

©Copyright Matthew W. Bassford, 2008. This material is subject to a Creative Commons attribution-noncommercial-no derivative works license. This means that it may be reproduced, shared, and used freely, provided it is attributed to the author, not used for commercial purposes, and not altered in any way. For more information, please see creativecommons.org.

Lesson One: Acts 13:1-16.....	2
Lesson Two: Acts 13:17-52.....	4
Lesson Three: Acts 14:1-28.....	6
Lesson Four: Acts 15:1-21.....	8
Lesson Five: Acts 15:22-40.....	10
Lesson Six: Acts 16:1-21.....	12
Lesson Seven: Acts 16:22-40.....	14
Lesson Eight: Acts 17:1-18.....	16
Lesson Nine: Acts 17:19-34.....	18
Lesson Ten: Acts 18:1-23.....	20
Lesson Eleven: Acts 18:24-19:20.....	22
Lesson Twelve: Acts 19:21-41.....	24
Lesson Thirteen: Acts 20:1-16.....	26
Lesson Fourteen: Acts 20:17-38.....	28
Lesson Fifteen: Acts 21:1-16.....	30
Lesson Sixteen: Acts 21:17-36.....	32
Lesson Seventeen: Acts 21:37-22:21.....	34
Lesson Eighteen: Acts 22:22-23:11.....	36
Lesson Nineteen: Acts 23:12-24:9.....	38
Lesson Twenty: Acts 24:10-27.....	40
Lesson Twenty-One: Acts 25:1-27.....	42
Lesson Twenty-Two: Acts 26:1-32.....	44
Lesson Twenty-Three: Acts 27:1-44.....	46
Lesson Twenty-Four: Acts 28:1-31.....	48
Lesson Twenty-Five: Review 1.....	50
Lesson Twenty-Six: Review 2.....	52

To the Gentiles



Lesson One

Acts 13:1-13

Introduction: The Call to Action

We often think of Paul's first missionary journey as the beginning of his work for the Lord. In reality, by this point, Paul has been a Christian for at least seventeen years, and has already preached the gospel in a number of different locations. However, it took that long before God judged he was ready for a series of journeys that would change the world. We need to learn to consider our lives in the same light: that with each day and each year that passes, God is preparing us to share in his work. Let's be honest about His expectations, and be ready to answer the call to action when we hear it. It may be that God intends for us to change the world too.

Without reference to a map, sketch on a black- or whiteboard a map of the eastern Mediterranean, and locate the following places on it as best you are able. Then, with the help of a map, correct your earlier sketch.

1. Antioch of Syria
2. Cyprus
3. Paphos
4. Antioch of Pisidia
5. Iconium
6. Lystra
7. Derbe
8. Samaria
9. Jerusalem

Lesson One: Acts 13:1-13

1. What happens in Acts 13:1-3? What does this tell us about a Christian's responsibility to work for God?
2. Where do Barnabas and Saul go first in 13:4-5? What do they do there? What's the significance of this?
3. What new character do we meet in 13:6-11? What does he do? What happens to him? What does this tell us about the wisdom of opposing God's will?
4. What result does Paul's miraculous display have in 13:12? What does this tell us about the purpose of miracles? Mark 16:20 may help.
5. What happens in Acts 13:13? What does this tell us about the character of John? How can we avoid being like him?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Two

Acts 13:14-52

Introduction: Who Will Listen to God?

In this section of text, we see the first occurrence of what is going to be a recurring theme through the rest of Acts. Paul travels to a new city and begins his work by preaching God's word to God's chosen people: the Jews. However, once the Jews hear the gospel, they largely reject it, and Paul is forced to turn to the Gentiles, who receive it with joy. The gospel often meets with the same reception today. Often, it's not the "religious" people in our lives who welcome the Bible's message. They think they already have the truth and don't want to hear us. Instead, it's the irreligious people who are most likely to listen. Let's learn to reach out to them too.

1. Where do Paul and his companions go in Acts 13:14-15? What do they do there?



Sermon Spotlight: Acts 13:16-47

2. Who is the audience?

3. Acts 21:37-23:11

4. 23:12-24:27

5. Acts 25:1-26:32

6. Acts 27:1-28:31

To the Gentiles



Lesson Twenty-Six

Review Two

Introduction: The Path of Paul's Discipleship

If we are truly disciples of Christ, we seek to imitate Jesus. This is a simple, logical idea, yet it has profound implications. Jesus dedicated Himself entirely to doing the will of God, and didn't shrink back from that even when it cost Him His life. Through the second half of Acts, Paul is a good example of a disciple of Jesus. He too was dedicated to righteousness above all else. He too taught everyone he could. He too was willing to risk his life to serve God. Where do we stand? What's our plan for imitating Jesus? Are we willing to follow in His footsteps, even when those steps lead to the cross? Or are we content to be churchgoers rather than Christians?

