 (cf. Luke 23:1–25)
15. Faithful witness brings great results. Acts is all about the victory of the Christian gospel. The witness brings results among both Jews and Gentiles. The book ends on this note, with Paul bearing his faithful witness to "all" who came to him in Rome.	4:4; 11:20–21; 13:48–49; 17:4; 18:6–11; 21:20; 28:30–31

Purpose, Occasion, and Background

Luke's stated purpose for both of his books is provided at the beginning of the first (Luke 1:1–4). He had a historian's interest in providing an "orderly account" of "the things that have been accomplished among us." One would assume the latter statement applied both to the ministry of Jesus (the gospel) and to that of the early church (Acts). Dedicating the work to Theophilus, he wanted him to have "certainty" (a firm foundation) for what he had been taught. The exact nature of Luke's purpose depends on how one identifies Theophilus. He evidently had already been instructed in the Christian way and may have been a new convert or a seeker on the verge of commitment. Since "Theophilus" means "lover of God," it is also possible that Luke is challenging the devotion of his readers rather than addressing his book to just one of them.

Luke probably had a number of purposes for writing Acts. These are best determined through the emphases or themes found throughout the book.

History of Salvation Summary

After his ascension (1:9; cf. Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:9–10) Jesus sends the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28–32) to empower the apostles as witnesses (Acts 1:8), to spread the message of the gospel (Isa. 52:7), and to draw to himself people from the nations (Matt. 28:19). (For an explanation of the "History of Salvation," see the Overview of the Bible.)

Literary Features

The book of Acts is a small anthology of individual literary genres. The list includes hero story, adventure story, travel story, conversion story, and miracle story. Drama also figures prominently: there are 32 speeches in Acts.

Following the story line becomes easy when one realizes that the book of Acts is structured on a cyclic principle in which a common pattern keeps getting repeated: (1) Christian leaders arise and preach the gospel; (2) listeners are converted and added to the church; (3) opponents (often Jewish but sometimes Gentile) begin to persecute the Christian leaders; and (4) God intervenes to rescue the leaders or otherwise protect the church. While this pattern is most obvious in the first half of the book, it extends in modified form to the journeys of Paul, whose repeated buffetings are followed by the expansion of the church. The book of Acts is noteworthy for its narrative qualities. It is the report of an adventure, replete with arrests, imprisonments, beatings, riots, narrow escapes, a resurrection from death, a shipwreck, trial scenes, and rescues.

Places play a key role in Acts. The places that matter most are the great cities of the Mediterranean region in the first century. Geography assumes a symbolic as well as literal importance, as Jerusalem, where the story begins, symbolizes the Jewish religion from which Christianity emerged, and Rome, where the story ends, symbolizes the Gentile world to which Christianity gravitates as the early history of the church unfolds.

Out of a large body of available data, storytellers select the details that fit their design and purpose. It is a plausible premise that sometimes Luke chose to give representative examples of categories of experiences: examples of miraculous healings that were no doubt duplicated many times (e.g., 3:1–10; 19:11–12), a specimen of preaching in the temple (3:11–26) and preaching to Greek intellectuals (17:16–34), an example of a martyrdom (ch. 7), and instances of individuals being converted (e.g., a Jew in 9:1–19 and an Ethiopian in 8:26–38) and of groups being converted (e.g., in Jerusalem in 2:37–41 and in Greek Ephesus in 19:17–20).

The Setting of Acts (c. A.D. 30-60)

The book of Acts records the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, thus fulfilling the risen Christ's words to his apostles in Acts 1:8.



