

The Acts of the Apostles

I. The Book of Acts

"The book of Acts is the great text of mission. In this Lucan compilation of oral history, we hear the stories of how a localized Jewish sectarian movement became spread throughout its known world. We travel with the embryonic church as it stumbles toward recognition of the significance of this man Jesus, who had caused a minor stir in Palestine. Alongside the pioneers of the Christian faith, we learn that the intentions of God in Christ are much wider and more deeply significant than had at first been recognized.

Acts is also a text of the Spirit. From the dynamic epiphany at Pentecost, the first followers of Jesus are time and again astonished as they encounter the work of the Spirit. In times past they had bumbled their way to understanding as they followed the radical prophet, Jesus. Now, still struggling to make sense of the resurrection, they receive rough insights as they are led and confronted by the Spirit. This is of course what Jesus had promised, in the time which suddenly seems so long ago. That he would send someone to lead them into truth. Perhaps they had contemplated something a little less dramatic."

Threshold of the Future, Michael Riddell pg 17,18

1. Read Acts 1:1. (See also Luke 1:1-4) In Acts 16:19,20; 20:4,5 a traveling companion writes about Paul and it is believed to be Luke the beloved physician (Colossians 4:14). Read Acts 1:8. This promise and command of Jesus, also serves as an outline for the early expansion of the gospel. Look at the chart below and look up the key verses. Fill in the name of the area where the gospel was proclaimed.

Chapters	Area(s) of Proclamation	Key Verse
1-7		<i>Acts 1:12</i>
8-12		<i>Acts 8:1</i>
13-28		<i>Acts 13:47</i>

} *Acts 1:8*

2. What would it mean to you 2000 years later if there was no book of Acts? (If when you finished reading the gospels, the next book was the book of Romans.) Why is it vital that we have these details of the early expansion of the kingdom? (see appendix A-20)

I. The Book of Acts (continued)

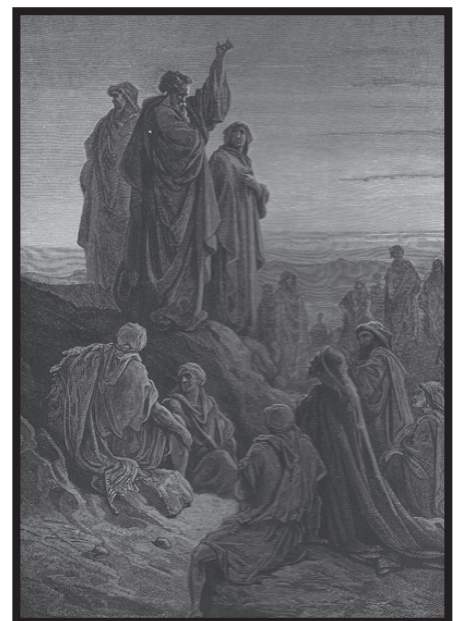
3. The book of Acts is a story of the activity of God's Spirit in the lives of his people. As you read through Acts, how do you see God's Spirit at work? (e.g. Acts 2:4; 4:8,31; 9:17; 13:9)



4. Read Acts 1:1-11. What did Jesus want the first believers to know before he ascended into heaven? Why was the resurrection a key message he wanted them to be convinced of? (see Jesus' prophecy of the resurrection Matthew 12:38-41, see also Acts 1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:30-32; 17:31,32)
5. What kind of kingdom was Christ establishing? (Acts 1:3) Do the apostles understand what kind of kingdom Christ came to bring? (Acts 1:6) See also: Acts 8:12; 14:22; 20:25; 28:23,31

I. The Book of Acts (continued)

6. The word 'witness' in Acts 1:8 is used 29 times in the book of Acts either as a verb or a noun. Our English word 'martyr' comes from the Greek word translated 'witness' and Stephen (Acts 6 & 7) is the first martyred witness. Look at the following verses in Acts where the word 'witness' is used. What is a 'witness' from the book of Acts? (Acts 1:8,22; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 6:13; 7:44,58; 10:39,41,43; 13:31; 14:17; 15:8; 20:33; 22:5,15; 23:11; 26:16,22)
7. Read Acts 2:14-41. How does Peter explain what is happening to the Jews who witness the Spirit's power in the believers? What Scriptures does he use and what is their emphasis? What is the people's reaction and how does Peter encourage them to respond? (As you look in the passages ahead notice how the gospel witnesses continue to prove that Jesus is the Christ using the same Old Testament Scriptures you have just studied. Note how significant Christ's message was to them in Luke 24.)

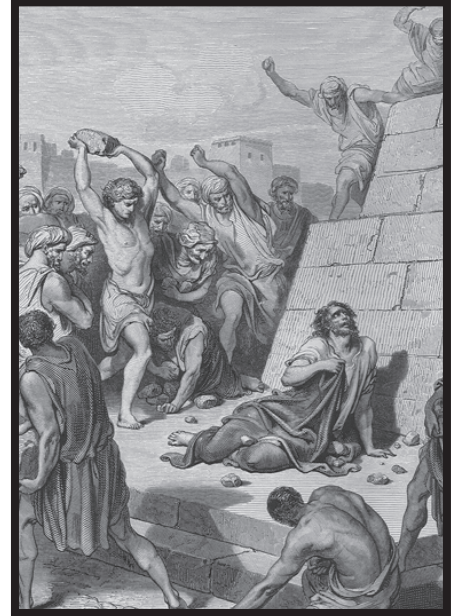


I. The Book of Acts (continued)

8. Read Acts 6:3 - 8:1. What kind of man was Stephen? How would you describe his grasp of the Word of God? In Acts 7 why does Stephen use these particular Old Testament examples as he makes his defense before the Sanhedrin?

