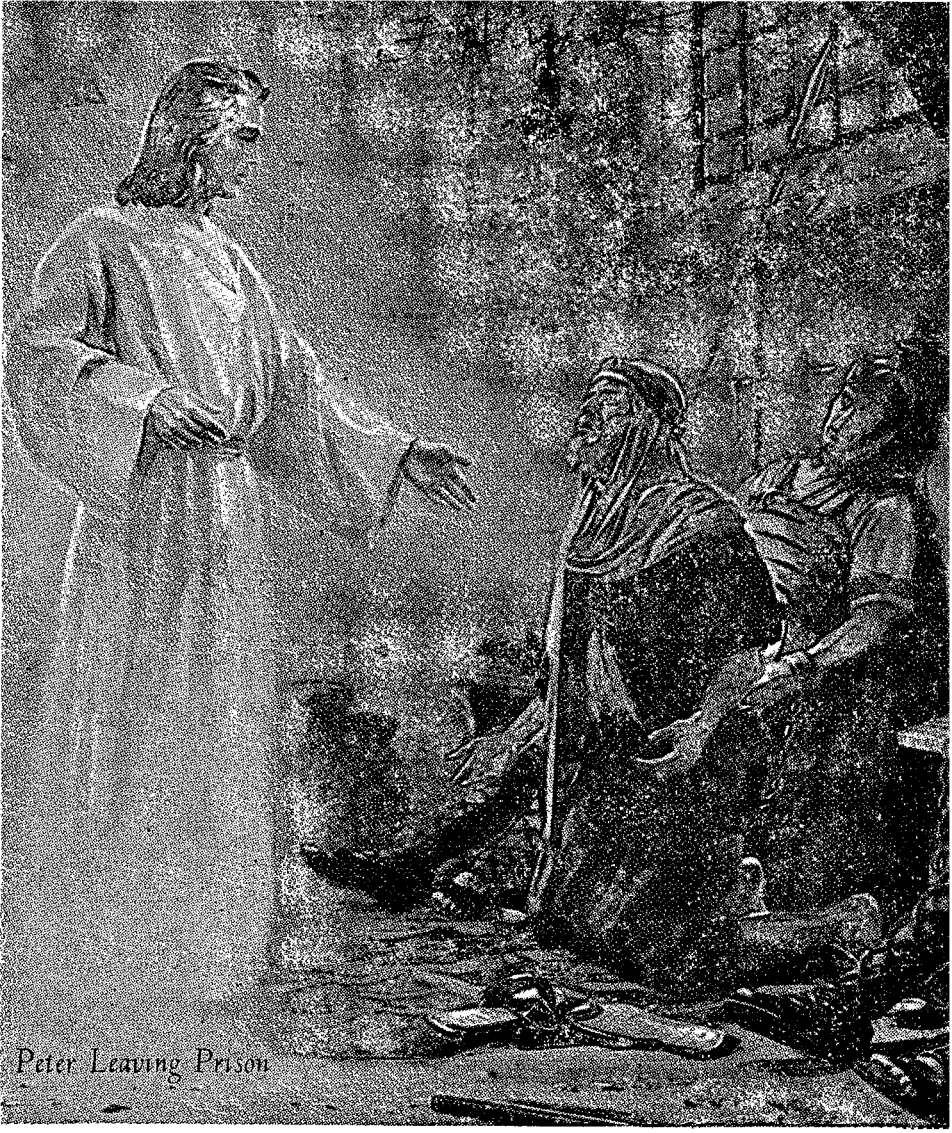

Peter Leaving Prison

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS, No. 1

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON

Quarterly

Senior Division, No. 290, Fourth Quarter, 1967

F. H. Yost

THE BLESSING OF DAILY STUDY

"The beauty and riches of the Word have a transforming influence on mind and character."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 132.

"There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God's Word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen in these times." —*Steps to Christ,* page 90.

My Daily Lesson Study Pledge

As one who greatly desires to improve his knowledge of the Scriptures, I pledge myself to the careful and prayerful study of some portion of my Sabbath School lesson each day of the week.

Name _____

Lesson Titles for the Quarter

1. The Great Commission; the Twelve Apostles
2. The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit
3. The Healing of the Lame Man
4. The First Persecution
5. The Spirit of God at Work
6. The Second Persecution
7. The Seven Deacons
8. The Third Persecution; the Martyrdom of Stephen
9. Missionary Expansion: From Judea to Samaria
10. The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus
11. The Ministry of Peter
12. Peter Renders an Account; the Word at Antioch
13. The Fourth Persecution; an Attack on James and Peter

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Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS, No. 1

Lesson 1, for October 7, 1967

The Great Commission; the Twelve Apostles

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Acts 1.

MEMORY VERSE: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," chapters 1 to 3; "Testimonies," Vol. 8, pp. 19-23; "The Desire of Ages," chapter 87; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To emphasize the gospel commission and the promise of the power of the Holy Spirit to carry it out; to show the conscious unity of the disciples after the Lord had left them to go to heaven.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 10-12.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 4-6.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 7-9.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. The Closing Scenes of Christ's Life

1. Proofs of Christ's resurrection. Acts 1:3.
2. The expectation of the disciples. Acts 1:6, 7.
3. The promise of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:5, 8.
4. Awaiting the fulfillment. Luke 24:49.
5. The gospel commission. John 15: 26, 27; Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8.
6. The Lord's ascension. Acts 1:9, 10, 12.
7. The promise of Jesus' return. Acts 1:11.

II. The Church Assembled

8. The disciples:
   a. The Eleven named. Acts 1:13.
   b. The believers numbered. Acts 1:15.
9. The meeting in the upper room. Acts 1:13, 14.
10. The need for another disciple. Acts 1:16-22.
11. The qualifications of Judas's successor. Acts 1:22.
12. The choice made. Acts 1:23-26.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: Christ had been crucified as the Sin Bearer for men and to offer salvation to all by God's grace. He had risen from the dead, and during the forty days had met from time to time with His disciples. He convinced the Eleven beyond

all doubt that He had risen, and He instructed them further in the gospel. Now the Saviour again promises the Holy Spirit. He ascends to heaven, and the church, awaiting the baptism of the Spirit, further organizes its leadership.

Places: Olivet, or the Mount of Olives, a "Sabbath-day's journey" (about three quarters of a mile) from Jerusalem and near the village of Bethany, the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. The "upper room" in Jerusalem, probably the room where the Last Supper was eaten, and supposed by many to be in a house owned by a believing woman, the mother of John Mark and sister to Joses Barnabas.

Persons: Jesus Christ; two angels; eleven apostles, with Peter a spokesman; Matthias.

Interesting Term: "Bishopric." The word is used as a translation of the Greek of which "overseership" is a far better rendering. The apostles were not bishops in the usual meaning of the word. The words "elder," "overseer," and "bishop" are used interchangeably in the New Testament for the office of elder or "presbyter." See Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-7.

Authorship of the Book: Compare Acts 1:1 with Luke 1:1-4. The "former," or first, treatise is Luke's Gospel. Luke is the Lucas of Philemon 24 and Paul's traveling companion and "the beloved physician" of Colossians 4:14. The book of Acts covers almost thirty-two years of the development of the early church.

The Closing Scenes of Christ's Life

1. What were some of the many "proofs" given to the disciples? What did Christ teach the disciples? Acts 1:3.

2. What question was still in the minds of the disciples? How did Jesus answer it? Acts 1:6, 7. Compare Matt. 20:20-23; 24:3; Luke 17:20.

NOTE.—"The apostles had entertained the common opinion of the Jews about the *temporal* dominion of the Messiah. They expected that He would reign as a prince and conqueror, and free them from the bondage of the Romans. Many instances of this expectation occur in the Gospels, notwithstanding all the efforts which the Lord Jesus made to explain to them the true nature of His kingdom. This expectation was checked, and almost destroyed by His death; Luke xxiv. 21. And it is clear that *His death* was the only means which could effectually check and change their opinions respecting the nature of His kingdom. Even His own instructions would not do it; and only His being taken from them could direct their minds effectually to the true nature of His kingdom. Yet, though His death checked their expectations, and appeared to thwart their plans, yet His return to life excited them again. . . . And as they did not doubt now that He *would* restore the kingdom to Israel, they asked whether He would do it *at this time*? They did not ask whether He would do it [at] all, or whether they had correct views of His kingdom; but taking that for granted, they asked Him whether *that was the time* in which He would do it. The emphasis of the inquiry lies in the expression, '*at this time,*' and hence the answer of the Saviour refers solely *to the point of their inquiry,* and not to the correctness or incorrectness of their opinions."—Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles,* Acts 1:6.

3. What divine Person did Jesus promise would come and abide with the disciples? Acts 1:5, 8. Compare John 14:16, 17, 26; 16:13-15; 20:22.

NOTE.—Since Christ had ascended, the Holy Spirit, as soon as He was given, was to be the divine Person ever present. Everywhere throughout the book of Acts the Spirit is the living guide, counselor, and strengthener of the believers. We meet Him on every page, in every incident.

4. Concerning this promise, what had Christ bidden the disciples do? Luke 24:49.

NOTE.—It is not an easy thing to wait, especially during a time of crisis. But the disciples needed strength beyond their own poor power.

"In obedience to Christ's command, they [the disciples] waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father—the outpouring of the Spirit. They did not wait in idleness. The record says that they were 'continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.'" —*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 35.

5. What commission would the Holy Spirit enable the church to carry out? How far afield was the Christian witness to be carried? John 15:26, 27; Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 24: 48; Acts 1:8.

NOTE.—"The events of Christ's life, His death and resurrection, the prophecies pointing to these events, the mysteries of the plan of salvation, the power of Jesus for the remission of sins—to all these things they had been witnesses, and they were to make them known to the world. They were to proclaim the gospel of peace and salvation through repentance and the power of the Saviour."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 27.

6. What miraculous event closed Christ's earthly career? From what place did He leave the earth? Acts 1:9, 10, 12. Compare Luke 24:50-52.

NOTE.—"All heaven was waiting the hour of triumph when Jesus should ascend to His Father. Angels came to receive the King of glory and to escort Him triumphantly to heaven. After Jesus had blessed His disciples, He was parted from them."—*Early Writings,* page 190.

7. What assurance did two angels bring? Acts 1:11.

NOTE.—The return of Christ is as certain as were His birth, His life on earth, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension. Each is as sure as the other. They stand together as a glorious whole.

The Church Assembled

8. Name the apostles who saw Jesus ascend. How many believers were in Jerusalem at the time? Acts 1:13, 15.

9. Where did the church meet, and for what purpose? Acts 1:13, 14.

NOTE.—"These days of preparation were days of deep heart searching. The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls. They realized that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ had promised."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 37.

10. What had the suicide of Judas made necessary? Acts 1:16-22.

11. What experience would qualify the man who was to become the twelfth apostle? Acts 1:22.

NOTE.—A man was to be chosen from among "those who had witnessed the life and works of Christ, and who were therefore qualified to discharge the duties of the office from which Judas fell."—Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles,* Acts 1:21, 22.

12. Who was chosen in Judas's place, and by what method? Acts 1:23-26.

NOTE.—"By the casting of the lot. This word is . . . *a calculus, or pebble,* by which . . . lots were cast. It means, that *by the result of the lot,* he was reckoned as an apostle. Nothing further is related of Matthias in the New Testament. Where he labored, and when and where he died, is

unknown, nor is there any tradition on which reliance is to be placed. The election of Matthias throws some light on the organization of the church. 1. He was chosen to fill the place vacated by Judas, and for a specific purpose, to be a *witness* of the resurrection of Christ. There is no mention of any other design. It was not to ordain men exclusively, or to rule over the churches, but to be a witness to an important fact. 2. There is no intimation here that it was designed that there should be *successors* to the apostles in the peculiar duties of the apostolic office."—Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles,* Acts 1:26.

"In plotting against Christ, the rabbis were not doing the works of Abraham. A mere lineal descent from Abraham was of no value. Without a spiritual connection with him, which would be manifested in possessing the same spirit, and doing the same works, they were not his children.

"This principle bears with equal weight upon a question that has long agitated the Christian world,—the question of apostolic succession. Descent from Abraham was proved, not by name and lineage, but by likeness of character. So the apostolic succession rests not upon the transmission of ecclesiastical authority, but upon spiritual relationship. A life actuated by the apostles' spirit, the belief and teaching of the truth they taught, this is the true evidence of apostolic succession. This is what constitutes men the successors of the first teachers of the gospel."—*The Desire of Ages,* pages 466, 467.

Lesson 2, for October 14, 1967

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Acts 2.

MEMORY VERSE: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Acts 2:33.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," chapters 4 and 5; "Testimonies," Vol. 7, pp. 31-33; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To enable us to know with what power the Holy Spirit came; how intimately He was united with the church; how the stream of gospel truth flows from the Old Testament into the New; how surely Christ Jesus is the Lord of all, and how certainly He saves.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 13-15.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-9.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 10-12.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. The Coming of the Spirit

1. The closeness of Christian fellowship. Acts 2:1.
2. The manifestation of the Spirit. Acts 2:2, 3.
3. The gift of tongues. Acts 2:4.
4. The sojourners in Jerusalem. Acts 2:6-12.

