

Into All the World

Introduction

Most stories end when the hero dies leaving this world behind to the care of others, but the Nazarene's story is different—his merely begins where all others end. Luke both begins and ends his second volume in a most peculiar way. He begins Jesus' story as he ascends into heaven where all good tales end but not this one for the story of Jesus continues in the lives of his disciples. He concludes his story with Paul still under house arrest with no mention of how his trial turns out. What is the reason for such a strange ending? Look at the last line: "*He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance*" (Acts 28:30-31). Paul's fate is unimportant. Luke's story is about the spread of the gospel, how it changed so many and how it continues spreading no matter who tries to prevent it.

As in any good story, we become caught up in its characters, however the principle characters are not Peter or Paul but Jesus and his church as God works among his people through the pouring out of his Spirit. As Paul puts it, "*What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth*" (1 Corinthians 3:5-7). We appreciate the contribution of Paul and others who brought the gospel to us, but their work is in vain if God's word does not live in us. In a sense, we are the continuation of the story of Acts as God works in us shaping more in his likeness as individuals and as a body of believers.

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Pointers for Digging Deeper

- List the characteristics Jesus' disciples possess and activities they do.
- List people, places and things of interest.
 - Use a Bible dictionary and other references to learn more about them.
 - Write down what you learned that helps you understand this specific passage better.
 - Keep a log of important people or topics so all relevant passages explain each fully.
- Use a Bible atlas to follow the disciples.

Online Resources

- [crosswire.com](http://www.crosswire.com) offers free Bible software.
- <http://www.padfield.com/downloads/amplified.html> has photos of Bible places.
- [bibleplayer.com](http://www.bibleplayer.com) offers audio and text files for iPod users.
- [GoogleEarth](http://www.google.com) offers a free package for seeing anywhere via satellite imagery.
- [heartlight.com](http://www.heartlight.com) offers several devotional aids.
- [wbschool.org](http://www.wbschool.org) offers free Bible courses online.

Beginning Your Study

A good study Bible such as the **NIV Study Bible** ought to be sufficient for most of your needs. Make sure your Bible has a concordance (for finding passages containing a certain word), a glossary or dictionary (for looking up the meaning of Bible words) and an atlas (for locating places). **Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary** is a good entry-level resource for all ages. **Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament** by H. Wayne House provides a vast array of helpful materials in quick reference chart form. Two handouts are available for any interested as a further help for Bible study—*Knowledge Base* and *A Chronology of Acts*.

April 22

The Necessity of Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12-28)

- How does Christ's resurrection point to ours?

- Why is the resurrection so important to the Christian faith?

April 23

Promise of the Holy Spirit (John 20:19-31; Acts 1:1-5)

- Why does Luke say Jesus' story is only beginning?

- What convincing proofs does Jesus offer of his resurrection?

- Keep track of the "pouring out" or "baptism of the Spirit": when, where, how (conditions for receiving) and who.

April 24

The Ascension (Acts 1:6-11; Luke 24:44-53)

- Compare the notion the disciples have of the kingdom of God and the actual kingdom Jesus establishes.

- How will Jesus return (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11)?

April 25 Choosing Judas's Successor (Acts 1:12-26)

- Describe the setting.

- What is the basis for replacing Judas?

- What are the criteria for an apostle?

- How is the choice made?

April 26 The Coming of the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4)

- Compare the setting of the Spirit's coming with the importance of his coming.

- While the Holy Spirit does so much more, draw up a list how closely is the Spirit tied to bearing witness to the Christ in Acts.

April 27 Initial reaction to the Spirit's Coming (Acts 2:5-13)

- What is the Jewish festival of Pentecost?

- How do the languages and cultures differ of those attending the festival?

- What reaction do the apostles receive?

April 28 The Lord's Return (Joel 2:12-17)

- What does God seek from his people?

April 29 God Pours out His Spirit (Joel 2:28-32)

- Why does God pour out his Spirit upon his people? What impact does this have?

April 30 Peter's Sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-42)

- How does Peter make the case that Jesus is both Lord and Christ?

- What is a double portion, and a double portion of what?