Outline

- Preparation for Witness (1:1–2:13)
 - Jesus prepares the disciples (1:1-5)
 - Jesus ascends (1:6-11)
 - Matthias replaces Judas (1:12–26)
 - The Spirit descends at Pentecost (2:1–13)
- The Witness in Jerusalem (2:14-5:42)
 - Peter preaches at Pentecost (2:14–41)
 - The Christian community shares a life in common (2:42–47)
 - Peter heals a lame man (3:1–10)
 - Peter preaches in the temple square (3:11-26)
 - Peter and John witness before the Jewish council (4:1-22)
 - The Christian community prays for boldness in witness (4:23–31)
 - The community shares together (4:32–5:16)
 - The apostles appear before the council (5:17-42)
- The Witness beyond Jerusalem (6:1–12:25)
 - Seven chosen to serve the Hellenist widows (6:1–7)

- Stephen bears the ultimate witness (6:8-8:3)
 - 1. The arrest of Stephen (6:8-15)
 - 2. Stephen's address before the Sanhedrin (7:1-53)
 - 3. The martyrdom of Stephen (7:54-8:3)
- Philip witnesses beyond Jerusalem (8:4–40)
 - 1. Witness to the Samaritans (8:4-25)
 - 2. Witness to an Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-40)
- The conversion of Saul (9:1–31)
 - 1. Saul's encounter with Christ (9:1-9)
 - 2. Saul's encounter with Ananias (9:10-19a)
 - 3. Saul's witness in Damascus and Jerusalem (9:19b-31)
- Peter preaches in the coastal towns (9:32–11:18)
 - 1. Healing of Aeneas and Dorcas (9:32-43)
 - 2. Conversion of Cornelius (10:1-48)
 - 3. Peter's testimony in Jerusalem (11:1–18)
- The Antioch church witnesses to Gentiles (11:19–26)
- The offering for Jerusalem (11:27–30)
- The Jerusalem church is persecuted (12:1–25)
 - 1. The death of James (12:1–5)
 - 2. Peter's deliverance from prison (12:6-19)
 - 3. The death of Herod Agrippa I (12:20-25)
- The Witness in Cyprus and Southern Galatia (13:1–14:28)
 - The Antioch church commissions Paul and Barnabas (13:1–3)
 - Paul and Barnabas witness on Cyprus (13:4–12)
 - Paul preaches in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (13:13–41)
 - Paul turns to the Gentiles (13:42–52)
 - Paul and Barnabas are rejected at Iconium (14:1–7)
 - The two missionaries witness in Lystra (14:8–23)
 - Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch (14:24–28)
- The Jerusalem Council (15:1–35)
 - The circumcision party criticizes the Gentile mission (15:1–5)
 - Peter defends Paul (15:6–11)
 - James proposes a solution (15:12–21)
 - A letter is sent to Antioch (15:22–35)
- The Witness in Greece (15:36–18:22)
 - Paul and Barnabas differ over Mark (15:36–41)

- Timothy joins Paul and is circumcised (16:1–5)
- Paul is called to Macedonia (16:6–10)
- Paul witnesses in Philippi (16:11–40)
 - 1. Conversion of Lydia (16:11-15)
 - 2. Imprisonment of Paul and Silas (16:16-24)
 - 3. Conversion of the jailer (16:25-34)
 - 4. Release of Paul and Silas (16:35-40)
- Paul witnesses in Thessalonica (17:1–9)
- Paul witnesses in Berea (17:10-15)
- Paul witnesses in Athens (17:16–34)
 - 1. Witness in the marketplace (17:16-21)
 - 2. Witness before the Areopagus (17:22-34)
- Paul witnesses in Corinth (18:1-22)
- The Witness in Ephesus (18:23–21:16)
 - Priscilla and Aquila instruct Apollos (18:23–28)
 - Paul encounters disciples of John (19:1–10)
 - Paul encounters false religion at Ephesus (19:11–22)
 - Paul experiences violent opposition at Ephesus (19:23-41)
 - Paul completes his ministry in Greece (20:1–6)
 - Paul travels to Miletus (20:7–16)
 - Paul addresses the Ephesian elders at Miletus (20:17–35)
 - Paul journeys to Jerusalem (20:36–21:16)
- The Arrest in Jerusalem (21:17–23:35)
 - Paul participates in a Nazirite ceremony (21:17–26)
 - An angry mob attacks Paul (21:27–39)
 - Paul addresses the Jewish crowd (21:40-22:21)
 - Paul reveals his Roman citizenship (22:22–29)
 - Paul appears before the Sanhedrin (22:30–23:11)
 - Zealous Jews plot against Paul (23:12–22)
 - Paul is delivered to the governor Felix (23:23–35)
- The Witness in Caesarea (24:1–26:32)
 - Paul appears before Felix (24:1–27)
 - Paul appeals to Caesar (25:1–12)
 - Festus presents the case to King Agrippa II (25:13–22)
 - Paul witnesses to Agrippa II (25:23–26:32)
- The Witness in Rome (27:1–28:31)

