

The Acts of the Apostles



Volume 1: Chapters 1-12 **A Self Study Guide**

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Directions:

This is a booklet to aid you in your personal study of this book. Read through the text first, discovering God's precious truths for yourself. Write down the main point of each section of text and note the other key themes in the space provided. The text is provided for you to mark, color, and highlight things you find interesting and important. Use the margins on each side of the text and the backside of the page to make notations of the truths you discover and passages you do not understand. When you believe you have seen all there is in text, read and answer the questions in the booklet pertaining to that section of text. The questions are not an exhaustive list of things to look for in the text. The questions are to help you consider the points that the author was trying to convey to his audience. Be prepared to share your findings in class.

Introduction:

1. Read through Acts in one sitting. This will help you see the book as a whole unit. Note places in your Bible where there is a natural division in the book, i.e. changes in subject, emphasis, or thought. As you read through the book, use colored pencils to highlight and make notations. Mark any phrases or thoughts that give you an overall impression as to the theme of the book.
2. Jot down key words or phrases as well as key verses that show the themes of Acts.
3. Who wrote the book of Acts? How do you know?
4. Survey:
 - a. What is the purpose of the book of Acts?
 - b. There are a number of ways to outline the book of Acts. Fill in the charts below to determine the different ways to examine the book.

Geographically:

Acts 1-7:

Acts 8-12:

Acts 13-28:

Key Audience:

Acts 1-7:

Acts 8-9:

Acts 10-28:

Apostolic Focus:

Acts 1-12:

Acts 13-28:

1:1 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.

1:1 I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach
 2 until the day He was taken up, after He had given orders through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen.
 3 After He had suffered, He also presented Himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God.
 4 While He was together with them, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father’s promise. “This,” He said, “is what 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, are You restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?”
 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority.
 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
 9 After He had said this, He was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took Him out of their sight.
 10 While He was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them.
 11 They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen Him going into heaven.”
 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem—a Sabbath day’s journey away.
 13 When they arrived, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.
 14 All these were continually united in prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.
 15 During these days Peter stood up among the brothers—the number of people who were together was about 120—and said:
 16 “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David spoke in advance about Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.
 17 For he was one of our number and was allotted a share in this ministry.”
 18 Now this man acquired a field with his unrighteous wages. He fell headfirst and burst open in the middle, and all his insides spilled out.

1:1-11 Main point: _____
Other key themes:

1. How long did Jesus appear to people before His ascension? What was Jesus teaching before His ascension?
2. In verse 5, Jesus reiterates the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Read Isaiah 32:14-18; Isaiah 44:3-5; Ezekiel 37:13-14; Ezekiel 39:28-29. What was expected to happen when the Holy Spirit came?

Read Matthew 3:7-12. What was going to happen when the Holy Spirit came?

Looking again at Acts 1, when did Jesus say the baptism of the Holy Spirit would take place?

3. In light of your above answers, explain what the apostles are asking in verse 6.
4. Explain Jesus' response to the apostles' question. Does Jesus correct their understanding or does Jesus validate their question?
5. Read Daniel 7:13-14. How does Jesus' ascension fit the message of the arrival of his kingdom?

1:12-26 Main point: _____
Other key themes:

5. List the qualifications of an apostle, according to this text:
6. Are there any apostles today? Why or why not?
7. How many are gathered together here? Name some of the notable people who are gathered besides the apostles:

1:19 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.

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.”

1:19 This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that in their own language that field is called Hakeldama (that is, Field of Blood).

20 “For it is written in the Book of Psalms: Let his dwelling become desolate; let no one live in it; and Let someone else take his position.

21 “Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—

22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day He was taken up from us—from among these, it is necessary that one become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

23 So they proposed two: Joseph, called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias.

24 Then they prayed, “You, Lord, know the hearts of all; show which of these two You have chosen

25 to take the place in this apostolic service that Judas left to go to his own place.”

26 Then they cast lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias. So he was numbered with the 11 apostles.

2:1 When the day of Pentecost had arrived, they were all together in one place.

2 Suddenly a sound like that of a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were staying.

3 And tongues, like flames of fire that were divided, appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

4 Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit gave them ability for speech.

5 There were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.

6 When this sound occurred, a crowd came together and was confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

7 And they were astounded and amazed, saying, “Look, aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?

8 How is it that each of us can hear in our own native language?

9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites; those who live in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking the magnificent acts of God in our own languages.”

12 They were all astounded and perplexed, saying to one another, “What could this be?”

13 But some sneered and said, “They’re full of new wine!”

8. Peter quotes Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8 to draw the conclusion to appoint another apostle. Read Psalm 109 in its entirety. What was happening in David's life in this psalm that Peter would draw a parallel to the events of Judas and Jesus?

ACTS

2

2:1-13 Main point: _____
Other key themes:

1. What is Pentecost? What was this festival called in the Old Testament? When was this festival observed? Why is this festival important to the passage?
2. Why "tongues as of fire?" Do some research and find out what you can about what tongues of fires might have signified.
3. Who, exactly, did the Holy Spirit fall on? Give arguments to back up your answer.
4. Why is it noted that the Jews "from every nation under heaven" are here in Jerusalem? Read Isaiah 2:2-4. What is supposed to happen in Jerusalem? What will be established? Who will accomplish these things?

2:14 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.”

2:14 But Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them: “Men of Judah and all you residents of Jerusalem, let me explain this to you and pay attention to my words.

15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it’s only nine in the morning.

16 On the contrary, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 And it will be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all humanity; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.

