



THE BOOK OF

# ACTS

WITH  
PASTOR GARY HAMRICK



CORNERSTONE CHAPEL

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STUDY GUIDE

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**ACTS**

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**STUDY GUIDE**

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THE BOOK OF  
ACTS

LETTER FROM PASTOR GARY HAMRICK



The book of Acts, also known as the “Acts of the Apostles,” could really be called the “Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles” because of the incredible display of the Holy Spirit’s power, work, and ministry through the life of the Church. There are 28 chapters that record 30 miracles over a period of 31 years. And while the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John mention “love” more than 100 times, “love” is not found once in the book of Acts. The predominant theme in Acts is “power” (Gk. *dunamis*, from which we get the English word “dynamite”).

Over the centuries, the subject of the Holy Spirit has been somewhat controversial and divisive in some churches. Topics such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit have, unfortunately, caused great division in the body of Christ.

If you have come from a particular church background or tradition, you may have a preconceived idea on the subject of the Holy Spirit; however, my challenge and encouragement to you is that, through the study of this book, you ask the Lord for fresh eyes and a fresh heart, that you might read Scripture from the perspective of “what does the Bible say” and not “what does my tradition say”.

The book of Acts records for us the explosive beginnings of the Church through God’s outpouring of His Holy Spirit, and I pray that Jesus’ words will continue to encourage you in your walk with Him:

*“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).*

In Christ,

*Pastor Gary*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

- Writer: **Luke** (only Gentile writer of Scripture)
- **Written sometime ca. 60-69 A.D.**
- **Luke** was a physician and traveling companion of Paul
- **Acts and Gospel of Luke** both addressed to Theophilus
  - either Luke's "employer" (personal physicians were hired as slaves)
  - or a pseudonym for the Church (Theophilus in Gk: "lover of God")
- "Acts of the Apostles" *could really be called:*  
***"Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles"***
- The Book of Acts is a book about the Holy Spirit and the Church
  - **"Holy Spirit"** – 57x in Acts

### **1. The Holy Spirit is a real being – the 3rd person of the Trinity** [One God revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit]

- A. Jesus uses personal pronouns (John 14:16-17)
- B. He has all the attributes of personality
  - i) **Mind** (1 Cor. 2:11)
  - ii) **Will** (1 Cor. 12:11)
  - iii) **Emotion** (Eph. 4:30)

### **2. The Holy Spirit has always existed, being co-equal and co-eternal with God**

- A. He was there at Creation (Gen. 1:2)
- B. He empowered specific people in the Old Testament

C. He became available to all Believers at the time of Pentecost (Acts 2)

- The Book of Acts is a book about the Holy Spirit and the Church
  - **“church”** – 20x in Acts (*Greek: ekklesia* – “called out ones”)
- The **BIRTH** of the **CHURCH**
- The **GROWTH** of the **CHURCH** (numerically & spiritually)
- The **UNITY** of the **CHURCH** (“in one accord” – KJV)
- The **POWER** of the **CHURCH** (Gk. – *dunamis*, 12x in Acts)

## ACTS 1:1-11

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1. Jesus **REMAINS** on earth for 40 days after His resurrection
2. Jesus **REMINDS** His disciples about the Holy Spirit and their witness
3. Jesus **RETURNS** to heaven from earth

WEEK  
02

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ACTS 1:12-26

### WHERE WERE THEY?

the Upper Room in Jerusalem; perhaps the same Upper Room as the Last Supper

### WHO WERE THEY?

about 120 Believers: The Eleven Disciples, the women, Mary, the half brothers of Jesus, and other unnamed followers

## WHAT WERE THEY DOING?

praying and waiting for the Holy Spirit; choosing another apostle to replace Judas

**In Acts 2:16 Peter mentions the  
INERRANCY and INSPIRATION of Scripture:**

**INERRANCY** “the Scripture had to be fulfilled...”

**INSPIRATION** “which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David...”

## Qualifications of an Apostle

1. One who was an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord  
(Acts 1:22)
2. One who has the gift of miracles (2 Cor. 12:12)

