

# Studying God's Word

## Book H

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A Chronological Study

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of the

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Book of Acts

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Darrel A. Trulson

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2000 Printing

2017 Printing

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A PUBLICATION OF



***Christian Liberty Press***

502 W. Euclid Avenue  
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004

[www.homeschools.org](http://www.homeschools.org)

***Studying God's Word Book H — A Chronological Study of the Book of Acts***

ISBN 1-930092-68-7

Printed in the United States of America

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## Preface

One of the primary goals of the *Studying God's Word* series is to encourage students to conform their thinking to the standard of God's revealed Word. When students begin to bring every one of their thoughts into captivity to God's Word, they begin to realize the joy of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

In this series, a strong emphasis is placed on the need for young people to develop strong Christian character traits. Students are not only presented with important facts and truths from the Bible, they are also provided with a wealth of personal examples from the lives of God's people that illustrate the truths they need to comprehend.

In addition, this series utilizes a chronological approach to Bible study so young people can better understand the timing and order of the key events listed throughout Scripture. This approach permits students to gain an accurate understanding of the flow of events contained in the Bible.

It has often been said that these are the times that try men's souls. Modern American culture is confronting God's people, both young and old alike, with many challenging trials and temptations. More than ever before, young people need to be equipped with the whole armor of God's Word so they can withstand the fiery darts of the wicked one. May the Lord use this Bible Study series to equip his children with the spiritual weapons that they need to fight the good fight of faith.

Michael J. McHugh  
Curriculum Director

Dr. Paul D. Lindstrom  
Superintendent of Schools

## How to Use this Book

If you are like most people, you may forget to read the instructions or directions for something until you are half finished with it and then discover you did something wrong. In order to understand this book and learn the most from it, **please read this section first!**

There are several types of learning tools woven into this book; each has a specific intention and purpose. The main body of the book consists of Bible lessons. These are taken exclusively from the book of Acts. Each lesson begins with a time line and the words "You Are Here" indicating the approximate historical location of the story taught in the lesson. The time line is presented in an effort to tie together the stories that take place within the Bible. A complete presentation of the time line is given in Appendix A. Within the time line, significant Biblical events are mentioned, including the probable time the various epistles were written. The rectangular box at the bottom of the time line represents the Roman Emperor who was then ruling.

There will be slight differences of opinion regarding the dates on the time line. Because of the nature of the New Testament, it is often difficult to ascertain the exact date each event took place. For example, we know that Paul was martyred around A.D. 68, but we do not know exactly when. Please explain to your student that like any good Bible study book, the information is presented only as a guide and is not inspired. Only the Word of God is inspired.

Following the time line, the lesson will contain the goal, memory verse, and background text. The student is to read the background text before continuing with the lesson. It is up to the individual teacher to decide if the verse is to be memorized for each lesson. All memory verses, lessons, and questions have been taken from the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

Each lesson will contain a few paragraphs in which the author suggests some principles from the text and applications for the student. This is followed by several questions covering the background reading, thought questions, and lesson review questions. Some lessons will have supplemental exercises for the student to do.

The thought questions are intended to be difficult and challenging for the student. There may be times when they will not apply directly to your child, or you may find some questions to be inappropriate. In these instances the question may be omitted. If the student feels more comfortable, he may answer the thought questions orally instead of writing his responses in the book. The purpose of these questions is not to embarrass anyone, but to encourage the reader to think about the truths of God's Word, and then to apply them directly to his life.

## *How to Use this Book*

Additional sections of this book contain Map Studies, Unit Tests, a Book Background, and special information. Unit tests should be taken without the help of this book, the Bible, or any outside source. Teachers should pretest their student before giving him the unit tests. It is recommended to review using similar, but not identical questions to those in the tests. The purpose of this section is to help the teacher judge how much the student has learned. Please review those areas of your child's test answers in which you find weaknesses. Mastery of the material is important. The questions in the unit test will only cover the subject matter presented in that unit.

As you work through these lessons with your child, you will not only discover the joy there is in studying God's Word, but that your student will have many difficult questions that this book does not address and/or you are not prepared to answer. As time permits, consult commentaries, Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, and other kinds of reference material at your disposal. The information gained from these sources will be invaluable to you as you address the difficult questions that arise.

The bibliography in the back of this book contains a good listing of reference material that you should consider adding to your personal library. These tools will prove to be very beneficial as you pursue an understanding of the Holy Scriptures. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

# Introduction to the Chronological Method of Bible Study

Welcome to one of the most important discoveries you will ever make, the discovery of God's Word. Throughout your life, you will have the opportunity to study the Bible. Each time you do, the Holy Spirit will be there to guide and direct your thoughts to help you learn and grow in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the hope and prayer of everyone involved in producing this book that through your study you will grow in the wisdom and understanding of God (Ephesians 1:17-19).

