

Lesson 1

Acts 1 – 2

Question 1

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the whole book of *Acts of the Apostles*. What information does St. Luke mention in the opening verses of this chapter (vv. 1-11)? To what specific mystery of our faith is he referring in verses 2 and 9-11, and what, exactly, do we believe concerning this doctrine of our faith? Where do the apostles go when they leave the Mount of Olives (cf. Ac 1:12-14)?

Readings: Ps 110; Is 2:2-3; Dn 7:13-14; Mk 16:19-20; Lk 24:49-53; Jn 3:13, 6:59-63, 12:32, 14:2-4, 16:28, 20:17-18; Ac 2:33, 7:56; Ep 4:8-13; Hb 9:11-12; 1Pt 3:21-22; Rv 4:6-11; CCC 659-70, 697, 965, 2177.

Question 2

What can we learn from the events recorded in Ac 1:15-26? Would it be correct to say that through the power of his free will Judas Iscariot prevented God's will from being fulfilled? Explain your answer.

Readings: 1Sm 15:10-11,26-29; Jt 9:5-6; Pss 37, 69:24-28, 109:8-11, 115:3; Ws 4:19; Is 14:18-19, 55:6-11; Jr 22:17-19; Mt 10:2-4, 27:3-10; Mk 3:16-19; Lk 6:13-16; Jn 6:70-71, 13:2-3,20-27; Rv 21:4; CCC 269, 271, 301-03, 306, 309-10, 324, 726, 1730-31, 1743-50, 1776, 1781, 1954, 2617.

Question 3

What great event is described in chapter 2 of *Acts of the Apostles* and of what significance is this event in salvation history?

Readings: Gn 1:2, 11:4-9; Pss 65:9-13 [NAB 65:10-14], 104 (esp. vv.3-4,30-32); Is 32:15; Ez 11:19-20, 36:25-28, 39:27-29; Jl 3:1-5; Mt 28:18-20; Jn 3:8, 7:37-39, 14:16-17,26, 15:26-27, 16:7,13-14; CCC 243-44, 246-48, 672, 696, 715, 731-32, 739, 767, 830-31, 1076, 1152, 1226, 1287, 1302, 2623-24, 2818.

Lesson 2

Acts 3 – 5:11

Question 1

When Peter and John encounter the lame beggar at the gate of Jerusalem, what do they say they have—and also not have—to give him (cf. Ac 3:1-8,16 and 4:9-10,30)? What does this encounter teach us about the miracles of Jesus?

Readings: Pss 8, 113; Mt 10:7-10; Lk 7:22, 10:17-20; Jn 14:13-14, 15:16, 16:23; Ac 2:21, 14:8-10; CCC 151-52, 180, 432, 434-35, 452-55, 690, 2666, 2668.

Question 2

Read Acts 3:9-26 and 4:1-22. How might we say that faith opens the way to miracles and miracles open the way for faith? What does Peter say to the crowd who gathers around him in the Portico of Solomon (cf. Ac 3:11-26), and what do we learn from Peter and John's testimony before the Sanhedrin and the Jews' response to the miracle (cf. Ac 4:1-22)?

Readings: Ne 9:16-17; 2Mc 15:21; Ps 119:161-168; Si 15:14-19, 48:4,12-14; Mt 11:20-24; Mk 6:1-6, 9:39-40; Lk 12:11-12; Ac 8:4-8, 19:8-12; Rm 10:8-9; Hb 2:3-4; CCC 35, 50, 150, 156, 168, 995.

Question 3

What happens when the apostles return to the community of believers and inform them of the situation (cf. Ac 4:23-31), and what takes place while they are praying (Ac 4:31)? Secondly (II), describe the life of the Christian community in succeeding days (cf. Ac 4:32-37). What are we to learn from the incident involving Ananias and Sapphira (cf. Ac 5:1-11)?

Readings: Ps 2; Hb 10:32-36; Ja 1:2-4; CCC 1083, 1808, 1816, 2471-72, 2626-27, 2644, 2664, 2670-71.

Readings (II): Dt 23:22-24; Pr 10:2; Ec 8:11-13; Si 5:1-10; Is 55:6-7; Mt 5:37, 12:37; Lk 12:15-21,35-40; Rm 3:5-6; 1Co 10:6, 11:31-32; 2Co 9:6-7; 1Jn 1:6; CCC 2464, 2482-86.