II. Peter's Defense

5. The cause of spiritual joy. Acts 2:15, 16.
6. Old Testament prophecies of the Spirit. Acts 2:17, 18.
7. Who crucified the Lord. Acts 2: 22, 23.
8. Death could not hold Christ. Acts 2:24.
9. Prophecies of the resurrection. Acts 2:25-28, 30-32.
10. The psalmist looked beyond himself. Acts 2:29, 34.
11. The ascension and the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:33-36.

III. The Way of Salvation

12. The convicting power of the Spirit. Acts 2:37.
13. Repentance, baptism, and the Spirit. Acts 2:38-41, 47 (last part).

IV. The Progress of the Church

14. The church's faithfulness and devotion. Acts 2:42, 43, 46, 47.
15. The common purse. Acts 2:44, 45.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: "The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The Infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit's grace. And under the influence of the Spirit, words of penitence and confession mingled with songs of praise for sins forgiven."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 38.

Places: The "upper room" where 120 believers have been praying for the gift of the Holy Spirit; the streets of Jerusalem, where the Spirit-filled apostles preached; the temple in Jerusalem.

Persons: The Holy Spirit; the twelve apostles, with Peter again a spokesman; a growing company of believers.

Interesting Terms: "Pentecost." So named from the Greek for "fiftieth," because the early summer harvest celebration of the Jews fell fifty days, or seven weeks (the seven Sabbaths of Lev. 23:15, 16), after the first Sabbath of the spring Feast of Unleavened Bread. Pentecost was therefore known also as the Feast of Weeks. Christ arose on the day when the sheaf of barley was waved as the firstfruits, which was the day following the first Sabbath of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:10-12; 1 Cor. 15:20). Fifty days later, inclusive reckoning, came Pentecost. Christ had appeared to His disciples during forty days following the resurrection and then ascended to heaven. Therefore ten days elapsed after the ascension until the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which time the believers spent in prayer and heart-searching.

"Hell." The Greek is *hades,* the "place of the dead," and should be translated, in reference to Peter's usage, "grave."

The Coming of the Spirit

1. How close was the fellowship of the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, A.D. 31? Acts 2:1.

2. How did the Holy Spirit manifest His coming? Acts 2:2, 3.

NOTE.—(*a*) The sounding of a mighty wind; (*b*) the filling of all the house with the Presence; (*c*) distributing tongues of fire to each disciple; (*d*) speaking with tongues by the disciples.

3. With what spiritual gift did the Holy Spirit endow the apostles? Acts 2:4. Compare 1 Cor. 12:28.

NOTE.—The gift was not a gift of hearing, but a gift of tongues, useful in the gospel ministry, and in contrast to any unintelligible babbling. See 1 Corinthians 14. "Every known tongue was represented by those assembled. This diversity of languages would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel;

God therefore in a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles. The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime. They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were laboring. This miraculous gift was a strong evidence to the world that their commission bore the signet of Heaven. From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 39, 40.

4. From what distant lands were the Jews then assembled in Jerusalem? Acts 2:6-12.

NOTE.—"During the dispersion the Jews had been scattered to almost every part of the inhabited world, and in their exile they had learned to speak various languages. Many of these Jews were on this occasion in Jerusalem, attending the religious festivals then in progress."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 39.

Peter's Defense

5. How did Peter show that the disciples' activity was due to the Spirit and not to intoxication? Acts 2:15, 16. Compare Eph. 5:18.

NOTE.—The Jews in the time of Christ reckoned the hours separately for day and night, counting twelve hours to the day beginning at sunrise, and the same number for the night beginning at sunset. See Matthew 20:3-9; John 1:39; 4:6, 52; Acts 23:23. The "third hour" of the day corresponded to about 9 a.m. in modern reckoning.

> "If Christians were to act in concert, moving forward as one, under the direction of one Power, for the accomplishment of one purpose, they would move the world." —*Testimonies,* Vol. 9, p. 221.

6. What Old Testament prophecy foretold the outpouring of the Spirit? Acts 2:17, 18. Compare Joel 2:28, 29.

7. Whom did Peter blame for the crucifixion of his miracle-working Lord? Acts 2:22, 23.

8. Why could not Christ be held in death? Acts 2:24.

NOTE.—The mystery of Christ's resurrection cannot be explained by human reasoning. "When the voice of the mighty angel was heard at Christ's tomb, saying, Thy Father calls Thee, the Saviour came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself. Now was proved the truth of His words, 'I lay down My life, that I might take it again. . . . I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.' Now was fulfilled the prophecy He had spoken to the priests and rulers, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' John 10:17, 18; 2:19."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 785.

Christ was sinless and therefore could not be held in death. Romans 6:23; Luke 23:4, 14; John 19:4, 6; 1 Peter 2:22. "Could one sin have been found in Christ, had He in one particular yielded to Satan to escape the terrible torture, the enemy of God and man would have triumphed. Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God."—*Ibid.,* p. 761.

9. What Scriptures did Peter quote to show that Christ could not remain in the tomb? Acts 2:25-28, 30-32. Compare Ps. 16:8-11.

NOTE.—"Peter did not refer to the teachings of Christ to prove his position, because he knew that the prejudice of his hearers

was so great that his words on this subject would be of no effect. Instead, he spoke to them of David, who was regarded by the Jews as one of the patriarchs of their nation."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 41.

10. What is the evidence that the psalmist was not speaking of himself? Acts 2:29, 34.

11. How does Peter associate the outpouring of the Spirit with Christ's enthronement at the right hand of the Father? Acts 2:33-36.

NOTE.—"Christ's ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven's communication that the Redeemer's inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 38, 39.

The Way of Salvation

12. How did this Spirit-filled sermon affect the hearers? Acts 2:37.

NOTE.—"Now they heard the disciples declaring that it was the Son of God who had been crucified. Priests and rulers trembled. Conviction and anguish seized the people. . . . Among those who listened to the disciples were devout Jews, who were sincere in their belief. The power that accompanied the words of the speaker convinced them that Jesus was indeed the Messiah."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 43.

13. What progressive steps in salvation did Peter describe for the conscience-stricken Jews? With what result? Acts 2:38-41, 47 (last part).

NOTE.—The steps outlined by Peter were (*a*) repentance, that is, a change of mind and heart in respect to one's past way of life, 2 Corinthians 7:9-11; (*b*) baptism, that is, immersion as a symbol of the washing away of sins and arising to newness of life, Romans 6:3-7; (*c*) receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit as a necessity in the Christian experience, Romans 8:11, 14.

The Progress of the Church

14. What acts of faithfulness and devotion characterized the church after Pentecost? Acts 2:42, 43, 46, 47.

NOTE.—(*a*) Following the apostles' teaching; (*b*) entering into godly fellowship; (*c*) giving praise to God; (*d*) continuing steadfast; (*e*) doing "wonders and signs."

15. How did the infant church provide for the needy believers? Acts 2:44, 45.

NOTE.—"Many of these early believers were immediately cut off from family and friends by the zealous bigotry of the Jews, and it was necessary to provide them with food and shelter. . . .

"Those among the believers who had money and possessions cheerfully sacrificed them to meet the emergency."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 70.

> "God calls upon us to burst the bands of our precise, indoor service. The message of the gospel is to be borne in the cities and outside of the cities."—*Selected Messages,* Bk. 1, p. 84.

Lesson 3, for October 21, 1967

The Healing of the Lame Man

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Acts 3.

MEMORY VERSE: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts 3:19.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 57-60; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To help us to learn more of the power of the Holy Spirit in healing men's bodies and souls, to find a renewed faith in the coming of "the times of restitution," and to experience the needful preparation of heart.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 11-13.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 4-7.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-10.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. The Circumstances of the Healing

1. Peter and John go to worship in the temple. Acts 3:1, 2.
2. Peter heals in the name of Jesus. Acts 3:3-6.
3. The healed man worships in the temple. Acts 3:8, 9.

II. The Effect of the Miracle

4. An event known to all. Acts 3:10, 11.
5. Christ the healer. Acts 3:12, 13, 16.

III. The Privilege of the Gospel

6. The Jews crucified Christ. Acts 3:14, 15.
7. Christ as Saviour, man's only hope. Acts 3:17-19 (first part).
8. Christ portrayed as the suffering Sin Bearer. Acts 3:18, 22-24.
9. Preparation for the times of restitution. Acts 3:19-21.
10. Christ is Mediator and heavenly Priest. Acts 3:21; Heb. 9:24.

IV. The Covenant Promises

11. The Hebrews a privileged people. Acts 3:25 (first part).
12. Christ and the Abrahamic promise. Acts 3:25 (last part).
13. The gospel and the Jews. Acts 3:26.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: "They brought daily to the Beautiful gate of the temple a lame beggar, who asked alms of all that entered (vers. 2, 3). What a striking contrast is here!—the large, strong, handsome gate, wrought by the most skillful workmen, intended to add beauty and attractiveness to the magnificent temple, an object of keen, universal admiration; and, laid down at the foot of it, a poor, ill-clad, deformed, helpless beggar, fain to find a miserable existence by asking the pity of all that passed through. Such contrasts has sin introduced into this world."—*The Pulpit Commentary,* Acts, Vol. 1, p. 98.

Places: The Beautiful Gate and Solomon's porch of the temple in Jerusalem.

Persons: A lame man who had never walked; John; Peter, again a spokesman.

The Circumstances of the Healing

1. Where, and why, were Peter and John going to worship when the lame man was healed? Acts 3:1, 2.

NOTE.—The temple was not a synagogue, but the magnificent temple in Jerusalem built by Herod the Great (John 2:20) around the remains of the temple built by Zerubbabel 500 years before (Ezra 5:2). The Christian Jews were during the period of the book of Acts still worshiping at the temple, as well as attending Sabbath services in the synagogues (Acts 15:19-21). This continued some years after the typical forms of worship had been rendered meaningless by Christ's death on the cross. Compare Daniel 9:24-27 and Matthew 27: 50, 51.

2. What reply did Peter make to the lame beggar? What did he have? Acts 3:3-6.

NOTE.—Natural gifts, education, and an adequate budget are very good things to use in the service of God. But there is one basic essential: That is the personal possession, by the workers in the gospel, of Jesus Christ the Son of God. When He is received, every other needed gift is supplied.

3. How did the man when healed use his new-found physical powers? Acts 3:8, 9.

> "Every day some portion of the time should be appropriated to the study of the lessons."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 53.

The Effect of the Miracle

4. How widely did this miracle become known? Acts 3:10, 11.

5. To whom did Peter give full credit for what happened? Acts 3:12, 13, 16. Compare John 15:5; Phil. 4:13.

The Privilege of the Gospel

6. Of what did Peter accuse the Jews? Acts 3:14, 15. Compare Acts 2:23.

7. What hope did Peter offer his troubled listeners? Acts 3:17-19 (first part). Compare Acts 2:38.

8. What had been prophesied concerning Christ? Acts 3:18, 22-24. Compare Isa. 53; Ps. 22; Zech. 13:6, 7.

9. For what great event was the repentance of guilty men to be a preparation? Acts 3:19-21.

NOTE.—"The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are 'the times of refreshing' to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said: 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the

presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus.' "—*The Great Controversy,* pages 611, 612.

"I saw that none could share the 'refreshing' unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence."—*Early Writings,* page 71.

10. From the time of the ascension to the second advent, what position does Christ occupy, and what ministry does He perform? Acts 3:21; Heb. 9:24. Compare Heb. 4:14-16; 5:5-10; 7:24 to 8:2; 1 Tim. 2:5.

The Covenant Promises

11. What was to have been the privileged position of the Hebrews? Acts 3:25 (first part). Compare Rom. 3:1-4.

12. What promise to Abraham has Christ fulfilled? Acts 3:25 (last part).

13. To what people did the gospel of the new covenant first come? Acts 3:26. Compare Rom. 2:9, 10.

NOTE.—"The Jews stood forth distinct from all other nations, professing allegiance to God. They had been specially favored by Him, and they laid claim to righteousness above every other people. But they were corrupted by the love of the world and the greed of gain. They boasted of their knowledge, but they were ignorant of the requirements of God, and were full of hypocrisy. Like the barren tree, they spread their pretentious branches aloft, luxuriant in appearance, and beautiful to the eye, but they yielded 'nothing but leaves.' The Jewish religion, with its magnificent temple, its sacred altars, its mitered priests and impressive ceremonies, was indeed fair in outward appearance, but humility, love, and benevolence were lacking."—*The Desire of Ages,* pages 582, 583.

Lesson 4, for October 28, 1967

The First Persecution

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Acts 4:1-33.

MEMORY VERSE: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 60-69; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To understand how and why persecution comes, and to share in the courage and devotion of those who have undergone it, and are now undergoing it; to find Christ anew as the only means of salvation from sin.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 12-14.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 4-8.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 9-11.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Opposition to the Gospel

1. The apostles arrested. Acts 4:1-3.
2. Many conversions secured. Acts 4:4.
3. Commanded not to preach. Acts 4:5-7.
4. The certainty of the healing. Acts 4:14, 21 (last part), 22.

II. Steadfastness Under Persecution

5. The Holy Ghost strengthened Peter. Acts 4:8 (first part).
6. Christ did the healing. Acts 4:8-10.
7. The guilt of the Jews. Acts 4:10, 11.