18 I will even pour out My Spirit on My male and female slaves in those days, and they will prophesy.

19 I will display wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below: blood and fire and a cloud of smoke.

20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and remarkable Day of the Lord comes.

21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

22 “Men of Israel, listen to these words: This Jesus the Nazarene was a man pointed out to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did among you through Him, just as you yourselves know.

23 Though He was delivered up according to God’s determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail Him to a cross and kill Him.

24 God raised Him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

25 For David says of Him: I saw the Lord ever before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

26 Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced. Moreover, my flesh will rest in hope,

27 because You will not leave me in Hades or allow Your Holy One to see decay.

28 You have revealed the paths of life to me; You will fill me with gladness in Your presence.

29 “Brothers, I can confidently speak to you about the patriarch David: He is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

30 Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn an oath to him to seat one of his descendants on his throne.

31 Seeing this in advance, he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Messiah: He was not left in Hades, and His flesh did not experience decay.

32 “God has resurrected this Jesus. We are all witnesses of this.

33 Therefore, since He has been exalted to the right hand of God and has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, He has poured out what you both see and hear.

34 For it was not David who ascended into the heavens, but he himself says: The Lord declared to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand

35 until I make Your enemies Your footstool.’

36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah!”

2:14-28 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

5. How many people stand up and begin preaching? How many people had the Holy Spirit fall on them?
6. How were these events of Pentecost the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (2:16-21)?
7. How were the events surrounding Jesus and the events of Pentecost the fulfillment of David's prophecy?

2:29-36 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

8. Now that you have read all of Peter's sermon, write down the key points of his message.
9. Upon ascending to the Father, what does Peter say that Christ received (2:33)? Explain exactly what Christ received, based on what you have learned so far in Acts 1-2.
10. What is the "this" that was poured out that the people were "seeing and hearing?" How does this fit Peter's quoted prophecies? How do these events prove that the Jesus who they crucified as been raised up and made the Lord (master) and Christ (anointed king)?

ESV

2:37 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.

ESV

3:1 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.

HCSB

2:37 When they heard this, they came under deep conviction and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: “Brothers, what must we do?”

38 “Repent,” Peter said to them, “and be baptized, each 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, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

40 And with many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt generation!”

41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about 3,000 people were added to them.

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers.

43 Then fear came over everyone, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles.

44 Now all the believers were together and held all things in common.

45 They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as anyone had a need.

46 Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple complex, and broke bread from house to house.

They ate their food with a joyful and humble attitude,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to them those who were being saved.

HCSB

3:1 Now Peter and John were going up together to the temple complex at the hour of prayer at three in the afternoon.

2 And a man who was lame from birth was carried there and placed every day at the temple gate called Beautiful, so he could beg from those entering the temple complex.

3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple complex, he asked for help.

4 Peter, along with John, looked at him intently and said, “Look at us.”

5 So he turned to them, expecting to get something from them.

6 But Peter said, “I don’t have silver or gold, but what I have, I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!”

7 Then, taking him by the right hand he raised him up, and at once his feet and ankles became strong.

8 So he jumped up, stood, and started to walk, and he entered the temple complex with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.

2:37-47 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

11. What was the gift of the Holy Spirit that had been promised to Jews and to the Gentiles? How does this answer fit with what you have studied about the Holy Spirit in these first two chapters so far?
12. How does Peter's exhortation to the people to "save themselves" fit the prophecy of Joel, quoted by Peter in Acts 2:17-21? In other words, what were the people saving themselves from?
13. What were the people being added to when they were saved (vs. 47)? How does this fit the gift of the Holy Spirit which had been promised by the prophets?

ACTS

3

3:1-8 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

1. Notice Peter's response in verse 6. Considering what we have read in Acts 2:44-45 and what we will read in Acts 4:34-35, why does Peter say that he does not have silver and gold?
2. What does the miracle prove about the apostles?

3:9 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."

3:9 All the people saw him walking and praising God,
 10 and they recognized that he was the one who used to sit and beg at the Beautiful Gate of the temple complex. So they were filled with awe and astonishment at what had happened to him.
 11 While he was holding on to Peter and John, all the people, greatly amazed, ran toward them in what is called Solomon's Colonnade.
 12 When Peter saw this, he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this? Or why do you stare at us, as though we had made him walk by our own power or godliness?
 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you handed 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 to have a murderer given to you.
 15 You killed the source of life, whom God raised from the dead; we are witnesses of this.
 16 By faith in His name, His name has made this man strong, whom you see and know. So the faith that comes through Him has given him this perfect health in front of all of you.
 17 "And now, brothers, I know that you did it in ignorance, just as your leaders also did.
 18 But what God predicted through the mouth of all the prophets—that His Messiah would suffer—He has fulfilled in this way.
 19 Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,
 20 and that He may send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah.
 21 Heaven must welcome Him until the times of the restoration of all things, which God spoke about by the mouth of His holy prophets from the beginning.
 22 Moses said: The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to Him in everything He will say to you.
 23 And everyone who will not listen to that Prophet will be completely cut off from the people.
 24 "In addition, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, have also announced these days.
 25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, And all the families of the earth will be blessed through your offspring.
 26 God raised up His Servant and sent Him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways."

3:9-26 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

3. Based on verse 19, explain repentance. Notice that Peter commands the people to do two things: (1) repent and (2) turn. What is repentance? Is Peter being redundant?

