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# Pastor's Introduction

Acts 1:1-2 states, "I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen." The Acts of the Apostles is part two in a two-part book written by Luke. The Gospel of Luke is the first narrative that he is referring to in these verses. In his Gospel, Luke recorded all the things that Jesus did during His ministry on the earth. It is all the things that "Jesus BEGAN to do." The book of Acts includes all the things that Jesus CONTINUED to do through His church that is birthed on the day of Pentecost. Acts records the ways in which the Holy Spirit guided the church to serve the Lord and spread the gospel to the ends of the earth.

As we dive into the book of Acts, we will examine it in two parts: "The Church Gathered" and "The Church Scattered." Each half of this series will be comprised of ten sermons. During "The Church Gathered" we will learn about what the Holy Spirit was calling the church to be and to do. During "The Church Scattered," we will highlight interactions of the early church as they spread the gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, and the remotest parts of the earth. My prayer is that this series will challenge us to be the church that God desires for us to be and to answer the call to spread the good news. My prayer is that we will see what God CONTINUES to do in His church today.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Green". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ed. TG



**Participant Guide for January 05, 2025**

# **Reasoning w/ the Religious**

Acts 2:1-36

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## **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Have you ever spent a long time waiting for something? A package in the mail? The return of your favorite sports season? The release of a new book or a movie? What was it like to finally experience the thing you had been waiting so long to enjoy?
2. In Acts 2, we witness the fulfillment of numerous prophecies from the Old Testament concerning the Kingdom of God. Go through and identify the prophecies from the Old Testament in this passage. Why are so many prophecies either fulfilled or recognized at this specific point?
3. Read Genesis 11:1-9: At the tower of Babel, the people refused to leave and fill the Earth, so their language was confused. This was God's way of causing the people to scatter forcibly. How is this curse reversed in this passage? How should we also fill the Earth like the people of Babel? Did the people there on the day of Pentecost have the same mandate?
4. Acts 2:5 says the crowd was filled with "devout" people from all over the region, yet Peter still reasoned passionately with them so they would act on the Gospel message. Why is it important for us to proclaim the Gospel and reason with people who claim to be religious?

## Respond

- **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated?**
- ◆ This week, make a plan to share the Gospel with or encourage someone this week who claims to be religious. Ask someone in your group to hold you accountable for doing this.

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**Participant Guide January 12, 2025**

# **Reasoning w/ the Doubting**

Acts 3:1-10

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## **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Have you ever seen something you didn't quite believe? We live in a world of computer effects, AI, viral marketing, and rapid technological advancement. These factors often cause us to doubt the claims we hear and the things we see. What have you seen recently that has caused you to doubt? Was it because of the event or the people involved? Did you walk away or seek more evidence?
2. In Acts 3, Peter and John stop and address the needs of a man they encounter on their way to the temple. Why is it important to address the immediate physical needs of those around us?
3. After this miracle, Peter and John see the doubts of the people around them. Why do you think people were so confused by this miracle?
4. Peter uses Old Testament prophecies to reason with the doubting crowd. What Scripture would you use to reason with someone who doubts the message of the Gospel?
5. How should we change our tone and approach when we attempt to reason with those who are doubting? Why are certain approaches preferable to others?

## Respond

### → **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, think of someone in your life who you know is struggling with doubts. Talk to the group about how you can reason with them as you care for their needs.

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**Participant Guide for January 19, 2025**

## Reasoning w/ the Hostile

Acts 4:1-12

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### Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:





## Apply

1. Have you ever been in a situation where someone became hostile to you? What happened? How did the situation escalate? How did it resolve?
2. In Acts 4, Peter and John are preaching the message in an area that is known to be hostile to Christianity. (These are literally the same people that had Jesus executed!) What places do you visit on a weekly basis that could be hostile to the message of Christianity? Have you ever experienced hostility? How did you respond?
3. In verses 8-12, Peter is called to give an account of why he was healing (Ch. 3) and preaching (Ch. 4) at the temple. Verse 13 describes his response as “bold.” How is bold different from aggressive? How is this type of boldness different from passivity or “people pleasing?”
4. Verse 8 said that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit as he began to answer. Read Galatians 5:22. What fruits of the Spirit is Peter displaying in his response?
5. When confronted with hostility, do you tend towards escalation or shrinking back? What practices can you try to engage in to exhibit more fruit of the Spirit instead of just a natural response?

## Respond

- **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**
- ◆ Once again, in verses 8-12, Peter is called to give an account of why he was healing (Ch.3) and preaching (Ch.4) at the temple. Get with a partner and offer a biblical defense of how you spent your time this week, then switch and ask your partner to do the same.