For each context of Scripture listed below, summarize the events that occur in it, and explain their significance.

1. Acts 20:1-38

2. Acts 21:1-36

Lesson Two: Acts 13:14-52

3. What does Paul want to accomplish? Be specific!

4. What point/points does he make? How does he support them?

5. How does he match his presentation to his audience? How do they take it?

6. What do we get out of it?

7. According to Acts 13:48-52, what is the effect of Paul's stay in Antioch? What should this teach us?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Three

Acts 14:1-28

Introduction: Hostility to the Gospel

Acts 14 describes a fairly violent period in the life of Paul, in which he is chased through the cities of Lycaonia by mobs of angry men who are intent on murdering him. At one point in time, in fact, they believe that they have succeeded in killing him and leave him for dead. The early church met with this kind of hostility everywhere it appeared. By contrast, Christians today see very little open, hostile opposition. Why is this? Is it that the people of 21st-century America are nicer and more righteous than the people of the first-century Roman Empire? Or is it that the church today isn't being vocal enough to create that kind of hostility? What's the answer with us?

1. Where does Paul travel in Acts 14:1? What result does he see? What does this tell us about the power of the gospel?
2. What do the enemies of the gospel do in response in 14:2-6? How do Paul and his companions react? Should we expect similar reactions from those around us sometimes? Why?

Lesson Twenty-Five: Review One

3. Acts 15:22-16:21

4. Acts 16:22-17:18

5. Acts 17:19-18:23

6. Acts 18:24-19:41

To the Gentiles



Lesson Twenty-Five

Review One

Introduction: The First-Century Church

In the Lord's church, we make a big deal about following the pattern of the first-century church that we have recorded in Scripture, because we know that pattern pleases God. However, as we do that, we need to be careful not to select only the parts of the pattern that we like. Yes, the first-century church didn't use musical instruments. Yes, the first-century church didn't have a denominational structure. However, as Acts revealed, the first-century church was also explosively evangelistic. Its members established new churches everywhere they went. If we're serious about following the pattern, we need to imitate the first-century church in saving the lost too.

For each of the contexts of Scripture listed below, summarize the events that occur in it, and explain their significance.

1. Acts 13:1-52

2. Acts 14:1-15:21

Lesson Three: Acts 14:1-28

3. What does Paul do in 14:8-10? How do the people of Lystra see this, according to 14:11-18? Is the work of God ever misinterpreted today? When?
4. Who reappears in 14:19-20? What happens to Paul as a result? How does Paul react to this in 14:21? What can we learn from his example?
5. What does Paul say in his teaching, according to 14:22? How can we expect to see this in our lives?
6. What do we see Paul doing in 14:23? Why is this important?
7. How does Paul complete his journey, according to 14:24-28? What does he do at the end? Should we look to imitate him? How?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Four

Acts 15:1-21

Introduction: Resolving Conflicts

In many ways, the example of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 is inapplicable to us. We no longer have apostles and elders who are directly inspired by the Holy Spirit. Thus, we don't have anyone who is qualified or authorized to issue binding pronouncements to the entire brotherhood. However, we can learn much from the way the council addressed the problem before it. They didn't attempt to impose their own reasoning on the question of circumcision. Instead, they turned to the different ways that God had revealed His will to them, and learned what they could from that revelation. When we have questions in our churches today, let us do the same.

1. What problem arises in Acts 15:1? What do Paul and Barnabas do about it in 15:2-3? How can we learn from their example?
2. What happens in Jerusalem in 15:4-5? How do the brethren respond in 15:6? What lesson is there in this for us?

Lesson Twenty-Four: Acts 28:1-31

3. Where do Paul and the others travel in 28:11-16? How does this relate to Acts 23:11? Why is this important?
4. What does Paul do in 28:17-20? What response does he receive in 28:21-22? Why do you think first-century Christianity had such a bad reputation?
5. What does Paul do in 28:23-24? What result does this have in 24:25? How does this compare to other reactions throughout Acts?
6. What does Paul say in 28:25-27? What result does he ascribe to this in 28:28? In what ways is this a fitting theme for the second half of Acts?
7. Where is Paul in 28:30? According to 28:31, what is he doing? Why does Acts end with this?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Twenty-Four

Acts 28:1-31

Introduction: The End of Acts

When I was younger, the end of the book of Acts always baffled me. Paul gets to Rome, hasn't presented his appeal to Caesar yet, hasn't even had anything terribly significant happen to him, yet the book just. . . ends. In truth, though, Acts' very incompleteness is an important piece of information. The most likely explanation for it is that Paul's trial and the end of his life hadn't occurred yet. Luke, the author, was one of Paul's companions, and probably was staying with him in Rome, recording these things as they happened. When, like Acts, an account is written immediately following the events described, it is counted among the most accurate of records.

