

Jesus Through the Scriptures

Luke and Acts Bible Reading Challenge



Read the Bible Monday Through Friday

If you miss a day, use the weekend to catch up. If you fall behind, pick up with the current reading for that week. Mark off the chart on the back as you complete each week's reading. By the end of the year, you'll have read through Luke and Acts a total of five times!



Monte Vista
church of Christ

Track Your Weekly Progress

Throughout the Year

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| 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 1 | 27 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 3 |
| 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 2 | 28 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 4 |
| 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 3 | 29 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 5 |
| 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 4 | 30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 6 |
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| 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 7 | 33 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 9 |
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| 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 24 | 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 26 |
| 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 1 | 51 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 27 |
| 26 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 2 | 52 | <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 28 |

What Do We Learn From Luke and Acts?

- The gospel is for all (Luke 19:10)!
- The gospel has been entrusted to us (Luke 10:2)!
- The gospel is powerful (Acts 2:41; Romans 1:16)!
- The gospel cannot be stopped (Acts 8:1-4)!

Luke 1

- The gospel of Luke was written by the only gentile writer of the New Testament. Luke is called “the beloved physician” by the Apostle Paul (Colossians 4:16). His gospel aims to provide evidence that Jesus is the Son of God, Son of Man, and the great spiritual physician.
- In Luke 1:1-4, Luke states that his gospel is a historical account. He interviewed eyewitnesses and carefully investigated the evidence so that we might know with certainty that the information he records is true.
- It is hard to know with certainty who Theophilus was (Luke 1:3). Most scholars believe that he was an influential Gentile who converted to Jesus. Luke wanted him to know that the gospel he obeyed was the truth.
- Luke 1:5-25 is a detailed account of the birth of John the Baptist. The Old Testament scriptures conclude by announcing the coming of John (Malachi 4:5-6). The angel’s announcement of John’s birth to his father (Zacharias) marked God’s first communication to His people in 400 years.
- Six months later, the angel visited a young virgin named Mary. He announced that she would miraculously give birth to the Son of God (Luke 1:26-38). Unlike Zachariah, Mary believed immediately believed the promise of God (Luke 1:38).
- The rest of the chapter speaks of visit Mary pays to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45), a Holy Spirit inspired song of praise from Mary (Luke 1:46-56), the birth of John (Luke 1:57-66), and Messianic prophecies given by Zacharias (Luke 1:67-80).

Luke 2

- The birth of the Savior is recorded in this chapter (Luke 2:1-7). Pay close attention to how God providentially gets Mary to Bethlehem so that the prophecy of Micah 5:2 could be fulfilled. Also, notice the disgusting conditions in which Jesus was born. A “manger” is a feeding trough for animals. After His birth, angels appeared and announced it to shepherds in the field (Luke 2:8-20). These shepherds found the baby Jesus and worshipped Him.
- Luke 2:21-24 records commandments that Jesus’ parents kept after His birth. Mary and Joseph were both dedicated servants of God.
- God promised Simeon that he would not die before seeing the Messiah. After witnessing the promise of God, Simon prophesied (Luke 2:25-35). He foretold that Jesus would save both Jews and Gentiles (Luke 2:32). He also predicted that Mary would experience great emotional pain while watching her Son die on the cross (Luke 2:35).
- Anna (a prophetess) was also blessed to see the Messiah. She was an old widow from the tribe of Asher. She praised God for sending Jesus and spoke of him to others (Luke 2:36-38).
- Eventually, Joseph and Mary moved back to Nazareth (Luke 2:39-40). There they raised Jesus.
- When Jesus was twelve, His parents lost Him in their caravan after leaving Jerusalem (Luke 2:41-51). They eventually found Him in the temple among the teachers. Even as a boy, Jesus was determined to be about His Father’s business.
- While we don’t have much information about Jesus’ childhood, Luke 2:52 provides a great summary. Let the words of this verse describe our lives as well!

Luke 3

- Luke provides more historical context at the beginning of this chapter. The ministries of John and Jesus would take place during this time when Pilate was the governor of Judea, and Herod Antipas was the tetrarch of Galilee (Luke 3:1). The Herod Antipas mentioned is the one who stole his brother Philip's wife (Mark 6:17-18) and mocked Jesus not long before He was crucified (Luke 23:8-12).
- The mention of two high priests can be confusing (Luke 3:2). Annas was the rightful high priest, but he had been removed by the Romans and replaced with his son-in-law Caiaphas. Jesus will appear before both men after He is arrested in Gethsemane.
- In Luke 3:3-20, the preaching of John the Baptist is described. As a prophet, John was given the mission of preparing Israel to receive Jesus as the Messiah. He called people to repent and announced God's pending judgment on the wicked Jews. He also preached against Herod's unlawful marriage to Herodias and was put in prison.
- In addition to baptizing hundreds of Jews from throughout Israel, John also baptized Jesus (Luke 3:21-22). After being baptized, both the Holy Spirit and God the Father confirmed to John that Jesus is the Messiah. Luke is the only gospel writer to reveal that the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus "while He was praying" (Luke 3:21).
- Like Matthew's gospel, Luke's gospel also provides a genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38). Luke seems to be giving us Jesus' genealogy through His mother, Mary. It is also interesting how while Matthew traces Jesus' genealogy back to Abraham, Luke traces it back to Adam. This is designed to show us how Jesus is connected to all nations, not just Jews.

Luke 4

- Before beginning His three-year ministry, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. He fasted forty days and nights and was tempted by Satan (Luke 4:1-13). The Lord overcame Satan's temptations by quoting and trusting in God's word. This experience was necessary for Him to go through to qualify as our perfect High Priest (Hebrews 4:15).
- Much of Jesus' ministry occurred in Galilee (Luke 4:14-15). There He preached in the synagogues and performed miraculous healings. At the beginning of His Galilean ministry, He spoke in the synagogue of His hometown of Nazareth (Luke 4:16). After reading a portion of Isaiah 61 (a messianic prophecy), Jesus announced it as being fulfilled in their hearing (Luke 4:17-21). Many of those assembled refused to believe this. Jesus then rebuked them for following in the footsteps of their hard-hearted ancestors. He made them especially mad when He announced God's blessings on Gentiles in times past, and not Jews (Luke 4:25-30). The people tried to kill the Lord by throwing Him off a cliff, but because it wasn't God's will for Him to die at that time, and in that way, He was able to escape.
- Capernaum was a city on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee (Luke 4:31-32). Jesus would take up residence there for much of His ministry.
- In Capernaum He taught in the synagogue and performed miracles. These miracles included casting out demons (Luke 4:33-37). We don't find demon possession occurring in the Bible before the ministry of Jesus. Their temporary work allowed Jesus the opportunity to exercise His power over Satan while on earth. We know that demon possession doesn't still occur because there are no miracle workers to cast them out (1 Corinthians 13:9-13).
- Peter's mother-in-law also lived in Capernaum. She became sick with a terrible fever, and Jesus healed her (Luke 4:38-39).
- It is interesting to notice how the demons knew the truth about Jesus' identity and feared Him (Luke 4:41). James also makes mention of this in James 2:19.

Luke 5

- This week, we find Jesus continuing in His early Galilean ministry. He had become so popular by this time that the crowds were “pressing around Him” (Luke 5:1). Jesus would then get into Peter’s boat and use it as a pulpit to teach the people (Luke 5:2-3).
- Once the Lord had finished His teaching, He told Peter to go into the deep water and let down his nets (Luke 5:4). Peter was reluctant at first. He was an experienced fisherman who had caught nothing the previous night (Luke 5:5). After obeying the commandment of Jesus, a “great quantity of fish” filled his nets (Luke 5:6). While this wasn’t their first encounter with Jesus, this event does seem to officially mark when Peter, James, and John began to follow Jesus on a full-time basis (Luke 5:9-11).
- There were many instances when Jesus healed lepers. Leprosy was a dreadful flesh-eating disease that was medically incurable. Those who contracted the disease had to be isolated from society. Luke records an occasion when Jesus was able to immediately cleanse a leper by just speaking a few words (Luke 5:12-14).
- The next miracle Jesus performed was on a paralyzed man. This man was lowered through the roof of someone’s home to get to Jesus (Luke 5:17-19). This miracle provided Him an opportunity to prove to the scribes and Pharisees that He is the Son of God and has the authority to forgive sins (Luke 7:20-26).
- Jesus was often criticized for spending time with tax-collectors and sinners (Luke 7:27-30). He did this to call them to repentance and teach them (Luke 7:31-32).
- The scribes and Pharisees criticized Jesus for not making His disciples fast. Jesus told them that it was not proper for them to fast while He was still with them (Luke 7:33-35). It also would not be proper for them to seek to hold on to the Old Law once He established the New (Luke 7:36-39).

Luke 6

- The keeping of the Sabbath was part of the Old Testament Law of Moses. Since it was a generic law, the Pharisees decided to invent their own rules and traditions. They taught that it qualified as work for someone to pick heads of grain and rub them together on the Sabbath (Mark 6:1-2). Jesus told them they were being hypocrites in their charge against His disciples. The religious leaders never condemned David for doing something unlawful (1 Samuel 21:1-6; Luke 6:3-4), but they condemned His disciples for something lawful (Matthew 12:7). Since Jesus was the One who invented the Sabbath, He had the authority to determine what was a violation of it (Luke 6:5).
- We find another controversy involving Jesus and the Sabbath in Luke 6:6-11. Instead of believing in Jesus because He performed a miracle, the scribes and Pharisees accused Him of working and breaking the Sabbath. They seemed to be more concerned with people breaking their man-made traditions than following God. They failed to understand that the Sabbath did not prohibit showing grace and mercy to their fellow man (Luke 6:9).
- After spending a night in prayer, Jesus selected twelve apostles out of a very diverse group of men (Luke 6:12-15). The apostles were more than disciples of Jesus. They were special ambassadors who would testify of the Lord's resurrection to the world after He ascended to heaven. They would also be directly guided by the Holy Spirit, perform miracles, and even impart miraculous gifts to Christians.
- In Luke 6:20-49, we find a similar sermon to what is found in Matthew 5-7. Like preachers often do, Jesus recycled sermons. The Sermon on the Mount was probably one He preached numerous times throughout His ministry. This sermon addresses key spiritual qualities that should be present in the lives of those who follow God.