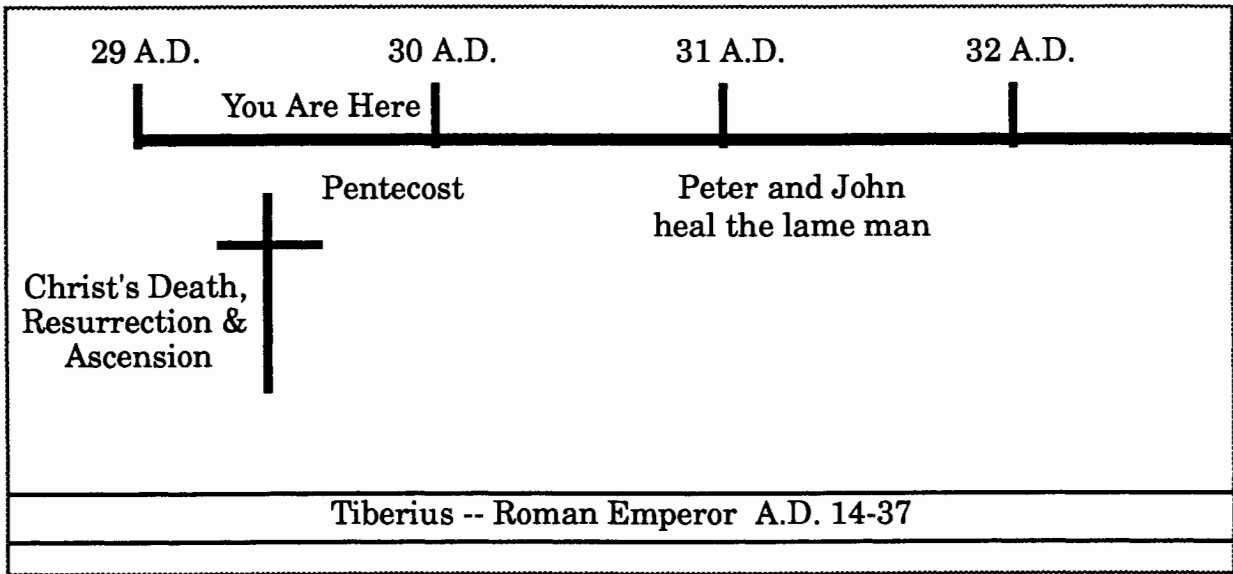
In order to make studying the Bible more interesting and beneficial, this book is written to follow the book of Acts in a Historical - Chronological pattern. We believe it is of utmost importance to you, the student, that as you study the Bible, you understand how all the separate stories and books fit together. Imagine a large jigsaw puzzle of a beautiful mountain village. If you were to take a few pieces from different points and study them individually, could you understand what the complete picture was? Of course not. You need to see all the pieces in the correct pattern in order to understand the "big picture." The Bible is the same way. If all we do is read one story here and another one there, we will not understand the true meaning of God's Word. We have to look at the Bible completely and study it as one unit in order to understand God's "big picture."

Regrettably, time and space do not allow us to cover the whole Bible in this book. The Old Testament is presented in Studying God's Word Book E and Studying God's Word Book F. The Gospels and the life of Christ are reviewed in Studying God's Word Book G. The rest of the New Testament will be covered in subsequent volumes in this series.

The goal and purpose of this book comes directly from Joshua 1:8: "This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." It is the sincere hope of the author and all those at Christian Liberty who were involved in this project that God will use this book as a tool in the spiritual instruction and guidance of your child. May the Lord grant you wisdom and grace as you seek to raise your child in the truths and principles of His Word.



## Peter's First Sermon Lesson #3



**Lesson Goal:** To understand the believer's role in the presentation of the Gospel of Christ.

**Background Text:** Acts 2:14-47

**Memory Verse:** Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12

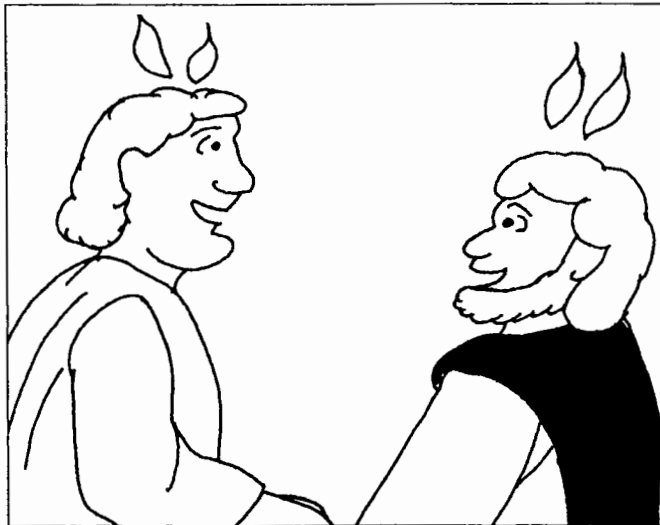
It is important to understand that our message to society is one of hope and salvation. On the day of Pentecost, Peter addressed a large group of people, explaining that Jesus was the risen Messiah. This basic message has not changed for almost two thousand years. You may not have the opportunity like Peter did to speak before thousands of people, but you will have the opportunity to tell someone else about the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we go into the world, what are we to do? Christ commands us in Acts 1:8 to be His witnesses, and in Matthew 28:19-20 to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations..." These instructions are not passive words of advice. They are direct commands to get busy doing the work of the Lord.