1. Where do Paul and the others end up in Acts 28:1? What happens in 28:2-6? How is Paul's experience different from modern-day snake handlers?
2. Whom do we meet in 28:7? What does Paul do for him and for others on the island in 28:8-10? What does this teach us about the compassion we should have?

Lesson Four: Acts 15:1-21



Sermon Spotlight: Acts 15:7-21

3. Who is the audience?
4. What do Peter and James want to accomplish? Be specific!
5. What point/points do they make? How do they support them?
6. How are their presentations tailored to their audience?
7. What do we get out of it?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Five

Acts 15:22-40

Introduction: Hearing the Word

Just as we can learn a lot by the way that the council in Jerusalem came to its decision, we can learn a lot by the way that the churches received the letter from the council. As the letter itself makes clear, it was an inspired document, and the Gentiles treated it accordingly: listening to it, then rejoicing in it. How do we hear the word of God today? Are we eager to learn what He has to say to us? Do we resolve to change our lives to better follow it? Do we rejoice when we have heard His will? Or do we react with boredom, apathy, and disinterest? One thing is certain: if we aren't interested in God's word, on the day of judgment, He won't be interested in us.

Without reference to a map, sketch on a black- or whiteboard a map of the eastern Mediterranean, and locate the following places on it as best you are able. Then, with the help of a map, correct your earlier sketch.

1. Cilicia
2. Galatia
3. Asia (province, not continent)
4. Troas
5. Macedonia
6. Philippi
7. Thessalonica
8. Berea
9. Athens
10. Corinth
11. Ephesus

Lesson Twenty-Three: Acts 27:1-44

3. What appears in 27:14? What results does this have in 27:15-20? What would it have been like to be in that situation?
4. What good news does Paul relay in 27:21-26? What's the accompanying bad news? What can we learn from Paul's faith?
5. What hopeful sign arises in 27:27-29? How do the sailors react to this in 27:30? According to 27:31, what's the outcome of their plot?
6. What does Paul say in 27:33-34? What result does this have in 27:35-36? What should we learn from him about how to act in a crisis?
7. What happens in 27:39-41? What discussion takes place in 27:42-43? According to 27:44, what's the final result of this harrowing journey?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Twenty-Three

Acts 27:1-44

Introduction: Storms

Acts 27 is one of the original great sea stories. Even if we're reading it from dry land 2000 years later, it's still a harrowing tale that can make us a little bit seasick. Paul and his companions were driven about 600 miles by the Mediterranean equivalent of a hurricane. For everybody but Paul, their situation was quite literally hopeless. However, in the midst of this apparently doomed voyage, Paul's serenity stands out as a bright spot. He never lost faith in God, and if worst came to worst, he knew there were more important things than his life. As Christians, we should possess a similar serenity. Even the worst storms of our lives can't affect what truly matters.

1. What happens in Acts 27:1-8? What problem seems to be emerging? Why do you think this is happening?
2. What does Paul say in 27:9-10? According to 27:11, how is this taken? What decision is reached in 27:12-13?

Lesson Five: Acts 15:22-40

1. What do the apostles and elders decide to do in Acts 15:22? Why do you think they decide to do it this way?
2. How does their letter describe the problem in 15:24? What decree do they hand down in 15:28-29? How does this apply to us?
3. According to 15:30, where do the messengers go? How does the church there receive them in 15:31? What does this teach us about how we should react to the word?
4. What does Paul want to do in 15:36? In 15:40, what happens before he leaves? What life lesson should we take from this?
5. What happens in 15:37-39? What does this passage teach us both about the consequences of our actions and about disagreement?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Six

Acts 16:1-21

Introduction: A Place of Prayer

In the realm of the brotherhood, there are plenty of folks who make a fuss about church buildings. They point out--correctly--that there are no examples in Scripture of a church owning its meeting place, and then accuse many in the church of being hypocritical when they insist that they do only what is written in the word. Of course, the Scriptural record is more complex than that. Acts describes Christians meeting in a number of different locations, of which Lydia's riverbank place of prayer is just one. From this, we can rightly conclude that God doesn't care where Christians assemble, as long as they do, even if we must rent or purchase a place to do so.

1. Whom does Paul encounter in Acts 16:1? What does Paul do about it in 16:3? How should we look for people who want to serve God?
2. How are the churches described in 16:5? Do we see the same thing happening in the Lord's church today? Why or why not? What should we do about it?

