

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Theophilus

Acts, like the Gospel, is addressed to Theophilus, who is called “most excellent Theophilus” (*kratiste Theophile*) in Luke 1:3. *Kratistos* appears in Acts in addressing the Roman governors Felix and Festus (cf. 23:26; 24:3; 26:25). This suggests that the word should be taken here as an honorific title for a highly placed Roman official. But it was often employed as a form of polite address, and that is probably how Luke used it of Theophilus. It is precarious to suppose (cf. Origen and others after him) that “Theophilus” (etymologically, “Friend of God” or “Loved by God”) is a symbolic name for either an anonymous person or a class of people. The name occurs as a proper name at least three centuries before Luke, and the practice of dedicating books to distinguished persons was common in his day.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

CHAPTER 1

1. Who is Theophilus? V. 1

2. Jesus appeared for 40 days
 - Speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom of God. V.3

3. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? V.5

4. What power came upon the disciples and what is the purpose of the power? Acts 1:8

5. Define witness? Why did the author list the cities in this order? Is the order significant?
 - Jerusalem
 - Judea
 - Samaria
 - Remotest part of the earth

6. List the disciples

- Peter -
- John -
- James -
- Andrew -
- Philip -
- Thomas -
- Bartholomew -
- Matthew -
- James (Mark 15:40) -
- Simon (Matthew 10:4) -
- Judas (Thaddeas—Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18) -

7. Define the following groups:

- Sadducees

- Pharisees

- Zealots

- Sanhedrin

- Scribes

8. The people were of “one mind & devoting themselves to prayer.” What does it mean to have one mind? Acts 1:14

9. List the family members of Jesus in Acts 1:14.

ACTS 2

1. What is the Day of Pentecost?

2. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

3. What is tongues?

4. List the various nationalities represented:
 - Parthians
 - Medes
 - Elamites
 - Mesopotamia
 - Judea
 - Cappadocia
 - Pontus
 - Asia (v.9)
 - Phrygia
 - Pamphylia
 - Egypt
 - Districts of Libya
 - Cyrene
 - Visitors from Rome
 - Jews & Proselytes
 - Cretans
 - Arabs

5. Why the accusation of inebriation?

6. How did the Jews reckon time?
 - 3rd hour — not drunk

7. Peter referenced the prophecy of Joel. What does this prophecy reveal? What is considered the last days?

1) Pour out my spirit

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

8. Jesus performed miracles, wonders, and signs. Why did He perform them and what is the difference between each act? Acts 2:22

1) Miracles

2) Wonders

3) Signs

9. What is the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God? Acts 2:23

10. List the features of the early church:

a) Devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching

b) Fellowship

c) Breaking of Bread

- d) Prayer v.42
- e) Feeling of awe - v.43
 - Signs and wonders
- f) Had things in common v.44
- g) Sharing with those in need
- h) Continuing with one mind v.46
 - in the temple
 - house to house
 - breaking bread
 - meals together
 - gladness and sincerity of heart
 - praising God
 - having favor with all people
 - Lord added to their number daily

11. What is the prophecy concerning Judas Iscariot? Acts2:16-20

- Guide to those who arrested Jesus
- Once counted among the 12 disciples
- Suicide
- Hakeldama

12. List the qualifications for being an original disciple of Jesus.

- a)
- b)
- c)

13. Lots were cast for Matthias. What is the process of casting lots?

Did the Lord accept Matthias as the replacement for Judas Iscariot?

- Matthias legitimate?

ACTS 3

1. Peter and John healed a man lame from his mother's womb 3:6-8. The lame man was seeking temporal healing and received eternal healing. What did he do after receiving his miracle and why is this important 3:8-10?

2. Why were the people amazed at the miracle performed by Peter 3:12?

3. During Peter's second sermon, he commands his audience to "repent and return so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" Acts 3:19. Is this a new formula for repentance? What are times of refreshing?

ACTS 4

1. Five thousand were saved as a result of the preaching of Peter and John. Acts 4:4. The rulers, elders, and scribes gathered with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander in order to question Peter and John. They inquired regarding the "power" and "name" by which they were proclaiming their truth. The questions by the leaders reveal what key insights?