Look at the Old Testament references Stephen makes and answer these questions:

- Where (geographically) is God working? Why is this significant?
- Who is God using? What is significant about them?
- What is God doing in these places through these people?
- What is Stephen seeking for the Jewish leaders to understand from these specific examples?

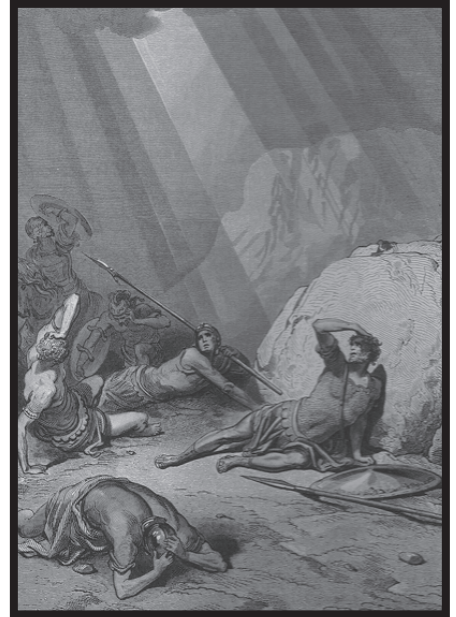


9. Read Acts 8:26-40. In this passage Luke tells us how God used Philip to bring the gospel to the Ethiopian. Look at this passage, what are some principles about sharing Christ that you can learn from Philip's example? (see appendix A-21)

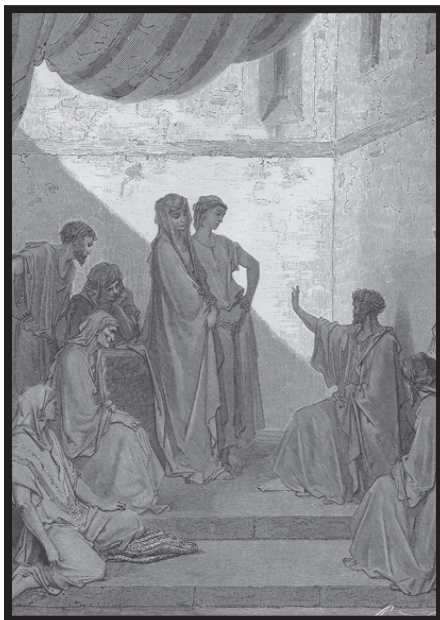
I. The Book of Acts (continued)

10. Read Acts 9:1-9. What was Saul's mindset at the beginning of this passage? Put your imagination cap on. Imagine you are Saul, the persecutor of the church and you are confronted with the powerful presence of God and he says "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? and you ask "Who are you Lord?" and you hear the answer "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." What radical change of mind has you to occur for you to ask your second question "What shall I do Lord?" (see Acts 22:10)

Consider Ananias, a simple follower of Jesus. How did his willingness to obey even though he was afraid impact the whole body of Christ?



11. Read Acts 10. This story is cataclysmic in the chain of experiences God used in getting the Jews to preach to the Gentiles. How did God get the attention of the Gentile Cornelius? What kind of man was he? What does God have to do to get Peter to share Christ with a Gentile? (Why is the vision repeated three times?) What does Peter do in response to the vision? What does Peter understand to be the meaning of the vision? (see Acts 10:34-35) What happens when the Gentiles hear the gospel? Why was it important for Peter to witness the outpouring of God's Spirit on the Jews (Acts 2), the Samaritans (Acts 8) and the Gentiles (Acts 10)? (see also Matthew 6:17-19) (see appendix A-21)

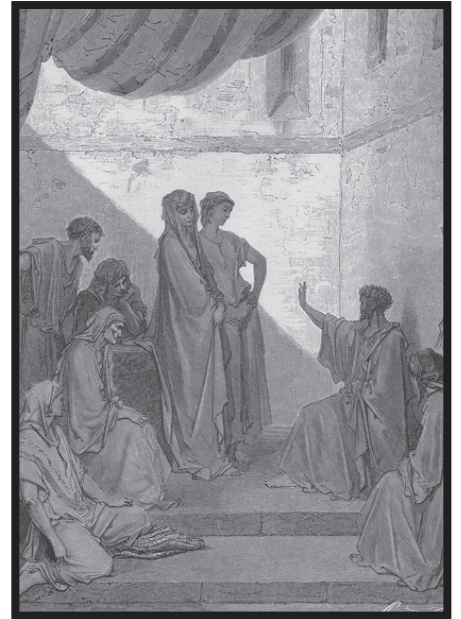


I. The Book of Acts (continued)

12. Look at the results of the expansion of the gospel in these verses. (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:7; 9:31; 11:21; 12:24) What caused the church to grow in these passages? What occurred in response to each of these expansions? Warren Wiersbe has said, "The book of Acts is a story of open doors and closed minds." How do you see this description of Acts validated in these verses?
13. Read Acts 13:1-4. Whose idea was it to send Barnabas and Saul to the Gentiles? Why is this significant?
14. The beginning of the ministry of Paul and Barnabas is a watershed mark in Biblical history. Since Abraham's time God has been focusing his redemptive message through a chosen people, the Jews. If anyone wanted to believe in Israel's God they had to come to the Jewish people and their temple. Now God is sending out Jewish witnesses to all people. Read Acts 13:47. It is a quotation of Isaiah 49:6. Look back at Isaiah 49. Who is Isaiah 49 addressed to? Of what significance is Isaiah 49:6 in Paul's life? (What does he say in Acts 13:47?)