Lesson Twenty-Two: Acts 26:1-32

3. What point/points does he make? How does he support them?
4. How is his presentation tailored to his audience?
5. What do we get out of it?
6. How does Festus react to Paul's speech in 26:24? How does Paul deal with this in 26:26-26? Why is his reply significant?
7. What does Agrippa say to Paul in 26:28? What reply does Paul give him in 26:29? In 26:30-32, what decision do the judges make?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Twenty-Two

Acts 26:1-32

Introduction: *"Not Done in a Corner"*

Many religious historians and scholars attack the validity of the gospel accounts of Jesus and His apostles. They argue that the presence of supernatural events in those accounts shows that they are filled with lies and not to be taken seriously. In response to that, we may well quote the words of Paul in Acts 26:27. The events of the New Testament were not done in a corner. Instead, millions of people knew about them, and many of those people hated Christianity. If the gospel were a hoax, wouldn't they have been able to come up with a better response than "Kill Paul"? The absence of such claims gives us more reason to rely on the truth of the Bible.



Sermon Spotlight: Acts 26:1-23

1. Who is the audience?

2. What does Paul want to accomplish? Be specific!

Lesson Six: Acts 16:1-21

3. What is God's message to Paul in 16:6-8? What is His message in 16:9-10? How do we figure out what God wants us to do today?

4. Where do Paul and Silas go in 16:11-12? According to 16:13, what do they do on arrival? What does this tell us about the single-mindedness that disciples of Christ should have?

5. Who hears the word in 16:14? What does she do about it in 16:15? How should our response to salvation be similar?

6. Whom do we meet in 16:16-17? How does Paul react to her in 16:18? How does this show the power of Paul?

7. What do the slave girl's masters do in 16:19-21? Why? Why do people oppose the gospel today?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Seven

Acts 16:22-40

Introduction: Rejoicing in Trial

In Acts 16, we see one of the most bizarre scenes in Scripture. Paul and Silas have just been beaten, thrown into prison, and locked in the stocks, all through no fault of their own. Their predicament would have dampened the spirits of nearly anyone, yet we find them singing hymns together in that dank, dark hole. The Scripture doesn't tell us why, but we can rightly assume that their joy in Christ was so great that no circumstances could lessen it. That's an attitude we need to share. If we have Jesus, we have the most important thing in the world or outside it. No matter what happens to us, we should still be people who rejoice in the Lord.

1. What happens in Acts 16:22-24? Why? Can we expect similar things as Christians today? Why?
2. How do Paul and Silas react to their predicament in Acts 16:25? How do the other prisoners respond to this? What can we learn from it?

Lesson Twenty-One: Acts 25:1-27

3. What does Festus ask in 25:9? Why? What would have happened to Paul had he gone?
4. What reply to Festus does Paul make in 25:10-11? What result does this have in 25:12? What's the significance of this?
5. According to 25:13, who next arrives in Caesarea? How does Festus describe Paul's situation in 25:14-16? How does this show why Paul's Roman citizenship was important?
6. How does Festus describe the accusations against Paul in 25:18-19? What does he say about his reaction in 25:20? What response does Agrippa make to this in 25:22?
7. What happens in 25:23? How does Festus describe the purpose of the gathering in 25:24-27? How does this relate to Acts 9:15?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Twenty-One

Acts 25:1-27

Introduction: The Legal Rights of the Christian

I once knew a young Christian woman who was rear-ended at a traffic light. The accident caused thousands of dollars of damage to her car, but she never filed a claim with the other driver's insurance company. She said it just didn't feel godly to go after somebody else like that. Before we say such things, we need to consider the way that Paul interacted with the law. Repeatedly throughout Acts, we see him invoking the legal protections of his Roman citizenship. Like Paul, we have a right to use the law of our country to protect ourselves from those who would harm us. All government is established by God, and God's people may rightly use God's tools.

1. Who shows up in Acts 25:1? How do the Jews react to him in 25:2-3? What response does he make in 25:4-5?
2. What happens in 25:6-7? What reply does Paul make in 25:8? What must Paul have been thinking by this time?

