

Proverbs 8, Micah 2-7, Nahum 1 (#123)

Proverbs 8— *What are the benefits and blessings that accompany wisdom that will make our lives more successful? See verses 12-21.*

Micah 2— The wicked plan evil in bed and when they get up in the morning, they go out and seize the fields and the houses of the poor to satisfy their lust for more. God is planning disaster on these people who walk about proudly. The rich who do such things will come to ruin and all that they have will be taken by others (vv. 1-5). The people do not want to hear of God's judgment, but they continue to do evil by even stealing the robes of the poor and forcing them out of their homes. They love and accept any prophet who will tell them lies and who agrees with their wicked lifestyle (vv. 6-11). The Shepherd-King will lead the righteous remnant back to their land. Once again the land will be filled with the joyful noise of people (vv. 12-13).

Micah 3— The prophet gives three oracles proclaiming judgment on the civil leaders and prophets of Israel and Judah because of their wicked actions. The civil leaders act unjustly, hate good, love evil, and exploit the people mercilessly for material advantage. On the day of God's vengeance they will cry out for mercy but God will turn His face away from them (vv. 1-4). The prophets proclaim the blessings of peace for a price, but curse those who won't pay them. Their visions will be turned to darkness, their mouths will be shut, and their seers will be ashamed because they will receive no messages from God (vv. 5-7). The heads of Israel abhor justice, build Jerusalem on bloodshed, and pervert everything that is right. The priests and prophets are all about monetary gain, but proclaim that the Lord is with them and therefore no disaster will come their way (vv. 8-11). The reality is that "Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets (v. 12 NIV)." *What were the sins of the rich (2:1-2), the civil leaders (3:1-3, 9-11), and the prophets (3:5) in these two chapters? Do we see these sins in your city and country?*

Micah 4— Right in the middle of condemning Israel and Judah for their sins, the prophet is comforting the remnant with a hope that in the last days "the mountain of the Lord's house will be established" in future Israel when the nations of the world will stream into it. The nations of the world will come to Jerusalem to be taught the ways of the Lord. There will be universal peace and prosperity because the Messiah will be ruling from Mount Zion (vv. 1-8). Going back to the near future, Micah looks to the time Judah will have no king and will be carried off to Babylon, but where they will eventually be rescued and return to their land. Verses 11 to 13 seem to return to the last days and the battle of Armageddon (Zechariah 14) when Israel will be delivered (vv. 9-13). *What will be some of the changes in the future Millennial Kingdom that will make it different from our present world? See verses 3-8.*

Micah 5— The author begins the chapter by talking about Babylon's attack on Jerusalem in 586 B.C. with the last king of Judah in David's line, Zedekiah, being captured (v. 1). Now, Micah brings to the forefront the next king from the line of David that is to come on the scene. This king is the Messiah, who will be born in Bethlehem. Although there will be an interval of time between the first and second advent of the Messiah, Israel will once again return

to Yahweh and will live securely with their Messiah. He will be their peace and extend His greatness to the ends of the earth. In those last days, the remnant of Jacob will be like a lion of the forest and will triumph over their enemies by the power of the Lord. In that kingdom age, there will be no need for instruments of war (horses and chariots) or protective walls to defend cities. Idolatry and false religions will be demolished and all nations who will not obey will be destroyed. What great mystery and miracle seems to be revealed by Micah in verse 2? See also Isaiah 9:6.

