

Chronological Bible Study

Week 45

Growth of the Church

Acts 6-15

Galatians 1-6

James 1-5

Questions?

Comments?

Summary of This Week's Readings

Stephen, the First Martyr
Philip
Simon the Sorcerer
Saul's Conversion
Peter's Missionary Work
Paul's First Missionary Journey
Conference in Jerusalem
Letter to the Galatians
Letter of James

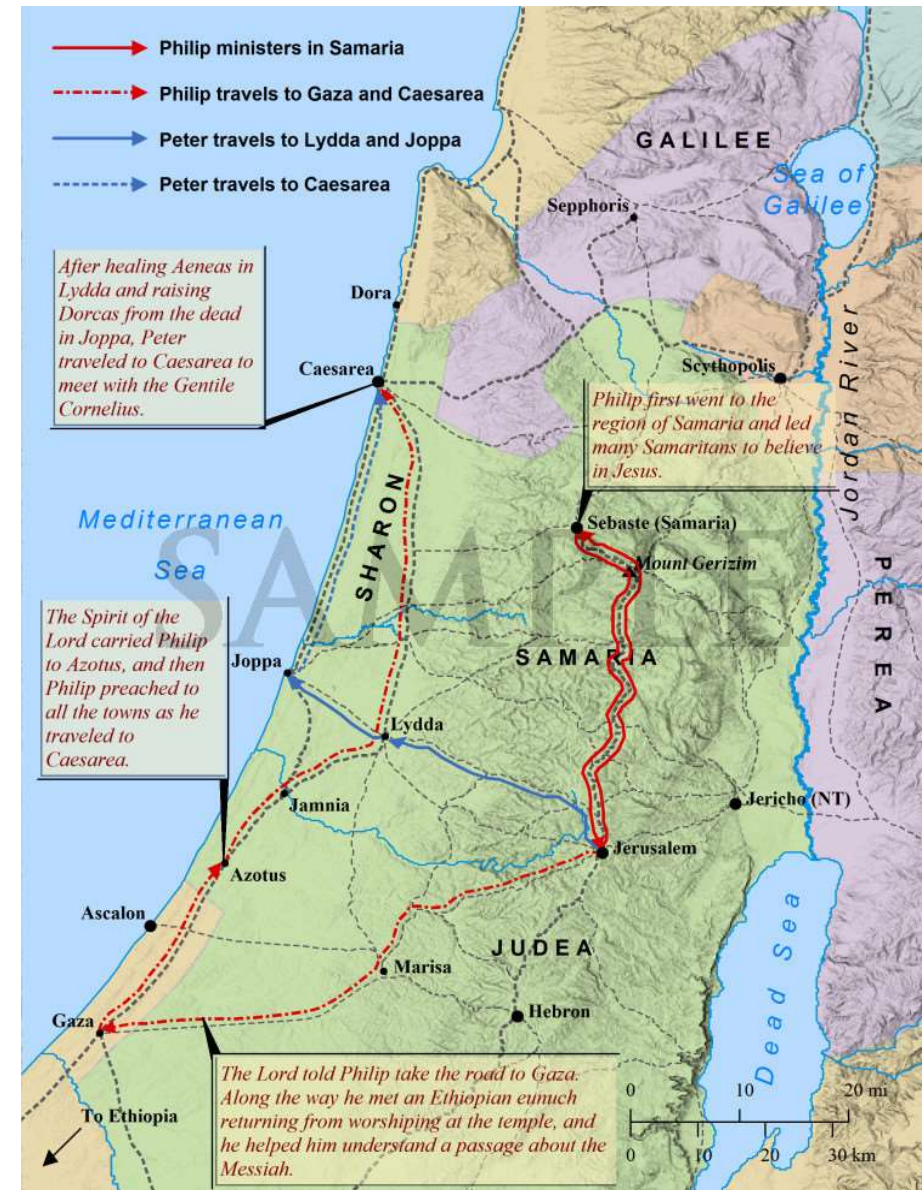
Book of Acts (Part 2)

[Video Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLbK4aAQgzs)