Luke 7

- It is rare to read about someone causing Jesus to marvel in the gospel. And yet, here in Luke 7:1-10, that is exactly what we find. A centurion (who has great respect for Jesus and His authority) begs the Lord to heal his sick slave without entering his home. Jesus marvels at this Gentile man's great faith and grants his request.
- There are three instances in the gospel where we read about Jesus raising the dead. One of them is found in Luke 7:11-16. After encountering a widow who was going to bury her only son, Jesus raises the dead man and gives Him back to his mother. This miracle caused the people of Nain to be gripped with fear and glorify God. They also began spreading the news of Jesus' power throughout Judea (Luke 7:17).
- Luke 7:18-35 is a section about John Baptist. It appears that while in prison, John was discouraged. He may have anticipated Jesus being a military Messiah who would liberate the Jews from Roman oppression. John sends some of his disciples to question Jesus, and the Lord tells them to go back and report how He is fulfilling everything that the prophets foretold (Luke 7:22). In Luke 7:24-27, Jesus describes John's work as a prophet. He says that those who are least in the kingdom of God are even greater than John (Luke 7:28).
- There was an occasion when Jesus was invited to eat in the home of a Pharisee (Luke 7:36). It was common during these times for Jews to gather and listen to Rabbis talk over a meal. Luke mentions a woman showing up for the dinner who was a "sinner" (Luke 7:37). She anoints Jesus with perfume, wets His feet with her tears, and wipes them with her hair (Luke 7:38). The compassion Jesus shows this woman greatly disturbs the Pharisee (Luke 7:39). The Lord tells a parable about how those who have many sins are usually more grateful for God's forgiveness (Luke 7:40-50). This episode is powerful because we find Jesus exercising His power as God to forgive sins. We also see that God is willing to forgive any sinner who humbly seeks Him.

Luke 8

- This chapter begins with Jesus continuing to preach throughout the Galilean region (Luke 8:1). In addition to His apostles, many women disciples also traveled with Jesus. Several of these women appeared wealthy and even helped finance His ministry (Luke 8:2-3).
- Jesus' most famous teaching method was using parables. Parables were metaphors from common everyday life designed to help people think on a spiritual level. The Lord often used parables to reveal truths about the nature of the kingdom of God. This chapter contains two of Jesus' parables. The parable of the sower is about various ways people respond to the word of God (Luke 8:4-15). The parable of the lamp is about the importance of hearing the word of God correctly and obeying it (Luke 8:16-21). The parables usually did a good job weeding out the crowds. They were not easy to understand. The truth-seekers would pull Jesus aside and ask Him to explain their meaning (Luke 8:9-10). The hard-hearted would hear and easily dismiss them.
- The rest of the chapter records several miracles of Jesus. Jesus performed supernatural acts to confirm His identity and teaching. He demonstrates power over the weather (Luke 8:22-25), demons (Luke 8:26-39), disease (Luke 8:40-48), and even death (Luke 8:49-56).

Luke 9

- Before concluding His Galilean ministry, Jesus gave His apostles miraculous power (Luke 9:1). He also sent them out to preach about the kingdom of God (Luke 9:2). They were not to worry about their living accommodations and how people would receive their message (Luke 9:3-5). They were to focus on going and doing the work that the Lord had given them.
- The work of the apostles made a huge impact in the region (Luke 9:6-9). Herod Antipas heard of Jesus' miraculous work and thought He was John the Baptist raised from the dead. He had a guilty conscience about John because he killed him at the behest of his wife Herodias (Mark 6:14-28).
- After withdrawing to Bethsaida, large crowds continued seeking after Jesus (Luke 9:10-11). The crowds eventually became hungry, and Jesus miraculously multiplied fish and bread to feed them (Luke 9:12-17). This miracle was similar to what God had done for Israel for forty years as they wandered in the wilderness. Only God could miraculously provide His people with bread!
- Luke 9:18-27 is a section about discipleship. While preparing His disciples for His death, Jesus wanted them to understand that following Him meant that they also would have to suffer and die for the kingdom of God.
- The transfiguration is another key moment in the life of Jesus (Luke 9:28-36). It provided Peter, James, and John confirmation that Jesus was the Messiah and that John the Baptist was His forerunner.
- Even though Jesus gave His apostles miraculous power, they still struggled with having faith. There was an occasion when they didn't have enough faith to cast a demon out of a boy (Luke 9:37-45). They would need to grow in their faith if they were going to be ambassadors for Jesus once He ascended to heaven.
- The apostles were also very immature at times. They constantly found themselves engaged in competition over who would be the greatest in the kingdom of God (Luke 9:46-50). James and John even wanted the Lord to send fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village (Luke 9:51-56).
- The chapter concludes with more teaching from Jesus about discipleship (Luke 9:57-62). After being approached by some people who wanted to join His group of disciples, Jesus calls them to put Him first. He wanted these people to understand that following Him is more important than anything else they may have been doing in their lives.

Luke 10

- There was an occasion when Jesus sent out seventy of His disciples in pairs (Luke 10:1). These disciples were to pray for the Lord's blessings before beginning their evangelistic work (Luke 10:2). They were not to make provisions beforehand (Luke 10:3-8). They were to completely trust in God and rely on the hospitality of others.
- The disciples were to work miracles and preach about the kingdom of God (Luke 10:9-11). Jesus also announced cursing on those who rejected the gospel they preached (Luke 10:12-15). Those who rejected their message would also be rejecting Him (Luke 10:16).
- The seventy rejoiced over the miraculous power the Lord had given them (Luke 10:17). Jesus told them to rejoice more that Satan was being defeated through their work, and their names had been recorded in the book of life (Luke 10:18-20).
- Jesus rejoiced that the Holy Spirit was experiencing victory over Satan through preaching the gospel by the seventy (Luke 10:21). Part of Jesus' purpose on the earth was to reveal the glory of the Father. His life and teachings gave people a glimpse of who God is (Luke 10:22). The disciples who followed Him were privileged to see God the Father at work through Jesus (Luke 10:23-24).
- The "lawyer" mentioned in Luke 10:25 was an expert in the Law of Moses. He tries to test Jesus with a controversial question at the time (Luke 10:25-29). Jesus answered Him by telling the parable of the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:30-37). Luke loves to reveal parables Jesus told where non-Jews are the good guys. It must have been a shock to Jesus' audience when they learned that the Samaritan considered a Jew to be his neighbor. The parable's point is that God wants us to show mercy and grace to anyone who needs our help.
- Jesus often spent time with Martha and Mary. These two women believed in Jesus and were the sisters of the Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead. While spending time in their home, Jesus taught Martha about the necessity of taking advantage of the opportunity she was given to listen to His teaching (Luke 10:38-42).

Luke 11

- Prayer was a big part of the life of Jesus. His disciples knew this and asked Him to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1). Jesus gives them a good template for prayer (Luke 11:2-4). Prayers should include reverence towards God's name, humble requests for God's daily provisions and forgiveness, and help against temptations.
- In Luke 11:5-8, Jesus tells the parable of "friend at midnight." This parable is designed to illustrate just how much God is willing to answer the prayers of His people. If this man was willing to grant the request of a rude neighbor, how much more is God willing to grant the request of His children through prayer? This point is further emphasized in Luke 11:9-13.
- Jesus worked many miracles among the Jews in Israel, but unfortunately, they didn't always produce faith. His enemies accused Him of being able to cast out demons by the power of Satan (Luke 11:14-16). They couldn't deny the supernatural power of Jesus, but they foolishly questioned their source. Jesus exposed how illogical and stubborn these men were in their thinking (Luke 11:17-26). While Jesus was a great miracle worker, He wanted people to focus on His teaching more than anything else (Luke 11:27-28).
- The reason why many of the Jews rejected the miraculous signs of Jesus was because they possessed hard hearts. Since they always envisioned the Messiah to be a great military leader like King David, they refused to believe in Jesus and His proclamation of establishing a spiritual kingdom. Jesus knew this and refused to offer them any more signs in ministry. The only other sign they would be given was His resurrection from the dead (Luke 11:29-30). The Lord contrasted these Jews with the people of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba (Luke 11:31-32). Since Jesus could read hearts, He knew that these people didn't want to see the truth about Him (Luke 11:32-36). Only when people want to discover the truth will they be able to see the light of Jesus!
- The Pharisees were big on people keeping their man-made rules and traditions. They took offense with Jesus when He did not ceremonially wash before eating (Luke 11:37-38). Jesus took this opportunity to expose their spiritual uncleanness (Luke 11:39-52). This public rebuke caused them to become very hostile and begin plotting against Him (Luke 11:53-54).

Luke 12

- As Jesus made His final journey to Jerusalem, He continued to teach His disciples. He taught His people about the spiritual corruptness of the Pharisees (Luke 12:1). Jesus warned them against trying to find favor with both Him and the Pharisees. God knows when disciples are trying to live double lives (Luke 12:2-3).
- Jesus wanted disciples to understand that persecution was going to come their way. They needed to fear God and not their persecutors (Luke 12:4-5). If they denied Jesus, He would deny them (Luke 12:8-9). They needed to trust that God was going to take care of them (Luke 12:6-7). He would send them the Holy Spirit and would teach them what to say when they appeared before those who opposed the gospel (Luke 12:10-12).
- After being interrupted by someone in the crowd, in Luke 12:13-21, Jesus teaches against covetousness and greed. He warns against seeking earthly gain before a relationship with God.
- The next section is similar to what we find in the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 12:22-34; Matthew 6:19-34). Disciples don't need to live anxious lives full of worry. Instead of worrying and seeking first earthly security, disciples should devote themselves to doing God's will and trust that He will provide them with the essential things they need to survive in this world. If God will take care of the birds and lilies of the field, then He will certainly take care of His people!
- Disciples needed to be ready for the coming of the Lord at any moment (Luke 12:35-48). The "coming of the Lord" in Jesus' ministry often referred to a couple of different ideas. Sometimes it referred to Jesus coming in judgment against the Jewish nation in 70 A.D. Other times it referred to His final coming before the resurrection and the world is destroyed. Both events required disciples to be prepared and faithful!
- Jesus' preaching often divides people (Luke 12:49-53). It demands that disciples put Him first!
- These people could determine the weather, but they struggled with determining their need to follow Jesus (Luke 12:54-56). The Lord urged them to wake up and realize the urgency to submit Him before it was too late (Luke 12:57-59).

Luke 13

- In the last section of the previous chapter, Jesus talks about coming judgment. How do people need to prepare for God's judgment? They need to repent! Repentance is a major theme in the gospel of Luke. In Luke 13:1, some people essentially ask Jesus, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Jesus keeps the conversation on a point He wants to make about repentance (Luke 13:2-3). Instead of focusing on Galileans who Pilate killed, they needed to repent. They needed to turn from their sins and avoid spiritually perishing. Since no one knows when they will die (Luke 13:4), repentance is an urgent matter (Luke 13:5).
- While God offers mercy and grace, there does come a time when those blessings are no longer available. God had been very patient with unrepentant people, but the time of punishment was coming (Luke 13:6-9). Those who don't bear fruit for Him will eventually be cut down. The Jewish nation would experience this kind of judgment when the Romans destroyed their city and nation forty years later.
- While teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus frees a woman being oppressed by an evil spirit (Luke 13:10-12). The woman began glorifying God after being made well, but the synagogue official was angry because Jesus performed the miracle on the Sabbath (Luke 13:13-14). Instead of beginning service to Jesus, this man was more concerned with the violation of man-made rules and traditions. Like many scribes and Pharisees, this man was a hypocrite (Luke 13:15-17).
- In Luke 13:18-22, we learn some important things about the kingdom of God. Like a mustard seed and leaven, the kingdom would start small but eventually become extremely large. It slowly but surely would become a place of spiritual refuge for all people who seek to know God.
- Luke 13:24 is the key verse of the next section. Many Jews believed that since they were Jews, they would automatically be saved. Jesus destroys that notion! Every person (regardless of what nation they are from) must strive to enter into God's kingdom. Striving requires making a diligent effort to follow Jesus. Most Jews would reject Jesus and be lost, but those from the other nations would follow Him and be saved (Luke 13:22-30).
- In Luke 13:31, it is hard to know with certainty whether these Pharisees are being sincere with Jesus. Regardless, Jesus had no respect for Herod (Luke 13:32). Jesus was focused on His mission (Luke 13:33). He was going to die for the world's sins, and Jerusalem would soon experience judgment from God (Luke 13:34-35).