Micah 6— Yahweh brings a lawsuit against the people of Israel and makes His case charging them with their forgetfulness of His goodness to them from the time of their rescue from Egypt, and includes all His other righteous acts throughout the centuries. God’s primary concern for Israel is not in bringing sacrifices, but in living justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with their God (vv. 1-8). However, Israel did the very opposite. They lived unjustly and without mercy by deceptive weights, lies, violence, and deceitfulness. Since they chose to walk in defiance to God (not humbly in obedience), they will never find satisfaction in the acquisition of material things, or in the enjoyment of food and drink. The Lord will bring Israel to complete desolation and ruin because of their sins. *What does the Lord require of you? Expound on the deeper message of verse 8 of acting justly, loving kindness and mercy, and walking humbly with our God as it relates to the way the Israelites were actually living, but at the same time thinking that God was pleased with them.*

Micah 7— Although Micah begins the chapter describing the great spiritual decline in Israel, he ends the chapter and book on a note of hope. Observing the moral decadence of the nation, Micah says that one cannot find a godly person, but that everyone is out for another person’s blood, and the officials and judges demand a bribe. People cannot rely on each other and family members oppose one another. Micah, however, looked to the Lord and waited on Him to save him (vv. 1-7). Even though God will judge His people, it won’t be completely over for them. As they patiently bear up under the punishment for their rebellion, the day will come when the walls are rebuilt and their boundary will be extended. Then the Messiah will shepherd His people and do mighty miracles for them during the millennial reign. Who can compare with our faithful God who completely removes our iniquity and casts our sins into the depths of the sea? Yahweh will show His faithful love He had promised in His covenant to Jacob and Abraham in days long ago (vv. 8-20). *What was Micah’s view of the Lord? See verses 18 to 20.*

Nahum— This book is written by Nahum (meaning “comfort”) about 650 B.C. He prophesies against Nineveh (Assyria) for their idolatry, immorality, injustice, cruelty, and other wickedness. This book gives comfort to Judah who had been greatly oppressed by them. Nahum is one of three prophetic books that were written solely to pronounce God’s judgment on a nation other than Judah and Israel. Hearing Jonah’s prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh, judgment of the king and people of Nineveh was averted because of their repentance. Nahum’s message was given to announce the total annihilation of Nineveh. The book of Obadiah pronounces doom on Edom.

Nahum 1— From the beginning, Nahum says this book is an oracle concerning Nineveh, and then describes Yahweh as a jealous and avenging God who is slow to anger, and will never leave the guilty unpunished. The Lord is awesome in His power to dry up the sea, to make the mountains quake, and to make the earth tremble at His presence (vv. 1-6). Nahum assures those who take their refuge in Yahweh that they will find Him to be good, and a fortress in a day of distress, but He will completely annihilate Nineveh with an overwhelming flood. The Lord's pronouncement is this: though Assyria is strong and numerous they will be mowed down, never to rise again. All of the carved images will be destroyed and God will prepare their graves because these people are despicable. Now Judah can celebrate the good news because this evil nation will never again invade their land.

Verse 2 describes the attributes of God as jealous, vengeful, and wrathful. Should these attributes characterize God? Why?

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV, 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion c.2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook. 9. Key Ideas Bible Handbook, Ron Rhodes, c. 2016, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR. 10. 500 Questions & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Homan Bible Handbook, c.1992, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL. 13. Life Essentials Study Bible, c. 2011, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 14. The Message, c. 2002, Eugene Peterson, NavPress Publishing Group, Colorado Springs, CO. 15. NIV Study Bible, c. 2011, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI. 16. Understanding the Bible, c.2000, Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN.

Proverbs 9, Nahum 2-3, Habakkuk 1-3, Zephaniah 1 (#124)

Proverbs 9— *What are the reactions and effects of dealing with a mocker, a wicked man, and a wise man? See verses 7-9.*

Nahum 2— The watchmen on the walls of Nineveh give commands to be prepared for the advancing army. The shields of the Babylonian warriors are dyed red, and their valiant men are dressed in scarlet. The enemy chariots rush madly through the streets as the Assyrian army tries to stem the tide of this great invasion. The river gates are opened on Nineveh, the streets are flooded, and the palace of the king is demolished. The city is being stripped and plundered just like Assyrians had done to others for the previous 300 years, but now it is payback time for all the savagery and wickedness they had done. The Assyrian lion who had always returned from the hunt with plunder and fresh meat has now been mauled and buried to rise no more. “I am your enemy” declares the Lord of Hosts. *Why is the prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh such a startling and important thing?*

