

ACTS AND ROMANS

TMBC Course #10



Student Workbook

The Acts of the Risen Christ

Chapter One

Audio lesson: New Testament 31



Objective: To introduce the book of Acts and the promise of the Holy Spirit.



Then Jesus came to them and said: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20

“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

The Book of Acts is the history book of the New Testament church. It connects the four Gospels to the letters of Paul and gives us much of the story behind the other New Testament writings. This book begins the same way the four Gospels end: with the Great Commission. In the Great Commission, Jesus told His disciples to “make disciples,” and in order to do that, they would have to go, preach, baptize, and teach. In the book of Acts, this is exactly what we see the disciples doing. It is the story of the Great Commission beginning to be fulfilled.

Chapter 2 describes the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. This was one of the most important events in the history of the people of God because the church simply cannot fulfill its purpose without the power of the Holy Spirit. This is also true for us as individuals. When we attempt to make a disciple for Jesus Christ, we are attempting the impossible without the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Book of Acts is the history of very ordinary people doing very extraordinary things because they are anointed and filled with the Holy Spirit of God. That same God, that same power, is available to us to do His work today.

1. True or false? The author of the book of Acts was Luke, a doctor, and he also wrote the third Gospel.
2. True or false? The Book of Acts begins where the Gospels end, with the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.
3. True or false? Because the Book of Acts is a book of history, it is not very important for us to study today.



4. True or false? The stories in the book of Acts are all neatly resolved, showing that the works of the early church had concluded and its era had come to an end.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. What other titles have people suggested for the book of Acts?
- The Acts of the Apostles
 - The Acts of the Holy Spirit
 - The Acts of the Risen Lord
 - All of the above.
6. What was God's purpose in giving us history books like the book of Acts?
- Only to give us examples to follow
 - Only to give us warnings to heed
 - To give us both examples and warnings
 - Only to give us entertaining stories
7. According to the book of Acts what is the purpose of the church?
- To go and tell other people about the gospel
 - To make disciples of those who believe the gospel
 - To baptize them once they have believed the gospel
 - To teach them to obey all of Jesus Christ's commands
 - All of the above
8. What promise were the disciples told to wait for in Jerusalem?
- The return of Jesus
 - The coming of the Holy Spirit in power
 - The fulfillment of the Great Commission
 - The completion of their education

9. Why did Luke not end the story of the book of Acts?
- a. He ran out of paper.
 - b. The Church is still writing its own history today.
 - c. He died before he finished writing.
 - d. He wrote the ending, but parts of the book were lost throughout history.
10. How many decided to follow Jesus as their Lord because of Peter's first message?
- a. About 3,000
 - b. Everyone who was there
 - c. Almost no one because they were all afraid
 - d. Luke does not tell us how many
11. What was the significance of the Feast of Pentecost?
- a. It was a celebration of the harvest.
 - b. It was a memorial to Jewish martyrs.
 - c. It was a celebration of the Exodus, God's deliverance of the Jews from Egypt.
 - d. It was simply a day for Jews to take time off from work.
12. Why was this an appropriate and symbolic time for the Holy Spirit to come?
- a. It represents the fact that we do not have to do any work anymore; the Great Commission is all up to God's power.
 - b. It kept the Spirit's presence a secret from the Jewish leaders since so many of them were out of town for the holiday.
 - c. It represents the Spirit's power working through us to harvest souls and fulfill the Great Commission.
 - d. It represents the last of God's great works among humanity.
13. What did the miraculous signs of Pentecost mean?
- a. They were a pattern that we must duplicate again and again.
 - b. They signified that only the apostles could have access to supernatural power.
 - c. They teach us that we can only encounter God in a very emotional experience.
 - d. They were a prophecy to those who heard, as well as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.



In what ways can the Holy Spirit help you know God and fulfill His purposes? Have you asked God for this gift of being empowered by His Spirit? If not, would you consider asking Him to empower you for His purposes now?



week.

Thank God that He has come to His people in power and that He is still working through the church today. Ask Him to continue to empower you through His Spirit, and ask Him to give you opportunities to help fulfill the Great Commission this



Going Deeper

1. For what did Jesus instruct His followers to wait before they began to obey His Great Commission? _____

2. What is the significance of the fact that the book of Acts begins with the Great Commission and all four Gospels end with that same Commission? _____

3. How did the apostles know they were to teach those who professed to be disciples of Jesus? _____

4. When you decide to personally obey the Great Commission, what four specific commands of Jesus are you to obey? (Consider Matthew 28: 18-20) _____

5. How long does it take to teach a newly-professed disciple all the things that Jesus commanded the apostles to observe while they were following Him every day for three years? _____

6. Generally speaking, is the Church of Jesus Christ obeying these four commandments of Jesus today? _____

7. Thinking specifically, have you ever taken the Great Commission of Jesus seriously enough to personally obey that commission yourself? Do you agree with this statement of a devout missionary statesman: "The Great Commission is the Charter of the Church and like any other organization the Church must fulfill the terms of its charter or it should cease and desist"? _____

The Visible Fingerprints of the Invisible Church

Chapter Two

Audio lesson: New Testament 32



Objective: To understand how the invisible universal church is expressed in the local visible church.



They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

—Acts 2:42

The second chapter of Acts begins by describing the Day of Pentecost, which was the birthday of the church. On that day, the risen Christ began to build the church in order to evangelize the world with Him and for Him. Anytime the Holy Spirit came upon people in the book of Acts, it was always related to the purpose given to the church in the Great Commission: for them to be Jesus' witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

As you study the book of Acts, observe the patterns that emerge in the first generation of the church. These are "the visible fingerprints of the Invisible church." The fellowship of believers each of us belongs to in a community is to be a local, visible expression of the invisible, universal Church the risen Christ is building in this world. Just as our fingerprints can identify where we have been and what we have touched, the church can be identified by "fingerprints." In Acts, the church was known by several fingerprints—evidence that God's Spirit was at work. These include evangelism, teaching, fellowship, worship, prayer, unity, diversity, plurality of leaders, empathy (or love), and equality. These also measure the health of a church today. When we see these characteristics in our churches, we can measure the degree to which our church is a visible expression of the universal church Jesus is building.

1. True or false? All Christians have the same spiritual gifts.
2. True or false? Everyone who is born again is a member of the invisible, universal church.
3. True or false? The church is really the church when it is reaching out and evangelizing.
4. True or false? When the Holy Spirit lives inside of a person, that person does not need to be taught anymore.
5. True or false? It is impossible to have diversity and unity in the same group of people.



Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

6. Why did the apostles appoint people to fulfill some of the practical needs of the church?
 - a. They were too important to do common labor.
 - b. They were not concerned for the physical needs of people.
 - c. They needed to devote themselves to the Word of God and to prayer.
 - d. They had to isolate themselves from other people in order to keep themselves pure.

7. Which of the following are the “fingerprints” of the invisible church in its visible expression? (choose all that apply)
 - a. Dramatic miracles
 - b. Fellowship
 - c. Prayer
 - d. Wealth
 - e. Empathy, or love
 - f. A large church building
 - g. Worship
 - h. Professional ministers
 - i. Unity
 - j. Diversity
 - k. Evangelism
 - l. Long pilgrimages
 - m. Extreme self-denial
 - n. Plurality
 - o. Equality
 - p. Tolerance for all paths to God
 - q. Poverty
 - r. Teaching

8. Why is evangelism an important ministry of the church?
- Bringing people to Christ is part of the Great Commission.
 - The church needs to grow in order to influence society.
 - The church needs to grow in order to receive more donations.
 - It is important for Christians to outnumber people of other religions.
9. What should the church do for those who receive the gospel and join the congregation?
- Nothing—they have all they need.
 - Teach them and help them grow as disciples.
 - Require them to donate their entire income to the church.
 - Test them for at least a year before accepting them into the church to see if their faith is genuine.
10. Which of the following is true of the early believers in Acts?
- They all spoke the same language and looked alike.
 - They were all from Jerusalem.
 - They all believed exactly the same things.
 - They were very diverse but united in their faith in Jesus.
11. Who is responsible for ministry in the church?
- Only one pastor
 - Only those who are paid for their work
 - Everyone—multiple pastors and elders as well as common members
 - Only those who prove they know the scriptures extremely well
12. How are the members of the church related to each other?
- We are all members of one body.
 - We are required to live in the same community.
 - We are commanded to serve the pastor together.
 - We are related only by similar beliefs but have no other bond.