2. Peter proclaimed salvation is found in one person and one “name under heaven” Acts 4:12. Is this an exclusive approach to Christianity? What does this mean for other religions, belief systems, and faiths?

3. Can there be other ways to gain access to God?

4. The apostle practiced communal living: common property v. 32, not a needy person among them v. 34, selling of property and laying it at the apostle feet v.35. Why did the early church utilize this practice? Where do you find this model today?

ACTS 5

1. Ananias and Sapphira sold property and agreed to lie about the sale price. They donated a portion to the disciples, but held a portion for themselves. Why did they lie to the disciples regarding the sales price?

2. Immediate judgment fell on Ananias and Sapphira after they lied. Why did God judge them so harshly? Did they receive grace?

3. Miracles were prevalent in the ministry of Peter. People wanted his shadow to fall on them so they could receive healing. Why did God use miracles, signs and wonders in such a monumental manner in the early Church? Acts 5:12-16

4. Ananias the high priest, along with his associates, became jealous of Peter and John, incarcerating them 5:17-19. An angel of the Lord miraculously delivered them from the prison and commanded them to go proclaim truth in the temple 5:19-20. Why did they return and not retreat to a safe and secure place from persecution?

5. The leaders would not speak Jesus name nor did they want the disciples preaching in the “name” of Jesus. However, the disciples asserted, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29; cf 5:42). How does one apply this principle today? How does this vary from context to context?

6. A Pharisee name Gamaliel provided wise counsel to the leaders regarding the disciples 5:33-39. How do you interpret his statement in verses 38-39? “So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.”

ACTS 6

1. According to the disciples their primary task is study of the word and prayer. Serving the tables is important, but it is not the role for the disciples. Therefore they selected men of certain character to serve the congregation. List the requirements in chapter six:

2. Who were the first deacons?

3. False accusations were brought against Stephen by false witnesses 6:10-14. Persecution of the disciples remained constant throughout the book of Acts from the Jewish establishment. Why were they so enraged by the disciples?

ACTS 7

Stephen's Defense

1. Stephen's defense reveals the veracity of the Old Testament account of events in the biblical narrative. How does this assist with defending the authority of Scripture?
2. Why did Israelite leadership, Caiaphas especially, become so angry when Stephen recounted the history of Israel's interaction with the prophets and law of God?
3. What is a martyr? Is there an additional reward for martyrs?
4. Stephen petitions the Lord not to hold the barbaric and brutal behavior of the Jewish officials against them. His words are reminiscent of who? Why did he make the request?
5. Saul of Tarsus held the coats of the men who stoned Stephen. What impact would this have a Saul?

ACTS 8

1. Persecution intensified after the martyrdom of Stephen. Saul went to the homes of Christians and imprisoned men and women (Acts 8:3). How did God use the persecution in the early church?

2. Philip preached Christ in the city of Samaria. Many believed the signs he was performing because unclean spirits came out and paralyzed and lame walked (Acts 8:5-8). Simon the sorcerer believed in the message Philip proclaimed due to the signs that amazed him. Why were the signs performed?

3. Simon desired to purchase the power of God after he saw the Spirit being bestowed through the laying on of hands. What does this indicate regarding his conversion (Acts 8:18-24)? Was his profession of faith in Christ authentic? Is laying on of hands still appropriate for the 21st century? Why or why not?

4. The Spirit of The Lord sent Philip from Samaria south to the road that lead to Gaza to encounter the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-28). The eunuch was reading the prophet Isaiah, but did not comprehend the message. Philip preached Jesus from the prophet Isaiah to the Ethiopian (Acts 8:34). What does this passage reveal about the message of the OT and its relevance for today? The conversion of Simon the sorcerer and the Ethiopian reveals what?

ACTS 9

1. Why did Saul reply to the voice from heaven as "Lord?"

2. God confirmed His calling of Saul through a vision to Ananias of Damascus (Acts 9:10-19). After Saul's conversion the Jews attempted to kill him, but God used the disciples to preserve his life (Acts 9:25-30). During this intense persecution the church was being built up and increased because of the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31). What insights and lessons may be gained from the example of the early church?