- Paul journeys to Rome by sea (27:1–44)
- Paul witnesses on Malta (28:1–10)
- Paul arrives in Rome (28:11–16)
- Paul witnesses to the Jews in Rome (28:17–31)

The Whys and Hows of Marking Bible Text

"Oh, the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" (Romans 11.33-34). If God's mind is inexhaustibly deep and beautiful, a book created by his mind (Scripture) is the same. It is therefore arrogantly ignorant to assume that casual glances at our Bibles can reveal all of its hidden treasures.

Precious resources are mined by digging deep shafts into the ground, not (usually) by skimming the surface of the dirt. The Scriptures operate in the same way, yielding its riches to those who dig into it. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Matt. 7.7). The context of that passage isn't about Bible study, but the principle applies.

I want you to enjoy reading the Creator's words and feel comfortable scribbling all around them. I've designed this workbook according to those goals. The text of each chapter is presented in one continuous paragraph, instead of two columns of separated verses as you see in many Bibles. Verse numbers are still there, but they're engulfed into the paragraph to minimize distractions. There's a two inch margin on the right-hand side of each page. I hope these features help you study! If you don't see the need to study with a pencil/pen, or if you like the idea but don't know how, I've provided some thoughts to consider below.

Why Mark Your Booklet?

- You'll understand it better. Writing uses a different part of the brain than reading, according to a 2015 study conducted by researchers from Rice, Columbia, and Johns Hopkins Universities. If you take the time to write down your thoughts about Scripture while looking at it, you'll process the material twice. Surely we desire to comprehend God's words as completely as we can.
- 2) You'll see more. It's enlightening to hear about someone else's trip to a foreign country. But if you went to the country yourself, you'd gain so much more understanding of that place through first-hand experience! Our interactions with Scripture work the same way. It's useful to listen to someone else explain what they've discovered in their visit to the Bible. It's much more illuminating, however, to go see for yourself. Since Scripture's depth is limitless, we must visit Scripture with our pencils in hand to help us take in the sights and sounds of God's words.

- 3) You'll feel more excited. To use the same traveling analogy again, I felt a thrill when Dennis scrolled through his pictures of Israel. But the pixels on the screen couldn't compare to the excitement of personally discovering the landscape myself. It's one thing to see photos of the Sea of Galilee; it's quite another thing to smell it, splash in it, and boat on it! Personally diving into Scripture with pencil in hand is a similar experience.
- 4) You'll retain it better. I've listened to many excellent sermons and participated in great Bible classes led by thoughtful teachers. My general memory of those teachings are poor, however, compared to my own written interaction with the Biblical text.

How to Mark Your Booklet

- 1) Read each chapter before doing anything else. There's no substitute for this step! Before we can zero in on details, we must have a larger sense of the big picture. Interpretation and application cannot happen until initial observation has taken place.
- 2) Mark divisions in the flow of text. For example, Acts 1 basically divides into vss. 1-11 (Jesus' ascension) and vss. 12-26 (Judas is replaced). You could draw brackets on the outside of the text and write summaries for each section.
- 3) Mark repeating key words/phrases. Note significant repeating words with consistent symbols. For example, Jesus tells his apostles in 1.8 that they will be his "witnesses" in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth. In their sermons and conversations, the apostles will often use that word to identify themselves. Regularly marking the word witnesses (with a "W" or eye symbol, for example) throughout Acts will help you easily see key moments in the book.
- 4) Mark setting indicators. Paying attention to the environment in which a story happens is crucial to understanding the story. You could mark cities (Jerusalem, Samaria) or important landmarks (temple, etc.) to help you keep track of the physical backdrop. If Luke tells us about an event's time of day/year, you could mark that with a clock symbol or a use particular colored pencil.
- 5) Ask questions and record the answers. Ask the text questions like: "Why was this part of the story recorded this way?" "Why am I told about this detail?" "What is the Holy Spirit showing me through this character?" Record your answers in the margins of each page.