I. The Book of Acts (continued)

15. Read Acts 17. Pick one of the locations in Acts 17 (Thessalonica, Berea or Athens) How did Paul approach this group of people? What was their response? How did Paul contextualize or make the gospel relevant to the peoples he presented it to? What was he unwilling to change? (see appendix A-22)



16. Read Acts 18. Pay careful attention to how Paul ministers to Priscilla and Aquila. Look at these passages, how does Paul model disciplemaking to them? What evidence is there that they caught Paul's disciplemaking vision?

- Acts 18:2-4
- Acts 18:18
- Acts 18:19,20
- Acts 18:24-26
- Acts 18:27,28

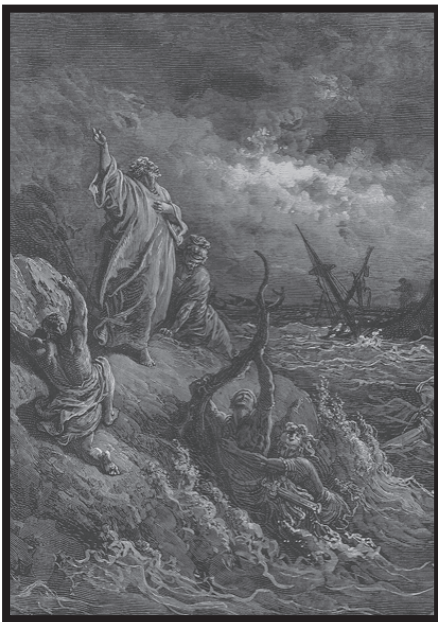
17. Read Paul's testimony in Acts 22. Why does Paul speak to the people in Aramaic (vs 1,2)? Notice the two questions that Paul asks Jesus when he meets him (vs 8,10). Consider these two questions for yourself, who have you discovered Jesus to be in the last few weeks? What does he want you to do?

I. The Book of Acts (continued)

18. What is the people's response to Paul's testimony?
(vs 22-30) Why does Paul's call to take the gospel to
the Gentiles anger them so?