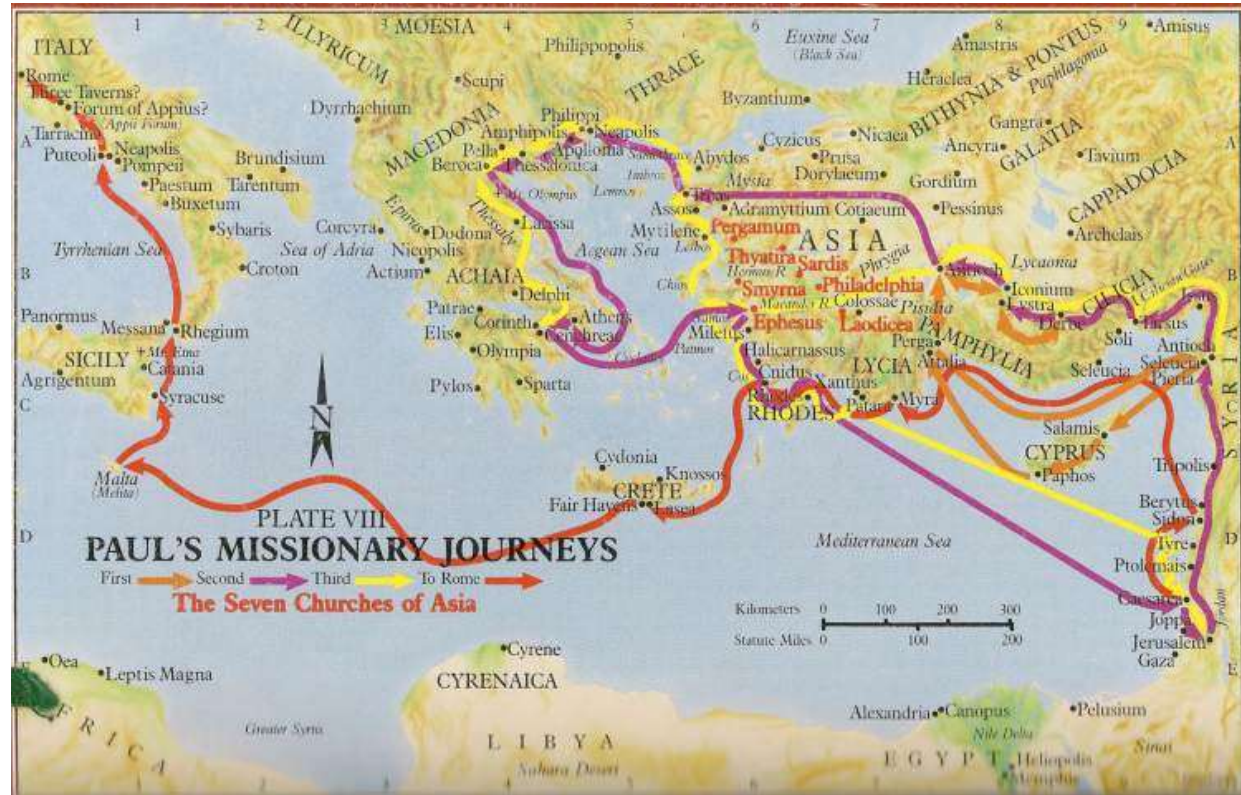
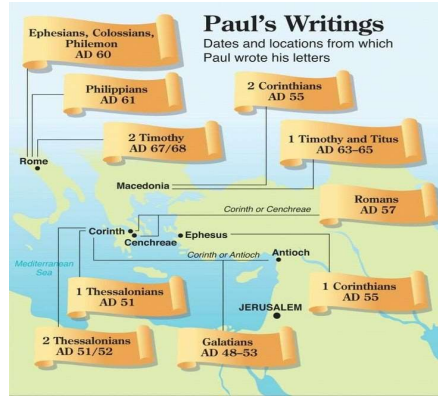
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Travels of Philip and Peter



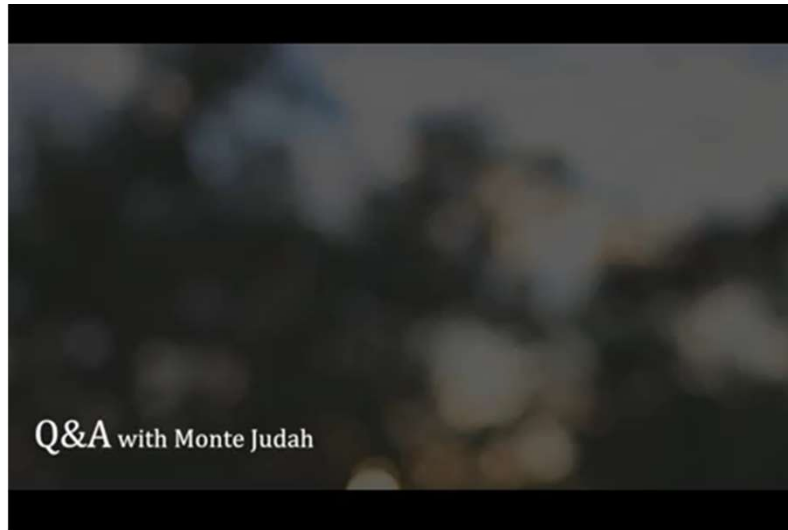
LifeLines: PAUL



What Was the Jerusalem Council

[Video Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F38xhrNjWkw&t)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F38xhrNjWkw&t>



Visions in Acts

**Paul's vision of Christ on
the road to Damascus**
9:3-9

**Ananias's vision to
minister to Paul**
9:10-16

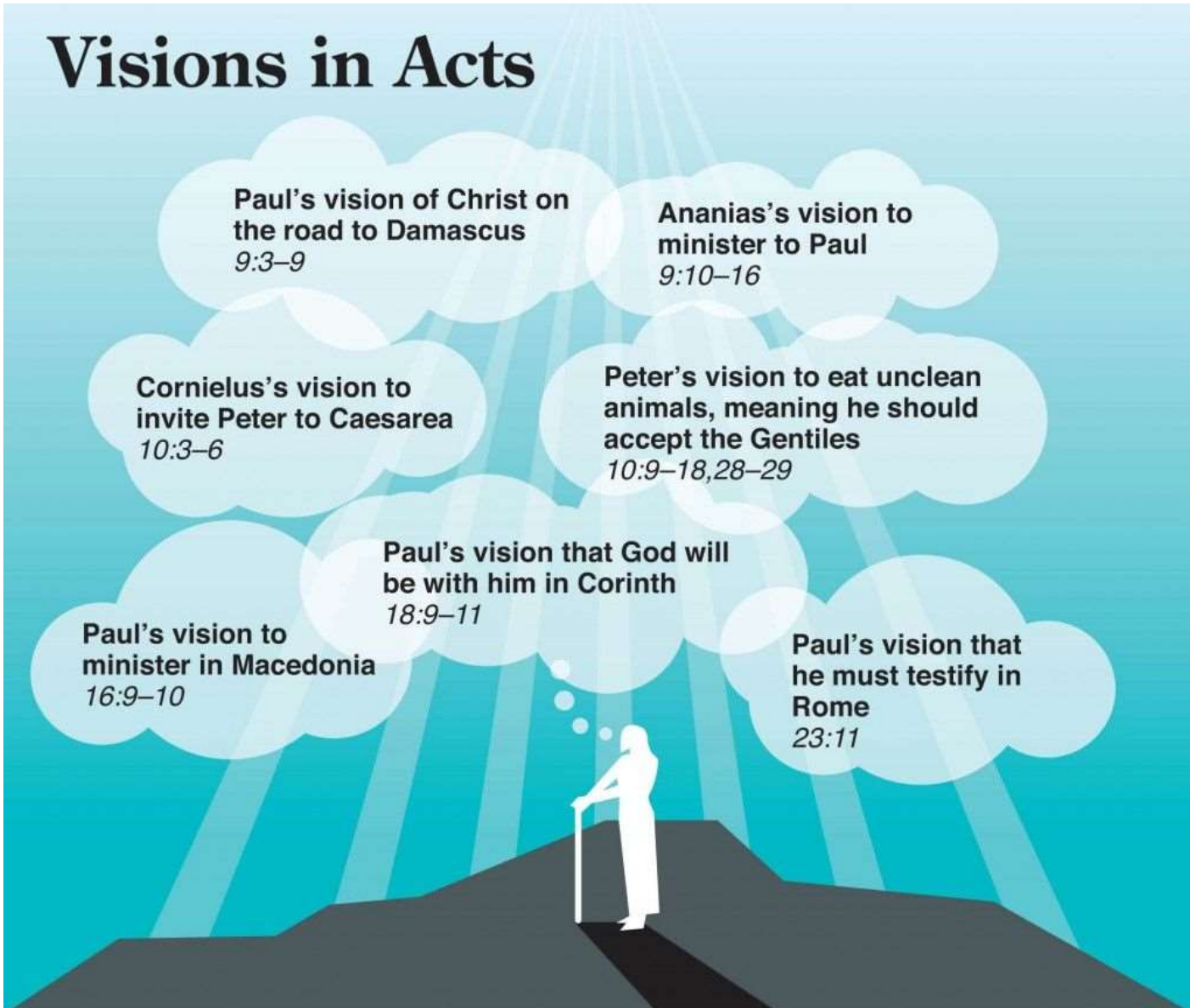
**Cornelius's vision to
invite Peter to Caesarea**
10:3-6

**Peter's vision to eat unclean
animals, meaning he should
accept the Gentiles**
10:9-18,28-29

**Paul's vision that God will
be with him in Corinth**
18:9-11

**Paul's vision to
minister in Macedonia**
16:9-10

**Paul's vision that
he must testify in
Rome**
23:11



Sermons in the Book of Acts

SPEAKER	AUDIENCE	REFERENCE	THEME
Peter	Crowds at Pentecost	Acts 2:14-14	Jesus Christ is the Son of God; Repent & be baptized for remission of sins
Peter	Crowds in the Temple area	Acts 3:12-26	Jewish people should repent for Crucifying the Messiah
Peter	The Sanhedrin	Acts 4:5-12	The power of Jesus healed the crippled man
Stephen	The Sanhedrin	Acts 7	Review of Jewish history & Jews Killed the Messiah
Peter	Cornelius & household (Gentiles)	Acts 10:28-47	Gentiles can also be saved like the Jews
Peter	The church in Jerusalem	Acts 11:4-18	Defends his ministry & Gentiles can now be saved
Paul	Jews at Antioch of Pisidia	Acts 13:16-41	Jesus was the Messiah & Old Testament is fulfilled
Peter	Jerusalem Council	Acts 15:7-11	Salvation by the grace of God is available to all
James	Jerusalem Council	Acts 15:13-21	Circumcision is not required of Gentile converts
Paul	People at Athens	Acts 17:22-31	God will hold all people accountable for their response to His Son
Paul	Ephesian elders & Miletus	Acts 20:17-35	Remain faithful in spite of false teachers and various persecutions
Paul	Crowd at Jerusalem	Acts 22:1-21	Recounts his conversion and his ministry & mission to the Gentiles
Paul	The Sanhedrin	Acts 23:1-6	Paul's defense, declares himself a Pharisee and a Roman citizen
Paul	Felix & Drusilla	Acts 24:	Righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come
Paul	King Agrippa, Bernice, & Festus	Acts 26:2-23	Recounts his conversion and zeal for the gospel of Christ

Paul's Letter to the Galatians

[Video Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmx4UjRFp0M&t)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmx4UjRFp0M&t>



Big Ideas in GALATIANS

God's grace is for people
of every nation; all are
justified by faith

Faith in Christ saves,
not following the law

Jesus died to set the
people free from lives of
sin and bondage

The Spirit, rather than the
law, empowers believers
to live holy lives

Those who are filled with
the Spirit live for God
rather than themselves



The Letter of James

[Video Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qn-hLHWwRYY)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qn-hLHWwRYY>



Big Ideas in JAMES

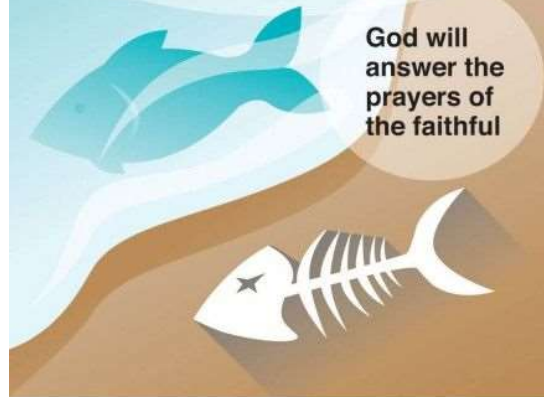
Trials can be received with joy because they can produce maturity in the believer

Faith that is not rooted in trust in God or fails to result in a transformed life is no faith at all

Those with genuine faith will bear the fruit of the faith in their lives

False wisdom produces envy and selfish ambition, but genuine wisdom results in moral conduct

God will answer the prayers of the faithful





Readings for Sept 30

Paul the Missionary

Acts 15:36-20:3a

1 Thessalonians 1-5

2 Thessalonians 1:1-3:18

1 Colossians 1:1-16:24

2 Colossians 1:1-13:14

Acts describes the early Church as a close and loving fellowship of believers. The disciples public witness met with widespread acceptance in Jerusalem and Christian following increased rapidly. A number of Pharisees and even a considerable body of priests were won over. But opposition, largely by the Pharisees and Sadducees, continued and we begin this week with the story of Stephen, the first martyr. After the stoning of Stephen, the Christians in Jerusalem were persecuted and most were forced to leave the city. But as the new believers traveled, they shared the Gospel with others. Soon, the message spread to Judea and even to Samaria, where many Samaritans accepted Christ as Savior. God speaks to Peter through visions to reach out to the Gentiles. The great surprise for the early Jewish Christians took place when a retired Roman centurion, Cornelius, was converted and they began to understand more fully that the message of salvation was for all people, not just for God's covenant people, the Jews.

We also read about the conversion of Saul, and read about Paul's missionary journeys to major cities of the Roman Empire. Paul and his companions established churches in these population centers. The new Christians then spread the Gospel to the surrounding villages and countryside. What drove Paul and other early Christians was the conviction that people everywhere needed to hear about the gift of forgiveness of sins that God offers to all who simply trust in his Son.

The success of setting up Christian churches in major cities led to some theological disputes. In Galatians Paul reminds believers to depend on Christ alone for their salvation. He talks about the practical implications of living by grace and living under control of the Holy Spirit. James provides practical guidelines in how to put Christian belief into action through both word and deed in order for Christians to separate themselves from more worldly habits.

These readings about the early church remind us that we, too, are a part of the story of the church. As we live as Christians amid our families and communities, as we show compassion to those around us, as we share the truths of the Good News, we participate in the history of the church, a continuing story of God's love poured out on the world.

Weekly Reading Plan

Day 1: AC 6:1 - 8:3;
Day 2: AC 8:4-40; AC 9:1-43
Day 3: AC 10:1-12:25
Day 4: AC 13:1 – 14:28
Day 5: AC 15:1-35; GAL 1:1-24
Day 6: GAL 2:1 – 6:18
Day 7: JAS 1:1 – 5:20

Outline

Stephen, the First Martyr (Day 1)
Philip and the Samaritan Pentecost (Day 2)
Spreading Beyond Judea and Samaria (Day 2)
Peter's Missionary Work (Day 3)
Paul's First Missionary Journey (Day 4)
Conference in Jerusalem (Day 5)
Letter to the Galatians (Day 5)
Paul Corrects Peter (Day 6)
Letter of James (Day 7)

Key Characters		Key Locations		Key Terms	
Stephen	Sanhedrin	Jerusalem	Samaria	Holy Spirit	Disciples
Saul/Paul	Philip	Gaza	Azotus	Messiah	Signs
Simon	Simon/Peter	Caesarea	Damascus	Believers	Apostles
John	Ethiopian	Judea	Galilee	Baptism	Clean/pure
Ananias	Barnabas	Lydda	Sharon	Gentile	Circumcised
Aeneas	Dorcas/Tabitha	Joppa	Antioch	Faith	The law
Cornelius	Agabus	Tarsus	Cyprus	Works	Child of God
Herod	James	Seleucia	Salamis	Freedom	Fruit of Spirit
Mary	John/Mark	Paphos	Perga	New Creation	Favoritism
Rhoda	Simeon	Pamphylia	Iconium	Wisdom	Submission
Bar-Jesus	Sergius Paulus	Lystra	Derbe	Patience	Prayer
Elymas	Judas	Pisidia	Attalia	Heaven	
Silas	Titus	Cilicia	Galatia		
Cephas					

Key Verses

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. [AC 4:31-33]

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace, and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers. [AC 9:31]

The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. [AC 11:26]

What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. [AC 13:32]

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ [GAL 1:3]

The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. [GAL 5:22-25]

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does. [JAS 1:22-25]

Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Acts6: The disciples chose seven men to distribute food. Some from the synagogue disputed with Stephen. They took him before the council.

Acts7: Stephen said, "Brothers, God called Abraham and appeared to Moses. You killed the Righteous One." They were enraged and stoned him.

Acts8: Philip proclaimed Christ in Samaria. A magician offered money for the gift of the Spirit. Philip baptized an Ethiopian official.

Acts9: Saul went to arrest the believers. Jesus said, "Why do you persecute me?" Saul was baptized and began preaching. Peter raised Dorcas.