Approaching Acts

1)		nce Luke and Acts are both written by Luke and addressed to the same person (Theophilus), need to treat them as a unit.
	a)	Go back and read Luke 1.1-4. Why did Luke write his gospel?
	b)	Read Acts 1.1-8. Why did Luke go on to write the book of Acts?
2)		nce this book is primarily written using the form of narrative (story), we need to spend some ne thinking about how to appreciate this genre.
	a)	What is a narrative? What are the components of a narrative?
	b)	What are some reasons why narratives are told?
	c)	How do you read narratives compared to other types of literature (discourse, poetry, etc.)
	d)	With all these things in mind, how then should we read the narrative of Acts?

1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2 until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3 He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. 4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. 15 In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, 16 "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. 17 For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." 18 (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 "For it is written in the Book of Psalms, "May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it'; and "Let another take his office.' 21 So one of the men who have accompanied

us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." 23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Thought Questions

- 1) Jesus repeats the promise to baptize with the Holy Spirit (vs. 5) which John the Baptist mentioned during his ministry (Luke 3.16). We need to understand the Old Testament background for this amazing promise. Read Isaiah 32.14-18, 44.3-5, Ezekiel 37.13-14, 39.28-29. What would the Holy Spirit do when he came?
- 2) What did the Apostles mean by their question to Jesus in vs. 6?
- 3) After several post-resurrection appearances and disappearances, it seems odd at first glance that Jesus visibly ascended into heaven on a cloud (vs. 9). How does Daniel 7.13-14 (and context) help us understand the huge significance of this moment?
- 4) Why does Peter quote Psalms 69.25 and 109.8 to explain why another apostle needed to take Judas' place? What is going on in David's life as he wrote those Psalms?

5) From Peter's speech, what do we learn about an apostle's necessary background and mission? How does this help us understand whether there are apostles today?

Chapter 2

1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." 12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine." 14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. 19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; 20 the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. 21 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' 22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the

definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 25 For David says concerning him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; 26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. 27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.' 29 "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool." 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." 37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Thought Questions

1)	What is the Old Testament background for this Jewish festival of "Pentecost"? Why do you suppose God chose this day to send the Holy Spirit?
2)	The way the Holy Spirit comes is very interesting. What's the significance of a "mighty rushing wind" and the "divided tongues as of fire"?
3)	Which people did the Holy Spirit come upon? Look carefully.
4)	Luke goes to great lengths to emphasize the various places the Jewish worshippers were from (vss. 5-11). Why? Consider Genesis 11 and Isaiah 2.2-4.
5)	What case is Peter making in this sermon and how does he accomplish his goals?
6)	What exactly was "the gift of the Holy Spirit" that those who were baptized received (vs. 38-39)? How do we apply this to ourselves?
7)	Look carefully at vss. 42-47. How can we make Tyngsboro a stronger church by examining the picture we're given of the Christian community in Jerusalem?

