

A Journey Through Luke and Acts

August

Each Monday read the entire chapter for that week, on consequent days break down the chapters in smaller sections of verses seeing what God might be revealing to you over the course of each day and week.

August 3 – Acts 12:1-25

Herod imprisons Peter

About that time King Herod began to harass some who belonged to the church. ² He had James, John's brother, killed with a sword. ³ When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he arrested Peter as well. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. ⁴ He put Peter in prison, handing him over to four squads of soldiers, sixteen in all, who guarded him. He planned to charge him publicly after the Passover. ⁵ While Peter was held in prison, the church offered earnest prayer to God for him.

⁶ The night before Herod was going to bring Peter's case forward, Peter was asleep between two soldiers and bound with two chains, with soldiers guarding the prison entrance. ⁷ Suddenly an angel from the Lord appeared and a light shone in the prison cell. After nudging Peter on his side to awaken him, the angel raised him up and said, "Quick! Get up!" The chains fell from his wrists. ⁸ The angel continued, "Get dressed. Put on your sandals." Peter did as he was told. The angel said, "Put on your coat and follow me." ⁹ Following the angel, Peter left the prison. However, he didn't realize the angel had actually done all this. He thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself. After leaving the prison, they proceeded the length of one street, when abruptly the angel was gone.

¹¹ At that, Peter came to his senses and remarked, "Now I'm certain that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod and from everything the Jewish people expected." ¹² Realizing this, he made his way to Mary's house. (Mary was John's mother; he was also known as Mark.) Many believers had gathered there and were praying. ¹³ When Peter knocked at the outer gate, a female servant named Rhoda went to answer. ¹⁴ She was so overcome with joy when she recognized Peter's voice that she didn't open the gate. Instead, she ran back in and announced that Peter was standing at the gate.

¹⁵ "You've lost your mind!" they responded. She stuck by her story with such determination that they began to say, "It must be his guardian angel." ¹⁶ Meanwhile,

Peter remained outside, knocking at the gate. They finally opened the gate and saw him there, and they were astounded.

¹⁷ He gestured with his hand to quiet them down, then recounted how the Lord led him out of prison. He said, "Tell this to James and the brothers and sisters." Then he left for another place.

¹⁸ The next morning the soldiers were flustered about what had happened to Peter. ¹⁹ Herod called for a thorough search. When Peter didn't turn up, Herod interrogated the guards and had them executed. Afterward, Herod left Judea in order to spend some time in Caesarea.

²⁰ Herod had been furious with the people of Tyre and Sidon for some time. They made a pact to approach him together, since their region depended on the king's realm for its food supply. They persuaded Blastus, the king's personal attendant, to join their cause, then appealed for an end to hostilities. ²¹ On the scheduled day Herod dressed himself in royal attire, seated himself on the throne, and gave a speech to the people. ²² Those assembled kept shouting, over and over, "This is a god's voice, not the voice of a mere human!" ²³ Immediately an angel from the Lord struck Herod down, because he didn't give the honor to God. He was eaten by worms and died.

²⁴ God's word continued to grow and increase. ²⁵ Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch from Jerusalem^[a] after completing their mission, bringing with them John, who was also known as Mark.

August 10 – Acts 13:1-52

Barnabas and Saul sent to minister

The church at Antioch included prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon (nicknamed Niger), Lucius from Cyrene, Manaen (a childhood friend of Herod the ruler), and Saul. ² As they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul to the work I have called them to undertake." ³ After they fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on these two and sent them off.