3. Peter healed Aenas, who had been paralyzed eight years and raised Tabitha from the dead (Acts 9:32-43). Both miracles are monumental events that had a profound effect on Lydda and Joppa. The signs were performed in unreached areas for what purpose?

ACTS 10

1. Peter received a vision from The Lord regarding clean and unclean foods prior to visiting Cornelius the Centurion in Caesarea (Acts 10:1-8). The vision is part of the preparation for the ministry context Peter would serve. Peter makes a profound statement when he arrives in Joppa, "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcomed to Him (Acts 10:34-35). Does your church both individually and collectively show partiality? Explain?"

ACTS 11

1. Peter reported the events of his ministry to the Jerusalem council. Initially the leaders were angry with Peter for associating with the uncircumcised Jews (Acts 11:2-3). However, they "quieted down and glorified God" after they recognized God's invisible hand moving among the Gentiles via Peter (Acts 11:18).
2. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch (11:26).

ACTS 12

1. Herod mistreated members of the church and had James the brother of John put to death with a sword 12:1-2. Then he incarcerated Peter because the persecution pleased the Jews 12:3. Peter received a stay of execution because his incarceration occurred during the feast of

unleavened bread. The church prayed reverently for Peter, the chains fell off Peter and an angel woke him and lead him out of the prison 12:5-11.

2. When Rhoda reported the presence of Peter to the church they rejected her testimony. Why? 12:15

3. How should Christians pray after reading the account in chapter twelve?

4. The guards watching Peter were executed after his miraculous deliverance. How would this affect them and their family's opinion of Christianity? Is this significant of the consequences of living in a fallen world?

ACTS 13

1. Did the Holy Spirit utilize an audible voice when He spoke to those in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-2)? Laying hands on Barnabas and Saul v. 2-3

2. Throughout the book of Acts the H.S. speaks and sends the disciples on journeys (13:2-4). Did this phenomenon end with the early church or how does it occur in your context?

3. Barnabas and Paul's first missionary journey began in Salamis (13:5) with John assisting. During the journey through the island they encountered Sergius Paulus who desired to hear the word of God, but Elymas the magician attempted to turn the proconsul away from the gospel (13:7-8). Paul rebuked Elymas by describing him a "full of all deceit and fraud, the son of the devil, the enemy of all righteousness, who will not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord (Acts 13:9-10)." Why could Paul make this accusation and is this

appropriate for the Christian seeking to witness? How does Paul's behavior coincide with Jesus presentation of the beatitudes (Matthew 5:42-44)?

Second stop is Perga in Pamphylia then to Pisidian Antioch. Paul preached when he visited the synagogue in Antioch 13:16.

4. Upon Paul and Barnabas returning to the synagogue on the following Sabbath day, the Jews became jealous and contradicted their message Acts 13:44-48. Therefore, Paul and Barnabas turned to the gentiles (13:47-48). Review the message in the gospel of John in 1:11-13. What correlations exist between Acts 13:44-48 and John 1:11-13? What does the rejection of the gospel by the Jews mean to the Gentiles?

5. The Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city to instigate persecution against Paul and Barnabas to drive them out of their district 13:50. Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet and went to Iconium 13:51. Why are the women mentioned first for the instigation against Paul and Barnabas?

6. Although immense opposition occurred for the disciples, they were "continually filled with joy and the Holy Spirit." Why does the author of Acts articulate this point?

7. When the disciples experienced persecution, why were they not discouraged, defeated, or depressed?

ACTS 14

1. After arriving in Iconium, Paul and Barnabas entered the synagogue preaching, both Jews and Gentiles believed. After the encounter with Elymas (Acts 13:9), Paul's name precedes Barnabas in the narrative (Acts 13:50). Why?

2. The Jews stirred up the Gentiles against Paul and Barnabas. However the Lord gave them boldness along with signs and wonders to convert some to Christ. Fierce opposition did not hinder the effectiveness of the gospel because they relied on God (Acts 14:3). Dependence on God is prevalent in the early church. How does one remain dependent on the Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit?