Which “fingerprints” of the church do you see most clearly in the Christians you know? Which ones are the most difficult for human beings to fulfill without the Spirit’s power? How does the Holy Spirit help us fulfill the Great Commission and serve others with our spiritual gifts? In what ways can you serve God in your local church?



Thank God for the visible expression of the body of Christ—the church. Thank Him for choosing to come to people who will love and serve Him. Ask Him to give you opportunities to minister to Him and to others by the power of His Spirit. Ask Him especially to help you share the good news of Jesus with others.



Going Deeper

1. Relate the importance of small groups as a context in which to apply many of the fingerprints mentioned in this commentary on the book of Acts – especially fellowship. _____

2. Why is it that we must maintain our diversity while achieving and experiencing unity? _____

3. Why should the diversity of individuals in the Church be celebrated rather than resolved? _____

4. Since the Greek word for pastor is always in the plural when we read about the New Testament Church, what would it take to have a plurality of pastors in our churches today? _____

5. When we think of the ring fingerprint of empathy on the left hand of the Church, how might we relate that to the ring fingerprint of worship on the right hand of a Biblical Church? _____

6. Jesus gave a New Commandment as He was finishing His three years with the apostles (John 13: 34, 35). How can you relate this statement to that commandment: “The best way to reach out is to reach in”? _____

7. According to Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, who was responsible for all the signs and wonders and the thousands of conversions in response to his sermon? _____

The Visible Patterns of the Invisible Church

Chapter Three

Audio lesson: New Testament 33



Objective: To understand the patterns of the early church as it faced many opportunities and confronted many challenges



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.

—Acts 4:31-33

In Acts we see the history of the first century church unfolded with its purpose, promise, power, performance, and preaching. The church faced persecution from outside, and deception and temptation from within. As God's Spirit worked among them, we can see patterns to follow and problems to avoid in our churches today.

Some of the patterns of the church include selfless and generous giving, civil disobedience when human authorities contradict God's instructions, church discipline against impurity, the use of spiritual gifts, martyrdom, refusing to use the Spirit for personal gain, and healing. God used all of these patterns to teach His people and to further His purposes in fulfilling the Great Commission. He continues to do so through people and churches that allow His Spirit to work in them freely.



1. True or false? The Bible teaches that Christians should not own anything.
2. True or false? God urges His people to disobey the government at all times.
3. True or false? Peter and John disobeyed the civil authorities only when those authorities contradicted God's will.
4. True or false? There is no difference between pastoral and practical spiritual gifts.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. Why were the believers in Acts so generous?
 - a. The Spirit filled them with a desire to give and help each other.
 - b. They wanted to earn God's favor.
 - c. They were extremely wealthy.
 - d. Giving was a requirement for church membership.
6. Why did God discipline Ananias and Sapphira?
 - a. They lied to God and to the apostles.
 - b. They tried to deceive the apostles and the church.
 - c. They were greedy.
 - d. All of the above
7. What does it mean to be "holy"?
 - a. You will no longer sin.
 - b. You no longer associate with common people.
 - c. You are set apart for God.
 - d. You are supernaturally enlightened.
8. Which of the following spiritual gifts are pastoral? (choose all that apply)
 - a. Counseling
 - b. Teaching
 - c. Administration
 - d. Serving food
9. What should a pastor's normal responsibilities include?
 - a. Managing the church's finances
 - b. Organizing the church's administration
 - c. Cleaning the church's meeting place
 - d. Spending time in God's Word and praying
10. What effect does persecution have on the church?
 - a. It threatens the church's survival.
 - b. It prunes the church and helps it grow.
 - c. It causes the church to disbelieve God.
 - d. It has no effect.

11. Why did Peter rebuke Simon the sorcerer?
- Peter felt threatened because Simon had so much power.
 - Simon tried to cast a spell on Peter.
 - Simon thought he could buy the Spirit's power and use it to make money.
 - Simon openly opposed God.
12. How do miracles of healing in Acts compare to Jesus' ministry in the gospels?
- Just as Jesus did many healings, so did His followers in the book of Acts.
 - Jesus healed many, but His followers did not have that gift.
 - Jesus did not do many healings, but the Holy Spirit empowered His followers to do them.
 - Neither Jesus nor His followers did many healings.
13. When Peter and John healed the lame man at the temple, what did that miracle accomplish for them?
- It made them famous.
 - It began a great persecution in the church.
 - It became a greater opportunity for them to preach the gospel.
 - No one really noticed the miracle.
14. Which of the following are patterns of the church in Acts?
- Giving
 - Establishing isolated communities
 - Healing
 - Spiritual gifts
 - Casual attitude toward sin
 - Civil disobedience
 - Using the Holy Spirit selfishly
 - Refusing to profit from the Spirit's power
 - Church discipline
 - Martyrdom
 - Hostility toward outsiders



Which of the New Testament patterns of the church do you see in churches today? How do you see God using those patterns for His glory? In what ways do these patterns challenge or encourage you to know Him better?



Thank God for working powerfully through His people to establish His purposes in the earth. Ask Him to use you powerfully in His plans, to teach you His ways, to give you opportunities to use your spiritual gifts, and to help you live completely for Him.



Going Deeper

1. How does the fact that, immediately after Pentecost the believers did not want to own anything, relate to holiness? _____

2. What is the difference between a pastoral spiritual gift pattern and a practical spiritual gift pattern? _____

3. With what specific responsibility were the first deacons commissioned by the apostles, which greatly blessed the power and effectiveness of the church? Should we implement and apply that principle in our churches today? _____

4. Relate the way persecution scattered the church to the Great Commission, with which the book begins. _____

5. When and only when should a devout follower of Jesus disobey the civil government? _____

6. To what degree and in what ways should the church today practice church discipline, as taught in principle by the case of Ananias and Sapphira? _____

7. How can you take your own personal spiritual gift inventory and then use your spiritual gift pattern in the church of which you are a part? _____

Patterns of Pentecost

Chapter Four

Audio lesson: New Testament 34



Objective: To understand the message of Stephen and to introduce the ministry of Saul, also known as Paul.



Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

—Acts 7:55-56

After the appointing of the first deacons in chapter six, we read about Stephen's arrest, his stunning sermon to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, and his death. After he masterfully summarized the Old Testament and accused the religious leaders of rejecting Moses, the prophets, and now Jesus, they stoned him to death.

Two important things occurred after the death of Stephen. God used the death of Stephen to impact Saul, a Pharisee who would later become the greatest missionary, apostle, and Christian teacher; and He used the persecution of Christians to scatter them and take the gospel to the regions beyond Jerusalem.

The book of Acts is really a "perpetual Pentecost" that results in the Great Commission being fulfilled through the early church's obedience. The gospel continued to spread through the Spirit's power as Christians scattered, taught, and followed His leading.