1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. **2** And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. 3 Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. 4 And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." 5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. 8 And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. 11 While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. 12 And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? 13 The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. 14 But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. 16 And his name—by faith in his name —has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all. 17 "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, 20 that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, 21 whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. 22 Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' 24 And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came

after him, also proclaimed these days. **25** You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' **26** God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

Thought Questions

	6 ·
1)	If Peter and John are disciples of Christ and living under a new covenant, why would they continue to go to the temple (the heart of the old covenant system) to pray at the typical Jewish hour?
2)	Considering Acts 2.44-45 and 4.34-35, Peter's statement in vs. 6 of "I have no silver or gold" seems odd. What did he mean by this? Are there broader applications for us?
3)	What are the main points of Peter's sermon to the "utterly astounded" crowd? What are some similarities (or differences) to his message in chapter 2?
4)	Explain what Peter means by the following phrases in vss. 20-21: 1) "That times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord"
	2) "That he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus"
	3) "The time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his prophets

1 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. 5 On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, 6 with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-by him this man is standing before you well. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. 14 But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. 15 But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, 16 saying, "What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name." 18 So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." 21 And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. 22 For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old. 23 When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together

to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, 25 who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'— 27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. 29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." 31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. 32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. 36 Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, 37 sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Thought Questions

- 1) Peter and John faced the Sanhedrin council in this chapter, the highest 1st century Jewish court which condemned Jesus (Luke 22.66). Where have we heard their attacking question before?
- 2) What does it mean that Peter was "filled with the Holy Spirit"? Tie this passage to other related Scriptures to answer.

- 3) Note that Peter's bold response to the council is precisely the opposite of his earlier reaction in the council's courtyard (Luke 22.55-62). What does he now proclaim about Jesus?
- 4) What do we learn about Satan's strategy to stop Christianity from the reaction of the council to this obvious miracle? How did this differ from the containment strategy in Matthew 28.11-14?
- 5) In vss. 25-26, the apostles quote from Psalm 2. What was that psalm originally talking about? How is it being used here? What can we learn as we connect our lives to Acts 4?
- 6) Why are we introduced to Joseph and given these details about his background and actions in the church?

1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." 5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. 6 The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. 7 After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." 9 But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." 10

Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things. 12 Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. 13 None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. 14 And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15 so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. 16 The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. 17 But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy 18 they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20 "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." 21 And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach. Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council, all the senate of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, 23 "We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside." 24 Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to. 25 And someone came and told them, "Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." 26 Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, 28 saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." 33 When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. 34 But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people,

stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. **35** And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. **36** For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. **37** After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. **38** So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; **39** but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!" So they took his advice, **40** and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. **41** Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. **42** And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

Thought Questions

- 1) Although the Sanhedrin were not killed by God for attempting to suppress his apostles, Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead on the spot. Why?
- 2) The text twice mentions the fear that came upon those who heard of this event (vss. 5, 11). Why is this emphasized? You might consider Acts 9.31 in your answer.
- 3) The thoughts of vs. 14 are a common theme in Acts (6.7, 9.31, 12.24). Why does Luke keep pointing out that the Christians multiplied? Consider Genesis 1.28 in your answer. Applications?

- 4) What is the significance of the miracle that happens? What is the Lord communicating both to his people and to his enemies?
- 5) The temple guard feared the people (vs. 26), just like the Jewish leadership had feared the people in Jesus' time (Luke 20.19, 22.2, Matthew 21.26). What do we learn from this chapter about the fear of man vs. the fear of God?
- 6) How does the wise counsel of Gamaliel fit into Luke's purpose in writing Acts?

1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. 2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. 8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. 10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. 11 Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 12 And they stirred up the people and

the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, 13 and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, 14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us." 15 And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Thought Questions

1)	The serious internal issue in the first verse had the potential to split the fledgling church apart. Look carefully at how the apostles handled this. What are some principles we can learn about congregational roles?
2)	Why are we told the particular background of the Jews who rose against Stephen? Based on the charges against him, can you reconstruct what he was teaching?
3)	How are the Jewish enemies of Stephen repeating the same serious mistakes that Ahab & Jezebel made in 1 Kings 21?
4)	Note the "gazing" that's happening in 6.15 and 7.55. Consider Exodus 34.29-35 and 2 Corinthians 3.7-16 and connect it to this passage. How are Stephen and the council like Moses

and the Israelites? What can we apply to ourselves?