May 4 Healing a Cripple at the Temple Gate (Acts 3:1-10)

- What makes this miracle so amazing?

May 5 Peter's Sermon at Solomon's Portico (Acts 3:11-26)

- How does Peter make use of this miracle to convince others to trust Christ?

- What is the connection between repentance and seasons of refreshing?

May 6 God's Mountain (Micah 4; Isaiah 2:1-5)

- What is the mountain of the Lord—what kind of place is it?

- What impact does it have on the nations, and what impact ought it to have on our lives?

May 7

Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1-22)

- Why does the council react so strongly against Peter and John?

- Why must the council release Peter and John even when their intent is not to do so?

May 8

“Incline Your Ear, O Lord” (Psalm 86)

- When life does not go my way is my ear inclined toward God? How do I make certain I am listening to God?

May 9

The Disciples Pray for Boldness (Acts 4:23-31)

- How is the response of the disciples to difficulty different from how we react normally?

- What do they seek from God in their prayers?

- What can we learn from what they received?

May 10

Ruth's Loyalty to Naomi (Ruth 1)

- What kind of daughter-in-law is Ruth?

May 11

Ruth Meets Boaz (Ruth 2)

- What kind of reputation does Ruth have and how does it impact how Boaz treats her?

May 12

Ruth Seeks a Redeemer (Ruth 3)

- What kind of a man is Boaz?

May 13

Boaz Redeems Ruth (Ruth 4)

- What is the kinsman redeemer?

- What is the purpose of taking off the sandal?

- Why is having a Moabite for a great grandmother problematic for David?

May 14

Hannah's Prayer (1 Samuel 1:3-2:11)

- What do we learn about motherhood from Hannah?

May 15

The Woman Who Blesses (Proverbs 31:10-31)

- List the qualities of the priceless woman.

May 16

A Woman's Imprint on Her Children (2 Timothy 1:3-7)

- How does a good mother leave such an impact on her children and grandchildren?

May 17

All Things in Common (Acts 4:32-37)

- What does it mean to be of one heart and soul?

- How did the condition of the congregation (v. 32) affect the effectiveness of the apostles' witness?

- How are Joseph's deeds an indicator of a healthy church?

May 18

Having the Mind of Christ (Philippians 2:1-18)

- What is the mind of Christ?

May 19

Remember What Is Important (Hebrews 13)

- What loose ends does the author tie together at the end of his letter—loose ends that turn something good into something great?

May 20

Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)

- What do Ananias and Sapphira do that deserves death?
- Contrasting the example of Barnabas, how is Ananias' and Sapphira's example so damaging to the health of the body of Christ?

May 21

Many Signs and Wonders Done (Acts 5:12-16)

- Describe a setting whereby one enjoys great popularity but none dare to join.
- How does the nature of these miracles further witness to the truthfulness of the apostolic witness?
- How is the outpouring of miracles a threat to Jewish leaders?

May 22

Apostles Arrested and Freed (Acts 5:17-42)

- What is jealousy, and how does it motivate us to do the unthinkable?
- List the events that lead up to the apostles on trial before the Sanhedrin (vv. 18-26).
- Why do the authorities wish to kill the apostles?
- Gamaliel defends the apostles because their movement might be of God. What has happened that point to this possibility?
- How do the apostles respond to suffering and persecution (vv. 40-42)?

May 23

My Help Comes from the Lord (Psalm 121)

- What is the significance of lifting our eyes up to the hills?

- How do we make God the source of our help?

May 24

Appointment of the Seven (Acts 6:1-7)

- How could this situation have ripped the Jerusalem church apart?
- Good leadership keeps its focus and delegates. What is the focus of the apostles and how do they delegate a matter, which is a potential powder keg?
- How is this a model for solving problems in churches today?

May 25

Be Gracious, Lord (Psalm 41)

- Whom does the Lord protect?
- How do we maintain faith in the presence of our enemies?

May 26

Stephen Arrested (Acts 6:8-15)

- Describe Stephen.

- What charges are brought against him?