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ACTS 2:1-13

## “PENTECOST”

Greek: *pentekoste* (“fiftieth”; this feast was **50 days** from the Sabbath after Passover)

Hebrew: *Chag Shavout* (“Feast of Weeks”)

## Historical significance of Pentecost

1. To commence the new grain harvest [wheat] - Lev. 23
2. To commemorate the giving of the LAW - Exod. 34:22

The **baptism of the Holy Spirit** is when the Holy Spirit comes upon you in power. This is a separate and distinct work from the *indwelling* of the Spirit at the time of salvation.

*John 20:22 | Acts 1:8 & Acts 2:4*

## Unique to that first Baptism of the Holy Spirit:

- (v.2) **Heard** sound like the blowing of a **violent wind** (*not an actual violent wind, only sounded like it*)
- (v.3) **Saw** what seemed to be **tongues of fire** coming to rest on each person (*not actual fire, only looked like it*)
- (v.4) First mention of one of the **gifts** of the Holy Spirit – **speaking in tongues**

## “speaking in tongues”

### 1. WHAT IT IS...

- **It is one of the gifts of the Spirit**  
(Acts 2:4, 1 Cor. 12:7-11)
- **It is a known language except to the person speaking**  
(Acts 2:6; 1 Cor. 14:13)
- **It is for the purpose of praise and prayer to God**  
(Acts 2:11; 1 Cor. 14:15-16)

### 2. WHAT IT IS NOT...

- **It is not for evangelizing the lost**
- **It is not for exercising in a public church setting, but rather for personal or small group settings**  
(1 Cor. 14:18-19; 14:23; 14:39-40)

- It is not *the* evidence, but *an* evidence for the baptism of the Holy Spirit; *The evidence is LOVE*

(1 Cor. 12:29-30; 1 Cor. 13)

### How do you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit? **You ask God and believe by faith.**

For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" **Luke 11:10-13 (NIV)**

WEEK  
04

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ACTS **2:17-18**

- **prophecies, visions, and dreams** must all be tested (1 John 4:1, 1 Thess. 5:19-21)
  - If it contradicts God's Word, reject it.
  - If it does **not** contradict God's Word, pray about it. (It may or may not be from the Lord.)

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ACTS **2:19-20**

- 2:19-20 **describe events related to the Tribulation** (Matt. 24:29, Luke 21:25, Rev. 6:12)
  - Jesus returns after the Tribulation (2:20)
  - It will be a time of great salvation (2:21)



- Peter preached the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- **REPENT**
  - “first word of the Gospel” (Matt. 3:2, 4:17, Acts 2:38)
  - Gk. **metanoeo**: *meta* – to change/ *noeo* – way of thinking
    - Repentance is having a change of mind about the path that you are on and turning from that and turning to God.
- **BE BAPTIZED** (water baptism) – repentance leads to action

WEEK  
05

ACTS **2:42**

## The Foundation of the Early Church

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to **prayer.**”  
(Acts 2:42 NIV)

1. Teaching the Word of God
2. Fellowship (*koinonia*)
  - corporate (“in the temple courts”, v.46a) and
  - small groups (“in their homes”, v.46b)
3. Communion
4. Prayer

ACTS **2:43-47**

### WHAT GOD DID:

- Performed miraculous signs and wonders (v.43)

- Added people to the church (v.47)
- Saved souls (v.47)

#### WHAT IT PRODUCED IN THE PEOPLE:

- The fear of God (“filled with awe”) (v. 43)
- Generosity toward others (v.45)
- Friendship among the Body (v.44,46)
- The worship of God (v.47)

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### ACTS 3:11-26

• Peter preached the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ

• **“REPENT”**

- Gk. metanoeo:

[meta - to change/ noeo - way of thinking]

- **Repentance** is having a change of mind about the path that you are on and **turning from** that and **turning to** God.

