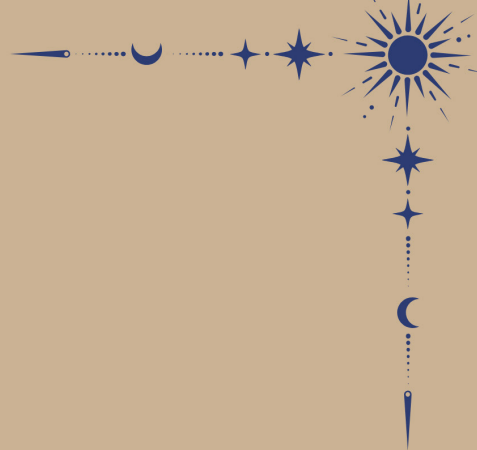


*i take this opportunity
write you a few lines to inquire
your health i hope you are in
lth i miss you very much
at i hope the time will
when you will be re
mily again for.*



ACTS

LIVING AS A SENT PEOPLE



SMALL GROUP STUDIES

small groups

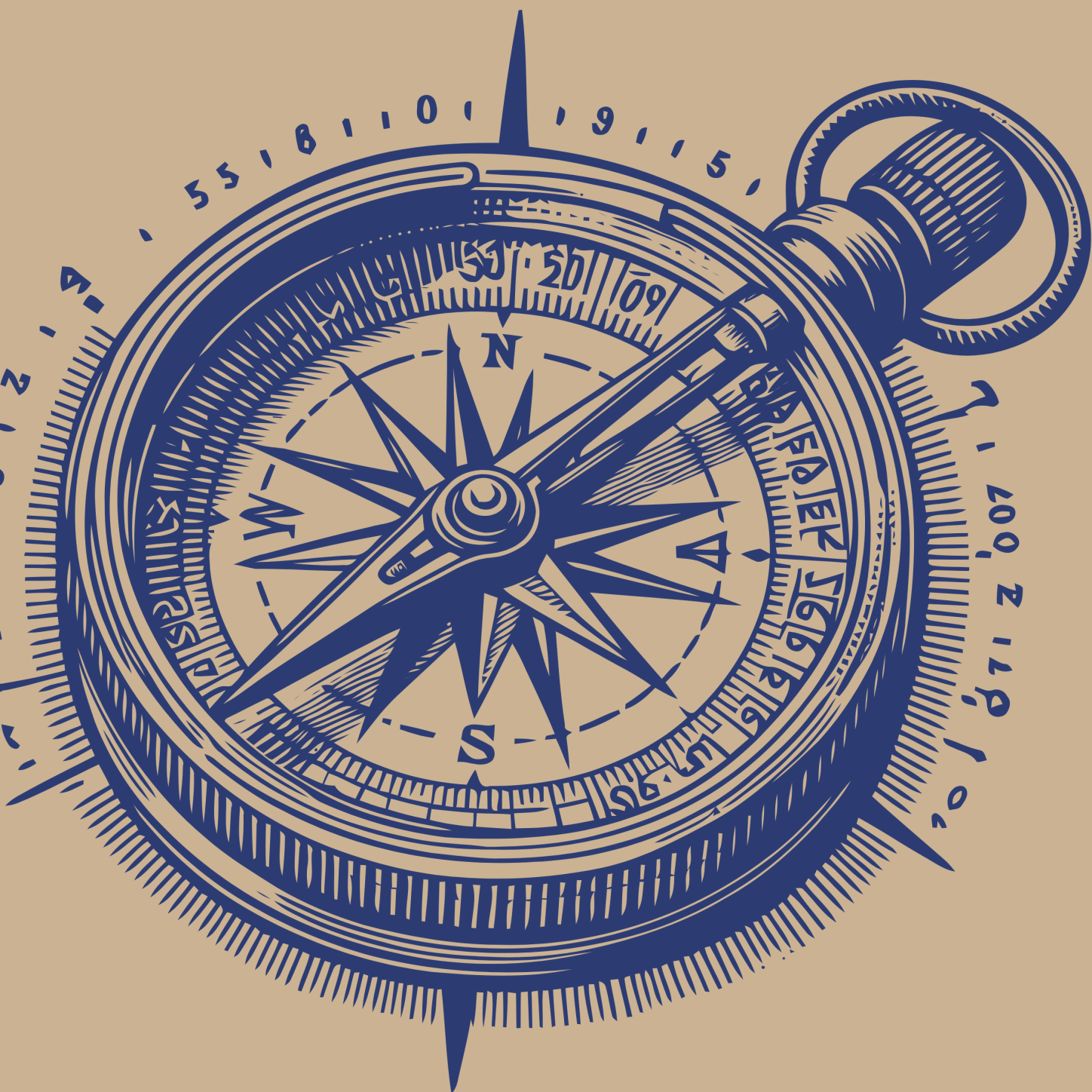
LIFE TOGETHER

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

ACTS 1:8

CONTENTS

- PG6** **STUDY ONE** - ACTS 1:1-14
- PG8** **STUDY TWO** - ACTS 2:1-21, 42-47
- PG10** **STUDY THREE** - ACTS 3:1-20
- PG12** **STUDY FOUR** - ACTS 6:1-7:1; 7:51-8:3
- PG14** **STUDY FIVE** - ACTS 8:4-40
- PG16** **STUDY SIX** - ACTS 9:1-22
- PG18** **STUDY SEVEN** - ACTS 11:19-30
- PG20** **STUDY EIGHT** - ACTS 4:32-37; 5:12-29
- PG22** **STUDY NINE** - ACTS 12:1-24



INTRODUCTION

Acts and Luke were originally one work, written to 'Theophilus', by Luke, a physician and companion of the apostle Paul. It is unknown whether Theophilus was a real person. Theophilus means: 'lover of God', so this may name may be symbolic of anyone reading the scriptures, as if Luke and Acts are dedicated to lovers of God.

The events of the book of Acts take place immediately after Jesus' ascension to heaven and outline the ministry of the apostles and the growing number of disciples as they lay foundations for the early church. It is where Christians are first mentioned in the scriptures as the church is established by those who are in Christ, which now includes Jews and the Gentiles. This series follows Acts from 1-12, ending right before Paul's three missionary journeys throughout the ancient world.

