

A SEVEN-WEEK CHALLENGE FOR THE BOOK OF ACTS WEEK ONE

Chapter One of the Book of Acts – A Strong Anchor

Section One: Vocabulary Activities (including tic, tac, toe and a little tale) for these words: former, apostle, suffering, proof, charge, restore, authority, witness, uttermost, earnestly, accompany, and resurrection.

Section Two: Questions to Investigate in Chapter One—

Who wrote the book of Acts?
Is Acts a good account of history?
Who saw Jesus alive after his death?
What does the Holy Spirit do?



Chapter Two of the Book of Acts – A Promise Fulfilled

Section One: Vocabulary Activities (including an Analogy Game and a jigsaw puzzle) for these words: Israelite, bold, forefather, tomb, prophet, oath, descendant, Christ/Messiah, decay, exalt, ascend, footstool, assuredly, prick, crucify, crooked.

Section Two: Questions to Investigate in Chapter Two—

What happened with the Holy Spirit fifty days after Jesus died?
What was the NEW agreement between God and people?
How did people who had demanded Jesus' death respond to the message about Jesus?
What did the apostles do to become stronger Christians?

Chapter Three of the Book of Acts – The Author of Life

Section One: Vocabulary Activities (including an Analogy Game and a crossword puzzle) for these words: lame, womb, beg, wonder, address (speak to), marvel, godliness, glorify, deliver up, grant, release, ignorance, foretell, repent, refreshing.

Section Two: Questions to Investigate in Chapter Three—

What real miracle did a lame man receive?
What did Peter tell Jesus' murderers? Did we have a part in the murder?
How do we know Jesus is the Author of the greatest story ever told?
What did the Jews' forefathers, Moses and Abraham, say about Jesus?

Chapter Four of the Book of Acts – A Tower of Strength

Section One: Vocabulary Activities (including an Odd Man Out Game and a little tale) for these words: troubled, proclaim, take hold of, elder, scribe, inquire, deed, reject, cornerstone, salvation, be mindful, confer, notable, threaten, heed.

Section Two: Questions to Investigate in Chapter Four—

Why were two of Jesus' followers, Peter and John, put in jail?
What did Peter and John say when their judges questioned them?
Peter once denied knowing Jesus. How did he change?
When Peter and John's judges threatened them, what did Peter say?



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1. In Acts 1 below, search for the twelve vocabulary words listed in #2.

Acts 1:1-8, ¹In the former account I made, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach, ²until the day he was taken up to heaven after having given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³He also showed himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during a forty-day period and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴One time when he was together with them, he charged them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of [God] the Father, which he had already spoken to them about. He said, ⁵“John indeed baptized with water; but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶Therefore, when they were with him, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷And he said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has set within His own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth. *

Acts 1:9-14, ⁹And when Jesus had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰While they were looking steadily into heaven as he went, suddenly two men stood by them in white clothing. ¹¹They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there, looking up? This Jesus, who has been received into heaven, will come back in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

¹²Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem . . . ¹³When they arrived, they went up into the upper room, where they were staying. Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James were all there. ¹⁴With like mind, these continued earnestly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. *

Acts 1:21-22, ²¹“One of the men who has accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus lived among us, ²²from the baptism of John until the day he was taken into heaven, must become a witness with us of Jesus’ resurrection.” *

2. Read Acts 1:1-14 and Acts 1:22-23 in your own language. (You can find the Bible in your language by clicking on <https://www.biblegateway.com>. Then click on ALL inside the Bible version box.) **Next, play this quick matching game, based on the meaning of the words in Acts 1.** Time yourself. Can you match the twelve words with their meanings in two minutes?

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| _____ 1. former | A. One who tells what he/she saw or experienced |
| _____ 2. apostle | B. To bring back to a good condition |
| _____ 3. suffering | C. To give a duty for someone to carry out |
| _____ 4. proof | D. Something that shows data to be true |
| _____ 5. charge | E. Previous, before the present one |
| _____ 6. restore | F. Experiencing pain or much trouble |
| _____ 7. authority | G. The right and power to control or direct |
| _____ 8. witness | H. A follower who is to give out his teacher’s messages |

- _____ 9. uttermost
- _____ 10. earnestly
- _____ 11. accompany
- _____ 12. resurrection

- I. Rising to life from death
- J. To go somewhere with someone
- K. Firmly from the heart, intently, sincerely
- L. Highest or farthest

(Answers are at the end.)

3. Try to use the new words to fill in the blanks without looking at #2 above.

- a. The writer of *Acts* wrote about Jesus' life in his _____ book, called *Luke*.
- b. The _____ who saw Jesus alive after his death carried his teachings to many lands.
- c. After his _____ on the cross, Jesus rose from the dead.
- d. Jesus' appearances to many people gave convincing _____ that he had risen.
- e. Jesus _____ the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- f. When Jesus returns to earth, he will _____ God's rule over all the world.
- g. Only God has the _____ to decide when the Kingdom of God will be set up on earth.
- h. Christians should be _____ of how Jesus has changed their lives and answered their prayers.
- i. We should take Jesus' message to the _____ areas of the world.
- j. After Jesus went up into heaven, his followers returned to Jerusalem and prayed _____.
- k. The apostles were led to choose someone who had _____ them all during Jesus' ministry as a replacement for Judas.
- l. The replacement, who also had seen Jesus alive after his death, was to tell others about Jesus' _____.

(Answers are at the end.)

4. Play this tic, tac, toe game with a friend or even by yourself to test your memory. Instead of using X or O, write the vocabulary word in the square that matches the meaning. Write the words from memory. Three across, down, or diagonally wins the game, but even one mistake makes the other person win (or yourself lose).

Experiencing pain	To bring back to good condition	Power to direct
The rising to life after death	Firmly from the heart	Shows a fact to be true
To give a duty	A follower who passes on the teachings	Farthest

5. Just for fun and practice, use each of the new words except *resurrection* to complete this little tale. One word will be used twice.

- a. Once upon a time, King Robert, who ruled a faraway land called Morles, _____ wanted to marry a young lady who was both lovely and famous for her kindness. He desired to _____ the good name of the royal family. His mother, the _____ queen, had been a cruel person. The king had a loyal head servant, named Bennett, who always _____ him on trips and knew him well. He _____ Bennett to search to the _____ parts of the land for a lady worthy of marrying him. He gave the servant the _____ to take and sail any ship he needed for his river journeys.
- b. Bennett left the palace immediately, but he traveled only to the next town. _____ had told him how a beautiful young lady, named Sarah, was taking care of sixty orphans in the town with her own money. That was all the _____ he needed to be sure of her unusual kindness. However, Sarah refused the wonderful offer because the orphans and she loved each other, and she didn't want to cause them more _____.
- c. King Robert was sorely disappointed when he heard about her refusal. Yet he remembered the _____ words that it is better to give than to receive. Therefore, he sent Sarah his blessing and had a large, new home built for the children. Then, he _____ Bennett to continue his search throughout the land. Bennett traveled over mountains and deserts and finally found another woman equally lovely and kind. King Robert and his wife lived happily ever after, and so did Sarah and the orphans.