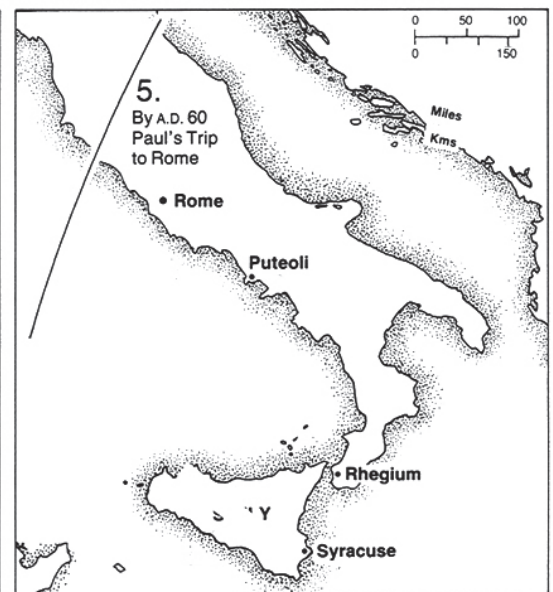
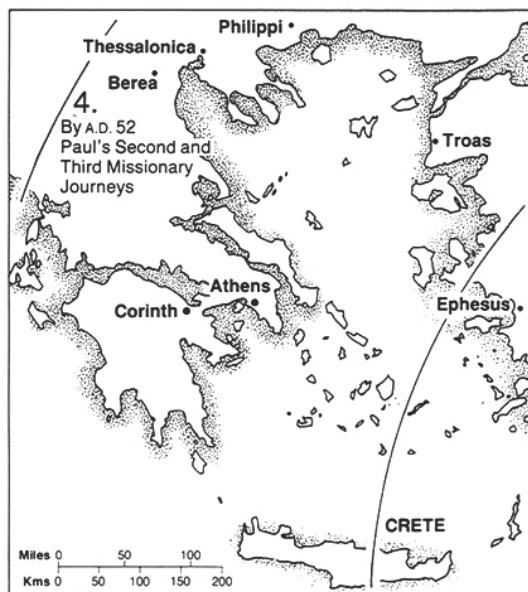
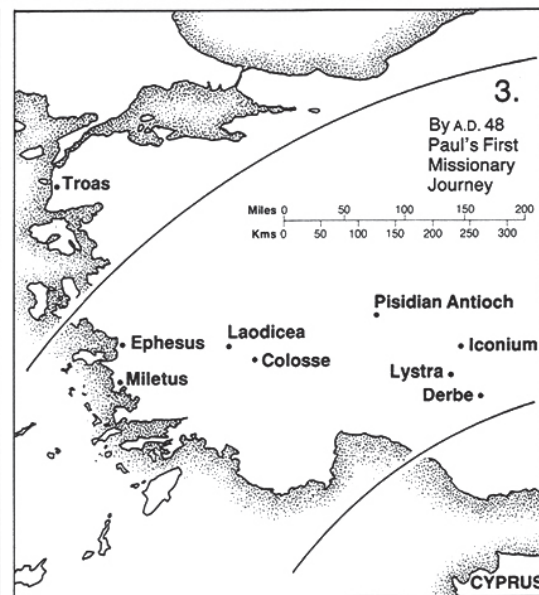
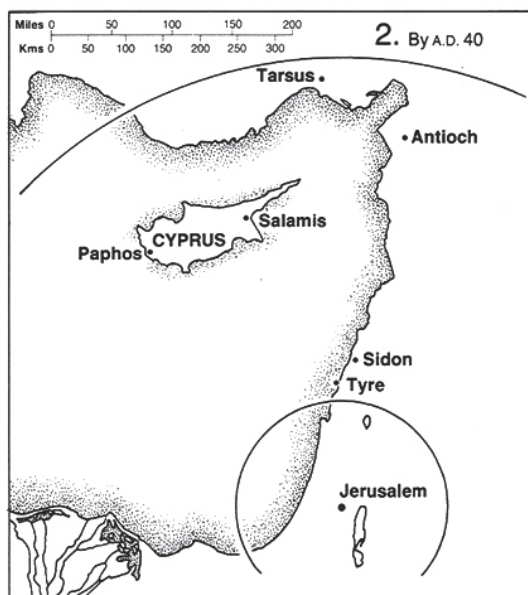
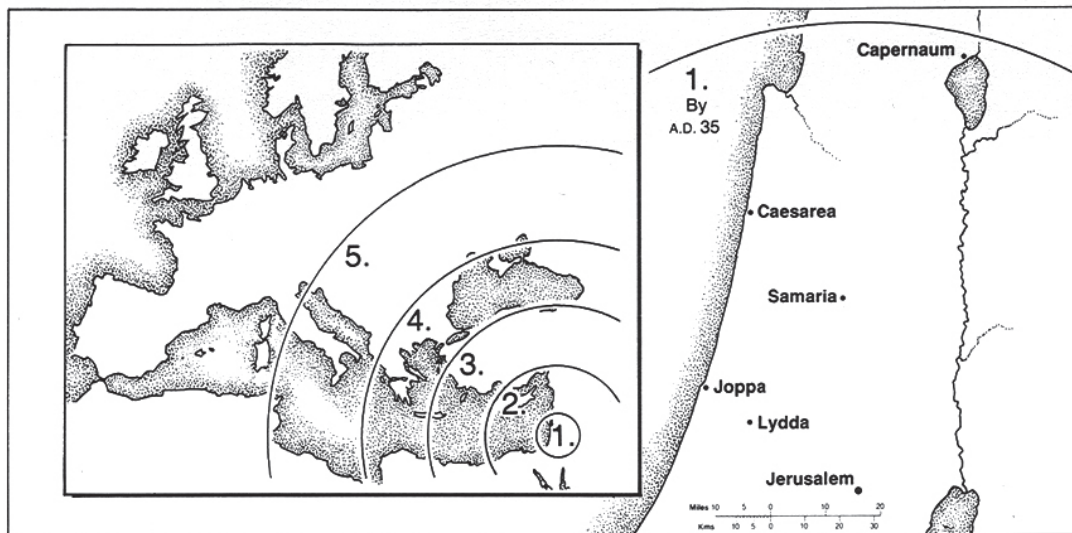


19. After being jailed for over two years Paul is finally sent to Rome. Read Acts 27. How do the men on the voyage to Rome become convinced that Paul serves the living God? Why did God give Paul favor with the centurion? How was that demonstrated? (see appendix A- 23)