Acts 1-7 takes place amongst the growth of the early church within Jerusalem describing the ascension, Pentecost and the increasing reach of the preaching of the disciples. **Acts 8-12** outlines the spread of the Gospel outside of Jerusalem as the disciples minister to people in Judea, Samaria, the road to Gaza, Caesarea, Damascus, likely Arabia, Lydda, Joppa, Antioch, Phoenicia, Cyprus and Cyrene.

Acts was written to outline the story of how the foundations for the early church were laid after Jesus' death and resurrection and the ways in which God sends out his spirit after Jesus' ascension.

Acts depicts God's sovereignty over the way the disciples carry out their ministry and are guided by the spirit. The identity of Christ is explained further as we learn of his lordship, the way he fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and how he grants us salvation through faith. **Acts outlines how God works through the spirit and his reign over the kingdom of God over the church. The establishment of the early church places emphasis on the ideas of the church as one united group of people, an introduction to evangelism, the message of the gospel and persecution for the sake of the gospel.**

Each study in this series follows the journey of the early church in Acts and weaves in the missional heartbeat of St Paul's Castle Hill: Bring, Build, Send. We see Jesus sending his people with the power of the Spirit to bring others to him, build them up in community and truth, and send them again – just as we are sent.

STUDY ONE – ACTS 1:1–14

WAITING TO BE SENT

“The church’s mission begins not with action but with expectation. Obedience is seen in their waiting.”