May 27

Living by Faith (Hebrews 11)

- What kind of legacy do the faithful leave behind them, what kind of legacy am I leaving, and how do I leave a legacy of faith for others behind me?

May 28

Stephen's Speech (Acts 7:1-53)

- List the events Stephen describes to illustrate his conclusion found in verses 51-53.

May 29

The Stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54-8:1a)

- Contrast the enraged mob and Stephen's demeanor.

June 2 Philip Spreads the Gospel to Samaria (Acts 8:4-13)

- How is Simon's conversion significant?

June 3 Peter and John Sent to Samaria (Acts 8:14-25)

- Why must the apostles be present to give the Holy Spirit?

- How was Simon's request so terrible?

June 4 Light for Those Living in Darkness (Isaiah 9:1-7)

- How will the Christ bring light to the dark places of this world?

June 5 The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)

- How does Isaiah 53 point to Jesus?

- Under the Mosaic Law the eunuch could not enter the assembly of Israel (Deuteronomy 23:1), yet under Christ he is allowed full entrance. How might this add to his joy?

June 9

Saul Preaches at Damascus (Acts 9:19b-22)

- How is Saul's conversion so amazing?

June 10

Paul Called by God (Galatians 1:11-24)

- How does Paul's life change once he meets Jesus?

June 11

Saul Escapes from the Jews (Acts 9:23-25)

- How does Saul escape?

June 12

Saul in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-31)

- What more do we learn about Barnabas here?

June 13

Paul's Commitment to Christ (Philippians 3)

- What does Paul give up to follow Jesus from a worldly point of view?

- How is Paul oriented to the future versus the past?

June 14

Dorcas Restored to Life (Acts 9:32-43)

- Who heals Aeneas?
- Do the disciples of Joppa expect Peter to raise Dorcas to life?

June 15

The Vision of Cornelius (Acts 10:1-8)

- What kind of a man is Cornelius?
- Why must Peter preach the gospel to him?

June 16

The Vision of Peter (Acts 10:9-23)

- Describe Peter's vision.
- Why was it so difficult for Peter to enter a Gentile home (cf. Leviticus 20:24; Ephesians 2:11-16)?

June 17

Salvation for Foreigners (Isaiah 56:1-8)

- What does God bring to his holy mountain?

June 18

The Gentiles Hear the Good News (Acts 10:24-43)

- What preparations had Cornelius made to hear Peter?

- What preparations ought we to make to hear the gospel?

June 19

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48)

- God's acceptance is based upon what?

- What is the significance of the Holy Spirit coming upon Gentiles (cf. Acts 2:17, 38-39)?

June 20

Peter Reports to the Church (Acts 11:1-18)

- What charge did the circumcision party bring against Peter?

- Why does Luke retell this story?

- What quieted their criticism and why?

June 21 Great Are God's Works (Psalm 111)

- How can we honor God for all the good he has worked among us?

- Keep a log of all the good that the Lord has done for you.

June 22 Unless the Lord Builds the House (Psalm 127)

- How have you committed your house to being built by the Lord?

June 23 Choosing Your Target (Hebrews 12)

- What kind of target does Jesus make?

- How does discipline improve our faith—for ourselves and others?

- What is the nature of the kingdom that we receive from God?

June 24

The Task of the Shepherd (Ezekiel 34)

- What are the attributes of the bad shepherd?

June 25

The Good Shepherd (John 10:1-21)

- What are the attributes of the Good Shepherd?

June 26

One with the Father (John 10:22-38)

- How is Jesus one with the Father?

June 27

The Lord Is My Shepherd (Psalm 23)

- How has the Lord been the shepherd of our lives—in taking us from still waters to eating a feast in the presence of our enemies?

June 28

The Church in Antioch (Acts 11:19-30)

- What is unique about the church in Antioch?
- Whom does the Jerusalem church send to help the disciples in Antioch?
- What is the significance of “Christian” in this context (cf. Ephesus 2:11-22)?

June 29

The Heart of a Disciple (Isaiah 50)

- How do we develop the heart of a disciple?

June 30

James Killed and Peter Imprisoned (Acts 12:1-5)

- List the precautions Herod takes to ensure Peter does not escape.