Acts10: Cornelius sent for Peter. The Lord said to Peter, "Do not call them unclean." Peter preached to the Gentiles and the Spirit fell.

Acts11: Some in Jerusalem criticized Peter. He said, "The Spirit told me to go." Many in Antioch believed. Barnabas and Saul taught there.

Acts12: Herod killed James and arrested Peter. The church prayed earnestly. An angel led Peter out of prison. An angel struck Herod down.

Acts13: Paul and Barnabas proclaimed the word. Paul said, "God has sent a Savior, Jesus, as he promised." The Jews stirred up persecution.

Acts14: Many believed at Iconium. The crowd at Lystra wanted to worship Paul, then they stoned him. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch.

Acts15: Some men taught circumcision for the Gentiles. Peter said, "God gave the Spirit with no distinction." Paul and Barnabas separated.

Gal1: Paul, to the churches of Galatia. You are already turning to a different gospel! The gospel I preached came by revelation from Christ.

Gal2: I went up to Jerusalem and saw the leaders. I opposed Cephas about circumcision. We are justified by faith in Christ and not by works.

Gal3: Those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. In Christ you are all sons of God.

Chapter Summaries (from @biblesummary)

Gal4: God sent his Son for us to receive adoption. How can you turn back to worthless principles? You, like Isaac, are children of promise.

Gal5: Christ has set us free. Circumcision counts for nothing. Use your freedom to love one another. Walk by the Spirit and not the flesh.

Gal6: Restore anyone caught in sin. Sow to the Spirit and reap eternal life. Let us not give up doing good. What counts is the new creation.

Jas1: James, to the tribes. Many trials produce perseverance. Riches will fade. Every good gift comes from the Father. Be doers of the word.

Jas2: If you show partiality to the rich you are committing sin. Act as those who are under the law of liberty. Faith without works is dead.

Jas3: No one can tame the tongue. With it we bless our Father and with it we curse others. The wisdom from above is pure and peace-loving.

Jas4: Your worldly desires cause conflict. Resist the devil, draw near to God. Who are you to judge your neighbor? You boast in arrogance.

Jas5: You rich have fattened yourselves for slaughter. Brothers, be patient until the Lord comes. The prayer of faith will save the sick.

What did I learn about God?

- Does the story of Saul's conversion change your thinking about who is part of God's kingdom? Are there any people you think might be beyond God's reach?
- What was the revelation that Paul received from Jesus Christ in GAL 1? How did the revelation change Paul's life? How does your past affect your present life? What do you need to put behind you and know that you are forgiven?
- How would you explain GAL 2:16 to a non-Christian, particularly one with high moral standards? [*know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not be observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.*]
- In JAS 5, we are taught to pray at all times. How is confession and prayer a part of the healing process? What is the connection between the physical and spiritual areas of our life?
- According to GAL 2:21, if you can be in right standing with God through your own efforts (e.g., being a good person), what did Christ die for? How does this impact you and your faith?

What did I learn about human nature?

- How do people hold on to religious rituals and heroes today, while missing the whole point of what those ceremonies and people represent?
- In Acts 12, Peter miraculously escapes from prison. Who truly has power in this story: Herod or God? What does this story tell you about how Christians ought to deal with opposition and persecution? What worldly forces today seem all powerful to you?
- How do you think Paul would respond to a modern-day skeptic who felt Jesus was a noble but misguided martyr? What role would the Old Testament play in Paul's answer? How does knowing the Old Testament help you to better understand and share your faith?
- Paul speaks of unity in Christ in GAL 3:26-4:7. What are some social and cultural barriers to the unity of Christians in our time? How can we help bring down these barriers in our own lives?
- In JAS 3:8 [*but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison*], what hope do we have in relation to controlling our tongues?

What did I learn about my life/relationship with God?

- Did Stephen's review of Old Testament history in AC 7 encouraged you? Challenged you? Confused you? How does the speech show the importance of the Old Testament to the early Christians?
- Over time, has there been something in which your views have changed radically? How do you relate this experience to Saul's conversion experience?
- If you are a self-made person who likes to see everyone pay their own way, how does this Gospel of undeserved grace (GAL 2) strike you?
- In what ways do people tamper with the Gospel to make it less offensive to others? Have you been tempted to do so? How?
- How far into the future have you planned your life? According to JAS 4:13-17, what attitude should we have toward our plans? How often do you pray about your plans and decisions before making them?