Serving in Cyprus

⁴ After the Holy Spirit sent them on their way, they went down to Seleucia. From there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵ In Salamis they proclaimed God's word in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their assistant. ⁶ They traveled throughout the island until they arrived at Paphos. There they found a certain man named Bar-Jesus, a Jew

who was a false prophet and practiced sorcery. ⁷ He kept company with the governor of that province, an intelligent man named Sergius Paulus. The governor sent for Barnabas and Saul since he wanted to hear God's word. ⁸ But Elymas the sorcerer^[a] (for that's what people understood his name meant) opposed them, trying to steer the governor away from the faith. ⁹ Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Saul, also known as Paul, glared at Bar-Jesus and ¹⁰ said, "You are a deceiver and trickster! You devil! You attack anything that is right! Will you never stop twisting the straight ways of the Lord into crooked paths? ¹¹ Listen! The Lord's power is set against you. You will be blind for a while, unable even to see the daylight." At once, Bar-Jesus' eyes were darkened, and he began to grope about for someone to lead him around by the hand. ¹² When the governor saw what had taken place, he came to believe, for he was astonished by the teaching about the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas in Pisidian Antioch

¹³ Paul and his companions sailed from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia. John deserted them there and returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They went on from Perga and arrived at Antioch in Pisidia. On the Sabbath, they entered and found seats in the synagogue there. ¹⁵ After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue leaders invited them, "Brothers, if one of you has a sermon for the people, please speak."

¹⁶ Standing up, Paul gestured with his hand and said, "Fellow Israelites and Gentile God-worshippers, please listen to me. ¹⁷ The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors. God made them a great people while they lived as strangers in the land of Egypt. With his great power, he led them out of that country. ¹⁸ For about forty years, God put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹ God conquered seven nations in the land of Canaan and gave the Israelites their land as an inheritance. ²⁰ This happened over a period of about four hundred fifty years.

"After this, he gave them judges until the time of the prophet Samuel. ²¹ The Israelites requested a king, so God gave them Saul, Kish's son, from the tribe of Benjamin, and he served as their king for forty years. ²² After God removed him, he raised up David to be their king. God testified concerning him, '*I have found David, Jesse's son, a man who shares my desires.*'^[a] Whatever my will is, he will do.' ²³ From this man's descendants, God brought to Israel a savior, Jesus, just as he promised. ²⁴ Before Jesus' appearance, John proclaimed to all the Israelites a baptism to show they were changing their hearts and lives. ²⁵ As John was completing his mission, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I'm not the one you think I am, but he is coming after me. I'm not worthy to loosen his sandals.'

²⁶ "Brothers, children of Abraham's family, and you Gentile God-worshippers, the message about this salvation has been sent to us. ²⁷ The people in Jerusalem and their

leaders didn't recognize Jesus. By condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. ²⁸ Even though they didn't find a single legal basis for the death penalty, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹ When they finished doing everything that had been written about him, they took him down from the cross^[a] and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead! ³¹ He appeared over many days to those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people.

³² "We proclaim to you the good news. What God promised to our ancestors, ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it was written in the second psalm, *You are my son; today I have become your father.*^[a]

³⁴ "God raised Jesus from the dead, never again to be subjected to death's decay. Therefore, God said, *I will give to you the holy and firm promises I made to David.*^[a] ³⁵ In another place it is said, *You will not let your holy one experience death's decay.*^[b] ³⁶ David served God's purpose in his own generation, then he died and was buried with his ancestors. He experienced death's decay, ³⁷ but the one whom God has raised up didn't experience death's decay.

³⁸ "Therefore, brothers and sisters, know this: Through Jesus we proclaim forgiveness of sins to you. From all those sins from which you couldn't be put in right relationship with God through Moses' Law, ³⁹ through Jesus everyone who believes is put in right relationship with God. ⁴⁰ Take care that the prophets' words don't apply to you:

⁴¹ *Look, you scoffers,
marvel and die.
I'm going to do work in your day —
a work you won't believe
even if someone told you."*^[a]

⁴² As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people urged them to speak about these things again on the next Sabbath. ⁴³ When the people in the synagogue were dismissed, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism accompanied Paul and Barnabas, who urged them to remain faithful to the message of God's grace.