Our message to society includes, but is not limited to, explaining God's plan of salvation. Consider for a moment what your message should contain. If you were to follow the example of Peter, you would begin by mentioning that Jesus was a man who historically lived, died, and rose again (Acts 2:22-24). His resurrection put an end to the agony of His death (Acts 2:24). He is now exalted at the right hand of the Father and has sent His Holy Spirit to fill believers (Acts 2:33).

## Peter's First Sermon

The presentation of these truths was not laced with uncontrolled emotion or manipulative appeals. Peter simply stated who Christ was and what He did. Nothing more needed to be said for the people to become convicted of their sin and ask what they needed to do to be saved (Acts 2:37).



Unfortunately, Peter's sermon is unlike many of the evangelistic messages we hear today. Christians sometimes have the tendency to lose sight of their true objective. Instead of presenting the truth that men are sinners and in need of a Savior, they adjust their message so as to make it more acceptable to their listeners. Let us not forget that our responsibility is to present the truth of the Gospel, not to "sell" it or water it down so as to diminish its message.

For some reason, Christians have the tendency to feel guilty if every last person with whom they come in contact is not saved. We should rightly desire that all our evangelistic contacts would repent, but throughout Scripture we find that some are unwilling. Let us not forget that the Holy Spirit is the individual responsible for conviction and salvation of souls. We can be creative with our message as long as we do not lose sight of this important truth. Our responsibility lies in making the presentation of the Gospel and in explaining the facts of Christ's resurrection. God alone does the saving of souls.

### Questions:

1. What was God to pour out upon His people? (Acts 2:17) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What did Peter say would occur in the heavens before the great and notable day of the Lord? (Acts 2:20) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who shall be saved? (Acts 2:21) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. By what was Jesus approved by God among the people? (Acts 2:22) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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5. God promised that Christ would be a descendant of whom? (Acts 2:29-30) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Who are to be the footstool of Christ? (Acts 2:35) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What did Peter tell the people they should do in order to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? (Acts 2:38) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What did the people do after they were baptized? (Acts 2:42) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What did all the believers that were gathered together have in common? (Acts 2:44) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What did the believers do with their possessions? (Acts 2:45) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Thought Questions:

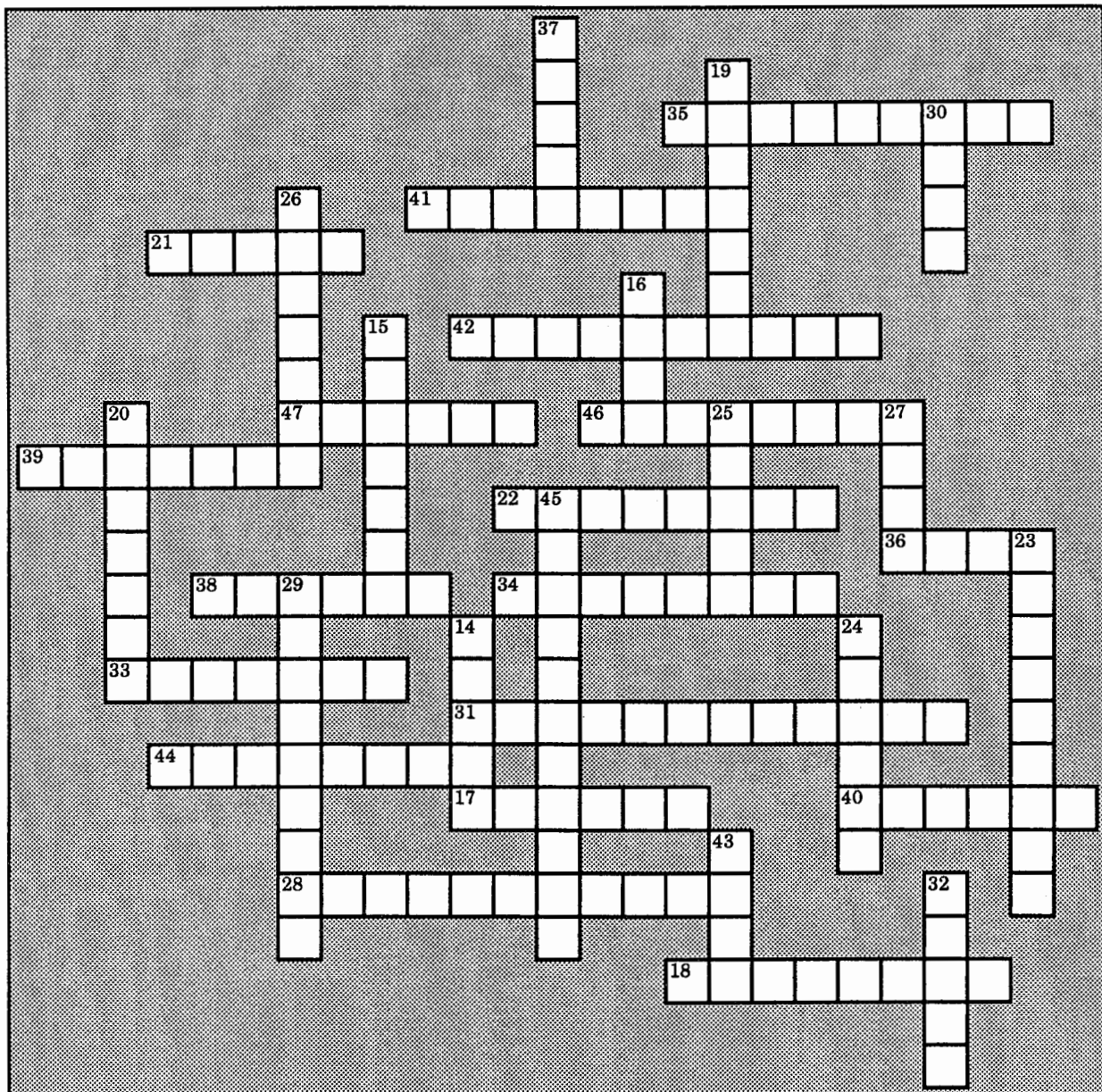
1. Read Acts 2:41-47 again. Describe how you would feel if you were part of this brand new community of believers. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. If one of your friends asked you to tell him or her about what it means to become a Christian, what would your message of salvation contain? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Peter's First Sermon