1 And the high priest said, "Are these things so?" 2 And Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, 3 and said to him, 'Go out from your land and from your kindred and go into the land that I will show you.' 4 Then he went out from the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living. 5 Yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as a possession and to his offspring after him, though he had no child. 6 And God spoke to this effect—that his offspring would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years. 7 'But I will judge the nation that they serve,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.' 8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs. 9 "And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him 10 and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household. 11 Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers on their first visit. 13 And on the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. 14 And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all. 15 And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, 16 and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. 17 "But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt 18 until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph. 19 He dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive. 20 At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house, 21 and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. 22 And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds. 23 "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of them being

wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. 25 He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. 26 And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?' 27 But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' 29 At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. 30 "Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord: 32 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and did not dare to look. **33** Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. 34 I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.' 35 "This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. 37 This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.' 38 This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us. 39 Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron, 'Make for us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. 42 But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: "Did you bring to me slain beasts and sacrifices, during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? 43 You took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship; and I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.' 44 "Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen. 45 Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers. So it was until the

days of David, 46 who found favor in the sight of God and asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. 47 But it was Solomon who built a house for him. 48 Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says, 49 "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? 50 Did not my hand make all these things?' 51 "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, 53 you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." 54 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. 55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. 58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Thought Questions

- 1) Since the Sanhedrin already knew the history of the Jewish people, why did Stephen's sermon mainly involve retelling the story of Israel? What's the Holy Spirit revealing to the council?
- 2) Can you outline Stephen's sermon and break down the way his points are made?

- 3) When we see a direct quotation from the Old Testament, God wants us to understand the whole context of where it comes from, not just the little snippet of quote itself. Stephen quotes from Amos 5.25-27 in vss. 42-23. Glance over that general part of Amos. What do you see there that fits the situation in Acts 7?
- 4) In vs. 49, he quotes Psalm 11.4. Read this short psalm of David and summarize the main points of it. What is the context that Stephen is bringing in to his sermon?
- 5) As the chapter closes, how do Stephen's actions remind us of what Jesus did? How can we apply this?

1 And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. 4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. 6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8 So there was much joy in that city. 9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. 10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." 11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and

women. 13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed. 14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." 24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me." 25 Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans. 26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. 27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. 33 In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." 34 And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. **36** And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" 38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the

Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. **40** But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Thought Questions

1)	This chapter opens bleakly. Stephen is dead, a massive persecution begins, and the Christians are forced to flee. Yet, God works through it all to accomplish His purposes! Do you see any similarities between what Stephen preaches and what happens in chapter 8?
2)	This is not the first time that Luke has written about Samaritans. Read back over Luke 9.51-56, 10.33, 17.16. What role(s) do Samaritans play in Luke's gospel?
3)	It's interesting that Luke keeps noting who people "paid attention to" (8.6, 10, 11). Why?
4)	What do we learn about miraculous spiritual gifts and the Holy Spirit from Peter and John's coming to Samaria?
5)	I'm always taken aback when I read Peter's violent reaction to Simon's request. What are we supposed to learn about the Holy Spirit, sin, and repentance from this situation?
5)	How does this narrative of Philip and the eunuch fit into Luke's purposes for writing Acts? Be sure to look at Isaiah 56.3-8 in your answer.

7) From the eunuch's conversation with Philip, what do we learn about how to teach someone else the gospel?

Chapter 9

1 But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. 4 And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" 5 And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6 But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. 8 Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. 10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 11 And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." 13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." 17 So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; 19 and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. 20 And

immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." 21 And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?" 22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ. 23 When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, 24 but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, 25 but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. 26 And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. 28 So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. 30 And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. 31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. 32 Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. 35 And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. 36 Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. 37 In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. 38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay." 39 So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. 43 And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.