4. Peter says that the people's repentance had a purpose. Explain the following terms Peter uses:

He may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus

Times of restoration of all things:

5. Explain verse 21. What is the times of the restoration of all things? Consider passages like 1 Corinthians 15:23-28; Daniel 7:26-27; Revelation 20:7-10.

6. How do your above answers fit into the prophecies of Moses and all the prophets from Samuel on (3:18, 21-24)?

4:1 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.

4:1 Now as they were speaking to the people, the priests, the commander of the temple police, and the Sadducees confronted them,

2 because they were provoked that they were teaching the people and proclaiming the resurrection from the dead, using Jesus as the example.

3 So they seized them and put them in custody until the next day, since it was already evening.

4 But many of those who heard the message believed, and the number of the men came to about 5,000.

5 The next day, their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem

6 with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John and Alexander, and all the members of the high-priestly family.

7 After they had Peter and John stand before them, they asked the question: “By what power or in what name have you done this?”

8 Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders:

9 If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a disabled man—by what means he was healed—

10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead—by Him this man is standing here before you healthy.

11 This Jesus is the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone.

12 There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people, and we must be saved by it.”

13 When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus.

14 And since they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in response.

15 After they had ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, they conferred among themselves,

16 saying, “What should we do with these men? For an obvious sign, evident to all who live in Jerusalem, has been done through them, and we cannot deny it!

17 However, so this does not spread any further among the people, let’s threaten them against speaking to anyone in this name again.”

18 So they called for them and ordered them not to preach or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it’s right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide;

20 for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

21 After threatening them further, they released them. They found no way to punish them, because the people were all giving glory to God over what had been done;

22 for this sign of healing had been performed on a man over 40 years old.

4:1-12 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

KEY INFORMATION:

The Sanhedrin was the highest Jewish council in the first century. The word Sanhedrin is usually translated "council" in most versions. The Council had seventy-one members over which a high priest presided. The Sanhedrin included both of the main Jewish parties, Sadducees and Pharisees, among its membership. Since the high priest presided, the Sadducean priestly party seems to have been predominant, but some leading Pharisees also were members.

1. Who does Luke record as being the high priest? Who is the high priest in the gospels that has Jesus killed? How do we reconcile these two different people? Consider John 18:12-14 also.
2. What does it mean that Peter was "filled with the Holy Spirit" in verse 8? Use other scriptures to explain your answer.
3. What was the miracle of healing the lame man supposed to prove (4:9-10)?
4. Could the miracle be denied (4:13-14)?
5. Explain verses 11-12. Are there many ways of salvation? Are there many paths to God?

4:13-22 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

6. The Sanhedrin perceives that Peter and John were "uneducated, common men." What does this mean? Were Peter and John unqualified to be apostles? Does this mean they were ignorant?
7. Explain the response of the Sanhedrin. The miracle is undeniable, yet they do not believe. Why will they not believe in Jesus even though they accept the validity of the miracle?
8. What important lesson do we learn in verses 19-20? Think of some situations where you would need to apply this principle in your life.

ESV

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.

HCSB

23 After they were released, they went to their own people and reported everything the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

24 When they heard this, they all raised their voices to God and said, “Master, You are the One who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and everything in them.

25 You said through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David Your servant: Why did the Gentiles rage and the peoples plot futile things?

26 The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers assembled together against the Lord and against His Messiah.

27 “For, in fact, in this city both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, assembled together against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed,

28 to do whatever Your hand and Your plan had predestined to take place.

29 And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that Your slaves may speak Your message with complete boldness,

30 while You stretch out Your hand for healing, signs, and wonders to be performed through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”

31 When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak God’s message with boldness.

32 Now the large group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one said that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common.

33 And the apostles were giving testimony with great power to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on all of them.

34 For there was not a needy person among them, because all those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,

35 and laid them at the apostles’ feet. This was then distributed for each person’s basic needs.

36 Joseph, a Levite and a Cypriot by birth, the one the apostles called Barnabas, which is translated Son of Encouragement,

37 sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.

4:22-37 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

9. Explain how David's prophecy, quoted in verses 25-26, was fulfilled here. Is this what the original prophecy was speaking about? What was the message of the original prophecy? How does it apply here?

10. Explain what the disciples are praying for. What lessons do we learn?

11. At the conclusion of the scene, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (vs. 31). What exactly does it mean that they were filled with the Holy Spirit? What happened?

12. Describe the circumstances and conditions of living for the first century Christians (4:32-35)

13. Who is Joses? Why is his name changed? Where is he from? What tribe is he from?

5:1 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.

5:1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property.
 2 However, he kept back part of the proceeds with his wife's knowledge, and brought a portion of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.
 3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds from the field?
 4 Wasn't it yours while you possessed it? And after it was sold, wasn't it at your disposal? Why is it that you planned this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God!"
 5 When he heard these words, Ananias dropped dead, and a great fear came on all who heard.
 6 The young men got up, wrapped his body, carried him out, and buried him.
 7 There was an interval of about three hours; then his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.
 8 "Tell me," Peter asked her, "did you sell the field for this price?" "Yes," she said, "for that price."
 9 Then Peter said to her, "Why did you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out!"
 10 Instantly she dropped dead at his feet. When the young men came in, they found her dead, carried her out, and buried her beside her husband.
 11 Then great fear came on the whole church and on all who heard these things.
 12 Many signs and wonders were being done among the people through the hands of the apostles. By common consent they would all meet in Solomon's Colonnade.
 13 None of the rest dared to join them, but the people praised them highly.
 14 Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers—crowds of both men and women.
 15 As a result, they would carry the sick out into the streets and lay them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them.
 16 In addition, a large group came together from the towns surrounding Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.
 17 Then the high priest took action. He and all his colleagues, those who belonged to the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.
 18 So they arrested the apostles and put them in the city jail.