Darrell Bock, *Acts* (BECNT)

OVERVIEW:

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to empower his disciples for mission, redirecting their focus from political hopes to gospel witness. As they wait in prayerful unity, they model how the church is built up before being sent out.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Share about a time you had to wait for something really important. What helped you stay hopeful?

What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

READ ACTS 1:1–14

1. What does Jesus promise in verses 4–5 and 8, and how does that shape the disciples’ expectations?

2. Why do the disciples ask about restoring the kingdom to Israel (v.6), and how does Jesus redirect them?

3. What’s the significance of Jesus’ ascension in vv.9–11?

4. How does the promise of the Spirit (v.8) connect to being 'sent'?

5. How do the disciples respond in vv.12–14, and what does that show about being prepared to be sent?

"Before they could witness, they must wait; before they could serve, they must be served; before they could go out into the world, Jesus must go up into heaven and the Spirit must come down."

John Stott, *The Message of Acts*

6. Why is prayer such a key part of their preparation?

7. How does this passage lay a foundation for a "Bring, Build, Send" movement?

TRANSFORMATION

What would it look like to prepare your heart, home, or group to be sent?

Where is God calling you to wait on him before stepping out?

STUDY TWO – ACTS 2:1–21, 42–47

THE SPIRIT SENDS A NEW COMMUNITY

“Here is the first Christian community – Spirit-filled, gospel-shaped, radically generous, and consistently growing. This is a missional people.”

David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Pillar)

OVERVIEW:

The Spirit’s arrival empowers the church for multilingual mission and unites them in teaching, generosity, worship, and growth. This Spirit-filled community is built up in love and sent daily to bring others to Jesus.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

What’s something you’ve seen that created a powerful ripple effect?

What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

READ ACTS 2:1–21

1. What signs accompany the Spirit’s arrival, and how do they point to a global mission? (vv.1–13)

2. How does Peter explain what is happening (vv.14–21)?

READ ACTS 2:42–47

3. What are the core commitments of the early church (vv.42–43)?

4. How does their generosity and life together reflect gospel Transformation (vv.44–45)?

5. How do joy and worship shape their daily lives (vv.46–47)?

6. What is the result of their life together in the Spirit (v.47)?

“The Spirit did not come just to create individual experiences but to form a new people devoted to the apostles’ teaching and the mission of God.”

Ajith Fernando, *Acts* (NIVAC)

7. How do we see “Bring, Build, Send” in this passage?

TRANSFORMATION

How could our church better reflect this kind of Spirit-empowered community?

Where are you seeing signs of people being sent and bringing others?

STUDY THREE – ACTS 3:1–20

A HEALING THAT SENDS THE GOSPEL FORWARD

“Peter gives the crowd more than a spectacle. He gives them Christ – and calls them to repent and receive refreshment from God.”

John Stott, *The Message of Acts*

OVERVIEW:

A miraculous healing leads to gospel proclamation, showing how acts of compassion can open doors to truth. Peter calls the crowd to repentance, bringing them to Jesus and sending them into new life.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Share about a time when someone’s compassion opened the door for a bigger conversation.

What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

READ ACTS 3:1–20

1. What do Peter and John encounter at the temple, and how do they respond (vv.1–7)?

2. What is the response of the man and the crowd (vv.8–11)?

3. How does Peter explain who Jesus is in vv.12–16?
4. How does Peter speak both truth and hope in vv.17–19?
5. What role does repentance play in this story of mission?
6. How is this event connected to God's wider plan through the prophets (vv.18–21)?
7. How does this moment model the rhythm of "Bring, Build, Send"?

TRANSFORMATION

Where is God giving you opportunity to speak the name of Jesus with compassion?

What would it look like to "bring" someone through gospel truth this week?

STUDY FOUR – ACTS 6:1–7:1; 7:51–8:3

SENT THROUGH SUFFERING

“The scattering of the church becomes the scattering of the seed. Persecution spreads the gospel.”