Nahum 3— The third chapter is much like the second chapter but is more vivid in its description of blood and death. Nineveh not only was known for its horrendous atrocities, but for its treachery in seducing nations with false friendship and then turning on them and destroying them like they had done with Thebes of Egypt 50 years earlier. Nahum taunts Nineveh to prepare themselves for such devastation that it will be like a plague of locust stripping clean everything in its path. This once great city will be wiped clean with absolutely nothing left but dead bodies and raised buildings. Now Nahum joins Jonah by ending his book with another rhetorical question about Nineveh. “Everyone who hears the news about you claps his hands at your fall, for who has not felt your endless cruelty (v. 19b NIV)?” *After reading this book, we see that it is not only a prophecy about Nineveh, but also a prophecy of every country that refuses to follow the Lord. David said, “When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do (Psalm 11:3 NIV)?” Even as we see the devastation that is beginning to happen to our country due to the chipping away of our spiritual foundations, what can we do to postpone and prepare others for God’s coming judgment?*

Habakkuk— Written between 609 B.C. and 589 B.C. by a prophet of whom we have no more information than what we can glean from his book, Habakkuk’s writing was not that of a prophet speaking for God to man, but one who is speaking to God for man. Babylon had become dominant on the world scene after the defeat of Assyria, and Judah returned to its previous evil lifestyle after the death of King Josiah in 609 B.C. The most famous verse from this book is “the just shall live by his faith (2:4).” The prophet is filled with questions about what God is doing,

and God answers in ways that seem astonishing to him. The author responds in worship and awe at God's power, supremacy, and sovereignty.

Habakkuk 1— The author is seeking wisdom to understand the ways of God. After the death of Josiah, Habakkuk was saddened by the violence, corruption, and injustice of Judah and wondered why God tolerated it (vv. 1-4). God answers that He indeed sees all of the evil that is taking place in Judah, and so He is raising up the powerful, terrifying, and unrighteous Chaldeans (Babylonians) to punish Judah for their sins. Habakkuk can hardly believe what he hears. He says to God, "Are not you the Holy One whose eyes are too pure to look on evil? Why would you tolerate those who are extremely wicked and treacherous to punish those who are far more righteous than they are (paraphrased)?" *Habakkuk said, "How long, Lord, must I call for help and You do not listen (v. 2a HCSB)?" Was God ignoring Habakkuk's prayer? What can we do when it seems He is?*

Habakkuk 2— The author becomes a watchman on his watchtower who waits expectantly for the way the Lord would answer him. The Lord assures him that though His judgment may be delayed, it will certainly come right on time. Then the Lord gives a major guiding principle when He says, "the righteous shall live by his faith (v. 4b NIV)." When the world seems to be in such chaos, by faith we know God is sovereign and in full control, and in the proper time righteousness will prevail. Habakkuk receives insight from Yahweh directly on how He methodically works to bring judgment on the wicked and justice to the righteous. God gives five "woe" oracles in this chapter describing the sins of five different classes of evil doers, and ends with the judgment that those five groups will receive for their transgressions. To answer Habakkuk's question, God says that there will be a time when Babylon will be judged for its wickedness. *What does it mean to live by faith?*

Habakkuk 3— Now the prophet turns to prayer and praise in order to remember God's mighty deeds. He asks the Lord to do what He said He would do to discipline the people of Judah at the hands of the Chaldeans, but in His wrath to remember mercy (vv. 1-2). Habakkuk recounts Yahweh's marvelous deeds in saving Israel from the tyranny of Egypt 800 years earlier, and then uses various descriptions of the Lord's awesome power on behalf of Israel. God led His people with a mighty hand to victory from Mount Paran (Sinai) through the desert and into the Promised Land. Habakkuk now quietly waits for the day of distress that surely will come upon his own people because of their evil deeds at the hands of the Chaldeans. The failure of their crops and the death of their animals would come, but he knew he could rejoice in the God of his salvation since Yahweh's strength was available to overcome all circumstances. Knowing the fact that God is in full control of the World, and that those who serve Him are the ultimate victors, enables us to run like a deer on precipitous mountain heights with Him. *The Chaldeans were about to come and destroy Jerusalem, demolish the temple, kill many, and carry thousands off*

to Babylon. How could Habakkuk say, “Yet I will triumph in Yahweh; I will rejoice in the God of my salvation (v. 19 HCSB)?” What was the Apostle Paul’s reaction and advice when he was in jail in Rome? See Philippians 4:4-7.