III. Christ the Only Saviour

8. Only Christ can save. Acts 4:12.
9. The disciples had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13.

IV. The Gospel Again Proclaimed

10. Christ must be preached. Acts 4:18-20.
11. Prayers for boldness in the gospel. Acts 4:29, 30.
12. Empowered for service. Acts 4:31.
13. Unity in the church. Acts 4:32.
14. The message of the resurrection. Acts 4:33.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: The priests were angry with the apostles for preaching. "The ground of their grief was as much *the fact* that *they* should presume to instruct the people, as the *matter* which they taught them. They were offended that unlearned Galileans, in no way connected with the priestly office, and unauthorized by *them,* should presume to set themselves up as religious teachers. *They* claimed the right to watch over the interests of the people, and to declare who was authorized to instruct the nation. It has been no unusual thing for men in ecclesiastical stations to take exceptions to the ministry of those who have not been commissioned by themselves. Men easily fancy that all power to instruct others is lodged in their hands; and they oppose others simply from the fact that they have not derived their authority from *them.* The true question in this case was, whether these Galileans gave proof that they were sent by God. The fact of the miracle in this case should have been satisfactory."—Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles,* Acts 4:2.

Places: The temple in Jerusalem; a prison; the meeting place of the Jewish

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Sanhedrin; the meeting place of the church.

Persons: Annas and Caiaphas, before whom Jesus had stood trial (John 18:13, 14); John and Alexander, Sadducees from among the chief priests, and leaders in the Sanhedrin; John the apostle, and Peter, again a spokesman.

Interesting Terms: "Sadducees." These were the liberals among the Jews, with leanings toward Greek culture, ready to compromise with Rome and unwilling to believe in supernatural beings, such as angels, nor in the miraculous; hence they rejected the resurrection. Acts 23:8.

"Captain of the temple." This officer was chief of police of the temple guard, probably a special company of the Levites. Nehemiah 11:11 speaks of a "ruler of the house of God."

Opposition to the Gospel

1. Why were the apostles placed under arrest? Acts 4:1-3.

2. What results did God give to the apostles' preaching? Acts 4:4.

3. What did the leaders of the Jews ask the apostles? Acts 4:5-7.

NOTE.—The inquiry inferred that the apostles might have performed their work on the lame man by magic, much believed in at that time, or through the power of evil spirits. See Matthew 12:22-32. Hence the demand for proof of the apostles' authority. The hearing was before the Sanhedrin, the council of seventy, the highest authority among the Jews, yet without direct political control since the Romans were ruling Palestine.

4. What clear evidence was there that the man had actually been healed? Acts 4:14, 21 (last part), 22.

NOTE.—The man had been healed in the presence of a crowd of worshipers at the temple gates. Acts 3:2. When he was healed, he leaped and hurried with shouts of praise into the temple and was seen by many. Acts 3:7-10. At the hearing before the Sanhedrin, the healed man was himself present, a visible proof of the miracle that had been performed.

> "After the tithe is set apart, let gifts and offerings be apportioned, 'as God hath prospered' you."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 130.

Steadfastness Under Persecution

5. What was the source of Peter's strength during this time of trial? Acts 4:8 (first part).

6. To whom did the apostles give glory for the miracle of healing? Acts 4:8-10.

NOTE.—"This courageous defense appalled the Jewish leaders. They had supposed that the disciples would be overcome with fear and confusion when brought before the Sanhedrin. But, instead, these witnesses spoke as Christ had spoken, with a convincing power that silenced their adversaries. There was no trace of fear in Peter's voice as he declared of Christ, 'This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 63, 64.

7. With what crime did Peter charge the Jewish leaders? Acts 4:10, 11. Compare Acts 2:23; 3:13-15.

Christ the Only Saviour

8. What marvelous gospel truth did Peter state? Acts 4:12.

NOTE.—"Like Nicodemus, we must be willing to enter into life in the same way as the chief of sinners. Than Christ, 'there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' Acts 4:12. Through faith we receive the grace of God; but faith is not our Saviour. It earns nothing. It is the hand by which we lay hold upon Christ, and appropriate His merits, the remedy for sin. And we cannot even repent without the aid of the Spirit of God. The Scripture says of Christ, 'Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' Acts 5:31. Repentance comes from Christ as truly as does pardon.

How, then, are we to be saved? 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,' so the Son of man has been lifted up, and everyone who has been deceived and bitten by the serpent may look and live."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 175.

9. What divine fellowship gave boldness to the apostles? Acts 4:13.

The Gospel Again Proclaimed

10. When ordered not to preach Christ, what was the apostles' reply? Acts 4:18-20.

NOTE.—"We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way. We are to go forward in Christ's name, advocating the truths committed to us. If we are forbidden by men to do this work, then we may say, as did the apostles, 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' "—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 69.

11. Instead of asking for their own safety, for what did the apostles pray? Acts 4:29, 30.

12. How did God answer these prayers? Acts 4:31.

13. How was the unity of the church manifested in spiritual matters? Acts 4:32.

14. To what event did the apostles bear witness? What attended their preaching? Acts 4:33.

NOTE.—"Under their labors were added to the church chosen men, who, receiving the word of truth, consecrated their lives to the work of giving to others the hope that filled their hearts with peace and joy. They could not be restrained or intimidated by threatenings. . . .

"So mightily can God work when men give themselves up to the control of His Spirit.

"The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 48, 49.

LESSON QUARTERLIES FOR THE BLIND

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The Spirit of God at Work

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Acts 4:34 to 5:16.

MEMORY VERSE: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Ephesians 4:30.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," chapter 7; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To show how dangerous it is to grieve the Holy Spirit; and to teach that even adverse circumstances can work to the glory of God.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 10-13.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1, 2.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 3-7.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8, 9.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Generosity in the Church

1. Generosity in caring for the needy. Acts 4:34, 35.
2. Contrast between Barnabas and Ananias. Acts 4:36 to 5:2.

II. The Deceit and Punishment of Ananias and Sapphira

3. The extent of their falsehood. Acts 5:2-4.
4. A lie to the Holy Spirit. Acts 5:3, 4, 9.
5. Sapphira equally guilty with Ananias. Acts 5:7-9.
6. Punishment by death. Acts 5:5, 6, 9, 10.
7. Justifiable fear. Acts 5:11 (first part).

III. The Effect Upon Church and Public

8. A wholesome respect for the church and its work. Acts 5:11, 13 (last part).
9. Protected from insincerity. Acts 5:13 (first part).

IV. The Gospel Proclaimed

10. Preaching at the temple. Acts 5:12 (last part).
11. Miracles wrought. Acts 5:12 (first part).
12. The sick brought for healing. Acts 5:15, 16.
13. Many believers added. Acts 5:14.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: "The converts to the gospel were 'of one heart and of one soul.' One common interest controlled them—the success of the mission entrusted to them; and covetousness had no place in their lives. Their love for their brethren and the cause they had espoused, was greater than their love of money and possessions. Their works testified that they accounted the souls of men of higher value than earthly wealth. . . .

"In sharp contrast to the example of benevolence shown by the believers, was the conduct of Ananias and Sapphira, whose experience, traced by the pen of Inspiration, has left a dark stain upon the history of the early church."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 70, 71.

Places: The meeting place of the church in Jerusalem; Solomon's porch at the temple; the streets of the city.

Persons: Joses Barnabas, a Jew of Cyprus and a Levite, a convert to Christ and future companion of Paul the apostle; Ananias and Sapphira, husband and wife who died because of their hypocrisy and deception; Peter; the multitude.

Generosity in the Church

1. In what way is the generosity of the believers again referred to? Acts 4:34, 35. Compare 2 Cor. 9:7.

NOTE.—"It would be improper to press it so as to suppose, that every individual that became a Christian sold at once all his property. The sense doubtless is, that this was done *when it was necessary*; they parted with whatever property was needful to supply the wants of their poor brethren. That it was by no means considered a matter of *obligation,* or enjoined by the apostles, is apparent from the case of Ananias, ch. v. 4. The fact that *Joses* is particularly mentioned (ver. 36), shows that it was by no means a universal practice thus to part with all their possessions. He was *one* instance in which it was done. Perhaps there were many other similar instances; but all that the passage requires us to believe is, that they parted with whatever was *needful* to supply the wants of the poor."—Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles,* Acts 4:34.

2. Contrast the character of Barnabas with that of Ananias and Sapphira, as shown in their giving. Acts 4:36 to 5:2.

NOTE.—"Here we have the generous, sympathetic Son of Consolation on the one side, and here, too, we have a warning and a type for all time that the tares must evermore be mingled with the wheat, the false with the true, the hypocrites with real servants of God, even until the final separation. The accidental division of the book into chapters hinders casual readers from noticing that the action of Ananias and his wife is set by the writer over against that of Barnabas. Barnabas sold his estate and brought the price, the whole price, and surrendered it as an offering to the church. The spirit of enthusiastic giving was abroad, and had seized upon the community; and Barnabas sympathized with it."—*The Expositor's Bible,* 1947 ed., Vol. 5, p. 345.

The Deceit and Punishment of Ananias and Sapphira

3. In what did Ananias and Sapphira's falsehood consist? Acts 5:2-4.

4. To whom was their lie primarily directed? Acts 5:3, 4, 9.

NOTE.—"God hates hypocrisy and falsehood. Ananias and Sapphira practiced fraud in their dealing with God; they lied to the Holy Spirit, and their sin was visited with swift and terrible judgment."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 72.

5. Why was Sapphira punished? Acts 5:7-9.

6. What dire punishment fell upon the guilty pair? Acts 5:5, 6, 9, 10.

NOTE.—"Infinite Wisdom saw that this signal manifestation of the wrath of God was necessary to guard the young church from becoming demoralized. Their numbers were rapidly increasing. The church

> "Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given."—*Steps to Christ,* page 91.

would have been endangered if, in the rapid increase of converts, men and women had been added who, while professing to serve God, were worshiping mammon. This judgment testified that men cannot deceive God, that He detects the hidden sin of the heart, and that He will not be mocked. It was designed as a warning to the church, to lead them to avoid pretense and hypocrisy, and to beware of robbing God."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 73, 74.

7. In what spirit did the church accept the judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira? Acts 5:11 (first part).

The Effect Upon Church and Public

8. What was the effect upon the church and the general public? Acts 5:11, 13 (last part).

NOTE.—"From the stern punishment meted out to those perjurers, God would have us learn also how deep is His hatred and contempt for all hypocrisy and deception. In pretending that they had given all, Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, and, as a result, they lost this life and the life that is to come. The same God who punished them, today condemns all falsehood. Lying lips are an abomination to Him. . . .

"In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, the sin of fraud against God was speedily punished. The same sin was often repeated in the after history of the church and is committed by many in our time. But though it may not be attended by the visible manifestation of God's displeasure, it is no less heinous in His sight now than in the apostles' time. The warning has been given; God has clearly manifested His abhorrence of this sin; and all who give themselves up to hypocrisy and covetousness may be sure that they are destroying their own souls."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 75, 76.

9. Who feared to be associated with the apostolic company? Acts 5:13 (first part).

NOTE.—The "rest" may mean Jews in some position of influence and leadership, since the church held with the apostles; and "the people," that is, the general Jewish populace, were glad at hearing the gospel message.

The Gospel Proclaimed

10. At what place was the witness of the apostles given? Acts 5:12 (last part).

11. What occurred to increase the interest and respect of the people? Acts 5:12 (first part).

12. How extensive was the work of healing? Acts 5:15, 16.

13. What was the result? Acts 5:14.

NOTE.—"In Jerusalem, where the deepest prejudice existed, and where the most confused ideas prevailed in regard to Him who had been crucified as a malefactor, the disciples continued to speak with boldness the words of life, setting before the Jews the work and mission of Christ, His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Priests and rulers heard with amazement the clear, bold testimony of the apostles. The power of the risen Saviour had indeed fallen on the disciples, and their work was accompanied by signs and miracles that daily increased the number of believers. Along the streets where the disciples were to pass, the people laid their sick 'on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.' Here also were brought those vexed with unclean spirits. The crowds gathered round them, and those who were healed shouted the praises of God and glorified the name of the Redeemer."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 77, 78.

Lesson 6, for November 11, 1967

The Second Persecution

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Acts 5:16-40.

MEMORY VERSE: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," chapter 8; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To learn again the providences of God through His angels, the privilege of witnessing for Christ, and the necessity of standing firmly for the Lord, no matter how determined and powerful the opposition.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 13, 14.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 4-7.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-12.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. The Apostles Imprisoned and Delivered

1. The arrest. Acts 5:16-18.
2. Liberation by an angel. Acts 5:19.
3. Preaching again at the temple. Acts 5:20, 21 (first part).

II. The Jewish Authorities Frustrated

4. The Jewish leaders bewildered. Acts 5:21 (last part), 22, 23, 25.
5. The Temple police cautious. Acts 5:26.
6. The accusations against the apostles. Acts 5:27, 28.
7. A fundamental principle of religious liberty. Acts 5:29.

III. Proclaiming the Gospel

8. Peter's charge concerning the crucifixtion of Christ. Acts 5:30 (last part).
9. The resurrection. Acts 5:30 (first part).
10. Christ's saving grace. Acts 5:31.
11. Witnessing for Christ. Acts 5:32 (first part).
12. The blessing of the Holy Spirit upon the obedient. Acts 5:32 (last part).