(Answers are at the end.)

Answers for the Matching Game: 1-E, 2-H, 3-F, 4-D, 5-C, 6-B, 7-G, 8-A, 9-L, 10-K, 11-J, 12-I (If you matched the words in two minutes or less, you have earnestly studied English. ☺)

Answers for the fill-in-the-blank exercise: a.) former b.) apostles (witnesses must be used later) c.) suffering d.) proof or proofs e.) charged f.) restore g.) authority h.) witnesses i.) uttermost j.) earnestly k.) accompanied l.) resurrection

Answers for the fill-in-the-blank story: a.) earnestly, restore, former, accompanied, charged, uttermost, authority. b.) Witnesses, proof, suffering. c.) apostle's, charged.

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Investigating Acts 1 A Strong Anchor

Background: Luke wrote the book of *Acts*, the fifth “book” in the Bible’s New Testament. Luke began traveling with Paul, the great Christian preacher, at Troas in what is now Turkey about twenty years after Jesus’ death. (Acts 16:10) While traveling with Paul, Luke was a witness to much of the rest of Acts. He was able to meet Peter and John, the two followers closest to Jesus, and James, who was Jesus’ half-brother, as well as other very early Christians.

Luke also wrote an account of Jesus’ life called *Luke*, the third book in the New Testament. In Luke’s introduction for the book, we see the good methods he used to find out the truth.

Luke 1:1-4, (chapter one, verses 1-4) ¹Since many have put together an account of those things that have been fulfilled among us, ²even as they were passed on to us by those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word [about Jesus] from the beginning, ³it seemed good to me also, having investigated all things carefully from the first, to write you in an orderly manner, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴so that you may know for certain the things you have been taught. *



1. What methods did Luke use so that his writing would not have mistakes? Christianity is anchored in carefully investigated, eyewitness history!
2. Theophilus was a close acquaintance of Luke and most likely was a Christian Roman official. Theophilus means “lover of God” or “loved by God.”

I. Jesus Final Time with His Disciples before His Rise into Heaven

Acts 1:1-3, ¹In the former account I made, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach, ²until the day he was taken up to heaven after having given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³He also showed himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, showing himself to them during a forty-day period and speaking about the kingdom of God. *

A. Here Luke reminds us of the prediction about Jesus Christ, given in **Isaiah 53:11** more than 600 years before Jesus lived: ¹¹He [Christ] will be satisfied when he thinks back on the suffering of his soul . . . My righteous servant will justify many, for he will bear their sins. *

1. Can you spot the word that is the same in Isaiah 53:11 and Acts 1:3?
 2. What phrases in Isaiah 53:11 predict that Jesus would be alive after his death?
- B. What proofs do you think Luke is talking about in Acts 1:3?
1. Paul wrote about these proofs (that Jesus showed himself to people after his death) in **I Corinthians 15:3-8**, written within 25 years of Jesus death. They had been told to Paul even earlier. ³For I passed on to you first of all what I also had received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures [verses in the Bible]; ⁴and that he was buried; and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures; ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter]; then to the Twelve [the Twelve Disciples]. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers [followers of Christ] at the same time, of whom the greater part are still living, but some have fallen asleep [died]. ⁷Then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; ⁸and last of all, like a

child born at the wrong time, he appeared to me [Paul] also. *

Paul said he was “like a child born at the wrong time” because he saw Jesus after the forty-day period during which Jesus appeared to the others in the list.

2. The people who said they saw Jesus alive after His death were either a) believing a mistake, b) lying, or c) telling the truth. Think about Paul’s words above in I Corinthians 15 along with Jesus’ teachings about honesty and the fact these witnesses gave their lives to follow these truths. Why are a) and b) poor explanations?

II. Jesus’ Promise of a Gift Resulting in New Spiritual Power

Have you ever seen someone changed for the better by becoming a Christian? Maybe you yourself have been changed. Here is part of the reason this happens.

Acts 1:4-8 ⁴One time [during the forty days] when Jesus was together with them [his followers], he charged them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of [God] the Father, which he had already spoken to them about. He said, ⁵“John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶Therefore, when they were with him, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has set within His own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth. *

Water baptism for a Christian is a picture of dying with Christ as the person goes under the water, and then it is a picture of rising to new life (while in this life) as he comes out of the water. The Holy Spirit’s baptism is not visible, and it happens now at the time we accept Jesus as our Savior. The disciples had to wait for this until Jesus’ bodily presence left the world.

A. **John 14:16-18** tells one of the times Jesus talked about the Holy Spirit before he died: “And I [Jesus] will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever— ¹⁷the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, for it does not see him or know him. You know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you alone as orphans; I will come to you.” *

What are three very important results of having the Holy Spirit come into our lives?

1. God’s Spirit becomes our H _____. He will guide us and encourage us.
2. The Holy Spirit will give us a close connection with our Savior. We will be not alone!
3. As we trust God’s Spirit to use us, we will have p _____ to do good and to tell others about Jesus.

B. Paul’s letters in the Bible tell more results of asking Jesus to be our Savior and therefore receiving the Holy Spirit into our life.

1. **I Corinthians 2:12**, ¹²But what we received was not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God so that we could know the things of God that were freely given to us. * The Holy Spirit helps us understand God’s truth much better.
2. **Galatians 5:22-23**, ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. * We need the Holy Spirit’s work to change us day by day.

3. **Ephesians 1:13-14** ¹³ . . . **having also believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,** ¹⁴ **who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of his glory.** *

The Holy Spirit makes it certain that a Christian will be with God in heaven forever!

C. Look back at Acts 1:6. The disciples may have thought that when the gift of the Holy Spirit was given, Jesus would immediately rule the world with visible power. What was Jesus’ answer?

D. The number one mission of the apostles was to be _____ of Jesus’ life, death for people’s sins, and his resurrection. Christians today also have been given the Great Commission to be witnesses of Jesus and his reality in their lives. God’s plan is to gain many members for the eternal Kingdom of God before setting up his final rule on earth.

III. The Prediction of Jesus’ Second Coming to Earth

Acts 1:9-11, ⁹ **And when Jesus had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up, and a cloud hid him from their sight.** ¹⁰ **While they were looking steadily into heaven as he went, suddenly two men stood by them in white clothing.** ¹¹ **They said, “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there, looking up? This Jesus, who has been received into heaven, will come back in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”** *

The disciples were told that Jesus would come back in the same way that He left. What does this tell us about Jesus’ Second Coming to earth (still at a future date)?

IV. Two Important Descriptions of the Apostles

A. The early apostles joined together in prayer.

Acts 1:12-14, ¹² **Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem . . .** ¹³ **When they arrived, they went up into the upper room, where they were staying. Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James were all there.** ¹⁴ **With like mind, these continued earnestly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.** *

The first Christians needed each other and guidance from God, and so do we.