Lesson 3

Acts 5:12 – 7

Question 1

In light of what St. Luke announces in Acts 5:12-16, what lessons can we learn from the different turns of events recorded in the remainder of chapter 5?

Readings: Pss 34:7-8, 91:10-13; Mt 5:11-12, 10:17-20; Lk 20:1-8; Jn 11:47-48, 15:20; Rm 2:15-16, 8:35-37; 1Co 4:11-13; Ph 1:27-30; Col 1:24-26; 2Tm 1:8-10; CCC 812, 858.

Question 2

According to Acts 6:1-7, what situation arises in the Church and how do the apostles solve the problem? St. Luke twice uses the Greek word *diakonia* (cf. Ac 6:1,4) in speaking of the Seven (cf. Ac 6:3) and their “service” to the Church in the “distribution” of food (*diakonia* can be translated as “service” or “distribution”). What does this passage reveal concerning one of the aspects of Christ’s priesthood which has come down to us through Sacred Tradition and the imposition of hands (cf. Ac 6:6)?

Readings: CCC 1256, 1543, 1554, 1569-71, 1588, 1593-94, 1596, 1630.

Question 3

Why is Stephen, one of the seven deacons (cf. Ac 6:5), arrested and brought to trial before the Sanhedrin (cf. Ac 6:8-15), and how does he respond to their accusations that he has been speaking against the Temple and the Law? Summarize Stephen’s defense (Ac 7:1-53). Given how this incident ends, would you say that Stephen is successful or unsuccessful in proclaiming Christ (Ac 7:54-60)? Explain your answer.

Readings: Pss 17, 108; Ws 4:13-17; Mt 23:29-36; Lk 21:12-19, 23:34,46; Jn 16:1-4; Ac 22:17-21; 1Pt 2:15; CCC 313, 852, 957, 1010-11, 1173, 2473-74, 2506.

Lesson 4

Acts 8 – 9:30

Question 1

What do the events of Acts 8:4-8 and 8:14-17 indicate about receiving the Holy Spirit? Do Christians receive the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Baptism or Confirmation, or both? Explain the connection between these sacraments from the earliest days of the Church. (The sacrament of Confirmation will be addressed again in lesson 10.) Secondly (II), what lessons do we learn from the incident of Simon the magician (cf. Ac 8:9-25)?

Readings: CCC 1212-13, 1229-33, 1242, 1244, 1265, 1285, 1290-92, 1298-99, 1306-08.

Readings (II): 2Kg 5:15-16; Is 55:1; Mt 10:8; Ep 4:17-24; CCC 1578, 2121, 2139.

Question 2

What can we learn from St. Luke's account of the Ethiopian eunuch who is returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (cf. Ac 8:26-40)? Why does the Lord send Philip to him?

Readings: Si 39:1-11; Is 29:11-12, 53:7-8; Lk 24:26-27; Jn 8:31-32, 14:26-27; Rm 10:14-17; 2Pt 1:20, 3:16; CCC 28, 89, 98, 109, 122-23, 132, 137, 601, 702, 713, 856, 977, 1226, 2566.

Question 3

Is Saul's conversion the result of anything *he* does (cf. Ac 9:1-19)? Explain your answer. St. Luke includes three accounts of St. Paul's conversion in *Acts of the Apostles*, and the apostle himself gives his own testimony in his *Letter to the Galatians*. Why do you think Saul's conversion is given so much emphasis in Scripture?

Readings: Ps 18:17-18 [NAB 18:16-17]; Jr 1:5-7; Ac 22:1-16, 26:9-23; Ga 1:11-24; CCC 442, 639, 1433, 1846-48, 1963, 2002, 2012, 2021.

Lesson 5
Acts 9:31 – 11

Question 1

What do the miracles of Peter (cf. Ac 9:32-43) tell us about the works of Christ, and how do they prepare people to hear the Word of God?

Readings: Mk 5:35-42, 16:19-20; Lk 7:13-16, 8:50-55; Jn 14:12-13, 15:15-16; CCC 548, 737-38, 740, 749-50, 787-88, 811-12, 2614-15.

