

An Interactive Life Application Bible Study of the Acts of the Apostles for Small Groups

Key: Blue = New Testament Red = Words of Jesus

Green = Old Testament Quotes

Lesson 34.

1. Background: As lesson 33 ended, Paul was in Rome where a large group of Jews were invited to hear Paul's account of his journey and of his faith. Some were persuaded and others would not believe Paul's message.

2. Paul's witness in Rome

Acts 28:25-30 After they had argued back and forth among themselves, they left with this final word from Paul: "The Holy Spirit was right when he said to your ancestors through Isaiah the prophet,

²⁶ 'Go and say to this people:

When you hear what I say,
you will not understand.

When you see what I do,
you will not comprehend.

²⁷ For the hearts of these people are hardened,
and their ears cannot hear,
and they have closed their eyes—

so their eyes cannot see,
and their ears cannot hear,
and their hearts cannot understand,

and they cannot turn to me

and let me heal them.' [Isaiah 6:9-10 Greek Version]

²⁸ So I want you to know that this salvation from God has also been offered to the Gentiles, and they will accept it."

[Some manuscripts add verse 29: And when he had said these words the Jews departed, greatly disagreeing with each other] ³⁰

For the next two years, Paul lived in Rome at his own expense. He welcomed all who visited him, boldly proclaiming the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. And no one tried to stop him.

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3. Discussion: (a) How did Paul respond to those Jews who failed to accept his message? (b) According to Isaiah what consequences result when God's Chosen People refuse to receive his message? (c) Why do you think Gentiles have often been more willing to receive the message about Jesus as Messiah, than have the Jews? (d) Based upon the last words about Paul in the Book of Acts, how would you describe what Paul must have accomplished during the rest of his life? (e) If someone were to write the story of your life after you die, what kinds of things do you hope they will be able to write?

4. The rest of the story

After planting many churches in various parts of the Roman Empire, Paul wrote letters to guide and encourage the new believers and their leaders in those churches. Much of the New Testament is made up of those letters. Paul's New Testament writings include the following letters: 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, as well as personal letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Some think Paul may have possibly written the book to the Hebrews (although other authors are more likely). Why might the guidance Paul gave to those early churches still be helpful to today's churches?

5. What is important about each of these events?

- a. How Jesus ended his earthly ministry. (Acts Chapter 1)
- b. The Holy Spirit carried on the ministry of Jesus. (Ch. 2)
- c. What miracles continued to happen among God's people?
- d. Peter & John did miracles, preached & faced critics (3-5)
- e. How the Church resolved favoritism between Greek and Hebrew speaking widows. (6)
- f. Steven's arrest and martyrdom. (6-8)
- g. How persecution scattered and spread the Church. (9-12)

- h. Saul's conversion to become the missionary, Paul. (9)
- i. Peter's ministry on the Mediterranean coast.
Aeneas, Dorcas, Cornelius (9-10)
- j. The Jewish/Gentile Church at Antioch. (11)
- k. King Herod persecuted the Church and his death. (12)
- l. Paul led the Church's expansion toward Rome. (13-28)
- m. -missionary journey through Phrygia and Galatia. (13-15)
- n. The Jerusalem conference about the Gentile Church. (15)
- o. Paul's 2nd missionary journey (Macedonia). (15-18)
- p. Paul's 3rd journey. (18-21)
- q. Paul arrested, imprisoned & tried in Jerusalem. (21-23)
- r. Paul's journey from Caesarea to Rome. (23-28)
- s. Paul imprisoned in Caesarea. (24)
- t. Paul's trial before Governor Felix. (24)
- u. Paul's trial before Governor Festus. (25)
- v. Paul's hearing before Festus and King Agrippa. (25-26)
- w. Paul's voyage to Rome (and the shipwreck). (27-28)
- x. Paul's 2 years under house arrest in Rome. (28)

6. What do you most want to remember from Acts?

Discuss with your group the following lessons that you believe will most impact your life from the Book of Acts.

- a. How the stories in Acts will help you face trials?
- b. How Acts will help you have a closer walk with Jesus?
- c. How you will view the Church (what it is and can be)?
- d. How your faith has been strengthened?
- e. How you can have a positive effect upon injustice?
- f. How you will view your need for the Holy Spirit?
- g. What you will expect the Holy Spirit to do through you?