B. The apostles felt led from prophecies (predictions) in the Psalms to replace Judas, the one who turned against Jesus. Peter said in **Acts 1:21-22,** **“One of the men who has accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus lived among us,** ²² **from the baptism of John until the day he was taken into heaven, must become a witness with us of Jesus’ resurrection.”** *

How does Acts 1:21-22 help show that Christianity is based firmly on eyewitness accounts?

V. Making Memories – like photographs for our mind

What is a key truth from Acts 1 that you want to remember?

Mark one important verse in Acts 1 that will help you remember what happened in this chapter.

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1. **In Acts 2:29-42, search for the sixteen vocabulary words listed below in #2.** Also notice the four words from Acts 1: *resurrection, witness, apostle, and earnestly.*

Acts 2:29-41, ²⁹ “Brother Israelites, I [Peter] tell you boldly that our forefather David both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet and knowing that God had sworn an oath that He would set one of his descendants upon his throne, ³¹ David saw what was to come and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was Christ left to Hades [the place of the dead] nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised up this Jesus, and we are all witnesses of it. ³³ Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, Christ has poured out this [gift of the Holy Spirit, the sign of] which you see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself said, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, ³⁵ until I make your enemies the footstool for your feet.” ³⁶ Therefore, let all of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Peter told them, “Repent and every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all who are far off, even to as many as the Lord our God will call to himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words, Peter warned and urged them [to believe], saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” ⁴¹ Those who received his word were baptized, and that day about three thousand [believers] were added. The new believers continued earnestly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. *

2. **Read Acts 2:29-42 in your own language. Then play this quick matching game.** Time yourself. Can you do it in less than three minutes?

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Israelite | A. A person who gives God’s message, often about the future |
| _____ 2. bold | B. Rot; the bad condition after something dies |
| _____ 3. forefather | C. An ancestor in one’s family line or nation |
| _____ 4. tomb | D. To pierce with something sharp, such as a pin |
| _____ 5. prophet | E. A low piece of furniture for feet to rest on |
| _____ 6. oath | F. Brave and confident |
| _____ 7. descendant | G. Dishonest, unrighteous, evil; not straight (<i>separate meaning</i>) |
| _____ 8. Christ | H. To lift up to a very high position; to praise highly |
| _____ 9. decay | I. To go up; to climb |
| _____ 10. exalt | J. A person’s child, grandchild, great-grandchild, etc. |
| _____ 11. ascend | K. To kill by nailing to a cross |
| _____ 12. footstool | L. A place to bury a dead person |
| _____ 13. assuredly | M. A strong promise |
| _____ 14. prick | N. With certainty; without doubt |
| _____ 15. crucify | O. Messiah, the promised Savior |
| _____ 16. crooked | P. A member of the ancient nation of Israel |

(Answers are at the end.)

3. Try to use the new words to fill in the blanks without looking at #2 above.

- a. Peter, who was one of Jesus' first followers, spoke to the _____ who had gathered.
 - b. He used a _____ manner of speaking about Jesus.
 - c. Peter began by quoting words by King David, one of the nation's _____.
 - d. David, who lived 1000 years before Jesus, was both a king of Israel and a _____.
 - e. King David talked about the _____ that God had made about David's descendant.
 - f. Jesus was a _____ of King David.
 - g. King David's body is still in his _____, but Jesus' _____ was empty.
 - h. Peter explained how David had been talking about the Christ, not himself, because David's body did experience _____.
 - i. The words Messiah and _____, which come from two different languages, both mean "the anointed, chosen one."
 - j. Peter told the crowd that Jesus _____ into heaven after his resurrection.
 - k. Jesus was _____ to God the Father's right hand, and then Jesus gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to his followers.
 - l. King David had predicted that the Christ's enemies would become like a _____ for him, demonstrating his victory over evil.
 - m. One reason Peter called his generation _____ was their failure to honestly consider Jesus' claims to be the Messiah.
 - n. Peter told the crowd that Jesus was _____ the Christ and Lord. There was no doubt.
 - o. The Romans had _____ Jesus because a large crowd, including some of Peter's listeners, had demanded it.
 - p. The Holy Spirit _____ the hearts of the people listening to Peter.
- (Answers are at the end.)

4. Analogy Game: Use fourteen of the new words to fill in the blanks.

Think about how the first pair of words are related, and then choose one of the new vocabulary words to relate the last pair in the same way. For example, *farms* is to *farmer* as *teaches* is to _____. Since a farmer farms, *teacher* would be a good word to put in the blank.

- a. School is to student as _____ is to corpse (a dead body).
 - b. Cautious is to careful as brave is to _____.
 - c. Citizen is to country as _____ is to Israel.
 - d. Nose is to sniff as mouth is to swear an _____.
 - e. Ancestor is to grandfather as _____ is to grandson.
 - f. Hot is to cold as _____ is to put down.
 - g. Drill is to hole in a board as _____ is to cavity in a tooth.
 - h. Saint Nicolas is to Santa as Messiah is to _____, However, one is legend and one is factual.
 - i. Bad is to good as _____ is to honest.
 - j. Knife is to cut as needle is to _____.
 - k. Hang is to rope as _____ is to nails.
 - l. Bed is to body as _____ is to feet.
 - m. Doctor is to heal as _____ is to predict.
 - n. Drive is to road as _____ is to mountain.
- (Answers are at the end.)

5. Work a free jigsaw puzzle online using ten of the new words from Acts 1 and 2.

Copy and paste: <https://www.jspuzzles.com/puzzle.php?lang=en&puzzle=754772&share>

Answers for the Matching Game: 1-P, 2-F, 3-C, 4-L, 5-A, 6-M, 7-J, 8-O, 9-B, 10-H, 11-I, 12-E, 13-N, 14-D, 15-K, 16-G. (If you matched the words in three minutes or less, you are assuredly awesome! ☺)

*Answers for the fill-in-the-blank exercise: a.) Israelites b.) bold c.) forefathers d.) prophet e.) oath
f.) descendant g.) tomb, tomb h.) decay i.) Christ j.) ascended k.) exalted l.) footstool m.) crooked
n.) assuredly o.) crucified p.) pricked*

*Answers for the Analogies: a.) tomb b.) bold c.) Israelite d.) oath e.) descendant f.) exalt g.) decay
h.) Christ i.) crooked j.) prick k.) crucify l.) footstool m.) prophet n.) ascend*

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I. The Coming of the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:1-13 tells how the Holy Spirit was first given to live in the new Christians permanently on Pentecost, i.e., fifty days after the Jewish Passover and Jesus' death. To show the reality of this invisible gift of the Holy Spirit, there was the sound of a mighty wind, and tongues, like flames of fire, rested on each of them. God also gave these men the ability to speak in foreign languages on that one day, causing a crowd to gather. Some were visitors to Jerusalem and questioned how these men could speak their languages. Some said the apostles were drunk.

