
Book of Acts – Course B

Instructions:

Please take all courses in order as listed on our home page (the computer will ask!). If you have not done all the lessons of previous courses, please [click here to go to the beginning](#).

If you have not already done so, save this lesson to your computer using the "save" feature of your browser or PDF reader. Then print out the lesson (or at least open it in your browser or PDF reader **offline** – not on the Internet). Read the lesson and **study in your Bible the passages indicated >>> Scripture <<<**. Following each passage, study each question that has a number enclosed in asterisks (*1*, *2*, etc.), and **write down your answers on paper**. Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit, but your answers will not be submitted to us.) Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

When you have studied the whole lesson and written down answers to all the indicated questions, return to the menu for this course on our web site at www.BibleStudyLessons.com and click on the link for the **answer quiz** for this lesson (or simply click on the link at the end of this lesson). Follow the directions to submit your answers and receive your grade. You will then be given an opportunity to see the correct answers to the questions. Please save this lesson and the correct answers for future reference.

Then move on to the next lesson or the next course in order. **Please study all lessons in all courses in order as listed in the menus on our web site.**

Thank you for your interest, and God bless your study of His word.

Conclusion of Trip #3 – Acts 20:13–23:10

Lesson 5

Introduction:

In our last lesson, Paul concluded his second preaching trip and began his third. This lesson studies the conclusion of that trip.

I. A Visit with the Ephesian Elders – Acts 20:13–38

The Journey Continues

>>> Please read Acts 20:13–17. <<<

1 Why was Paul hurrying to reach Jerusalem? Answer: Paul wanted to be in Jerusalem for _____.

2 Whom did he call to meet him at Miletus? Answer: He called to him the _____ of the church at Ephesus.

Comment: Paul had waited 7 days at Troas, so he could break bread with the disciples (20:6,7). Though hurrying to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost, yet he stayed behind in Troas, then left by land to catch up with the ship (vv 13–16). Why didn't he meet with the church on an earlier day? As discussed in our last lesson, the answer is that the first day of the week was the special day when Christians met to have the Lord's supper.

We have studied before about elders. These men must meet special qualifications (Titus 1:5–9; 1 Tim. 3:1–7) and are then appointed within a local church (Acts 14:23). Every passage about elders in a local church, speaks of them as being plural (see Acts 14:23; 15:4,22; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; 1 Peter 5:1,2). Here Paul met with the elders of the church in Ephesus.

Paul's Speech

>>> Please read Acts 20:18–27. <<<

3&4 In what circumstances had Paul taught (v20)? Answer: He taught _____ and from _____.

5&6 What was predicted would happen to him in Jerusalem? Answer: _____ and _____ awaited him in Jerusalem.

7 How much of God's word had he taught? (a) some, (b) most, (c) none, (d) the whole counsel of God. Answer: _____.

Comments: Paul began by describing his work in Asia, including Ephesus. Despite persecution, he had taught the gospel to Jews and Gentiles, publicly and from house to house (i.e., in various homes – cf. Acts 5:40–42). He was convinced that chains and tribulation also awaited him at Jerusalem, so he was sure he would never see them again. Yet he was confident that he had fulfilled his duty to them, having thoroughly taught them the whole counsel of God (vv 20,27).

Many preachers today are not like Paul. Some will not go to peoples' homes to teach. Others will not preach some Biblical teachings that people really need to hear. As a result many people today fail to understand what God requires of them (see 2 Tim. 3:16–4:2; Ezek. 33:1–9).

>>> Please read Acts 20:28–31. <<<

8 In what position were these men placed in the church? Answer: The Holy Spirit had made them _____.

9 What price did God pay to purchase the church? Answer: Jesus purchased the church with His _____.

10 What should the elders watch for? (a) wolves, (b) teachers of perverse things, (c) those who draw away disciples, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

11 Read 1 Peter 5:1–3. What flock do a group of elders oversee? (a) all the local churches throughout a diocese, (b) the flock among them or entrusted to their care, (c) all congregations in the world, (d) it does not say. Answer: _____.