Zephaniah— The author, Zephaniah, was a descendent of the godly King Hezekiah and was instrumental in the revival of Judah under King Josiah in 621 B.C. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah and Habakkuk. Zephaniah denounced the sins of idolatry, materialism, and greed in Judah, and was jealous for the Lord’s reputation as well as for the well-being of the faithful remnant that walked in God’s ways. Zephaniah announces the Day of the Lord when righteous Yahweh must judge wicked Judah because of its rejection of His authority and laws. He also declares judgment on the surrounding nations including Philistia, Moab, and Assyria for their wickedness and for their opposition to Israel. Although the book is a dark proclamation of the Day of the Lord, Zephaniah finishes his writing by prophesying the final restoration of God’s people and the coming of the Messiah.

Zephaniah 1— The prophet announces the dreadful day of the Lord’s wrath that “will completely sweep away everything from the face of the earth (v. 2 HCSB).” This chapter is mostly a judgment on Judah for Baal worship and idolatry. Yahweh will search Jerusalem with lamps to assure that no evil doer will go unpunished. The day of reckoning will also come on their priests, leaders, officials, and the king’s sons who are complacent in their sins and think the Lord will do nothing to them, either good or bad. Verses 14 to 18 seem to describe both the near fulfillment of the Lord’s retribution on Jerusalem and Judah at the hands of the Babylonians, and the far fulfillment in the last days when the whole earth will be consumed on the day of the Lord’s wrath. *Verses 15 and 18 seem to be speaking of the day of the Lord’s wrath that will happen during the Great Tribulation that will come upon the whole earth. Will Christians be able to escape the Great Tribulation in which the **wrath of God** is poured out on the people of the earth as it says in verses 15 and 18 as well as Revelation 6:15-17? If so, how will they escape it? See I Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18, and 5:1-9.*

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Proverbs 10, Zephaniah 2-3, Haggai 1-2, Lamentations 1-2 (#125)

Proverbs 10— Give 7 statements found in this chapter that describe the blessings on those who live a righteous life.

Zephaniah 2— Zephaniah now gives a solemn warning to all who do not want to experience the burning anger of the Lord on the day of His reckoning. He cries out, “Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord’s anger (v. 3b NIV).” Even though judgment is certain to come in the near future, hope is given that God will protect the righteous. Verses 4 to 15 turn the focus on the judgment of the nations that surround Judah from west (Philistia, verses 4-7) to east (Moab and Ammon, verses 8-11), and from south (Cushites, verse 12) to north (Assyria, verses 13-15). In time, after suffering God’s discipline, the Lord their God will return to the remnant of Judah and restore their fortunes. *The prophet warns Judah about the clouds and distress that are coming due to her sin. What hope was there for them at that time and for us today when we clearly see the warning signs of God’s coming judgment? See verse 3.*

Zephaniah 3— The prophet returns to the theme of God’s judgment on Judah and Jerusalem because of her rebellion, oppression, and disobedience. All of the leaders including the princes, judges, prophets, and priests were motivated by self-interest and did not fear the Lord, but actually became more corrupt and evil than before. Zephaniah encourages the righteous to wait on the Lord because He will judge the nations and consume the whole earth (vv. 1-8). Then the Lord will restore the people’s speech so it will be cleansed from all pride and deceitfulness. Only the humble and meek will be left, and they will live in safety with nothing to make them afraid. During this Kingdom Age, the King of Israel, Yahweh, will delight to live among His people and they will respond with joyful songs and great gladness. *What promises does the Lord give to Israel in verse 20? See also Ezekiel 37:11-14.*

