

LESSON 1

SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE

ACTS INTRODUCTION



1 Give an example of something in your lifetime (trend, political movement, fad) that began very small but then grew rapidly and took the world by storm.

2 What factors caused it to have such a great influence?



Read the introduction to Acts, the chart “A Journey through the Book of Acts,” and the following notes:

☐ 1:1 ☐ 1:1ff

3 What did the disciples do when Jesus was arrested, tried, and crucified (Matthew 26:47–56, 69–75)?

4 In Acts we see the disciples as courageous witnesses for Christ. What changed them?

5 At first the church was limited to Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. By the end of Acts, the gospel had spread to most of the known world. What factors caused the church to grow so rapidly?

Jesus promised his followers they would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to spread the gospel around the world. Acts tells their story, documenting the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. How were these early believers able to make such a dramatic impact on their world? Fresh from the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, they spoke with holy boldness, taking every opportunity to tell of Christ on the street and in synagogues, homes, prisons, and courtrooms. These men and women were convinced of the truth because they had seen their risen Lord and were filled with the Holy Spirit. God's plan continues today, and he gives us opportunities to spread the Word. The Resurrection is real, and the Holy Spirit's power is available. What's stopping us?



6 How had God prepared the world for the rapid spread of the gospel?

7 How has God prepared our world for the spread of the gospel?



8 In what parts of the world are churches growing most rapidly? Why do you think this is so?

9 Where is your Jerusalem? Samaria? Ephesus? Rome?

10 How is your church working to take the gospel to those areas?



11 How does your church support missions and evangelism?

12 What barriers might be hindering your church's growth?

13 What is your place in God's plan? How can you work for the advancement of his Kingdom? (Here are some possibilities: pray, give financial support, help missionaries, reach neighbors, teach Sunday school, greet guests at church, volunteer for a church leadership position, etc.)

- A** What were some of the key turning points for the early church? What would it take to turn your church around?
- B** What social barriers did the gospel break down? What barriers in your church need to be removed?
- C** What did Peter and Paul have in common? How were they different? How did God use each one uniquely to spread the gospel? How might God use your unique abilities to tell others of Christ?

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