Comments: Note first that Jesus purchased the church with His blood. Some folks say that church membership is not essential to salvation. But the New Testament church is the body of people who have been purchased and saved by Jesus' blood (Acts 2:47; 20:28; Eph. 5:23,25). How can we be saved outside that body?

The elders (v17) are "overseers" (or "bishops") who act as "shepherds" (see the word for "pastors" in Eph. 4:11). Contrary to what some think, these words do not refer to different offices, but are just different words for the same work (see also 1 Peter 5:1,2; Titus 1:5-7). It follows that a preacher is not the same position as a pastor. A pastor is an elder or bishop, who must have special qualifications to be appointed. And remember that elders (pastors) in a local church must be plural. No one man alone ever oversaw a local church (see notes on v17 above).

Elders lead or oversee a congregation, like shepherds lead a flock (cf. 1 Peter 5:1,2). They watch to protect the flock from false teachers (vv 29,30). They "rule," subject to the authority of Christ, so other members should obey and submit to them (1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7,17). They must not lead the church to practice unauthorized acts (Matthew 15:9,13; Galatians 1:8,9; 2 John 9-11). But they make decisions to lead the congregation to carry out the acts God has authorized the church to do.

1 Peter 5:1,2 shows that elders lead the flock "among them." This is the flock where they have been appointed (Acts 20:28). Remember, each church has its own elders (Acts 14:23), so the work of elders is a local work. No elders can supervise the work or funds of more than one church. Centralized earthly church officers and organizations are without Bible authority. Each church should function independently under the leadership of its own local leaders, following the teachings of Jesus.

(Note: If you would like to learn more about the organization and work of the church, please see our links at the end of this lesson.)

>>> Please read Acts 20:32-38. <<<

12&13 What did Jesus teach about giving? Answer: It is more blessed to _____ than to _____.

14 Why was Paul's departure from the elders especially sad? Answer: They grieved because they would never see _____ again.

Comments: Paul concluded by teaching Christians to not be selfish or greedy (covetous), but to work with our hands and share. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Selfish people are unhappy people. This is true spiritually and physically. Many of life's greatest blessings can be enjoyed only by sharing them with others: love, joy, salvation, etc.

Paul concluded the meeting with prayer. The separation was tearful, especially because he had clearly stated that he did not expect to ever see them again on earth.

II. The Journey to Jerusalem – Acts 21:1-16

>>> Please read Acts 21:1-7. <<<

15 What warning did disciples at Tyre give to Paul? (a) none, (b) not to go to Jerusalem, (c) to repent of his sins, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

16 How did Paul's company separate from the disciples at Tyre? Answer: They knelt on the shore and _____.

Comments: The account then traces the journey of Paul's company by ship to Tyre (see a map of Paul's travels). There they found disciples, who warned Paul of the danger of going to Jerusalem (apparently, this was not an inspired command, but just a warning of what to expect if he did go there).

Before leaving, Paul's company prayed on the shore with the disciples. It is appropriate to ask God's blessings on our travels, especially when we are separating from loved ones.

>>> Please read Acts 21:8–16. <<<

17 In whose home did they stay in Caesarea? (a) Philip's, (b) Paul's, (c) Peter's, (d) disciples could not own homes. Answer: _____.

18 How did Agabus demonstrate Paul's coming imprisonment? Answer: He bound himself with Paul's _____.

Comments: In Caesarea the company visited in the home of Philip the evangelist (see Acts 6 and 8). This evangelist had a home and a family (four daughters). His daughters had the gift of prophecy, showing again that women can be valuable teachers of the word. There is no evidence, however, that they spoke out when the whole church was assembled or led men in Bible study groups (see notes on Acts 18:26–28).

A prophet named Agabus (cf. Acts 11:28) predicted Paul's arrest in Jerusalem by binding himself with Paul's belt. Though the disciples pled with him, Paul remained determined to go to Jerusalem. Note that New Testament teachers effectively used illustrations and visual aids.

III. Paul's Arrest in the Temple – Acts 21:17–40

Purification in the Temple

>>>Please read Acts 21:17–26. <<<

19&20 What did the church leaders say people thought Paul taught? Answer: Some thought Paul taught people not to _____ their children or follow (Jewish) _____.