Lesson Six: Acts 16:22-40

3. What happens in 16:26? According to 16:27, what is the jailer's initial reaction to this? How does Paul stop him in 16:28? Why do you think Paul didn't leave?
4. What does the jailer ask in 16:30? How does Paul reply in 16:31? Why didn't Paul tell him to be baptized?
5. What do Paul and Silas do in 16:32? What result does this have in 16:33? What does this tell us about salvation?
6. Many defenders of infant baptism use 16:33 as evidence that infant baptism was practiced in the first century. What do we see in 16:33-34 that tells us that no infants were baptized at this time?
7. What happens in 16:35-36? How does Paul reply in 16:37? What eventually happens in 16:38-39? What should we take from this?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Eight

Acts 17:1-18

Introduction: Noble-Mindedness

When we think of the words “noble” and “nobility”, most likely, they give us a mental image of the dukes and counts and barons of 700 years ago, who lived in stone castles and rode into battle on white horses. In reality, of course, most of those dukes and counts and barons were bloody-minded barbarians who used force to take whatever they wanted. Acts 17:10-11 gives us a much better picture of true nobility. Nobility isn’t about where we live or who our parents were; it’s about our attitude toward the word of God. The noble mind loves the word because in it he sees the upward path that leads to heaven. If we are truly noble, we will also love to read to climb.

1. Where does Paul next go in Acts 17:1? What is he described as doing in 17:2-3? How can we imitate Paul’s teaching process?
2. According to 17:4-5, what two results does Paul’s teaching have? Why do you think this difference existed?

Lesson Twenty: Acts 24:10-27

3. What point(s) does he make? How does he support them?
4. How is his presentation tailored to his audience?
5. What do we get out of it?
6. In Acts 24:22-23, what is Felix’s initial response to this argument? In 24:26-27, what is his eventual response? What does this tell us about the kind of “justice” we can sometimes expect from man?
7. In the meantime, what does Paul discuss with Felix and his wife, according to 24:24-25? How does Felix react in 25? Can we have this reaction to the gospel? What should we do about it?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Twenty

Acts 24:10-27

Introduction: "A Convenient Time"

There are many candidates in our hymnal for the title of "Most Ominous Invitation Song Ever", but probably the most ominous is "Almost Persuaded." It incorporates the replies of Felix and Agrippa to Paul, and uses them to paint the picture of the man who is perpetually just about to obey the gospel, but never does. As the hymn points out, "almost" means "lost." Sadly, there are many churchgoers who are in the almost-but-lost category. They don't want to go to hell, they intend to come to Christ someday, but somehow, someday never arrives. The problem with that is that none of us know how long we have, and waiting is a risk we can't afford to take.



Sermon Spotlight: Acts 24:10-21

1. Who is the audience?

2. What does Paul want to accomplish? Be specific?

Lesson Eight: Acts 17:1-18

3. In 17:6-7, what does the mob say about the Christians there? Was this true? If we are righteous, should we expect slander too? Why?

4. According to 17:10, where did Paul go next? In 17:11, how are the Bereans described? Why? How can we be noble-minded too?

5. Once again, in 17:12-13, the word achieves two different results. What are they? How likely is it that we will see the same thing if we imitate Christ? Why?

6. According to 17:16, where does Paul find himself? How does he react to the city? Are there things that should provoke us? If so, what?

7. What do we see Paul doing in 17:17-18? What reactions does he encounter here? Is this also a reaction that genuine followers of Jesus should expect? Why?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Nine

Acts 17:19-34

Introduction: Mars Hill

In Acts 17, we see perhaps the most famous sermon that Paul ever preached. The snotty intellectuals who lived in Athens challenged the shabby wandering preacher to stand before him and defend the gospel that he was preaching. Like any true child of God, Paul rose to the occasion and explained his faith in a way that still resonates 2000 years later. In our lives, we too need to be prepared for “Mars Hill moments”, times when someone asks us to defend what we believe. We need to think about it beforehand, to know what we want to point to from the word to explain the gospel. Only then can we be assured of following in the footsteps of Paul.

1. What happens to Paul in Acts 17:19-21? What seems to be the Athenians' motivation for doing this? What can we learn from this in our efforts to spread the gospel?



Sermon Spotlight: Acts 17:22-31

2. Who is the audience?

Lesson Nineteen: Acts 23:12-24:9

3. What story does Paul's nephew tell the tribune in 23:19-21? How does the tribune react to this in 23:22? Are there ever times when others try to involve us in deceitful plots?
4. What does the tribune do in 23:23-25? What does he say in the letter recounted in 23:26-30? How does the tribune's account differ from what actually happened?
5. What happens in 23:31-34? What does the governor decide to do in 23:35? Why do you think things turn out this way?
6. Who shows up in 24:1-2? What do they obviously plan to do? What does this teach us about the character of the Jewish leaders?
7. How does Tertullus address Felix in 24:3-4? What does he say about Paul in 24:5-8? How accurate is his account?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Nineteen

Acts 23:12-24:9

Introduction: Dealing with Adversity

Acts 23-24 probably does not mark a high point in Paul's life. In just that short context, Paul becomes the target of a fanatical assassination plot, requires military protection just to travel a few miles, and is slandered by a lawyer whose goal is to expose him to the assassins. Life can be like that for all of us sometimes, though hopefully not to that extent. Sometimes, it seems like everything we touch turns to mud. When life is like that, we need to remember that the world can turn hostile, but God is always loving. People may prove faithless, but God is faithful. We are guaranteed to get through the rough patches, if only we place our faith and trust in Him.