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### ACTS 3:19-20

#### The Results of Repentance:

- The LORD “wipes out” our sins (v.19a)
- The LORD brings “times of refreshing” (v.19b)
- The LORD comes into our lives (v.20)

WEEK

06

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### ACTS is a book about “FIRSTS”

**Ch.1** – first mention of the ascension of Jesus to Heaven

**Ch.2** – first time the Holy Spirit fell upon all Believers

**Ch.3** – first miracle of the Early Church

**Ch.4** – first opposition to the Early Church

**Ch.5** – first death by divine judgment in the Early Church

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## ACTS 4

The **SADDUCEES** were a Jewish religious sect.

-They did NOT believe in:

- angels
- resurrection from the dead
- miracles

**Acts 4:2, 10, 33**

The resurrection from the dead is central to the Gospel.

**John 11:23-26 • 1 Corinthians 15:12-22 • John 14:19**

**Acts 4:12**

Salvation through Jesus alone is an exclusive claim with an inclusive aim.

**John 14:6 • John 1:12 • Rev. 22:17**

**Acts 4:31**

The filling of the Holy Spirit is not a one-time event.

**Acts 2:4 & 4:31 • Ephesians 5:18**

WEEK  
07

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## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

**1 Cor. 12:8-10** [9 GIFTS]

- Word of Wisdom
- Word of Knowledge
- Faith
- Healing
- Miraculous Powers
- Prophecy/Exhortation
- Distinguishing between spirits
- Tongues
- Interpretation of Tongues

### **1 Cor. 12:28**

[We see 8 GIFTS, **4** are NEW:]

- Apostleship
- Teaching
- Helps
- Administration

### **Romans 12:6-8**

[We see 7 GIFTS, **5** are NEW:]

- Serving
- Encouraging
- Giving
- Leadership
- Mercy

### **Ephesians 4:11-13**

[We see 5 GIFTS, **2** are NEW:]

- Evangelism
- Pastor/Shepherding

## **20 SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN ALL**

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## **ACTS 5**

### **The “Fear of the Lord”...**

“... is the beginning of WISDOM.” (Ps. 111:10)

“... is the beginning of KNOWLEDGE.” (Prov. 1:7)

“... adds length to LIFE.” (Prov. 10:27)

“... helps a man avoid EVIL.” (Prov. 16:6)

“... brings WEALTH, HONOR, and LIFE.” (Prov. 22:4)

## the Deacon Ministry

### BORN OUT OF A DESIRE...

- to care for people who were being overlooked as the church grew (v.1); and
- to keep the ministry of the Word and prayer the priority of the church (v.2,4)

### ORIGINALLY...

- **seven men** (6:3)
- **full of the Spirit and wisdom** (6:3)

### LATER...

- **included women** (Rom. 16:1)
- **12 qualifications** (1 Tim. 3:8-13)

*The result of delegating ministry...*

#### **Acts 6:7**

1. The GOSPEL SPREAD
2. The CHURCH GREW
3. PEOPLE got SAVED

## SANHEDRIN

(“sun” – together | “hedra” – seat)

- A Jewish Ruling Council of men “seated together”
- Modeled after the 70 elders Moses appointed to help administrate Israel (Exodus 18)
- 70 men + the high priest who presided over the meetings (71 men in all)

### Stephen’s speech recaps 1100 years of Jewish history

- **Acts 7:2-19** It’s not about a **PATRIARCH**  
(Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, 12 sons of Jacob)
- **Acts 7:20-43** It’s not about a **PROPHET** (Moses)
- **Acts 7:44-50** It’s not about a **PLACE**  
(the Tabernacle/Temple)

**Acts 7:51-53**

***It’s about a PERSON... JESUS CHRIST!***

- At the end of Ch.7 we were introduced to SAUL (7:58) who was complicit in the murder of Stephen
- After his conversion, Saul becomes known as “PAUL” (ch.13 and on) in order to reach the Gentiles
- Saul was believed to be a member of the Sanhedrin because he was there “giving approval” (literally, “voting”) for Stephen’s death (7:60)

- Before his conversion, Saul was actively and aggressively persecuting Christians (8:3)
- Due to “great persecution”, the church was **scattered throughout Judea and Samaria**

This was part of Jesus’ original mandate to be His witnesses in “*Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*” (Acts 1:8).