Question 2

St. Luke spends considerable time recounting the details surrounding Peter's visit to the house of the Roman centurion Cornelius (cf. Ac 10 and 11:1-18). What do we learn from the way things unfold, and why is this event such an important one in the early Church? What do we learn from verses 2, 7-8 and 24 of chapter 10?

Readings: Dt 10:12-19; Is 11:10, 52:7-10, 56:6-9, 65:1; Mt 28:19; Mk 7:14-23; Lk 7:1-10; Ac 15:7-9; Rm 2:9-11, 10:10-13, 14:13-15; 1Pt 1:17; CCC 55, 758-61, 777-78, 781, 790, 850, 870, 1226, 1655-58, 2204, 2226, 2228, 2685.

Question 3

According to what St. Luke tells us in Acts 11:19-30, why is Antioch a place of interest in the early life of the Church? Why does God send the prophet Agabus to Antioch (cf. Ac 11:27-30)? What are some of the ways God uses the gift of prophecy in the Church?

Readings: Ac 21:9-14; Rm 12:6-7; 1Co 12:4-11,28; CCC 243, 794, 798-801, 951, 2003.

Lesson 6

Acts 12 – 13:12

Question 1

Scripture indicates that God's servants are often imprisoned for their witness to Christ and His Church and sometimes put to death (cf. Ac 12:2-3). What is God teaching us through Peter's imprisonment and his deliverance (cf. Ac 12:1-19), and what effect do the trials and setbacks described in Acts 12 have on the Church?

Readings: Pss 91:10-11, 142; Mt 23:34-35; Lk 6:22, 21:12-15; Ac 5:17-21, 16:20-26, 26:9-10; 2Co 6:3-10, 11:23-28; Ph 1:27-30; 1Th 2:2; Hb 10:34-36; Rv 2:10-11; CCC 305, 328-30, 334, 352, 852, 2634, 2636.

Question 2

In chapter 13 St. Luke begins his narration of St. Paul's first missionary journey. What sign does the Christian community at Antioch 'impose' upon Saul and Barnabas in sending them out (cf. Ac 13:3)? Using the readings below, briefly explain the meaning and power of this sign in the New Testament of Christ and His Church.

Readings: Mt 19:13-15; Mk 5:22-23, 6:5, 8:23-25, 10:15-16, 16:18b; Lk 4:40, 23:46, 24:50; Ac 6:6, 8:14-20, 9:12,17-18, 19:6, 28:8; 1Tm 4:14-16, 5:22; 2Tm 1:6-7; CCC 292, 699, 1288-89, 1300, 1573, 1667-72, 1677-78.

Question 3

How does Paul respond when he encounters the magician Elymas (cf. Ac 13:4-12)? Do his actions seem harsh? Explain your answer.

Readings: Jb 5:17-18; Pss 6, 38; Jr 1:10; Ho 6:1-3; Ac 9:8-9,18-19, 26:15-18; 2Co 7:8-10; Hb 12:5-6,8-9; CCC 1502, 2117.

Lesson 7

Acts 13:13 – 14

Question 1

What are the circumstances in which Paul is given the opportunity to preach the Gospel when he and Barnabas arrive in the city of Antioch in Pisidia (cf. Ac 13:13-16), and what points or arguments does he use in proclaiming the message (cf. Ac 13:17-41)?

Readings: 1Sm 13:14; Pss 16:9-10, 89:19-29 [NAB 89:20-30], 105; Is 44:28, 55:3-5; Ha 1:5; Ml 3:1-2; Rm 15:4-5; CCC 2-4, 75, 601, 638, 854, 856, 875.

Question 2

Are Paul and Barnabas successful in proclaiming the message in Antioch of Pisidia and in Iconium (cf. Ac 13:42-51, 14:1-7)? Who or what is the source of their difficulties?

Readings: Pss 2:7-9, 19; Is 49:6; Mt 10:20, 24:14; Lk 10:9-12; Ac 1:6-8, 3:25-26, 26:17-23, 28:25-28; Rm 1:16-17, 2:6-11, 10:18,20-21; 1Th 2:13-16; CCC 1122, 1816, 2471-72.