1. What conspirators emerge in Acts 23:12-13? According to 23:14-15, what do they plan to do? Why would Paul have stirred up such hostility?
2. In 23:16, how is this plot uncovered? What does Paul do about this in 23:17? What does this teach us about young people's ability to make a difference?

Lesson Nine: Acts 17:19-34

3. What does Paul want to accomplish? Be specific!
4. What point(s) does he make? How does he support them?
5. How is his presentation tailored to his audience?
6. What do we get out of it?
7. According to 17:32-34, how is Paul's sermon received? Are there people today who will react to the gospel in these same ways? Who?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Ten

Acts 18:1-23

Introduction: The People of Corinth

Sometimes, we think of the times of the Bible as a cleaned-up, sanitized version of our modern reality. We don't think of immorality and greed being as rampant then as today. Actually, the opposite is true. Modern-day Las Vegas isn't any worse than many cities of the Roman Empire. In particular, the city of Corinth had such a bad reputation that a slang word for "to fornicate" was "to corinthianize". And yet, even such an evil city still had many people who would turn to the Lord if given a chance. We need to remember that today as we confront an increasingly wicked world. No matter how evil the days are, the gospel still has the power to save souls if we use it.

1. Whom does Paul meet in Acts 18:1-4? What does he do with them? What can we learn from Paul's example about associating with godly people?
2. What does Paul do in 18:5-6? How does he eventually react? What can we learn from Paul's behavior here?

Lesson Eighteen: Acts 22:22-23:11

3. In 22:30, what does the tribune do? How does Paul handle this opportunity in 23:1? When do we have opportunities to reach others?
4. How does the high priest react to Paul's first sentence in 23:2? In 23:3-5, what happens as a result? How should we handle it when others point out we're in the wrong?
5. What does Paul notice in 23:6? What does he do about it? How does 23:8 explain his motivation?
6. In 23:7, 9, what happens as a consequence of Paul's declaration? What finally happens to Paul in 23:10? Why would Paul provoke such an uproar?
7. Who appears in 23:11? What does He say? What are Christ's expectations for us today?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Eighteen

Acts 22:22-23:11

Introduction: Paul, the Real Person

One of the fascinating things about Scripture is the way that it presents even its heroes in an impartial light. It doesn't shy away from showing them in their less flattering moments. We see Paul caught in such an unflattering moment in Acts 23:2-4. When he believes he is about to be struck wrongly, he angrily insults the one who threatened him, and must apologize when he learns that the speaker was the high priest. It's no secret to any student of Scripture that Paul had a temper, and controlling that temper was something he probably worked on until the end of his life. In this, we see, rather than the St. Paul of denominational myth, just another Christian like us.

1. What reaction does Paul's speech receive in Acts 22:22-23? What does the tribune do as a result in 22:24? When can we expect to receive a strongly negative reaction to our faith in Christ?
2. What does Paul ask in 22:25? What conversation results in 22:26-29? What can we learn from this about using our legal rights as Christians?

Lesson Ten: Acts 18:1-23

3. By contrast, what happens in 18:7-8? What effect must this have had on Paul after so much recent disappointment? What does it tell us we should do when we are spiritually disappointed?
4. In the first century, Corinth was a famously wicked city. What does God tell Paul about Corinth in 18:9-10? How should this shape our attitude toward people with bad reputations?
5. What do the Jews do in 18:12-13? In 18:14-15, who defends Paul? Today, what should Christians expect from the authorities?
6. How are the accusations resolved in 18:16-17? What does this tell us about the promise God made in 18:10? When do we need to trust God's promises?
7. Where is Paul in 18:19-21? What do the Jews there want? What does this teach us about what our hunger for the word should be?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Eleven

Acts 18:24-19:20

Introduction: Accepting Correction

Perhaps one of the hardest skills for humankind to master is the skill of learning how to be wrong. Most people are decent at being right. They're good winners who don't gloat overmuch when the guy on the other side admits his error. However, even when someone presents evidence to them that shows they're wrong, most people are so insecure that they refuse to hear the evidence and persist in defending their error. We need to be wiser than that. Especially in the spiritual realm, the price of insisting on the untrue is higher than we want to pay. We need to humbly listen to correction, acknowledge that we were wrong, and order our lives according to the truth.

1. Whom do we meet in Acts 18:24-25? What are his strengths and weaknesses? Are there people today with similar strengths and weaknesses?
2. In 18:26-28, what do Priscilla and Aquila do with Apollos? How does he react? What does this teach us about the way we should respond to correction?