II. Peter's Powerful Message to the Crowd

A. The Explanation of the Event

Acts 2:14-21, ¹⁴ **But Peter [one of the original Twelve Disciples of Jesus], standing up with the eleven, spoke to them in a loud voice, saying, "Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, listen to what I have to say to you. ¹⁵ These men are not drunk, as you think, seeing it is only nine in the morning. ¹⁶ But this is what was spoken about through the prophet Joel:**

¹⁷ **'In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people; and your sons and your daughters will prophesy [tell God's messages]; your young men will see visions; and your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Yes, in those days, I will pour out my Spirit on my servants, both men and women, and they will prophesy.**

¹⁹ **'And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath— blood, fire, and smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood before the day of the Lord comes, that great day.**

²¹ **And it will be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' ***

1. The Old Testament prophet, Joel, predicted this coming of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-29) about 800 years before Jesus lived. We are still in the "Last Days," which began with this gift of the Spirit. The events in verses 19-20 will happen right before Jesus' future return.
2. This coming of the Holy Spirit into Christians' lives marked the start of the new agreement between God and his followers, predicted by the prophet Jeremiah about 600 years before Christ in **Jeremiah 31:31-34**: ³¹ **"The days will come," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant [agreement] with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³² not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers . . . I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts . . . for they will all know me, from the least important of them to the greatest of them," says Jehovah [God]. "For I will forgive their sin, and I will no longer call it to mind." ***
3. At the same time, the Church began, in which all Christians are united spiritually with Jesus and with one another. This day was a turning point in history!

B. Pointing to Jesus

Acts 2:22-36, ²² **"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved by God, as shown by the mighty works, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man, having been handed over by the counsel and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ But God**

raised him up, having freed him from the pains of death because it was not possible that he should be held in its power. ²⁵ For David said about him,

‘I saw the Lord always before my face, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be moved. ²⁶ Therefore, my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced. My body also will live in hope ⁷ because you will not leave my soul in Hades [the place of the dead], nor will you allow your Holy One to see decay. ²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life. Your presence will make me full of gladness.’

²⁹ Brothers, I tell you boldly that our forefather David both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet and knowing that God had made an oath that He would set one of his descendants upon his throne, ³¹ David saw what was to come and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was Christ left in Hades nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised up this Jesus, and we are all witnesses of it.

³³ Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, Christ has poured out this [gift of the Holy Spirit, the sign of] which you see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself said, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, ³⁵ until I make your enemies the footstool for your feet.’” ³⁶ Therefore, let all of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” *

1. What shows that Jesus’ life and miracles were very well known in Jerusalem?
2. Peter told the crowd that they had helped murder their Messiah. In what way is everyone who has sinned also responsible for Jesus’ death?
3. What words in Acts 2:23 tell us that God was in control even though Jesus was crucified?
4. Peter quoted part of Psalm 16, written by King David 1000 years earlier. What words in the psalm most clearly show that David was predicting the Messiah’s resurrection?
5. Peter also quoted the first verse of Psalm 110 to show that Jesus was Lord and had victory over evil. (Jesus had quoted this verse, too, to show that the Messiah, who would descend from King David, would be more than just a man since David called him “my Lord.”)

C. The People’s Response

Acts 2:37-41, ³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Peter told them, “Repent and every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all who are far off, even to as many as the Lord our God will call to himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words, Peter warned and urged them [to believe] saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” ⁴¹ Those who received his word were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added. *

A. Three thousand people believed in Jesus that day! Why did so many become Christians?

1. They were “_____ in their _____” by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:37)
2. They realized that Jesus had fulfilled Old Testament p_____ about the Messiah’s death and resurrection.
3. They heard the disciples’ eyewitness account about Jesus’ resurrection. (2:32) Jesus’ resurrection is the central proof that Jesus was the Messiah/Christ, the Son of God!
4. They were urged by Peter to repent and accept Jesus as their Savior (2:38-40). Repenting doesn’t mean to become good. It means we see our sin and turn away from it to God for

help. When we receive Jesus into our life as our Savior, we are forgiven and changed.

- B. This took place only forty-seven days after Jesus' resurrection. Wouldn't people, especially Jesus' enemies, already have checked Jesus' tomb to see if Jesus' body was still in it? Of course, no body had been found in Jesus' tomb. More proof!
- C. The new Christians were _____ to show their belief. (2:41) Many Bible verses show that baptism does not make a person become a Christian. The thief who believed while on the cross was not baptized. John 3:16, Acts 2:21, and Romans 10:9-10 do not mention baptism as a requirement for becoming a Christian. However, Jesus commanded that his followers be baptized as a sign of their belief, so it is an important step in obeying him.

III. The Early Church

Acts 2:42 The new believers continued earnestly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. *

- A. Here are four practices that help Christians grow in their relationship with God and believers:
1. The new Christians paid close attention to the apostles' _____. Today we can do this by studying the Bible. The Bible is our spiritual food. It is God's guidebook for our life!
 2. They were careful to have _____ with each other. We can find good Christian fellowship in Bible-believing churches. Why is it important to meet together in person?
 3. They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread. Communion (the Lord's Supper), during which a church hands out pieces of cracker-type bread and grape juice or wine, is to remind us of Jesus' death for us. **Luke 22:19, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ***
 4. Finally, we find that these first Christians earnestly _____. God knows everything, and he loves us. Why then do we need to pray?
 - a. First, prayer is communicating with God. When praying, we shouldn't ask only for things, but we should also praise and thank the Lord for his presence and help, ask for his guidance, and tune into whatever he may be telling us in our spirit.
 - b. Prayer increases our faith. Have you seen this happen for you or an acquaintance?
 - c. Praying with others _____ us and lets us show our love and care.
 - d. God's love requires that we be free to love and follow him (or be free to choose against him.) Therefore, God often waits for us to ask him for his help.
- B. The writer goes on to describe how the early church shared their possessions and met together each day. The chapter finishes in **Acts 2:47** with a description of these first Christians joyfully **"praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those who were being saved." ***

V. Making Memories – like photographs for our mind

What is a key truth from Acts 2 that you want to remember?

Mark one important verse in Acts 2 that will help you remember what happened in this chapter.

*Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, with the English updated to modern usage. The NET Bible® was consulted from time to time to confirm or adopt apt words or phrases.

Vocabulary Activities for Acts 3:1-21
The Author of Life

1. **In Acts 3:1-21, search for the fifteen vocabulary words listed in #2.** Also note these words from Acts 1 and 2 in addition to *Christ: forefather, witness, resurrection, prophet, suffer, restore.*

Acts 3:1-10, ¹ As Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, that is, at 3 p.m., ² a certain man who was lame from his mother's womb was carried there. He was laid daily at the temple's gate called Beautiful to beg for money from the people who entered the temple. ³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, the lame man asked for money. ⁴ Peter, with John, looked directly at him and said, "Look at us." ⁵ The man paid attention to them, expecting to get something from them.