Question 3

What do we learn from the incident of Paul healing the cripple (cf. Ac 14:8-18)? What is the outcome of this event (cf. Ac 14:19-20), and how do Paul and Barnabas spend the final months of this first missionary journey (cf. Ac 14:19-28)?

Readings: Mk 16:17-18; Jn 15:16; Ac 3:1-6, 15:36, 16:1, 28:5-6; Ga 4:8-9; 1Th 1:9-10; 2Tm 3:10-13; CCC 434, 567, 1507, 2003, 2099, 2104, 2110.

Lesson 8

Acts 15 – 16

Question 1

Chapter 15 describes the controversy in the early Church which led to a council or gathering of the apostles and elders in the city of Jerusalem. What is the source of the controversy? After the council's "long discussion," who stands up to speak and what is the point he makes (cf. Ac 15:7-11)? How does the council conclude?

Readings: Pss 18:43-44 [NAB 18:44-45], 67; Is 43:8-9, 56:8, 66:18-21; Am 9:11-12; Ga 2:1-10, 3:11-14; Ep 2:19; CCC 153, 552-53, 881-82, 1991-92, 1996.

Question 2

According to Acts 15:36-41, what are the circumstances of St. Paul's second missionary journey? What action does Paul take in regard to Timothy (cf. Ac 16:1-4), and how might we explain this in light of the decision made at the council in Jerusalem, which work Paul himself had shared in (cf. Ac 15:12,22)?

Readings: 1Co 9:19-23; Ga 2:3; 2Tm 1:1-5, 3:14-15.

Question 3

Why don't Paul and his companions go into Bithynia (cf. Ac 16:6-7), and why do they end up going to Macedonia (cf. Ac 16:9-10)? Although the reasons for their decisions are rather extraordinary, is there a lesson in this which applies to the ordinary daily decisions we make?

Readings: Ac 11:11-12; Rm 12:6-7; 1Co 2:14-16, 12:4-11; CCC 800-01, 2004, 2690, 2826-27.

Question 4

After Paul and his companions are beaten and chained up in prison, how do they spend their time waiting through the night (cf. Ac 16:23-26)? What lessons can we learn from the events of Acts 16:11-40? What conclusion might we draw from verses 15a and 31-34 about infant Baptism? (Cf. also Ac 18:8; 1Co 1:16a; CCC 1226, 1250-52, 2222.)

Readings: Mk 5:19b; Ac 4:29-31; Ep 6:18-20; Col 3:16-17; 1Tm 5:8; 1Pt 1:6-7; CCC 1666, 2098, 2633, 2639, 2642, 2742-43.

Lesson 9

Acts 17 – 18

Question 1

Scripture tells us that the Jews in Bereoa were “better disposed” or “more noble-minded” toward the Gospel Paul preached than were the Jews in Thessalonica. In Acts 17:11, what does St. Luke say the Jews in Bereoa do as they strive to embrace the Good News preached to them, and what important lesson should we take from this?

Readings: Lk 24:27,32,45; Jn 2:17,22, 5:39, 10:35b, 13:18; Ga 3:8; 1Tm 4:13; 2Tm 3:14-17; 2Pt 3:16-18; CCC 101-04, 107-08, 131-36, 143-44, 839-40, 1102, 2763.

Question 2

Why is Athens a challenging city for Paul (cf. Ac 17:16-21), and what approach does he use in trying to win over pagans to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Ac 17:22-31)? Why is it often difficult to convince nonbelievers of the Revelation of God in the Person of Christ?

Readings: Ws 7:17-21, 13:1-9; Rm 1:18-21; Hb 11:3; 1Jn 4:2-3; CCC 28, 31-43, 50, 57, 282-85, 300, 344, 355, 360, 842-44, 849, 996, 2104, 2140, 2467.

Question 3

Briefly summarize the remaining events which St. Luke records of St. Paul’s second missionary journey (cf. Ac 18:1-22). How does his third journey begin (cf. Ac 18:23), and what does Scripture tell us about Apollos and his work in the early Church (cf. Ac 18:24-28)? What are his strengths—and what is he lacking—as an effective proclaimer of the Word of God? Explain your answer.

Readings: 1Co 1:12, 3:5-9a,21-23, 4:6, 16:12; Ep 1:13; Col 1:3-6; Ti 3:13; CCC 562, 1842, 2465-66.