Luke 14

- Luke mentions many occasions when Jesus ate with others. On one occasion, He ate in the home of a Pharisee (Luke 14:1). There were also lawyers and other Pharisees present. This seemed to be an elite and very prestigious group of people. The Lord heals a man with dropsy (Luke 14:2). Jesus (who can read minds) knows that men present would have a problem with Him healing on the Sabbath (Luke 14:3). He heals the man and exposes the hypocrisy found in binding their man-made rules and traditions for God's Sabbath Law (Luke 14:4-6).
- Jesus also told several parables at this dinner. These parables condemned the religious leaders and those Jews who rebelled against God. In the parable of the guests (Luke 14:7-15), the Lord condemns the arrogance of the Pharisees and their desire for position. God exalts the humble, not the proud (Luke 14:11)!
- The parable of the dinner would have also offended everyone in this Pharisee's home (Luke 14:16-24). The Jews who rejected Jesus showed disdain for God and His invitation to be part of His kingdom. Since they rejected the invitation, others were invited to enjoy their blessing. In Acts, we find Gentiles, eunuchs, poor people, outcasts, and even Samaritans obeying the gospel and becoming part of the kingdom of God.
- In the next section, Jesus talks about discipleship. Following Him requires loving Him more than our families (Luke 14:25-26), being willing to suffer for Him (Luke 14:27), and counting the cost (Luke 14:28-33). Disciples who are not truly committed are useless to the Lord (Luke 14:34-35).

Luke 15

- The first two verses set up the context for the parables Jesus teaches in this chapter. Jesus was being criticized for spending time with the outcast of society (Luke 15:1-2). Instead of celebrating the fact that sinners were getting to learn from Jesus, the Pharisees grumbled and complained. They resented the fact that Jesus accepted people that they looked down on.
- Jesus taught three parables to combat the ungodly attitude of the Pharisees. The first is about a shepherd who anxiously goes after his lost sheep (Luke 15:1-7). Even though he only loses one out of a hundred, that one means so much to him that he is willing to go and search for it. This shepherd realizes the danger this sheep is in, and he wants to bring it back to safety.
- The second parable involves a woman who loses a valuable coin (Luke 15:8-10). She searches her house diligently until she finds it.
- The third parable is one of Jesus' most famous (Luke 15:11-32). It is about a son who leaves home early with his inheritance and wastes it on sinful living. Once he reaches rock bottom and realizes how much better his life was in his father's home, he returns and repents.
- All of these parables are designed to teach the same thing. There is joy and celebration in heaven when sinners repent (Luke 15:7, 9-10, 22-24). In the parable of the lost boy, the father represents God, and the prodigal represents sinners. The father celebrated when his lost son repented and came home. The older brother (who refused to celebrate when his younger brother returned) represented the Pharisees. The Pharisees did not celebrate the repentance of sinners.
- God wants to save all sinners! His mercy, and grace is abundant and offered to all. Like the angels, let us rejoice when sinners come to Him.

Luke 16

- The subject of greed is another critical theme in Luke's gospel. Jesus knew that many of the Pharisees were lovers of money (Luke 16:14). This love was at the core of much of their evil (Matthew 15:3-9; 23:14).
- The parable of "the unrighteous steward" is widely believed to be the most difficult one to understand (Luke 16:1-9). In it, the Lord uses His common "How much more?" teaching method. If people of the world are willing to do "x," how much more should disciples do it?
- The steward knew that he was about to be fired from his job. Since he believed his job skills were limited, he decided to do unethical financial favors for his boss's clients so that they would take care of him later (Luke 16:3-7). The master (who is not Jesus in the parable) commended the shrewdness of his steward (Jesus would never commend sin). While he was upset that his steward cheated him, he was impressed by his craftiness (Luke 16:8a). If a sinful "son of this age" was wise enough to show concern for his physical future, how much more should the righteous "son of light" show concern for his spiritual future (Luke 16:8b)? Instead of being greedy and selfish with their earthly wealth, the child of God should be wise and use it to glorify God and lay up treasures in heaven (Luke 16:9; 1 Timothy 6:17-19). God expects His people to be good stewards of their possessions (Luke 16:10-12).
- While there is no sin in gaining earthly wealth, disciples must avoid loving it more than God (Luke 16:13). They must use it to help others. Jesus further emphasizes this point in the following story He tells in Luke 16:19-31.
- The Pharisees mocked this teaching of Jesus (Luke 16:14). Jesus condemned their hypocrisy (Luke 16:15). Instead of being concerned with pleasing God, Jesus knew that they were mainly concerned about appearing righteous before men.
- Jesus urges the Pharisees to get serious about serving God and see the importance of becoming part of the kingdom of God (Luke 16:16-17). Both John the Baptist and the Law pointed to the glory of the Messiah's kingdom!
- Luke 16:18 seems to deviate from Jesus' message about money and greed. It could be another rebuke of the Pharisees because it was common for Jewish men during this time to divorce their wives and leave them financially destitute. While these men treated marriage as a disposable relationship, the Lord reinstated God's will for marriage from the beginning.
- The story of the rich man and Lazarus is well-known (Luke 16:19-31). It is not designed to answer all of our questions about death and the afterlife. Instead, it was told to rebuke the greed of the Pharisees. The rich man lost his soul because he was selfish and refused to help a poor man. Once the rich man died, his eternal fate was sealed. He wanted Abraham to send Lazarus back to the earth to warn his brothers about the place of torment he was in, but the faithful patriarch told him that they have God's word to warn them, and it was sufficient.

Luke 17

- Christians who cause other Christians to sin are called “stumbling blocks” (Luke 17:1). The Lord offers a stern warning to these people (Luke 17:2). The “little ones” probably refer to new babes in Christ. Those new in the faith should be cared for and nurtured, not led into sin.
- Instead of being a stumbling block, disciples are called to look out for another (Luke 17:3). When a disciple notices a brother in sin, he should rebuke and call him to repentance. If he sins against him and repents, he should forgive him. If a disciple doesn’t forgive his brother, he can’t expect God to forgive him when he repents (Luke 17:4; Matthew 18:21-35).
- Forgiving others involves humility and faith. The apostles asked Jesus for the faith needed to forgive others unlimited times (Luke 17:5). While forgiving others can be challenging, God’s children can do difficult things with faith (Luke 17:6).
- No matter how much service disciples offer God, He doesn’t owe them anything (Luke 17:7-10). They are forgiven servants of the King and can never earn their salvation.
- Luke 17:11-19 contains information that is only found in this gospel. While traveling to Jerusalem a final time, Jesus passed between Samaria and Galilee. He entered a village and was approached by ten men who had the dreadful disease of leprosy. After being healed by Jesus, only one (the Samaritan) came back to offer thanks. This is a wonderful story that emphasizes the need to always show gratitude for the blessings of God.
- Later on the journey, Jesus answered questions given by the Pharisees concerning the kingdom of God (Luke 17:20-21). The kingdom of God here refers to God’s rule in the hearts of men. Jesus (the ultimate king and ruler) was right there among them, and they rejected His rule.
- It is difficult to know with certainty whether Luke 17:22-37 is referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. or the second coming of Christ. There are many similarities between this text and what is recorded in Matthew 24:17-41. Regardless, the Lord’s point is that disciples need to be prepared and ready! They needed to be prepared and ready to flee Jerusalem 2,000 years ago, and they need to be prepared and ready for the Lord’s return today.

Luke 18

- In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus teaches the parable of the “Unjust Judge.” This is another “how much more?” parable. If a grumpy and sinful judge would give a widow assistance in a time of distress, how much more will God do the same for His children?
- The parable probably needs to be connected back to what Jesus teaches in Luke 17:22-37. Jerusalem’s destruction would be a difficult time for the Lord’s people. The same may also be true before He returns a final time. In preparing for difficult days, disciples need to pray (Luke 18:7). They need to cry to Lord, have faith, and trust that He will vindicate them (Luke 18:8).
- The parable of “The Pharisee and Tax-collector” teaches disciples how to properly approach God (Luke 18:9-14). The Pharisee prayed to God with great arrogance and self-righteousness, while the tax collector was humble. The tax collector acknowledged his spiritual poverty before God and found favor with Him (Luke 18:14).
- The lesson of humility is further emphasized in the following verses (Luke 18:15-17). Children did not have many rights in the time of Jesus. They were often viewed as second-class citizens and beneath others. Jesus gives attention to children and says that His kingdom belongs to such as them. The Lord commends the humility and innocence of children. We must develop the same qualities if we are going to be part of His kingdom!
- Like many of the Pharisees, the rich young ruler, was also arrogant before God (Luke 18:18-23). While he had kept many of God’s commandments, he wasn’t willing to do all that was necessary to put God first. While it is not a sin to be rich, wealth can become a serious problem when we put it before God. The rich must also put their complete confidence and trust in God (Luke 18:24-27).
- The rich young ruler is contrasted with the apostles (Luke 18:28-30). The apostles did forsake everything to follow Jesus! Their rewards would be a spiritual family and eternal life.
- Jesus knew what awaited Him as He made His final journey to Jerusalem (Luke 18:31-33). The disciples struggled with the reality that the long-awaited Messiah would have to die (Luke 18:34).
- Before approaching Jericho, a blind man begged Jesus to heal him (Luke 18:35). His name was Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46). Matthew mentions another blind man with him (Matthew 20:30). These men believed in Jesus and were healed (Luke 18:36-43). They continued to follow the Lord and glorified God for their blessings.