## Lesson Review:

1. To what book of the Bible do lonely Christians often turn? (Lesson #2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Define "Omniscient" and "Omnipresent." (Lesson #2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the church's social responsibility? (Lesson #1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Supplemental Exercise:** Fill in the Scrabble crossword below with the missing words. One key word has been taken from each verse in this lesson's background text (Acts 2:14-47). The numbers indicate the appropriate verse for each word.



## The Time It Takes to Mature Lesson #12

35 A.D.	36 A.D.	37 A.D.	38 A.D.
You Are Here			
Conversion of Saul		Saul goes to Arabia and returns to Damascus  Paul goes to Jerusalem to see Cephas and James	
			Caligula -- Roman Emperor A.D.37-41

**Lesson Goal:** To understand that growth in the knowledge of God's Word is necessary before God appoints us to responsible roles in the church.

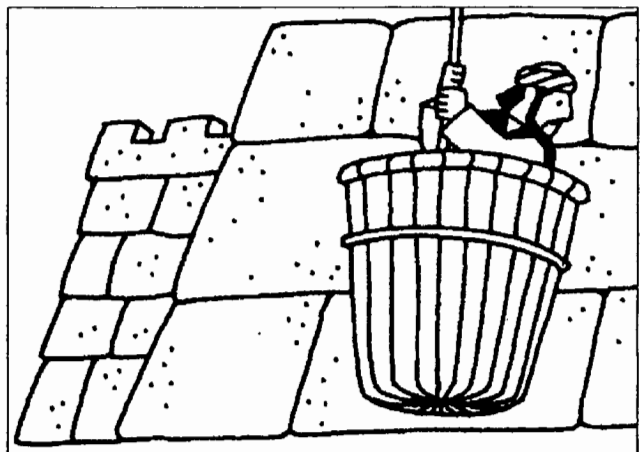
**Background Text:** Acts 9:19-31

**Memory Verse:** But speaking the truth in love, [you] may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. Ephesians 4:15

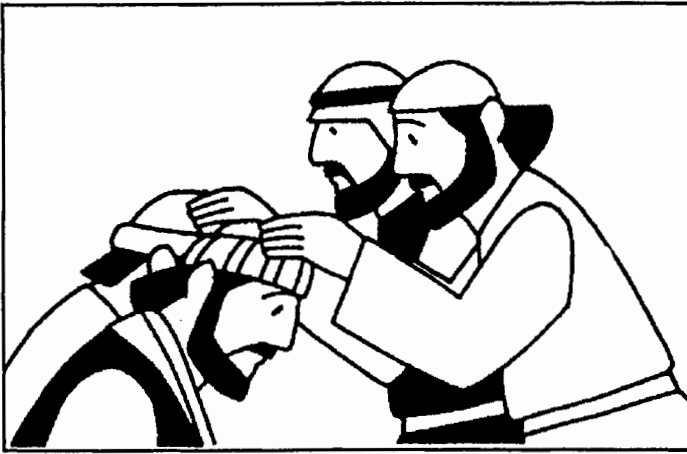
An important fact that many believers forget is that when a person becomes a Christian, he does not immediately know everything there is to know about God's Word. Just as an individual grows from a baby to a child, and then to an adult, a believer grows from spiritual infancy to Christian maturity. This means that as a Christian grows and matures, his responsibilities as a believer should increase.

We have an example of this from the life of the Apostle Paul. As soon as he became a Christian, he began to tell people about Jesus Christ and what the Lord had done in his life. Acts 9:22 says, "But Paul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ."

Paul evangelized immediately upon his conversion, but he was not mature



## The Time It Takes to Mature



enough spiritually to begin his formal ministry. If we compare Acts 9:19-31 to Galatians 1:16-2:1, we can see that several years passed before Paul went on his first missionary journey. Even for the great Apostle, those years were a necessary part of his spiritual development to help him grow into a mature Christian and prepare him for the job he was to do.