1. True or false? The book of Acts is a “perpetual Pentecost.”
2. True or false? Nearly everything in the book of Acts is somehow related to the Great Commission.
3. True or false? Stephen was very practical and had almost no pastoral gifts.
4. True or false? The power of the Spirit was on Stephen as he preached his sermon.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. What is the primary power behind biblical preaching?
 - a. The years of study by the preacher
 - b. The professional skills of the preacher
 - c. The gift of the Holy Spirit
 - d. The size and interest of the audience
6. What did Stephen talk about in his sermon? (choose all that apply)
 - a. The story of the entire Old Testament
 - b. The importance of keeping all of the Old Testament laws
 - c. How the world will end and when Jesus is coming back
 - d. The fact that Jesus was the Messiah whom the religious leaders rejected
7. How did the religious leaders respond to Stephen’s message?
 - a. They were very angry and stoned him to death.
 - b. They laughed at him and walked away.
 - c. They put him in prison.
 - d. They agreed with him and repented of their sins.
8. What is Saul doing when he is introduced in the book of Acts?
 - a. Defending Stephen
 - b. Approving those who stoned Stephen and holding their coats
 - c. Listening to the teaching of the apostles
 - d. Sitting in a Roman prison for preaching the gospel
9. What did Saul do soon after Stephen was killed?
 - a. He repented of his sins and was baptized.
 - b. He had a meal with the apostles and discussed the Christian faith.
 - c. He blamed all of his friends for treating Stephen too harshly.
 - d. He zealously persecuted Christians.
10. What did Saul (or Paul) do soon after he met the risen Christ?
 - a. He immediately went to the apostles to explain what happened.
 - b. He hid in fear of the Jewish leaders.
 - c. He went to Arabia and spent time with Jesus.
 - d. He went on a mission trip to preach the good news and start churches.

11. How long did Paul spend preparing for his ministry?

- a. Three years
- b. Four years
- c. Fourteen years
- d. All of the above are possible. Scholars do not agree, but it was at least three years.



Stephen gave his life to preach the truth. How much would you give up to follow God? What sacrifices do you think God wants you to be willing to make as you serve Him?

Paul was a very unlikely convert to faith in Jesus. What does his conversion tell us about God's power to save? What does his ministry tell us about the kind of people God chooses to serve Him? What "unlikely" person can you be praying for?



Thank God for those who serve Him sacrificially and zealously. Thank Him for His power to save even the most unlikely people. Pray specifically for those who are opposed to Jesus and ask God to show them the truth and save them. Ask Him to stir up your zeal to serve Him sacrificially.



Going Deeper

1. How does the martyrdom of Stephen relate to the great verse written by the Apostle Paul (Romans 8:28), in which Paul writes that all things fit into a pattern for good if we love God and are called according to His plan? _____

2. How can you relate the Pentecost of Acts Chapter Two with the Pentecosts in Samaria (chapter 8), at the beginning of Paul's ministry in Ephesus (chapter 19), and in the ministry of Peter at the home of the Roman Centurion, Cornelius (chapter 10)? _____

3. Even though those Pentecosts may have been unique in details, how do they relate in principle to the Pentecosts that we need as we seek to spread the Gospel to the world? _____

4. Can we obey and implement the Great Commission without Pentecostal power? Explain. _____

5. Do you believe it is possible and in fact, absolutely necessary, for you to have a personal Pentecost? Explain. _____

6. In what ways did Jesus show us how to seek a personal Pentecost in Luke 11: 9-13? _____

7. Is it truly, actually possible for us to live out the life and ministry to which we are called as followers of Jesus Christ without a personal Pentecost? _____

How to Make a Disciple

Chapter Five

Audio lesson: New Testament 35



Objective: To understand how God uses His disciples to make other disciples.



Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

—Acts 10:34-35

Two stories in the book of Acts show us how God makes disciples. In one story, the Holy Spirit led Philip to go to the desert and share the good news with an Ethiopian official. The Ethiopian had been reading a prophecy of the Messiah in Isaiah but did not understand it. Philip shared the truth with him and, when the Ethiopian believed in Jesus, Philip baptized him. In the other story, God gave visions to Peter and Cornelius in order to help them overcome their prejudices, so Gentiles could hear the gospel just as Jews did. When Peter explained the truth about Jesus to Cornelius and his household, the Holy Spirit came upon these Gentiles just as He had done on the day of Pentecost.

In these stories about Philip and Peter, we find a formula that shows us how to make a disciple. These inspired examples show us how the Holy Spirit must be working through the Word of God and in the lives of the lost person and the disciple-maker. When the Word of God is received in a heart of faith, a spiritual conception takes place. We can play an important part in making disciples as we share God's Word with people and as He works in their hearts to help them understand and receive it.



1. True or false? The Holy Spirit overcame people's prejudice several times in the book of Acts.
2. True or false? Peter refused to go to the home of a Gentile, even after God told him to do so.
3. True or false? Peter allowed Cornelius to bow down to him because Peter was a representative of God.
4. True or false? The Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles in Cornelius' home even before Peter finished speaking.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. What was the meaning of Peter's vision of the sheet with the unclean animals in it?
 - a. The gospel is meant for the animal kingdom as well as for human beings.
 - b. God did not care anymore about one's diet.
 - c. We should never consider any human being to be unclean.
 - d. Peter was under a lot of stress and should get more sleep.
6. What social boundary did the gospel cross when Peter preached in Cornelius' household?
 - a. The line between military people and civilians
 - b. The line between Jews and Gentiles
 - c. The line between different age groups
 - d. The line between people of different skin colors
7. Why did Philip go to Gaza to speak to the Ethiopian?
 - a. He preferred to work in isolated places.
 - b. The Holy Spirit told him to do it.
 - c. He knew the Ethiopian's travel plans and decided to be there.
 - d. It happened completely by chance.
8. What is the most important aspect of baptism?
 - a. The mode—whether a person is immersed or sprinkled
 - b. The place where it occurs
 - c. The words spoken before, during, and after
 - d. The meaning of the event and the person's faith
9. Which of the following is a good description of baptism?
 - a. A spiritual wedding ceremony
 - b. A private, internal attitude
 - c. An unnecessary attempt to prove one's spirituality
 - d. A rigid, detailed ritual that must be done perfectly

10. What does baptism accomplish?
- a. It saves us from our sins. We cannot be saved without being baptized.
 - b. It proves that we are sincere.
 - c. It is a public confession of our faith.
 - d. It shows everyone how spiritually mature we are.
11. Which of the following are vital resources for making a disciple?
- a. The Word of God
 - b. The Spirit of God
 - c. A servant of God
 - d. All of the above
12. In whom must the Holy Spirit work in order to make a disciple?
- a. In the person who shares his or her faith
 - b. In the person who hears the Word and receives it
 - c. Both the one who shares the Word and the one who hears it
 - d. Neither—it is entirely an intellectual decision



Have you ever asked God to use you to help make a disciple? If not, why not? How might God want to use you to help fulfill the Great Commission? In what ways would you need to be empowered to do so?



Thank God for the people who have shared the good news of salvation with you. Thank God for the empowerment and spiritual gifts He gives to each of us. Ask Him to help you grow as a disciple and to lead you to people with whom you can share your faith.