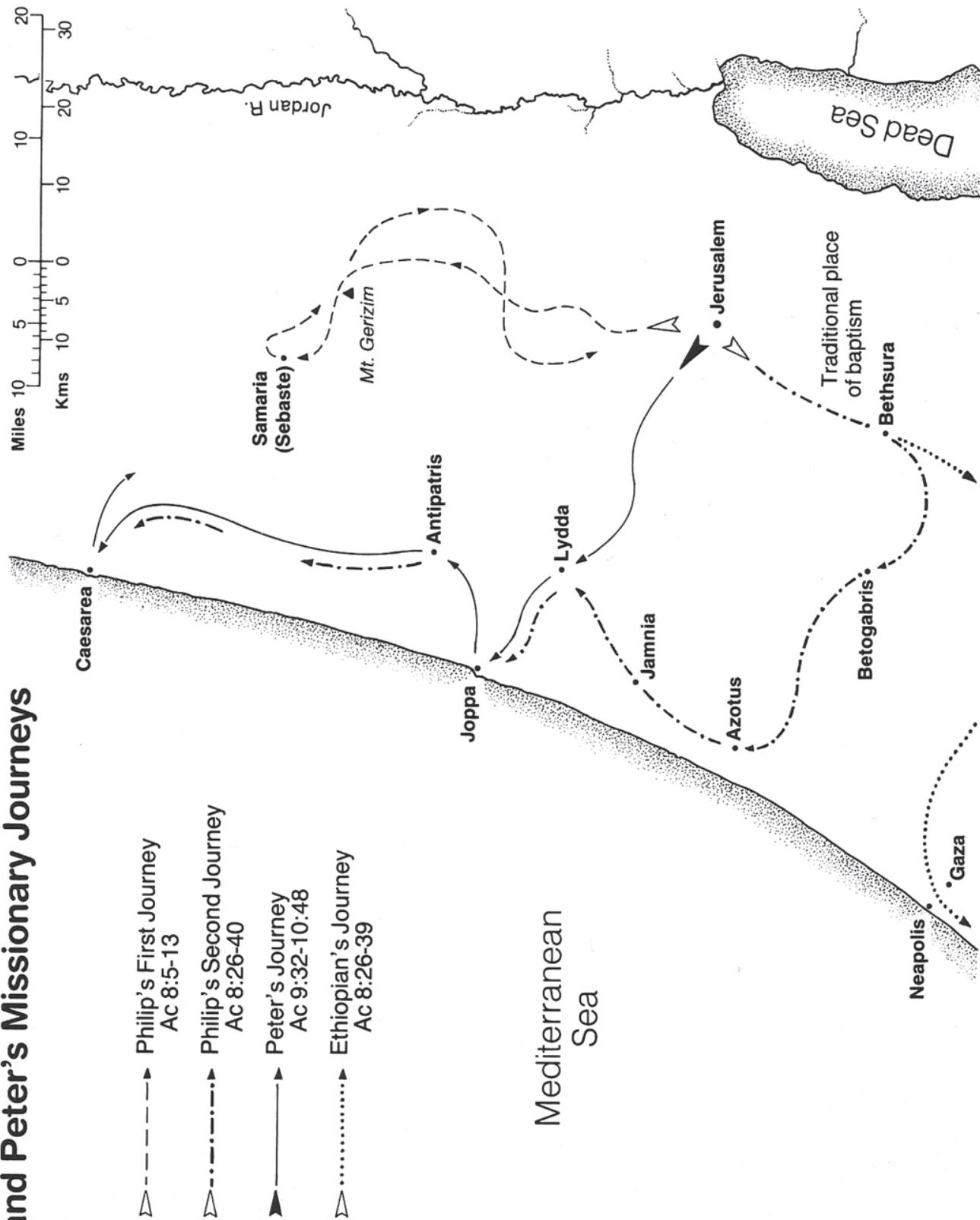


20. Read Acts 28:17-31. After Paul arrived in Rome, what did he do? To whom did he make his appeal and what was their response? Paul had a consistent pattern of making his appeal to those who knew the Scriptures and he made his appeal through the Scriptures (Acts 28:20, 23,24) Some responded but most did not. Paul then turned and went to those who did not know. (Acts 28:30,31) How does Paul's example instruct you and challenge you in your ministry to others? From the last verse in Acts what would you say was the passion of Paul's life? (see also Acts 20:24)

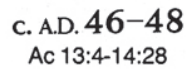
The Spread of the Gospel



Philip's and Peter's Missionary Journeys



A number line with two scales. The top scale is labeled 'Miles' and has markings at 0, 100, and 200. The bottom scale is labeled 'Kms' and has markings at 0, 100, 200, 300, and 400. The line is horizontal and the markings are evenly spaced.