3. Attempts were made to stone Paul and Barnabas by the Jews and Gentiles so they fled to Lycaonia, Lystra, and Derbe. Paul healed a lame at Lystra and the crowds wanted to deify Barnabas as Zeus and Paul as Hermes (Acts 14:5-13). What potential dangers may occur when God manifests His power through humankind? How does one guard against these potential dangers? Who are these deities, Zeus and Hermes, and why were they considered among the pantheon of Greek gods?

4. What is the response of apostles Barnabas and Paul to crowd's statements (Acts 14:14-18)?

5. Unbelieving Jews from Antioch and Iconium followed Paul and Barnabas to Lystra and persuaded the crowds to stone Paul (Acts 14:19). What is significant about the place they stoned Paul? What does this communicate about the adversaries of the apostles?

6. God miraculously revived Paul, sending him to Derbe with Barnabas. After preaching in Derbe they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch strengthening and encouraging the faithful, the regions where they experienced intense persecution (Acts 14:20-22). How do you interpret the words of the apostles, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22b).

7. Elders were appointed in every church, having prayed and fast (Acts 14:23). Praying and fasting is mentioned throughout the Bible, is this principle applicable for today?

ACTS 15

1. Speculation led many to suggest these men from Judea teaching circumcision for salvation were of the sect of the Pharisees. Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles and elders concerning the matter (15:2-12). The Jerusalem council concluded (Acts 15:19-20, 28-32):
 - a) do not trouble those turning to God among the Gentiles
 - b) abstain from things contaminated by idols (Acts 15:29; 1 Corinthians 8:7-13; Rev 2:14,20).
 - c) abstain from fornication (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)
 - d) abstain from what is strangled (Genesis 9:4)
 - e) abstain from blood (cf. Leviticus 17:10-12)

Gentile practices repulsed the Jews, therefore these aforementioned directives ausaded the core sentiments of the Jews. They omitted the necessity of circumcision, but the stipulations offered were instituted prior to the Mosaic Law. Greek religious festivals consisted of worshipping idols through deviant sexual practices, as well as animal sacrifices with blood. Jews desired a modicum of restraint among these areas so they instituted the four directives.

ACTS 16

1. Timothy became a disciple of Paul during his visit to Derbe and Lystra. Why did Paul circumcise Timothy after the Jerusalem council recommended after the Mosaic rite for Gentiles?
2. What ethnic legacy did Timothy possess?

3. Why does the author continue to mention how the "churches were being strengthened in faith, and were increasing in number daily?" Acts 16:5

4. The Holy Spirit forbid Paul, Silas and Timothy from speaking a word in Asia and Bithynia (Acts 16:6-7). Does this conflict with God's desire for all to be saved?

5. Paul went to Macedonia from Troas, due to a vision of a man requesting help. He met Lydia from Thyatira a seller of purple fabrics, who worshipped God Acts 16:9-17. While in Macedonia a slave girl (who made much profit for her master) with a spirit of divination followed Paul repeating, "These men are bond-servants of the Most-High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation (Acts 16:16-18). She did this for many days, greatly annoying Paul. He said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" Acts 16:18. Paul became annoyed with the evil spirit, did his action honor God? Why or why not?

6. What has been the apostles' approach when they encounter evil spirits?

7. Paul and Silas were beaten with rods and incarcerated for destroying the profits for the slave girl's master. Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and sing hymns of praise to God when an earthquake shook the prison releasing their stocks and chains. Why did God miraculously deliver them?

8. Paul tells the jailer to "Believe in the Lord Jesus" for salvation. They did not mention baptism. Is this a change in God's program? What is the significance of the statement?

ACTS 17

1. While in Thessalonica, Paul went to the synagogue on the Sabbath and "reasoned" with the Jews. Define reasoned.

2. Jews in Thessalonica became jealous and selected wicked men to attack Jason. Equally, the Jews followed Paul to Berea agitating and stirring up the crowds Acts 17:7-9, 13. Why were the Jews so persistent?