Luke 19

- When passing through Jericho, Jesus met Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-2). Zaccheus is described as rich, small in stature, and a chief tax collector. Once he realized that Jesus was passing through, he climbed into a sycamore tree to Him (Luke 19:3-4). Jesus called him to come down and invited Himself into his home (Luke 19:5). Unlike many scribes and Pharisees, Zaccheus gladly received Jesus (Luke 19:6). While many grumbled at the Lord's actions, Zaccheus humbled himself and desired to repent (Luke 19:7-8). Jesus then professed His desire to save even outcasts like him (Luke 19:9-10).
- In Luke 19:11-27, Jesus tells "The Parable of the Minas." This was a story that the Jews could relate to because something similar occurred when Archelaus became king once King Herod (his father) died (Luke 19:11-14). This parable portrays God as good and generous but also willing to punish those who are not loyal and faithful in their service to Him.
- Before entering Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of His disciples into a village to bring back a colt (Luke 19:28-35). As the Lord rode the colt into the city, He was praised and honored by crowds of people (Luke 19:36-38). It may be that these Jews believed that Jesus was a Messiah who had come into Jerusalem to liberate them from Roman oppression.
- Some of Pharisees became angry and asked Jesus to stop the people from praising Him (Luke 19:39). Jesus told them that He was worthy of their praise (Luke 19:40).
- Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). He knew that the Jews would receive judgment from God in forty years for their wickedness (Luke 19:42-44). They failed to accept Jesus as the Messiah and would be done away with as a nation.
- In Luke 19:45-46, Luke gives us an example of just how wicked the Jewish nation had become. They were defiling God's temple! After Jesus cleansed it, the religious leaders began looking for opportunities to kill Him (Luke 19:47-48).

Luke 20

- The chief priests and scribes confronted Jesus for cleansing the temple (Luke 20:1). They wanted to know by what authority he did the things that he did (Luke 20:2). This was a great question! We always need to ask this question when it comes to religious matters.
- While the question about authority was great, Jesus knew that the motive from which it came was not. The Lord exposed their hypocrisy by bringing up their rejection of John the Baptist (Luke 20:3-8). As a prophet of God, John announced Jesus to be the Messiah, and they rejected his authority and message.
- Luke 20:19 begins a section where the religious leaders will try to trap Jesus and hurt His influence with the crowds. They attempt to do this with controversial questions (Luke 20:20). The question the chief priests and scribes asked about taxes was designed to make Him a target of either the Jews or Romans (Luke 20:21-22). Jesus knew their wicked hearts and embarrassed them with His answer (Luke 20:22-26).
- The quotation found in Luke 20:17 comes from Psalm 118:22. It describes how the Messiah would be rejected by evil men but vindicated by God. It also reveals that Jesus is the most important stone in the house of God. Those who oppose Him will lose every time (Luke 20:18).
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- The Sadducees followed with a question about the resurrection (Luke 20:27-33). These men were well-known for not believing in the resurrection. Jesus reproves and exposes their misunderstanding of the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 20:34-39). His skilled teaching caused them to no longer question Him (Luke 20:40).
- While these religious leaders thought they were so smart, they didn't even understand key aspects of the Messiah (Luke 20:41-44). They did not correctly understand what David taught in Psalm 110. While the Messiah would come through the lineage of David, He would be superior to him because He is the eternal Lord God.
- The scribes ultimately failed to accept Jesus because they were powerful hungry hypocrites (Luke 20:45-47). They cared more about gaining favor with men than with God.

Luke 21

- Luke 21:1-4 are powerful verses that describe what God is looking for when it comes to monetary giving. After exposing the corruptness of the scribes, chief priests, and Sadducees, Jesus commends an unexpected person. It is a poor widow putting into the temple treasury two copper coins. Jesus measures her giving not by how much she gives but by what was leftover afterward. While the rich may have been technically providing huge sums of money, the poor widow was being more sacrificial. She gave all she had to the Lord! God is looking for sacrifice, not leftovers!
- Many wrongly interpret the remainder of the chapter to be about what will occur before the Lord's second coming and the end of the world (Luke 21:5-38). Carefully studying the context reveals that is not the case! This chapter is about what would occur before Jerusalem's destruction and the end of the Jewish age in 70 A.D.
- Luke 21:5-6 are key verses that set up the context for the section. While leaving the temple, Jesus begins pointing out its beautiful features to His apostles. He then predicts the day when "there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down." This is a reference to when the Romans would destroy the temple forty years later.
- The apostles were curious to know when such a mind-blowing event would occur (Luke 21:7). Jesus provides them with signs to watch for leading up to Jerusalem's destructions (Luke 21:8-28). These signs were for that generation (Luke 21:32). Josephus (a first-century Jewish historian) confirms in his writings that every one of these things occurred before 70 A.D.
- The Lord reveals these signs so that the Christians could know when to be out of the city (Luke 21:20-21, 29-31, 34-36). Fleeing to the mountains will be pointless when He literally comes again (2 Peter 3:10). Jerusalem's destruction would be a judgment from God for Israel's rejection of the Messiah (Luke 21:22-27). Over a million Jews died in Jerusalem, but no Christians.
- Just like the Christians in the first century needed to be preparing for God's judgment against Jerusalem, God's people today need to be preparing for the return of Jesus. There will be no signs before the second coming of the Lord. Unlike God's judgment on Jerusalem, the second coming will occur suddenly and unexpectedly (Matthew 24:36-51; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3).

Luke 22

- As the Passover drew near, the chief priests and scribes began seeking to arrest and kill Jesus. They had to figure out a way to bypass the large crowds because He was a well-respected teacher (Luke 22:1-2). Judas (one of Jesus's apostles) would give them the opportunity they were seeking. At the right price, Judas would help them take Jesus apart from the crowds (Luke 22:3-6)
- Before eating the Passover with His apostles, Jesus found them a furnished room to prepare it (Luke 22:7-13). The eating of this meal commemorated when God's destroyer "passed over" their firstborns and killed the firstborns of the Egyptians. This occurred before their deliverance from Egypt.
- After the Passover meal, Jesus instituted a meal (the Lord's Supper) that Christians would eat to remember His redemptive work at Calvary until He comes again (Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-30). The Lord also revealed that He knew one of the His apostles would betray Him (Luke 22:21-23).
- An argument also took place between the apostles (Luke 22:24-30). The apostles frequently found themselves in competition over who would be the greatest in the kingdom of God (Mark 10:35-45). Jesus continually emphasized that those who are great in His kingdom are servants, not lords.
- Jesus also predicted that Peter would deny Him but return and continue doing God's work (Luke 22:31-34). After some final words, Jesus then made His way to Gethsemane (Luke 22:35-38).
- Jesus faced temptation while in the garden (Luke 22:39-40). The path the Lord journeyed was stressful. It required constant communication with the Father through prayer. He prayed for the Father to remove the cup of suffering if it was His will (Luke 22:41-42). While being in intense agony, the Father sent an angel to give Him the strength He needed to endure the cross (Luke 22:43-46). God may not always take away the trials of His people, but He will give them the strength they need to endure.
- The disciples struggled to stay awake while Jesus spent time in prayer (Luke 22:45-46). Judas eventually arrived with soldiers sent by the chief priests and scribes. He pointed Jesus out to them with a kiss (Luke 22:47-48). While trying to defend the Lord, Peter cut off a man's ear (Luke 22:49-50). Jesus rebuked Peter and miraculously healed the man (Luke 22:51). Jesus knew that Satan was doing His work in the cover of darkness (Luke 22:52-53).
- After being arrested, Jesus appeared before the Sanhedrin. The trial was corrupt! Jesus was beaten and mocked by many (Luke 22:63-65). There were no legitimate witnesses to make the charges against Him stick. This frustrated the high priests to such a degree that he directly asked Jesus if He was the Christ (Luke 22:66-67a). Once Jesus told the truth about His identity, He was charged with blasphemy (Luke 22:67b-71).
- During the trial, Peter was recognized by several people as a disciple (Luke 22:54-62). Fearing for his life, he denied it just as the Lord predicted.

Luke 23

- While the Sanhedrin decided that Jesus must die, they still needed the green light from Pontius Pilate to have Him executed. Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea. When bringing Jesus before Pilate, the Jewish leaders switched the charges (Luke 23:1-3). They knew that Pilate could have cared less about their charge of blasphemy, but the charge of treason would have caught his attention.
- After questioning Jesus, Pilate was convinced of His innocence (Luke 23:4-5). Since he knew releasing the Lord would not satisfy the Sanhedrin, he decided to send Him to King Herod (Luke 23:6-7). Herod was over the jurisdiction of Galilee and was in Jerusalem for the Passover. Herod wanted to meet Jesus and see Him perform miracles. Jesus refused to answer his questions and put on a show (Luke 23:8-12). Herod became frustrated and sent Him back to Pilate.
- Pilate questioned Jesus a second time and found no guilt in Him. He also acknowledged that Herod judged Him innocent (Luke 23:13-15). He ordered Jesus to be severely beaten (thinking this punishment would satisfy the Jews), but they continued to demand His death (Luke 23:16). The crowds even consented to the release of a notorious rebel over Jesus (Luke 23:17-25). Since most Jews hated being under Roman rule, it not surprising that they had no problem with an insurrectionist like Barabbas being granted his freedom.
- Due to being severely beaten, Jesus had trouble carrying His cross to Golgotha. Simon of Cyrene was forced to help Him (Luke 23:26). It was not uncommon for Romans to spontaneously force Jews into this kind of service. During the trip outside of Jerusalem, Jesus announced judgment on the Jewish people for their rejection of Him (Luke 23:27-31). His words would come to pass forty years later when Romans destroyed the city and the temple.
- Like Barabbas, the two criminals crucified alongside Jesus were probably insurrectionists (Luke 23:32). That was the crime that guaranteed being made an example of by the Roman empire.
- Luke 23:33-49 provides critical events that took place while Jesus hung on the cross. In addition to dying the death of a criminal, Jesus was mocked and had His garments divided up by soldiers. One of the criminals was converted and was promised to be with Jesus in Paradise (Luke 23:42-43). Darkness also came upon the land, and the temple's veil was torn in half. After hanging on the cross for about six hours, Jesus died. Based on the events surrounding His death, a Roman centurion was convinced that He was the Son of God (Luke 23:47).
- Joseph of Arimathea (a secret disciple who was also part of the Sanhedrin) asked permission from Pilate to bury Jesus. He placed it in a new tomb (Luke 23:50-53). Some women disciples observed where the tomb was and planned to return after the Sabbath to anoint His body (Luke 23:54-56).

