



# Selected Passages from the Book of Acts



High School Study Guide Answer Key by Beth Barr



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### ~ Weeks 1 and 2 ~

#### Introduction

For the next two weeks, we will be taking a closer look at two passages from the Book of Acts in which Paul explains his faith. The Book of Acts records the growth of the church from a small group of people who had been close to Jesus while He was here on the earth to a movement of God's Spirit that reached throughout the Roman Empire. In Acts 1:8, Jesus commissions the believers to be His witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (NIV) This commission applies to us today as well, and we can learn a lot about how to accomplish it as we observe our brothers and sisters in the Book of Acts.

#### Goals

1. Grow in our ability to know how to study the Scripture personally.
2. Grow in our understanding of who God is and how He acts.
3. Grow in our ability to tell others about Jesus.

#### Supplies and Preparation

- A Bible. (I suggest that you choose a modern translation such as the New International or the New King James Version because it will be easier to understand.)
- A copy of Acts 13:4–43 and Acts 17:16–34 that you can write on. (You can use your own Bible or print out a copy from [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com).)
- Colored pencils, pens, or highlighters.
- A map of Paul's first missionary journey. (*The Student Bible Atlas* has this, and your Bible may have maps in the back as well.)
- Outline Map #2 in *The Mystery of History* Volume 2 to draw on.

### Week 1 - Day 1 – Understanding Context

Context is the setting in which something is placed. It greatly influences our understanding. For instance, the word "fire" could have a very different meaning to a soldier in a battle than it has to someone camping in the mountains. Those are two different "contexts." *Con* is a Latin root that means "with," so the "context" is anything that goes with the text that helps us to understand its meaning. Understanding context will help you in any book that you read, and it can even help you understand people that you know because all of us have our own unique "context" that we live in as well. Just for fun, list five things that might describe your context right now. [The answers will vary — my answers would include:

- I'm in my house.
- I'm in Dover, Delaware.

- I'm married.
- I have two (mostly) grown-up daughters
- It's summer as I write this.
- I have a college degree.]

When we talk about the context of a book of the Bible, some of the important things we would like to know are:

- Who wrote it? What was going on in his life when he wrote it?
- Whom is it about?
- To whom was it written? Where did they live? What was going on in their lives when it was written?
- When was it written? What was going on in history at this time?

We can't always figure out the answers to all these questions, but usually a little detective work will turn up most of the answers. Some Bibles have an introduction to each book that will give you this information, but we are going to learn some methods by which to discover these answers for ourselves.

Before we turn to the specific parts of Acts that we will be studying, it is important to understand a little bit about the book of Acts as a whole.

- Read Acts Chapter 1:1–8.
  - What was the author's former book about? [The life of Jesus]
  - What do you think this book is going to be about? (Hint: Look at verse 1:8.) [The witness of the apostles in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and throughout the earth]
- Using a Bible atlas, find a map of the Roman Empire during this time period.
  - On the map at the end of the lesson, put a black dot on Jerusalem.
  - Shade Judea and Samaria in yellow.
  - Draw red lines over the rest of the areas on the map.

What you have just drawn could be called a visual outline of the Book of Acts. The early chapters talk about the spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem. Then, in Chapter 8:1, we read that there was a great persecution against the church and many were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. And then, in Chapter 13, we see the Holy Spirit setting apart Barnabas and Saul for a missionary journey. The rest of the book chronicles many of Paul's experiences as the Holy Spirit leads him throughout the Roman world.

## Week 1 - Day 2

- Read Acts 13:13–14.
  - Who are the people mentioned? [Paul and his companions]
  - What do you already know about Paul? Make a list of anything you remember about him. [Answers will vary. Students may remember some information from learning about Paul in *The Mystery of*

*History* or other sources — if they don't, that is not a problem.]

The best place to get information about someone in the Bible is the Bible itself. Let's read a little more about Paul so that we can understand him better.