July 1

Peter Delivered from Prison (Acts 12:1-19)

- Who is John Mark?
- What is meant by, “It is his angel!”?

- Why are the brothers so surprised to see Peter free since they were gathered in prayer for him?

July 2

The Death of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:20-25)

- Why does God strike Herod dead?

July 3

The Lord Works Righteousness (Psalm 103)

- How are we blessed by God?

- How are we blessing the Lord for the blessings he gives us?

July 4

The Body of Christ (Ephesians 4)

- How do we maintain the unity of the body through the bond of peace?

July 5

Barnabas and Saul Commissioned (Acts 13:1-3)

- What is the significance of “laying on of hands” here?

July 6

Barnabas and Saul on Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12)

- Why does the magician oppose the gospel and what happens to him?

July 7

Paul and Barnabas at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:13-52)

- List the basic points of Paul’s sermon to the Jews and God-fearers.

July 8

Paul and Barnabas at Iconium (Acts 14:1-7)

- Compare the reaction to the gospel in Iconium with what happened in Antioch.

July 9

Paul and Barnabas at Lystra (Acts 14:8-20)

- Why are Paul and Barnabas taken for Greek gods?

July 10

The Return to Antioch in Syria (Acts 14:21-28)

- What do Paul and Barnabas do to ensure these fledgling churches remain true to Christ?

July 11

The Pursuit of Righteousness (Isaiah 51)

- Where does the pursuit of righteousness begin?

- What are the indicators that demonstrate that God has our ear?

July 12

The Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-21)

- What do men from Judea argue once Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch?
- As the church in Jerusalem gathers to consider the matter, three speakers make important points:
 - Peter argues...
 - Barnabas (with Paul's assistance) argues...
 - James (Jesus' brother) argues...
- What decision do they reach, and how is it reached?

July 13

Reply of the Council (Acts 15:22-35)

- How does the Jerusalem church send their findings to the church in Antioch as well as the new church plantings?

July 14

Paul and Barnabas Separate (Acts 15:36-41)

- What can we learn from this disagreement?

July 15

Timothy Accompanies Paul and Silas (Acts 16:1-5)

- Why does Paul circumcise Timothy?

July 16

Paul's Vision of the Macedonian Man (Acts 16:6-10)

- How does the Spirit lead Paul to where he wants him to go?

July 17

The Conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:11-15)

- What is a Roman colony?
- How does God use Lydia?

July 18

Imprisonment at Philippi (Acts 16:16-40)

- How do Paul and Silas land in prison?
- Why do the prisoners stay in jail when they clearly have opportunity to escape?

- What leads the jailer to faith in Christ?

July 19 The Uproar in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9)

- What causes the uproar?

July 20 The Apostles at Berea (Acts 17:10-15)

- Compare the Berean Jews with their counterparts in Thessalonica.

July 21 Paul at Athens (Acts 17:16-34)

- What provokes Paul?
- Why do others accuse him of being a babbler?
- List the important points of his address to the Areopagus.

July 22

Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:1-17)

- Who are Aquila and Priscilla?
- How do the Jews react to the gospel?
- What is the Gentile reaction?

- What is the basis of this uproar?

July 23

Listen to God (Isaiah 48:12-22)

- What is the Lord calling his people to do and be?

- How did Israel answer his call, and how are you answering his call?

July 24

Paul Returns to Antioch (Acts 18:18-23)

- Why does Paul cut his hair?

- Why does Paul revisit churches he has already planted?

July 25

Apollos Preaches at Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28)

- Describe Apollos.

- What does Apollos lack in his understanding of the gospel?

July 26

A Case of Rebaptism (Acts 19:1-7)

- Why must the twelve disciples of John be baptized again but not Apollos?

July 27

Paul and the Seven Sons of Sceva (Acts 19:8-20)

- Why does Paul go to the hall of Tyrannus?

- What happens to the sons of Sceva?

- Can magic and Christianity coexist and why?

July 28

The Riot at Ephesus (Acts 19:21-40)

- Why does Demetrius lead a riot?

- How does the city clerk react to the situation?