Lesson 10
Acts 19 – 20:16

Question 1

Explain the situation of the disciples whom Paul encounters in Ephesus and how they come to receive the Holy Spirit (cf. Ac 19:1-7). What sacrament of the Church is St. Luke describing when he says “the moment Paul had laid his hands on them the Holy Spirit came down on them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy” (Ac 19:6)? Who is the ordinary minister of this sacrament? What are the sacrament’s essential elements and its effects?

Readings: Is 61:1-2; Jl 3:1-2; Jn 3:33-34, 7:37-39; Ac 1:8, 2:1-4,14-18, 8:14-17; 2Co 1:21-22; Ep 1:13-14; CCC 1285-88, 1293-97, 1301-05, 1309-21.

Question 2

What can we learn from the events of Acts 19:11-20? Why are cloths that have touched the apostle Paul taken to the sick, and how is this connected to our understanding of sacramentals? (How has the coming of Christ and the Holy Spirit changed the way created things can play a role in being blessings to man? Why do Catholics treat certain objects and images as holy? Do the people healed in Acts 19 think the cloths of Paul have magical powers?)

Readings: 2Kg 13:20-21; Si 48:12-14; Mk 5:25-30,34; Ac 5:14b-16; CCC 1159-62, 1192, 1667-71, 1674-79, 2129-32, 2138, 2141, 2502.

Question 3

What causes the silversmiths’ riot in Ephesus and how does this incident reveal a deeper truth about the values of unenlightened man (cf. Ac 19:23-40)? What spiritual lesson is there in this for us? How does God protect and assist Paul’s missionary work, both in Ephesus and in Troas?

Readings: Ps 115; Is 44:9-11; Jr 2:26-32, 10:1-10; Mt 6:24; Lk 6:43, 12:51, 16:13, 18:24-27; Jn 2:13-17.

Lesson 11

Acts 20:17 – 22:29

Question 1

In Acts 20:17-38, St. Luke records the apostle Paul's farewell address given to the elders of Ephesus at the end of his missionary journeys. What are the points he stresses, and how might this discourse be considered an ideal summary of what it means for priests to be good shepherds of God's people? In what way does this event reveal Christ's design in governing the Church through a priestly *order* comprising apostles and their successors, under whom "elders" (*presbyteros*) serve (Ac 20:17)?

Readings: 1Co 9:24-27, 11:1; 1Tm 4:12-16; 2Tm 4:1-5; 1Pt 5:1-3; CCC 816, 857, 876, 886, 939, 1536-38, 1551, 1560, 1564-68, 1575-76, 2179.

Question 2

When Paul visits Tyre and Caesarea, what do certain people "speaking in the Spirit" say to him, and how does Paul respond (cf. Ac 21:3-14)? What can we learn from these events?

Readings: Mt 16:21-23; Lk 9:22-26; Jn 21:18-19; 2Co 1:8-10; Ph 3:8-16; Col 1:24-26, 3:1-4; 2Tm 4:6-8; 1Pt 5:10-11; CCC 164.

Question 3

Describe the events upon Paul's arrival in Jerusalem and why he is arrested (cf. Ac 21:15-40). What accusations do the Jews make against Paul? Using the readings below, explain how Paul deals with those who try to harm him. What can we learn from the way Paul handles situations that are going from bad to worse?

Readings: Mt 10:19-20; Lk 12:11-12, 21:12-15; Ac 6:10; 1Co 2:1-9, 9:19-23; CCC 1930.

Lesson 12

Acts 22:30 – 24

Question 1

What does Paul declare in the presence of the Jewish elders concerning his actions, and how does the high priest respond (cf. Ac 23:1-2)? What does Paul then say in reply (cf. Ac 23:3-5)? Why is his defense to the Sanhedrin (cf. Ac 23:6) an ingenious way of presenting his case (cf. Ac 23:7-10)?

Readings: Ez 13:10-16, 22:26-28; Mt 12:25-26, 22:29-40, 23:27-28; Mk 3:26-27; Lk 11:17, 20:34-40; CCC 575, 1779, 1782.

Question 2

How do the Jews ultimately decide to deal with Paul (cf. Ac 23:12-15), and what do their actions reveal about the effects of anger when we allow it to grow in our hearts? In what way does Acts 23:11 shed special light on events immediately before and after it, and what is God revealing about His providence toward those whom He sends to bear witness to the truth?