Lesson Seventeen: Acts 21:37-22:21



Sermon Spotlight: Acts 22:1-21

3. Who is Paul's audience?
4. What does Paul want to accomplish? Be specific!
5. What point/points does he make? How does he support them?
6. How is his presentation tailored to his audience?
7. What do we get out of it?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Seventeen

Acts 21:37-22:21

Introduction: What They Didn't Want to Hear

The way the Jews react to Paul's speech on the stairs reveals quite a lot about who they were. They listened quietly to Paul's description of his previous life, his encounter with Jesus, and even his conversion by Ananias. However, when Paul mentioned that God sent him to the Gentiles, they reacted with outrage and fury. They simply could not bear the idea that God loved the people who weren't Jews too. How about us? Do we listen patiently to most of the gospel, only to erupt in rage at one particular part? If so, that tells us a great deal about Satan's plan for us. When it comes to God's word, usually the part we don't want to hear is the part we need to.

1. In Acts 21:37, what does Paul do? According to 21:38, why does this surprise the tribune? How big a problem do you think confusion about Christianity was for Christians in the first century?
2. What does Paul want to do in 21:39-40? What does this tell us about Paul's personal courage? When do we need to be courageous as servants of God?

Lesson Eleven: Acts 18:24-19:20

3. What does Paul find in 19:1? What does he learn about them in 19:2-3? How important is it for us to investigate churches we're considering joining?
4. What does Paul do in 19:4? What result does this have in 19:5-6? How will the honest heart react to this kind of instruction?
5. What does Paul do in 19:8-9? According to 19:10, what result does this have? Do the people around us know as much about God? Why or why not?
6. What is Paul able to accomplish in 19:11-12? By contrast, what happens to the impostors in 19:13-16? What does this teach us about the difference between genuine and fake Christianity?
7. What do we see new Christians doing in 19:18-19? How much did this cost them? What things that are precious to us do we have to give up for Jesus?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Twelve

Acts 19:21-41

Introduction: Consequences of the Gospel

The main character of this part of Acts isn't an apostle or even a Christian at all. It's Demetrius, a pagan silversmith who made what were essentially souvenirs for visitors to the temple of Artemis. Demetrius realized that the more Christians there were, the fewer Artemis-worshipers there would be, and the less income there would be for him. He stirred up a riot against Paul not for ideological reasons, but for commercial ones. Just as was true for Demetrius, the gospel will often cause us to lose things in our lives that we value, whether they be friends or activities. When that happens, we need to share the heart of Christ, who gave up everything for God.

1. What intention does Paul express in Acts 19:21? From what we know of Paul's future, what happens? What does this tell us about how we should plan for the future?
2. What event does 19:23 describe? What motivation for this appears in 19:24-25? Who today opposes the gospel for similar reasons?

Lesson Sixteen: Acts 21:17-36

3. What solution do the elders recommend in 21:23-24? What would Paul prove by doing this? Are there times when we might need to act in a certain way to deal with rumors? When?
4. How could Paul have reacted to the elders' request? According to 21:26-27, how did he react? What can we learn from him in this?
5. What do Jews from Asia do in 21:27-28? How does 21:29 explain why? What's the big deal about that? Nehemiah 13:1-3 may help.
6. In 21:30, what do the people do to Paul? In 21:31-32, how is Paul saved? What would it have been like to be Paul then?
7. According to 21:33, is Paul out of trouble yet? What happens to him in 21:34-35? How intense is this mob scene?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Sixteen

Acts 21:17-36

Introduction: Gossip

This section of Acts 21 is certainly one of the most gossipy contexts in the Bible. When Paul is interacting with other Christians, he has to deal with rumors that he is teaching Jews to forsake the Law. When he's interacting with non-Christian Jews, he is assaulted because of a rumor that he has brought a Gentile into the temple. For some strange reason, gossip tends to be one of the sins we don't object to as much--possibly because it's so easy for us to engage in it. However, we need to remember that when we spread malicious stories about another, those stories do more than amuse us. They damage reputations and perhaps even ruin lives.

1. What does Paul do in Acts 21:18-19? How do James and the elders react to this in 21:20? How should we react when we hear good news about the spread of the gospel?
2. What group do James and the elders bring up in 21:20-21? What have they been told about Paul? How big a problem can spreading rumors be?