Going Deeper

1. How did the decision of Paul to move into Europe rather than Asia impact church and secular history? _____

2. The first two chapters of Galatians inform us that Paul spent somewhere between three and fourteen years in Arabia with the risen Christ before he consulted with the apostles and began his dynamic missionary ministry. How do you believe Paul was able to convince the men that he was as much an apostle as they were? _____

3. How do we apply what we learn about divine guidance from the reality that God told Ananias an overview of His will for the life of Paul but only gave Paul one directive? _____

4. How are we to apply what we learn about divine guidance from the reality that the Apostle Paul saw a man in his Macedonian call/vision, but when he arrived in Philippi he found a prayer meeting made up solely of women? _____

5. How do we apply the reality that, beginning with what God gave him, Paul opened the Word, the Holy Spirit opened the heart of Lydia and she opened her house, which became Paul's favorite and most important sending church? _____

6. What does it mean to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and know that you and your house will be saved? _____

7. What was different about Paul's strategy and preaching in Athens and Corinth? Why do you think he changed?

The Personal Pentecost of Paul

Chapter Six

Audio lesson: New Testament 36



Objective: To learn about Paul's encounter with Jesus and understand the mission God called him to fulfill.



"I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

—Acts 26:16-18

Saul, also known as Paul, had an unusual encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. We cannot explain this apostle apart from that experience. It was the turning point in his life that shaped his future and the future of the church. This experience is described several times in the book of Acts, twice by Paul when he was on trial.

Paul had been a Christ-hater and had been persecuting Christians, but when Jesus appeared to him, the Lord asked, "Why are you persecuting me?" Paul did not even know who he was talking to, so he asked, "Who are you, Lord?" In this conversion experience, the wildness of Saul was transformed to the "tame" of Paul. Paul accepted the control of the Lord's "bit and bridle." He became a different man who was humble and teachable.

Later in Paul's letters, he would explain all that God has done for us in giving us salvation through Jesus. But when he first met Jesus, his question was not, "What are you going to do for me?" He asked, "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

After his experience on the Damascus road, Paul was led to a man named Ananias who would baptize him. God showed Ananias his future plans for Paul—that he would be a chosen instrument to take the gospel first to Jews and then to Gentiles and their kings. When Ananias learned that this enemy of the church had been converted, he considered Paul a brother because he understood the power of the gospel: that the grace of God changes lives.

1. True or false? When Saul first appears in the book of Acts, he is a Christ-hater and an enemy of the church.
2. True or false? Saul's conversion was based entirely on an intellectual understanding of the gospel, not on experience.
3. True or false? Jesus accused Saul of persecuting Him, not just the church.

4. True or false? Saul's anger against the church was a sign that the Holy Spirit was not working in him at all.



Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. How did Jesus respond to Saul's hatred of Him?
 - a. He vowed never to let Saul into His kingdom.
 - b. He punished Saul by making him sick.
 - c. He protected His followers from Saul so that no believer would ever suffer because of him.
 - d. He appeared to Saul in order to convince him of truth and call him to ministry.
6. What question did Jesus ask Saul?
 - a. "Why are you persecuting me?"
 - b. "Why are you so zealous?"
 - c. "How long have you been traveling on this road?"
 - d. "Would you consider volunteering for a mission?"
7. What question did Saul ask Jesus?
 - a. "How did the resurrection actually happen?"
 - b. "Who are you, Lord?"
 - c. "What does the parable of the Prodigal Son mean?"
 - d. "What is heaven like?"
8. What is most important about someone's "personal Pentecost"—their encounter with God?
 - a. How they made it happen
 - b. The details of the experience
 - c. The results of the experience
 - d. Whether other people approve of their experience

9. Why should we do good works?
- a. In order to impress others
 - b. In order to be saved
 - c. Because we are saved
 - d. We should not do good works at all because salvation comes by faith.
10. What happened to Paul's values when he met Jesus?
- a. They turned upside down so that what he once valued became unimportant and what he did not value became extremely important.
 - b. Jesus became his highest value, but everything else stayed the same.
 - c. They did not change at all.
 - d. He began to value his heritage and his credentials even more.
11. What did God show Ananias to convince him to baptize Paul?
- a. All of Ananias' past sins, to remind him of his obligation to God
 - b. The angels who would be protecting Ananias from Paul's threats
 - c. The punishment Ananias would receive if he did not obey
 - d. God's future plans for Paul



Have you, like Paul, ever asked this question: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" If so, how has God responded to your question? If not, is there any reason you would not ask Him now?



Thank God that He has a plan for your life. Ask Him what He wants you to do in order to fulfill His purpose for your life. Pray that He would bear much fruit through your life as you serve Him.



Going Deeper

1. What do you think about, and how are you to personally apply, the *road to Damascus experience* of Paul? _____

2. Since the most important part of a spiritual experience is the results of the experience rather than its details, what were the results of Paul's experience and how are we to apply them to ourselves? _____

3. While you are answering this second question, how do you personally apply the passage in Philippians 3: 7-17, where Paul describes this experience in terms of the results of this experience? _____

4. What is the application for us from the reality that Saul of Tarsus seemed to be the hard case and the most impossible person to be converted to Christ, yet he was arguably the greatest missionary of the church? _____

5. Since we cannot explain all of the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul apart from the word experience, by application do you believe in experiential Christianity? _____

6. Have you had any experiences on your faith journey, do you seek experiences, and how do you seek them? _____

7. Jesus taught us to ask, seek and knock our way through to knowing God. What does the example of the Apostle Paul teach us about knowing God? _____

The Patterns of Pentecost

Plant the Church

Chapter Seven

Audio lesson: New Testament 37



Objective: To learn from Paul's example as he planted churches.



“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

—Acts 16:31

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

—Romans 1:16

Many people found it hard to believe that Saul, the persecutor of the church, had been saved—especially Ananias, whom the Lord commanded to heal and baptize him. Paul immediately began to witness in Damascus that Jesus was the Christ. This began the ministry of the most influential Christian in the New Testament.

According to Galatians chapter one, Paul spent several years with Jesus in Arabia, learning what he later wrote in his letters. Then Paul met with the other apostles and began his church planting ministry to the Gentiles. Paul began his missionary career with Barnabas, and they spread the gospel in the Mediterranean area. His plans to go into Asia were redirected by the Holy Spirit, so he went into Europe instead. As a result, he met Lydia and used her home as his base to reach out to the Philippians with the gospel. The city of Philippi was turned upside down, but not before Paul cast a demon out of a fortune-telling girl and was arrested, whipped, imprisoned, and then set free through supernatural events.

Despite his fondness for Philippi, Paul continued his journey spreading the gospel to Athens and Corinth and laid the foundation for the church to continue fulfilling the Great Commission.

1. True or false? When God first told Ananias about Saul's conversion, Ananias was afraid.
2. True or false? When Saul (Paul) encountered Jesus on the Damascus road, Jesus showed Saul the whole plan for his life.
3. True or false? Saul never consulted with the other apostles at any point in his life.
4. True or false? Paul only preached the gospel to Jews, never to Gentiles.



5. True or false? If Paul had not gone into Europe instead of Asia, history would have unfolded very differently.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

6. Why are Paul's letters important?
 - a. They help us understand history.
 - b. They show us how to deal with problems that confront the church and the spread of the gospel.
 - c. They show us how perfect the church is.
 - d. They give us detailed prophecies of the end times.
7. What did Paul find when he first arrived in Philippi?
 - a. A large synagogue where he preached to Jewish men
 - b. A Roman temple where he preached to Gentiles
 - c. A small gathering of Jewish women by a river
 - d. An angry mob that wanted to stone him
8. Why was Lydia significant?
 - a. She is one of the first women to be highlighted in Acts.
 - b. Her home became Paul's base in Philippi.
 - c. Her home became the first house church in Europe.
 - d. All of the above
9. What did Paul and Silas do when they were in prison in Philippi?
 - a. They sent for a lawyer to help them get out.
 - b. They plotted an escape.
 - c. They worshiped and sang hymns to God.
 - d. They lost hope because God had not protected them.