July 29

Search Me, O Lord (Psalm 139)

- How completely are we willing for God to search us?

- How can we develop a closer walk with God?

July 30

Paul Journeys to Macedonia and Greece (Acts 20:1-6)

- What trouble meets Paul here?

July 31

Eutychus Raised from the Dead (Acts 20:7-16)

- Compare this church service to ours.

- How much like Eutychus are we?

August 1

Paul Bids Farewell to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20:17-38)

- What charge does Paul give to the elders of Ephesus?

- Describe the model of ministry Paul set for them to imitate.

August 2

Paul Goes to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-26)

- Why does the Spirit warn Paul in every city of what will happen in Jerusalem when this is God's will?

August 3

Paul Arrested at the Temple (Acts 21:27-36)

- What rumors have Jews been spreading concerning Paul?
- How does James propose Paul should answer these charges?

August 4

Paul Offers a Defense (Acts 21:37-22:5)

- What charge against Paul throws all Jerusalem into a panic and why?
- How does Paul identify himself to the Jews?

August 5

Paul Tells of His Conversion (Acts 22:6-21)

- Luke tells Paul's conversion three times. Why is it so important?

- Why do the Jews react so strongly to Paul being sent to the Gentiles by the Lord?

August 6 Paul and the Roman Tribune (Acts 22:22-29)

- What stops the Romans from flogging Paul and why?

August 7 Paul before the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:30-23:11)

- What causes dissension in the Sanhedrin?

August 8 The Plot against Paul (Acts 23:12-22)

- How is the plot against Paul discovered, and what precautions are taken?

August 9 Paul Sent to Felix the Governor (Acts 23:23-32)

- How does Lysias describe Paul's situation to Felix?

August 10

The Case against Paul (Acts 24:1-9)

- Summarize the case against Paul.

August 11

Paul Defends Himself before Felix (Acts 24:10-23)

- What is Paul's defense?

August 12

Paul Held in Custody (Acts 24:24-27)

- How does Felix react to the gospel?

August 13

Paul Appeals to Caesar (Acts 25:1-12)

- What leads Paul to appeal to Caesar?

August 14

Paul Brought before Agrippa and Bernice (Acts 25:13-27)

- Why does Festus seek Agrippa's help with Paul's case?

August 15

Paul Defends Himself before Agrippa (Acts 26:1-11)

- What was Paul's life before Christ?

August 16

Paul Tells of His Conversion (Acts 26:12-18)

- Why does Paul give up everything to follow Jesus?

August 17

Paul's Testimony to the Jews and Gentiles (Acts 26:19-23)

- According to Paul, why did the Jews seize him at the temple?

August 18

Paul Appeals to Agrippa to Believe (Acts 26:24-32)

- What reactions do Paul's listeners have to his story?

August 19

Paul Sails for Rome (Acts 27:1-12)

- Make a log of Paul's travels.

August 20

The Storm at Sea (Acts 27:13-38)

- Why would pagans listen attentively to Paul's dream of an angel?

August 21

The Shipwreck (Acts 27:39-44)

- How does God rescue Paul from this shipwreck?

August 22

In the Day of Trouble... (Psalm 77)

- Have you ever been in a similar situation that the psalmist describes? How did the Lord bring you through it?

August 23

The Compassion of the Lord (Isaiah 55)

- How is God's thinking different from ours?

- What is the power of God's word?

August 24

Paul on the Island of Malta (Acts 28:1-10)

- Why do the inhabitants of Malta change their minds so positively about Paul?

August 25

Jesus Prays for Future Disciples (John 17:20-26)

- What kind of future does Jesus want for his disciples?

August 26

Paul Arrives at Rome (Acts 28:11-16)

- What response does Paul receive from the church in Rome?

August 27

Prepare for the Lord's Day (1 Thessalonians 5)

- How do we prepare for the Lord's coming?

August 28

Paul Preaches in Rome (Acts 28:17-31)

- What response does Paul receive from the Jewish community in Rome?

August 31

May God Be Gracious (Psalm 67)

- How can we be gracious to others as God has been gracious to us?