Haggai— About 80 years have passed between the ministries of Zephaniah and Haggai, and now in 520 B.C. both Haggai and Zechariah prophecy to the Jews that have returned to Jerusalem from their exile in Babylon in order to encourage them to finish the rebuilding of the temple that they had begun 16 years earlier. From the time they returned from Babylon in 536 B.C. to Jerusalem, their intentions were to rebuild the temple immediately. The work on the temple had been stopped because of the opposition and intimidation of the surrounding people. After 16 years they had lost their desire to finish the temple and were more interested in their own houses and

estates. Although the lineage and the hometown of Haggai is unknown, Ezra says that he was successful in calling the citizens to repentance and action (Ezra 6:14).

Haggai 1— Haggai prophesied to Zerubbabel, the governor, and to Joshua, the high priest, that the time had come to complete the temple in Jerusalem. He asks a revealing question to the people. “Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins (v. 4 ESV)?” Although God’s temple was in ruins, the homes of the people were finished and trimmed in fine cedar thus showing their misplaced priorities. Haggai challenged the people to think carefully how they were really doing financially and materially. Because of ignoring Him, the Lord was withholding many blessings including bountiful harvests, warm cloths, and good wages. Unlike the people of Judah before the deportation to Babylon, the entire remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord and feared God. The Lord stirred up the hearts of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and all the people, and they began again the work on the temple (September 15, 520 B.C.). *“And he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes (v. 6c NKJV).”* *When have you seen financial famine where you put your wages into a bag with holes in it? How has God spoken to you about your financial priorities and spending habits? #1 p.1218* *What was the command of Jesus about laying up treasures on earth? See Matthew 6:19-21.*

Haggai 2— The prophet gathers Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the remnant of the people to declare that although Solomon’s temple was magnificent, the final glory of the temple they are building will surpass it in grandeur. The Lord encourages them to be strong and promises them His presence. As with other prophets, he speaks of the future millennial reign of the Messiah when His glory will fill the temple, and He will provide peace (vv. 1-9). Haggai prophesies two months latter (December 18, 520 B.C.) that although the people were bringing offerings and sacrifices, their disobedience in not building the temple has caused them to be defiled and sinful. Now on this day as they are laying the foundation of the temple, Yahweh in His grace promises that from this day on, because of their obedience in building the temple, God will give them a bountiful harvests (vv. 10-19). On this same day Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, was affirmed as the person who represents the Davidic line of the Messiah that was interrupted by the rejection of his grandfather Jehoiachin (Jeremiah 22:24). *In what way were Zerubbabel and his father Shealtiel significant in the line of Christ? See Matthew 1:12-13 and Luke 3:27.*

Lamentations— Soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., Jeremiah writes this book lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians with the people of Judah being killed, tortured, and thousands taken captive to Babylon. Each of the first four chapters is written as an acrostic poem, with the first word of each verse beginning with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet (like Psalms 119 and 145). Jeremiah clearly states that because of the sins of the people this devastation has come, but also gives rays of hope for the future and acknowledges God’s faithfulness and love.

Lamentations 1— The people of Jerusalem are in stunned disbelief that their most beloved city and the temple where Yahweh dwelt are completely destroyed. They were God’s chosen people, and this temple was Lord’s only

dwelling place in all of the earth. So they thought it was impossible that God would allow this to happen even though He had sent many prophets to warn of His terrible judgment on His people for their transgressions. Like a widow losing all her children, everything including material goods, family members, leaders, and homes are gone. This once bustling city full of song, joy, and sounds of commerce is now silent, and no one is there to help or give comfort. The wicked Chaldeans have done all manner of torture and atrocities against them, and their allies have turned against them and rejoiced in their demise. In anguish they cry, “Look at all their evil deeds, Lord. Punish them, as you have punished me for all my sins. My groans are many and I am sick at heart (v.22 NLT).”