IV. The Apostles Set Free

13. The counsel of Gamaliel. Acts 5:33-39.
14. The scourging. Acts 5:40.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: Following the death of Ananias and Sapphira there came great fear on the church, and great power for public witness. The latter aroused stubborn opposition to truth on the part of the Jewish leaders. This gave opportunity for God to send angel intervention. This lesson reveals the courage and resolution of the apostles, who are obligated to preach the gospel, no matter how stern the forbiddings. Obedience to God must take precedence. A Jewish philosopher arrives at a face-saving compromise.

Places: The meeting place of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem; a prison; the porticoes of the temple.

Persons: An angel; the high priest; the Sadducees; the captain of the temple;

Gamaliel, a leading Pharisee and great theologian, teacher of Paul (Acts 22:3); the apostles; Peter, again a spokesman.

Interesting Terms: "Sect." The translation of a word meaning "choice," from which the word "heresy" is also derived. The word means a group holding a particular view or views, usually different from that of the majority of the people. The word is often used in contempt.

"Doubted." Better, "were in perplexity."

The Apostles Imprisoned and Delivered

1. What happened to the apostles because of previous remarkable occurrences? Acts 5:16-18.

2. What divine agency came to the apostles' rescue? Acts 5:19.

3. Where were they directed to go, and what were they to preach? Acts 5:20, 21 (first part).

The Jewish Authorities Frustrated

4. Not knowing that the apostles were released from prison, what did the Jewish leaders do? What were they told? Acts 5:21 (last part), 22, 23, 25.

NOTE.—"They [priests and rulers] were aware that many who did not accept the teachings of Christ were weary of the arbitrary rule of the Jewish authorities and anxious for some change. The priests feared that if these dissatisfied ones were to accept the truths proclaimed by the apostles, and were to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, the anger of the entire people would be raised against the religious leaders, who would then be made to answer for the murder of Christ. They decided to take strong measures to prevent this.

"When they sent for the prisoners to be brought before them, great was their amazement at the word brought back that the prison doors were found to be securely bolted and the guard stationed before them, but that the prisoners were nowhere to be found."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 80, 81.

5. Of what did the temple police stand in fear? Acts 5:26.

NOTE.—"The people were favorable to the apostles. If violence had been attempted, or they had been taken in a cruel and forcible manner, the consequence would have been a tumult, and bloodshed. In this way, also, the apostles showed that they were not disposed to excite tumult. Opposition by them would have excited commotion; and though *they* would have have been rescued, yet they resolved to show that they were not obstinate, contumacious, or rebellious, but were disposed, as far as it could be done with a clear conscience, to yield obedience to the laws of the land."—Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles,* Acts 5:26.

6. Of what defiant acts did the Jewish leaders accuse the apostles? Acts 5:27, 28.

NOTE.—"This, though not so designed, was an honorable tribute to the zeal and fidelity of the apostles. When Christians are arraigned or persecuted, it is well if the only charge which their enemies can bring against them is that they have been distinguished for zeal and success in propagating their religion; see 1 Pet. iv. 16."—Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles,* Acts 5:28.

> "The Sabbath School should be one of the greatest instrumentalities, and the most effectual, in bringing souls to Christ."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 10.

The expression "bring this Man's blood upon us" has obvious reference not only to Peter's repeated charge that the Jewish leaders brought about Christ's death (Acts 2:23; 3:15; 4:10), but also to their own assumption of that blame at Christ's trial (Matt. 27:25).

7. What great principle of religious liberty did the apostle Peter then set forth? Acts 5:29.

NOTE.—"When in 1529 the German princes assembled at the Diet of Spires, there was presented the emperor's decree restricting religious liberty, and prohibiting all further dissemination of the reformed doctrines. It seemed that the hope of the world was about to be crushed out. Would the princes accept the decree? Should the light of the gospel be shut out from the multitudes still in darkness? Mighty issues for the world were at stake. Those who had accepted the reformed faith met together, and their unanimous decision was, 'Let us reject this decree. In matters of conscience the majority has no power.' . . .

"This principle we in our day are firmly to maintain. The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by God's witnesses during the centuries that have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands. The responsibility for this great gift rests with those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of His Word."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 68, 69.

Proclaiming the Gospel

8. With what offense did Peter again charge the Jews? Acts 5:30 (last part). Compare Acts 2:23; 3:13-15; 4:10.

9. Who raised Christ from the dead? Acts 5:30 (first part).

10. What gracious work was the risen Saviour to accomplish? Acts 5:31.

NOTE.—" 'From the highest throne of glory to the cross of deepest woe' He had come; now He reascended from the grave to the throne, to the seat of heavenly power and blessedness. He has become an enthroned Redeemer, a sovereign Saviour, (1) occupying the foremost place in heavenly rank, (2) dispensing salvation to the lost children of men, and (3) receiving the willing homage, the affectionate service of the multitude He has redeemed. What more honorable, enviable, blessed position can we conceive than that of One who, seated in the very highest post of honor, is conferring the best of all imaginable boons, and is receiving, in return, the freest, richest, most rejoicing worship and service of His redeemed, both of those who are about His person 'in the heavens,' and of those also who are serving Him and striving to follow Him below?"—*The Pulpit Commentary,* Acts, Vol. 1, pp. 167, 168.

11. What divine and human witnesses acclaim the merits of the glorified Saviour? Acts 5:32 (first part).

NOTE.—The Holy Spirit convicts men as a divine witness (John 16:7-11). Under the power of the Spirit converted men become in turn living witnesses of what the Saviour of men can accomplish in human hearts.

12. What great blessing comes as a result of obeying God? Acts 5:32 (last part).

NOTE.—"The descent of the Holy Ghost to endow them with remarkable gifts (ch. ii. 1-4), to awaken and convert such a multitude (ch. ii. 41; iv. 4; v. 14), was an unanswerable attestation of the truth of these doctrines, and of the Christian religion. So manifest and decided was the presence of God attending them, that *they* could have no doubt that what they said was true; and so open and public was this attestation, that it was an evidence to all the people of the truth of their doctrine." —Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles,* Acts 5:32.

The Apostles Set Free

13. What was Gamaliel's argument in favor of the apostles? Acts 5:33-39.

14. What mistreatment did the apostles suffer as they were released? Acts 5:40.

NOTE.—"When the Jews inflicted this punishment [of scourging] the culprit was tied to a pillar in the synagogue; the executioner, armed with a scourge of three distinct lashes, inflicted the punishment; while an official standing by read selected portions of the law between each stroke. Thirteen strokes of the threefold scourge was equivalent to the thirty-nine stripes. This was the flogging the apostles suffered on this occasion."—*The Expositor's Bible,* 1947 ed., Vol. 5, p. 355, footnote.

Lesson 7, for November 18, 1967

The Seven Deacons

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Acts 5:41 to 6:8.

MEMORY VERSE: "Let all things be done decently and in order." 1 Cor. 14:40.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," chapter 9; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To explain the origin and function of the office of deacons, a very important group in the organization of the church.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 12-14.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-3.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 4-6.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 7-11.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Preaching the Gospel of Salvation

1. The joy of witnessing. Acts 5:41.
2. The message of the apostles. Acts 5:42.

II. The Care of the Needy

3. The daily supply. Acts 6:1 (last part).
4. Complaints against the Hebrew Christians. Acts 6:1 (first part).
5. The Grecian widows reported neglected. Acts 6:1 (second part).
6. The apostles decline to serve tables. Acts 6:2, 4.

III. The Appointment of Seven Deacons

7. Seven good men to be appointed. Acts 6:2 (last part), 3.
8. The qualification of the new officers. Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8-13.
9. The choosing of the seven. Acts 6:5.
10. The office of deacon. Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8.
11. The ordination. Acts 6:6.

IV. The Advance of the Gospel

12. The disciples increased. Acts 6:7 (first part).
13. Conversion of priests. Acts 6:7 (last part).
14. The character and work of Stephen. Acts 6:8.

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: "The early church was made up of many classes of people, of various nationalities. At the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, 'there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.' Acts 2:5. Among those of the Hebrew faith who were gathered at Jerusalem were some commonly known as Grecians, between whom and the Jews of Palestine there had long existed distrust and even antagonism. . . .

"Thus it came to pass that as disciples were multiplied, the enemy succeeded in arousing the suspicions of some who had formerly been in the habit of looking with jealousy on their brethren in the faith and of finding fault with their spiritual leaders, and so 'there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews.' The cause of complaint was an alleged neglect of the Greek widows in the daily distribution of assistance. Any inequality would have been contrary to the spirit of the gospel, yet Satan had succeeded in arousing suspicion. Prompt measures must now be taken to remove all occasion for dissatisfaction, lest the enemy triumph in his effort to bring about a division among the believers."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 87, 88.

Places: The temple; houses in the city; the meeting place of the church; the places where food and clothing were dispensed to the believers.

Persons: The Christian widows of Jews of foreign extraction ("Grecians"); the Twelve; the seven deacons.

Interesting Terms: "Grecians" (or Hellenists). Jews who were born and lived outside of Palestine, called the "Dispersion," usually Greek-speaking. "Proselyte." Any Gentile converted to Judaism from a heathen experience.

Preaching the Gospel of Salvation

1. What caused the liberated apostles to rejoice? Acts 5:41.

NOTE.—"The emotion is probably, in one sense, natural to all who have an intense conviction of the truth for which they suffer. But in this case there was something more. The Twelve could not fail to remember their Lord's beatitudes; and now, for the first time, felt that they could 'rejoice and be exceeding glad' because they were suffering as the prophets had suffered before them (Matt. v. 11, 12). And they were suffering for His name, . . . for that of the Master who had loved them and whom they had learnt to love."—*Ellicott's Commentary,* on Acts 5:41.

2. What message did the apostles give, and where? Acts 5:42.

The Care of the Needy

3. What is meant by "the daily ministration"? Acts 6:1 (last part). Compare Acts 2:44, 45 and 4:34, 35.

NOTE.—Each day the poor believers came to be served with the necessities of life which the generosity of the other believers made available to them.

4. Who murmured, and against whom were the complaints directed? Acts 6:1 (first part).

5. What people in the church were reported as being neglected? Acts 6:1 (second part).

NOTE.—"In the time when the gospel was first preached, there were two classes of Jews—those who remained in Palestine, who used the Hebrew [Aramaic] language, etc., and who were appropriately called *Hebrews;* and those who were scattered among the Gentiles, who spoke the Greek language, and who used in their synagogues the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. These were called *Hellenists,* or as it is in our translation *Grecians;* note, John vii. 35. These were

doubtless the persons mentioned here—not those who were proselyted from Gentiles, but those who were not natives of Judea, who had come up to Jerusalem to attend the great festivals of the Jews. See ch. ii. 5, 9-11. Dissensions would be very likely to arise between these two classes of persons."—Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles,* Acts 6:1.

6. What separation of work did the apostles insist should be made for them? Acts 6:2, 4.

The Appointment of Seven Deacons

7. What suggestion was made to the church? What were the new officers to do? Acts 6:2 (last part), 3.

NOTE.—By "tables" is to be understood the business of distribution of the clothing and food that were dispensed daily to the needy believers who came to be served. The apostles came to realize that with the gifts of the Spirit vouchsafed to them, and the weight of the responsibility of the gospel of salvation resting heavily upon them, they should not be busied with routine work which any honest, dependable individual could perform as well as they.

8. What qualifications were the new officers to possess? Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8-13.

NOTE.—The deacons were to have the kind of equipment that the church should always expect of its officers. The deacons were to be (1) honest, (2) filled with the Holy Spirit, (3) wise, of good common sense.

> "One dollar now is of more value to the work than ten dollars will be at some future period."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 134.

9. Who were appointed? Who did the choosing? Acts 6:5.

NOTE.—All of the seven bore Greek names, suggesting that they were Grecians, or Hellenistic Jews, in a position to deal sympathetically with those who had been neglected. At least one of the seven was a proselyte, a Gentile who had been converted from paganism to Judaism. "The whole multitude" did the choosing or electing.

10. By what name do we now speak of these new officers? Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8.

NOTE.—The Greek word *diakonos* ("deacon") means "minister" in the sense of "servant."

11. How were the deacons set apart for their work? Acts 6:6.

NOTE.—"The ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office and a recognition of one's authority in that office. By it the seal of the church was set upon the work of God."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 161, 162.

The Advance of the Gospel

12. What great progress in the gospel proclamation was now seen? Acts 6:7 (first part).

13. From what Jewish group did many now accept the gospel? Acts 6:7 (last part).

NOTE.—It is significant that a large number of Jewish priests now came to understand the mediatorial work of the great High Priest and accept Him as their personal Saviour.

14. What spiritual qualifications did Stephen possess? What resulted from his work? Acts 6:8.

NOTE.—The stoning of Stephen, about to take place, marks the end of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24-27. Christ, our High Priest, had begun His work in the heavenly sanctuary. "God's servants receive no honor or recognition from the world. Stephen was stoned because he preached Christ and Him crucified. Paul was imprisoned, beaten, stoned, and finally put to death, because he was a faithful messenger of God to the Gentiles. The apostle John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, 'for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.' These examples of human steadfastness in the might of divine power are a witness to the world of the faithfulness of God's promises, of His abiding presence and sustaining grace."—*Gospel Workers*, page 18.