***Sometimes it takes a crisis to get us out of our comfort zone and to get us in step with God’s will.***

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## ACTS 8:5 PHILIP

- one of the original seven Deacons (6:5)
- called an “evangelist” (21:8)
- lived in Caesarea by the Sea (21:8)
- had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophesy (21:9)
- had the gift of miracles to cast out demons and to heal the sick (8:6-7)

For background on **SAUL**,  
see **Acts 22:3-5**

- **a Jew, born in Tarsus, Cilicia**  
(Cilicia was a province of the Roman Empire in southern Turkey along the Mediterranean coast)
- **educated in Jerusalem under Gamaliel**  
(one of the most well-respected rabbis)
- **zealous for God**
- **persecuting Christians** (“followers of this Way”)  
(because he saw them as a heretical sect of Judaism)

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## ACTS 9 SAUL'S (PAUL'S) CONVERSION

- When Saul was near Damascus, Syria on his way to persecute Christians, the Lord Jesus appeared to him
- KJV&NKJV add between v.5 & v.6: *“It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’”*
- He was blind for three days until Ananias was sent by the Lord to pray for him that he might receive both his sight and the Holy Spirit (9:17)
- He believed and was baptized (9:18)



- Gentile (Roman Centurion)
- gave generously
- devout
- prayed regularly
- God-fearing

**ACTS 10 - CORNELIUS & family**

- **BELIEVED** in Jesus
- **BAPTIZED** by the Holy Spirit
- **BAPTIZED** with water



ACTS 11 –  
“...called Christians first at Antioch”

- They had been called **disciples** (Acts 1:15)
- They had been called **saints** (Acts 9:13)
- They had been called **believers** (Acts 5:14)
- They had been called **brothers** (Acts 6:3)
- They had been called **witnesses** (Acts 5:32)
- They had been called **followers of the Way** (Acts 9:2)
- Now they would be called **CHRISTIANS** (Acts 11:26)

**Herod Agrippa I** (grandson of Herod the Great)

- Died because he did not give glory to God when people deified him as a god instead of a man.

**Isaiah 42:8 (NIV)**

*“I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.”*

We can be guilty of stealing glory from God...

- 1. BY WHAT WE SAY** (when we take credit for credit that belongs to God)
- 2. BY WHAT WE DON'T SAY** (when we don't correct people who praise us for something that God did through us or for us)

**ACTS 13:44-49 - emphasis on the Word of God**

1. Almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord (13:44)
2. Paul and Barnabas spoke the word of God to them first (13:46)
3. The Gentiles believed the word of the Lord (13:48)
4. The word of the Lord spread through the whole region (13:49)

**Paul's Perspective on Suffering:**

1. **REMEMBER** that God loves you (Rom. 8:35-39)
2. **RELY** on God who helps you (2 Cor. 1:8-10)
3. **REGARD** your present sufferings through an eternal lens (Rom. 8:18)

**QUESTION:**

**In order to become a Christian, must you first become a Jew?**

**ACTS 15:23-29 - Letter to the Gentile Believers**

1. Don't eat food sacrificed to idols
2. Don't eat blood
3. Don't eat the meat of strangled animals
4. Don't commit sexual immorality

3 rules of dietary • 1 rule of morality  
4 rules of SENSITIVITY

WEEK  
17

ACTS 16

### The *selfless examples* of Paul & Silas

1. Praying and singing to the Lord in prison after being stripped, beaten, and severely flogged (v.22-25)
2. Witnessing instead of escaping (v.28-32)
3. Encouraging others when they needed encouragement themselves (v.40)

