

# acts

PART 2

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deep roots

BIBLE STUDIES

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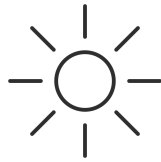
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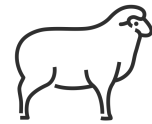
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# ACTS CHART

CHAPTER	DESCRIPTION
Chapter 8	
Chapter 9	
Chapter 10	
Chapter 11	

32 A.D.

- Saul converts (Ch 9)
- Saul goes into the Arabian desert, then returns to Damascus. (Gal 1:17)

35 A.D.

- Saul returns to Damascus (Gal 1:18) and meets with the apostles (A 9:26)

41-42 A.D.

- Barnabas & Saul at Antioch (Ch11)
- Believers first called Christians at Antioch (11:26)
- James, son of Zebedee, is killed by Herod Agrippa I (Ch 12)
- Peter imprisoned (Ch12)

(It is nearly impossible to know the exact dates and even years of the events in Acts, so these are approximate times determined by Bible scholars.)



# & TIMELINE

CHAPTER	DESCRIPTION
Chapter 12	
Chapter 13	
Chapter 14	

44 A.D.

- Herod Agrippa I dies (12:23)
- Barnabas & Saul complete mission at Jerusalem and return to Antioch (12:25)

46 A.D.

- Paul's first missionary journey (Ch13-14)

61 - 64 A.D.

- Luke writes the book of Acts



# MAJOR & MINOR FIGURES



**Peter, Apostle**  
Spokesperson of early church



**Barnabas, Christian**  
Partners with Paul



**Paul, Missionary**  
Preaches to the Gentiles  
Plants several churches

**Agabus:** 1st century prophet who predicted a famine (Ch 11)

**Ananias:** Lives in Damascus, Called by God to meet Saul after his conversion (Ch 9)

**Bar-Jesus:** False prophet, becomes physically blind after antagonizing Paul (Ch 13)

**Cornelius:** Roman centurion, the first Gentile convert (Ch 10)

**Ethopian Eunuch:** Meets Philip on journey from Jerusalem (Ch 8)

**King Herod Agrippa I:** King of Judea, orders the execution of James (Ch11)

**James, brother of Jesus:** Peter tells the believers to tell this James about Peter's escape (Ch11)

**James, son of Zebedee:** One of the 12 apostles, executed by King Herod (Ch11)

**John Mark:** Joins Paul and Barnabas for part of their missionary journey (Ch 12)

**Mary, Mother of Mark:** Believers pray at this Mary's house while Peter is in prison (Ch 11)

**Philip:** One of the 12 Apostles, Preaches in Samaria and to the Ethiopian Eunuch (Ch 8)

**Rhoda:** Mary's servant girl who opens the door for Peter (Ch 11)

**Sergius Paulus:** Governor of Paphos, Wants to hear the gospel (Ch13)

**Simon Magnus:** Samaritan charlatan, who asks to buy the Holy Spirit for His powers (Ch 8)

**Tabitha:** Believer who lives in Joppa, brought back to life by Peter (Ch 9)





# Chapter 8

## THE BOOK OF ACTS

### Goals For This Week:

- Pray for those who are being persecuted for their faith.
- Understand that often times, God uses bad things to bring good things to fruition!
- Pray for those people who are caught up in sin, and need the touch of the Holy Spirit.
- Have the courage to hope that better things lie ahead.

### DAY ONE: SAUL EMERGES

This is the second time we are introduced to Saul, who will later be renamed to Paul. (The first time was Acts 7:58) As you probably know, Paul became one of the biggest evangelists of the early Church, and he also wrote the most books in the Bible. Keep this in mind as we learn more about Saul. By the way, this Saul is not the same as King Saul of the Old Testament. Same name, different people.

- To review what you learned already, who was put to death in Chapter 7? How was he killed?





- Look at Acts 8:1. How did Saul feel about Stephen’s murder?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What happened afterward? (Verses 1-3)

Did you know these kinds of persecutions towards Christians occur even today? Take a moment today to pray for those worshipping the Lord in areas where their faith is illegal or dangerous. Ask for the Lord’s protection over His missionaries in these places, and those who continue to teach God’s word regardless of the consequences.