> "The religious experience is to a great degree determined by the character of the books you read in your leisure moments." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 204.

Lesson 8, for November 25, 1967

The Third Persecution; the Martyrdom of Stephen

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Acts 6:9 to 8:2.

MEMORY VERSE: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Acts 7:56.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," chapter 10; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To review through Stephen's speech the foreshadowing of the gospel in the Old Testament, and to observe Stephen's personal piety and devotion, and his faithfulness unto death.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 12-14.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-7.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-11.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Stephen's Evangelism and Arrest

1. Stephen and the foreign synagogues. Acts 6:9.
2. False charges laid against Stephen. Acts 6:11, 13, 14.
3. A timely message for A.D. 34. Acts 6:13.
4. Stephen's radiant face. Acts 6: 12, 15.

II. The Hebrew Background of the Gospel

5. The promises to Abraham. Acts 7:2-5.
6. The departure to Egypt. Acts 7:6-16.
7. Moses and the Exodus. Acts 7:17-36.

8. Rebellion against Moses. Acts 7:35-39.
9. Rebellion in the wilderness. Acts 7:40-42.
10. The purpose of tabernacle and temple. Acts 7:43-50.
11. Stephen's charge against the Jews. Acts 7:51-53.

III. The Vision and Death of Stephen

12. Christ at God's right hand. Acts 7:55, 56; Dan. 9:24-27.
13. The stoning of Stephen. Acts 7:57-60; 8:2.
14. Bitter persecution under Saul of Tarsus. Acts 7:58; 8:1.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: "Because the priests and rulers could not prevail against the clear, calm wisdom of Stephen, they determined to make an example of him; and while thus satisfying their revengeful hatred, they would prevent others, through fear, from adopting his belief. Witnesses were hired to bear false testimony that they had heard him speak blasphemous words against the temple and the law."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 98, 99.

Places: Synagogues of the dispersed Jews, in Jerusalem; the council chamber of the Sanhedrin; a place of stoning outside Jerusalem.

Persons: Hellenistic Jews; Stephen; the high priest; Saul of Tarsus, later called Paul the apostle.

Interesting Terms: "Suborn." The word means literally to provide or procure, but always in a bad sense. In connection with legal action "suborn" means to provide witnesses who will swear falsely.

Stephen's Evangelism and Arrest

1. In what synagogues of foreign Jews did Stephen especially present the gospel? Acts 6:9.

NOTE.—"Though a Jew by birth, he [Stephen] spoke the Greek language and was familiar with the customs and manners of the Greeks. He therefore found opportunity to preach the gospel in the synagogues of the Greek Jews."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 97.

2. What serious charges were laid against Stephen? Acts 6:11, 13, 14. Compare Matt. 26:59-61.

NOTE.—"We need not doubt that these Hellenistic Jews had a very strong and ardent attachment to the law of Moses, and that their dread and dislike of Stephen's teaching arose from their apprehension that Christian doctrine was in its nature destructive of their own tenets. But if their attachment to the law of Moses had been intelligent and pure, they would have welcomed the gospel of Christ as being the fulfillment of the law. If they had been actuated by a holy love of God's truth, they would not have sought to uphold the Mosaic institutions by violence, by injustice, and by fraud."—*The Pulpit Commentary,* Acts, Vol. 1, p. 196.

"On several occasions they had bribed the Roman authorities to pass over without comment instances where the Jews had taken the law into their own hands and had tried, condemned, and executed prisoners in accordance with their national custom. The enemies of Stephen did not doubt that they could again pursue such a course without danger to themselves. They determined to risk the consequences and therefore seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin council for trial."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 98.

3. What particularly timely gospel truth might Stephen well have been presenting? Acts 6:13.

NOTE.—"Since the whole ritual economy was symbolical of Christ, it had no value apart from Him. When the Jews sealed their rejection of Christ by delivering Him to death, they rejected all that gave significance to the temple and its services. Its sacredness had departed. It was doomed to destruction. From that day sacrificial offerings and the service connected with them were meaningless. Like the offering

of Cain, they did not express faith in the Saviour. In putting Christ to death, the Jews virtually destroyed their temple."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 165.

4. What was unusual about Stephen when he was brought under arrest before the Jewish council? Acts 6: 12, 15.

The Hebrew Background of the Gospel

5. How did Stephen show that the promises to Abraham were not fulfilled in the patriarch's day? Acts 7: 2-5.

6. What caused the early Hebrews to leave the Land of Promise to go to Egypt? Acts 7:6-16.

7. By what miracles and under what leadership did God lead the Hebrews back to the Promised Land? Acts 7:17-36.

8. How nearly did the Hebrews come to rejecting Moses, their God-appointed leader? Acts 7:35-39.

NOTE.—" 'Had ye believed Moses,' said Jesus, 'ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?' It was Christ who had spoken to Israel through Moses. If they had listened to the divine voice that spoke through their great leader, they would have recognized it in the teachings of Christ. Had they believed Moses, they would have believed Him of whom Moses wrote."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 213.

9. How far did the Hebrews go in disobedience while still in the wilderness? Acts 7:40-42.

10. In view of the fact that the infinite God cannot be contained in man-made temples, what was the purpose of the tabernacle and later of the temple? Acts 7:43-50. Compare John 4:20-24; Heb. 8:2; 9:2, 11.

NOTE.—"As referring to the temple at Jerusalem, the Saviour's words, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,' had a deeper meaning than the hearers perceived. Christ was the foundation and life of the temple. Its services were typical of the sacrifice of the Son of God. The priesthood was established to represent the mediatorial character and work of Christ. The entire plan of sacrificial worship was a foreshadowing of the Saviour's death to redeem the world. There would be no efficacy in these offerings when the great event toward which they had pointed for ages was consummated."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 165.

11. What bitter charge did Stephen make concerning the Jews' current disobedience? Acts 7:51-53. Compare Acts 2:22, 23; 3:13-15; 4:10, 11; 5:30.

"Opposing circumstances should create a firm determination to overcome them. . . . Press with determination in the right direction, and circumstances will be your helpers, not your hindrances."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* page 332.

The Vision and Death of Stephen

12. What is the significance of the vision Stephen had, in view of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary and the close of the seventy-week period? Acts 7:55, 56; Dan. 9:24-27.

NOTE.—"By virtue of His [Christ's] death and resurrection He became the minister of the 'true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.' Heb. 8:2. Men reared the Jewish tabernacle; men builded the Jewish temple; but the sanctuary above, of which the earthly was a type, was built by no human architect. 'Behold the Man whose name is The Branch; . . . He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne.' Zech. 6:12, 13.

"The sacrificial service that had pointed to Christ passed away; but the eyes of men were turned to the true sacrifice for the sins of the world. The earthly priesthood ceased; but we look to Jesus, the minister of the new covenant, and 'to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.' "—*The Desire of Ages,* pages 165, 166.

"The commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, as completed by the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus (see Ezra 6:14; 7:1, 9, margin), went into effect in the autumn of B.C. 457. From this time four hundred and eighty-three years extend to the autumn of A.D. 27. According to the prophecy, this period was to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One. In A.D. 27, Jesus at His baptism received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and soon afterward began His ministry. Then the message was proclaimed, 'The time is fulfilled.' . . .

"The one week—seven years—ended in A.D. 34. Then by the stoning of Stephen the Jews finally sealed their rejection of the gospel; the disciples who were scattered abroad by persecution 'went everywhere preaching the word' (Acts 8:4); and shortly after, Saul the persecutor was converted, and became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles."—*Ibid.,* p. 233.

13. How did Stephen die? Acts 7:57-60; 8:2.

NOTE.—Technically the Jews had no legal right, as a subjugated nation, to put a man to death. It is possible that the Roman governor's absence from the city gave them opportunity. Stoning was a Hebrew form of punishment, crucifixion a Roman method. Stephen, whose name in the Greek means "crown of victory," was the first Christian martyr whose name has come down to us.

14. What trying experience now came to the church, and who was primarily responsible for this persecution? Acts 7:58; 8:1.

NOTE.—"After the death of Stephen, Saul was elected a member of the Sanhedrin council in consideration of the part he had acted on that occasion. For a time he was a mighty instrument in the hands of Satan to carry out his rebellion against the Son of God. But soon this relentless persecutor was to be employed in building up the church that he was now tearing down. A Mightier than Satan had chosen Saul to take the place of the martyred Stephen, to preach and suffer for His name, and to spread far and wide the tidings of salvation through His blood."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 102.

"Let each regularly examine his income, which is all a blessing from God, and set apart the tithe as a separate fund, to be sacredly the Lord's. . . . After the tithe is set apart, let gifts and offerings be apportioned, *'as God hath prospered' you.*"—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 130. Italics supplied.

Lesson 9, for December 2, 1967

Missionary Expansion: From Judea to Samaria

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Acts 8:3-40.

MEMORY VERSE: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Acts 8:35.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," chapter 11; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To show the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing the gospel to whole communities and to truth-seeking individuals.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 11-15.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-5.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 6, 7.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-10.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. The Persecution

1. Saul still the persecutor. Acts 8:3.
2. The church active during persecution. Acts 8:4, 1.

II. Philip the Deacon in Samaria

3. Philip goes to Samaria. Acts 8:5.
4. The success of the gospel. Acts 8:6-8, 12.
5. Peter and John help Philip. Acts 8:14, 15.

III. The Holy Spirit Upon the Converts

6. The Holy Spirit not yet received. Acts 8:16.
7. The Spirit granted. Acts 8:17.

IV. Simon the Sorcerer

8. The reputation of Simon. Acts 8:9-11.
9. Simon's good intentions. Acts 8:13.
10. The sin of simony. Acts 8:18-24.

V. Philip in the Desert

11. Peter, John, and Philip separate. Acts 8:25, 26.
12. Philip meets the Ethiopian. Acts 8:27, 28.
13. The Ethiopian instructed. Acts 8:29-35.
14. The Ethiopian baptized. Acts 8:36-38.
15. Philip removed to Azotus. Acts 8:39, 40.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: The Philip in this lesson is not Philip the apostle, but the deacon turned evangelist. He went up from Jerusalem to Samaria, where he preached with great success. Then he was led of the Spirit to the wilderness region near Gaza, where he was instrumental in winning the Ethiopian eunuch to the gospel. We have seen the gospel preached in Jerusalem and Judea. It now moves into a wider circle. Acts 1:8.

Places: Either Sebaste (the ancient Samaria) or Sychar in Samaria; the wilderness near Gaza; Azotus, the ancient Ashdod; Caesarea.

Persons: Saul of Tarsus; Philip the deacon; Simon the sorcerer; John and Peter; the Ethiopian eunuch.

The Persecution

1. With what baneful work did Saul of Tarsus continue to busy himself after the stoning of Stephen? Acts 8:3.

NOTE.—"It may be remarked here that there never was a persecution commenced with more flattering prospects to the persecutors. Saul, the principal agent, was young, zealous, learned, and clothed with power. He showed afterwards that he had talents fitted for any station; and zeal that tired with no exertion, and that was appalled by no obstacle. With this talent he entered on his work. Christians were few and feeble. They were scattered and unarmed. They were unprotected by any civil power, and exposed, therefore, to the full blaze and rage of persecution. That the church was not destroyed, was owing to the protection of God—a protection that not only secured its existence, but which extended its influence and power by means of this very persecution far abroad on the earth."—Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles,* Acts 8:3.

2. What was the church doing? Where did the apostles remain in spite of danger? Acts 8:4, 1.

NOTE.—"When they were scattered by persecution they went forth filled with missionary zeal. They realized the responsibility of their mission. They knew that they held in their hands the bread of life for a famishing world; and they were constrained by the love of Christ to break this bread to all who were in need. The Lord wrought through them. Wherever they went, the sick were healed and the poor had the gospel preached unto them."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 106.

> "The object of Sabbath School work should be the ingathering of souls."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 61.

Philip the Deacon in Samaria

3. When Philip the deacon went out from Jerusalem as an evangelist, where did he go, and for what purpose? Acts 8:5.

NOTE.—The ancient city of Samaria had been completely destroyed about 70 B.C., and on its site many years later Herod the Great built another town, which he called Sebaste (Augustus) in honor of the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus. Either this city, or Sychar, where Jesus had planted the gospel truth (John 4:5-8, 39-42), is intended in Acts 8:5.

4. What results attended the preaching of the gospel by Philip? Acts 8: 6-8, 12.

5. Who were sent from the general headquarters at Jerusalem to help Philip? What was their first concern? Acts 8:14, 15.

The Holy Spirit Upon the Converts

6. What had not yet happened to the baptized believers? Acts 8:16.

7. What great gift was now granted to the converts, when apostolic hands were laid upon them? Acts 8:17.

Simon the Sorcerer

8. What distinguished man resided in Samaria? What is said of his character and activity? How did the people regard him? Acts 8:9-11.

9. How did Simon outwardly respond to the gospel message? Acts 8:13.

10. When he saw the Holy Spirit given, how did Simon seek to secure this power? Acts 8:18-24.

NOTE.—The name of Simon the sorcerer has given us the word "simony" to describe the crime of seeking church office by paying money as bribes, or by presenting gifts or using undue influence. There is no information in the Bible that this Simon ever found true repentance. Tradition maintains that he did not, but continued as an enemy of the gospel messengers.