C. A.D. 49-52
Ac 15:39-18:22

Miles 0 100 200 300
Kms 0 100 200 300 400 500

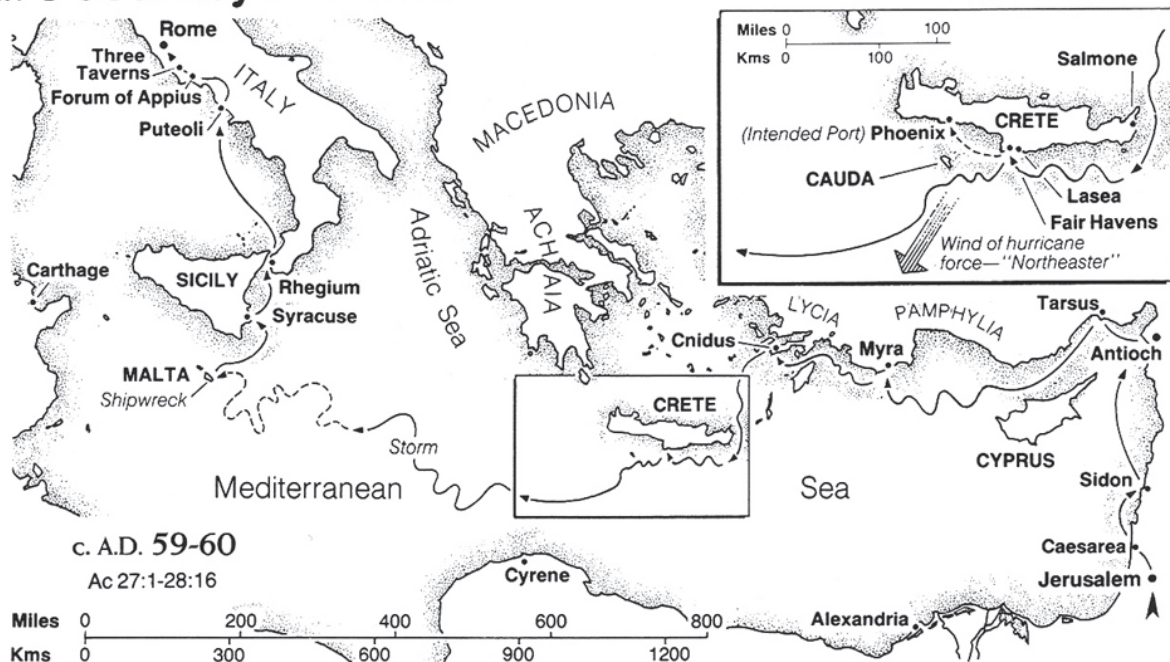
SAMOTHRACE—Islands
Rhodes—Cities, Ports

A-22

Paul's Third Missionary Journey



Paul's Journey to Rome



The Gentile Epistles

Romans - 2 Thessalonians

"It was necessary that these communities [those forming as followers of Jesus] should now be given instruction in a more permanent form than the merely oral teaching by which they had been called into existence. How then should this be done? The Epistles are the answer. They preserve in permanent form those inspired teachings which are specially provided for Christian believers in the present age. Paul and his co-writers little guessed that they were writing for twenty centuries ahead as well as for their own day! But the Holy Spirit knew: and they were so guided in what they wrote that their letters have become the church's doctrine for all time... We may well be grateful that the truths which are unfolded in them were committed to us in the form of these letters rather than in cut-and-dried theological theses or catechisms! Coming to us in the form of these heart-moving letters, they have a warmth, a passion, an energy, a freshness and a personal touch which they never could have had otherwise." J. Sidlow Baxter

I. The Gentile Epistles

"There are three main themes for the letters that Paul wrote to Gentile churches. The first theme explained in Romans and defended in I, II Corinthians and Galatians is the gospel. The second main theme explained in Ephesians and defended in Philippians and Colossians is the church. And the third main theme explained and defended in I and II Thessalonians is the second coming of Christ."

1. Please note the order of these epistles in the New Testament. The books are arranged thematically rather than in the order in which they were written. For example, Romans is first even though it was probably one of Paul's last letters.

ROMANS
I CORINTHIANS
II CORINTHIANS
GALATIANS
EPHESIANS
PHILIPPIANS
COLOSSIANS
I THESSALONIANS
II THESSALONIANS

Epistles written to
Gentile Christians
by Paul

I TIMOTHY
II TIMOTHY
TITUS
PHILEMON

Epistles written
to Leaders
by Paul

HEBREWS
JAMES
I PETER
II PETER
I JOHN
II JOHN
III JOHN
JUDE
REVELATION

Epistles written to
Hebrew Christians
by James, Peter, John & Jude
(the author of Hebrews is uncertain)

All of the letters apply to all believers (Jew or Gentile) but it is important to understand the frame of reference of the original recipients and their authors. As the beginning of each set of epistles is a profound theological book explaining the deep meanings of what Christ did for us on earth (Romans) and what Christ is doing for us in heaven (Hebrews).

I. The Gentile Epistles (continued)

1. Read II Timothy 3:16. What does Paul say is the benefit of Scripture? Each of these epistles that Paul has written has all of these benefits but when carefully examined can be found to be focused on one of these benefits primarily. Consider these benefits from these books.

Teaching (right doctrine)	Reproof (wrong behavior)	Correction (wrong doctrine)	Training in Righteousness (right behavior)
*Romans	*I, II Corinthians	*Galatians	I, *II Timothy
Ephesians	Philippians	Colossians	Titus
I Thessalonians	II Thessalonians		Philemon
* We will look at one of each of four types in our study of the Gentile epistles.			

II. The Book of Romans

"This is Paul's magnum opus. Here we see him at his greatest as a constructive thinker and theologian. The Epistle to the Romans is the complete and mature expression of the apostle's main doctrines, which it unfolds in due order and proportion and combines into an organic whole. For the purpose of systematic theology it is the important book in the Bible. More than any other, it has determined the course of Christian thought." J. Sidlow Baxter

1. In Romans 1-3, Paul reveals the spiritual state of the Gentile (1:18-2:16) and the Jew (2:17-3:8). What is Paul's conclusion about both the Jew and the Gentile? (see Romans 3:9-20)
2. Read Romans 3:21-26. What is God's solution for man's sinfulness? Read verse 21 again. How have you seen the Law and Prophets testify to a righteousness from God apart from the Law? How does Paul give an example of this in Romans 4?

II. The Book of Romans (continued)

3. Read Romans 5:1-11. What are the results of Christ's death for us?

4. Man's problem of sin is concerned both with our specific acts of unrighteousness (sins) and our sin nature itself. How does Paul address the reality of our sin nature? (see Romans 5:12-21)

5. How does Paul say we are to regard our sin nature and then live differently?

Romans 6:11-14

Romans 7:4-6

Romans 8:13-17

II. The Book of Romans (continued)

6. In Romans 9-11, Paul explains how the gospel relates to Israel. In the remaining chapters (12-16) Paul encourages us to conduct ourselves in light of the gospel truth. Read Romans 12:1,2. What is our only proper response in light of God's mercy? (The mercy of God is explained in Romans 1-11 but it finds its foundation in the whole Old Testament - Rom 3:21) What does this mean for you as an application to your life from this entire study?

7. Read Romans 12:3-21. How should correct doctrine (Romans 1-11) affect the believer's character of life?

III. The Book of I Corinthians

1. The book of I Corinthians was written to reprove the Corinthians for the divisions in their fellowship and to answer questions the Corinthians wrote to Paul about specific matters (see I Corinthians 7:1) How does Paul describe the problem of divisions (I Cor 1:10-17)?

III. The Book of I Corinthians (continued)

2. Read I Corinthians 3. What perspective does Paul give the Corinthians to challenge their divisive spirit?

3. In answering the Corinthians' questions in chapters 7-16, Paul gives them principles that they can use in answering future questions they will encounter as they live the Christian life. Look at the following verses. What principles do you gain from them?