⁴⁴ On the next Sabbath, almost everyone in the city gathered to hear the Lord's word. ⁴⁵ When the Jews saw the crowds, they were overcome with jealousy. They argued against what Paul was saying by slandering him. ⁴⁶ Speaking courageously, Paul and Barnabas said, "We had to speak God's word to you first. Since you reject it and show that you are unworthy to receive eternal life, we will turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ This is what the Lord commanded us:

I have made you a light for the Gentiles,

so that you could bring salvation to the end of the earth.”^[a]

⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and honored the Lord’s word. Everyone who was appointed for eternal life believed, ⁴⁹ and the Lord’s word was broadcast throughout the entire region. ⁵⁰ However, the Jews provoked the prominent women among the Gentile God-worshippers, as well as the city’s leaders. They instigated others to harass Paul and Barnabas, and threw them out of their district. ⁵¹ Paul and Barnabas shook the dust from their feet and went to Iconium. ⁵² Because of the abundant presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives, the disciples were overflowing with happiness.

August 17- Acts 14: 1-28

Paul and Barnabas in Iconium

The same thing happened in Iconium. Paul and Barnabas entered the Jewish synagogue and spoke as they had before. As a result, a huge number of Jews and Greeks believed. ² However, the Jews who rejected the faith stirred up the Gentiles, poisoning their minds against the brothers. ³ Nevertheless, Paul and Barnabas stayed there for quite some time, confidently speaking about the Lord. And the Lord confirmed the word about his grace by the signs and wonders he enabled them to perform. ⁴ The people of the city were divided—some siding with the Jews, others with the Lord’s messengers. ⁵ Then some Gentiles and Jews, including their leaders, hatched a plot to mistreat and stone Paul and Barnabas. ⁶ When they learned of it, these two messengers fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding area, ⁷ where they continued to proclaim the good news.

Healing a crippled man in Lystra

⁸ In Lystra there was a certain man who lacked strength in his legs. He had been crippled since birth and had never walked. Sitting there, he ⁹ heard Paul speaking. Paul stared at him and saw that he believed he could be healed.

¹⁰ Raising his voice, Paul said, “Stand up straight on your feet!” He jumped up and began to walk.

¹¹ Seeing what Paul had done, the crowd shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have taken human form and come down to visit us!” ¹² They referred to Barnabas as

Zeus and to Paul as Hermes, since Paul was the main speaker. ¹³ The priest of Zeus, whose temple was located just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates. Along with the crowds, he wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

¹⁴ When the Lord's messengers Barnabas and Paul found out about this, they tore their clothes in protest and rushed out into the crowd. They shouted, ¹⁵ "People, what are you doing? We are humans too, just like you! We are proclaiming the good news to you: turn to the living God and away from such worthless things. He *made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them.*" ¹⁶ In the past, he permitted every nation to go its own way. ¹⁷ Nevertheless, he hasn't left himself without a witness. He has blessed you by giving you rain from above as well as seasonal harvests, and satisfying you with food and happiness." ¹⁸ Even with these words, they barely kept the crowds from sacrificing to them.

¹⁹ Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrived and won the crowds over. They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing he was dead. ²⁰ When the disciples surrounded him, he got up and entered the city again. The following day he left with Barnabas for Derbe.

Returning to Antioch

²¹ Paul and Barnabas proclaimed the good news to the people in Derbe and made many disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, where ²² they strengthened the disciples and urged them to remain firm in the faith. They told them, "If we are to enter God's kingdom, we must pass through many troubles." ²³ They appointed elders for each church. With prayer and fasting, they committed these elders to the Lord, in whom they had placed their trust.

²⁴ After Paul and Barnabas traveled through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. ²⁵ They proclaimed the word in Perga, then went down to Attalia. ²⁶ From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been entrusted by God's grace to the work they had now completed. ²⁷ On their arrival, they gathered the church together and reported everything that God had accomplished through their activity, and how God had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. ²⁸ They stayed with the disciples a long time.

August 24- Acts 15: 1- 41

The Jerusalem Council

Some people came down from Judea teaching the family of believers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom we've received from Moses, you can't be

saved.”² Paul and Barnabas took sides against these Judeans and argued strongly against their position.