NOTE: Over the course of your study, try to memorize key verses from your reading, and even listen to music inspired by Acts. You can see our suggestions in Appendix A and B, on pages 110 to 111 in the back of your booklet.

**“GOD SOMETIMES HAS TO ACT THROUGH DISAGREEABLE CIRCUMSTANCES IN ORDER TO COMPEL HIS SAINTS TO WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS PLAN FOR THEM.”**

- H.A. Ironside



## DAY TWO: SAUL AND STEPHEN

Saul and Stephen could not have been more different from one another. Interesting enough, though, Stephen's death is quite similar to Jesus'. To better see this similarity, fill out both charts below. In each chart, list the similarities, including verse references as proof. (NOTE: Jesus' crucifixion occurs in Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19. Saul's attitude is described in Acts 7:58 – 8:3)

### JESUS

### STEPHEN

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## CROWDS AT JESUS' CRUCIFIXION

## SAUL & THE CROWDS AT STEPHEN'S MURDER

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Now, we must ask ourselves: how could Stephen possibly respond the way Jesus did, in the midst of being murdered? Ponder on this, and write your thoughts below:



## DAY THREE: THE CHURCH SPREADS

Read Acts 8:4-8. What happens to the church in Jerusalem, following Stephen's murder? What kind of miracles are happening?

Look back at Acts 1:8. What was Jesus' instruction to the apostles? What is happening here in Acts 8:5?

Thus far, our time in Acts has primarily been in Jerusalem. However, now that the church is spreading, more and more locations will be mentioned in the text. You may find it helpful to mark the locations in your Bible - we suggest underlining every name of location with a specific color, like green, in your Bible from this point forward. Maps have also been included in Appendix A on pages 106 to 109.

Who was Philip? Read the following verses, and record what you learn about him:

- Mark 3:14-19
- John 1:43-48
- John 14:8-15



- Acts 1:13

- Acts 6:5

Now that we are caught up on who Philip was, what did he do in Acts 8:4-8?

Often times, we think that under intense persecution, we would probably stop proclaiming the name of Jesus out of fear. However, the complete opposite happens here after Stephen's death. Bible scholars believe that Stephen's death was the catalyst for the early church spreading out further, as Jesus had prompted in Acts 1. These early Christians are on the

run from the religious leaders of the day, causing the Christians to travel away from their home, Jerusalem. Yet, these new places gave them fresh opportunities to share the gospel, and the opportunity to plant new churches in these cities. It is amazing to see how God uses horrible circumstances for good.



## DAY FOUR: THE MAGICIAN SIMON

Read Acts 8:9-23. Then, answer the following below:

- Who was Simon? How did people respond to him? (Verse 9-11)
- What changed? (Verse 12-13)
- Why did the church in Jerusalem send Peter and John to this new church in Samaria? (Verse 14-17)
- What did Simon ask for, in verses 18-19?
- How does Peter respond? (Verses 20-23)
- Who does Simon think should pray for him, rather than praying for himself as instructed? (Verse 24) Why might this be?



## SIMON MAGNUS

Simon Magnus, also known as Simon of Samaria, was an interesting character in history. Several historians wrote about Simon and his work to perform magic tricks to manipulate people into worshipping him. Justin Martyr, a second century historian, wrote, “He was considered a god...with a statue, which ...bore this inscription, in the language of Rome:— *Simoni Deo Sancto*, To Simon the holy God. And almost all the Samaritans, and a few even of other nations, worship him, and acknowledge him as the first god... For this purpose, then, he had come that ...he conferred salvation upon men, by making himself known to them. [Simon claimed] he had come to amend matters, and had descended, transfigured and assimilated to powers and principalities and angels, so that he might appear among men to be a man, while yet he was not a man.” Doesn’t it sound like Simon was claiming to be like Jesus?

In the second century, a group who called themselves “Simonians” claimed this Simon Magus was their founder. Justin Martyr explained, “And [Simon], by the aid of the devils, has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies, and to deny that God is the maker of this universe, and to assert that some other being, greater than He, has done greater works.” Some of these people, Martyr says, even claimed they were Christians.