3. Why were the Bereans more "noble minded" than the believers at Thessalonica?
 - 1) received the word with eagerness

 - 2) examining the scriptures

4. After departing from Berea, leaving Silas and Timothy, Paul arrived in Athens Acts 17:15. He reasoned with the Stoic and Epicureans in the Areopagus. 17:16-31. Why did they "sneer" regarding the resurrection Acts 17:32.

ACTS 18

1. Paul departed from Athens and arrived in Corinth. He met a Jew, Aquila, and his wife Priscilla who just arrived from Italy Acts 18:2. The Jews "resisted and blasphemed" so Paul "shook out his garments" and declared, "Your blood be on your own heads!" Acts 18:4-6. Why did Paul shake his garments instead of shaking the dust off his feet?

2. God spoke to Paul in a vision at Corinth. List the reassuring affirmations given to Paul by the Lord:
 - a) Do not be afraid any long
 - b) go on speaking
 - c) do not be silent
 - d) I am with you
 - e) no man will attack you
 - f) I have many people in Corinth

3. What may you discern from His first declaration? Acts 18:9

Acts 18:23 starts the third missionary journey for Paul, passing through the Galatian and Phrygia region strengthening all the disciples.

4. Apollos, an Alexandrian's, message only mentioned the baptism of John Acts 18:25. What did Apollos lack in his gospel presentation that Priscilla and Aquila imparted to him 18:24-28?

ACTS 19

1. In Ephesus Paul met disciples who had not heard of the Holy Spirit, but were baptized into John's baptism Acts 19:2-4. Paul baptized them, laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. They spoke in tongues and prophesied 19:5. Paul continued his method of boldly reasoning and persuading Jews in the synagogue regarding the kingdom of God 19:8. For two years Paul reasoned in the school of Tyrannus with disciples (Acts 19:9-10). What principles maybe taken from Paul's example regarding making disciples?

2. God was with Paul and he was performing extraordinary miracles via handkerchiefs and aprons from his body to the sick and those with evil spirits, both were delivered. The seven sons of Sceva attempted to follow Paul's example but the evil spirits "leaped on them and subdued" them and they "fled out of that house naked and wounded" Acts 19:13-16. List the insights gained from the sons of Sceva.

3. The Ephesians were burning their magic books which totaled 50,000 pieces of silver and the word of The Lord was growing mightily and prevailing 19:18-20.

4. Who is Artemis?

5. Most of the hostility Paul encountered related to the economics of the Jews or native people of the cities he visited. Economics motivated Demetrius, the silversmith, to oppose Paul and his companions (Acts 19:23-41). Paul preached against idols, Demetrius produced statues of Artemis and his economic prosperity depended on the continuance of the business. Therefore, he opposed Paul's message to renounce idolatry and trust in Jesus Christ. Are Christians required to exclusively worship Jesus Christ or may they embrace other religions?

6. What is syncretism?

ACTS 20

1. Paul went to the church at Macedonia which gave toward the work of the ministry (cf. 2 Cor 8-9:15).
 - a) giving in affliction 2 Cor. 8:2
 - b) with an abundance of joy 2 Cor. 8:2
 - c) giving out of their poverty 2 Cor. 8:2
 - d) giving according and above their ability 2 Cor. 8:3
 - e) giving themselves (Macedonian Churches) to The Lord first 2 Cor. 8:5
 - f) giving on their own accord 2 Cor. 8:3
 - g) sow sparingly will reap sparingly sow bountifully will reap bountifully 2 Cor. 9:6
 - h) each person must purpose in his heart 2 Cor. 9:7
 - i) not giving grudgingly 2 Cor. 9:7
 - j) not giving under compulsion 2 Cor. 9:7
 - k) God's portion 2 Cor. 9:8-9
 - A. God loves a cheerful giver
 - B. god makes all grace abound
 - C. God ensures all sufficiency in everything

2. Eutychus was present in Macedonia during one of Paul's sermons. Paul preached until midnight and Eutychus fell asleep in the window and fell to the ground breaking his neck (Acts 20:9). However Paul raised him from the dead 20:10-12.