The church at Antioch appointed Paul, Barnabas, and several others from Antioch to go up to Jerusalem to set this question before the apostles and the elders.³ The church sent this delegation on their way. They traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, telling stories about the conversion of the Gentiles to everyone. Their reports thrilled the brothers and sisters.⁴ When they arrived in Jerusalem, the church, the apostles, and the elders all welcomed them. They gave a full report of what God had accomplished through their activity.⁵ Some believers from among the Pharisees stood up and claimed, “The Gentiles must be circumcised. They must be required to keep the Law from Moses.”

⁶ The apostles and the elders gathered to consider this matter. ⁷ After much debate, Peter stood and addressed them, “Fellow believers, you know that, early on, God chose me from among you as the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and come to believe. ⁸ God, who knows people’s deepest thoughts and desires, confirmed this by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. ⁹ He made no distinction between us and them, but purified their deepest thoughts and desires through faith. ¹⁰ Why then are you now challenging God by placing a burden on the shoulders of these disciples that neither we nor our ancestors could bear? ¹¹ On the contrary, we believe that we and they are saved in the same way, by the grace of the Lord Jesus.”

¹² The entire assembly fell quiet as they listened to Barnabas and Paul describe all the signs and wonders God did among the Gentiles through their activity. ¹³ When Barnabas and Paul also fell silent, James responded, “Fellow believers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simon reported how, in his kindness, God came to the Gentiles in the first place, to raise up from them a people of God. ¹⁵ The prophets’ words agree with this; as it is written,

¹⁶ *After this I will return,
and I will rebuild David’s fallen tent;
I will rebuild what has been torn down.
I will restore it*
¹⁷ *so that the rest of humanity will seek the Lord,
even all the Gentiles who belong to me.*

The Lord says this, the one who does these things^[a]

¹⁸ known from earliest times.

¹⁹ “Therefore, I conclude that we shouldn’t create problems for Gentiles who turn to God. ²⁰ Instead, we should write a letter, telling them to avoid the pollution associated with idols, sexual immorality, eating meat from strangled animals, and consuming

blood. ²¹ After all, Moses has been proclaimed in every city for a long time, and is read aloud every Sabbath in every synagogue."

Letter to the Gentile believers

²² The apostles and the elders, along with the entire church, agreed to send some delegates chosen from among themselves to Antioch, together with Paul and Barnabas. They selected Judas Barsabbas and Silas, who were leaders among the brothers and sisters. ²³ They were to carry this letter:

The apostles and the elders, to the Gentile brothers and sisters in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings! ²⁴ We've heard that some of our number have disturbed you with unsettling words we didn't authorize. ²⁵ We reached a united decision to select some delegates and send them to you along with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul. ²⁶ These people have devoted their lives to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ Therefore, we are sending Judas and Silas. They will confirm what we have written. ²⁸ The Holy Spirit has led us to the decision that no burden should be placed on you other than these essentials: ²⁹ refuse food offered to idols, blood, the meat from strangled animals, and sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid such things. Farewell.

³⁰ When Barnabas, Paul, and the delegates were sent on their way, they went down to Antioch. They gathered the believers and delivered the letter. ³¹ The people read it, delighted with its encouraging message. ³² Judas and Silas were prophets, and they said many things that encouraged and strengthened the brothers and sisters. ³³ Judas and Silas stayed there awhile, then were sent back with a blessing of peace from the brothers and sisters to those who first sent them. ³⁴ ³⁵ Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, where, together with many others, they taught and proclaimed the good news of the Lord's word.