10. What does it mean to “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ”?
- a. Simply to believe that Jesus existed
 - b. To believe that Jesus is the Messiah and that He is Lord, and to commit to Him
 - c. To intellectually understand every detail of the gospel
 - d. To agree with other Christians
11. What did Paul think about the Philippian church?
- a. It was probably his favorite church.
 - b. He grieved over how many problems the church had.
 - c. He was angry at the Philippians’ stubbornness.
 - d. He thought they should have done more to keep him out of prison.
12. What was the theme of Paul’s letter to the Athenians?
- a. The truth of Greek philosophy
 - b. The simple truth of the gospel
 - c. His love for the church in Athens
 - d. None of the above; he did not write a letter to the Athenians.



How does God want us to respond when we hear His Word? Have you found it easy to accept His Word as truth? Why or why not?

Have you chosen “to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”? If so, how has your life changed by following Him as your Lord? If not, how do you think your life would change if you believed and followed Him? Would you consider making a commitment to Him now?



Thank God that we can worship Him even in the most difficult circumstances, like Paul and Silas when they were in prison, because He is always with us and caring for us. Ask Him to help you worship Him today, even if you are going through a difficult time. Ask Him for His comfort and for Him to use your circumstances as a testimony to Him and to help spread the gospel.



Going Deeper

1. How did the Lord overcome the prejudice of Peter so that He could use Peter to reach the first Gentiles in the home of Cornelius, the Roman centurion? _____

2. How should we relate to and apply this experience of Peter with these Gentiles and the vision he had of a sheet with unclean animals on it? _____

3. Do you have any prejudice about people that convinces you that you should not present the Gospel to them? What might they be? _____

4. Describe and explain a three-link chain that exists between God and a lost person. _____

5. Why did water baptism play such an important role in the ministries of the apostles? What were the significance, the meaning, and the purpose of their baptizing those who professed to have become disciples of Jesus? (Consider Matthew 28: 18-20) _____

6. How are we to apply the Holy Spirit's leading of Phillip to leave a fruitful evangelistic crusade among the Samaritans and go out into a desert to reach one man from Ethiopia? _____

7. How are we to apply what we understand when we summarize and paraphrase the defense of Peter before the Jewish Church leaders in chapters 11 and 12, concerning why he entered a Gentile home of one of their Roman enemies and proclaimed the Gospel? _____

The Preaching of Paul

Chapter Eight

Audio lesson: New Testament 38



Objective: To understand Paul's preaching and how he conducted his ministry.



I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

—Acts 20:24

Some scholars think Paul was ineffective in Athens because he tried to be too clever with his sermons and only a few people believed. Others think he was brilliant in how he used their culture to relate the gospel to them without being offensive. Either way, he seems to have learned a great deal, because at his next stop, in Corinth, he decided simply to announce good news that Jesus had died for our sins and was raised from the dead.

Later, Paul stopped in Miletus to say goodbye to the leaders of the church at Ephesus, where he had ministered for more than three years. He knew he would never see them again and that suffering awaited him in Jerusalem, but he was convinced that God wanted him to go. His heartfelt words to the Ephesian leaders show Paul's compassion and his integrity in the way he conducted his ministry.

Paul longed to share the gospel with everyone he met because he loved them, especially his own people, the Jews. In Jerusalem, he went to the temple to demonstrate that he was not opposed to the law of Moses, as some people claimed. But while he was there, the crowd was stirred up against him. Even then, Paul used the opportunity to proclaim his message. He did all things for the sake of the gospel.

1. True or false? Paul had a very fruitful ministry in Athens.
2. True or false? There were many idols in the city of Athens.
3. True or false? After his experience in Athens, Paul's normal approach was simply to announce the gospel.
4. True or false? The primary message of the gospel is that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead.



Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. How did the people of Athens respond to Paul's claim that Jesus had risen from the dead?
 - a. They enthusiastically believed the message.
 - b. Many believed and many wanted to hear more.
 - c. Some wanted to hear more, but many others mocked him.
 - d. They dragged him out of the city and tried to stone him.
6. How long did Paul spend in Ephesus?
 - a. Only a few days
 - b. About six months
 - c. The same as he spent in Corinth
 - d. Three and a half years
7. Who did Paul meet with in Miletus on his way to Jerusalem?
 - a. Lydia, Timothy, and the Philippian jailer
 - b. Some philosophers from Athens
 - c. A Roman emperor
 - d. Some pastors and leaders from the Ephesian church
8. What awaited Paul in Jerusalem?
 - a. Bondage and suffering
 - b. A welcome celebration
 - c. A council of apostles who wanted to correct him
 - d. Another opportunity to start a church
9. How was Paul supported while he was in Ephesus?
 - a. The Ephesian church hired him as their pastor.
 - b. He worked hard, often making tents, so he would not be a liability to them.
 - c. The Corinthian church kept sending money to him.
 - d. God miraculously fed him with manna from heaven.

10. How did Paul respond when the Christian leaders in Jerusalem asked him to show that he had not rejected the law of Moses?

- a. He agreed to do so and went to the temple with some men who were making vows and sacrifices.
- b. He agreed to do so and affirmed that Christians are still obligated to keep the law.
- c. He refused because Christians are not obligated to keep the law of Moses.
- d. He rejected Judaism completely and left Jerusalem immediately.

11. What did Paul do when a crowd at the temple turned against him and tried to kill him?

- a. He fled and vowed never to visit Jerusalem again.
- b. He got angry and began insulting the crowd.
- c. He took advantage of the attention and preached a sermon.
- d. He urged all Christians to take up weapons and fight to the death.



Paul did all things for the sake of the gospel. How would your life change if you decided to do the same? What decisions would you need to make? How would your relationships change? Is there anything you would need to give up in order to devote yourself entirely to God and His purposes? If so, what?



Thank God for helping you grow in your faith and for teaching you His truth. Offer to Him more and more of your life each day. Ask Him if there is anything in your life that needs to change for you to serve Him with your whole heart.



Going Deeper

1. While reading through all of the great sermons of Paul in the book of Acts, in what significant ways do you think Paul's preaching was different after his experiences in Athens and Corinth? (Consider Acts 17, 18: 9, 10; 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5; 15: 1-4) _____

2. When you carefully study his sermon on Areopagus as recorded in Acts 17, and when you compare it to 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5, do you think that he clearly used "enticing words of man's wisdom" when he quoted their Greek poets and philosophers? If so, how does the fact that he did not preach that way again strengthen the argument that he learned much in Athens about how to preach the Gospel? _____

3. Do you think men like Timothy could have attended Paul's classes in the School of Tyrannus in Ephesus, which might have been like a seminary in which Paul trained pastors? (Consider 2 Timothy 2:2) Why or why not? _____

4. What was the purpose of the Council in Jerusalem, recorded in Acts 15, and what was resolved there? _____

5. In Paul's very touching farewell to the Elders in Ephesus (Acts 20: 17-38), what can we learn and apply about the preaching and teaching commitment of this great apostle? _____

6. What can we learn and apply about the way the Church in Ephesus met, was led and organized? _____

7. How can we learn and apply the two things Paul wanted these Elders to remember (20: 35)?

Patterns of Paul

Chapter Nine

Audio lesson: New Testament 39



Objective: To continue to explore and understand the mission and character of Paul.



“I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.”

—Acts 24:14-16

Paul used every opportunity to share his faith story. He even shared his faith with an angry mob in Jerusalem that wanted to beat him. Roman soldiers eventually seized him for his own protection, but Paul saw an opportunity to preach to the crowd. He escaped the soldier's flogging by claiming his rights of Roman citizenship, and after inciting an argument about the resurrection among a Jewish council, he had to be rescued by Roman soldiers from their angry reaction.