Readings: Pss 32:8, 33; Jn 17:14-20; Rm 14:7-9; Ep 6:18-20; CCC 304, 312, 314, 324, 385, 395, 1040, 2115, 2302-04, 2306, 2738, 2850.

Question 3

What do we learn from the events of chapter 24, and how is Felix representative of the challenge Christians face in defending the truth and proclaiming the Gospel through dialogue with worldly institutions and authority? Is it necessary for Felix to embrace the Law of Christ in order to be a good governor? Explain your answer in light of the following readings.

Readings: CCC 1041, 1877-79, 1949-51, 1954-60, 2036, 2049, 2071.

Lesson 13

Acts 25 – 26

Question 1

How does the new Roman procurator Festus deal with Paul's case, which his predecessor Felix left to him after his time as governor ended, and why does Festus bring this case before King Agrippa and Bernice on their visit to Caesarea (cf. Ac 24:27, 25:1-17)? Based on what we know Paul to have boldly proclaimed to everyone with whom he had the opportunity to speak, why would Agrippa (and also Festus) have desired to hear Paul (cf. Ac 25:22), even though he probably did not fully understand why such a desire was in him?

Readings: Ps 119:46-48; Jn 1:18, 14:6-7; Ac 4:11b-12; 2Co 4:2b-6; Ep 2:17; Col 3:11; 1Tm 2:1-7; CCC 27, 30-31, 359, 425, 449, 981, 1699, 1701-09.

Question 2

Why is Paul glad for the opportunity to present his case to King Agrippa, and for what does Paul say he is on trial (cf. Ac 26:2-8)? This is the third time in Acts that we hear the story of Paul's conversion. How is his speech to Agrippa a call to conversion for both believers and non-believers? What does Jesus mean when He says to Saul, "It is hard for you to kick against the goad" (Ac 26:14)?

Readings: Pss 51, 86, 119:25-40; Mt 5:19-20; CCC 160, 1036, 1098, 1229, 1247-49, 1426-29, 1431-32, 1848, 1989-90, 1993, 2000-01, 2025-28, 2092, 2784-85.

Question 3

Would you say that Paul is successful or not in presenting his argument to King Agrippa (cf. Ac 26:24-32)? Explain your answer.

Readings: Mt 13:14-15; Jn 7:16-19; Hb 3:7-11,18-19, 4:1-3a,12-13.

Lesson 14

Acts 27 – 28

Question 1

Chapter 27 gives the account of Paul's journey across the Great Sea. What similarities (or differences) are there between this narrative and the story of Jonah, and what kinds of lessons can we learn from St. Luke's account of the storm and shipwreck? What must the people on board the ship do in order to be saved (cf. Ac 27:30-38)?

Readings: Ps 107:17-32; Jo 1:1-16; Mt 8:23-27, 16:24-28; CCC 162, 953.

Question 2

Divine Providence is clearly guiding the events that take place on the island of Malta (cf. Ac 28:1-10). What do we learn from this incident, and how is Paul's shaking the poisonous viper from his hand a sign of a greater mystery present?

Readings: Ps 91:10-16; Mt 10:1,40-42; Mk 16:18; Lk 4:38-39, 10:19; Ac 14:15-18; CCC 1507, 2851, 2864.

Question 3

In bringing his account of *Acts of the Apostles* to conclusion, St. Luke writes, "And so we came to Rome" (Ac 28:14). In what way do these words sum up what God was doing for and through His Church in her first years? How does the apostle, still in "chains" (Ac 18:20), spend the remainder of his time in captivity, and is he well or poorly received (cf. Ac 28:22-31)? In what way does the ending to this book seem 'unfinished'? In what way is it an appropriate ending in light of the Church's identity, mission, and visible presence in the world? (It is worth noting that Peter was writing his first letter from Rome about the same time Paul was there; cf. 1 Pt 5:13-14.)

Readings: Jn 17:18-20; Ac 1:7-11; Ep 3:1-7, 4:1, 6:19-20; Col 4:3-4,10; Phm 1:8-9; CCC 194, 834-35, 868, 877-79, 882, 887, 892, 936.