⁶ But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I do have, I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. ⁷ He took him by the right hand and raised him up. Immediately the lame man's feet and ankles received strength. ⁸ Leaping up, he stood and began to walk. He entered the temple courts with Peter and John, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹ All the people saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰ They realized that he was the man who had begged at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. *

Acts 3:11-16, ¹¹ As the healed man held on to Peter and John, all the people, greatly wondering, ran together to them in the covered walkway called Solomon's Portico. ¹² When Peter saw this, he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this man? Why do you look at us as though by our own power or godliness we made him able to walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our forefathers, has glorified his Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied before Pilate when he had planned to release him. ¹⁴ You denied the Holy and Righteous One. You asked for a murderer to be granted to you ¹⁵ and killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. We are witnesses of his resurrection. ¹⁶ Faith in Jesus' name has made this man strong, whom you see and know. The faith which comes through Jesus Christ has given him this perfect healing in the presence of all of you. *

Acts 3:17-21 ¹⁷ "Now, brothers, I know that you did this in ignorance, as did your rulers. ¹⁸ But in this way, God fulfilled what was foretold by all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer. ¹⁹ Therefore, repent and turn again [to God] so that your sins may be wiped out and so that there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰ and so that he may send the Christ who has been appointed for you, even Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must receive him until the time for restoring all things, which God spoke about long ago through his holy prophets." *

2. **Read Acts 3:1-21 in your own language. Then play this quick matching game.** Time yourself. Can you do it within three minutes?

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| _____ 1. lame | A. To set free |
| _____ 2. womb | B. Not having knowledge of the facts |
| _____ 3. beg | C. To speak to |
| _____ 4. wonder | D. Causing a good, renewed feeling |
| _____ 5. address | E. The part of a woman that carries the unborn baby |
| _____ 6. marvel | F. To ask strongly for something as a favor |
| _____ 7. godliness | G. Surprise and awe; to be curious (second meaning) |
| _____ 8. glorify | H. To predict something before it happens |
| _____ 9. deliver up | I. Unable to walk or unable to walk well |
| _____ 10. grant | J. To recognize sin and turn away from it |
| _____ 11. release | K. Having goodness and other characteristics related to God |
| _____ 12. ignorance | L. Allow a request to be fulfilled |
| _____ 13. foretell | M. To be amazed; to be very surprised by an unusual thing |
| _____ 14. repent | N. To lift up to heavenly beauty and majesty |
| _____ 15. refreshing | O. To place something in another person's hands; hand over |

(Answers are at the end.)

3. Try to use the new words to fill in the blanks without looking at #2 above.

- Poor people often _____ for money near the Jewish temple.
- A beggar at the Beautiful Gate had been lame from his mother's _____.
- The _____ man was healed through the power of Jesus' name.
- Peter and John did not heal the lame man by their own power or _____.
- The crowd was filled with _____ to see the beggar jumping and praising God.
- Peter stood before the curious crowd and _____ them.
- He asked them why they were _____ at the miracle.
- He told the crowd that God had _____ Jesus, in whose name the man was healed.
- The religious leaders had arrested Jesus and had _____ him _____ to the Romans.
- Peter reminded the crowd that Pilate had not _____ Jesus because of their demands.
- They had even demanded that Pilate _____ the release of a murderer instead of Jesus.
- Some people had wanted Jesus to be killed because of their _____.
- The suffering and death of Jesus fulfilled what the Old Testament prophets had _____.
- In order to accept Jesus, a person must _____ and want God's forgiveness.
- When people put their faith in Jesus, they receive _____ changes to their life.

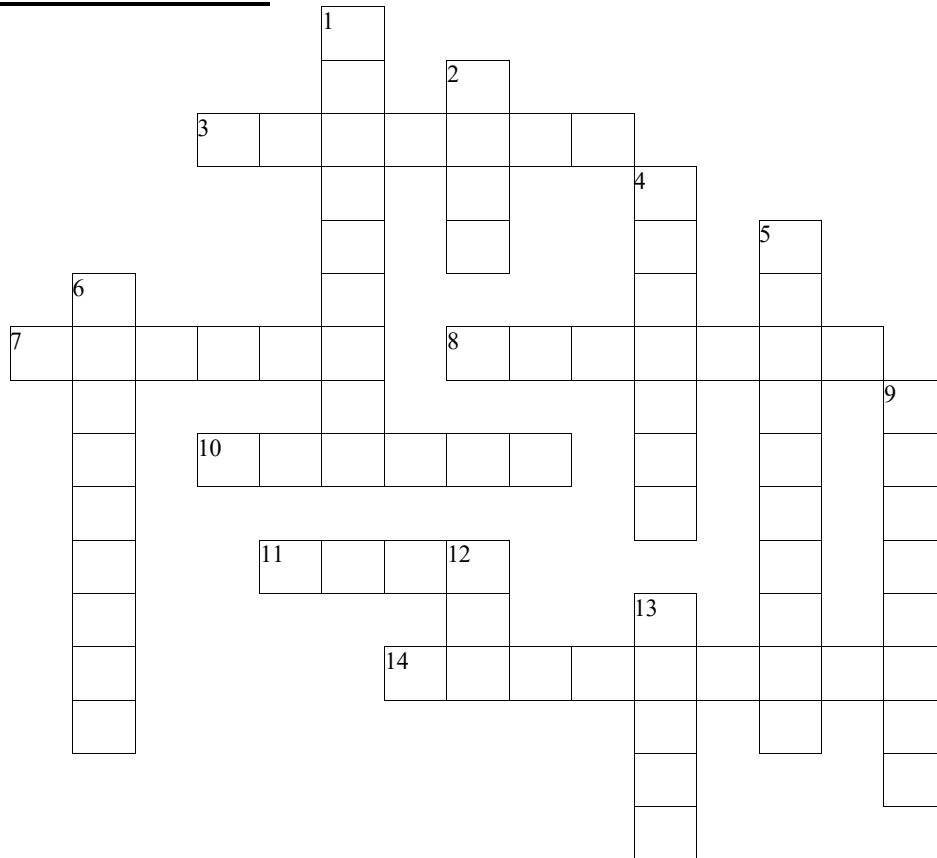
(Answers are at the end.)

4. Analogy Game Use eleven of the new words to complete these analogies.

- Deaf is to ear as _____ is to leg.
- King is to rule as prophet is to _____.
- Large is to big as _____ is to amazement.
- Evil is to Satan as _____ is to God.
- Happy is to sad as keep is to _____.
- Open is to shut as _____ is to deny.
- Relief is to worry as _____ is to captivity.
- Nest is to egg as _____ is to baby.
- Poverty (being poor) is to wealth as _____ is to knowledge.
- Grow is to growth as _____ is to repentance.
- Burning is to fire as _____ is to water.

(Answers are at the end.)