Paul and Barnabas part company

³⁶ Some time later, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit all the brothers and sisters in every city where we preached the Lord's word. Let's see how they are doing." ³⁷ Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them. ³⁸ Paul insisted that they shouldn't take him along, since he had deserted them in Pamphylia and hadn't continued with them in their work. ³⁹ Their argument became so intense that they went their separate ways. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus. ⁴⁰ Paul chose Silas and left, entrusted by the brothers and sisters to the Lord's grace. ⁴¹ He traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

August 31- Acts 16: 1-40

Paul adds Timothy

16 Paul reached Derbe, and then Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy. He was the son of a believing Jewish woman and a Greek father. **2** The brothers and sisters in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. **3** Paul wanted to take Timothy with him, so he circumcised him. This was because of the Jews who lived in those areas, for they all knew Timothy's father was Greek. **4** As Paul and his companions traveled through the cities, they instructed Gentile believers to keep the regulations put in place by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. **5** So the churches were strengthened in the faith and every day their numbers flourished.

Vision of the Macedonian

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the regions of Phrygia and Galatia because the Holy Spirit kept them from speaking the word in the province of Asia. **7** When they approached the province of Mysia, they tried to enter the province of Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus wouldn't let them. **8** Passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas instead. **9** A vision of a man from Macedonia came to Paul during the night. He stood urging Paul, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" **10** Immediately after he saw the vision, we prepared to leave for the province of Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

Lydia's conversion

11 We sailed from Troas straight for Samothrace and came to Neapolis the following day. **12** From there we went to Philippi, a city of Macedonia's first district and a Roman colony. We stayed in that city several days. **13** On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the riverbank, where we thought there might be a place for prayer. We sat down and began to talk with the women who had gathered. **14** One of those women was Lydia, a Gentile God-worshipper from the city of Thyatira, a dealer in purple cloth. As she listened, the Lord enabled her to embrace Paul's message. **15** Once she and her household were baptized, she urged, "Now that you have decided that I am a believer in the Lord, come and stay in my house." And she persuaded us.

Paul and Silas in prison

16 One day, when we were on the way to the place for prayer, we met a slave woman. She had a spirit that enabled her to predict the future. She made a lot of money for her

owners through fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She began following Paul and us, shouting, "These people are servants of the Most High God! They are proclaiming a way of salvation to you!" ¹⁸ She did this for many days.

This annoyed Paul so much that he finally turned and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to leave her!" It left her at that very moment.

¹⁹ Her owners realized that their hope for making money was gone. They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the officials in the city center. ²⁰ When her owners approached the legal authorities, they said, "These people are causing an uproar in our city. They are Jews ²¹ who promote customs that we Romans can't accept or practice." ²² The crowd joined in the attacks against Paul and Silas, so the authorities ordered that they be stripped of their clothes and beaten with a rod. ²³ When Paul and Silas had been severely beaten, the authorities threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to secure them with great care. ²⁴ When he received these instructions, he threw them into the innermost cell and secured their feet in stocks.

²⁵ Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ All at once there was such a violent earthquake that it shook the prison's foundations. The doors flew open and everyone's chains came loose. ²⁷ When the jailer awoke and saw the open doors of the prison, he thought the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸ But Paul shouted loudly, "Don't harm yourself! We're all here!"

²⁹ The jailer called for some lights, rushed in, and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ He led them outside and asked, "Honorable masters, what must I do to be rescued?"

³¹ They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your entire household." ³² They spoke the Lord's word to him and everyone else in his house. ³³ Right then, in the middle of the night, the jailer welcomed them and washed their wounds. He and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. ³⁴ He brought them into his home and gave them a meal. He was overjoyed because he and everyone in his household had come to believe in God.

³⁵ The next morning the legal authorities sent the police to the jailer with the order "Release those people."

³⁶ So the jailer reported this to Paul, informing him, "The authorities sent word that you both are to be released. You can leave now. Go in peace."

³⁷ Paul told the police, "Even though we are Roman citizens, they beat us publicly without first finding us guilty of a crime, and they threw us into prison. And now they want to send us away secretly? No way! They themselves will have to come and escort us out." ³⁸ The police reported this to the legal authorities, who were alarmed to learn that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. ³⁹ They came and consoled Paul and Silas, escorting them out of prison and begging them to leave the city.

⁴⁰ Paul and Silas left the prison and made their way to Lydia's house where they encouraged the brothers and sisters. Then they left Philippi.