I Corinthians 6:12-

I Corinthians 6:19,20-

I Corinthians 8:9-

I Corinthians 9:22,23-

I Corinthians 9:24-27-

I Corinthians 10:31-

I Corinthians 13:4-7-

I Corinthians 14:20-

I Corinthians 15:58-

IV. The Book of Galatians

1. Read Galatians 1:6-9. What was the doctrinal problem in Galatia? How did the problem exhibit itself (see Galatians 3:3; 4:10, 21; 5:2, 4; 6:12,13)

IV. The Book of Galatians (continued)

2. How does Paul defend the accuracy of the gospel that he preached to the Galatians?

(See Galatians 1:11-2:21)

3. Read Galatians 3:6-25 and 4:21-31. How does Paul use the Old Testament to defend the purity of the gospel of grace?

4. Does the fact that we are saved by grace allow us to exploit grace and live any way we want? What does Galatians 5:13-26 say about this?

V. The Book of II Timothy

1. Turn to the book of II Timothy. This is the last epistle Paul wrote before his death. He wrote to encourage Timothy as he led the church in Ephesus (I Timothy 1:3). Look at the following verses. What 'charge' does Paul give to Timothy to challenge him as a leader?

II Timothy 1:6-8-

II Timothy 1:13-14-

II Timothy 2:1,2-

V. The Book of II Timothy (continued)

1. (continued)

II Timothy 2:8-

II Timothy 2:15-

II Timothy 2:20-22-

II Timothy 3:14-

II Timothy 3:16,17-

II Timothy 4:2-

II Timothy 4:5-

2. As Timothy's spiritual father (Philippians 2:22; II Timothy 2:1) Paul uses his own life as an example to Timothy. What does he remind Timothy to remember from his life?

II Timothy 1:8-12-

II Timothy 1:13-

II Timothy 2:2-

II Timothy 2:10-

II Timothy 3:10-14-

II Timothy 4:6-8-

II Timothy 4:16-18-

3. Look at the three metaphors (II Timothy 2:3-6) Paul uses to describe the reproduction of leaders that he describes in II Timothy 2:1,2. Paul encourages Timothy to reflect on these metaphors (II Timothy 2:7). What is the meaning of each metaphor and how does it apply to raising up leaders who are able to teach others also?

The Soldier (II Timothy 2:3,4)

The Athlete (II Timothy 2:5)

The Farmer (II Timothy 2:6)

The Hebrew Epistles

Hebrews - Revelation

"...these final nine are distinguished from the earlier epistles by their distinctively Hebrew standpoint and atmosphere. Unlike the first nine (Romans to II Thessalonians) which are all addressed to Christian churches, not one of the last nine is so addressed. The first of them is clearly to Hebrews, as the opening words show. The epistle of James is sent to 'the twelve tribes scattered abroad' (James 1:1). Peter's two epistles are to 'sojourners of the dispersion' (I Peter 1:1 and II Peter 3:1). Not all of them so specifically address Jewish readers, but they all carry incidental indications of their Jewish directions." J. Sidlow Baxter

ROMANS
I CORINTHIANS
II CORINTHIANS
GALATIANS
EPHESIANS
PHILIPPIANS
COLOSSIANS
I THESSALONIANS
II THESSALONIANS

Epistles written to
Gentile Christians
by Paul

I TIMOTHY
II TIMOTHY
TITUS
PHILEMON

Epistles written
to Leaders
by Paul

HEBREWS
JAMES
I PETER
II PETER
I JOHN
II JOHN
III JOHN
JUDE
REVELATION

Epistles written to
Hebrew Christians
by James, Peter, John & Jude
(the author of Hebrews is uncertain)

I. The Book of Hebrews

"The epistle to the Romans tells us how a sinner may stand before a righteous God; a sinner may stand before a righteous God; but this epistle to the Hebrews opens up the even more astonishing truth that the justified sinner may approach a God who is in His holiness is 'a consuming fire'. And even more than that, it show how the justified sinner may draw near with utmost confidence, 'having boldness to enter the holiest'! " J. Sidlow Baxter

1. Hebrews was originally written to instruct Hebrew Christians who were tempted to lapse back into Judaism. Its purpose is the exhibit the superiority of the gospel over the old covenant. It does not belittle Judaism, but rather honors it but helping the reader to see Christ as "better (superior)" or the final fulfillment of the old covenant. The keyword is "better (superior)" and is used thirteen times. Look at the following passages and answer the questions.

Who is Jesus better than?

Hebrews 1:4-

Hebrews 3:2,3-

Hebrews 4:8-11-

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:4-6-

I. **The Book of Hebrews (continued)**

1. (continued)

What is better about the new covenant?

Hebrews 8:6-

Hebrews 9:11-14-

Hebrews 9:23-

Hebrews 10:11-18-

What are the better results for those who trust in Jesus?

Hebrews 10:34-

Hebrews 11:16-

Hebrews 11:35-

Hebrews 11:40-

2. Read Hebrews 11. How does the author of Hebrews demonstrate that faith has always been the “better principle”? Which of the people in Hebrews 11 challenges you the most and why? What should be our response to these examples of faith? (Hebrews 12:1-3)

3. Because of the continuous sacrifices for sin offered in the temple (when Hebrews was written) what was important for the Hebrews to recognize about Christ’s superior sacrifice?

