

ACTS

CHURCH ON MISSION

GUIDEBOOK

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Term 4 | 2025

WEEKEND
OCT 4-6

**Y Conference
Young Adults**



WEEK OF
OCT 7-9

**Growth Groups
Term 4 Launch**

JOIN A
Growth Group



SUNDAY
OCT 12

**Elvanto
Helpdesk**



SATURDAY
OCT 18

Working Bee



SUNDAY NIGHT
OCT 19

**Crosstalk
Trinity**

 crosstalk


KNOWING GOD AS
TRINITY

SUNDAY
OCT 26

**Celebration
Sunday**

 CHRIST CENTRAL

Celebration Sunday

SUNDAY
NOV 2

Startup



WEEKEND
NOV 7-9

**Seniors
Getaway**



SUNDAY
NOV 16

**MTS & Trainees
Celebration BBQ**



SATURDAY
NOV 29

**Youth
Aqua Park**


SATURDAY
20 NOVEMBER

SATURDAY
DEC 6

**Creative Christmas
for Women**



SUNDAY
DEC 7

**Kids Christmas
Breakup**



SUNDAY
DEC 14

Carols



Retirees Group **1st Wed in the Month** 

Young Adults All-In **1st Sun in the Month** 

ACTS

CHURCH ON MISSION

ACTS

CHURCH ON MISSION

There's a show going around called 'Who Do You Think You Are?' where various celebrities go on an historical investigative journey of tracing their ancestry and roots. But did you know that Christians, and in fact, we as a church at Christ Central, can go on our own historical investigative journey of tracing our spiritual ancestry and roots? We can do this because we have the original first century record of what took place when God gave birth to His church.

This historical record has been traditionally called 'Acts of the Apostles'. But in fact, would it be more accurate to call it, 'Acts of God the Father' or 'Acts of the Holy Spirit' or 'Acts of Jesus Christ'. We'll be thinking about this as we go along. Acts is the sequel to Luke's first volume and it's worth putting his two introductions side by side. Luke said:

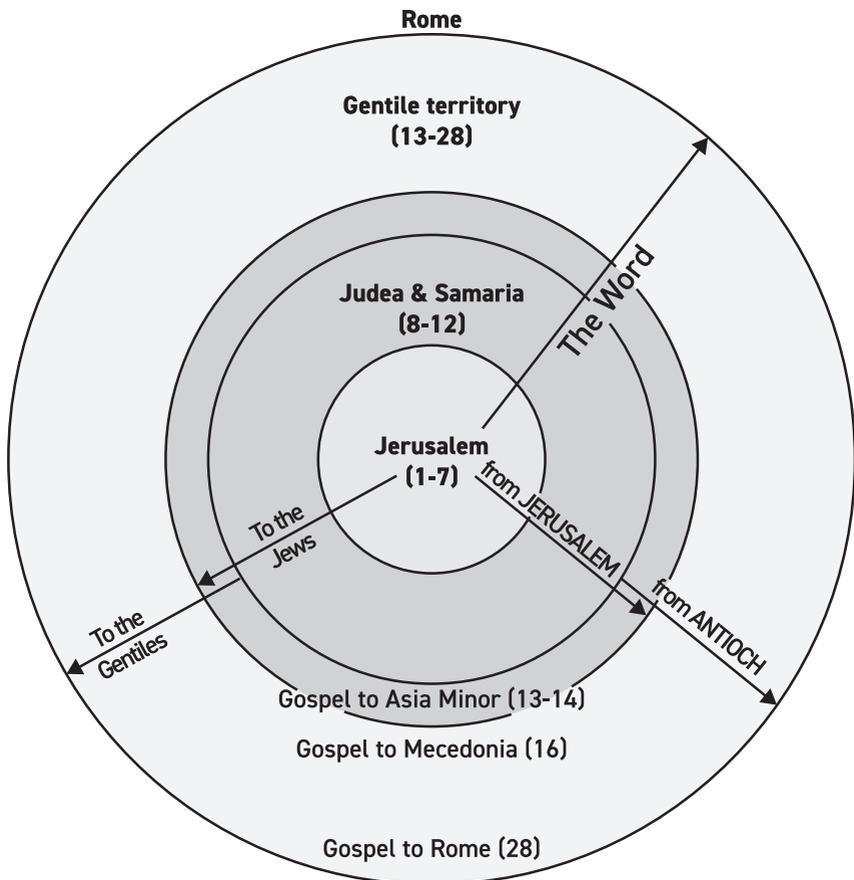
Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Luke 1:1-4