5. **Use all the new vocabulary words except *marvel* to fill in the crossword puzzle. Try not to look at the list in #2 above.**



Across

- 3. Set free
- 7. Surprised awe
- 8. To lift up to heavenly majesty
- 10. Turn away from sin
- 11. Location of the unborn baby
- 14. Not knowing the facts

Down

- 1. Hand over
- 2. A person who cannot walk
- 4. To speak to
- 5. Causing a renewed feeling
- 6. Having characteristics related to God
- 9. To tell before it happens
- 12. To ask for a favor
- 13. Fulfill a request

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Answers for the Matching Game: 1-I, 2-E, 3-F, 4-G, 5-C, 6-M, 7-K, 8-N, 9-O, 10-L, 11-A, 12-B, 13-H, 14-J, 15-D (If you matched the words in three minutes or less, you are a wonder with these words! ☺)

Answers for the fill-in-the-blank exercise: a.) begged b.) womb c.) lame d.) godliness e.) wonder f.) addressed g.) marveling h.) glorified i.) delivered up j.) released k.) grant l.) ignorance m.) foretold n.) repent o.) refreshing

Answers for the Analogy Game: a.) lame b.) foretell c.) wonder d.) godliness e.) deliver up f.) grant g.) release h.) womb i.) ignorance j.) repent k.) refreshing

*Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, with the English updated to modern usage. The NET Bible® was consulted from time to time to confirm or adopt apt words or phrases.

**Investigating Acts 3
The Author of Life**

Try to picture the miracle in this chapter. Imagine the excitement of the forty-year-old man who could walk for the first time in his life.

I. The Unexpected Miracle

Acts 3:1-10, ¹ As Peter and John were going up to the [Jewish] temple at the hour of prayer, that is, at 3 p.m., ² a certain man who was lame from his mother's womb was carried there. He was laid daily at the temple's gate called Beautiful to beg for money from the people who entered the temple. ³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, the lame man asked for money. ⁴ Peter, with John, looked directly at him and said, "Look at us." ⁵ The man paid attention to them, expecting to get something from them. ⁶ But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I do have, I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. ⁷ He took him by the right hand and raised him up. Immediately the lame man's feet and ankles received strength. ⁸ Leaping up, he stood and began to walk. He entered the temple courts with Peter and John, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹ All the people saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰ They realized that he was the man who had begged at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. *

- A. God's gift was clearly far better than the money the lame man had wanted.
1. What are some of the many ways being healed was better?
 2. What can God's answer (through Peter) teach us about praying?
 3. From your experience, does it sometimes take time, maybe even a long time, to see how a different answer turns out to be better than what you wanted? What comes to your mind?
- B. What does the healed man's response teach us about receiving God's gifts?
- 1.) Be confident in the results. He leaped up. 2.) P _____ God. 3.) T _____ others about God's greatness!
- C. Luke was a good historian. He gave the exact t _____ and p _____ of the miracle. He knew this because he had opportunities to talk to eyewitnesses in his travels with Paul. This event would have remained front and center in Peter's and John's memories.

II. Peter's Message to the Crowd

Acts 3:11-20, ¹¹ As the healed man held on to Peter and John, all the people, greatly wondering, ran together to them in the covered walkway called Solomon's Portico. ¹² When Peter saw this, he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this man? Why do you look at us as though by our own power or godliness we made him able to walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our forefathers, has glorified his Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied before Pilate when he had planned to release him. ¹⁴ You denied the Holy and Righteous One. You asked for a murderer to be granted to you ¹⁵ and killed the Author¹ of life, whom God raised from the dead. We are witnesses of his resurrection. ¹⁶ Faith in Jesus' name has made this man strong, whom you

¹ The American Standard Version gives either Prince or Author as the translation here. The NIV chooses to use Author. The NET Bible uses Originator of life.

see and know. The faith which comes through Jesus Christ has given him this perfect healing in the presence of all of you.

¹⁷“Now, brothers, I know that you did this in ignorance, as did your rulers. ¹⁸ But in this way, God fulfilled what was foretold by all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer.

¹⁹ Therefore, repent and turn again [to God] so that your sins may be wiped out and so that there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰ and so that he may send the Christ who has been appointed for you, even Jesus.” *

A. The opportunity

1. Peter and John didn't take any credit for the miracle. Are there times that Christians may take too much credit? Here's what Paul wrote in **I Corinthians 3:5-6**: ⁵ **What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, and each served the way the Lord gave him.** ⁶ **I planted; Apollos watered; but God gave the growth.** *
2. Peter used the crowd's amazement and interest to preach about Jesus. God may open unexpected opportunities for us to share about Jesus, too. We need to watch for them.

B. Jesus is the “author” of life. (Acts 3:15) What ideas about Jesus do you get from this unusual word? C.S. Lewis pointed out that people love stories because they are created to be a part of God's great story. But without Christ, we are like a hero or heroine without a good plot.

1. The hero or heroine in a story has a purpose: defeat the villain and survive, rescue those in danger, destroy the ring, find true love. God has purposes for each of us that will make a difference for all eternity! He gives us separate callings that fit our spiritual gifts, talents, and personality while giving all Christians the overall mission to love and serve.
2. When we seek to carry out God's purposes, we still make choices and have responsibility, but God helps us do his will as we pray, read the Bible, and rely on him.
3. A novel is fiction. Jesus Christ is truth, nonfiction. Non-Christians might say that people made up Christianity to fit their desire for purpose and a powerful helper. Christians say that people have the desire because our Creator/Author made us for the purpose of living a life in relationship with Him. We can't be fully satisfied without Him.
4. The _____ (Acts 3:15) is proof that Jesus is the Author of Life! In **John 10:10** Jesus said, “. . . **I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.**” *
5. **Ephesians 2:8-10**, ⁸ **For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God,** ⁹ **not of works, so that no man should boast.** ¹⁰ **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.** * “Workmanship” can be translated as a work of art, masterpiece, or poem in the original language! God is the Author of the greatest story ever told, and he wants each of us to be heroes/heroines in it.

C. Two More Examples Peter Gave of Prophecies about Jesus

Acts 3:21-26, ²¹ **“Heaven must receive Jesus until the time for restoring all things, which God spoke about long ago through his holy prophets.** ²² **Moses indeed said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to and accept whatever he tells you,** ²³ **for everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be completely destroyed from among the people.’** ²⁴ **Yes, and all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who followed him, also told of these days.** ²⁵ **You are the**

sons of the prophets and of the covenant [agreement] which God made with your forefathers, saying to Abraham, ‘Through your descendants, all the families of the earth will be blessed.’ ²⁶ God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you first, in turning every one of you away from your sins.” *

1. The Jews considered Moses and Abraham to be their greatest forefathers. By reminding his listeners of Moses’ prophecy of a mighty Prophet coming after him and also reminding them of God’s promise to Abraham, Peter showed his Jewish listeners that they should have recognized their Messiah. They had ignored God’s Word.
 - a. What did Moses say would happen to those who did not obey the future great Prophet? This warning from Moses must have gotten his listeners’ attention.
 - b. How did Jesus fulfill God’s promise to Abraham that all people would be blessed through his descendants? (Hint: Jesus, as a human, was descended from Abraham.)
 - c. We are part of the promised blessing for “all the families of the earth.” Jesus died on the cross for us as well as for the Jews!
2. In the last sentence of his message, Peter again said that a.) God _____ Jesus to life after his death (the proof!) and b.) his listeners, guilty of such a terrible sin, could still be blessed by r _____ of their sin and their rejection of Jesus.