**Participant Guide for January 26, 2025**

# **Reasoning w/ the Persecutors**

Acts 7:1-60

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## **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Have you ever been falsely accused by someone? How did it make you feel? Were you able to defend yourself? How did you react to the person making the false accusation against you?
2. Read Acts 6:8-15: Of what was Stephen accused? Why was it a big deal to be accused of speaking against Moses and the temple?
3. Stephen's defense was primarily a history lesson about the Israelite people. He spoke about Abraham and then Moses, frequently quoting from the Old Testament as part of his defense. He pointed out the rebelliousness of the Israelites against Moses and that God's dwelling is not confined to the Tabernacle or the Temple. Now read Acts 7:51-54. Why did Stephen choose this manner of defense instead of simply pleading his innocence?
4. Read Matthew 5:43-45: How should we respond to persecutors? How did Stephen react?
5. Read Matthew 6:12, 14-15: Why would Jesus prioritize forgiving those who persecute us? What is the consequence if we do not forgive?

## Respond

- **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**
- ◆ Who is someone (or perhaps multiple people) you need to forgive for hurting you? What can you pray for them?

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**Participant Guide for February 02, 2025**

# **Reasoning w/ the Nations**

Acts 8:26-40

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## **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. In Acts chapter 8, Phillip is sent by the Holy Spirit to speak with an Ethiopian official. Have you ever had an in-depth conversation with someone from a completely different culture? What did you learn about them? How did their perspective help you grow as a person?
2. In Verse 29, Phillip receives an explicit command from the Holy Spirit: “Go and Join that Chariot.” Many people are skeptical of whether something is their own desire or an urge from the Holy Spirit. How do we know when the Holy Spirit is leading us?
3. In Verse 35, Phillip clearly explains the prophecy to the Ethiopian official. What learning and daily disciplines can we use to prepare ourselves to do the same?
4. Phillip and the Ethiopian were from drastically different cultures, with different languages, customs, and experiences, but they were able to have meaningful conversations because of their love for the Gospel. How can we develop relationships with people from other backgrounds and cultures so we can share with them? How can we do this while respecting their customs and not expecting them to assimilate into our way of life?

## Respond

### → **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, do you know someone from a different culture? Someone who speaks a different language? Someone with a radically different background than you? If so, make a plan for how you can share the Gospel with them. If not, make a plan for how to meet someone from a different background in the next few weeks!



**Participant Guide for February 09, 2025**

# **Reasoning w/ the Community**

Acts 9:20-25

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## **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Recall a time when you felt a strong sense that someone was taking a strong opposition to your beliefs and actions. What negative actions did you experience?
2. In Acts 9:20-25, we see Paul's encounters in Damascus and Jerusalem, which are just after his conversion. What obstacles did he face with the Jewish and Christian communities?
3. Why is it that when a person is supporting and testifying Christ's gospel, persecution often follows? How should we respond according to scriptural instructions? (1Cor. 15:58; 2 Thes. 2:15; James 5:8; 2 Peter 2:21)
4. How should our actions spill over into our community? Think of some of our church's attempts at sharing our beliefs with our community. What results are we seeing?
5. In what ways do Paul's encounters speak to us today, specifically about our relationship with Christ that carries over to our mission efforts?
6. Spend some time thinking and praying about your personal commitment to community outreach, as well as ways our Wallace community could better serve outside our own doors to reach others in fulfilling their personal and spiritual needs.

## Respond

### → **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ What are you personally willing to do to enhance your calling to serve Christ in supporting the gospel in our community? Are you willing to pray and ask God, "God, what is it that you want me to do to carry out your will?"



**Participant Guide for February 16, 2025**

# **Reasoning w/ the Seeking**

Acts 10:17-48

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## **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:





## Apply

1. Has anyone ever asked you questions about a subject you love? Describe what it's like to tell someone about something you're interested in! What topics do you have great information, insight, and experience on? What's your favorite thing to tell someone else about that subject?
2. In Acts 4, Peter is called by God to move beyond some of his own traditions to spread the message of the Gospel better. How do we decide what is a moral necessity as opposed to a simple preference of tradition? Are there any traditions or norms we need to set aside to be better messengers of the Gospel?
3. Chapter 10 describes Cornelius as a devout man who was seeking God. Because of this, he was directed to Peter for answers. Describe the type of person you would go to if you were seeking spiritual answers. What can each of us do to become that type of person?
4. We've all met someone who asks questions so that they can argue about the answers. How can we tell the difference between someone who is honestly seeking answers and someone who just wants to argue? What are the differences in how we would engage each of those types of people?
5. Read verses 28 and 29. Peter clearly had some personal prejudice and discomfort that he had to move past to be the type of evangelist God wanted him to be. Do you have Personal prejudices that prevent you from evangelizing? How can you identify them? How can you overcome them?

## Respond

### → Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?

- ◆ Both Peter and Cornelius were seeking answers from God in Acts 10. This shows us that our encounters with others and the spiritual conversations we have are not simple coincidences. How can we commit this week to seeking answers and to helping those who are seeking?



**Participant Guide for February 23, 2025**

# **Green Light Sunday**

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## **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

Green Light Sunday will feature videos with prayer points from our missionary and church planting partners.

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, spend additional time in your daily prayers to pray for our missionary partners.

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**Participant Guide for March 03, 2025**

# **Reasoning w/ the Skeptic**

Acts 17:22-34

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## **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Share about a time when you had a challenging conversation with someone resistant, skeptical, or dismissive of your perspective. How did you handle the situation?
2. How does Paul's approach in Acts 17:22-34 demonstrate cultural sensitivity and understanding? How does he acknowledge their religious practices and use them as a bridge to introduce the true God? Discuss the potential impact of this approach on the Athenians' receptiveness to his message.
3. What is the significance of the resurrection of Jesus in the context of Paul's message to the Athenians? How does the resurrection serve as both a historical event and a theological cornerstone of Paul's argument?
4. How can we, like Paul, engage in conversations about faith with people of different backgrounds and beliefs? What are some of the strategies that you have employed for building relationships, listening empathetically, and sharing our faith in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner? Why is it important to be open, listen to and learn from others, and find common ground?
5. What are some practical ways we can demonstrate God's love and offer hope to those in our community who may be searching for meaning and purpose? Brainstorm specific actions we can take to show kindness, compassion, and support to those around us.
6. Paul's message was not just about imparting information but also about inviting people to think and respond. How can we encourage our friends to ask questions, share their thoughts, and consider the implications of the Gospel for their own lives?

## Respond

### → **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ Paul found common ground with the Athenians by acknowledging their altar to "an unknown god." This week, look for an opportunity to start a gospel conversation by looking for shared values, experiences, or questions that our friends are grappling with.





**Participant Guide for March 09, 2025**

# **Reasoning w/ the Angry**

Acts 22:6-21

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## **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Have you ever seen a manager try to deal with an especially angry customer who asked to see them? How did that work out? Did it de-escalate? Did it get worse?
2. Our Bible text today is Paul trying to talk to a crowd of people who were attempting to beat him to death just minutes ago. If you've ever seen Twitter or the YouTube comments section, you may have seen how reasonable an angry mob of people can be, especially on religious topics. Despite all this, Paul stops the soldiers who are escorting him to safety so he can try to reason with the angry crowd. Why do you think Paul takes this approach?
3. Paul's last words in this passage make the crowd so angry that they immediately start tearing off their clothes, throwing dust into the air, and calling for Paul's death. This level of anger really confused the captain of the guard (22:30). How would you explain the crowd's reaction to the captain?
4. In John 8:59, Jesus makes the Jewish leaders so angry that they pick up stones to kill him. How do you think Jesus' reaction compares to Paul's in our passage?
5. A Christian is always a witness of Christ in their life - whether they intend to be or not. As you witness for Christ, what sorts of reactions do you think you can expect? And how do you think you should respond when you get those reactions?
6. In our passage, Paul's feelings are not addressed at all. It is not clear exactly what mix of emotions was in Paul as he tried to talk to the crowd that had indeed left him in a significant amount of physical pain. How does this inform our answers to the previous question?

## Respond

### → **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, share your "Road to Damascus" story with someone. Be honest, vulnerable, and authentic. Focus on the impact of the experience on your life and what you learned from it.







**Participant Guide for March 16, 2025**

# **Reasoning w/ the Rulers**

Acts 26:1-32

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## **H**ighlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

## **E**xplain

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. At the beginning of the chapter, Paul stands before Agrippa and begs to be heard patiently. He considers himself fortunate that Agrippa has allowed him to speak. What does this humble approach tell us about how we should approach our rulers today? What does this tell us about how we approach the public square?
2. In verses 4-11, Paul gives some of his background to let his audience know who he is and to connect with them. Our stories and experiences have surprising power, and Paul uses this to his advantage. Why is it important to connect with our audience? What are some ways we can use our testimonies to connect with people?
3. As Paul stands in a room full of skeptics of the resurrection of Jesus, including Agrippa, he points out a shared common idea. The idea that he, too, was once wrong. That he stood there that day standing on his hope of the promises to their fathers. What are ways we can communicate to people that we are not "perfect" Christians? Why is it important to humbly communicate our old way of thinking when presenting our testimony?
4. Paul then retells the powerful conversion he experienced on the road to Damascus. This is the center and most powerful part of his defense. Paul tells Agrippa and those listening about the unmatched power and the truth of the risen Savior. Jesus is the center and hero of his story. What are ways we can make our testimonies more about Jesus?
5. Paul also views this as an opportunity. Paul has been sent not an elective opportunity but on a mission from God to the Gentiles. Amid his captivity and suffering, he uses the opportunity to speak of Christ. He sets aside his personal suffering to stay obedient to the "heavenly vision" (v.20). What are ways we can set aside our own personal feelings about our current culture and leaders or even our own personal



sufferings to instead use it as an opportunity to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ?

6. Ultimately, Paul uses the power of the story of Christ and his life, death, and resurrection to reason with Agrippa. Paul uses the facts of the true story of the resurrection of Christ and how Christ saved him as the rational response to the accusations against him. How does this encourage you as you seek to engage the leaders of our country in the public square?

## Respond

### → **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, dedicate time to practicing your testimony. Our testimonies often focus on all the sins we committed before our conversion, and while that is important, this does not do justice to all that Christ has done for us and is not the whole story. While the way our life changes is important, this tends to make us the center and hero of our own story. Instead, let's look to Paul and his example of giving his testimony before Agrippa and the other's personal touches while making Christ the center and hero of the story. Ask God to show you how you can make Him the center of your testimony and be able to communicate that boldly in front of others.

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