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Acts 1:1-2

So Acts is an account of history, but it's also the exciting story of God who was breaking barriers as the gospel of the resurrected Lord Jesus went outwards. Those barriers were - spiritual forces, political authorities, layers of wealth, and gender. But also, the story of Acts shows us that God was breaking through into new regions and across the ethnic divide of Jew and Gentile. This is certainly what we see in this next part of the story, Acts 11-15. Take a look at the diagram below. You can see that we're now moving into the time when the mission of the church truly starts to go beyond the 'gospel-ground-zero' of Jerusalem, and into Gentile regions, as the apostle Paul carries Jesus' message onwards. But this story is not simply about one apostle on mission. In fact, as we'll see, many people were involved, and it's a story that's meant to challenge and encourage all of us. Today, with our church, we are still on mission too!



STUDY 1

BARNABAS WITH A BIG-HEART

ACTS 11:19-30

In today's passage we'll look at a spiritually impressive person, Barnabas, who was 'big-hearted' in many ways. Name one person in your life who has been spiritually impressive/influential person for you?

EXPLORING TOGETHER

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Read Acts 11:19-30 and take some time to fill in the sections below.



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DIGGING DEEPER

1. In some ways Acts 11:19-30 is not a bad place to restart our journey in the book of Acts, because we have mentioned here three people who've already been part of story:

a. According to Acts 8:1-2, what do we know of *Stephen's* impact on the spread of the gospel?

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b. According to Acts 4:36-37 and Acts 9:22-30, what do we know about *Barnabas*?

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c. According the above passages in Acts, what do we know about *Saul/Paul*?

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It's worth noting that we sometimes lose sight of the timeline of the events of Acts. There's perhaps been a period of up to seven or eight years between when we last heard of Paul in Acts 9:30 and this moment in Acts 11!

2. In the following map, circle and mark with arrows the locations and movements of people in the story of Acts 11:19-30.



3. How does v21 give a good description of Christian conversion?

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4. Why do you think some scattered Christians are speaking the word only to Jews, while others are bringing the gospel to Greeks?

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5. Why do you think Barnabas was sent to Antioch?

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Naturally enough, we have questions about Agabus! For now, we can note that he's a prophet who we'll meet again in Acts 21:7-14. We also will meet some prophets in Acts 13:1 and 15:32.



ACTS & OUR CHURCH

1. What makes Barnabas such an impressive person for us?

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2. Barnabas was a guy who could spot the grace of God and be glad for the Lord at work. In what ways can we sadly not be big-hearted like Barnabas i.e. suspicious, resistant or resentful?

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3. What's the answer to having our hearts enlarged like Barnabas?

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4. How does Barnabas' ministry that's described at the end of v23 give you challenge or encouragement, in terms of pursuing gospel ministry yourself?

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PRAYER

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STUDY 2

UNSTOPPABLE GOSPEL

ACTS 12:1-25

What do you think are the biggest obstacles to the spread of the gospel of Jesus in our society today?

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Read Acts 12:1-25 and take some time to fill in the sections below.



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DIGGING DEEPER

1. The story of Acts will soon move to Paul's various missionary journeys around the Mediterranean as he brings the gospel to the Gentiles, but in chapter 12 we have this final focus on the apostle Peter. Peter has been put in prison previously by the Jewish Sanhedrin. **Read Acts 4:1-4; 4:23-31; Acts 5:17-32.** When you compare these imprisonment moments with Acts 12, what similarities do you see?

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2. How is Peter portrayed in the events of Acts 12?