5:1-18 Main point: _____
Other key themes:

1. How does the information about what Barnabas did in the last chapter tie into what Ananias and Sapphira did?
2. Write down everything we learn from the story of Ananias and Sapphira:
3. Why, exactly, did God kill Ananias and Sapphira for lying?
4. Note the two instances where the scriptures say that "great fear came upon" the people. Write down the reason for the people's fear.
5. What does it mean that Ananias and Sapphira "tested the Spirit of the Lord?"
6. Who was performing the miracles, according to the text?
7. Why did no one dare to join with the apostles?
8. Explain the actions of the multitudes in verses 15-16:

5:19 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.

5:19 But an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail during the night, brought them out, and said,
 20 “Go and stand in the temple complex, and tell the people all about this life.”
 21 In obedience to this, they entered the temple complex at daybreak and began to teach. When the high priest and those who were with him arrived, they convened the Sanhedrin—the full Senate of the sons of Israel—and sent orders to the jail to have them brought.
 22 But when the temple police got there, they did not find them in the jail, so they returned and reported,
 23 “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing in front of the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside!”
 24 As the commander of the temple police and the chief priests heard these things, they were baffled about them, as to what could come of this.
 25 Someone came and reported to them, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple complex and teaching the people.”
 26 Then the commander went with the temple police and brought them in without force, because they were afraid the people might stone them.
 27 After they brought them in, they had them stand before the Sanhedrin, and the high priest asked,
 28 “Didn’t we strictly order you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to bring this man’s blood on us!”
 29 But Peter and the apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than men.
 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had murdered by hanging Him on a tree.
 31 God exalted this man to His right hand as ruler and Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.
 32 We are witnesses of 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.

5:19-33 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

9. What were the apostles commanded to do when they were released from prison by the angel? Would you have obeyed the angel's command?

10. Explain the miracle that takes place. What makes this a miracle?

11. Why weren't the apostles arrested by force? What does this tell you about the crowds?

12. Read verse 28 carefully. Then write down what the apostles must have been preaching in the temple courts.

13. Explain the apostles' defense before the Sanhedrin in verses 29-32:

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.

6:1 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.

34 A Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was respected by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered the men to be taken outside for a little while.

35 He said to them, “Men of Israel, be careful about what you’re going to do to these men.

36 Not long ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about 400 men rallied to him. He was killed, and all his partisans were dispersed and came to nothing.

37 After this man, Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and attracted a following. That man also perished, and all his partisans were scattered.

38 And now, I tell you, stay away from these men and leave them alone. For if this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown;

39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even be found fighting against God.” So they were persuaded by him.

40 After they called in the apostles and had them flogged, they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and released them.

41 Then they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be dishonored on behalf of the Name.

42 Every day in the temple complex, and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

6:1 In those days, as the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint by the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution.

2 Then the Twelve summoned the whole company of the disciples and said, “It would not be right for us to give up preaching about God to handle financial matters.

3 Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty.

4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the preaching ministry.”

5 The proposal pleased the whole company. So they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte from Antioch.

6 They had them stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 So the preaching about God flourished, the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith.

5:34-42 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

14. What is the instruction of Gamaliel? Why is this good counsel?

15. What historical events is Gamaliel describing in his advice?

16. What happened to the apostles? What was the reaction of the apostles?

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6:1-7 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

1. Describe the problem that is happening with the widows:

2. What is the solution the apostles give?

3. What important lessons do we learn from the apostles' solution and their answer in verse 2?

a. Apply those lessons to the elders:

b. Apply those lessons to the evangelist:

6:8 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.

7:1 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

6:8 Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then some from what is called the Freedmen's Synagogue, composed of both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, came forward and disputed with Stephen. 10 But they were unable to stand up against his wisdom and the Spirit by whom he was speaking.

11 Then they persuaded some men to say, "We heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and God!" 12 They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; so they came, dragged him off, and took him to the Sanhedrin. 13 They also presented false witnesses who said, "This man does not stop speaking blasphemous words against this holy place and the law. 14 For we heard him say that Jesus, this Nazarene, will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us." 15 And all who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at him and saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

7:1 "Is this true?" the high priest asked.

2 "Brothers and fathers," he said, "listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in Haran,

3 and said to him: Get out of your country and away from your relatives, and come to the land that I will show you.

4 "Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to this land you now live in. 5 He didn't give him an inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground, but He promised to give it to him as a possession, and to his descendants after him, even though he was childless.

6 God spoke in this way: His descendants would be strangers in a foreign country, and they would enslave and oppress them 400 years.

7 I will judge the nation that they will serve as slaves, God said. After this, they will come out and worship Me in this place.

8 Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision. After this, he fathered Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; Isaac did the same with Jacob, and Jacob with the 12 patriarchs.

9 "The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt, but God was with him 10 and rescued him out of all his troubles. He gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him ruler over Egypt and over his whole household. 11 Then a famine and great suffering came over all of Egypt and Canaan, and our ancestors could find no food. 12 When Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, he sent our ancestors the first time. 13 The second time, Joseph was revealed to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. 14 Joseph then invited his father Jacob and all his relatives, 75 people in all, 15 and Jacob went down to Egypt. He and our ancestors died there, 16 were carried back to Shechem

6:8-15 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

4. What are the charges against Stephen?

5. Based upon these charges, what do you think Stephen was preaching?

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7:1-16 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

1. Why do you think Stephen begins his defense against these charges by starting with the history of Israel?
Certainly the Sanhedrin knows their history.