Luke 24

- After dying on a cross and being buried in a tomb on Friday evening, Jesus was raised on Sunday morning. Once arriving at the tomb, some women disciples noticed that the huge stone covering it had been rolled away. Mary Magdalene left to go and tell the apostles. She believed that the Lord's body had been stolen. The other women proceeded into the tomb (Luke 24:1-7; John 20:1-2). Inside they found two angels who announced that Jesus had been raised! Jesus would later appear to these women (Matthew 28:8-10).
- The apostles did not believe the testimony of the women (Luke 24:8-11). It is powerful that the gospel writers tell us that women were the first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. In first-century Jewish society, women were often viewed as untrustworthy witnesses. They were not even allowed to testify in a court of law. If the gospel was fabricated, it would not have included this information!
- Peter and John went with Mary Magdalene back to the empty tomb (Luke 24:12; John 20:3-10). Once the two apostles departed, Jesus appeared and talked with her (John 20:11-18).
- The account of Jesus appearing to two disciples on the road to Emmaus is only found in Luke's gospel (Luke 24:13-35). It is given more attention than any of the other appearances in Luke. One of the disciples was named Cleopas (Luke 24:18). Many have suggested that the other unnamed disciple could have been his wife or Luke.
- Later that day, Jesus appeared to His apostles in an upper room (Luke 24:36-49). Thomas was the only apostle not present (John 20:24). Instead of eagerly anticipating a reunion with a risen Jesus, they hid behind locked doors in fear of the Jews (John 20:19). In addition to eating with them, the Lord also helped them better understand how His work fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24:42-45). He then gave them the mission of being His witnesses and preaching the gospel, beginning in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47-48). He also promised that they would receive power from the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49).
- After Jesus appeared to the apostles over 40 days (Acts 1:3), He blessed them and ascended to heaven (Luke 24:50-51). The apostles returned to Jerusalem and continued praising God (Luke 24:52-53).

Acts 1

- The book of Acts should be viewed as a continuation of the gospel of Luke. Whereas the gospel of Luke is about the work of Jesus on earth (Acts 1:1), Acts is about His work continuing through His disciples after His ascension (Acts 1:2).
- Luke is the only gospel writer to reveal how Jesus appeared to His apostles forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3). During this time, He cleared up any misunderstandings they had about the kingdom of God.
- The Lord promised to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles while they waited in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4-5). After the Spirit's power came upon them, they would be equipped to take the gospel throughout the world (Acts 1:6-8). Acts 1:8 seems to be the thesis for the book. The preaching of the gospel begins in Jerusalem (Acts 2-7), then in Samaria (Acts 8:1-14), and then it is promoted throughout all the world (Acts 10-28).
- Luke is also the only gospel writer to provide details concerning the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:9-11). While the apostles watched Jesus be lifted into heaven, two angels promised that He would one day return!
- Acts 1:12-26 are about God choosing another disciple to replace Judas as an apostle. While Jesus had hundreds of disciples, He only picked a few to be His apostles. The casting of lots was a common practice in Bible times (Acts 1:26). It was a method used to allow God to reveal His will if He desired.
- After the apostles prayed and cast lots, God chose Matthias to be Judas' replacement (Acts 1:23-26). Like the other eleven, he too would provide eyewitness testimony to the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1:21-22).

Acts 2

- The day of Pentecost was one of three significant feast days for the Jews (Acts 2:1). This day always occurred on the first day of the week (fifty days after the Passover). While the disciples were gathered in Jerusalem, the promise of the Holy Spirit came to pass (Acts 2:2-4). The “they” mentioned in Acts 2:1 must be connected back to the context of Acts 1:4-26. The Spirit’s miraculous power was poured out on the apostles!
- The Spirit’s presence was accompanied by “a noise like a violent rushing wind” and “tongues as of fire distributing themselves” on each one of them.
- The outpouring of the Spirit caused the apostles to miraculously begin speaking in foreign tongues that they had never formally learned (Acts 2:4). These “tongues” were actual languages that could be understood by the hearers (Acts 2:8, 11). It was a sign from heaven that the apostles were messengers of God, and salvation was available to all people because of Jesus.
- Acts 2:5-11 provides a list of the various places Jews traveled from to observe Pentecost. Notice how the Jews were scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Those who witnessed the miracle correctly concluded that the apostles were speaking about “the mighty deeds of God” (Acts 2:11). They were curious about the meaning of the miracle (Acts 2:12). Other Jews mocked the apostles and accused them of being drunk (Acts 2:13).
- Peter then preached to the crowd (Acts 2:14-36). His sermon is one of the most famous in the Bible. The key verse is Acts 2:21. Due to the redemptive work of Jesus, salvation has been available. The prophet Joel prophesied about this day (Joel 2:28-32). Joel predicted a day of judgment from God, and only those who call on the name of the Lord will escape it.
- Jesus is the Messiah who fulfilled Joel’s inspired prediction. The evidence for this can be seen in His miracles, death, and resurrection (Acts 2:22-31). His resurrection was foretold in Psalm 16. His exaltation was foretold in Psalm 110.
- Peter wanted the crowds to know that they were witnesses of the resurrection, Jesus was responsible for sending the Holy Spirit, and both of those things prove Him to be the Lord and Christ (Acts 2:32-33, 36). He also rebuked them for murdering the Messiah!
- This sermon pricked the hearts of many of those who heard it (Acts 2:37). Three thousand repented, were baptized, and added to the Lord’s church (Acts 2:38-41, 47). They continued learning from the apostles, observing miracles, and growing in their faith in Christ (Acts 2:41-43). They took care of one another’s needs, spent time together, and were viewed favorably by non-believing Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 2:44-47a). Due to their evangelistic zeal, the Lord was able to continue adding to their number every day (Acts 2:47b).

Acts 3

- This chapter is strikingly similar to Acts 2. Like in the previous chapter, after a miraculous sign occurred, people came together, and Peter preached to them the gospel.
- Peter and John are the two apostles that Luke focuses on in this chapter (Acts 3:1). While going up to the temple during the hour of prayer, they encountered a beggar at the “Beautiful” gate who had been lame since birth (Acts 3:2). This man sought money from the apostles but received something better (Acts 3:3-7). By the power of Jesus, Peter healed him!
- The miracle was so complete that the beggar not only began walking for the first time, but he also leaped and began praising God (Acts 3:8-9). The crowd remembered seeing this lame beggar many days outside the gate. They acknowledged that a genuine miracle had occurred (Acts 3:10).
- As the crowd grew larger in Solomon’s portico, Peter took the opportunity to preach. His sermon was about the One responsible for the miracle they had witnessed (Acts 3:11-26).
- Peter’s sermon was similar to the one he preached on Pentecost. He emphasized how even though evil men killed Jesus, He was resurrected, and they were witnesses of it (Acts 3:14-16).
- Jesus’ power was responsible for the physical healing of the lame man (Acts 3:16-18), and by repenting and submitting fully to His will, they could receive spiritual healing (Acts 3:19).
- The entire Old Testament pointed to the coming of Jesus and the salvation that He would make possible for all men (Acts 3:20-26).

Acts 4

- After Peter preached another powerful sermon about Jesus being the Messiah, he and John were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. The thing that “greatly disturbed” the council was the message of the Lord’s resurrection (Acts 4:1-2). The guards physically abused the two apostles and put them in jail (Acts 4:3). By this time the church had grown tremendously (Acts 4:4). There were at least five thousand men in the church (not counting the women). The next day, the Jewish leaders questioned Peter and John about the miracle performed on the lame man and their message (Acts 4:5-7). Being full of the Holy Spirit, Peter told them that the lame man had been healed by the power of Jesus (Acts 4:8-10). He also rebuked them for their rejection of Jesus and boldly proclaimed that He is the only source of salvation (Acts 4:11-12).
- The Sanhedrin was blown away by Peter’s message (Acts 4:13). They could not deny that a legitimate miracle had occurred (Acts 4:14). They threatened and tried to intimidate the two apostles (Acts 4:15-18), but Peter told them that they would not stop preaching about the risen Lord (Acts 4:19-20).
- Once Peter and John were released, they gathered with the church. After hearing their report, the church prayed (Acts 4:23-30). They prayed for boldness and courage to continue preaching God’s word in the midst of persecution. God responded to the prayer by shaking the place where they were gathered and filling them with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:30-31).
- The church continued to be united and attentive to one another’s needs (Acts 4:32-34). Joseph was a very generous disciple (Acts 4:35-37). He was such a positive and encouraging man that his name was changed to “Barnabas.” Barnabas will have a significant role throughout the rest of Acts. He will vouch for Paul once he is converted, travel with Paul preaching the gospel, and give John Mark another shot to redeem himself after he abandoned them on their first preaching journey.

Acts 5

- In the previous chapter, the church faced an external problem. Two of the apostles were persecuted by Jewish leaders. In this chapter, the devil begins assaulting the church from within (Acts 5:1-11). A Christian couple sold some property and falsely claimed to have given all the proceeds to help their brethren. Their motivation seems to have been tied to Barnabas' generosity (Acts 4:36-37). Ananias and Sapphira wanted the appearance of being as generous as Barnabas. Their hypocrisy was sinful and brought about the judgment of God! Their deaths generated godly fear in the brethren's hearts and reminded them that God knows about everything going on in the church.
- After the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, the church continued to grow (Acts 5:12-16). There were at least 5,000 adult males in the church. This means that there could have been between 12,000-15,000 Christians in Jerusalem. The gospel message was spreading throughout the city, and people were witnessing the supernatural power of God as the apostles were exercising it.
- With the success of the gospel came more persecution. All of the apostles were arrested and threatened by the Jewish Council (Acts 5:17-33). The apostles refused to cave to their intimidation. After being told to stop preaching about Jesus, Peter famously told the Jewish leaders, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).
- One of the Jewish leaders (Gamaliel) offered some wise counsel. He told the other men on the Sanhedrin that if Christianity were not of God, in time, it would die like other movements had throughout history (Acts 5:33-38). He urged his brethren to leave the apostles alone, "or else you might be found fighting against God" (Acts 5:39b).
- The council heeded Gamaliel's advice. After beating the apostles, they released them (Acts 5:40). The apostles celebrated that they were able to suffer for Jesus and continued preaching the gospel (Acts 5:41-42).

Acts 6

- Despite the apostles experiencing persecution at the hand of Jewish leaders, the gospel continues to spread like wildfire, and the church grows (Acts 6:1a.). However, during this period of success, an internal problem arose. Some felt that the Hellenistic widows were neglected, while the native Hebrew widows were given favorable treatment (Acts 6:1). This was a charge of discrimination in the church!
- Rather than let the issue hinder and distract them from preaching the gospel, the apostles encouraged the brethren to appoint seven spiritually qualified men over the benevolent work (Acts 6:2-4). After the men were appointed, the apostles prayed and imparted to them miraculous spiritual gifts (Acts 6:5-6). The gospel continued to be preached, and even many Jewish priests were being converted (Acts 6:7).
- Stephen's (one of the seven) preaching and miraculous work caught the attention of enemies of the gospel. Some men from the "Synagogue of the Freedmen" argued with Stephen. When they could not combat the wisdom he received from God, they brought him before the Sanhedrin and falsely accused him of speaking against the Law of Moses (Acts 6:8-14).
- The chapter concludes with Stephen appearing as an angel before the court and preparing to make a defense (Acts 6:15). His speech in Acts 7 is the longest sermon in Acts. It exposes Israel's constant rejection of God's spokesman and results in Stephen being murdered by the council.