III. Making Memories

What is a key truth from Acts 3 that you want to remember?

Underline or highlight one important verse in Acts 3 that will help you remember what happened in this chapter.

*Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, with the English updated to modern usage. The NET Bible® was consulted from time to time to confirm or adopt apt words or phrases.

Vocabulary Activities for Acts 4:1-22
A Tower of Strength

1. **In Acts 4:1-22, search for the fifteen vocabulary words listed in #2.** Also notice the six words from Acts 1-3: *resurrection, crucified, bold (boldness), marvel, charge, and glorify.*

Acts 4:1-4 As Peter and John spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple [guard], and the Sadducees approached them, ² being greatly troubled because Peter and John taught the people and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ They took hold of them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was now evening. ⁴ But many of the people who heard the speech believed, and the number of the men grew to about five thousand.

Acts 4:5-12 ⁵ The following day, the rulers, elders, and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas, the high priest, was there, as well as Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and relatives of the high priest. ⁷ And when they had brought in Peter and John, they inquired, “By what power, or in what name, have you done this?”

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being judged today about a good deed done to a powerless man and are being questioned how this man was made whole, ¹⁰ let it be known to you and all the people of Israel that it is in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands here before you healed. ¹¹ Jesus Christ is the stone, rejected by you builders, who has been made the cornerstone. ¹² There is salvation in none other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved.”

Acts 4:13-17, ¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were not educated men, they marveled and were mindful that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ Seeing the man who was healed standing with Peter and John, they could say nothing against it. ¹⁵ But when they had ordered Peter and John to go out of the Council, they conferred among themselves, ⁶ saying, “What shall we do to these men? A notable miracle has been done through them, and this is clear to all who live in Jerusalem. We cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But in order that this message spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, warning them not to speak to anyone in this name from now on.”

Acts 4:18-22, ¹⁸ The Council called Peter and John in and charged them not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to heed you rather than God, you should judge, ²⁰ for we must speak the things which we saw and heard. ²¹ When the Council had threatened them further, they let them go, not finding how they might punish them because of the people, who all glorified God for what had been done. ²² The man who had been miraculously healed was more than forty years old. *

2. **Read Acts 4:1-22 in your own language. Then play this quick matching game.** Time yourself. Can you do it within three minutes?

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| _____ 1. troubled | A. Foundation, the most important basis of something |
| _____ 2. proclaim | B. To discuss, talk together about something |
| _____ 3. take hold of | C. Remarkable, extraordinary |
| _____ 4. elder | D. To notice, be aware of |
| _____ 5. scribe | E. An older person, often deemed worthy of overseeing a group |
| _____ 6. inquire | F. A man in old times who studied and copied the Scriptures |
| _____ 7. deed | G. To warn of a bad action against someone or something |
| _____ 8. reject | H. To ask |
| _____ 9. cornerstone | I. To seize; grab |
| _____ 10. salvation | J. To pay attention to something and act on it as a result |
| _____ 11. be mindful | K. To not accept |
| _____ 12. confer | L. To announce a fact with authority |
| _____ 13. notable | M. Upset, disturbed |
| _____ 14. threaten | N. A deliverance from a bad thing, such as from death or hell |
| _____ 15. heed | O. An action, performance, activity, endeavor |

(Answers are at the end.)

3. Try to use all of the new words to fill in the blanks without looking at #2 above.

However, you can look at the Bible passage in #1.

- The Sadducees were _____ because of what Peter and John taught the people.
- Peter and John _____ that Jesus had risen from the dead.
- The religious leaders _____ Peter and John and put them in jail overnight.
- The rulers, _____, and _____ brought Peter and John before the Council.
- The Council _____ by what name the lame man had been healed.
- Peter pointed out that he and John had done a good _____.
- An Old Testament prophecy foretold that the _____ of God's kingdom would be rejected by the *builders*.
- Peter told the members of the Council that they had _____ their Savior, Jesus Christ.
- He proclaimed that there was _____ only through Jesus Christ.
- The religious leaders _____ that the two men had been with Jesus.
- The members of the Council _____ with each other, but could not decide how to punish Peter and John because they didn't want to upset the people in Jerusalem.
- The people in Jerusalem and the Council knew a _____ miracle had taken place.
- The Council decided to _____ Peter and John with punishment if they did not obey.
- Peter responded that the Council should judge whether it was right to _____ God or them.

(Answers are at the end.)

4. Odd Man Out Game

Three words in each set have almost the same meaning. The Odd Man Out has a different meaning and does not belong to the set. Find all the words that are Odd Men Out without looking at the definitions in #2. You may use your dictionary if needed.

- Troubled, worried, stymied, alarmed
- Proclaim, rule, declare, announce
- Take hold of, seize, compel, grab
- Inquire, ask, probe, add to

- e. Reject, refuse, detest, decline
- f. Cornerstone, basement, foundation, basis
- g. Scribe, copyist, elder, transcriber
- h. Be mindful, admire, take note, observe
- i. Confer, consult, decide, discuss
- j. Notable, remarkable, extraordinary, acceptable

(Answers are at the end.)

5. Use each of the new words to complete this little tale.

- a. Jack Pott attended an unusual school. The _____ idea of the school was to give the students complete freedom to follow their interests. The teachers wanted the students to _____ of the things around them and to _____ how those things worked. Jack, however, was _____ by the confused classroom. Although he knew inventions like the cell phone were _____, he didn't want to do research alone and then meet with his classmates about his findings. Since he _____ doing the work, he was never prepared for his classes. If he was put into a group, he usually became the "_____." This meant that he just wrote down what the other students had discovered.
- b. After a few weeks, Jack started skipping school. He would go to the park and play video games on his phone or use his lunch money to go to the movies. However, his _____ discovered these bad _____. Then, Jack _____ to everyone how much he disliked his terrible school. His angry father _____ him and shook him. He _____ to take away the cell phone and every other privilege.
- c. However, Jack's grandfather understood the problem. When Jack's parents and grandfather _____, his grandfather said that Jack should attend an ordinary school that gave more guidance and kept order in the classes. After Jack changed schools, he found he really liked his math and science classes. Almost miraculously, he looked forward to studying the stars, planets, and outer space. Later, when Jack became a famous scientist, he said the second school had been his education's _____. He was thankful his parents had _____ his grandfather's advice.

Answers for the Matching Game: 1-M, 2-L, 3-I, 4-E, 5-F, 6-H, 7-O, 8-K, 9-A, 10-N, 11-D, 12-B, 13-C, 14-G, 15-J (If you matched the words in three minutes or less, I proclaim you a notable English speaker!)