There is no secret formula for the spiritual maturity of the believer. It takes years of experience, joy, growth, faith, and discipleship in God's Word. After Paul became a Christian, he demonstrated a great deal of enthusiasm for his new-found faith. Even though it is good for a believer to be excited about his faith in the Lord Jesus, that excitement is not enough to sustain him through the growth period and trials that inevitably come. Many Bible students believe that Paul spent the early years after his conversion working as a tent-maker and advancing his study in the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul already had an excellent understanding of the Old Testament, but now as a believer, he studied it with the Lord Jesus in mind, under the direct illumination of the Holy Spirit.

As believers, it is necessary for us to understand that we need to study God's Word continually. Even though Paul knew that God had called him to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15-16), he did not have any prior knowledge of what he would accomplish. As far as he was concerned, he was studying the Scripture because it was God's Word, a necessity for the believer. Later in his life, Paul commanded Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth." (II Timothy 2:15).

There is a tendency for Christians to become impatient, wondering if God will ever use them for His work. We need to realize that it often takes decades of study and preparation for a believer to grow and mature to a level at which God can assign more responsibility to him. A person does not simply become a doctor by wanting to help people who are sick. It takes at least twelve years of college, medical school, and internship before an individual can begin practicing medicine. Even then, if he wants to specialize in a certain area, it will take several more years of studying and training.

We can expect no less in our own spiritual pilgrimage. One of the biggest mistakes a church leader can make is to give an immature Christian too much responsibility before he is capable of handling it. Paul cautions Timothy about making this error in I Timothy 3:6. Here, he explains that a qualification for being a bishop is that he not be a novice, or new believer. This does not necessarily mean young in years, but in spiritual maturity.

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Please understand that there is a balance to this teaching. Paul was immediately active as a believer, telling others about the Lord Jesus, but he also had to grow and mature as a Christian before he was given greater amounts of responsibility. If you feel impatient, wondering where God will lead and direct you, please be assured that your situation is not unique. This does not mean that you cannot become active in your local church, or that you cannot use your gifts and abilities to serve the Lord now. But, understand that before you can expect to serve God in a larger capacity, you first need to prepare yourself through the study of Scriptures.

**Questions:** Please indicate your answer with either True or False.

1. \_\_\_\_ Saul preached the Law in the synagogue. (Acts 9:20)
2. \_\_\_\_ Saul had previously destroyed the people who followed Christ. (Acts 9:21)
3. \_\_\_\_ The Jews wanted to kill Saul. (Acts 9:23)
4. \_\_\_\_ The disciples led the Jews against Saul. (Acts 9:25)
5. \_\_\_\_ Barnabas defended Saul before the Apostles. (Acts 9:27)
6. \_\_\_\_ Saul was with the Apostles. (Acts 9:28)
7. \_\_\_\_ Saul spoke cautiously and fearfully in the name of Christ. (Acts 9:29)
8. \_\_\_\_ The brethren sent Saul away from Tarsus. (Acts 9:30)
9. \_\_\_\_ The churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria were edified and multiplied. (Acts 9:31)
10. \_\_\_\_ The Holy Ghost comforted the churches. (Acts 9:31)

**Thought Questions:**

1. Think of another Biblical character who spent years of preparation before God gave him/her more responsibility. How did God prepare this person for his/her ministry? What did this individual eventually accomplish for the Lord. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. In what areas of your life do you need to mature? \_\_\_\_\_

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# The Time It Takes to Mature

## Lesson Review:

1. How can we strengthen our hope, confidence, and faith in God? (Lesson #11)

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2. What did Stephen do when he was brought before the High Priest?  
(Lesson #9)

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3. What is the root cause of poverty? (Lesson #8)

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**Supplemental Exercise:** Find and circle the words listed in the word search puzzle. Words may be forward, backward, horizontal, vertical, or diagonal. The letters that are not used form a hidden message. Reading from left to right, top to bottom, fill in the unused letters in the blank spaces to reveal the message.

S	A	U	L	W	T	C	A	E	S	A	R	E	A	H	G
S	T	E	C	A	H	D	E	S	A	E	R	C	N	I	A
E	A	R	U	L	M	U	L	T	I	P	L	I	E	D	L
L	E	R	E	L	C	D	D	A	Y	H	S	E	S	N	I
T	M	J	O	N	R	O	B	Y	E	S	E	T	A	G	L
S	S	Y	N	A	G	O	G	U	E	S	L	E	B	R	E
O	D	P	E	F	L	T	H	G	I	N	P	K	A	E	E
P	E	H	O	D	K	S	H	A	C	J	I	S	N	C	M
A	E	N	L	G	A	I	O	E	I	U	C	A	R	I	E
N	O	Y	G	M	D	R	L	O	N	D	S	B	A	A	L
S	N	I	A	E	N	H	T	L	H	E	I	L	B	N	A
E	F	R	Z	S	U	C	S	A	M	A	D	E	A	S	S
A	I	A	R	O	F	T	T	A	R	S	U	S	H	Y	U
A	M	C	O	N	F	O	U	N	D	E	D	E	W	L	R
A	F	R	A	I	D	O	L	E	S	N	U	O	C	E	E
D	E	S	T	R	O	Y	E	D	R	D	S	U	S	E	J