Ajith Fernando, *Acts* (NIVAC)

OVERVIEW:

As the church grows, leaders are raised up and the gospel spreads – even through persecution. Stephen’s bold witness and death mark a turning point, sending believers out to new regions with the message of Christ.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

When have you seen God use a hard situation to advance his work?

What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

READ ACTS 6:1–7:1; 7:51–8:3

1. What issue does the early church face in Acts 6, and how do they respond?
2. What do we learn about Stephen and his ministry in vv.8–10?
3. How does Stephen confront the religious leaders in 7:51–53?

4. What vision does Stephen have as he dies (vv.55–56)?

5. What is the impact of Stephen's death on the early church (8:1–3)?

“Stephen's speech is not a defence but a prophetic confrontation. It is a missionary moment wrapped in martyrdom.”

Craig Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*

6. How does this episode deepen our understanding of what it costs to be sent?

7. Where do you see “Bring, Build, Send” in this story?

TRANSFORMATION

What comfort or challenge do you draw from Stephen's example?

How can you prepare to be sent, even into hard places or situations?

STUDY FIVE – ACTS 8:4–40

THE GOSPEL CROSSES BORDERS

“Everywhere they went, the scattered believers gossiped the gospel. The mission advanced without a central strategy – just obedience to the Spirit.”

John Stott, *The Message of Acts*

OVERVIEW:

Scattered by persecution, believers continue bringing the gospel to Samaritans and a high-ranking Ethiopian official. The Spirit sends Philip to a divine appointment, showing that God’s mission includes every people and place.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Where have you seen the gospel move into unexpected places or groups?

What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

READ ACTS 8:4–40

1. What do scattered believers do after Stephen’s death (vv.4–8)?
2. How does Simon respond to the gospel (vv.9–24)?
3. How do Peter and John’s actions strengthen the church in Samaria?

4. What is the Spirit's role in sending Philip to the Ethiopian (vv.26–30)?
5. How does Philip bring the gospel to the Ethiopian, and what is the response (vv.31–38)?
6. Why is this Ethiopian's inclusion significant?
7. How do we see "Bring, Build, Send" in this chapter?



"God sends Philip not only to a person but to a people – this Ethiopian man becomes the firstfruits of Africa's response to the gospel."

Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People*

TRANSFORMATION

What border – cultural, relational, or spiritual – might God be sending you across?

Who are you walking with that God might be preparing to send?

STUDY SIX – ACTS 9:1–22

SENT BY GRACE

“The same grace that saves also commissions. Saul is turned from persecutor to proclaimer in the same breath.”

John Stott, *The Message of Acts*

OVERVIEW:

Jesus turns his fiercest enemy into his most passionate witness. Saul’s radical conversion shows how no one is beyond God’s grace and how being brought to Jesus leads immediately to being sent for Jesus.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

What was a low-stakes life-changing moment for you?
(e.g. Starbursts being discontinued, learning the book of Revelation has no “s” in its title)

What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

READ ACTS 9:1–22

1. How did God confront Saul?
2. If Paul knew the Lord was speaking to him, why did he ask who he was?
3. What was the purpose behind blinding Saul for three days?

4. What caused Saul to change his mind and lifestyle?

5. What was Saul's response to God calling him?

6. What did it mean for Saul to suffer for God's name?

"Conversion is not just a change of heart but a reorientation of purpose. God saves and sends."

Ajith Fernando, *Acts (NIVAC)*

TRANSFORMATION

Do you think your idea of who God is contradicts who the Bible says he is?

Can you recall God provoking a transformative experience in your life?
Was it a cause and effect?

What holds you back from suffering for God's name?

In your context, how might you find hope in the Lord and 'baffle' (v.22) those around you?

STUDY SEVEN– ACTS 11:19–30

SENT BEYOND BOUNDARIES

“The church at Antioch becomes the model for all mission-minded churches: diverse, gospel-shaped, and ready to send.”