Philip in the Desert

11. After preaching throughout all Samaria, where did Peter and John go? Where did the angel bid Philip to go? Acts 8:25, 26.

NOTE.—"While Philip was still in Samaria, he was directed by a heavenly messenger to 'go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza. . . . And he arose and went.' He did not question the call, nor did he hesitate to obey; for he had learned the lesson of conformity to God's will."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 107.

By the "desert" lying toward Gaza, we are not to understand a sandy waste, but a sparsely populated region.

12. Whom did Philip meet? Where had the man been, and what was he now doing? Acts 8:27, 28.

NOTE.—"This Ethiopian was a man of good standing and of wide influence. God saw that when converted he would give others the light he had received and would exert a strong influence in favor of the gospel."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 107.

13. What did the Holy Spirit instruct Philip to do, and with what result? Acts 8:29-35.

NOTE.—Philip must have spent some time with the Ethiopian and instructed him thoroughly in the gospel truths which he did not already know from Judaism. Notice that Philip made Jesus Christ the center of his instruction.

14. What did the Ethiopian ask, and how was the request granted? Acts 8:36-38.

NOTE.—The baptism was, of course, by immersion, as is clearly indicated in verse 38.

15. Following the rite of baptism, how were the two men parted? What did each do? Acts 8:39, 40.

ATTENTION, SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHERS!

Are you using the Teacher's Edition of the "Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly"? If not, you should ask your Sabbath School secretary to secure it for you. You will find it a great help in the preparation of your lesson as well as in teaching, for every other page in the quarterly is blank, thus giving space on which to write out answers to questions, notes, or special comments to use in class. It has been provided in response to requests from many teachers. It is designed to help you, but it cannot help you if you do not use it. Try it!

Lesson 10, for December 9, 1967

The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Acts 9:1-31.

MEMORY VERSE: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Phil. 3:7.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," chapters 12 and 13; "Testimonies," Vol. 3, pp. 429-433; "Gospel Workers," pages 58-62; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To show the power of Christ in calling a man He needed, in spite of human stubbornness, as well as the joy and peace that come from a personal fellowship with one's Lord.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 13-15.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-5.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 6-8.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 9-12.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. The Call of the Lord

1. The commission of Saul against the Christians. Acts 9:1, 2.
2. Saul challenged by the call of heaven. Acts 9:3, 4 (first part).
3. Jesus calls Saul. Acts 9:4 (last part), 5.
4. The effects of the heavenly visitation. Acts 9:6 (first part), 7, 8.
5. Saul's question and Christ's answer. Acts 9:6 (last part).

II. In Damascus

6. Saul's blindness. Acts 9:9.
7. Ananias sent to Saul's aid. Acts 9:10-19 (first part).
8. Saul appointed an apostle to the Gentiles. Acts 9:15, 16.

III. Growth in Grace

9. Saul preaches in Damascus. Acts 9:18, 20.
10. Saul in Arabia. Gal. 1:15-17.
11. The gospel again in Damascus. Acts 9:22.
12. The Jews plot against Saul. Acts 9:23-25.

IV. Sojourn in Jerusalem

13. Saul's first visit as a Christian in Jerusalem. Acts 9:26-29; Gal. 1:18, 19.
14. Saul goes to Tarsus. Acts 9:29 (last part), 30.
15. The church at peace. Acts 9:31.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: Beginning with this lesson we see Saul of Tarsus as Paul the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. On his way to Damascus as a persecutor of the church he is challenged by Jesus Christ and enjoys a thorough conversion. He spent some time (*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 125, says, "for a time") in Arabia in communion with God; then followed a successful evangelistic career in his native province of Cilicia. In succeeding years came Paul's fruitful three missionary journeys, with Antioch in Syria as their center.

Places: Jerusalem; Damascus; Arabia; Tarsus in Cilicia.

Persons: Saul of Tarsus; the high priest;

Jesus Christ; Ananias of Damascus; the Holy Spirit; disciples of Damascus; Barnabas; the apostles.

Interesting Terms: "Breathing out." An expression similar to "panting," indicating Saul's zeal and wrath against the Christians.

"Brother." The term by which Ananias addressed the converted Saul of Tarsus. This is the only individual title applied to Christian men in the New Testament.

"Saints." Sanctified or dedicated ones, a term applied to all the believers, as in Romans 1:7. The word in the original tongues is also translated "holy ones." The expression does not imply actual sinlessness, but consecration.

The Call of the Lord

1. What did Saul the persecutor ask of the high priest, and with what cruel purpose? Acts 9:1, 2.

NOTE.—"Saul was about to journey to Damascus upon his own business; but he was determined to accomplish a double purpose, by searching out, as he went, all the believers in Christ. For this purpose he obtained letters from the high priest to read in the synagogues, which authorized him to seize all those who were suspected of being believers in Jesus, and to send them by messengers to Jerusalem, there to be tried and punished."—Ellen G. White, *Sketches From the Life of Paul,* page 21.

> "Of every Christian the Lord requires growth in efficiency and capability in every line. Christ has paid us our wages, even His own blood and suffering, to secure our willing service. He came to our world to give us an example of how we should work, and what spirit we should bring into our labor."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* pages 330, 331.

2. What occurred to Saul and his companions as they approached Damascus? Acts 9:3, 4 (first part).

NOTE.—"It is evident that this revelation was not merely an inward impression made on the mind of Saul during a trance or ecstasy. It was the direct perception of the visible presence of Jesus Christ. This is asserted in various passages, both positively and incidentally. In St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, when he contends for the validity of his own apostleship, his argument is, 'Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ, the Lord?' (1 Cor. ix. 1). And when he adduces the evidence for the truth of the resurrection, his argument is again, 'He was seen . . . by Cephas . . . by James . . . by all the apostles . . . last of all by me . . . as one born out of due time' (xv. 8). By Cephas and by James at Jerusalem the reality of Saul's conversion was doubted (Acts ix. 27); but 'Barnabas brought him to the apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and had spoken with Him.' "—Conybeare and Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul.* 1906 ed., p. 84.

3. What did the voice from heaven say? Who was the speaker? Acts 9:4 (last part), 5.

NOTE.—"No doubt entered the mind of Saul that the One who spoke to him was Jesus of Nazareth, the long-looked-for Messiah, the Consolation and Redeemer of Israel."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 117.

4. What was the physical effect upon the men with Saul, and upon Saul himself? Acts 9:6 (first part), 7, 8.

NOTE.—In Acts 9:7 it says the men with Saul heard the voice, but in Acts 22:9 it says they did not hear the voice. The word translated "voice" in both places is the root word that appears in such English words as *telephone, dictaphone, phonetics,* et cetera. It was used for the sound of the

wind (John 3:8) and of the cry of animals, and of the sounds of millstones, wings, chariots, water, and musical instruments (1 Cor. 14:8), and most commonly for the human voice. As in both these accounts in Acts it is clear that the sound of human speech is referred to, the word "voice" was quite properly used. However, if someone were speaking in another room, one might either hear what was actually said, or one might hear only sufficient to recognize who was speaking. In such a case it might truly be said that one *did* hear, and that one *did not* hear. Thus in Acts 9 we are told that the men recognized that the sound they heard was human language, and in Acts 22 we are told that they did not understand the words of the voice that was speaking.

5. What did Saul ask? What instruction was given? Acts 9:6 (last part).

In Damascus

6. How long did Saul remain blind? In what circumstances? Acts 9:9.

NOTE.—"The same reason, we may venture to think, which caused the interposition of three days' blindness between Saul's conversion and his baptism, led Saul himself to pass those days in a voluntary self-abasement. His sin in persecuting the church of God and its Divine Head, his guilt in assisting at the death of God's saints, and in rejecting the testimony to Christ's resurrection, had been very great. These three days of blindness and of fasting were therefore a fitting preparation for the grace of forgiveness about to be so freely and fully given to him (1 Tim. i. 12-16). What thoughts must have passed through Saul's mind during those three days!"—*The Pulpit Commentary,* Acts, Vol. 1, p. 283.

7. What message came to Ananias in Damascus? What did he do? Acts 9:10-19 (first part).

8. What was Christ's plan for Saul? Acts 9:15, 16.

Growth in Grace

9. With sight restored, how did Saul occupy himself in Damascus? Acts 9:18, 20.

10. Where did Saul next go? Gal. 1:15-17.

NOTE.—"While in Arabia he did not communicate with the apostles; he sought God earnestly with all his heart, determining not to rest till he knew for a certainty that his repentance was accepted, and his great sin pardoned. He would not give up the conflict until he had the assurance that Jesus would be with him in his coming ministry. He was ever to carry about with him in the body the marks of Christ's glory, in his eyes, which had been blinded by the heavenly light, and he desired also to bear with him constantly the assurance of Christ's sustaining grace."—Ellen G. White, *Sketches From the Life of Paul,* page 34.

11. Upon his return to Damascus, what did Saul continue to do? Acts 9:22.

NOTE.—"God in His providence not only spared Saul's life, but converted him, thus transferring a champion from the side of the enemy to the side of Christ. An elo-

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quent speaker and a severe critic, Paul, with his stern purpose and undaunted courage, possessed the very qualifications needed in the early church.

"As Paul preached Christ in Damascus, all who heard him were amazed. . . . In his presentation of the gospel he sought to make plain the prophecies relating to the first advent of Christ. He showed conclusively that these prophecies had been literally fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. The foundation of his faith was the sure word of prophecy."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 124, 125.

12. How did the Jews in Damascus react to Saul's preaching? How was Saul delivered from vicious foes? Acts 9:23-25.

Sojourn in Jerusalem

13. Who stood guarantee for Saul when he went to Jerusalem? What did Saul do there? Acts 9:26-29; Gal. 1:18, 19.

NOTE.—"Barnabas, who had liberally contributed of his means to sustain the cause of Christ, and to relieve the necessities of the poor, had been acquainted with Paul when he opposed the believers. He now came forward and renewed that acquaintance, heard the testimony of Paul in regard to his miraculous conversion, and his experience from that time. He fully believed and received Paul, took him by the hand, and led him into the presence of the apostles."—Ellen G. White, *Sketches From the Life of Paul,* page 36.

14. What did the apostles have Saul do, and why? Acts 9:29 (last part), 30.

15. What was now the experience of the church in Palestine? Acts 9:31.

NOTE.—"It is thought that the attention of the Jews to the progress of the faith of Jesus Christ was diverted at this time, and their active hostility stayed, by the still greater danger to the Jews' religion which arose from [the Roman emperor] Caligula's intention of placing a statue to himself as a god in the holy of holies. Thus did God's gracious providence intervene to give rest to his harassed saints, and to build up his church in numbers, in holiness, and in heavenly comfort."—*The Pulpit Commentary,* Acts, Vol. 1, p. 287.

Lesson 11, for December 16, 1967

The Ministry of Peter

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Acts 9:32 to 10:48.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."* Acts 10:34, 35.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 131-141; "The Ministry of Healing," pages 209-216; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To see Peter as an agent of miracle-working power, and a willing minister of the gospel to the Gentiles.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 11-15.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-5.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 6, 7.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-10.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Miracles of Healing

1. Peter as an evangelist. Acts 9:32.
2. The healing of Aeneas. Acts 9:33-35.
3. Dorcas's service to the church. Acts 9:36, 39.
4. Peter's ministry to Dorcas. Acts 9:37-41.
5. The effect of the Dorcas miracle. Acts 9:42.

II. The Calling of Cornelius

6. The devout centurion. Acts 10:1, 2, 22.
7. Instructions to Cornelius. Acts 10:3-8.

III. The Vision of Peter

8. Peter's noontide prayer. Acts 10:9, 10, 17, 18.
9. Peter's vision. Acts 10:11-16.
10. Instructions of the Spirit to Peter. Acts 10:19-24.

IV. The Baptism of Cornelius

11. Peter meets the Gentile Cornelius. Acts 10:25-28 (first part).
12. The lesson of Peter's vision. Acts 10:28 (last part).
13. Cornelius's preparation. Acts 10:34-37.
14. The message of salvation. Acts 10:38-43.
15. The baptism.
    a. By the Holy Spirit. Acts 10:44-46.
    b. By water. Acts 10:47, 48

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: While Saul is doing a routine but useful work in Cilicia, gaining experience in evangelism (Gal. 1:21-24), the record brings Peter again to the front, and shows how the gospel spread through him in the coastal regions. Two miracles are described, and the account of the conversion of Cornelius and his household is given in full. Through an angel and a vision Peter and Cornelius are brought together. Peter preaches the gospel, the hearers receive the Holy Spirit, and Peter administers baptism. This was a decisive event, for, although Cornelius was "devout," that is, a believer in the Jewish faith, a "proselyte of the gate," he had not yet been circumcised and therefore was not permitted in Jewish assemblies. Cornelius's reception of the Holy Spirit therefore set a precedent of the greatest importance for later work among the Gentiles. The supernatural is so much a part of the events here that it becomes almost natural as should be the case with active, effective Christians.

Places: Lydda (modern Israel uses the ancient name, Lod), not far inland from Joppa, on the edge of the plain of Sharon, west of Jerusalem; Joppa, modern Jaffa, on the coast; Caesarea, a busy city on the coast some thirty miles north of Joppa, the seat of Roman provincial government (the ruins of the city are only recently being excavated).