2. What are some key themes and points thus far in Stephen's defense?

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

and were placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

17 “As the time was drawing near to fulfill the promise that God had made to Abraham, the people flourished and multiplied in Egypt 18 until a different king who did not know Joseph ruled over Egypt. 19 He dealt deceitfully with our race and oppressed our ancestors by making them leave their infants outside, so they wouldn’t survive. 20 At this time Moses was born, and he was beautiful in God’s sight. He was cared for in his father’s home three months, 21 and when he was left outside, Pharaoh’s daughter adopted and raised him as her own son. 22 So Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his speech and actions.

23 “As he was approaching the age of 40, he decided to visit his brothers, the Israelites. 24 When he saw one of them being mistreated, he came to his rescue and avenged the oppressed man by striking down the Egyptian. 25 He assumed his brothers would understand that God would give them deliverance through him, but they did not understand. 26 The next day he showed up while they were fighting and tried to reconcile them peacefully, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers. Why are you mistreating each other?’

27 “But the one who was mistreating his neighbor pushed him away, saying: Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Do you want to kill me, the same way you killed the Egyptian yesterday?

29 “At this disclosure, Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he fathered two sons. 30 After 40 years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight. As he was approaching to look at it, the voice of the Lord came: 32 I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. So Moses began to tremble and did not dare to look.

33 “Then the Lord said to him: Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. 34 I have observed the oppression of My people in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to rescue them. And now, come, I will send you to Egypt. 35 “This Moses, whom they rejected when they said, Who appointed you a ruler and a judge?—this one God sent as a ruler and a redeemer by means of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 This man led them out and performed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness 40 years.

37 “This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your brothers. 38 He is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors. He received living

7:17-41 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

3. What does Moses' life story have to do with Stephen's defense? What is Stephen trying to prove by relating these points from Moses' life?

4. Key on verse 35 and explain what Stephen is pointing out here:

5. Key on verse 36 and explain what Stephen is pointing out here:

6. Key on verse 39 and explain what Stephen is arguing:

7. Write down other key themes in Stephen's defense:

7:42-60 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

8. Explain what Stephen is saying in verses 42-43, a quotation from Amos 5:25-27:

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.

oracles to give to us. 39 Our ancestors were unwilling to obey him, but pushed him away, and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. 40 They told Aaron: Make us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we don’t know what’s happened to him.

41 They even made a calf in those days, offered sacrifice to the idol, and were celebrating what their hands had made.

42 Then God turned away and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: House of Israel, did you bring Me offerings and sacrifices 40 years in the wilderness? 43 No, you took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship. So I will deport you beyond Babylon!

44 “Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses commanded him to make it according to the pattern he had seen. 45 Our ancestors in turn received it and with Joshua brought it in when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers, until the days of David. 46 He found favor in God’s sight and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. 47 But it was Solomon who built Him a house. 48 However, the Most High does not dwell in sanctuaries made with hands, as the prophet says: 49 Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool. What sort of house will you build for Me? says the Lord, or what is My resting place?”

50 Did not My hand make all these things?”

51 “You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are always resisting the Holy Spirit; as your ancestors did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They even killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become. 53 You received the law under the direction of angels and yet have not kept it.”

54 When they heard these things, they were enraged in their hearts and gnashed their teeth at him. 55 But Stephen, filled by the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven. He saw God’s glory, with Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said, 56 “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

57 Then they screamed at the top of their voices, covered their ears, and together rushed against him. 58 They threw him out of the city and began to stone him. And the witnesses laid their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 They were stoning Stephen as he called out: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin!” And saying this, he fell asleep.

9. What does Solomon building a temple have to do with Stephen's defense (7:44-50)? Why is this an important for Stephen to make?

10. What point is Stephen making in 7:51-53? Why is this an important point to make?

11. Compare the response of these Sanhedrin leaders in verse 54 with the response of the people in the temple courts in Acts 2:37. How was their response the same? How was their response different?

11. What does it mean that Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit in verse 55?

12. What do we learn from Stephen's actions? What applications can you make to your own life?

8:1 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.

8:1 Saul agreed with putting him to death. On that day a severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him. 3 Saul, however, was ravaging the church. He would enter house after house, drag off men and women, and put them in prison. 4 So those who were scattered went on their way preaching the message of good news. 5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. 6 The crowds paid attention with one mind to what Philip said, as they heard and saw the signs he was performing. 7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed, and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 So there was great joy in that city. 9 A man named Simon had previously practiced sorcery in that city and astounded the Samaritan people, while claiming to be somebody great. 10 They all paid attention to him, from the least of them to the greatest, and they said, "This man is called the Great Power of God!" 11 They were attentive to him because he had astounded them with his sorceries for a long time. 12 But when they believed Philip, as he preached the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. 13 Then even Simon himself believed. And after he was baptized, he went around constantly with Philip and was astounded as he observed the signs and great miracles that were being performed. 14 When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had welcomed God's message, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 After they went down there, they prayed for them, so the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For He had not yet come down on any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power too, so that anyone I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter told him, "May your silver be destroyed with you, because you thought the gift of God could be obtained with money! 21 You have no part or share in this matter, because your heart is not right before God. 22 Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity." 24 "Please pray to the Lord for me," Simon replied, "so that nothing you have said may happen to me." 25 Then, after they had testified and spoken the message of the Lord, they traveled back to Jerusalem, evangelizing many villages of the Samaritans.