David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles (Pillar)*

OVERVIEW:

The gospel spreads beyond Jerusalem not through strategy, but through scattered, faithful believers. At Antioch, a new kind of church emerges—cross-cultural, generous, Spirit-led, and ready to send others.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Can you think of a place where you have felt really welcomed?

What were your reflections leaving this place?

What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

READ ACTS 11:19–30

1. Who are Barnabus and Paul preaching to in this passage? Who would be the modern-day equivalent?

2. How did Barnabus respond to God’s work amongst the nations?

3. What was Barnabus’ attitude to encouraging new believers in v.23–24?

4. How do the disciples respond to prophets led by the spirit?

5. Why might Antioch have been the first place to call believers Christians? (Verse 26)

6. How does this church embody “Bring, Build, Send”?

“God works through ordinary believers scattered by hardship. Mission is not postponed by suffering – it is often born from it.”

Darrell Bock, *Acts (BECNT)*

TRANSFORMATION

Have you ever felt like an outsider amongst Christians?

How can we be more inclusive and welcoming with new Christians, unfamiliar with the idea of a church family?

The church in Antioch didn’t wait for the famine to arrive before acting. How can we be diligent in acting for our church family?

What does it look like for you to remain faithful to the lord in your life?

STUDY EIGHT – ACTS 4:32–37; 5:12–29

SENT TO SPEAK BOLDLY

“The apostles are not trying to preserve themselves but to proclaim the resurrection. The church is bold because they know whom they serve.”

David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles (Pillar)*

OVERVIEW:

Radical generosity and gospel power mark the early church, but opposition soon follows. Despite threats, the apostles are built up by God’s presence and sent back into public witness, declaring that obedience to God comes first.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

What stops people from speaking about Jesus openly?
What helps them do it?

What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

READ ACTS 4:32–37; 5:12–29

1. What do we learn about the early church’s generosity in 4:32–37?
2. How do Barnabas’ actions model gospel-shaped living?
3. How does God continue to work powerfully through the apostles in 5:12–16?

4. Why are the religious leaders threatened, and what do they do (vv.17–18)?

5. What is surprising about the angel's command in vv.19–20?

6. How do the apostles respond when questioned by the authorities (vv.27–29)?

7. Where do we see the rhythm of “Bring, Build, Send” in this passage?

“We must obey God rather than men. That is not just an act of defiance but a declaration of allegiance.”

Ajith Fernando, Acts (NIVAC)

TRANSFORMATION

What would boldness look like for you this week?

How can we help each other be built up for courageous witness?

STUDY NINE – ACTS 12:1–24

SENT UNDER SOVEREIGNTY

“The final word is not Herod’s sword but God’s Word. The church is always safest in the hands of its sovereign Lord.”

John Stott, *The Message of Acts*

OVERVIEW:

In the face of violent persecution, the church turns to prayer and sees God miraculously rescue Peter. Herod’s downfall and the gospel’s unstoppable advance affirm that those sent by God can trust fully in his power and plan.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

Have you ever seen God work powerfully when things seemed darkest?

What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon?

READ ACTS 12:1–24

1. What does Herod do to the church, and how does the church respond (vv.1–5)?
2. How does God answer their prayer in vv.6–11?
3. How do the believers react to Peter’s escape (vv.12–17)?

4. What happens to Herod in vv.20–23, and what does this say about opposing God's mission?

5. What does v.24 say about the outcome of these events?

6. What roles do prayer, mission, and God's intervention play in this story?

7. How does this chapter reinforce the "Send" part of our mission?

"Herod's death contrasts with Peter's deliverance: God may not save every life, but He never lets His mission fail."

Craig Keener, Acts: An Exegetical Commentary

TRANSFORMATION

What would it look like to live as though God's mission truly can't be stopped?

How can you support others who are sent – whether near or far?