In what ways is the Lord warning your nation about its sinfulness? What can we do to help avert God’s judgment?

Lamentations 2— The righteous anger of God was poured out on His people without compassion for their continual rebellion, stubbornness, and idolatry over many years. Jeremiah cries out, “My eyes are worn out from weeping; I am churning within. My heart is poured out in grief because of the destruction of my dear people (v.11 HCSB).” The children died in the arms of their mothers, the young men and women have fallen by the sword, and no one has survived because the people would not repent at the hearing of God’s prophets but instead willfully and gladly accepted the empty and deceptive visions of the false prophets. What can be done? The prophet says, “Pour out your heart like water before the Lord’s presence. Lift up your hands to Him for the lives of your children (v. 19 HCSB).” *Why does God allow innocent children to suffer? #7 p.1179*

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Proverbs 11, Lamentations 3-5, Acts 1-3 (#126)

Proverbs 11— *What advice do we find in the book of Proverbs about the wise use and abuse of money from the following verses? 1. 11:24-25, 2. 22:26-27, 3. 17:23, 4. 19:17, 5. 21:20, and 6. 22:7.*

Lamentations 3— Although Jeremiah had preached God’s coming judgment on his people for forty years, when it finally did come, he grieved greatly under the weight of unbearable suffering and affliction that his people received from the rod of the Lord’s anger (vv. 1-21). Jeremiah expresses hope with the fact that God has not totally destroyed or abandoned His nation, and that He is merciful and faithful to those who truly repent, wait on Him, and seek Him. The Lord has disciplined His people for their sins but does not enjoy bringing affliction or suffering, and will not reject them forever. Jeremiah says, “Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord...We have transgressed and rebelled (vv. 40, 42 ESV).” Now the author asks for vengeance on their enemies who mercilessly abused and destroyed them. “Pay them back what they deserve, O Lord, for what their hands have done (v. 64 NIV).” *Read verses 22 to 23 that ends with the famous words, “Great is Your faithfulness.” Recount in a paragraph the mercies and faithfulness of God in your life during the last month, the last year, and over your lifetime.*

Lamentations 4— In this chapter there are contrasts between the condition of the people before and after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. The once precious people worth their weight in gold are now treated as clay pots that can be shattered to pieces. Those who lived in the city of Sodom were better off because they were destroyed in an instant and didn’t have to suffer a famine or the atrocities of war. Why did all this befall God’s chosen people? This evil happened due to the sins of the prophets who told lies, because of the priests who shed the blood of the righteous, and on account of the people’s misguided trust in the protection of the king. In time God’s punishment on Judah will be finished, and they will return from exile, but Edom’s punishment will just be beginning. *How are the leaders of a nation accountable for the sins of the people? #7 p.1185*

Lamentations 5— Jeremiah represents all of the people as he asks Yahweh for mercy and to restore His people to a relationship with Himself. From verses 2 to 18 he lists a series of woes that the people have suffered at the hands

of the Chaldeans due to Judah's sins. The people have become orphans, fatherless, or widows who lack the basic necessities of life while their women, princes, elders, and young men have endured horrible atrocities and feel completely abandoned by God. Jeremiah recognizes the enthroned Lord who endures from generation to generation. He pleads, "Restore us to Yourself, O Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old (v. 21 NIV)." *What attribute of God is displayed in verse 19? Why is that significant?*