Hebrews 7:27

Hebrews 9:12

Hebrews 9:26

Hebrews 9:28

Hebrews 10:10

I. The Book of Hebrews (continued)

4. In light of Christ's superiority and that He ever lives to intercede for us (Hebrews 7:25), the author of Hebrews calls believers to certain responses. What are we to do?

Hebrews 4:1, 11-

Hebrews 4:14-

Hebrews 4:16

Hebrews 10:22-

Hebrews 10:23-

Hebrews 10:24-

Hebrews 12:1-

Hebrews 12:2-

Hebrews 13:13-

Hebrews 13:15-

II. The Book of I Peter

1. Read the book of I Peter. Peter wrote to Jews who were scattered throughout Asia Minor (I Peter 1:1). In I Peter, Peter writes to encourage believers who are suffering for their faith. What kind of encouragement does Peter give them?

I Peter 1:3-5-

I Peter 1:6,7-

I Peter 1:14-17-

I Peter 2:11,12-

I Peter 3:15-

I Peter 4:7,8-

I Peter 4:12-19-

I Peter 5:6,7-

I Peter 5:8,9-

2. As part of their suffering there is loss of material possessions and more severely a loss of relationships. Peter exhorts them to focus on blessings they have received in Christ that cannot be taken away. What are those blessings?

I Peter 1:4-

I Peter 1:18,19-

I Peter 1:23-

I Peter 2:4, 6, 7-

I Peter 3:4-

III. The Book of I John

1. The book of I John is a book of recurrent ideas rather than hard fast divisions. Read through I John and write down the references of passages which relate to the themes listed below. What insight on these themes do you gain?

Christian love:

Traits of true believers:

Knowing truth from error:

The believer and the world:

2. John was called the “apostle of love” but he was also known for his straightforward view of issues. He saw strong contrasts between right and wrong. Look at the following passages, what is John contrasting?

I John 1:5-2:11-

I John 2:12-17

I John 2:18-28-

I John 2:29-3:24-

I John 4:1-6-

I John 4:7-21-

3. John wrote to counter a heresy called ‘Gnosticism’ that was infiltrating the churches. Gnostics believed they were an elite group of people that had attained special spiritual knowledge not available to everyone. What does John tell us in his letter that every believer can know?

I John 2:3-

I John 2:5-

I John 2:20,21-

I John 2:29-

I John 3:2-

I John 3:5-

III. The Book of I John (continued)

3. (continued)

I John 3:10-
I John 3:14-
I John 3:16-
I John 3:24-
I John 4:13-
I John 4:16-
I John 5:2-
I John 5:13-
I John 5:15-
I John 5:18,19-
I John 5:20-

IV. The Book of Revelation

1. Read Revelation 1:9-20. What was John's response to seeing the Son of Man? From Revelation 1:19 what was John told to do?

2. In Revelation 2,3 are letters to seven churches in Asia (Revelation 1:4). Pick one of the letters to these churches. What is Christ's message to that church? What are they commended for? Are they corrected for anything? What are they challenged to do? Are rewards promised?

III. The Book of Revelation (continued)

3. Read Revelation 4,5. How is Christ exalted in heaven and for what reason?

Revelation 4:8-11-

Revelation 5:9,10-

4. Look at the chart below and observe the repetition of prophecies between chapters 6-11 and chapters 12-19.

Chapters 6-11	Chapters 12-19
Chapter 6 The seven seals	Chapters 12,13 The seven persons
Chapter 7 Parenthetical (1) Israel remnant sealed (2) Blessedness of saints in heaven	Chapter 14 Parenthetical (1) Israel remnant sealed (2) Blessedness of the saints
Chapters 8,9 SEVEN TRUMPETS 1. On the earth 2. On the sea 3. On the rivers 4. Sun, moon, stars 5. Darkness, scourge 6. Euphrates, army 7. "Nations angry" "Wrath"; "Great voices"; "Time no more"	Chapters 15,16 SEVEN VIALS 1. On the earth 2. On the sea 3. On the rivers 4. Sun 5. Darkness, scourge 6. Euphrates, kings 7. "Nations fell" "Wrath"; "Voices"; "Thunderings"; "It is done."
Chapters 10,11 Parenthetical: Jerusalem in the "Great Tribulation"	Chapters 17,18 Parenthetical: Babylon in "Wrath of God"
Revelation 11:15 End of seventh trumpet 1. "Kingdom of the Lord" 2. The 24 elders worship 3. "Wrath" is come.	Chapter 19 After seventh vial 1. "Lord God reigneth" 2. The 24 elders worship 3. "Armageddon"

III. The Book of Revelation (continued)

5. What does Revelation 20 will be the final judgment of Satan and wicked mankind?

6. How is the new heaven and new earth described?

7. What is the picture we get of Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation?



Final Thoughts **Genesis - Revelation**

1. Look back over your notes from the entire Bible study. What are the key lessons/truths that you gained from this study that you want to remember?

2. Of what value has it been for you to overview the whole Bible? What have been the benefits for you?

Final Thoughts

Genesis - Revelation

3. What applications have you made from this study? Are there any you need to make in the future?
4. In what new ways have you seen Jesus Christ in this study? Do you remember any times where your heart burned within you (like the disciples on the road to Emmaus - Luke 24:32) as you discovered a new insight about Jesus?
5. What do you want to pray for yourself and for others as a result of this study?