8:1-25 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

1. What else began happening on the day that Stephen was killed?

2. Who is Philip? Where have we read about him before? How is he able to perform miracles?

3. Who is Simon and what is he doing?

4. Why did Peter and John go to Samaria from Jerusalem?

5. How was the Holy Spirit given to another person (8:18)? What does this mean? Based on your answer, can people have miraculous spiritual gifts today?

6. Were miraculous gifts given by the Holy Spirit at baptism? Which verses give you your answer?

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.

26 An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip: "Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is the desert road.)

27 So he got up and went. There was an Ethiopian man, a eunuch and high official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to worship in Jerusalem

28 and was sitting in his chariot on his way home, reading the prophet Isaiah aloud.

29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go and join that chariot."

30 When Philip ran up to it, he heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you're reading?"

31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone guides me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 Now the Scripture passage he was reading was this: He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb is silent before its shearer, so He does not open His mouth.

33 In His humiliation justice was denied Him. Who will describe His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.

34 The eunuch replied to Philip, "I ask you, who is the prophet saying this about—himself or another person?"

35 So Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning from that Scripture.

36 As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, "Look, there's water! What would keep me from being baptized?"

38 Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any longer. But he went on his way rejoicing.

40 Philip appeared in Azotus, and he was traveling and evangelizing all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

8:26-40 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

7. Comment on the evangelism technique of Philip when he approached the eunuch:
8. Why does the eunuch notice that there is water?
9. Verse 37: Most modern versions do not include this verse. Please get a Bible dictionary and commentaries to determine the reason why some version exclude this verse. Write down your findings below:
10. Why do Philip and the eunuch both go down into the water?
11. What happened to Philip exactly after the eunuch's baptism?
12. What local church did the eunuch belong to? Was the eunuch saved?

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.

9:1 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. He went to the high priest
 2 and requested letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem.
 3 As he traveled and was nearing Damascus, a light from heaven suddenly flashed around him.
 4 Falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"
 5 "Who are You, Lord?" he said. "I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting," He replied.
 6 "But get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."
 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the sound but seeing no one.
 8 Then Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing. So they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus.
 9 He was unable to see for three days and did not eat or drink.
 10 There was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Here I am, Lord!" he said.
 11 "Get up and go to the street called Straight," the Lord said to him, "to the house of Judas, and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, since he is praying there.
 12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and placing his hands on him so he can regain his sight."
 13 "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard from many people about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.
 14 And he has authority here from the chief priests to arrest all who call on Your name."
 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go! For this man is My chosen instrument to take My name to Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites.
 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for My name!"
 17 So Ananias left and entered the house. Then he placed his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road you were traveling, has sent me so that you can regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."
 18 At once something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized.
 19 And after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul was with the disciples in Damascus for some days.
 20 Immediately he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues: "He is the Son of God."
 21 But all who heard him were astounded and said, "Isn't this the man who, in Jerusalem, was destroying those who called on this name and then came here for the purpose of taking them as prisoners to the chief priests?"
 22 But Saul grew more capable and kept confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that this One is the Messiah.

9:1-22 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Damascus is the capital of Syria. It would have taken Saul at least 6 days to travel from Jerusalem to Damascus. This shows how far the message of Jesus had spread and Saul's motivation to persecute beyond Jerusalem.

1. Explain what Saul is doing and why he is going to Damascus:

2. What were the disciples of Jesus first called in the first century?

3. What does Ananias know about Saul? What is his reaction of the Lord's call to go to Saul?

4. Carefully read verse 17. Ananias says he was sent so that Saul would "regain his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Ananias was not an apostle. So how could Ananias give Saul the Holy Spirit, since Simon said that only the apostles had the power to give the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18)? Carefully reread Acts 9 and Acts 22 to work on the answer.

5. What did Saul do immediately after his conversion?

6. What lessons do we learn from this instance in Saul's life? What life changes do we learn from Saul?

9:23 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.

9:23 After many days had passed, the Jews conspired to kill him,
 24 but their plot became known to Saul. So they were watching the gates day and night intending to kill him,
 25 but his disciples took him by night and lowered him in a large basket through an opening in the wall.
 26 When he arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to associate with the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, since they did not believe he was a disciple.
 27 Barnabas, however, took him and brought him to the apostles and explained to them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road and that He had talked to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus.
 28 Saul was coming and going with them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.
 29 He conversed and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they attempted to kill him.
 30 When the brothers found out, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.
 31 So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace, being built up and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, and it increased in numbers.
 32 As Peter was traveling from place to place, he also came down to the saints who lived in Lydda.
 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years.
 34 Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed," and immediately he got up.
 35 So all who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.
 36 In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. She was always doing good works and acts of charity.
 37 In those days she became sick and died. After washing her, they placed her in a room upstairs.
 38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples heard that Peter was there and sent two men to him who begged him, "Don't delay in coming with us."
 39 So Peter got up and went with them. When he arrived, they led him to the room upstairs. And all the widows approached him, weeping and showing him the robes and clothes that Dorcas had made while she was with them.
 40 Then Peter sent them all out of the room. He knelt down, prayed, and turning toward the body said, "Tabitha, get up!" She opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up.
 41 He gave her his hand and helped her stand up. Then he called the saints and widows and presented her alive.
 42 This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.
 43 And Peter stayed on many days in Joppa with Simon, a leather tanner.