WEEK  
18

ACTS 17

**“reasoned”** – 4x in Acts 17 & 18 (Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4,19)

Greek: **dialogomai** “to say thoroughly, to converse”

English - *dialogue*

**Paul’s Gospel Presentation to the Men of the Areopagus**

(Acts 17:22-31)

### He presented GOD as...

**CREATOR** – “who made the world and everything in it” (v.24)

**LIFE-GIVER** – “he gives all men life and breath and everything else” (v.25)

**SOVEREIGN** – *“he determined the times set for them”* (v.26)

**PERSONABLE** – *“so that men would seek him...reach out for him and find him”* (v.27)

**FATHER** – *“since we are his offspring”* (v.29)

**DIVINE** – *“the divine being”* (v.29)

**JUDGE** – *“he will judge the world with justice”* (v.31)

**MIRACLE-WORKER** – *“he has given proof...by raising him from the dead”* (v.31)

## Sharing the Gospel with others:

**LISTEN** to their story, their worldview, their perspective

**LOOK** for a relevant entry point

**LEAD** them to God and an understanding of repentance

**LEAVE** the results to God

WEEK  
19

ACTS 18

## Corinth, Greece

- **Commercial/trade center** of the world
- **Port city** with 2 harbors
- **Capital** of the Roman province
- Population in 1st Century A.D. –ca. **700,000** (200,000 Roman citizens; 500,000 slaves)
- Temple of Aphrodite (and 11 other temples) located there
  - + Aphrodite was goddess of love and sexual pleasure
  - + 1000 male & female temple prostitutes
- Most famous for being center of **immorality & sexuality** (see Romans 1; written in Corinth)

## Aquila & Priscilla

- he was Jewish; uncertain if Priscilla was Jewish
- she was high in Roman social status (“Priscilla”)
- implied that both were Christians because only Jewish Christians were expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius
- tentmakers
- mentioned in Paul's closing letter – 2 Tim. 4:19

“**reasoned**” – 4x in Acts 17 & 18 (Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4,19)

Greek: **dialogomai** “*to say thoroughly, to converse*”

(English - *dialogue*)

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## Nazarite Vow (Numbers 6)

### I. PURPOSE

1. *voluntary* vow of separation, consecration, and dedication to God
2. applied to both men and women
3. usually for a set period of time; but sometimes a lifetime vow

### II. PRACTICE

1. No wine, fermented drink, or anything of the grape vine
2. No contact or closeness to a dead body
3. No cutting the hair

## EPHESUS

- situated on the eastern shoreline of the **Aegean Sea**
- **population** in 1st Cent. A.D.: 300,000—500,000
- today, only a small Turkish village named **Ayasaluk** remains where the ancient city of Ephesus once proudly stood
- situated along major **trade routes**
- well-known for its worship of **Artemis** (or, Diana as the Romans called her)

## ARTEMIS (Diana)

- **goddess** of the moon and hunt, but also **sex** and **fertility**; 1000 prostitutes were employed in her temple service
- **Temple of Artemis** was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

*[425 feet in length, 220 feet in width, encompassed by 127 pillars that were each 60 feet in height]*

- British archaeologist **John T. Wood** discovered the site on December 31, 1869

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## ACTS 19:1-7

### “Baptisms”

#### 1. Baptism of John (v.3)

*pre-salvation* baptism by water in *anticipation* of Messiah

## 2. Baptism of Jesus (v.5)

post-salvation baptism by water in *identification* with Messiah

## 3. Baptism of Holy Spirit (v.6)

post-salvation filling of God's Spirit

WEEK  
21

ACTS 20

## Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders

v.18-27: Summary of his ministry

v.28-35: Exhortation of their ministry

### v.28-35: Exhortation of their ministry

1. **Keep watch** [prosecho - "give attention to"]
  - a) over yourselves
  - b) over the flock
2. **Be shepherds** [poimaino - "to feed", "to pastor"]
  - a) of God's church which was bought with His blood
3. **Be on your guard** [gregoreuo - "to keep awake", "be vigilant"]
  - a) persecution from without
  - b) division from within