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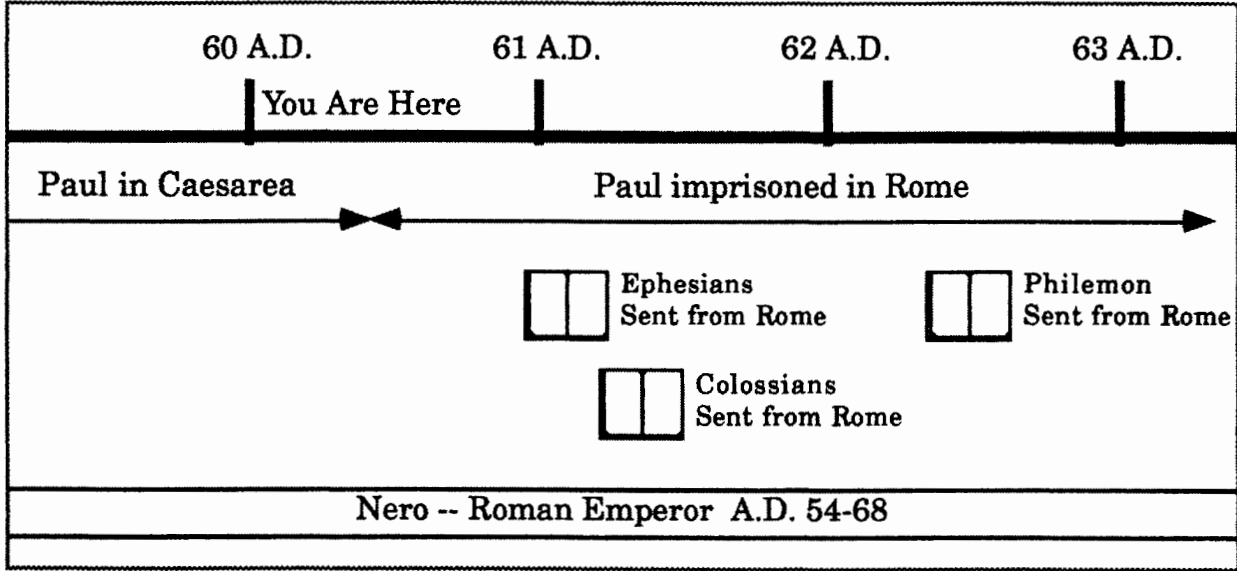
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- |            |           |            |              |
|------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| AFRAID     | COUNSEL   | INCREASED  | SAMARIA      |
| AMAZED     | DAMASCUS  | JERUSALEM  | SAUL         |
| APOSTLES   | DAY       | JESUS      | SLAY         |
| BARNABAS   | DESTROYED | JEWS       | SON OF GOD   |
| BASKET     | DISCIPLES | JUDEA      | STRENGTHENED |
| BOLDLY     | GALILEE   | KILL       | SYNAGOGUES   |
| CAESAREA   | GATES     | MEAT       | TARSUS       |
| CHRIST     | GRECIANS  | MULTIPLIED | WALL         |
| CONFOUNDED | HEARD     | NIGHT      |              |



# Political Powers

## Lesson #40



**Lesson Goal:** To understand the historical role the political and religious leaders played during the time of the New Testament church.

**Background Text:** Acts 25:1-27

**Memory Verse:** For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39

As we study the New Testament, it can be quite confusing to understand who all the different political and religious leaders were and what positions they held. For instance, how could Agrippa be the King if Nero was the emperor? What authority did the Jewish High Priest hold if the Romans were in control of Israel? How were the governors different from the High Priests?

To answer these questions and understand the division of power during this time,



we may categorize these rulers into three different groups. The first and most powerful group were the Romans. Through their military, the Romans controlled most of the known world, which included the land of Palestine. Scattered around the different geographic regions were governors who oversaw the territory

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and reported to Caesar. When Christ was crucified, Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea. Years later, Antonius Felix, followed by Porcius Festus, were governors when Paul was arrested and brought to Caesarea. A simple way to look at this is to understand that the land of Judea was like a police state, controlled indirectly by the Roman military. Given this military presence, the Romans allowed the political and religious orders of the Jews to co-exist, as long as their plans and government did not interfere with that of their empire. Even though most of the Jews despised the presence of the Romans in their country, the common man had most of his freedoms and was able to pursue his interests as he chose.

The second influential group in Palestine during the time of the New Testament was the family of Herod. King Agrippa, before whom Paul appeared, was a member of this powerful but evil family. To understand how wicked some of these individuals were, one needs to consider that King Agrippa's great-grandfather, Herod the Great, tried to kill the infant Jesus at Bethlehem; the brother of Agrippa's grandfather (Herod Antipas) judged Jesus at His trial; Agrippa's aunt, Herodias, plotted the death of John the Baptist; and Agrippa's father, Herod Agrippa I, had the Apostle James killed and Peter thrown into prison. These kings, who worked in conjunction with Rome, oversaw the political realm of Palestine. Although they ultimately had to answer to the Roman governor and had to give their allegiance to Caesar, they were still very powerful and influential in the land of Palestine.