9:23-31 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

7. Explain what Paul was trying to do in Jerusalem. What was he trying to join? How did he try to join? Was he successful?

8. What group of people was Paul speaking and disputing with? Why them?

9:32-43 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Lydda was the district capital of Samaria in New Testament times. Christianity became a strong influence in Lydda by the second century.

9. Why did Peter heal Aeneas?

10. Why was Tabitha healed?

11. What is unusual about Peter staying with Simon, a tanner?

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."

10:1 There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment.
 2 He was a devout man and feared God along with his whole household. He did many charitable deeds for the Jewish people and always prayed to God.
 3 About three in the afternoon he distinctly saw in a vision an angel of God who came in and said to him, "Cornelius!"
 4 Looking intently at him, he became afraid and said, "What is it, lord?" The angel told him, "Your prayers and your acts of charity have come up as a memorial offering before God.
 5 Now send men to Joppa and call for Simon, who is also named Peter.
 6 He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea."
 7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, he called two of his household slaves and a devout soldier, who was one of those who attended him.
 8 After explaining everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.
 9 The next day, as they were traveling and nearing the city, Peter went up to pray on the housetop about noon.
 10 Then he became hungry and wanted to eat, but while they were preparing something, he went into a visionary state.
 11 He saw heaven opened and an object that resembled a large sheet coming down, being lowered by its four corners to the earth.
 12 In it were all the four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth, and the birds of the sky.
 13 Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat!"
 14 "No, Lord!" Peter said. "For I have never eaten anything common and ritually unclean!"
 15 Again, a second time, a voice said to him, "What God has made clean, you must not call common."
 16 This happened three times, and then the object was taken up into heaven.
 17 While Peter was deeply perplexed about what the vision he had seen might mean, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions to Simon's house, stood at the gate.
 18 They called out, asking if Simon, who was also named Peter, was lodging there.
 19 While Peter was thinking about the vision, the Spirit told him, "Three men are here looking for you.
 20 Get up, go downstairs, and accompany them with no doubts at all, because I have sent them."

10:1-20 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

1. Who is Cornelius?

2. What do we learn about the fact that Cornelius' prayers had been heard and answered?

3. Explain Peter's vision. What is so difficult for Peter concerning the vision?

4. What was God's repeated message to Peter? What was the application?

5. Did Peter understand the application yet? How do you know?

10:21 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."

10:21 Then Peter went down to the men and said, "Here I am, the one you're looking for. What is the reason you're here?"

22 They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who has a good reputation with the whole Jewish nation, was divinely directed by a holy angel to call you to his house and to hear a message from you."

23 Peter then invited them in and gave them lodging. The next day he got up and set out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went with him.

24 The following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.

25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell at his feet, and worshiped him.

26 But Peter helped him up and said, "Stand up! I myself am also a man."

27 While talking with him, he went on in and found that many had come together there.

28 Peter said to them, "You know it's forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner. But God has shown me that I must not call any person common or unclean.

29 That's why I came without any objection when I was sent for. So I ask: Why did you send for me?"

30 Cornelius replied, "Four days ago at this hour, at three in the afternoon, I was praying in my house. Just then a man in a dazzling robe stood before me

31 and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your acts of charity have been remembered in God's sight.

32 Therefore send someone to Joppa and invite Simon here, who is also named Peter. He is lodging in Simon the tanner's house by the sea.'

33 Therefore I immediately sent for you, and you did the right thing in coming. So we are all present before God, to hear everything you have been commanded by the Lord."

10:21-33 Main point: _____

Other key themes:

6. What is Cornelius' reaction to meeting Peter? What is Peter's response?

-- If Peter was the first pope, as Catholicism claims, how were Peter's actions different than modern popes?

7. Looking at verse 28, did God tell Peter to not call a man unclean? How did Peter come to this conclusion?

-- What were clean and what were unclean animals? (see Leviticus 11 for help)

8. According to his own words, why had Cornelius called for Peter?

10:34 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.

10:34 Then Peter began to speak: “Now I really understand that God doesn’t show favoritism,
 35 but in every nation the person who fears Him and does righteousness is acceptable to Him.
 36 He sent the message to the Israelites, proclaiming the good news of peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all.
 37 You know the events that took place throughout Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John preached:
 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were under the tyranny of the Devil, because God was with Him.
 39 We ourselves are witnesses of everything He did in both the Judean country and in Jerusalem, yet they killed Him by hanging Him on a tree.
 40 God raised up this man on the third day and permitted Him to be seen,
 41 not by all the people, but by us, witnesses appointed beforehand by God, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead.
 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to solemnly testify that He is the One appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead.
 43 All the prophets testify about Him that through His name everyone who believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins.”
 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who heard the message.
 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.
 46 For they heard them speaking in other languages and declaring the greatness of God. Then Peter responded,
 47 “Can anyone withhold water and prevent these people from being baptized, 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 stay for a few days.

10:34-48 Main point: _____
Other key themes:

9. What had Peter learned thus far in this whole experience, according to verses 34-35?

10. Why does the Holy Spirit fall upon Cornelius and his household? How does this fit what learned in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles?

11. Carefully read the text. What did it mean to the circumcised believers for them to be speaking in tongues?

12. Based upon all of this, what is Peter's response? Why?

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.”

11:1 The apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles had welcomed God’s message also.

2 When Peter went up to Jerusalem, those who stressed circumcision argued with him,

3 saying, “You visited uncircumcised men and ate with them!”