- Read Acts 9:1–22. Write a brief description of what happened to Paul (then called Saul). What do you learn about Paul? [He was a devout Jew who persecuted Christians. One day when he was traveling to Damascus to arrest Christians, he was struck blind by Jesus. After three days, God sent a man to him to heal him. After that, he began to preach to others that Jesus was the Christ.]
- Read Acts 13:1–3. What do you learn about Paul? [He has been set apart by God to go on a mission.]

### Week 1 - Day 3 – Geographical Locations

- Read Acts 13:4–14.
- Underline in green any geographical locations that you see mentioned.
- Use a Bible atlas to find out where those places are located.
- What countries would they be in today? [Turkey, Cyprus, and Israel]
- How did Paul and his companions travel? [By ship and walking]
- Have you ever been on a long trip with your family or friends? Did you enjoy it or did you miss being home? Imagine you were traveling with Paul and his friends. You have been away from home for quite some time but have just come into the town of Pisidian Antioch and tomorrow you are going to go to the synagogue to be with some people to worship God. Write a journal entry or a letter home about your trip and what your expectations might be for tomorrow.

### Week 1 - Day 4

- Read Acts 13:13–16.
- Underline in yellow any mention of the people to whom Paul is speaking.
- Now, look at the information you have underlined and see if you can answer these questions:
  - What city did they live in? [Pisidian Antioch]
  - Where were they within that city? [A synagogue]
  - What were they doing? [Reading from the Law and the Prophets]
  - How does Paul refer to them in verse 16? [Men of Israel and Gentiles who worship God]
- Think about what it would have been like to be this group of people. They were Jewish people, but they were living far away from Israel. Quite possibly they had never been to the temple in Jerusalem. Judaism was, at best, tolerated in the Roman Empire, but in many places, Jews were persecuted because they refused to worship the emperor. In spite of this, their faith seems to have been important to them because they were meeting together on the Sabbath, reading the Scriptures and worshiping God. Have you ever been in a situation where you were surrounded by people who thought differently than you, or who believed in different things than you do? What was that like? If you haven't had that experience, maybe your family has moved to a new town where you didn't know anyone. What does it feel like to be a stranger?



- Paul calls the people he is speaking to here “brothers” because they have the same religious background that he has. Some of them were born Jewish, and others were Gentiles who had converted and now worshiped the same God he did. This gave them a lot in common.
- Read Acts 13:16–33. Put an orange circle around any use of the word “us” or “our” that you see. Make a list of the things Paul says he has in common with these people (include the verse where you find your information).
  - [Their fathers were chosen by God. (17)]
  - They have the history of God’s protection, leading and blessing their people, in common. (17–22)
  - The message of salvation has been sent to them. (26)
  - God has fulfilled the promise He made to their fathers by raising up Jesus. (32)]

## Week 1 - Day 5

- Read Acts 13:16–41.
- Put a red triangle over every mention of God and a red cross over every mention of Jesus.
- Put a star next to any verse in which Paul asks the people he is talking to for some kind of response.
- Fill in the chart at the end of this lesson with what you have learned by going back to look at what you marked.

## Week 2 - Day 1 – Acts 17

- Read Acts 17:16–22.
- Circle in blue any references to Paul.
- What city is he in? [Athens]
- Use your Bible atlas to find that city. What country would it be in today? [Greece]
- What do you learn about that city and the people in it from verses 16, 21, and 22? [The city was full of idols. The people liked to spend their days talking about and listening to the latest ideas. They were very religious.]
- In what specific places did Paul spend time talking to people about Jesus? [The synagogue, the marketplace, and the Areopagus. The Areopagus was like a city council where leaders of the town gathered to discuss ideas and pass judgments.]
- In spite of the fact that the people at the Areopagus knew nothing about Paul’s teaching, he seeks to find some common ground with them just as he did in Pisidian Antioch. Read Acts 17:22–31 and make a list of the ways Paul makes connections with the people he is speaking to. It may help you to mark words like “we,” “us,” “all,” and “every.” (Include the verse where you find your information).
  - [He says they are already worshiping an “unknown god,” whom he would like to help them to know more about. (23)]
  - God gives all men life and breath and everything else. (24)
  - God made every nation of men. (26)
  - God is not far from each one of us. (27)

- Paul refers to some of their poets. (28)
- We are God's offspring. (29)
- God commands all people everywhere to repent. (30)]

## Week 2 - Day 2

- Read Acts 17:22–33.
- Put a red triangle over every mention of God and a red cross over every mention of Jesus.
- Put a star next to any verse in which Paul asks the people he is talking to for some kind of response.
- Fill in the chart at the end of this lesson with what you have learned by going back to look at what you marked.

## Week 2 - Day 3

- As a review — What did the people that Paul spoke to in Pisidian Antioch already know about God? [They knew all the Old Testament Scriptures — so they knew how God had acted throughout history.]
- Summarize the *new* information Paul told the people in Pisidian Antioch. [In Jesus, God fulfilled His promise to send a Savior. Jesus was executed even though he was not found guilty of a crime, but God raised him from the dead.]
- What did the people in Athens already know about God? [They knew almost nothing about the true God. They were very religious and worshiped many different kinds of gods or idols made of gold and silver and wood.]
- Summarize the *new* information Paul told the people in Athens. [Paul told them a lot about who God is — what He is like. He also told them that God would judge the world through Jesus, whom He raised from the dead, and that they needed to repent.]
- Look through the chart that you filled out yesterday. Underline in yellow any of your statements that are the same in both columns.
- As you can see from underlining your statements, there are only a few that are the same. Why do you think Paul presented the Gospel in such different ways to these two groups of people? [Paul started with what the people knew, and then he presented Jesus to them in a context that they could understand.]
- Read Acts 13:42–43 and Acts 17:32–34. Compare the responses of the two groups of people. [In Pisidian Antioch, many followed Paul and Barnabas, while in Athens, only a few believed.]

## Week 2 - Day 4

We have seen Paul's presentation of the Gospel in two very different situations over the last two weeks. What can we learn from this that will help us when we try to tell other people what we know about Jesus?

First of all, we have to realize that God wants each of us to be witnesses about Him to those who don't know Him.

Look up Acts 1:8 and answer the following questions:

- Who is to witness? [You]

- How will they/you be able to do this? [They will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on them.]
- Where are they supposed to witness? [Jerusalem, Judea, and the ends of the earth]
- Where were they when Jesus gave this command? (Hint: Look at verse 4.) [Jerusalem]

So, let's summarize what God has said in this verse. God wants you to be his \_\_\_[witness]\_\_\_ and He has given you the \_\_\_[Holy Spirit]\_\_\_ to help you do that. He told the apostles to start where they were in \_\_\_[Jerusalem]\_\_\_ so you should probably start \_\_\_[where you are]\_\_\_.

Think about how you spend your time each week. Are there any activities where you naturally spend time with those who don't know Jesus? It could be an activity you enjoy such as sports or theater, or perhaps a job. If you don't have any regular contact with non-Christians, ask God to lead you into a situation where you can build friendships with those who need to know Him. Make a list of two or three people you have contact with on a somewhat regular basis whom you would like to talk to about Jesus.

Paul was very careful about what he said and how he treated the people in both of the cities we have read about. We already noted that he tried to find things that he had in common with the people in each place. Read Acts 17:23. What do you learn about Paul there? [He walked around and looked carefully at their objects of worship.]

Paul took the time to understand the people he was going to talk to. We have to take time to get to know people and understand what they think so that when we tell them about Jesus, it will make sense to them. Remember, we talked at the beginning of last week about how all of us have our own "context." You will be more successful in telling others about Jesus if you get to know their "context" as well.

As you look at the list of people you would like to share Jesus with, pray that God would help you to understand them. Pray also that God would show you how to speak to them in a way that makes sense to them.

One final thought. We saw that God called the early believers not only to share about Jesus in the context of their everyday lives (Jerusalem), but also to reach beyond that to Judea and Samaria and eventually, to the ends of the earth. What might that mean for you?

- Brainstorm a list of 10 places you could go or things you could do to share God's message of love and forgiveness with someone who would not be a part of your everyday life because of either geographical differences, social differences, age differences, or economic differences.
- Now commit to praying about the ideas that you have written down. You might share your ideas with a youth pastor or your parents and see if the Holy Spirit leads you to follow through on one or more of them.

## Week 2 - Day 5

Next, you need to know what to say about Jesus. Paul had studied the Scriptures all his life, so he knew a lot about God. Hopefully, learning God's Word is important to you too, but you don't have to know as much as Paul did to tell others about Jesus. If you look at the few statements that Paul made at both Pisidian Antioch and Athens, you will have a basic outline for telling people what they need to know about Jesus. Record those things below and the verses where you find them:

- [God brought/appointed Jesus. (13:23; 17:31)]

- Jesus died (for our sins). (13:28, 38; 17:31)
- God raised Jesus from the dead. (13:30; 17:31)
- You must repent and believe. (13:39; 17:30, 33)]

Read Acts 2:22–40. This is a record of Peter sharing the Gospel in Jerusalem. Make a list of the things that you see in common with what Paul said when he presented the Gospel (as usual, include the verse where it is found).

- [Jesus died. (2:23)
- God raised Jesus from the dead. (24)
- You must repent and believe. (38)]

Finally, you need to remember that there will be different responses. Many followed in Pisidian Antioch, while only a few believed in Athens. Often, when people don't know much about God, like the people in Athens, it takes longer for them to understand. Your job is to be a faithful witness and pray for the people that God gives you to talk to, and He will take care of the rest.

**Acts 13:16–41**

**Acts 17:22–33**

What I learned about God.	What I learned about God.
<p>He chose the fathers of the people of Israel. (17)                      He made them prosper in Egypt. (17)                      He led them out of Egypt. (17)                      He endured their conduct in the desert. (18)                      He overthrew seven nations and gave Israel the land of Canaan. (19)                      He gave them judges. (20)                      He gave them kings. (21, 22)                      He brought to Israel the Savior, Jesus, as He promised. (23)                      He raised Jesus from the dead. (30)                      What God promised, He fulfilled. (32–33)</p>	<p>He made the world and everything in it. (24)                      He is Lord of heaven and earth. (24)                      He does not live in temples built by hands. (24)                      He is not served by human hands. (25)                      He gives all men life and breath and everything else. (25)                      From one man, He made every nation of men. (26)                      He determined the times set for men and the exact places where they should live. (26)                      He wants men to seek Him and reach out for Him and find Him. (27)                      He is not far from each one of us. (27)                      In Him we live and move and have our being. (28)                      We are his offspring. (29)                      He is not silver or gold or stone, an image made by man's design and skill. (29)                      He commands all people everywhere to repent. (30)                      He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed (Jesus). (31)                      He raised Jesus from the dead. (31)</p>



What I learned about Jesus.	What I learned about Jesus.
<p>He was brought by God. (23)                      He is the Savior. (23)                      He was not recognized by the people of Jerusalem and their rulers. (27)                      He was condemned to fulfill the words for the prophets. (27)                      He was executed even though no proper ground for the death sentence was found. (28)                      He was laid in a tomb. (29)                      God raised Him from the dead. (30)                      For many days, He was seen by those who had traveled with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem. (30)                      He did not see decay. (37)                      Through Him, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed. (38)                      Through Him, everyone who believes is justified. (39)</p>	<p>He will judge the world with justice. (31)                      He is appointed by God. (31)                      God raised Him from the dead. (31)</p>
What Paul wants them to do.	What Paul wants them to do.
<p>Know that forgiveness of sins comes through Jesus. (38)                      Believe. (39)                      Take care not to scoff. (41)</p>	<p>Seek God, reach out to God. (27)                      Not think of God as something made of gold or silver or wood, made by man. (30)                      Repent. (30)                      Believe. (33)</p>