Lesson Twelve: Acts 19:21-41

3. What two fears does Demetrius express in 19:27? Do these fears eventually happen despite his efforts? What can we learn from this about the usefulness of opposing God?
4. According to 19:28, how is Demetrius' speech initially taken? What result of this does 19:29 describe? Can people today behave similarly? When?
5. In 19:30-31, what does Paul want to do? How do his friends react to this? When, if ever, should we similarly remain silent?
6. Who attempts to make a defense in 19:33? What reaction does he meet with in 19:34? How can we avoid reaching the point with others when they refuse to listen to us?
7. In 19:35, who eventually addresses the crowd? What advice does he give in 19:36-40? What risks do we run when we similarly act on emotion?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Thirteen

Acts 20:1-16

Introduction: The First Day of the Week

The way that Scripture is written, not everything that we need to do is spelled out in excruciating detail. If that were the case, the Bible would be too large for any of us to comprehend or even lift! Instead, in discerning God's will, we often must apply the larger principles of the word or look to what the first-century Christians did for our example. Acts 20:7 is one place where this is necessary. In this context, we see Paul and other Christians delaying their journey in Troas for a week, so that they could come together on the first day of the week to "break bread"--partake of the Lord's Supper. Their example is why we do the same thing each Lord's Day.

Without reference to a map, sketch on a black- or whiteboard a map of the eastern/central Mediterranean, and locate the following places on it as best you are able. Then, with the help of a map, correct your earlier sketch.

1. Macedonia
2. Troas
3. Miletus
4. Tyre
5. Caesarea
6. Jerusalem
7. Damascus
8. Fair Havens
9. Phoenix
10. Malta
11. Puteoli
12. Rome

Lesson Fifteen: Acts 21:1-16

3. Whom do we (re)meet in 21:8? How long has he been there? What does this tell us about Acts as a historical account?
4. Who else shows up in 21:10? Where have we seen him before? Why are all these people from the early part of Acts showing up again?
5. What does Agabus reveal to Paul in 21:11? How do the disciples take this in 21:12? How would you react if you were there?
6. How does Paul answer the disciples in 21:13? What response do they give in 21:14? Why would Paul say this (and act accordingly)?
7. What happens in 21:15-16? Where do the companions stay during their time in Jerusalem? What can we learn from this about the importance of hospitality to other Christians?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Fifteen

Acts 21:1-16

Introduction: Philip the Evangelist

In Acts 8, it appears that Philip, one of the remaining six deacons, is going to be one of the rising stars of the church. He converts many in the regions of Samaria, and also teaches the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch. When last we see him, in Acts 8:40, he has come to Caesarea. In Acts 21, about 25 years later, he's still in Caesarea, without having gotten a single bit of publicity from the Holy Spirit in the intervening decades. God moved Philip from center stage to backstage. Sometimes, the same thing happens to us. We feel like we're working hard for God, but others are getting all the glory. In such times, let's remember that only God's praise matters.

1. Where is Paul in Acts 21:34? What do the disciples there tell him? In that situation, what would you do if you were Paul?
2. What are Paul and his companions doing in 21:5-6? What do the disciples in Tyre do at this time? What lesson do you think that taught their children?

Lesson Thirteen: Acts 20:1-16

1. Who are Paul's companions for the journey home, as listed in Acts 20:4? How many of them are from places Paul preached? What does this tell us about a side benefit of teaching others?
2. How are Paul's travels described in 20:6? What apparent reason for this delay is provided in 20:7? How does this help us understand when we should partake of the Lord's Supper?
3. What does Paul do in 20:7? Why? When might we behave in the same way?
4. What does Paul continue to do in 20:9? What effect does this have on one of his listeners? What can we learn from this about sleeping in church? (kidding!)
5. As described in 20:11-12, what eventually happens to Eutychus? How long does Paul end up talking for? If you had the chance to listen to Paul from sunset to sunrise, would you take it? Why or why not?

To the Gentiles



Lesson Fourteen

Acts 20:17-38

Introduction: From Among Your Own Selves

Paul's address to the Ephesian elders is probably one of the most difficult of his sermons either to present or to listen to. Paul had loved and worked with these men for years, and now was certain he'd never see them again. However, perhaps the most shocking part of this message was when he warned the elders that some of them would fall away from the faith, become false teachers, and tear apart the flock with which God had entrusted them. This is a sobering warning to us too. If it is possible for an elder to betray Christ, it is possible for any one of us. We must always be on our guard against the devil, lest by one of his schemes he entrap us eternally.

1. Where is Paul in 20:17? What does he do there? Why?



Sermon Spotlight: Acts 13:16-47

2. Who is Paul's audience here?

Lesson Fourteen: Acts 20:17-38

3. What does Paul want to accomplish? Be specific!

4. What point(s) does he make? How does he support them?

5. How is his presentation tailored to the audience?

6. What do we get out of it?

7. According to Acts 20:36-38, how is Paul's sermon received? How is this reception different from the ones that previous sermons got? Why do you think the elders react in this way?