3. God forewarns Paul through the Holy Spirit "bonds and afflictions" were in his future 20:23. Paul considered his life insignificant and desired to finish his course and the ministry The Lord gave, not shrinking back but declaring the whole gospel 20:24, 27.

4. Departing from Ephesus, Paul declared "savage wolves" would come in and men from among their flock who would not spare the flock 20:29-30. The false teacher, wolves would speak "perverse" things seeking to draw away the disciples. How does the church, individually and collectively, avoid wolves from without and from within?

5. What is the context of the statement quoted by Paul from the lips of Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" Acts 20:35?

The apostle Paul appealed to several political figures:

- High Priest Ananias A.D. 47-59 son of Nebedaeus Acts 23. Josephus noted Ananias propensity for violence and avarice. Ananias confiscated the tithes for himself that is for the ordinary priest. Equally Romans and Jews received lavish bribes (Antiquities XX 205-7 [ix.2] 213[ix.4]. Paul's anger v.3 and humility v.5
- Felix Governor of Judea - Judea is a Roman province
- Druscilla-Jewish wife Acts 24:24
- Fetus- Governor of Judea after Felix Acts 25
- King Agrippa: Herod Agrippa II and Bernice Acts 26
Paul's defense before Agrippa v. 28 "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."
- Fetus- Paul you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad.

The Road Not Taken

"Two roads diverge in a wood and I - I took the one less traveled, and that has made all the difference." Robert Frost

ACTS 21

1. Philip of Caesarea had four daughters who were virgins and prophetesses. What is a prophetess and are they required to remain a virgin to serve in this capacity? 21:8-9
2. Agabus came to Caesarea from Judea and gave a word of revelation to Paul via the Holy Spirit. The prophetic words were not a message of prosperity physically or financially. Rather, Agabus insured Paul he would experience physical bondage at the hands of the

- d. Does God require the contemporary Christian to sacrifice temporary pleasures for eternal rewards? If yes, please explain?
4. Often Christians repeat the phrase in Acts 21:14, “The will of the Lord be done!” What does this statement mean?
5. Does the Bible provide a prescription or formula for knowing the will of God?
6. The Roman commander perceived Paul was from Egyptian descent Acts 21:38. What are two plausible reasons this occurred?

ACTS 22

1. Acts twenty-two begins with Paul in Jerusalem preaching to his persecutors (cf. Acts 21:27-40). Persecution by the Jews afforded Paul the opportunity to proclaim Jesus Christ to his Jewish brothers, Roman soldiers, and other by-standers. Paul recounted his conversion to Jesus Christ 22:1-21. However, the Jews resisted the message and the Romans desired to scourge him for information regarding the conflict with the Jews 22:22-25. Paul’s entry to Jerusalem allowed him to preach Christ. What insights do you glean from Paul’s obedience to the Holy Spirit?
2. Why does God’s will often include suffering, hardship, and adversity? The Roman commander chained Paul, but he became afraid after Paul proclaimed his Roman citizenship. Acts 22:29

3. Is God a sadist or a narcissist, seeking to appease His need for pain and adoration from His subjects? Note the comment by one of the Four Horsemen of the Neo-atheist movement, Richard Dawkins in "The God Delusion."

"The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully."¹

4. Does God need humans to proclaim His message? Why does use people to proclaim His truth?

ACTS 23

1. Why did the Ananias the high priest command a servant to strike Paul? 23:2
2. Paul used harsh language to describe the high priest, "whitewashed wall!" What does the statement mean? cf. Exodus 22:28
3. Describe the origin, beliefs, and history of the Sadducees and Pharisees. 23:8-9

¹ Richard Dawkins , The God Delusion

4. Luke explains, "The Lord stood" at Paul's side, reassuring him regarding his safe passage to Rome. How do you think The Lord manifests His presence? 23:11

5. Paul's nephew alerted the centurion to the Jew's plot to kill Paul 23:12-22. The centurion had 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen to accompany Paul to Antipatris Acts 23:23-35.

Antipatris was rebuilt by Herod the Great and became a military outpost between Samaria and Judea which is 30 miles from Jerusalem.