Acts 7

- This chapter is about Stephen's defense against charges made against him back in Acts 6:13-14. These charges were false! Stephen spoke against the Law of Moses or the temple.
- Stephen's speech doesn't contain much about the gospel message. It is more of a history of Israel, and it highlights various instances when people were able to serve God outside Israel. He mentions the patriarchs (Acts 7:1-8), Israel's time as enslaved people in Egypt (Acts 7:9-19), and Moses and his deliverance of Israel (Acts 7:20-43). He also mentions the building of both the temple and tabernacle (Acts 7:44-50).
- The major theme in Stephen's speech is Israel's pattern of constantly rejecting God's messengers. The Jews of the past rejected Moses and the prophets (Acts 7:39, 51-53), and the Jews of Stephen's day had rejected the ultimate messenger of God – Jesus.
- Stephen's sermon angered the council, and they determined to put him to death. They took him out of the city and stoned him (Acts 7:57-58). A man named Saul watched over the coats of the murderers. He may have even been a member of the Sanhedrin. He will later be converted by the gospel and become one of the greatest preachers in the history of the world!
- As Stephen was being stoned, he saw a vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55-56). This is the only time in the Bible that Jesus is said to be standing at the Father's right hand.
- There are many similarities between the Lord's and Stephen's deaths. Both had false charges brought against them. Both appeared before the Sanhedrin and were condemned to die. Both were taken out of the city and prayed for their persecutors shortly before dying (Acts 7:59-60).

Acts 8

- After the death of Stephen, Saul of Tarsus led a vicious assault against the church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). The Christians are forced to scatter throughout Judea and Samaria. The evil actions of Saul led to the gospel spreading beyond Jerusalem, which is precisely what the Lord desired (Acts 1:8).
- The word “ravaging” used in verse 3 implies violence. It was a word used to describe how wild animals would tear and destroy their prey to pieces. Saul promoted violence against the church, separated Christian families, and imprisoned many disciples.
- Despite persecution, the church continued advancing the gospel (Acts 8:4). In Acts 8:5-25, Luke focuses on the evangelistic efforts of Philip. He was one of the seven appointed in Acts 6:5. Philip would be the first to preach the gospel to the Samaritans. Going to Samaria would be considered a radical action because most Jews had no interaction with Samaritans (John 4:9). The Samaritans were half Jewish and half Gentile. They worshipped God at Mt Gerizim and were regarded as unclean heathens.
- The Samaritans were receptive to the preaching of the gospel (Acts 8:5-8, 12). Philip also performed miracles to confirm his message.
- Even Simon (a sorcerer who had been deceiving the Samaritans) obeyed the gospel (Acts 8:13). Once Peter and John arrived and began imparting miraculous gifts, Simon tried to purchase the Holy’s Spirit power with money (Acts 8:18-19). Peter rebuked and urged him to repent (Acts 8:22-24). Contrary to Calvinistic doctrine, Christians can sin and lose their salvation!
- The Spirit then leads Philip to a eunuch from Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-27). This eunuch was a government official for the queen. He was probably a proselyte (he had just returned from Jerusalem worshipping God). After hearing preaching about Jesus, he was baptized for the remission of his sins (Acts 8:28-39). The Spirit then placed Philip in Azotus (Acts 8:40). He continued preaching and eventually settled in Caesarea.
- By the end of this chapter, the gospel is spreading like wildfire. It is being proclaimed not just to Jews, but also Samaritans, sorcerers, and even government officials from Ethiopia. In the next chapter, the most unlikely person will also be converted.

Acts 9

- As Saul was making his way to Damascus to persecute Christians, he encountered Jesus in a vision (Acts 9:1-7). This experience will be recounted twice by Saul (Paul) later in Acts. It is interesting to notice how Jesus personally took Saul's persecution of Christians (Acts 9:4). Saul was blinded and led into Damascus to wait for a messenger the Lord would send (Acts 9:8). He also fasted and prayed for three days (Acts 9:9, 11).
- Ananias was reluctant to obey the Lord's instruction to visit Saul. He was aware of Saul's reputation of being a fierce opponent of the cause of Christ (Acts 9:10-14). Lord explained to Ananias that He had a special purpose for Saul (Acts 9:15-16). Ananias went to Saul, gave him further instructions about God's will, and baptized him (Acts 9:17-19).
- After being converted, Saul immediately began proclaiming the name of Jesus in Damascus (Acts 9:20-25). Enemies of the church plotted to kill him, and the brethren helped him escape.
- Saul traveled to Jerusalem and had trouble being allowed into the fellowship of the disciples there (Acts 9:26). Barnabas spoke for him and explained how he was now a genuine follower of Christ (Acts 9:27). Saul began preaching the gospel in Jerusalem, but due to more death threats, he had to be sent back to Tarsus (Acts 9:28-31).
- Luke then shifts his focus back to Peter. In Acts 9:32-41, we find Peter performing miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. He healed a paralyzed man in Lydda and raised a very loved disciple (Tabitha) from the dead. This case of resurrection became well-known all over Joppa and caused many to turn to the Lord (Acts 9:42).
- Peter would stay many days in Joppa with a tanner named Simon (Acts 9:43). This is interesting because Jews regarded tanners as unclean because they handled dead bodies. This would only be the beginning of Peter doing things uncommon for a Jew.

Acts 10

- This chapter contains a critical moment in human history. Gentiles begin hearing the gospel, repenting of sin, and being baptized.
- In Acts 10:1-2, Cornelius is described. He was a Gentile who believed in the one true God and was generous to the Jews. An angel came to him in a vision and commanded him to send for the Apostle Peter, who was staying with a tanner (Acts 10:4-8). Cornelius obeyed the angel and immediately dispatched two of his servants and a devout soldier to Joppa.
- God prepared Peter to preach to Gentiles by giving him a miraculous vision (Acts 10:9-16). As a Jew, Peter had never eaten any unclean animals. God demanded that he kill and eat all the animals in the vision. The vision was a sign from God. Gentiles were about to hear the gospel and be cleansed and made holy by the blood of Jesus.
- Once the vision concluded, those sent by Cornelius arrived for Peter. They reported to Peter the instructions Cornelius received from the angel (Acts 10:17-23). Peter and some brethren traveled back with them to Caesarea and entered the house of Cornelius.
- Cornelius had gathered many family members and friends to hear Peter's message (Acts 10:24). Peter understood that God wanted him there to preach the gospel (Acts 10:24-33). He told those gathered about the ministry of Jesus, His death, burial, and resurrection. He announced the good news that forgiveness of sins has now been made available even to those who are not Jews (Acts 10:34-43).
- The Holy Spirit confirmed Peter's message by pouring out His power from heaven and giving these Gentiles the miraculous ability to speak in tongues (Acts 10:44-46). This was the same sign given to the Jews back in Acts 2:1-12. Peter then commanded these Gentiles to be baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:47-48). The Gentiles are now officially included in the family of God!

Acts 11

- The news of Gentiles obeying the gospel reached the Jewish brethren in Judea (Acts 11:1). Many were upset, not because Gentiles could gain salvation, but because Peter ate with them (Acts 11:2-3). These Jewish Christians were not excited about accepting Gentiles into the family of God.
- Peter explained all that transpired at the household of Cornelius. He revealed that God sent him to the Gentiles to preach forgiveness of sin and disclose the terms for them to enter the kingdom of God (Acts 11:4-18). The Jews' resistance to Gentiles being included in God's family will be a significant issue Luke addresses throughout the rest of Acts.
- Many Christians who had been forced from Jerusalem traveled to Gentile cities (Acts 11:19). After preaching solely to the Jews, these disciples began sharing the gospel with the Gentiles (Acts 11:20). Many were converted (Acts 11:21).
- After the church in Jerusalem learned of these converts, they sent Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11:22-24). Barnabas traveled first to Tarsus to find Saul. He felt Saul would be useful in helping strengthen the Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26). Saul will now become the dominant character in Acts. Luke will transition from focusing on Peter to how the Lord uses Saul to spread the gospel beyond Judea and Samaria.
- Agabus (a prophet from the church in Jerusalem) came down to Antioch and prophesied about a famine that would affect the entire world (Acts 11:27-28). The saints in Judea would suffer immensely.
- The Christians in Antioch (mostly Gentile) would send financial aid to the brethren in Judea through Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:29-30). God used a period of suffering to create unity among Jewish and Gentile believers!

Acts 12

- While the gospel continued to spread beyond Judea, the devil continued assaulting the church with persecution (Acts 12:1-2). Herod Agrippa (the grandson of Herod the Great and the Hasmonean princess Mariamne) was more popular with the Jews than most members of the Herod dynasty. This was likely due to his descent from the Hasmonean royal family. The Hasmoneans were the family from which the great Jewish heroes like Judas Maccabaeus and John Hyrcanus came. To remain in the Jews' good favor, Herod persecuted the church and killed the Apostle James. This is the only time we read about an apostle executed in the gospel.
- Herod proceeded to throw Peter in jail (Acts 12:3-4). Peter was likely going to be killed as well. While God did not intervene in the cases of Stephen and James, He did with Peter (Acts 12:6-17). The Lord has more work for His servant to do. He miraculously delivered the Apostle from the prison while the church prayed fervently for him at the home of John Mark's mother (Acts 12:5).
- Herod was furious about Peter's escape and executed the soldiers guarding him (Acts 12:18-19).
- Shortly after, Herod went down to Caesarea and experienced God's judgment (Acts 12:20-23). Since Herod refused to give glory to God, an angel of the Lord killed him. This evil king was removed as a stumbling block to His people!
- God would not allow persecution to destroy His cause! The gospel continued to advance, and many people were converted (Acts 12:24).
- The chapter concludes with Saul and Barnabas returning from their benevolent work in Jerusalem (Acts 12:25). Soon, they will be commissioned by the Holy Spirit to spread the gospel worldwide!

Acts 13

- This chapter marks the beginning of Luke's record of Paul's preaching journeys. As Paul and Barnabas labored with the saints in Antioch of Syria, the Holy Spirit called them to spread the gospel in places it had never gone before (Acts 13:1-2).
- Get a Bible map and notice the path of their journey carefully. Paul and Barnabas (along with John Mark) left Antioch of Syria, went down to Seleucia, and sailed to Cyprus (Acts 13:3-4). They began preaching the gospel in Salamis and made their way across the island to Paphos (Acts 13:5-6). There they encountered a sorcerer (Bar-Jesus) and a government official (Sergius Paulus). Bar-Jesus vigorously opposed the gospel and was blinded by the miraculous power Paul received from God (Acts 13:6-11). By contrast, Sergius Paulus was receptive to the gospel and became a believer (Acts 13:12).
- Paul and Barnabas then traveled to Perga. This was a city on the southern coast of Asia Minor. At this point, John Mark abandoned the group and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). Paul and Barnabas then traveled to Perga. This was a city on the southern coast of Asia Minor. At this point, John Mark abandoned the group and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13).
- They then continued northward to Pisidian Antioch. Upon arriving, Paul went into the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath and preached the gospel (Acts 13:14). This is the second longest sermon recorded in Acts. It is strikingly similar to Stephen's sermon (the longest sermon recorded in Acts)!
- Paul rehearsed 2,000 years of Jewish history (Acts 13:14-25). He emphasized how God chose the nation of Israel (descendants of Abraham) to bring salvation into the world through the Messiah. Jesus proved He was the promised Messiah by dying on a cross, being raised from the dead, and appearing before many witnesses (Acts 13:26-39). The Jews needed to believe in Him to avoid God's judgment (Acts 13:40-41).
- Paul was asked to return and preach this message again next Sabbath (Acts 13:42-43). The next Sabbath, a large crowd assembled to hear the gospel. Among those in the group were jealous and blaspheming Jews (Acts 13:44-45). Paul rebuked them for their hard hearts and took the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46-47; Romans 1:16). The Gentiles were much more receptive (Acts 13:48-49), but Jewish persecution forced Paul and Barnabas to leave the city and travel to Iconium (Acts 13:50-52).