**OBSERVATIONS and CHALLENGES**  
from **PAUL'S LIFE****1. tireless in travels**

(even in the face of 2500+ miles)

**Q.** *How far will we go out of our way to share Christ?*

**2. faithful in service**

(even in the face of adversity)

**Q.** *When the going gets tough, how committed are we to live for Christ?*

**3. bold in witness**

(even in the face of angry opposition)

**Q.** *How willing are we to share our faith even when it's not popular?*

**conscience** - *the inner "judge" or "witness" that approves when we do right or disapproves when we do wrong. It is our moral faculty.*

Greek: SUNEIDESIS  
**sun** - with; **oida** - to know

VINES: "A co-knowledge of oneself and God"

It's an internal mechanism of God-awareness

## Conscience

- *good* – Acts 23:1
- *weak* – 1 Cor. 8:10
- *corrupted* – Titus 1:15
- *clear* – Acts 24:16
- *guilty* – Heb. 10:22
- *seared* – 1 Tim. 4:2

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### ACTS 23:5

#### Reasons Paul may not have recognized the High Priest:

1. poor eyesight from injuries
2. the high priest was not acting like one; violated “due process”; Deut.25:2 (Paul was being sarcastic)
3. literally, “I did not consider” (Paul was being impulsive)

#### MARCUS ANTONIUS FELIX

- governor (procurator) of Judea, 52-58 A.D.
- originally a slave; first and only person known to have gone from being a slave to a governor
- Felix’s brother, Pallas, was good friends with Emperor Claudius and persuaded him to make Felix governor

***Tacitus said of Felix: “He executes the prerogatives of a king with the spirit of a slave.”***

## PORCIUS FESTUS

- governor (procurator) of Judea, 59-62 A.D.
- he was sent by Nero to replace Marcus Antonius Felix
- his sudden death (62 A.D.) left Judea temporarily without a Roman governor

## ACTS 25:8

“made his **defense**” – Gk: *apologeomai*

### 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

Always be prepared to give an answer [apologia] to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

Eng. – “apology, apologize”

“**apologetics**”: the defense of the Christian faith

## APOLOGETICS: HOW TO DEFEND YOUR FAITH

### 01. Know the Bible

### 02. Know your audience

### 03. Rehearse your testimony

### 04. Read good books on apologetics

- *Christian Apologetics: An A to Z Guide* (Dr. Norman Geisler)
- *Jesus Among Other Gods* (Ravi Zacharias)
- *More Than a Carpenter* (Josh McDowell)

- *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Josh McDowell)
- *The Case for Christ* (Lee Strobel)
- *The Case for Faith* (Lee Strobel)

## **05. Rely on the Holy Spirit**

### **HEROD AGRIPPA II**

- Julius Marcus Agrippa
- son of Herod Agrippa I
- great-Grandson of Herod the Great
- witnessed destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem
- ruled over much of Israel, 53A.D. until his death in 100A.D.

### **BERNICE**

- Julia Berenice
- sister of Herod Agrippa II
- married her uncle with whom she had two sons
- had an affair with Emperor Titus (11 years her junior)
- Historian, Juvenal (1st Century writer), said she and Herod Agrippa II had an incestuous relationship

## WISDOM FROM ACTS 27-28

01. God has given us common sense—use it! (27:10)
02. Don't allow money or the majority to drive a decision (27:11-12)
03. God will see us through our storms (27:21-26)
04. We might be tempted to escape from our storms, but God's grace is only experienced through our storms (27:30-32)
05. When in a storm, do your best and leave the rest [to God] (27:33-38)
06. Sometimes storms come to align our lives with God's will (28:1-10)
07. God will ultimately fulfill his plans and purposes for our lives (28:14-31)



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