21 What did they recommend Paul do as a solution? Answer: Paul should join some men who were completing their _____ of purification.

Comments: At Jerusalem Paul met with leaders in the church and explained his work to them. They recalled how they had agreed that Gentiles need not keep the law (see Acts 15), but some Jewish Christians were upset thinking Paul taught they should not be circumcised or keep Jewish customs. These leaders suggested Paul join certain Jewish men in fulfilling their vows according to the law. Paul agreed to do so.

The men involved apparently had Nazarite vows, as described in Numbers 6. Paul's conduct here is generally considered one of the most difficult events in Acts to understand. Paul had clearly taught that the Old Testament law is not binding authority for our practices today. See Heb. 10:1–10; 7:11–14; 8:6–13; 9:1–4; Gal. 3:24,25; 5:1–6; Col. 2:13–17. He did, however, keep some aspects of the law (including circumcision) as civil law or social custom, as long as it was not viewed as spiritual or religious requirement (see on Acts 16:3; 1 Cor. 9:19–23). This may explain much of Paul's conduct here, but more may also have been involved.

Paul's Arrest

>>> Please read Acts 21:27–40. <<<

22 What accusations did Asian Jews make against Paul? (a) he opposed the people, (b) he opposed the law, (c) he opposed the temple, (d) he brought a Greek into the temple, (e) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

23 Who rescued Paul? (a) the disciples, (b) the church elders, (c) the commander of the Roman soldiers, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

Comments: The decision to have Paul help men complete their vows in the temple may have been well intentioned, but it backfired. Asian Jews, seeing Paul in the temple, started a riot. They accused Paul of teaching against the people, the law, and the temple, and they jumped to the false conclusion that he had brought a Greek into the temple.

They seized Paul, dragged him out of the temple, and began beating him, intending to kill him. The Roman commander, however, brought soldiers and rescued Paul. When Paul had identified himself to the commander, he obtained permission to speak to the people.

IV. Paul's Defense to the Mob – Acts 22:1–29

Jesus' Appearance to Paul

>>> Please read Acts 22:1–10. <<<

24 How had Paul treated Christians before his conversion? Answer: He had _____ Christians, binding and imprisoning them.

25 Who had appeared to him on the road to Damascus? Answer: _____ had appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus.

Comments: Paul used his arrest as an opportunity to teach the crowd the truth, but he began by discussing common ground. Like his hearers, Paul had been brought up in Judaism, strictly taught the law. He understood their views. He even understood their opposition to the gospel, for he too had been a great persecutor of the church. His conversion had not been caused by a lack of knowledge or faith in the law.

He explained his change by describing the evidence that convinced him: the appearance of Jesus on the Damascus road. We will study this briefly, since we studied it closely in Acts 9 (see notes there). Jesus' appearance proved to Paul that Jesus was alive. This confirmed the resurrection and should have convinced Paul's hearers that the gospel is true.

Jesus told Paul to go into the city to be told the things appointed for him to do. Modern denominational preachers say people are saved by "faith alone," so "there is nothing to do." Jesus did not so teach. He said there were things Paul must do. We will examine them as we proceed.

Paul's Conversion and Preaching

>>> Please read Acts 22:11–21. <<<

26 When were Paul's sins washed away? (a) before baptism, (b) the moment he believed, (c) when he had been baptized. Answer: _____.

27 Why had Paul later left Jerusalem to preach to Gentiles? Answer: The Lord told Paul this in a _____ while Paul was in the temple.

Comments: The Lord sent a disciple named Ananias to Paul. He said Paul would be a witness of what he had seen and heard, referring to Jesus' appearance to Paul. Like other apostles, Paul had to be able to testify that he had seen Christ alive (Acts 1:21; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:4–8).

Then Ananias told Paul what the Lord had appointed for him to do. He said to be baptized and wash away his sins. Contrary to denominational teaching, baptism is clearly essential to salvation from sin. Paul had already done all that most denominations say is necessary. He clearly believed in Jesus when he saw Him, and he had even been praying (Acts 9:11). Nevertheless, he still had his sins till he was baptized. See also Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:27; 1 Peter 3:21.