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3. How is the demise of Herod in keeping with how God has been working throughout the events recorded in the book of Acts?

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For those who enjoy historical writing, we can also refer to the Jewish writer Josephus who at the time gave his own description of the death of Agrippa I:

Now when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Cesarea, which was formerly called Strato's Tower...On the second day of which shows he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theater early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, ... and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another, (though not for his good,) that he was a god;...A severe pain also arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. ... And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age...

Antiquities of the Jews (19:8:2).



ACTS & OUR CHURCH

1. John Stott gives a helpful summary: "The chapter starts with James dead, Peter in prison, and Herod triumphing; it closes with Herod dead, Peter free and the word of God triumphing". This was a moment in Acts, but how does this help us see tyrants today in a proper light?

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2. How should the activities of the early church encourage and challenge us today?

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PRAYER

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STUDY 3

SENT BY THE SPIRIT

ACTS 13:1-12

When you think of the activity of the Holy Spirit, what comes to your mind?

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DIGGING DEEPER

Chapter 13 is a watershed moment in the story of Acts. Rather than Jerusalem, the northern metropolitan city of Antioch becomes the sending base for Christian missionaries to now take the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. This is a new phase in the fulfillment of Jesus' words:

But 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

Mark on the map opposite the route taken by missionaries Barnabas, Saul and John in Acts 13:1-12.

1. What is it about the church in Antioch (v1-3) that shows us that the first missionary journey in Acts is no private travel adventure, but something very much 'of God'?

2. A few weeks ago, we had a Crosstalk on the Trinity – God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We hope that presentation was helpful. How are persons of the Trinity shown in the events of Acts 13:1-12?

3. No doubt we're given a striking picture of the Holy Spirit who speaks and sends (v2-4). How do we think the Holy Spirit did this?



4. Did you notice a subtle shift in the way Saul is portrayed? Up until now, it's been the order of names, 'Barnabas and Saul' (11:30; 12:25; 13:7), but then in 13:9 we're told about Saul's second name 'Paul' (he was probably given multiple names at birth. Saul was his Jewish name and Paul was his Roman name). Then in 13:13, there's a notable shift again. What do you think Luke the writer is showing us?

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ACTS & OUR CHURCH

1. How should the church in Antioch challenge and inspire us as a church?

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2. What will it take for our own church, Christ Central to send out more gospel workers and missionaries?

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PRAYER

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STUDY 4

ON GOD'S MISSION

ACTS 14:1-28

Can you think of a time you received mixed responses from others to something you said or did? What was that like for you?

EXPLORING TOGETHER

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Read Acts 13:13-52 and take some time to fill in the sections below.



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DIGGING DEEPER

1. Go back to the map on the previous study and trace the next steps in Paul's missionary journey. As you look back to where Paul had already travelled on this trip, what are some key events that have occurred already?

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2. Here we see the only detailed account of Paul's words in a Jewish synagogue. Although the content of these addresses would have likely been repeated to the multiple synagogues visited in Paul's ministry, this is the only time Luke records what Paul would say on these occasions. Does anything stand out to you?

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3. Paul was known to the Pharisees having been one himself prior to his conversion. Why then, would he have been invited to speak a "Word of exhortation" (13:15) in a synagogue?

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4. Paul begins his word of encouragement by recounting significant moments in the gospel story so far; beginning with the historical events from the exodus, to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Paul then concludes by presenting a clear choice between life and death. What was the purpose of recounting significant moments in Israel's history before reaching the message of the cross?

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5. Later in the passage Paul and Barnabas continue preaching the gospel and are met with jealousy and abuse from the Jewish leaders (v45). Would you describe aspects of our modern culture as 'jealous'? How can we counteract or respond to that jealousy and malice with gospel-shaped love?

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6. Despite an unfortunate end to their time in Pisidian Antioch, the disciples are still filled with joy and with the Spirit (v49-52). How is this possible in the face of such danger?

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ACTS & OUR CHURCH

1. After leaving the synagogue, Paul and Barnabas continue to speak with the people and urge them to continue in the grace of God (V43). What are some practical ways we can urge our brothers and sisters to continue in the grace of God?

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2. Think of a brother or sister outside your Growth Group. What is a way in which they have encouraged you, and how could you offer an encouragement to them?

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PRAYER

STUDY 5

OPPOSITION & ENCOURAGEMENT

ACTS 14:1-28

Can you think of a time you received mixed responses from others to something you said or did? What was that like for you?

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Read Acts 14:1-28 and take some time to fill in the sections below.



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DIGGING DEEPER

Mark on the map on page 17 the route taken by missionaries Paul and Barnabas, in Acts 14:1-28.

1. We see in both the Gospels and in Acts that miracles accompany the spreading of the Word.

In v3, the writer tells us that the ascended Lord Jesus verifies Paul and Barnabas' bold speaking of the "message of his grace" by signs and wonders that He enables them to do.

a. From this passage, what is this message that Jesus wants people to hear?

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b. What does this verse tell us about Jesus' authority, Jesus' priorities and Jesus' purpose in doing these miracles?

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2. How do various people here respond to Paul and Barnabas? What does this say about their attitudes toward the ascended Jesus and their acceptance of His message?

The Jews and Greeks at Iconium (v1-6)

The lame man at Lystra (v8-10)

The Lycaonian crowd (v11-18)

The Jews from Antioch and Iconium (v19)

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3. What was Paul and Barnabas' reaction to the crowds at Lystra (v14-17)? How can we see their heart for Jesus and their heart for the crowds here?

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4. Paul and Barnabas deeply cared not only about the lost knowing Jesus, but God's people deepening in their relationship with Christ.

Why do you think the disciples in Antioch particularly needed to be strengthened and encouraged during this time?

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How do Paul and Barnabas show pastoral care to the disciples in Antioch? (Consider their actions and words to the disciples in v21-28)

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ACTS & OUR CHURCH

1. When the gospel is proclaimed, we see opposition to the message and suffering of God's people.

How does this reality sit with you? Does this reinforce or challenge your expectations of what our life on earth will look like for us who are in-Christ?

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2. When the gospel is proclaimed, we also see people turning to the Living God and believing in the message of His grace. Not only this, but the gospel continues to encourage already-believers in their walk with Christ. God is committed to expanding His Kingdom and strengthening His people.

How may this reality give you hope, boldness and encouragement as you share Jesus with those whom God has placed in your life (unbelievers and believers)?

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PRAYER

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STUDY 6

PEOPLE UNITE!

ACTS 15:1-35

Describe a moment when you were doing something, and then had someone come along and confidently say that you're doing it wrong – even if you weren't.

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DIGGING DEEPER

1. Why were Paul and Barnabas and others required to go to Jerusalem to sort out this matter, rather than just sorting it out within the church in Antioch?

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2. In v10, what's Peter meaning when he talks about "putting a yoke on [the Gentiles] that neither we nor our ancestors could bear"?

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3. What would the danger have been if Paul and Barnabas were the only ones to take the message back - rather than Barsabbas and Silas returning with them?

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4. In vss 19-21, it almost sounds like James is saying that they should continue to follow the law of Moses, as it is what's taught every Sabbath. Is this actually what he's saying?

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Because of the arrival of the gospel, Old Testament law adherence such as circumcision is no longer needed, but so there can be fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians in the early church, we see in this moment that certain instructions are given. Sexual immorality amongst Gentile people was particularly rife so there was a need to highlight this biblical command, but also, to avoid distress and offense, certain food laws are mentioned. Following these instructions would not enable salvation, but they would help God's people in the early church to grow together.

5. How would it have been an encouragement for the church at Antioch to have the letter read out, and Judas (also called Barsabbas) and Silas be present?

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ACTS & OUR CHURCH

1. What are some of the practical ways that we as a church can be encouraging each other, and helping each other to grow, rather than setting "yokes" on each other?

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2. What are some ways that we can join together with other churches and to help each other to grow?

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PRAYER

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