Hans Josef Klauck, a Bible scholar, explains that it was inevitable Simon Magnus should meet the Christian apostles at some point, because of Simon’s “prominent position” in Samaria. This is where Peter meets Simon in Acts 8. Although Simon initially seems receptive to the gospel, his desire for more glory shows his true colors. As H.A. Ironside states, “If the gift of God could be purchased with money, it would not be a gift!”



Do you know anyone like Simon Magnus, as in someone who uses their faith to get ahead in life, or blasphemes against the name of God? Or maybe someone whose heart is “not right before God” and is in “the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity?” This could be a person you personally know, or someone who is in the media. Take some time to present this person before the Lord, and ask that “the intention of [his/her] heart may be forgiven.” Ask Him to convict this person of their behavior, so that they might dwell in the presence of the Lord, not in their sin.

In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist mentions the purpose of his baptisms: I baptize you with water for repentance. Paul affirms this in Acts 19:4: John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus. John’s baptism had to do with repentance—it was a symbolic representation of

changing one’s mind and going a new direction. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:6). Being baptized by John demonstrated a recognition of one’s sin, a desire for spiritual cleansing, and a commitment to follow God’s law in anticipation of the Messiah’s arrival.





“Why did not these Samaritans receive the Spirit of God the moment they professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? The reason, I think, is perfectly clear. For something like five hundred years the temple at Jerusalem and the temple at Mt. Gerizim had been rival sanctuaries. The Jews in the south and the Samaritans north of Jerusalem had each claimed to be God's chosen people, and there was intense rivalry between them. One can understand that if the Spirit had immediately fallen on these Samaritan believers, when they received the Word, then the strife between the Jews and Samaritans might have been perpetuated. There might have been down through the centuries two different groups of Christians, each claiming to be the true church.

But when the apostles came from Jerusalem and identified themselves with the believing Samaritans, and God gave the Holy Ghost to them in answer to the prayers of the apostles, the work was recognized definitely and openly as one. There was only one body, whether Jews in Judea or Samaritans in Samaria. All were joined into one body of which the risen Christ was the Head.”

– H.A. Ironside



## DAY FIVE: THE COURAGE TO HOPE

Read Romans 8:28-39. You may want to underline or highlight any verse in this passage that stands out to you. Then, summarize Paul's arguments below:

Has there even been a time that you went through something devastating, that God actually used for good later? What was it, and how did the Lord use it? (If you can't think of anything, then think of someone else who went through a distressing trial that the Lord used for good.)

What about today? What pain or difficulty are you facing right now?



Often times, we get caught up in just asking God to remove the pain or trial. Sometimes our pain seems so great, we cannot imagine our lives will ever get better, or God can ever heal us from the pain. We feel hopeless when the difficulty persists and we do not feel any better about it. At this point, depression settles in. We become angry at God for not removing the struggle.

Yet, it takes courage to hope that better things will come. Yes, *courage* - the courage to hope that this too shall pass, and one day your pain will be behind you.

The reason you do not ask for hope itself, is because oftentimes we base hope on seeing circumstances change. Unfortunately, things sometimes have to get worse before they get better. (Look at Job! Or Joseph!) God may need you to be in the trial for a while longer, so He can continue to shape and mold you more into His image and heart. Paul says in Romans 8:24-25, "For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who

hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it." If we ask God for hope, we will constantly be on the lookout for a change in our circumstance that will give us hope. Yet, from what we read in Romans 8 above, hope is simply something you have to believe exists, since God is for you. Thus, we bravely hope that our future will change and this pain will someday end, because we have faith in the goodness of God, no matter our circumstances.

So, instead of asking God to take away the pain, take some time today to admit how your circumstances make you feel. If you are angry with God, if you feel like God has abandoned or betrayed you, admit that. Is there something that you chose to push to the side and thus have never really dealt with it? Talk to Him about it. Be open. Then, ask Him for the courage to hope each day, that better things lie ahead.