Caesarea is the headquarters of Roman rule for Samaria and Judea. Caesarea is 28 miles from Antipatris

ACTS 24

1. Ananias desired to eradicate Paul's impact for Jesus Christ. He traveled 60 miles to Caesarea, with some elders, and Tertullus, an attorney, to supervise the case against Paul. Tertullus accused Paul of being "a real pest and "stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world 24:5-6. How accurate is Tertullus? Paul desired that all be saved, so he challenged the Jew first then the Gentiles to convert to Christ. The results were tremendous and the adversary attempted to kill him 24:7-9. Should the contemporary Christ expect the same treatment?

2. Paul was given freedom while incarcerated by Felix 24:22-23. Felix allowed Paul to speak to him regarding Christ, but he became frightened as Paul spoke of self-control and the resurrection 24:24-25. Like an authentic politician, Felix was seeking a bribe from Paul 24:26. Paul remained incarcerated 2 years until the next regime commenced under Fetus 24:27. Why did Felix become frightened?

3. Would Paul violate the will of God if he paid a bribe to avoid jail?

Acts 25

1. Paul maintained his innocence before Fetus. However, Fetus wanted the approval of the Jews, so he offered Paul an opportunity to present his case to Caesar 25:9-12. King Agrippa and Bernice desired to hear Paul 25:22. How does this reflect God's sovereign and providential will?
2. Define the sovereignty of God
3. Define the providence of God.

ACTS 26

1. King Agrippa:
Herod Agrippa II and Bernice -
Paul's defense before Agrippa v. 28 "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."
Fetus- Paul you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad.
Two men heard Paul's preaching and both select divergent roads. Why?

Read the following poem in its entirety. *The Road Not Taken*

"Two roads diverge in a wood and I - I took the one less traveled, and that has made all the difference." -Robert Frost

2. Every person travels the road of life experiencing a plethora of activities and considerations. However, each person must select from the options encountered. Reflect on some options you have chosen. What would you change regarding your choices? What insights would you offer to successive generations from your experiences?

3. No person selects the correct option consistently, which may lead to regret and guilt. What did you do to enable you to transition from your incorrect choices?
4. If you have not transitioned, read Romans 7:1-8:1; Philippians 3:12-21. Walk in the liberty and freedom Jesus Christ provides for the repentant person (cf. Matthew 11:28-30).

ACTS 27

1. Julius, of the Augustan cohort, took custody of Paul and placed him on a ship going to Rome 27:6. Paul warned the men the ship would experience damage, equally, the loss of cargo 27:10. The centurion ignored Paul, but his prophetic words came to fruition 27:14-21. Although they endured turbulent weather, "an angel of God" reassured Paul their lives would be spared 27:22-26. Previously Paul heard from The Lord now the angle of God speaks. What is the difference? Why the change in the manifestation of the Lord's message?
2. Individuals affirm their faith and trust in God. In 27:25 Paul makes a profound statement, "for I believe in God..." Do you genuinely believe in God's words and promises? How do you know?
3. What tangible evidence can you offer to support your belief in God? (cf. Revelations 12:11)
4. Crisis is inevitable. Paul's chains did not diminish his boldness for Christ. Although Paul is a prisoner, he exhibit godly leadership for the men on the ship. List the leadership traits Paul displayed in Acts 27 (i.e. what Christian conduct did Paul display)?
5. Why did the men listen to Paul's words?

ACTS 28

1. According to the word of the angel of God the ship was destroyed. They landed on the island of Malta where the natives extended kindness to the men Acts 28:1-2. Apparently the natives were not Christian, but they extended hospitality to the men. What insight do you gain from the men's encounter with the natives of Malta?
2. What is the belief system of the natives of Malta? Significant insight may be gained from their interpretation of the snake attaching to Paul's arm 28:3-6.
3. God's promise to Paul came to fruition Acts 28:11ff. Paul had an opportunity to depart without persecution because the Jews in Rome did not know of the accusations against him 28:21. Nevertheless, he faithfully proclaimed Christ to the Jews in Rome without regard for his life 28:22-29. After reading the book of Acts one may view it as a historical book without contemporary relevance. Supernatural events are unsettling for many in the contemporary church: miracles, healing, signs and wonders, the voice of God speaking to men and visions were prevalent with the disciples in the early church. How does one apply what occurred in Acts to the 21st century church?
4. As a result of this study what will you change? How have you matured in your relationship with Christ? (I.e. what is sanctification according to your understanding of the Bible?)