4 Peter began to explain to them in an orderly sequence, saying:

5 “I was in the town of Joppa praying, and I saw, in a visionary state, an object that resembled a large sheet coming down, being lowered by its four corners from heaven, and it came to me.

6 When I looked closely and considered it, I saw the four-footed animals of the earth, the wild beasts, the reptiles, and the birds of the sky.

7 Then I also heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat!’

8 “‘No, Lord!’ I said. ‘For nothing common or ritually unclean has ever entered my mouth!’

9 But a voice answered from heaven a second time, ‘What God has made clean, you must not call common.’

10 “Now this happened three times, and then everything was drawn up again into heaven.

11 At that very moment, three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea arrived at the house where we were.

12 Then the Spirit told me to accompany them with no doubts at all. These six brothers accompanied me, and we went into the man’s house.

13 He reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa, and call for Simon, who is also named Peter.

14 He will speak a message to you that you and all your household will be saved by.’

15 “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came down on them, just as on us at the beginning.

16 Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’

17 Therefore, if God gave them the same gift that He also gave to us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, how could I possibly hinder God?”

18 When they heard this they became silent. Then they glorified God, saying, “So God has granted repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles!”

11:1-18 Main point: _____
Other key themes:

1. Who confronts Peter? What is the problem? Why is this a problem?

2. How does Peter deal with this problem? Explain his answers:

3. Explain verses 15-17. What happened? What is Peter's argument?

4. What is the response of the believers (11:18)?

11:19 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.

11:19 Those who had been scattered as a result of the persecution that started because of Stephen made their way as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message to no one except Jews.

20 But there were some of them, Cypriot and Cyrenian men, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Hellenists, proclaiming the good news about the Lord Jesus.

21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.

22 Then the report about them was heard by the church that was at Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to travel as far as Antioch.

23 When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged all of them to remain true to the Lord with a firm resolve of the heart,

24 for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And large numbers of people were added to the Lord.

25 Then he went to Tarsus to search for Saul,

26 and when he found him he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught large numbers. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.

27 In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

28 Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine throughout the Roman world. This took place during the time of Claudius.

29 So each of the disciples, according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers who lived in Judea.

30 They did this, sending it to the elders by means of Barnabas and Saul.

11:19-30 Main point: _____
Other key themes:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Antioch of Syria was the third largest city in the Roman Empire, after Rome and Alexandria.

4. Explain what is going on in Antioch:

5. Who is Barnabas? Be sure to add the information that we learned about him in Acts 4.

6. Why was Saul in Tarsus (recall Acts 9)? Why does Barnabas go to Tarsus to find Saul?

7. What disaster is prophesied? What is the response of the disciples in Antioch? Explain the mechanism of the relief effort.

8. What do we learn about the use of the church treasury?

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.

12:1 About that time King Herod cruelly attacked some who belonged to the church,
 2 and he killed James, John's brother, with the sword.
 3 When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter too, during the days of Unleavened Bread.
 4 After the arrest, he put him in prison and assigned four squads of four soldiers each to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover.
 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but prayer was being made earnestly to God for him by the church.
 6 On the night before Herod was to bring him out for execution, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while the sentries in front of the door guarded the prison.
 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. Striking Peter on the side, he woke him up and said, "Quick, get up!" Then the chains fell off his wrists.
 8 "Get dressed," the angel told him, "and put on your sandals." And he did so. "Wrap your cloak around you," he told him, "and follow me."
 9 So he went out and followed, and he did not know that what took place through the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.
 10 After they passed the first and second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened to them by itself. They went outside and passed one street, and immediately the angel left him.
 11 Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel and rescued me from Herod's grasp and from all that the Jewish people expected."
 12 When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many had assembled and were praying.
 13 He knocked at the door in the gateway, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer.
 14 She recognized Peter's voice, and because of her joy, she did not open the gate but ran in and announced that Peter was standing at the gateway.
 15 "You're crazy!" they told her. But she kept insisting that it was true. Then they said, "It's his angel!"
 16 Peter, however, kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astounded.

12:1-16 Main point: _____

Other key themes: _____

1. What do you think was the impact on the disciples upon the news of the apostle James being killed by Herod?

2. Why was Peter arrested?

3. How was Peter released?

4. Why did the Lord allow the apostle James to die, but uses an angel to free the apostle Peter?

5. What were the disciples doing while Peter was imprisoned? What was their response?

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12:17 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.

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12:17 Motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he explained to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. "Report these things to James and the brothers," he said. Then he departed and went to a different place.

18 At daylight, there was a great commotion among the soldiers as to what could have become of Peter.

19 After Herod had searched and did not find him, he interrogated the guards and ordered their execution. Then Herod went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there.

20 He had been very angry with the Tyrians and Sidonians. Together they presented themselves before him. They won over Blastus, who was in charge of the king's bedroom, and through him they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food from the king's country.

21 So on an appointed day, dressed in royal robes and seated on the throne, Herod delivered a public address to them.

22 The assembled people began to shout, "It's the voice of a god and not of a man!"

23 At once an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give the glory to God, and he became infected with worms and died.

24 Then God's message flourished and multiplied.

25 After they had completed their relief mission, Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem, taking along John who is called Mark.

12:17-25 Main point: _____
Other key themes:

6. What happened to the soldiers who were guarding Peter? Who were the disciples to report the release of Peter to?

7. Explain the sin of Herod:

8. What lessons do we learn from Herod's sin and its consequences?