Acts 14

- Upon entering Iconium, Paul and Barnabas found a synagogue. They preached to a large group of Jews and Greeks (Acts 14:1; Romans 1:16). Those who rejected the gospel persecuted Paul and Barnabas. This persecution forced them to move on to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra, and Derbe (Acts 14:2-7).
- In Lystra, Paul healed a lame man (Acts 14:8-10). This miracle amazed the crowds and led them to believe that Paul and Barnabas were Greek gods (Acts 14:11-13). Paul was disturbed by their idolatry and proclaimed the glory of the one true God (Acts 14:14-18). The persecuting Jews from Antioch and Iconium eventually showed up and convinced the crowds to take Paul out of the city and stone him (Acts 14:19). Paul survived the stoning (maybe miraculously) and went into Derbe to continue preaching (Acts 14:20). He and Barnabas then began retracing their path back to Syrian Antioch (Acts 14:21). Along the way, they encouraged the brethren and appointed elders in the churches (Acts 14:22-23).
- They passed back through Pisidian, Pamphylia, Perga, and finally arrived back in Antioch (Acts 14:24-26). After reporting their work to the church, they continued strengthening and laboring with the brethren (Acts 14:27-28).

Acts 15

- This chapter presents a significant problem in the church. An issue at Jerusalem spilled over into the congregation at Antioch. Local churches must always be on guard concerning false doctrine. Satan has many weapons in his arsenal. He will attack the church from without through persecution. He will also attack the church from within through hypocrisy, grumbling, immorality, and, in this case, through false teaching.
- The controversy had to do with circumcision (Acts 15:1-5). Some at Jerusalem argued that Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be saved. These brethren were wrong! The Apostle Paul condemned this teaching in passages like Galatians 5:4.
- Since this controversy was directly related to the issue of salvation, it needed to be resolved. The brethren were able to discover God's will by relying on what the Holy Spirit had already revealed. Peter appealed to what took place at the household of Cornelius (Acts 15:6-11). Paul and Barnabas appealed to the miracles the Holy Spirit empowered them to work among the Gentiles (Acts 15:12). James appealed to the Spirit's revelation through the Old Testament prophets (Acts 15:13-21). Their conclusion was, "God has clearly made His will known on this matter. Gentiles are not bound to the Law of Moses!"
- The apostles and elders at Jerusalem wrote a letter to the Gentiles in the churches at Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia (Acts 15:22-35). In the letter, they made it clear that they did send these Judaizing teachers out from Jerusalem. These men were promoting this false doctrine of their own accord. The Gentile Christians were not bound to any aspect of the Law of Moses. They did not have to be circumcised to gain salvation. There were other things, however, that Gentiles must observe. They need to abstain from idolatry and sexual immorality. When the brethren in Antioch received this letter, they rejoiced.
- Once the controversy surrounding circumcision was resolved, Paul desired to visit the congregations that he and Barnabas worked with on their first preaching journey (Acts 15:36-41). Due to Paul's refusal to travel again with John Mark, he and Barnabas decided to part ways. Paul traveled with Silas while Barnabas and John Mark made their way to Cyprus. This second preaching journey would provide an open door for Paul to take the gospel even further from Jerusalem and into Europe for the first time.

Acts 16

- This chapter introduces us to Timothy (Acts 16:1-2). Timothy was born to a Jewish mother and a Greek father. Following his father, he was uncircumcised and regarded as a Greek instead of a Jew. He had been taught the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5). He was also well spoken of by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium.
- Paul was immediately impressed with Timothy. After having him circumcised, Paul had Timothy travel with him and preach the gospel (Acts 16:3-5). Their work strengthened many local churches.
- While Paul wanted to visit and preach in Asia, he was forbidden by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6). God wanted Paul to travel to Macedonia instead (Acts 16:7-10). Their first stop in Macedonia was Philippi. This was a prominent city. After finding some women assembled near a river, Paul and Silas preached the gospel to them. Among those converted was a wealthy woman named Lydia (Acts 16:11-15).
- Paul's preaching would interfere with some corrupt men profiting from a slave girl with a spirit of divination (Acts 16:16-18). After Paul casts the evil spirit out of her, her masters seized and brought him before the civil authorities (Acts 16:19-21).
- Paul and Silas are beaten and imprisoned (Acts 16:22-24). This is Paul's first recorded prison time. God turns what seems to be a negative situation into something positive. During a crisis, Paul was given an open door to preach and persuade a jailer and his family to become Christians (Acts 16:25-34).
- Due to their Roman citizenship, Paul and Silas's mistreatment was illegal (Acts 16:35-39). They were released, and after spending time in the house of Lydia, they continued their journey to another major Macedonian city – Thessalonica (Acts 16:40).

Acts 17

- After departing from Philippi, Paul, Silas, and Timothy made their way to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1). Upon arrival, they immediately began preaching the gospel to the Jews (Acts 17:2-3).
- While many of the Thessalonians were receptive to the message of Jesus, some of the Jews became jealous (Acts 17:4-5). They formed a mob and sought to harm Paul and his preaching companions (Acts 17:5). They even brought newly converted disciples before civil authorities and accused them of rebelling against the Roman Empire (Acts 17:6-9).
- Luke's information about the persecution of these Christians is critical to understanding the background of the Thessalonian letters (1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8).
- Paul and Silas safely escaped Thessalonica and made their way to Berea. The Bereans are described as more receptive to the preaching of the gospel (Acts 17:10-12). Unfortunately, the Jewish persecutors of Thessalonica followed Paul to Berea and began stirring up the crowds (Acts 17:13). Paul left the city and traveled to Athens. Timothy and Silas remained in Berea (Acts 17:14-15).
- Athens was the most important and revered city in ancient Greece. It was distinguished as a place of learning, philosophy, and the arts. Great warriors, poets, statesmen, and philosophers flourished there. Supreme examples of architecture were found there in the finest buildings of the ancient world.
- Upon arriving in the city, Paul noticed that it was full of idols (Acts 17:16). He began preaching to the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles (Acts 17:17). He eventually had an opportunity to preach about the one true God in the Areopagus (Acts 17:18-29).
- Paul urged the people to repent and warned them of the coming Judgment Day (Acts 17:30-31). Many mocked Paul's message of the resurrection of Jesus, but some believed and joined him in the cause of Christ (Acts 17:32-34).

Acts 18

- After leaving Athens, Paul traveled to Corinth, where he met Aquila and Priscilla. Like Timothy, they too would become co-workers with Paul in the cause of Christ (Acts 18:1-2). This Christian couple was part of a group of Jews who had been forced from Italy by Claudius. They worked alongside Paul in the tentmaking business (Acts 18:3). There was a synagogue in Corinth where Paul taught the gospel every Sabbath (Acts 18:4).
- Corinth was one of the most populous and wealthy cities in Greece. It also was one of the most wicked and corrupt cities. It was loaded with immorality and idolatry. And yet, Paul went to this city with no thought of bypassing or avoiding it. He was determined to establish a group of believers in this place. The letters of 1st and 2nd Corinthians show the extent of Paul's success.
- Paul became afraid while laboring in Corinth and Jesus encouraged him (Acts 18:9-10). The Lord assured Paul that He would protect him. Paul would go on to labor in Corinth for 18 months (Acts 18:11).
- Paul's time in Corinth would not be without persecution at the hands of the Jews (Acts 18:12-17). While returning to Antioch (in Syria), Paul stopped in Ephesus. There he preached in the synagogue and left Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:18-19). The trip back to Antioch marked the end of Paul's successful preaching journey (Acts 18:20-22).
- In Acts 18:23, Luke begins telling us about Paul's third and final missionary recorded in Acts. This trip was the same song, third verse. Throughout the journey, Paul was persecuted by both Jews and pagans. This likely was a four-year trip that included a lengthy stay in Ephesus.
- Acts 18:24-28 mentions the preaching of Apollos. He was knowledgeable and a mighty speaker but was teaching error concerning the baptism of John. After accepting correction from Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos continued to spread the gospel of Christ.

Acts 19

- Ephesus was the capital city of the western part of Asia Minor. It was famous for housing the Temple of Diana. While Diana was worshipped in many Greek cities, Ephesus was the city noted for being the center of Diana worship. Ephesus was also renowned for its great theater, the largest in the world (capable of holding 50,000 spectators).
- When Paul arrived in Ephesus, his first job was to correct the erroneous doctrine taught by Apollos concerning baptism (Acts 19:1-7). He then preached boldly about Jesus and the kingdom of God for three months in the synagogue (Acts 19:8). He also taught daily in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9). While some hardened their hearts against the gospel, Paul's preaching had a tremendously positive impact in Asia (Acts 19:10).
- Paul also faced extreme persecution while laboring in Ephesus. His preaching and miraculous works started to hurt the pocketbooks of the idolatrous silversmiths in the city. These greedy men caused a riot, and God used the brethren to protect Paul's life (Acts 19:11-41).
- It is also worth noting that Paul established a congregation of Christians in Ephesus. Paul would later write an inspired letter to them while imprisoned in Rome. This letter is commonly called "Ephesians." Paul worked with this church for about three years (Acts 20:31). He became very close with the elders of this church (Acts 20:17).
- Paul would later leave Timothy with the brethren in Ephesus. This young preacher would continue helping these disciples grow in the Lord (1 Timothy 1:3). As the years went by, this church would start having many spiritual problems. Jesus would rebuke them for dwindling in their love and zeal for Him (Revelation 2:3-4).

Acts 20

- Acts 20:1-5 provide a summary of Paul's work in Macedonia and Greece. Paul would make return visits to Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. He spent three months in Greece, but because of a plot to kill him by the Jews, he directed his trip back through Macedonia. He and several other disciples then sailed from Philippi to Troas (Acts 20:6).
- On the first day of the week, Paul worshipped with the church in Troas (Acts 20:7-12). He partook of the Lord's Supper with the church, preached, and even raised someone from the dead!
- Acts 20:13-15 offers more details concerning Paul's journey. He had determined to travel to Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 20:16). However, along the way, he heard several prophecies that chains and prison await him. Paul believed this might be his last opportunity to speak with his brethren in Asia. After calling for the elders of the Ephesian church to meet him in Miletus, he gave them final instructions for leading their congregation (Acts 20:17-38).
- Paul reminded the elders of his diligent and faithful work among them (Acts 20:17-21). He also made them aware of the persecutions that awaited him in Jerusalem and admonished them to guard their flock against false teachers (Acts 20:22-31).
- After praying and weeping together, the elders accompanied Paul to his ship (Acts 20:36-38).