After discovering a Jewish plot to kill Paul, the Romans moved him by night to Caesarea to appear before Felix the governor. Paul again took the opportunity to share his testimony with Felix and his Jewish accusers. Even though he made a persuasive argument that affected Felix, Paul remained in prison for two more years.

When Felix died and was replaced by Festus, Paul appealed to Caesar so he would avoid a trial in Jerusalem and be sent to Rome. While waiting to leave for Rome, Paul once again used another opportunity to share the gospel with Festus and King Agrippa. Agrippa realized Paul was innocent and was nearly persuaded to believe the gospel himself.

Paul was eventually sent to Rome by ship, and he influenced the crew and passengers by sharing his faith and accurately prophesying a shipwreck. During the storm that wrecked the ship, Paul assured everyone on board that though the ship would be lost, no one would be harmed. Once safely ashore on Malta, Paul again shared his faith with everyone, and Jesus Christ used him to heal many of their sick. Finally, after three more months, he continued his journey to Rome, where he shared the gospel with his guards and anyone else who would listen.

1. True or false? Paul was always looking for a chance to share his faith.
2. True or false? God warned Paul through his nephew that 40 Jews were plotting to kill him.



3. True or false? Even though the crowd at the temple was hostile toward Paul, the religious leaders treated him very well.
4. True or false? Festus refused Paul's "appeal to Caesar" and he remained in prison for two years.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. What did Paul say that caused the Roman soldier to quit beating him?
- He threatened the soldier with God's wrath.
 - He informed the soldier that he was a Roman citizen.
 - He begged the soldier to stop.
 - He bribed the soldier.
6. What did the Jewish leaders begin arguing about when Paul was defending himself?
- The temple taxes
 - A belief in the resurrection of the dead
 - The Roman occupation
 - Whether the death penalty was lawful
7. After listening to Paul's testimony, what did Felix think of Paul?
- He thought Paul was just a religious troublemaker.
 - He was afraid and felt conviction about his sin.
 - He agreed with Drusilla, who thought Paul was clever but harmless.
 - None of the above.
8. What did Paul say to cause Festus to send him to Rome?
- He appealed his case to Caesar.
 - He vowed to make trouble for Festus if he stayed in Caesarea.
 - He promised to tell Caesar what a great leader Festus was.
 - He convinced Festus that sending him far away would make everyone forget about him.

9. Why did Paul appeal to Caesar?
- a. He believed he would never get a fair trial from Festus.
 - b. He believed the Jews would still try to kill him in Caesarea.
 - c. He believed he would preach the good news in Rome.
 - d. All of the above
10. After listening to Paul's conversion story, what did King Agrippa think of Paul?
- a. He thought Paul was innocent.
 - b. He may have been nearly persuaded to believe.
 - c. He accused Paul of being out of his mind.
 - d. All of the above
11. How did Paul influence the men on the ship with the gospel?
- a. He spoke of his God unashamedly and as often as he could.
 - b. He told them that God had predicted a shipwreck, but that no one would die.
 - c. He encouraged them and assured them that God was with them.
 - d. All of the above



Paul told his testimony often. What is your testimony of Jesus? In what ways have you encountered Him? If someone asked you to explain how you met Him and what difference has He made in your life, what would you say?



Thank God for the way He calls each of us and prepares us to know, love, and serve Him. Ask Him to give you opportunities to tell your testimony of Jesus. Thank Him that even if your testimony is not as dramatic as Paul's, He will use it to change people's lives.



Going Deeper

1. Imagine and apply what Paul was thinking during the entire two years he was imprisoned in Caesarea in Palestine, during which one governor died and the other took his place. _____

2. Precisely how many Roman military men escorted Paul in the middle of the night to the prison in Caesarea? _____

3. When you diligently study the great sermon of Paul before King Agrippa, how can you apply that sermon to the life and witness of this great apostle, and to your own life and ministry? _____

4. What do you learn and how can you apply the leadership profile of the Apostle Paul during the worst part of the storm that destroyed the ship that was transporting him to Rome for his day in court with Caesar? _____

5. How can you relate and apply the response of Paul to being struck in the mouth (Acts 23: 1-3) to the nonviolence taught by Jesus and practiced by the early Church? _____

6. How can you apply the passion of the Apostle Paul to preach the Gospel every time he had the opportunity to do so? _____

7. How can you explain and apply the reality that the book of Acts does not come to a conclusive end? _____

God and Man—Like It Is

Chapter Ten

Audio lesson: New Testament 40



Objective: To introduce the book of Romans and its major themes.



I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

—Romans 1:16-17

The Book of Romans is Paul’s theological masterpiece, compiled after years of fruitful ministry. Although addressed to the Romans, it is in fact for the entire Church and explains the crucial doctrine of justification—that God declares the unrighteous to be completely righteous because of the work of Jesus Christ.

This complex book can be divided into four sections: chapters 1-4 deal with the human family as sinners; chapters 5-8 explain how those who are “declared righteous” should live and the struggles to do so; chapters 9-11 address Israel, its future, and the world; and chapters 12-16 discuss how to apply these doctrinal truths practically.

In the first four chapters, Paul explains justification and how all of us are contaminated by sin. He goes on to show how God makes certain charges against us, His response to this dilemma in “giving us over” to freely choose unrighteous behaviors, and the destructive result of these choices. Despite this bad news that we are separated from a righteous God by our sin, our decision to continue in it, and His holy wrath toward us, there is a hope. The cross of Jesus Christ can make us righteous.

1. True or false? The letter to the Romans is the first letter Paul wrote.
2. True or false? The letter to the Romans dealt with very specific issues relevant only to the church at Rome.
3. True or false? One of the major themes in Romans is “justification”—being made righteous before God, as though we had never sinned.
4. True or false? The book of Romans gives us the most complete statement of salvation in the Bible.
5. True or false? In Romans, Paul skips from one theme to another without ever really making a clear argument.



Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

6. Match the following sections of Romans with the group of people each one addresses:

a. Chapters 1-4	1. Israel
b. Chapters 5-8	2. Sinners
c. Chapters 9-11	3. Everyone who applies the gospel to their lives
d. Chapters 12-16	4. Those who are justified

7. What did God do when Jews rejected the salvation He offered?
 - a. He offered it to the non-Jewish world.
 - b. He vowed never to deal with Israel again.
 - c. He forced them to believe.
 - d. He decided to do nothing for now other than wait until they do believe.

8. Why do people often suppress the truth?
 - a. They are not smart enough to understand it.
 - b. They want to justify an unrighteous lifestyle.
 - c. They do not agree with it.
 - d. They are too educated to believe in God.

9. What does it mean when God “gives people over” to their sins?
 - a. He gives up hope that they can be saved.
 - b. He turns them over to Satan to be punished.
 - c. He lashes out in anger at them.
 - d. He allows them to choose what they want and to suffer the consequences.

10. What happens to those who repeatedly choose to sin? (choose all that apply)
- a. They become lustful.
 - b. They exchange the truth of God for a lie.
 - c. They discover that God does not really mind if they sin.
 - d. They become fools.
 - e. They learn to overcome sin in their own strength.
 - f. They realize there is no difference between a Christian and a non-Christian.
 - g. They develop a depraved mind.
 - h. They become filled with all kinds of idolatry and unrighteousness.
11. Who or what is the absolute standard of righteousness?
- a. Paul
 - b. The laws of nature
 - c. Jews
 - d. God
12. What is God's wrath?
- a. His unrestrained anger
 - b. The dark side of His personality
 - c. His opposition to whatever harms His loved ones
 - d. His judgments against people He does not like



What is God's answer to sin? Why must we understand that we are sinners if we are going to experience salvation from God? Have you confessed your sins and asked God to justify you? If so, what changed in your life? If not, will you consider doing that now?