**HEROD AGRIPPA I**  
Father of Agrippa II  
Killed Apostle James (Acts 12:1-2); put Peter into prison (12:3-11).

**HEROD of CHALCIS**  
Uncle of Agrippa II  
Married Bernice his niece.

**HERODIAS**  
Aunt of Agrippa II  
Plotted death of John the Baptist.

**HEROD AGRIPPA II**  
King of Judea A.D. 53-93. Listened to Paul's defense in Caesarea.

**DRUSILLA**  
Sister of Agrippa II  
Wife of procurator Felix before whom Paul was tried (Acts 23:26-24:27).

**BERNICE**  
Sister of Agrippa II  
Married her uncle, Herod Chalcis; with King Agrippa II at Paul's trial.

## Political Powers



The third and final group that wielded power in Palestine were the high priests. The position of high priest was mostly controlled by the family of Annas during the time of Christ and the Apostles. In some ways, the religious leaders under the direction of the high priest were actually

more powerful than the kings or even the governors. Since they controlled the temple, synagogues, and religious order of the land, they were in a position to tell the people what they could and could not do. Even though they did not have the civil authority to try and execute criminals, they often stirred up the crowd to form a mob and carry out their own form of vigilante justice. Although high priests were easily appointed or deposed of by the Roman government, Annas remained a powerful figure even after he stepped down from his office. Because of his influence, five of his sons, his son-in-law Caiaphas, and his grandson Matthias all followed him as high priest. If you will recall, it was Caiaphas who saw to it that Christ was crucified; Annas and Caiaphas opposed Peter and John, commanding them to stop preaching the Gospel. Ananias, who ordered that the Apostle Paul be struck was not related to Annas, but was just as vile and ruthless as his predecessors.

From this lesson it is important to see that Christians should study history. From it we can learn where we came from, what mistakes were made, and possibly gain a better understanding of how to avoid those same mistakes. Secondly, the Bible is a historical book; therefore, when we study God's Word, we must do it from a historical perspective. Through the centuries, God's people have made many mistakes and have had many triumphs. The more we can learn and understand from these mistakes and victories, the better prepared we will be to avoid the defeats and repeat the victories.

**Questions:** Please indicate your answer with either True or False.

1. \_\_\_\_ The High Priest spoke before Festus in Paul's defense. (Acts 25:2)
2. \_\_\_\_ Festus commanded that Paul be sent to Jerusalem. (Acts 25:4)
3. \_\_\_\_ Paul claimed that he was innocent. (Acts 25:8)
4. \_\_\_\_ Paul refused to be tried in Jerusalem. (Act 25:10-11)
5. \_\_\_\_ Paul appealed to Caesar. (Acts 25:11)
6. \_\_\_\_ Festus refused to send Paul to Caesar, despite his appeal. (Acts 25:12)
7. \_\_\_\_ King Agrippa and Bernice came to visit Festus. (Acts 25:13)
8. \_\_\_\_ Agrippa said that he did not want to hear Paul. (Acts 25:22)
9. \_\_\_\_ Festus did not want Paul to testify before Agrippa because he would appear innocent. (Acts 25:26)
10. \_\_\_\_ Festus had Paul testify so that he could write Paul's charges down in a letter to Caesar. (Acts 25:27)

## Studying God's Word Book H

### Thought Questions:

1. What mistakes have you made in the past and what have you learned from them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What victories have you had in the past and what have you learned from them?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Lesson Review:

1. What did Paul want the Christians to imitate? (Lesson #39) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What attitude is sinful because it signifies that we think ourselves greater than God? (Lesson #38) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why may God bring changes and/or tests into our lives? (Lesson #34) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supplemental Exercise: Translate this Greek passage from I John 5:11 into English. The dictionary can be found in Appendix C.

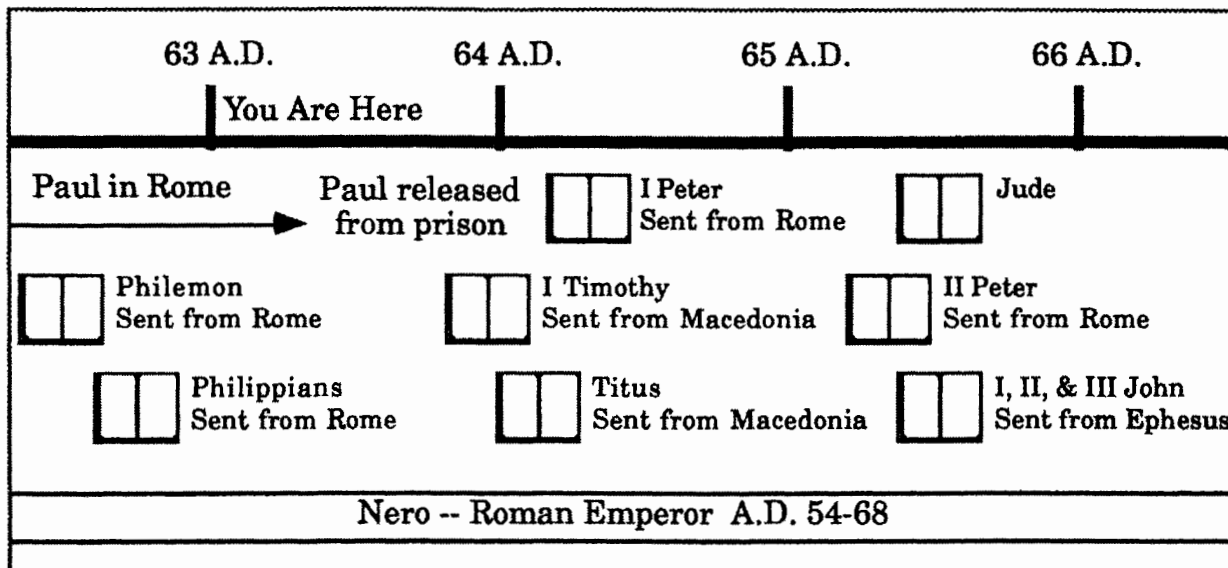
ΚΑΙ ΑΥΤΗ ΕΣΤΙΝ Η ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΑ,