Acts— Luke wrote the book of Acts to Theophilus as a sequel to the Gospel of Luke and gives the history of the birth of the church from approximately 30 A.D. to Paul's first imprisonment in Rome at about 62 A.D. when the book was written. The book begins with Christ's commission to His Apostles and His ascension to Heaven from the Mount of Olives. Acts 1:8 is the key verse of the book highlighting the importance of the Holy Spirit in the witness of believers to the world as well as in the direction and growth of the Church. Verse 8 gives the timeline of the book from Jerusalem and all Judea (chapters 1-7), to Samaria (Chapter 8), and to the ends of the earth (chapters 9-28). The main characters in the book of Acts are Peter (chapters 1-12) and Paul (chapters 9-28). Luke was a Gentile doctor who accompanied Paul on many of his journeys, wrote this historical narrative in polished Greek, and thoroughly researched every detail to provide a meticulous accuracy of people, places, and events. The real title of the book should be the "Acts of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1— Although Matthew and Mark gave the Great Commission at the end of their books, Luke gave the Great Commission at the beginning of the book of Acts instead of the end of his gospel. The Apostles ask the burning question that any Jewish Christian would have asked after His resurrection. "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel (v. 6 ESV)?" Christ didn't deny that there was a future kingdom for Israel, but made it clear that the business at hand was to be His witnesses and take the gospel to the whole world through the leadership and power of the Holy Spirit. After the ascension of Christ to heaven, the apostles returned from the Mount of Olives to the upper room in Jerusalem to wait for the coming of the promised Holy Spirit. During the next ten days the 120 persons spent much time in united prayer to prepare their hearts to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit so that they would be equipped for the task of world evangelism. One item of business to be done was to choose someone to take the place of Judas as a part of the Twelve Apostles. Matthias was chosen. *While here on earth, we are called to be His witnesses in our Jerusalem. Give names of specific people at your work, in your neighborhood, ministry, and family who you are (or should be) praying for, and whom God has put on your heart to share the gospel. Extra Question: As Jesus ascended to Heaven from the Mount of Olives, two men in white clothing (angels) said that this same Jesus would come again in the same way they saw Him go to heaven. When will Christ return from heaven back to the Mount of Olives? See Zechariah 14:3-9.*

Acts 2— The day of Pentecost (also called Feast of weeks) was held in Jerusalem 50 days after the Passover where thousands of Jews came from all over the Roman Empire to celebrate this festival of thanksgiving to God for the harvested crops. On this day the greatest harvest was that of new Christians who became a part of the Church, the Body of Christ. As the Holy Spirit empowered the 120 believers, they began to speak in the languages of people

who had gathered in Jerusalem from around the world. When the people were wondering what was happening, Peter stood up and clearly declared a message explaining that this day fulfilled Joel's prophecy where God would pour out His Spirit on all humanity. Peter then clearly presented the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and the need of repenting, believing, and being baptized. The original 120 now multiplies to 3000 in one day. A new community is born in which the apostles taught God's Word, the people shared their lives and possessions, and many were being added daily to the Church. *What evidence of the Holy Spirit's work can be observed in this chapter? What evidence of the Holy Spirit's work is seen in your life?*

Acts 3— In this chapter the Apostle Peter again takes the lead in preaching another gospel filled message energized by the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter demonstrates the power and authority of Jesus by healing a man who was lame from birth. The healing occurred when he and John were going to the temple complex to pray at 3:00 pm. As a large crowd gathered, Peter used this miraculous sign to declare a message to the Jews that Jesus was the promised Messiah spoken of by Moses and all the prophets. He pointed out that although they had killed the source of life, God had raised Him from the dead of which they were witnesses. If they would repent of their evil ways and turn in faith to Jesus as their Savior and Messiah, their sins would be wiped out. Then, at the appointed time, Jesus would return from Heaven to bring in seasons of refreshing, the restoration of all things, and establish His Kingdom. *What do verses 13 to 26 say about Jesus?*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV, 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion c.2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc. Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc. Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009, David C. Cook. 9. Key Ideas Bible Handbook, Ron Rhodes, c. 2016, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR. 10. 500 Questions & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006, Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Homan Bible Handbook, c.1992, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL. 13. Life Essentials Study Bible, c. 2011, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 14. The Message, c. 2002, Eugene Peterson, NavPress Publishing Group, Colorado Springs, CO. 15. NIV Study Bible, c. 2011, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI. 16. Understanding the Bible, c.2000, Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN.