STUDY

Acts Bible Study Questions and Answers (Free PDF)

Leader's Edition — with Answers

A 12-session walk through Acts, from the Ascension to Paul in Rome, with open questions for your own answers. Free to print, no sign-up.

A 12-session study of Acts for groups or solo reading.

> *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*
>
> **Acts 1:8 (NIV)**

> *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*
>
> **Acts 2:42 (NIV)**

> *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.*
>
> **Acts 4:12 (NIV)**

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The study guide

SESSION 1 · ACTS 1:1-26

Waiting for the Promise

For forty days the risen Jesus teaches his followers, then rises into heaven. They return to Jerusalem to pray and wait for the Spirit, and they choose Matthias to take Judas's place.

1. What does Jesus tell his followers to do and not do in Acts 1:4-8, and what happens at the end of Acts 1:9?

   Jesus tells them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the gift his Father promised (Acts 1:4). They will be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5) and will be his witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Then he is taken up, and a cloud hides him from their sight (Acts 1:9).

2. Why do you think Jesus answers a question about the kingdom with a promise about the Spirit and a call to be witnesses?

   The disciples ask about the timing of the kingdom, and Jesus says the times are the Father's to know (Acts 1:6-7). Many readers hear him turning their eyes from the calendar to the calling. God's plan is his, and ours is to bear witness in the power he gives.

3. Where has God asked you to wait, and what does Acts 1:14 show you about how to wait?

   Leader's note: This question asks for honest waiting, not tidy answers. The believers were joined together constantly in prayer (Acts 1:14). Give the group time to name the waiting they are in, and pray for each person before you move on.

SESSION 2 · ACTS 2:1-47

The Spirit Comes at Pentecost

The Holy Spirit falls on the believers in Jerusalem. Peter preaches Jesus crucified and risen, thousands respond, and the first church takes shape.

1. What happens in Acts 2:1-4, and how do the crowds respond in Acts 2:5-13?

   A sound like a violent wind fills the house, tongues like fire rest on each believer, and all are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in other tongues (Acts 2:2-4). Pilgrims from many nations hear the wonders of God in their own languages. Some are amazed, and others mock and say the believers are drunk (Acts 2:12-13).

2. What does Peter say Jesus has done and what does he call the people to do in Acts 2:22-38?

   Peter says Jesus of Nazareth was crucified by the hands of wicked men, but God raised him up (Acts 2:23-24), and he is both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36). He calls the people to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins, and they will receive the Spirit (Acts 2:38). Faithful readers differ on how the gift of tongues works today, and this study leaves that to your group's own tradition.

3. What in Acts 2:42-47 would you most want to see in your own church or group, and what is one step toward it?

   Leader's note: This question is about the life of the church, not a checklist to fix. They devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42). Invite each person to name one habit from this list that they could grow in, and pray for it together.

SESSION 3 · ACTS 3:1-4:31

Boldness Before the Council

Peter and John heal a man lame from birth at the temple gate. Arrested, they stand before the same leaders who condemned Jesus and speak of him without fear.

1. What does the lame man ask for in Acts 3:2-3, and what does Peter give him in Acts 3:6-8?

   A man lame from birth asks for money at the temple gate (Acts 3:2-3). Peter says he has no silver or gold, and in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth he tells him to walk. The man is healed and goes into the temple walking and leaping and praising God (Acts 3:6-8).

2. What do the leaders notice about Peter and John in Acts 4:13, and what explains it?

   The leaders see the courage of Peter and John and realize they are unschooled, ordinary men. They take note that these men had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). Peter also says there is salvation in no one else (Acts 4:12). The boldness comes from time spent with Jesus and from the Spirit, not from training.

3. When has fear kept you quiet about Jesus, and what does Acts 4:29-31 teach you to ask for?

   Leader's note: This question is meant to be gentle. Fear of speaking is something most believers know. The church did not pray for danger to end but for boldness to speak (Acts 4:29-31). Let the group share, and pray for boldness for each person by name.

SESSION 4 · ACTS 4:32-6:7

One Heart and the Seven

The early church shares what it has. Ananias and Sapphira lie about their gift and fall dead, the apostles obey God over the council, and seven men are chosen to serve neglected widows.

1. How do the believers care for one another in Acts 4:32-35, and what do Ananias and Sapphira do wrong in Acts 5:1-4?

   They are of one heart and mind, share their possessions, and no one among them is in need (Acts 4:32-34). Ananias and Sapphira sell a field and keep back part of the money while acting as if they gave it all. Peter says they have lied to the Holy Spirit and to God (Acts 5:3-4).

2. Why do you think the apostles hand the daily service of food to seven others in Acts 6:2-4, and what happens as a result in Acts 6:7?

The Greek-speaking widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution (Acts 6:1). The apostles keep to prayer and the word and appoint seven men full of the Spirit and wisdom to serve (Acts 6:2-4). The word of God then spreads, and the number of disciples grows rapidly (Acts 6:7). Many readers see that care for the overlooked and the ministry of the word belong together.

3. Where is there a need in your church that is being quietly missed, and what could you do about it this week?

Leader's note: This question invites people to notice, not to take on everything. A need had been missed in Jerusalem, and it was handled with honesty and shared work. Ask the group to name one need and one person who could meet it, and pray for them.

SESSION 5 · ACTS 6:8-8:40

Stephen and the Scattering

Stephen preaches to the council and is stoned as the first martyr. The church is scattered, and Philip carries the gospel to Samaria and to an Ethiopian official on the road.

1. What does Stephen see in Acts 7:55-56 just before his death, and what does he pray in Acts 7:59-60?

Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looks up to heaven and sees the glory of God and Jesus standing at his right hand (Acts 7:55-56). As they stone him he asks the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit, and he asks that this sin not be held against them (Acts 7:59-60). Saul stands there approving (Acts 8:1).

2. How does God use the persecution in Acts 8:1-4 to advance the gospel, and how does Philip use his conversation in Acts 8:30-35?

The church is scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, and those who are scattered preach the word wherever they go (Acts 8:1, 4). Philip hears the Ethiopian official reading Isaiah, asks if he understands, and starting with that passage tells him the good news about Jesus (Acts 8:30-35). What was meant to end the church spread it.

3. Who is someone you find hard to forgive, and what does Stephen's prayer ask of you?

Leader's note: This question is heavy and should be handled with care. Stephen's prayer echoes Jesus on the cross (Luke 23:34). Do not press anyone to say they have forgiven. Let the group sit with what it asks, and pray for anyone who is carrying a wound.

SESSION 6 · ACTS 9:1-31

Saul Meets Jesus

On the road to Damascus, the risen Jesus stops Saul, a persecutor of the church, and calls him to carry his name to the nations. Ananias and Barnabas take a risk on the man they feared.

1. What does Jesus say to Saul in Acts 9:4-6, and what does he tell Ananias about Saul in Acts 9:15-16?

   A light from heaven flashes around Saul, and a voice says, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? Saul asks who he is, and the answer is Jesus, whom he is persecuting (Acts 9:3-5). Jesus tells Ananias that Saul is his chosen instrument to carry his name to Gentiles, kings, and Israel, and that he will suffer for the name (Acts 9:15-16).

2. Why do you think the Lord sends Ananias to Saul, and Barnabas to the disciples, rather than simply changing everyone's mind himself?

   Ananias fears Saul (Acts 9:13-14), and the disciples in Jerusalem do too, until Barnabas brings Saul to the apostles and tells his story (Acts 9:26-27). God does the work of grace, and yet he uses the courage of ordinary believers to welcome the one he has changed.

3. Who in your life seems too far gone, and what would it mean to show them the kind of welcome Ananias and Barnabas showed?

   Leader's note: This question asks for a name and a step, not a solution. Ananias obeyed while afraid (Acts 9:17). Invite the group to name someone and pray for them, and ask what small act of welcome might come next.

SESSION 7 · ACTS 9:32-12:25

The Gospel Reaches the Gentiles

Peter is sent to the Gentile Cornelius and sees the Spirit fall on those he thought outside the promise. The church in Antioch grows, and Peter is freed from prison as the church prays.

1. What does Peter see and hear in Acts 10:9-16, and what does he say in Acts 10:34-35 after meeting Cornelius?

   Peter is hungry on a rooftop and sees a sheet with animals on it. A voice tells him to kill and eat, and he refuses because they are unclean. The voice says not to call anything impure that God has made clean (Acts 10:9-16). At Cornelius's house Peter says God does not show favoritism, but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right (Acts 10:34-35).

2. Why is it such a shock to the Jewish believers that the Spirit falls on the Gentiles in Acts 10:44-45, and how do they respond in Acts 11:18?

   The believers of Jewish background are astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit has been poured out on Gentiles (Acts 10:45). Peter's Jerusalem critics quiet down and praise God, saying God has granted even the Gentiles repentance that leads to life (Acts 11:18). At Antioch the disciples are first called Christians (Acts 11:26).

3. What group of people are you tempted to think are outside the reach of God's grace, and what might God be teaching you through Peter?

Leader's note: This question presses on a hidden prejudice, so ask it with kindness. Peter's own heart had to be changed before he could go. Give the group room to be honest, and pray for open eyes and open doors.

SESSION 8 · ACTS 13:1-14:28

Sent Out from Antioch

The church at Antioch sets apart Barnabas and Saul, and the Spirit sends them out. They preach across Cyprus and Galatia, face opposition and a stoning, and return to report what God has done.

1. What is the church at Antioch doing when the Spirit speaks in Acts 13:2-3, and what do they do next?

They are worshiping the Lord and fasting when the Holy Spirit says to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work he has called them to (Acts 13:2). After more fasting and prayer they lay hands on them and send them off (Acts 13:3). The mission begins with worship and prayer.

2. What is Paul's message to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch, and why does he turn to the Gentiles in Acts 13:46-48?

Paul tells the story of Israel and proclaims that through Jesus forgiveness of sins is offered, and everyone who believes is set free (Acts 13:38-39). When many Jews oppose him, he and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles, who are glad and honor the word of the Lord (Acts 13:46-48). Paul also tells the new believers that we must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).

3. Who has your church sent or supported, and what could you do to join in that work?

Leader's note: This question is about sending and support. Antioch gave up two of its own leaders (Acts 13:3). Ask the group to name missionaries or workers they know, and choose one way to pray for or help them.

SESSION 9 · ACTS 15:1-16:40

The Council and the Philippian Jailer

The church gathers in Jerusalem to decide whether Gentiles must keep the law of Moses. Paul then hears the call to Macedonia and, in a Philippi jail, sees a jailer and his household come to faith.

1. What is the dispute in Acts 15:1-5, and what does Peter say in Acts 15:11?

Some teachers say Gentile believers must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses to be saved (Acts 15:1, 5). Peter answers that they believe it is through the grace of the Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are (Acts 15:11). The council writes a letter to the Gentile believers that does not burden them beyond a few necessary things (Acts 15:28-29).

2. What do Paul and Silas do at midnight in Acts 16:25, and how does the jailer respond to the earthquake and their answer in Acts 16:30-34?

Paul and Silas, beaten and in prison, are praying and singing hymns to God while the prisoners listen (Acts 16:23-25). An earthquake opens the doors, and the jailer, about to kill himself, asks what he must do to be saved (Acts 16:26-30). They tell him to believe in the Lord Jesus and he and his household will be saved. He washes their wounds and is baptized that night with his family (Acts 16:31-33).

3. What is one thing you have been treating as a requirement for faith that the gospel does not require, and what could you let go of?

Leader's note: This question is about grace, not a call to drop good habits. Peter says we are saved through grace, and the Gentiles as well (Acts 15:11). Ask the group to name a burden they have carried, and remind them that Christ's yoke is a different thing. Do not correct, only listen.

SESSION 10 · ACTS 17:1-18:28

Thessalonica, Athens, and Corinth

Paul reasons from the Scriptures in Thessalonica and Berea, speaks to the philosophers of Athens, and spends a year and a half planting the church at Corinth.

1. How do the Bereans respond to Paul's message in Acts 17:11, and how do the Athenians respond to his speech in Acts 17:32-34?

The Bereans receive the message with great eagerness and examine the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul says is true, and many of them believe (Acts 17:11-12). In Athens some sneer at Paul's talk of the resurrection, some want to hear more, and a few, including Dionysius and Damaris, believe (Acts 17:32-34).

2. Why does Paul begin at the altar to an unknown god in Acts 17:22-23 instead of quoting the Old Testament, and what does he end with in Acts 17:30-31?

Paul starts with what the Athenians already know, the altar to an unknown god (Acts 17:22-23), and speaks of the God who made the world and does not live in temples (Acts 17:24). He ends with the call to repent, because God has set a day to judge the world through a man he raised from the dead (Acts 17:30-31). He meets people where they are, but the message does not change.

3. How do you respond to a message you have not heard before, and what would it look like to test what you hear against Scripture?

Leader's note: This question invites gentle self-examination. The Bereans were called noble not for doubting but for eager study (Acts 17:11). Invite the group to share how they weigh new teaching, and encourage a habit of reading the passage for themselves.

SESSION 11 · ACTS 19:1-21:16

Ephesus and the Farewell

Paul teaches in Ephesus for two years while the word spreads through Asia, and an uproar over the goddess Artemis erupts. On his way to Jerusalem he says goodbye to the elders and warns them of what lies ahead.

1. What happens in Ephesus in Acts 19:8-10 and 19:23-27, and what does Paul tell the elders to do in Acts 20:28?

   Paul reasons daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus for two years, so that all who live in Asia hear the word of the Lord (Acts 19:9-10). The silversmith Demetrius stirs up a riot because the gospel threatens the trade in silver shrines of Artemis (Acts 19:23-27). Paul tells the elders to keep watch over themselves and all the flock, and to shepherd the church of God (Acts 20:28).

2. What does Paul say his life is for in Acts 20:24, and what does he mean by quoting Jesus in Acts 20:35?

   Paul says his only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given him, testifying to the good news of God's grace (Acts 20:24). He also reminds them of the Lord's own words, that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). His life is poured out for the work and for others.

3. How does Paul's willingness to go to Jerusalem despite the warnings in Acts 21:10-14 challenge the way you think about obedience?

   Leader's note: This question does not say that every warning means to stop, or that every warning means to go. Paul's friends wept and pleaded, and he stayed firm, and they said, The Lord's will be done (Acts 21:12-14). Give the group room to talk about hard obedience, and pray for discernment.

SESSION 12 · ACTS 21:17-28:31

Arrest and the Road to Rome

Paul is arrested in Jerusalem and testifies before crowds, governors, and King Agrippa. He appeals to Caesar, survives a storm and shipwreck, and arrives in Rome, where he preaches freely under guard.

1. What does the Lord tell Paul in Acts 23:11, and what does he tell him in the storm in Acts 27:23-24?

   The Lord stands near Paul in the night and tells him to take courage, for as he has testified in Jerusalem, so he must in Rome (Acts 23:11). In the storm an angel says Paul must stand trial before Caesar, and God has graciously given him the lives of all who sail with him (Acts 27:23-24). Paul is promised safe passage, but not an easy one.

2. Why do you think Luke ends the book with Paul under guard in Acts 28:30-31, rather than with his release or his death?

   Luke closes with Paul in Rome for two years in a rented house, welcoming all who come, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ boldly and without hindrance (Acts 28:30-31). Many readers take the open ending as an invitation. The gospel has reached Rome, and the story of the church goes on into our own day.

3. Where do you feel like you are in a storm or in chains, and how might God be using that place for the gospel?

   Leader's note: This question asks for honesty about hard seasons. Paul was in chains, and yet the word was not chained. Let people speak about their storms without a quick fix, and pray that God would use each one for his purposes.