Persons: Peter; Aeneas; Dorcas; Cornelius, a centurion in the Italian cohort garrison at Caesarea; an angel; the Holy Spirit.

Interesting Terms: "Centurion." A subordinate officer in the Roman army, commanding a hundred men, corresponding to sergeant or to lieutenant, junior grade, in the United States Army.

"Band." "The Roman cohort, here called a 'band,' consisted of about 600 men, and was the administrative unit of the army."—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary,* on Acts 10:1.

"Housetop." The flat roof of a Syrian house offered a place of family privacy, away from the turmoil of the street. Frequently a small room was built on the housetop, and almost always there was a canopy for shelter.

"Remission of sins." The "sending away" of sin, that is, the separation of sin from the sinner. Ps. 103:10-12.

Miracles of Healing

1. On returning from helping Philip in Samaria, how far did Peter extend his evangelistic work? Acts 9:32.

2. What gracious miracle did Peter perform at Lydda through the power of Christ? Acts 9:33-35.

3. What good work did Dorcas of Joppa do in the church? Acts 9:36, 39.

NOTE.—"At Joppa, which was near Lydda, there lived a woman named Dorcas, whose good deeds had made her greatly beloved. She was a worthy disciple of Jesus, and her life was filled with acts of kindness. She knew who needed comfortable clothing and who needed sympathy, and she freely ministered to the poor and the sorrowful. Her skillful fingers were more active than her tongue."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 131.

4. What good work did the Spirit of God do for Dorcas through Peter? Acts 9:37-41.

5. What effect did this remarkable occurrence have? Acts 9:42.

The Calling of Cornelius

6. Who was Cornelius, and what was his character and his relationship to God? Acts 10:1, 2, 22.

7. What did Cornelius do in compliance with instructions he received in a vision from the Lord? Acts 10: 3-8.

NOTE.—"The same Holy Watcher who said of Abraham, 'I know him,' knew Cornelius also, and sent a message direct from heaven to him. . . .

"The explicitness of these directions, in which was named even the occupation of the man with whom Peter was staying, shows that Heaven is acquainted with the history and business of men in every station of life. God is familiar with the experience and work of the humble laborer, as well as with that of the king upon his throne."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 133, 134.

The Vision of Peter

8. Where was Peter dwelling, and what was he doing when Cornelius's messengers reached him? Acts 10:9, 10, 17, 18.

NOTE.—There were two hours of prayer for the Jewish community, when the morning and evening sacrifices were offered in Jerusalem. But for the devout man, that was not enough. "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray." Ps. 55:17. Daniel "kneeled upon his knees three times a day." Dan. 6:10.

> "A conscientious few [of ancient Israel] made returns to God of about one third of all their income for the benefit of religious interests and for the poor. These exactions were . . . from *all* . . . according to the amount possessed. . . . These drafts were made by God upon the people for their own good, as well as to sustain His service."—*Testimonies,* vol. 4, pp. 467, 468.

9. What vision did Peter have while experiencing a noontide hunger? Acts 10:11-16.

NOTE.—"By the vision of the sheet and its contents, let down from heaven, Peter was to be divested of his settled prejudices against the Gentiles; to understand that, through Christ, heathen nations were made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the Jews, and were to be thus benefited equally with them. Some have urged that this vision was to signify that God had removed His prohibition from the use of the flesh of animals which He formerly pronounced unclean; and that therefore swines' flesh was fit for food. This is a very narrow, and altogether erroneous interpretation, and is plainly contradicted in the Scriptural account of the vision and its consequences."—*The Spirit of Prophecy,* Vol. 3, pp. 327, 328.

The meaning of the vision was not respecting unclean foods, but that no *man* should be called "common or unclean," verse 28.

10. What did the Spirit of God bid Peter do? How did Peter respond to the messengers' request? Acts 10: 19-24.

The Baptism of Cornelius

11. How did Cornelius greet Peter? What was Peter's problem in associating with Cornelius? Acts 10:25-28 (first part).

12. How did Peter apply the lesson of his vision? Acts 10:28 (last part).

NOTE.—It was from man, and not from food, that the stigma of "unclean" was to be removed. Notice that the word here translated "man" is of the broadest application, meaning man as a race.

13. What did Peter declare Cornelius and his companions already had heard? Acts 10:34-37.

NOTE.—"That word . . . ye know." Cornelius and his household had learned not only the truths of Judaism; they knew of the message of John the Baptist, and the work and preaching of Jesus Christ. There would scarcely be anyone in Palestine who had not heard these things.

14. What message did Peter bring to them? Acts 10:38-43.

NOTE.—The "anointing" of Jesus was at His baptism (Matt. 3:16, 17), when to the accompaniment of a Voice from heaven, the Spirit of God came afresh upon Jesus. This endowment marked the initiation of Christ's public ministry in A.D. 27, beginning the final "week" (seven years) of the seventy weeks of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27), which closed with the stoning of Stephen.

Like Philip (Acts 8:35), Peter preached Jesus.

15. How did God indicate His acceptance of these Gentiles? What did Peter do for them? Acts 10:44-48.

NOTE.—Again the Holy Spirit showed His active presence in the infant church. He did not wait for Peter, but took control of a situation embarrassing to the Jewish apostle. In a dynamic and soul-thrilling manifestation, the Spirit took Cornelius as His own. The speaking in tongues was no babbling, but a useful gift such as had come to the believers at Pentecost. Acts 2:4.

"God desires us to choose the heavenly in place of the earthly. He opens before us the possibilities of a heavenly investment." "Let your property go beforehand to heaven. Lay up your treasures beside the throne of God."—*Christ's Object Lessons,* pages 374, 375.

Lesson 12, for December 23, 1967

Peter Renders an Account; the Word at Antioch

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Acts 11.

MEMORY VERSE: "But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." Acts 11:9.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 141, 142, 155-160; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To see the willingness of the church leadership to move forward into new developments, in this case the winning of Gentiles, and to note the establishment of the work in Antioch in Syria.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 11-14.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-4.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 5-7.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-10.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Peter Called to Account

1. Eating with uncircumcised Gentiles. Acts 11:1-3.
2. Call no man unclean. Acts 10:28; 11:9.
3. Testimony of witnesses. Acts 10:23; 11:12.
4. The authority of the Holy Spirit. Acts 11:12-16.

II. The Gospel to the Gentiles

5. The lesson of Cornelius. Acts 11:17, 18; Gal. 2:9.
6. Peter's dissimulation. Gal. 2:11-16.
7. The spread of the gospel. Acts 11: 19, 20.

III. The Work of the Gospel in Antioch

8. Evangelistic results in Antioch. Acts 11:21.
9. The commission and qualifications of Barnabas. Acts 11:22, 24 (first part).
10. The success given him. Acts 11:23, 24 (last part).

IV. Saul's Work at Antioch

11. Barnabas seeks Saul. Acts 11: 25, 26.
12. The believers called "Christians." Acts 11:26 (last part).
13. Barnabas and Saul at Jerusalem. Acts 11:27-30.
14. John Mark enters the ministry. Acts 12:25.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: The work of the gospel now enters a new phase. In the early years the message was preached to the Jews. Then the circle of activity was widened under pressure from the Holy Spirit to include the Samaritans, who already believed the Scriptures and looked for a Messiah. Next, two Gentiles, the Ethiopian and Cornelius, already believers in God and the Scriptures, were accepted. Now, at Antioch, raw heathenism is met, and pagans, previously untouched by the truths of Scripture, are converted and brought into the circle of believers. This is a great

step, and though taken courageously, meets great opposition. The time is about A.D. 42-45.

Places: Jerusalem; Antioch in Syria; Tarsus in Cilicia.

Persons: Peter; the apostles in Jerusalem; the six witnesses; converted men, evangelists, from Cyprus and Cyrene; Greeks; Barnabas; Saul; Agabus the prophet; John Mark.

Peter Called to Account

1. What "severe censure" did Peter meet at Jerusalem? Acts 11:1-3.

NOTE.—"When the brethren in Judea heard that Peter had preached to the Gentiles, and had met with them, and eaten with them in their houses, they were surprised and offended by such strange movements on his part. They feared that such a course, which looked presumptuous to them, would tend to contradict his own teachings. . . .

"Peter candidly laid the whole matter before them. He related his experience in regard to the vision, and pleaded that it admonished him no longer to keep up the ceremonial distinction of circumcision and uncircumcision, nor to look upon the Gentiles as unclean, for God was not a respecter of persons. . . . His caution was made manifest to his brethren from the fact that, although commanded by God to go to the Gentile's house, he had taken with him six of the disciples then present, as witnesses of all he should say or do while there. . . .

"The disciples, upon hearing this account, were silenced, and convinced that Peter's course was in direct fulfillment of the plan of God, and that their old prejudices and exclusiveness were to be utterly destroyed by the gospel of Christ."—*The Spirit of Prophecy,* Vol. 3, pp. 332-334.

2. What lesson had Peter learned from his vision of the unclean foods? Acts 10:28; 11:9.

3. How many had accompanied Peter from Joppa, and where did they go? Acts 10:23; 11:12.

4. What divine authority did Peter give for his fellowshiping with the Gentile Cornelius? Acts 11:12-16.

The Gospel to the Gentiles

5. What lesson did the church leadership learn from the experience with Cornelius? Acts 11:17, 18; Gal. 2:9.

6. At a later time what compromising attitude of Peter is recorded, and how did Paul challenge him? Gal. 2:11-16.

NOTE.—"The church was threatened with division. But Paul, who saw the subverting influence of the wrong done to the church through the double part acted by Peter, openly rebuked him for thus disguising his true sentiments. In the presence of the church, Paul inquired of Peter, 'If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?' Gal. 2:13, 14.

"Peter saw the error into which he had fallen, and immediately set about repairing the evil that had been wrought, so far as was in his power."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 198.

7. Following the stoning of Stephen, how widely was the gospel preached, and through what agencies? Acts 11:19, 20.

> "Well, says one, the calls keep coming to give to the cause. I am weary of giving. Are you? Then let me ask, Are you weary of receiving from God's beneficent hand?"—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 133.

NOTE.—The men from Cyprus and Cyrene were Hellenists, that is, Greek-speaking Jews who had accepted Christianity and had an understanding of the Gentile world. Instead of "Grecians" as identifying those who were now converted in Antioch, we should read, in keeping with the oldest manuscripts, "Greeks," that is, pagans untouched by the truths of Scripture.

The Work of the Gospel in Antioch

8. What did the blessing of the Lord produce in Antioch? Acts 11:21.

9. Whom did the apostles send to supervise the work there? What were his qualifications? Acts 11:22, 24 (first part). Compare Acts 4:36; 9:27.

NOTE.—The man Barnabas here named is the same who had introduced Saul to the brethren in Jerusalem shortly after Saul's conversion (Acts 9:26, 27), and who had led in contributing to the "common purse" of the church following Pentecost (Acts 4:36, 37). It is a widely held opinion that Barnabas may have attended the school of Gamaliel in Jerusalem with Saul in earlier years (Acts 22:3). Barnabas was "full of the Holy Ghost," not merely a man of good character, but possessed by the Spirit of God. Stephen was also a man "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." Acts 6:5.

10. What success attended Barnabas's endeavors? Acts 11:23, 24 (last part).

Saul's Work at Antioch

11. Whom did Barnabas seek as a helper? With what result? Acts 11: 25, 26.

NOTE.—With the joint labors of two consecrated and Spirit-filled evangelists, Antioch became a great center of missionary activity for the Gentiles, while Jerusalem remained the center for evangelism among the Jews.

12. What name was first applied to the believers in Antioch? Acts 11:26 (last part).

NOTE.—"It was God who gave to them the name of Christian. This is a royal name, given to all who join themselves to Christ." —*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 157.

13. What were the circumstances of Saul's second visit to Jerusalem as a Christian? Acts 11:27-30.

NOTE.—To take material aid to the famine-threatened Jewish believers in Palestine required a trip by Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem. This was Saul's second visit to that city since becoming a Christian. His first visit there was about three years after his conversion, at which time he was welcomed by Barnabas. Acts 9:27. His third visit was also in Barnabas's company. Acts 15:2.

14. Whom did Saul and Barnabas bring with them from Jerusalem to Antioch? Acts 12:25.

"For life, health, food, and clothing, no less than for the hope of eternal life, we are indebted to the Giver of all mercies; and it is due to God to recognize His gifts, and to present our offerings of gratitude to our greatest Benefactor. These birthday gifts are recognized of Heaven."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work,* page 143.

The Fourth Persecution; an Attack on James and Peter

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Acts 12.

MEMORY VERSE: "Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." Acts 12:11.

STUDY HELPS: "The Acts of the Apostles," chapter 15; "Testimonies," Vol. 5, pp. 748, 749; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To realize that in a wicked world some children of God die in His service and some live on in the providence of God; also that sometimes there is upon earth retribution on the wicked.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

	Check Here		Check Here
Sabbath afternoon: General survey.	☐	Wednesday: Questions 12-15.	☐
Sunday: Questions 1-5.	☐	Thursday: Read from study helps.	☐
Monday: Questions 6, 7.	☐	Friday: Review the entire lesson.	☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-11.	☐		

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. James Martyred

1. The reign of King Herod Agrippa I. Acts 12:1 (first part).
2. Herod persecutes the church. Acts 12:1, 2.

II. Peter in Prison

3. Peter's arrest and imprisonment. Acts 12:3, 4 (first part), 6.
4. The Passover season. Acts 12:4 (last part).
5. The church in prayer. Acts 12:5, 12.