Thank God that His salvation is not for those who are righteous but for sinners like us. Ask Him to continue to save you from every effect of sin in your life. Also ask Him, as we begin to study Romans, to help you understand the deep truths of the good news of salvation and justification.



Going Deeper

1. How can you relate and apply the fall of the human race, as recorded in the early chapters of the book of Romans, to the fall of man as it is recorded in the early chapters of the book of Genesis? _____

2. What is a good definition of the wrath of God as it is described in the early chapters of Romans? _____

3. State clearly and apply the thesis, or the argument, of the book of Romans that begins in chapter 1, verse 17 and concludes in chapter 11 verse 36. _____

4. As you trace that argument through the first four chapters as it relates to righteousness and unrighteousness:
 - a. What is God? _____
 - b. What does God want? _____
 - c. What does God demand? _____
 - d. What does God condemn? _____
 - e. What does God know? _____
 - f. What has God done? _____
 - g. What does God want us to do? _____
5. According to God's plan of justification as presented in the first four chapters of this letter:
 - a. Who is the Author of this plan? _____
 - b. What is the dynamic that makes this plan work? _____
 - c. What is the principle that applies this plan to you and me personally? _____
 - d. How did God guarantee this plan? _____
 - e. What is the proof that we really do have the principle that makes this plan work for you and me? _____
6. According to the third chapter, what is the specific dimension of sin that declares all of us to be sinners? _____

7. According to this argument, in chapter five (verses 12-17), who are four kings who enter, abound and reign while believers who have been declared righteous are attempting to live like people who have been declared righteous? _____

The Four Winners and The Four Laws

Chapter Eleven

Audio lesson: New Testament 41



Objective: To understand how the law of the spirit of life in Christ can help us to overcome sin and death.



Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

—Romans 5:1-2

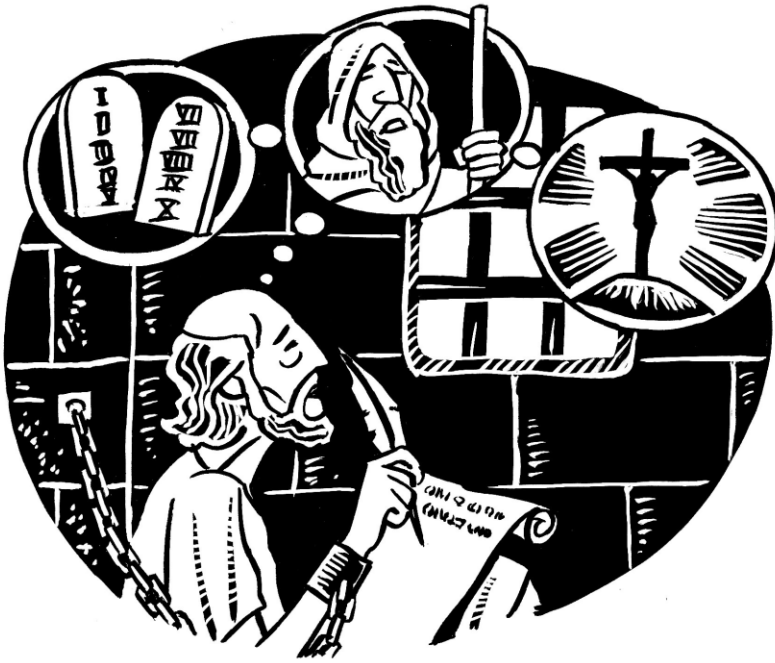
Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.

—Romans 8:5-6

After establishing the doctrine of justification in the first four chapters of Romans, emphasizing Abraham's righteousness for simply believing God, Paul goes on to explain in chapters 5-8 what it means to be victorious and live righteously. The key to being able to stand for Christ in a fallen world is living in God's grace.

Paul introduces four kings: sin, death, Jesus, and you. Sin enters our lives and reigns, resulting in death. But King Jesus overcomes sin and death, and if we have faith in Him, we can reign with Him over sin and death. Paul also introduces four spiritual laws: the law of God, the law of sin and death, the law of the spirit of life in Christ, and the law of the mindset. The law of God reveals the law of sin and death; but the law of the spirit of life in Christ overcomes the law of sin and death; and we can experience this if we practice the law of the mindset and set our minds on the Spirit rather than the flesh.

1. True or false? The first four chapters of Romans start off with bad news of our spiritual condition.
2. True or false? God is righteous, and we must be righteous in order to relate to Him.
3. True or false? On our own, we can never be righteous enough to save ourselves.
4. True or false? God wants us to believe that the righteousness of Jesus on our behalf is enough to save us.



Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. How does the plan of justification apply to us if we do not believe in it?
 - a. It saves us anyway, whether we believe it or not.
 - b. It benefits us in heaven but not on earth.
 - c. It forces us to choose God's alternate plan of salvation, which is becoming righteous on our own.
 - d. It does not benefit us if we do not believe in it.

6. In the first four chapters of Romans, who does Paul describe as an illustration of righteous faith?
 - a. Moses
 - b. Abraham
 - c. David
 - d. Himself

7. What do we need in order to stand for God in the world?
 - a. Grace
 - b. Determination
 - c. Self-will
 - d. Good fortune

8. What two "kings" came into the world and conquered us?
 - a. David and Solomon
 - b. Politics and religion
 - c. Sin and death
 - d. Karma and chance

9. What two “kings” can rescue us?
- a. Optimism and confidence
 - b. Hope and love
 - c. Tolerance and cooperation
 - d. Jesus and us
10. What does the law of God reveal?
- a. The law of sin and death
 - b. Life and freedom
 - c. The goodness of humanity
 - d. The rewards of obedience
11. What can set us free from the law of sin and death?
- a. Good works
 - b. The law of the spirit of life in Christ
 - c. Meditation
 - d. The principle of karma
12. How can we apply the law of the spirit of life in Christ to overcome the law of sin and death?
- a. By setting our minds on the flesh
 - b. By setting our minds on the Spirit
 - c. By denying that sin and death exist
 - d. By going to battle against sin and death



Do you find that your mind is more often set on the flesh or on the Spirit? How does your mindset affect your ability to experience the freedom of life in Christ? In what ways would you like to enjoy life in Christ more fully? According to God’s Word, how can you do that?



Thank God that He has overcome the law of sin and death and given us the spirit of life in Christ. Ask Him to help you experience the life of the Spirit more fully and deeply every day. As you set your mind on the Spirit, pray that He would make you more than a conqueror over everything that hinders your walk with Him.



Going Deeper

1. What are the four spiritual laws that are found from the middle of chapter seven to the middle of chapter eight in Paul's letter to the Romans? _____

2. In what ways does the law of God (the Word of God) function as a mirror and reveal laws like the law of sin and death? (Consider James 1: 22-25) _____

3. How do these four laws parallel the four conquerors in chapter five? _____

4. How can you compare the law of sin and death to gravity, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ to aerodynamics? _____

5. In light of the fact that these laws have been in place since Paul wrote the letter to the Romans, why are so many believers today still being controlled by the law of sin and death? _____

6. Explain how the law of the mindset can make the difference between the law of sin and death and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ. _____

7. Describe how you are implementing all four of these spiritual laws in your journey of faith in Christ right now. _____

So What!

Chapter Twelve Audio lesson: New Testament 42



Objective: To explore the mysteries of God's will and to learn how to find His will for our lives.



Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

—Romans 11:33-36

In Romans 9-11, Paul deals with some very deep truths and the mysteries of God's will. He specifically identifies Israel as an example that shows how God has the right to bless whomever He chooses. Although we may not understand His reasons, we can trust that He is infinitely wiser than we are. There are many things about God we do not understand, but He clearly tells us what He wants us to know and do.

Knowing God's will is a very common concern for believers who want to please God. Often our own will gets in the way of hearing from God about His will for us. When we center our lives on Him as the source of everything, commit our lives to Him and align with His desires, surrender our will and allow Him to transform us, and refuse to be conformed to the patterns of the world, God reveals His will for our lives.



1. True or false? God's plan for the end of human history will center around Israel.
2. True or false? God does not choose those who will love and serve Him. He waits to see who will come to Him.
3. True or false? God has infinite knowledge and wisdom, and He does not need for us to counsel Him.
4. True or false? God is obligated to do what we think is fair and right.
5. True or false? There are secret things about God that we will never understand, but He makes clear to us what He wants us to do.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

6. What things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purposes?
 - a. Good things
 - b. Only the things God chooses
 - c. The things of God's kingdom
 - d. All things
7. Who or what is the source of all things and the purpose behind all things?
 - a. The universe
 - b. The unity of humankind
 - c. Ourselves
 - d. God
8. What should we present to God as a living sacrifice?
 - a. The best of our flocks and herds
 - b. Our bodies, even our entire selves
 - c. Our spiritual awareness
 - d. Our best intentions
9. What kind of relationship does God have with us?
 - a. Personal
 - b. Impersonal
 - c. Casual
 - d. Distant
10. How can we know and experience the perfect will of God for our lives? (choose all that apply)
 - a. Center ourselves on God
 - b. Be committed to God
 - c. Be transformed by the renewal of our minds
 - d. Do not be conformed to the world
 - e. We cannot know. We can only guess and hope that we have found His will.

11. Why do our minds have to be renewed?

- a. Because we are not very smart
- b. Because God does not want us to use our minds, only our hearts
- c. Because God's thoughts are higher than ours
- d. So we can be omniscient like He is



Have you asked God to show you His will for your life? If so, how has He led you? If not, which of the steps to knowing His will do you need to take?

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

—Jeremiah 29:11-13



Thank God that He has a perfect will for your life. Ask Him to show you what it is. Tell Him you will commit to do whatever He leads you to do and that you want your mind to be transformed to know His thoughts. Ask Him to lead you in His will.



Going Deeper

1. Explain how God has a will about the little things and the big things in our lives. _____

2. Explain why you believe, when Paul says in 11:36, “God is the Source of all things,” that he means everything that happens in this world, or all the things he has written to us about in this letter. _____

3. How does the great passage at the end of chapter 11, in verses 33-36, relate to the exhortations in chapter 12? _____

4. In chapters 9-11, in what way is Israel an example of election, as well as an example of free will? _____

5. In chapter 8, how does Paul teach that the Providence of God is the most comforting teaching in the Word of God? _____

6. In 8:28, explain two prerequisites, and what they really mean, that we must meet before we can claim and apply the great promise of the verse. _____

7. Explain and interpret the prophecy (in 11:24, 25) that, when the full number of Gentiles come in, “all Israel will be saved.” _____

Righteousness Reproduced in Rome

Chapter Thirteen

Audio lesson: New Testament 43



Objective: To explore the mysteries of God's will and to learn how to find His will for our lives.



Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

—Romans 12:1-2

In this last section of the Book of Romans, chapters 12-16, Paul emphasizes the application of the truths he has just shared in relation to God, the church, other believers, the government, the world, and ourselves. He describes how Christian relationships should be filled with love, humility, hospitality, serving, forgiveness, and more. He encourages us to submit to government as a God-given institution, but to always serve God as our highest priority. As we relate to people who have a different sense of right and wrong in areas that scripture is not clear about, Paul teaches us to follow our conscience and the leading of the Holy Spirit while being sensitive to the needs of others. In everything, as we apply God's Word to our lives, love should determine how we relate to people.

Paul demonstrates again at the end of Romans that his heart was always searching for ways to fulfill the Great Commission and that his greatest desire was to spread the gospel around the world. Even though Paul had never been to Rome, he greeted friends that he knew there and encouraged them with his words.



1. True or false? Paul's letter to the Romans explains great theological truth but has very little practical application in it.
2. True or false? The practical teaching in Romans applies to our relationship with God but not our relationships with each other.
3. True or false? God gives all spiritual gifts to some people and no spiritual gifts to others.
4. True or false? When we discover what our gifts are, we should focus on exercising our gifts and let others focus on exercising theirs.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. How do the spiritual gifts of one person relate to the gifts of another?
 - a. We all use our gifts independently of each other.
 - b. We need each other's gifts and have to depend on each other.
 - c. God gives His gifts randomly, so they really do not relate to each other.
 - d. We should compare our gifts with others so we can determine which people God has most highly favored.
6. Which attributes does Paul encourage Christians to have? (choose all that apply)
 - a. Love
 - b. Competition
 - c. Humility
 - d. Repentance
 - e. Hostility toward the world
 - f. Unity
 - g. Giving
 - h. Pride
 - i. Activity
 - j. Faith
 - k. Forgiveness
7. How should we deal with "gray areas" that are not clearly right or wrong?
 - a. Follow our conscience.
 - b. Obey the Holy Spirit as we develop our convictions.
 - c. Be considerate of other believers who are weaker in their convictions.
 - d. Let our love of others determine our choices.
 - e. All of the above
8. What did Paul believe about government? (choose all that apply)
 - a. That government is good, ordained by God, and important to obey
 - b. That we should obey God's law first and foremost
 - c. That we should obey the government regardless of what it requires of us
 - d. That government is evil, a tool of Satan

9. Where did Paul say he wanted to go after visiting Rome?

- a. Jerusalem
- b. Greece
- c. Spain
- d. Africa

10. What do Paul's travel plans show about Paul?

- a. The world and the Great Commission were always on his heart.
- b. He had to move around often because he caused trouble wherever he was.
- c. He had a restless spirit.
- d. He could not make up his mind about where God wanted him to serve.



Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? If so, how has God led you to use them? If not, would you consider asking Him to help you discover your gifts and use them to help build up His people?

In what ways do you depend on the spiritual gifts of others? In what ways do spiritual gifts and the godly attitudes of other believers build up the fellowship of God's people?



Thank God that He has given spiritual gifts to every believer and that He uses us to strengthen, encourage, and edify each other. Ask Him to help you discover and use the gifts He has given you. Also ask Him to fill your church and your relationships with the love, humility, and zeal that Paul encouraged us to have.



Going Deeper

1. When Paul is giving a cluster of inspired commandments in chapter 12, what does he teach us about our responsibility boundaries, when it comes to living at peace with everyone? _____

2. In chapter 13, what does Paul mean when he refers three times to law enforcement officers as “ministers of God,” even when they are using their sword on you for breaking the law? _____

3. What does Paul mean in that same chapter when he writes that the law enforcement officer is expressing the present wrath of God on the lawbreaker, and can this be projected to the level of military armed forces being that law enforcement officer? _____

4. Compare, contrast, relate and apply the Fourteenth Chapter of Romans to 1 Corinthians 8-10.

5. In both of these passages of Scripture, what is the primary truth that governs the way the believer should approach the so-called gray issues, in living out the way of Christ in the context of the church body? _____

6. In chapter fifteen, how does Paul demonstrate his passion to preach the Gospel by telling the Church at Rome why he had felt such a strong passion to get to Rome? _____

7. When Paul tells us about the circle within which he preached the Gospel, by application, draw a circle within which your church should determine to saturate an area with the preaching of the Gospel. _____