ΟΤΙ ΖΩΗΝ ΑΙΩΝΙΟΝ ΕΔΩΚΕΝ

ΗΜΙΝ Ο ΘΕΟΣ, ΚΑΙ ΑΥΤΗ Η ΖΩΗ

ΕΝ ΤΩ ΥΙΩ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΕΣΤΙΝ.

## The End of the Road Lesson #43



**Lesson Goal:** To understand the responsibility that Christians have as good stewards.

**Background Text:** Acts 28:1-31

**Memory Verse:** I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. II Timothy 4:7-8

As our study in the book of Acts draws to a conclusion, we cannot help but notice that the story line ends rather abruptly. Acts does not have an ending that is common in most books written these days. Instead, Luke concludes his narrative with Paul waiting in Rome to be tried by Caesar.

History tells us that after a couple of years in Rome, Paul received an audience with Nero, was found innocent of any charges, and was released. Paul then went on another missionary journey, possibly even going to Spain (Romans 15:24, 28). Around A.D. 65, Paul was again arrested and brought to Nero in Rome. This time the Apostle was found guilty and was condemned to be executed.

It is difficult to say why Luke ended the book of Acts the way he did and opted not to include any of this later information. Some have suggested that he intended to write a second part to the book, but never accomplished it. It is my belief that Luke concluded the book of Acts with an open ending because he understood that the growth, development, and continual ministry of the church did not end when

## The End of the Road

his book did. Even though Paul's personal ministry concluded when he was beheaded, it did not diminish the impact that the church continued to have upon society.



The Apostle Peter writes in I Peter 1:10, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (NASV). A steward is a person who has been entrusted to take care of something. The steward of a house is responsible to the owner for the home. If the steward lets the house fall into disrepair, he must answer to the owner. In the same way, we have been given a stewardship by God to be witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we fail in that endeavor, then we must one day answer to God as to why.

Our stewardship entails that we first of all live a holy life free from immorality and wickedness (I Thessalonians 4:7; II Timothy 2:22; James 1:27). There are many temptations to lead us away from our spiritual walk with the Lord, but we need to, "Consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry" (Colossians 3:5, NASV). Romans 12:2 also emphasizes that, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Our stewardship also means that we fulfill the calling that God has given us (II Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 3:1). In Matthew 5:13-16, our Lord commands his followers to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Light is important because it illuminates the darkness and thereby shows people where to go. Salt is necessary because it is used both as a preservative so food does not spoil and a flavor enhancer so food tastes better. Together as light and salt, the believer can show the unsaved where to turn for hope, act as a preservative against sin, and enhance life by demonstrating that it has meaning and purpose when people follow the Lord.

Today as the church furthers its efforts to evangelize the world and make disciples of all nations, the book of Acts continues to be written through the lives and actions of those who call Christ Jesus their Lord and Savior. We are the Pauls, Peters, Aquillas, Priscillas, Marks, and Lydias of the twentieth century. With us proceeds the hope of the Gospel and the message that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). Through every trial and victory we face, another chapter is written in the annals of church history as God's people carry on the work entrusted to them.

### Questions:

1. What did the barbarous people do for Paul and the people from the ship?  
(Acts 28:2) \_\_\_\_\_

## Studying God's Word Book H

2. What fastened on to Paul's hand? (Acts 28:3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What did the barbarous people think Paul was when they saw the venomous  
beast hanging on to his hand? (Acts 28:4) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What was wrong with the father of Publius? (Acts 28:8) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. After three days, who did Paul call together in Rome? (Acts 28:17) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What did the Jews desire to hear? (Acts 28:22) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Out of what did Paul persuade them concerning Jesus? (Acts 28:23) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What was waxed gross? (Acts 28:27) \_\_\_\_\_
9. To whom was the salvation of God sent? (Acts 28:28) \_\_\_\_\_
10. How long did Paul dwell in his own hired house? (Acts 28:30) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Thought Questions:

1. Why do you think Luke ended the book of Acts so abruptly? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What do you hope to accomplish for God's Kingdom in your lifetime? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Lesson Review:

1. Why is the believer's spiritual life like a computer? (Lesson #41) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who were the governors of Judea when Paul was arrested and brought to  
Caesarea? (Lesson #40) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who did Paul's nephew warn about the plot against the Apostle's life?  
(Lesson #38) \_\_\_\_\_