III. Peter Delivered

6. Rescue by an angel. Acts 12:7-10.
7. Peter's realization of a miracle. Acts 12:9, 11.

IV. The Awakened Faith of the Church

8. Reluctance to believe. Acts 12:13-15.
9. The astonishment of the believers. Acts 12:16.
10. Peter's instructions and departure. Acts 12:17.
11. The prison guards. Acts 12:18, 19.

V. The Death of Herod Agrippa I

12. Herod's political problems. Acts 12:20, 21.
13. Herod's irreverence. Acts 12:22.
14. Herod's death. Acts 12:23.
15. The progress of the gospel. Acts 12:24.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: This chapter of Acts relates the martyrdom of a second leader in the church, "James the brother of John." Peter was miraculously spared to do a great work for God. King Herod accepted the worship of man, but died ingloriously at the hands of God's angel.

Places: Jerusalem; Caesarea.

Persons: King Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great; James, son of Zebedee and brother of John, the beloved disciple; Simon Peter; sixteen soldiers; an

angel; Rhoda; the praying believers; a delegation from Tyre and Sidon; Blastus, the king's personal secretary.

Interesting Terms: "Easter." This is a late English term, mistakenly used by the King James translators to translate the Greek word for "Passover"; it was the Passover season, or the time of "unleavened bread." Acts 12:3. "Easter" is from an Anglo-Saxon name for the pagan annual spring sun festival. The word was not known in Bible times.

"Quaternion." A squad of four soldiers serving together on a special-duty assignment.

"Damsel." The original word means only "servant girl."

"Chamberlain." The supervisor of the king's private apartments; a sort of highly placed secretary.

James Martyred

1. Who was king of Judea at the time of our lesson (A.D. 44)? Acts 12:1 (first part).

NOTE.—"Herod the king here mentioned is Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, and son of Aristobulus and Bernice. During the reign of Tiberius he resided at Rome, in alternate favor and disgrace, sometimes banished, sometimes a prisoner, sometimes a guest at the imperial court. He was a great friend of Caius Caesar Caligula, and, on his succeeding to the empire on the death of Tiberius, was promoted by him to the tetrarchy of Herod Philip, with the title of king. He was further advanced three years afterwards to the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas; and, on the accession of Claudius to the throne, Judea and Samaria were added to his dominions, which now comprised the whole kingdom of his grandfather, Herod the Great. Agrippa, in spite of his close intimacy with Drusus, Caligula, Claudius, and other Roman magnates, was 'exactly careful in the observance of the laws of his country, not allowing a day to pass without its appointed sacrifice;' and he had given proof of his strong Jewish feeling by interposing his whole influence with Caligula to prevent his statue being placed in the holy of holies. This spirit accounts for his enmity against the church. He was a man of very expensive and luxurious habits, but not without some great qualities."—*The Pulpit Commentary,* Acts, Vol. 1, p. 378.

2. What did Herod do against the church? Why? Acts 12:1, 2.

NOTE.—The James martyred by King Herod Agrippa I was "James, the son of Zebedee, or James the Elder, to whom, with his brother John, our Lord gave the surname of Boanerges. . . , sons of thunder. Nothing is recorded of him in the Acts but his presence in the upper room at Jerusalem after the ascension (ch. i. 13), and this his martyrdom, which was the fulfillment of our Lord's prediction in Matt. xx. 23. His being singled out by Herod for death in company with Peter is rather an indication of his zeal and activity in the Lord's service, though we know nothing of his work."—*The Pulpit Commentary,* Acts, Vol. 1, p. 378.

Peter in Prison

3. How securely was Peter held in prison? Acts 12:3, 4 (first part), 6.

4. In what season of the year did this event occur? Acts 12:4 (last part).

NOTE.—"We have another characteristic trait of the religion of Agrippa, and of his sympathy with the feelings of the Jews about the law, that he would not allow a trial on a capital charge, or an execution, to take place during the Feast of Unleavened Bread."—*The Pulpit Commentary,* Acts, Vol. 1, p. 379.

> "There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures."—*Steps to Christ,* page 90.

5. What was the church doing on Peter's behalf? Acts 12:5, 12.

NOTE.—"There was great grief and consternation at the death of James. When Peter was also imprisoned, the entire church engaged in fasting and prayer. While the Jews were celebrating the memorial of their deliverance from Egypt, and pretending great zeal for the law, they were at the same time persecuting and murdering the believers in Christ, thus transgressing every principle of that law. At these great religious gatherings they stirred one another up against the Christians, till they were united in a bitter hatred of them."—*The Spirit of Prophecy,* Vol. 3, p. 335.

Peter Delivered

6. How were the prayers of the church for Peter answered? Acts 12: 7-10.

NOTE.—Peter was released from his chains without even the guards who were chained to him being awakened. He was led out with locked doors opening before him. To Peter his deliverance had rather the characteristic of a vision than of an occurrence in real life. The fact of the supernatural is strong in the book of Acts.

7. How did Peter come to understand what was happening to him? Acts 12:9, 11.

The Awakened Faith of the Church

8. How was Peter received when he came to where the brethren were assembled? Acts 12:13-15.

NOTE.—So wonderful was the supernatural act of the angel in rescuing Peter that the believers could scarcely accept the facts. Rhoda's simple, childlike faith is refreshing.

The apostles were evidently still using the "upper room" of the gospel record (Luke 22:12, 13) and of the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:13; 2:1, 2), thought to have been in the house of John Mark's mother, where the church is found in prayer when Peter is released.

9. How did the church feel about Peter's release? Acts 12:16.

10. What instruction did Peter give? What did he do? Acts 12:17. Compare Matt. 10:23.

NOTE.—The James here mentioned is thought of as an older brother of Jesus Christ (Matt. 13:55), son of Joseph by a first wife. Compare *The Desire of Ages,* page 87. This is the James who presided at the very important council of the church held in Jerusalem in A.D. 49 or 50 and described in Acts, chapter 15. He was doubtless the author of the Epistle of James.

11. What was the reaction of the authorities to Peter's disappearance? Acts 12:18, 19.

The Death of Herod Agrippa I

12. With what political difficulties did Herod now attempt to deal? Acts 12:20, 21.

13. To what idolatry was Herod a party? Acts 12:22.

NOTE.—"Herod knew that he deserved none of the praise and homage offered him, yet he accepted the idolatry of the people as his due."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 151.

14. How was Herod punished? Acts 12:23.

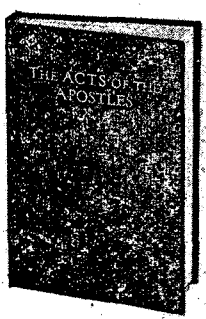
NOTE.—"The same angel who had come from the royal courts to rescue Peter, had been the messenger of wrath and judgment to Herod. The angel smote Peter to arouse him from slumber; it was with a different stroke that he smote the wicked king, laying low his pride and bringing upon him the punishment of the Almighty. Herod died in great agony of mind and body, under the retributive judgment of God.

"This demonstration of divine justice had a powerful influence upon the people. The tidings that the apostle of Christ had been miraculously delivered from prison and death, while his persecutor had been stricken down by the curse of God, were borne to all lands and became the means of leading many to a belief in Christ."—*The Acts of the Apostles,* page 152.

15. What progress continued to attend the preaching of the gospel? Acts 12:24.

When the church enables men to outthink, outlove, and outlive the world, it demonstrates its right to existence.

"Christianity will make a man a gentleman. Christ was courteous, even to His persecutors; and His true followers will manifest the same spirit."—*The Ministry of Healing,* page 489.

A Book 

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PERIODICAL DEPARTMENT

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING

December 23, 1967

Central European Division

During this quarter the thoughts of Sabbath School members around the world will be turned toward Germany, a country that represents the heart of Europe. At the turn of the century we had in many cities along the Rhine flourishing Adventist centers. However, these great churches were dispersed by the second world war, and many church members did not return. Most of the chapels were destroyed, and there were no church homes for them to return to.

The work is again flourishing in Germany, however, and today there are about 40,000 church members; but still church housing facilities are inadequate for these members. It is impossible to preach the message in an effective way with no places of meeting to which to bring new converts. Therefore, the overflow from the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help to build an evangelistic and welfare center in Hamburg, an evangelistic center and an old people's hospital at Uelzen, and a domestic building including a dining room for Marienhoehe College at Darmstadt. As you plan your Christmas giving, remember your brothers and sisters in Germany, not only that they may have suitable places in which to worship, but also because these places will help them to bring others into the truth.

Lessons for the First Quarter of 1968

Sabbath School members who have not received a senior *Lesson Quarterly* for the first quarter of 1968 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first lesson. The title of the series is "Studies in the Book of Acts, No. 2." The title of the first lesson is, "Paul's First Missionary Journey; Cyprus and Pisidia." The memory verse is Isaiah 60:3. The study helps are: *The Acts of the Apostles,* pages 160-176, and the *S.D.A. Bible Commentary.* The texts to be studied are:

Ques. 1. Acts 13:1.

Ques. 2. Acts 13:2.

Ques. 3. Acts 13:3, 4 (first part), 5 (last part).

Ques. 4. Acts 13:4 (last part), 5 (first part).

Ques. 5. Acts 13:5.

Ques. 6. Acts 13:7.

Ques. 7. Acts 13:6, 8-11.

Ques. 8. Acts 13:12.

Ques. 9. Acts 13:9.

Ques. 10. Acts 13:13.

Ques. 11. Acts 13:14, 16, 42.

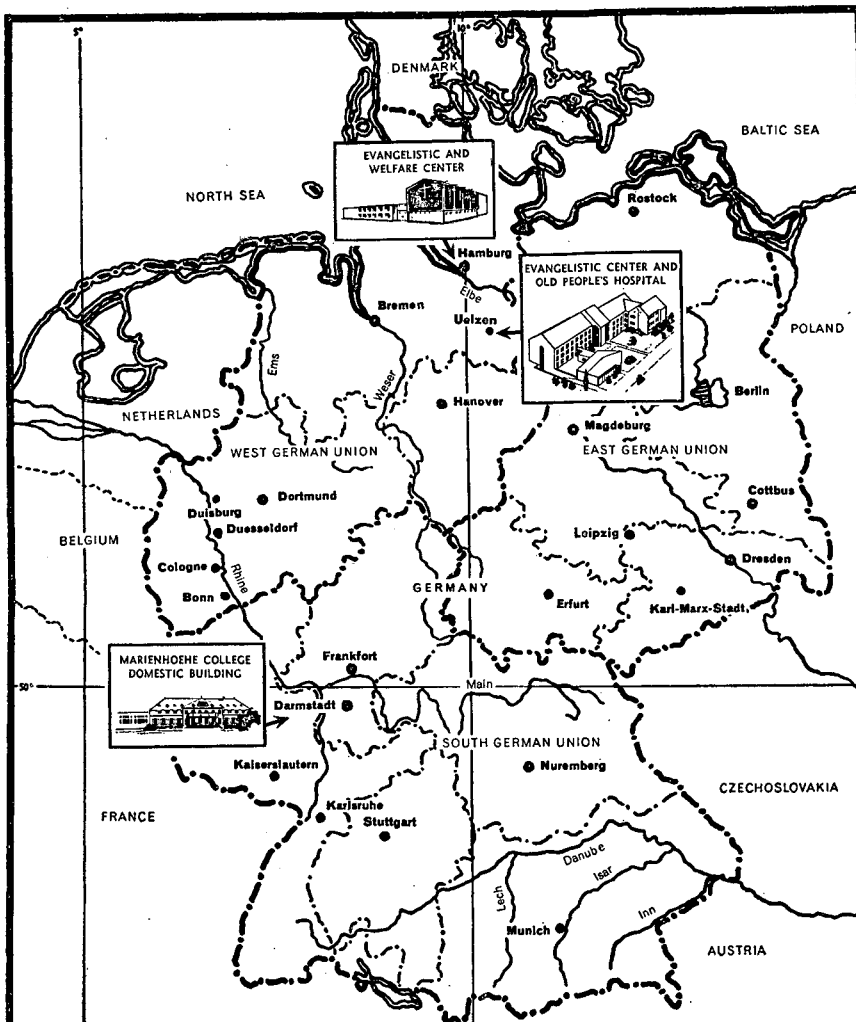
Ques. 12. Acts 13:22, 23, 27-37.

Ques. 13. Acts 13:38, 39.

Ques. 14. Acts 13:42, 44.

Ques. 15. Acts 13:45-50.

Ques. 16. Acts 13:46.



CENTRAL EUROPEAN DIVISION

Unions	Population	Churches	Church Memb.	Sab. Sch. Memb.
East German Union	18,403,800	344	13,054	14,666
Berlin West Conference	2,195,771	17	1,674	1,831
South German Union	28,373,235	246	13,023	15,408
West German Union	28,199,659	204	12,025	14,225
Totals	77,172,465	811	39,776	46,130