Acts 21

- This chapter details Paul's journey to Jerusalem after departing from Miletus. The trip included stops in Tyre, Ptolemais, and Caesarea (Acts 21:1-8). While in Caesarea, Paul and Luke stayed with Philip and his four virgin daughters, who were prophetesses (Acts 21:8-9). This is the same Philip appointed to serve the needy widows in Jerusalem and preached the gospel to the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 6:1-6; 8:1-40).
- While Paul was staying in Caesarea, Agabus (a prophet from Judea) foretold days of suffering for the apostle. God had revealed to Agabus how Paul would be arrested and handed over to the Gentiles (Acts 21:10-14). The brethren urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem, but he would not be deterred.
- Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Paul was persuaded to offer a sacrifice with some men who were completing their vows (Acts 21:15-26). This was done as proof that he was not teaching the Jews to forsake the Law of Moses. Paul's actions had nothing to do with the forgiveness of sins, but rather it had to do with ceremonial purification according to the Law. Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 may provide good insight into Paul's thinking at this time.
- While in the temple, Paul was seized and falsely charged with bringing a Gentile into the temple (Acts 21:27-29). A riot started, and a large group of Jews began beating Paul (Acts 21:30-32). The Roman officials were confused by all the chaos. They took Paul into custody and began questioning him (Acts 21:33-38).
- After Paul revealed his identity, he was granted the opportunity to address the hostile crowd and make a defense (Acts 21:39-40).

Acts 22

- The providence of God regarding the spread of the gospel is seen in this chapter. Amid a riot, Paul was able to proclaim the gospel and rehearse the story of his conversion.
- Paul began his speech by describing his life before he became a Christian. Before his conversion, it was widely known that Paul persecuted the church (Acts 22:1-5). While traveling to Damascus to arrest disciples, Jesus appeared and spoke to him (Acts 22:6-11). After being baptized by Ananias, Paul entered the service of the resurrected Savior (Acts 22:12-16). The Lord would use this former persecutor to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 22:17-21).
- Upon hearing about Paul's ministry to the Gentiles, the Jewish audience was filled with rage. They voiced a desire for him to be taken away and killed (Acts 22:22). Since Paul had spoken in the Hebrew dialect, the Roman soldiers were confused by the crowd's anger (Acts 22:23-24). They planned to interrogate Paul by beating him but abandoned the plan once they learned that he had Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25-29).
- The next day, Paul was brought before the Sanhedrin. Paul's defense before the Council would allow the Roman officials to learn why the Jews were so hostile toward him (Acts 22:30).

Acts 23

- This chapter contains Paul's appearance before the Jewish Council. His appearance before the Sanhedrin would help the Roman commander understand what caused a riot the previous day.
- Paul cleverly turned the members of the council against one another (Acts 23:1-9). The controversial topic he used to divide them was the resurrection. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection from the dead, while the Sadducees did not. Jesus also clashed with the Sadducees over this matter. He told them they were wrong in their understanding (Matthew 22:23-33).
- The debate that Paul caused between the two competing Jewish groups led to his deliverance (Acts 23:10). Paul was taken away to a place of safety by the Roman authorities. While in the barracks, the Lord appeared to Paul and urged him to take courage (Acts 23:11). He assured Paul that he was destined to preach the gospel in Rome.
- Paul's enemies would continue trying to kill him (Acts 23:12-22). More than forty opponents promised not to eat anything until Paul was dead! Paul's nephew overheard their plan to assassinate him. The young man told the Roman authorities, and Paul was safely moved to Caesarea (Acts 23:23-35).
- While so many hostile Jews are threatening Paul's life, the Lord providentially protects Him! He used their evil actions to place Paul exactly where He wanted him to be.

Acts 24

- As a prisoner, the Lord was able to use Paul to preach to powerful men. This might not have happened if it wasn't for his imprisonment!
- While kept in custody in Caesarea, the Jewish authorities (along with an attorney) brought false charges against Paul to the Roman governor Felix (Acts 24:1-9).
- In Acts 24:10-21, we find Paul's defense against their bogus charges. He recounted what really occurred at the temple and how many Jews despised his preaching about the resurrection.
- Felix decided to keep Paul locked up for the time being (Acts 24:22-23). Eventually, the governor sent for Paul, and the apostle was able to preach the gospel to him. Paul's message included admonitions about righteousness, self-control, and the coming Judgment Day (Acts 24:24-25). While Felix was convicted by the message, he decided to put off serving God and releasing Paul.
- Felix was greedy and wanted to bribe Paul (Acts 24:26). He kept Paul locked up in Caesarea for two years! He would be replaced as governor by Porcius Festus (Acts 24:27).

Acts 25

- Festus was another important political figure that Paul was able to meet while imprisoned in Caesarea. After going up to Jerusalem, Festus heard the bogus charges made against Paul by the Jewish leaders (Acts 25:1-3). These leaders wanted Paul transferred back to Jerusalem so they could assassinate him.
- Festus told the Jewish authorities to travel to Caesarea and bring their charges against Paul there (Acts 25:4-5). Upon returning to Caesarea, Festus brought Paul out before his accusers (Acts 25:6). The Jewish leaders' charges could not be proven (Acts 25:7). Paul maintained his innocence and appealed his case to Caesar in Rome (Acts 25:8-12).
- The Agrippa mentioned in Acts 25:13 was a member of the Herod family. His father was the Herod, who killed the Apostle James, locked up Peter, and was killed by God (Acts 12:1-25). Upon arriving to pay respects to the Festus, the governor asked for his counsel regarding Paul (Acts 25:14-21).
- King Agrippa decided to investigate Paul the next day (Acts 25:22). He would be another powerful man that Paul would be able to meet with and preach the gospel.
- Festus knew Paul was innocent! However, since Paul appealed to Caesar, he felt Agrippa could help him understand the charges against him before sending him off to Rome (Acts 25:23-27).

Acts 26

- This chapter contains King Agrippa's examination of Paul. Paul rehearses with Agrippa the story of his conversion. He informs him that before he was a disciple, he was a zealous Jew (Acts 26:1-5). He was a Pharisee and very passionate about keeping the Law of Moses.
- Paul knew that the Jews especially despised his preaching about Jesus being raised from the dead (Acts 26:6-8).
- Before his conversion, Paul was a fierce opponent of the church. He locked up Christians and took pleasure in seeing them put to death. He tried to force them to blaspheme and pursued them to foreign cities (Acts 26:9-11). This would be Paul's biggest regret in life. He knew that if God was willing to forgive him for persecuting His people, he was willing to forgive anyone (1 Timothy 1:12-15).
- When traveling to Damascus to persecute Christians, the Lord appeared to Paul (Acts 26:12-15). Luke first mentions this encounter in Acts 9:1-9. The Lord chose Paul (a man who once was zealous about the Law) to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 26:16-18). It was for this reason that the Jewish leaders hated Paul (Acts 26:19-23).
- Festus accused Paul of being crazy (Acts 26:24). Paul was adamant that everything he testified was true and others were aware of these events (Acts 26:25-26).
- While King Agrippa was familiar with the Scriptures (Acts 26:27), it is hard to be certain if he was sincere in Acts 26:28. The term "Christian" was not typically used to describe God's people in first-century Roman society positively. Regardless, King Agrippa was not converted!
- King Agrippa was convinced that Paul was innocent and did not deserve to be imprisoned (Acts 26:29-32). He and Festus were unaware of how it was the Lord's will that Paul make the journey to Rome (Acts 23:11).

Acts 27

- This chapter details Paul's journey to Rome as a prisoner. Luke accompanied Paul (Acts 27:1). The centurion responsible for Paul treated him with favor and respect. He allowed Paul some liberties (Acts 27:2-3).
- Their journey began in Caesarea. After stopping at Sidon, the group traveled along the coasts of Cilicia, Cyprus, and Pamphylia. In Myra, Paul and his group transferred to the Alexandria ship sailing for Italy (Acts 27:3-6). Luke is very detailed when describing their route (Acts 27:7-8). It would be helpful to get a Bible map and mark the places mentioned.
- Paul tried to warn the crew about the dangers that awaited them on the trip, but the pilot and captain persuaded the centurion not to listen to him (Acts 27:9-11). This would prove foolish because a violent storm arose on the sea (Acts 27:12-20). Paul calmed the crew and prisoners by assuring them that no one would die. God was going to save them (Acts 20:21-26).
- After experiencing shipwreck, Paul and the other 275 members aboard safely made it to the island of Malta (Acts 27:27-44). This would be an act of God's providence. Those on Malta would soon witness Paul perform a miracle and hear the gospel!
- The shipwreck Paul experienced here is also mentioned in 2 Corinthians 11:26-27. Being a servant of Christ didn't immune Paul from problems. Paul could have died in this storm, but the Lord watched over him and kept his promise to get him to Rome safely (Acts 23:11).

Acts 28

- In the previous chapter, Paul, Roman officials, and the rest of the prisoners had to abandon their ship after it began to break apart. Upon reaching the shore of the island of Malta, they were shown great kindness by the natives (Acts 28:1-2). They kindled a fire for Paul and the rest of the survivors because it was cold and raining.
- As Paul was laying sticks on the fire, a viper rose and bit him on the hand. The natives were sure that Paul was an evil man who was reaping what he had sowed! Once the apostle miraculously shook off the injury and survived, they began calling him a “god” (Acts 28:3-6).
- Publius was the leading man of Malta. Paul healed his sick father and many of those who had diseases on the island. (Acts 28:7-10). This would have certainly led to open doors of opportunity for Paul to preach the gospel!
- After spending three months of the winter on Malta, Paul finally made it to Rome. Upon his arrival, many brethren welcomed him, and the Roman authorities allowed him to stay in his rented quarters (Acts 28:11-16).
- When Paul had been in Rome for three days, he called for the Jewish leaders. He told them he was innocent of the charges made against him in Jerusalem and forced him to appeal his case to Caesar (Acts 28:17-20). The Jews in Rome had received no word from Judea about Paul but desired to hear more about his “sect” (Acts 28:21-22).
- There came a day when these Jews were able to hear Paul preach about Jesus being the Messiah (Acts 28:23). Some of them were persuaded, but others were not (Acts 28:24). When many began rejecting the gospel, Paul shook it off and turned his attention to the Gentiles (Acts 28:25-29).
- The chapter concludes with Paul staying two years in Rome, waiting for his case to be heard by Caesar. During this time, he preached about Jesus to all of those who came to him (Acts 28:30-31). The evidence leads us to believe that Paul won his appeal, but a few years later, he would be arrested again and executed by the Roman government (2 Timothy 4:6-8).