Consider also the urgency of Scriptural baptism. Ananias urged Paul not to wait. Note the following expressions in Acts that show the urgency of baptism:

Acts 2:41 -- "those who gladly received his word were baptized ... that day"
Acts 8:36 -- "What hinders me from being baptized?"
Acts 16:33 -- "...the same hour of the night ... immediately he and all his family were baptized"
Acts 22:16 -- "And now, why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins..."

Most denominations disobey the Bible examples and postpone baptism, because they do not see it as essential to salvation.

Paul then told how, in Jerusalem after his baptism, he was persecuted for preaching Jesus. Jesus then came in a vision and told him to go preach to the Gentiles. Paul's story would explain to the mob why Paul had begun to preach the gospel of Christ and why he had been teaching Gentiles.

(Note: If you would like to study more about whether or not baptism is necessary to salvation, please see the links at the end of this lesson.)

The People's Reaction

>>> Please read Acts 22:22–30. <<<

28 How did the commander intend to examine Paul? Answer: He intended to _____ Paul.

29 How did Paul protect himself and avoid this mistreatment? Answer: Paul informed them that he was a _____.

Comments: The people listened to Paul until he said he would preach to Gentiles. This reminded the people of their objections to Paul, so they reacted violently, calling out that he was not fit to live.

The commander was confused by this violence and decided to examine Paul by scourging. This was illegal treatment of a Roman citizen (see notes on Acts 16:35ff). Paul avoided this mistreatment by again appealing to his Roman citizenship. Once again the gospel shows that Christians may use their rights as citizens to protect them from harm.

The commander then determined to bring Paul before the Jewish council to let them examine him.

V. Paul before the Council – Acts 23:1–10

>>> Please read Acts 23:1–10. <<<

30 Paul had lived his life with what kind of conscience? (a) bad, (b) good, (c) guilty, (d) seared, (e) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

31 What did Paul say that caused dissension in the council? Answer: He was on trial because of his hope in the _____ of the dead.

32 What did Sadducees believe that Pharisees denied? Answer: Sadducees disbelieved in the _____.

Comments: Paul began his defense by claiming innocence. He said he had lived his whole life in good conscience. Conscience is the faculty by which our minds tell us whether or not we are practicing our beliefs.

Some folks claim that all one needs to do to please God is to be sincere and follow his conscience. "Just let your conscience be your guide." But Paul had lived in good conscience, including the time before he became a Christian, when he had been persecuting Christians. He had not violated his conscience, because he really believed he was doing what God wanted (Acts 26:9). Later, however, he realized that, in doing this, he had been the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:12–16).

Christians should be sincere and have good consciences, but more is needed. Some people, like Paul, are sincere and have good consciences but are lost. Conscience simply tells a person whether or not he is following his beliefs. But if his beliefs are wrong, he will still be in error.

The high priest had Paul slapped for claiming to be innocent! Realizing he would never receive justice here, Paul claimed he was on trial because of his faith in the resurrection of the dead. He referred, not just to the resurrection of all men, but to the resurrection of Jesus. The result was major turmoil in the council.

The council consisted of Sadducees and Pharisees. The former denied the existence of resurrection, spirits, and angels. Like modern materialists, they believed death is the end of existence. The Pharisees, however, believed in resurrection, spirits, and life after death. By siding with the Pharisees, Paul caused such an uproar that the Roman commander had to end the hearing by rescuing Paul.

Many passages teach that all men will someday be raised from the day and face Jesus in the judgment. Jesus' resurrection is the assurance that this will happen. Are you ready? See Acts 24:15; Luke 20:27–39; John 6:40–45; 5:21–29; 1 Corinthians 15:12–58; 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.

Personal application questions:

(These questions are for you to ponder. Your answers will help us understand your thinking, however they will not affect your "score.")

33 Do you believe in independent local churches led by qualified elders, or in centralized organizations? _____

34 Were you baptized with the understanding that your sins would be washed away when you were baptized? _____

When you have carefully studied this lesson and written down answers to all the questions, [click on this link to submit your answers.](#)

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