Answers for the fill-in-the-blank exercise: a.) troubled b.) proclaimed c.) took hold of d.) elders, scribes e. inquired f.) deed g.) cornerstone h.) rejected i.) salvation j.) were mindful k. conferred l. notable m. threaten n. heed

Answers for the Odd Man Out Game: a.) stymied b.) rule c.) compel d.) add to e.) detest f.) basement g.) elder h.) admire i.) decide j.) acceptable

Answers for the little tale: a. cornerstone, be mindful, inquire, troubled, notable, rejected, scribe. b. elders, deeds, proclaimed, took hold of, threatened. c. conferred, salvation, heeded.

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**Investigating Acts 4:1-22
A Tower of Strength**

I. Peter and John before the Council after the Miraculous Healing of the Lame Man

A. Two Different Responses to Jesus' Resurrection

Acts 4:1-4, ¹ As Peter and John spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple [guard], and the Sadducees approached them, ² being greatly troubled because Peter and John taught the people and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ They took hold of them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was now evening. ⁴ But many of the people who heard the speech believed, and the number of the men grew to about five thousand. *

1. The Sadducees were religious leaders who taught that there was no resurrection of the dead. If people believed Peter's message, what would happen to the Sadducees' position?
2. These leaders claimed to serve God, yet they jailed Peter and John even after God had clearly used them to work a miracle. Failure to recognize the truth can lead people to make terrible mistakes.
3. Some people today argue against the resurrection. They say that Christians added the idea much later. They fail to see this truth: the resurrection of Jesus was at the center of the message given by Jesus' earliest followers, his eyewitnesses! Thousands believed these witnesses from the beginning.

B. Peter's response to the Council

Acts 4:5-12, ⁵ The following day, the rulers, elders, and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem. ⁶ Annas, the high priest, was there, as well as Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and relatives of the high priest. ⁷ And when they had brought in Peter and John, they inquired, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being judged today about a good deed done to a powerless man and are being questioned how this man was made whole, ¹⁰ let it be known to you and all the people of Israel that it is in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands here before you healed. ¹¹ Jesus Christ is the stone, rejected by you builders, who has been made the cornerstone. ¹² There is salvation in none other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved." *

1. What phrases in Peter's response in verse 9 showed the Council how mistaken they were to act as though Peter and John had done something wrong?
2. Actually, the Council members themselves were the ones who had greatly sinned by delivering Jesus to death, as both Jesus' resurrection and the miraculous healing showed. Then Peter reminded the Council of a prophecy in Psalm 118:22. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem a week before his death, he quoted this verse about himself as the Cornerstone of God's Building (i.e. the Kingdom of God) and the leaders' rejection (Matthew 21:42). Who did Peter say the "builders" were that rejected the "Cornerstone?"
3. Sometimes people say that there are many religious paths to God. Is this true? What did Peter say while being *filled with the Holy Spirit*?

C. Let's compare Peter's situation and response to the Council with what happened in Mark 14. **Mark 14:66-71, [During Jesus' first trial leading to His crucifixion] ⁶⁶ While Peter was in the court below, one of the high priest's maids came ⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You were also with the Nazarene, Jesus." ⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." Just as he went into the forecourt, the rooster crowed. ⁶⁹ Then the maid saw him a second time and again said to those nearby, "This is one of them." ⁷⁰ But Peter denied it again. After a little while, the persons standing by Peter said once more, "Truly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." ⁷¹ But he began to curse and swear, claiming, "I do not know this man you are speaking about." ***

1. Here are amazing opposites in Peter's two situations and actions:
 - a. In Acts 4, Peter's listeners were very powerful and were clearly enemies of Jesus. In fact, these same men had sentenced Jesus to die.
In Mark 14, his listeners had been ordinary people.
 - b. In Acts 4, Peter lifted up Jesus' name to the highest level.
In Mark 14, he had _____ knowing Jesus.
 - c. In Acts 4, Peter talked about God's miracle and Old Testament _____ to persuade his listeners.
In Mark 14, he had used _____ to persuade the listeners.
 - d. In Acts 4, Peter cared about his listeners' salvation.
In Mark 14, he had wanted to save his own _____.
 - e. In Acts 4, Peter was confident and bold, a tower of strength.
In Mark 14, he had been like weak straw blown by the wind.
2. Let's look at why Peter changed so greatly.
 - a. First of all, his denials and Jesus' death and resurrection changed him. In what ways do you think these events affected him?
 - b. Peter was born again and received the Holy Spirit.
II Corinthians 5:17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, they have become new. *
 - c. Peter depended on God to use him. **II Corinthians 2:15-16, ¹⁵ For we [Paul and the other messengers] are a sweet smell to God of Christ to those who are being saved and to those who are dying, ¹⁶ to the one a smell from death to death; to the other a smell from life to life. And who is sufficient [able] for these things? ***

Here is Paul's answer to his question, and it shows how Peter could be such a tower of strength. **II Corinthians 3:5-6, ¹² ⁵ not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves, but our sufficiency [enough ability] is from God. ⁶ God made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant [of Christ] . . . ¹² Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech. ***

II. The Response of the Council

Acts 4:13-17, ¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were not educated men, they marveled and were mindful that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ Seeing the man who was healed standing with Peter and John, they could say nothing against it. ¹⁵ But when they had ordered Peter and John to go out of the Council, they conferred among themselves, ¹⁶ saying, "What shall we do to these men? A

notable miracle has been done through them, and this is clear to all who live in Jerusalem. We cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But in order that this message spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, warning them not to speak to anyone in this name from now on.” *

A. These rulers and religious leaders had such hard hearts that even a clear miracle (4:16) didn't cause them to change their ideas.

B. Here are some reasons we can have confidence that this miracle in Acts and Jesus' miracles during his lifetime were truly works of God. We can have a different response!

1. First of all, because God is the Creator, miracles are possible.
2. Here are facts about Jesus' miracles and the miracle of the lame man's healing:
 - a. The miracles were done in public.
 - b. Jesus' enemies were also witnesses.
 - c. The miracles had a purpose (not a random event like seeing a likeness of Jesus on toast).
 - d. The effects of the miracles were lasting, not temporary.
 - e. Honesty was a very important part of Jesus' and the apostles' teaching.
 - f. The miracles were recorded when witnesses were still alive.

Which of the above especially catches your attention?

III. The Response of Peter and John

Acts 4:18-22, ¹⁸ The Council called Peter and John in and charged them not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to heed you rather than God, you should judge, ²⁰ for we must speak the things which we saw and heard. ²¹ When the Council had threatened them further, they let them go, not finding how they might punish them because of the people, who all glorified God for what had been done. ²² The man who had been miraculously healed was more than forty years old. *

Are people willing to risk their lives for something they know is untrue? Peter and John were not lying. They were willing to die for what they were proclaiming, i.e., that Jesus had been resurrected and was the Savior for all mankind!

People's opinions and fashions have changed through the years, but the truth of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection has not changed. This truth is the one and only solid foundation for our lives.

IV. Making Memories

What is a key truth from Acts 4 that you want to remember?

Underline or highlight one important verse in Acts 4 that will help you remember what took place in this chapter.

*Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, with the English updated to modern usage. The NET Bible® was consulted from time to time to confirm or adopt apt words or phrases.