Thought Questions

)	Vs. 2 is the first time in Acts that the early church is called "the Way" (c.f. Acts 19.9, 23, 24.22, etc.). Why do you suppose Christians referred to themselves by this name?
2)	Although Jesus himself appears to Saul, he doesn't really give him any teaching or instructions (other than to go into the city). Instead, Jesus sends a (rather unwilling!) disciple to teach Saul and baptize him. What do we learn for our own lives concerning our roles as messengers?
3)	What's the significance of Saul's miraculous three-day blindness before his conversion to Jesus? How can we apply this, either to ourselves or to the people we teach?
4)	How does God's mission for Saul connect to Luke's larger purpose in writing the book of Acts?
5)	In what ways did the conversion of Saul glorify Jesus? Make a list from this chapter.
5)	In vs. 27, Barnabas (son of encouragement) plays a key role in connecting Saul to the Jerusalem church. What do we learn about the importance of joining other disciples and how that's done?
7)	Beginning in vs. 32, the narrative shifts back to Peter. Why are we told about what he does in Lydda and Joppa?

Chapter 10

1 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, **2** a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. 3 About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." 4 And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. 6 He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." 7 When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, 8 and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. 9 The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. 10 And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance 11 and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. 12 In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." 14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." 15 And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common." 16 This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. 17 Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate 18 and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. 19 And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. 20 Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." 21 And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?" 22 And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." 23 So he invited them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. 24 And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. 26 But Peter lifted him up,

saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." 27 And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. 28 And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. 29 So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me." 30 And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing 31 and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.' 33 So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." 34 So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. 36 As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), 37 you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, 40 but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, 41 not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. 43 To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." 44 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. 45 And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. 46 For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, 47 "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

Thought Questions

1)	Cornelius was a Roman centurion. Where have we read about centurions before in the New Testament and what do we notice about how they're portrayed to us?
2)	What do we learn about God from the fact that he answers the prayers of Cornelius? Consider Jesus' words in Matthew 5.7-11.
3)	Why did God gives Peter an elaborate vision instead of simply dropping him on Cornelius' doorstep and commanding him to preach? Have we seen Jesus teach in this kind of way before?
4)	From the preparations Cornelius made, his reaction when Peter came in, and his comments in vss. 30-33, what kind of heart does Cornelius show?
5)	How did Peter tailor his presentation of the gospel to his particular audience?
6)	Why did the Holy Spirit fall on the people in Cornelius' home? How did that fit with the events of Acts 2?

Chapter 11

1 Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, 3 "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." 4 But Peter began and explained it to them in order: 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. 6 Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' 8 But I said, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' 9 But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has made clean, do not call common.' 10 This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. 11 And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. 12 And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. 13 And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; 14 he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' 15 As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" 18 When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life." 19 Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. 22 The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, 24 for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. 25 So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people.

And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. 27 Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). 29 So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. 30 And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

	Thought Questions		
1)	Why did Peter receive criticism about eating with uncircumcised people? Why was that such a big deal? Think about Galatians 2.11-14 as your answer.		
2)	In Peter's retelling of his experience, what tactics/arguments does he use to convince his fellow Jews that God wanted Gentiles included in the spiritual family?		
3)	The reaction of the Jewish Christians was admirable in vs. 18. What can we learn from their example?		
4)	Consult a Bible dictionary for some background information about the city of Antioch of Syria and record your observations. What was it like, how many people did it have, etc.?		
5)	In 11.19-30, Luke gives us a glimpse into the origin and atmosphere of one of the most prominent congregations in Acts, the church in Antioch. What is this church's personality? What are its		

characteristics?

Chapter 12

1 About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. 2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword, 3 and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. 4 And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. 6 Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. 8 And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." 9 And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. 10 When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. 11 When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting." 12 When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. 13 And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14 Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. 15 They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" 16 But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed. 17 But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place. 18 Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. 19 And after Herod searched for him and did not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time there. 20 Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord,

and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. 21 On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. 22 And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" 23 Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last. 24 But the word of God increased and multiplied. 25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark.

Thought Questions

1)	Which "Herod the king" is this? Consult a Bible dictionary and record some details about him.
2)	Interestingly, Luke tells us the time of year in which Herod killed James and arrested John. Why?
3)	Why did the Lord allow James to die, but sent an angel to save Peter from death?

4) The stories of Peter's rescue and Herod's death are placed back to back by Luke. What is the

Holy Spirit showing us?