May God extend His favor upon you while you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May God empower you with boldness to proclaim His truth when you encounter opposition from the adversary. May God give you His joy as you delight in His ways with a heart of adoration and an attitude of thanksgiving. Amen.

Answers

The socio-economics:

An agrarian, slave labor economy was predominate in the 1st century world.

3 factors contribute to slave system:

1. large tracts of land
2. wealthy land owners.
3. large surplus labor force-slaves captured during military conquests worked the land and kept wages depressed.

The basis of the agricultural economy in Palestine:

- 1) olive groves, 2) vineyards 3) grain (wheat and barley) 4) sheep and goats, 5) fishing
- No large industries; small industries continued: ceramics, glass-blowing, handcrafts, textiles (silk and wool) and primitive mining (lead, silver, iron).

Schools were developed in the Hellenistic period:

They were the responsibility of the cities and known as the local gymnasium--used for the physical and mental. Greek paideia (training, discipline) served as the basis for Latin humanitas (humanities--the formation of the human person).

Schools had 3 levels:

1. Primary public schools--age 7 learn reading writing arithmetic music and athletics. Paid by city/discipline strict/slave watched the children
 2. Middle school--12 or 13 students read classical poets/Homer & Euripides/liberal arts education.
 3. Advanced education--18th year young men went to the gym for 1-2 years of training in athletics or military training. Also, a profession--philosophy, medicine, law, or a trade through apprenticeship. Most girls learned household task.
- No universities or professional schools--except medical schools/schools of rhetoric and philosophy in major cities.

The **Stoa**--colonnades in the marketplace for public lectures.

Incipient gnosticism--rebelled against the core Christian beliefs. Paradoxically they seem both Christian and anti-Christian, a classic example of heretical scripture.

It is believed that Paul argued against gnostic ideas in 1 Cor. 6-7, 15 "bodily resurrection" Gnosticism compelled Christian thinkers to face various problems of theology and this contributed to the rise of systematic theology and apologetic in the 2nd century A.D. and following.

Gnosticism was also a powerful impetus to the formation of the NT canon of Scripture. It claimed to have authoritative gospels and epistles of their own and it was necessary for the Church to distinguish between spurious and genuine writings.

Greco-Roman religion:

1. pluralistic (inclusive)
2. syncretistic (eclectic)
3. It contributed to the demonizing of religion. People were conscious of supernatural forces
4. Accepted fate(destiny), magic, and astrology which applied the law of causality strictly.
5. It emphasized the corporate nature or social side of religion. Religion w/ a system of worship.
6. It gave significance to personal choice in matters of religious belief and practice.
7. It did not associate personal morality with religion.
8. It had no belief in bodily resurrection to an afterlife.

Pharisees-about 6,000

Pharisees

roots traced to Hasidim in the 2nd century

Torah and oral tradition was considered inspired

accepted hierarchy of angels and demons

believe in life after death
believed in immortality of the soul and reward and retribution after death

champions of human equality

emphasis of their teaching ethical rather than theological

Human free will

Sadducees(166-63B.C.

start during Hasmonean period/demise w/ fall of Jerusalem in A.D.70

Denied the oral tradition authoritative

Interpreted Mosaic law more literally than did the Pharisees

Were very exacting in Levitical purity
attribute all to free will

Against the resurrection of the dead nor future life.

rejected belief in angels and demons

rejected idea of spiritual world
Only books of Moses canonical

Essenes

followed strict observance of the purity laws and Torah

Communal ownership of property

strong sense of mutual responsibility

Daily worship was important w/ study of the sacred scriptures

Marriage not condemned

Solemn oaths of piety and obedience had to be taken

They attributed all to fate