BEYOND THE DIVIDE

Race • Justice • Generations • Culture • Community • Faith

WEEK 3 | WHO IS WELCOME HERE?

Acts 8:1–4, 26–40 | Thursday Evening Bible Study | 6:00 PM

LET'S REVIEW THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Mark each statement True or False, then complete the fill-in review.

A. TRUE OR FALSE — Acts 1–7

1. Acts 1. Matthias was chosen to replace Judas before Jesus ascended into heaven.

_____ **True** _____ **False**

2. Acts 2. After Peter preached at Pentecost, about three thousand people received the word and were added to the believers.

_____ **True** _____ **False**

3. Acts 3. Peter and John encountered a man lame from birth at the temple gate called Beautiful.

_____ **True** _____ **False**

4. Acts 4. The religious leaders encouraged Peter and John to continue speaking publicly in the name of Jesus.

_____ **True** _____ **False**

5. Acts 5. Ananias and Sapphira were completely honest about the money from the sale of their property.

_____ **True** _____ **False**

6. Acts 6. Seven men were chosen after a complaint arose that Grecian widows were being neglected in the daily ministry.

_____ **True** _____ **False**

7. Acts 7. Stephen prayed for those who were killing him as he was being stoned.

_____ **True** _____ **False**

B. FILL IN THE BLANK — Acts 1–7

WORD BANK

Beautiful • boldness • Gamaliel • Matthias • right hand • seven • three thousand

1. [Acts 1] After Judas was gone, _____ was chosen to be numbered with the eleven apostles.

2. [Acts 2] About _____ souls were added after Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost.

3. [Acts 3] The man who had been lame from birth was sitting at the temple gate called _____.

4. [Acts 4] After facing opposition, the believers prayed that they might speak God's Word with all _____.

5. [Acts 5] The respected Pharisee named _____ urged the council to be cautious in dealing with the apostles.

6. [Acts 6] The church selected _____ men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, to address the ministry need.

7. [Acts 7] Stephen saw Jesus standing on the _____ of God.

ACTS 1–7 AT A GLANCE

Acts 1	Jesus commissions His witnesses, ascends to heaven, and Matthias is chosen.
Acts 2	The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost; Peter preaches; the church begins life together.
Acts 3	Peter and John heal the lame man at the Beautiful Gate and proclaim Jesus.
Acts 4	Peter and John face opposition; believers pray for boldness and care for one another.
Acts 5	Ananias and Sapphira are judged; the apostles continue witnessing despite persecution.
Acts 6	The church responds to neglected widows; seven servants are chosen; Stephen is seized.
Acts 7	Stephen recounts Israel's history, testifies to Christ, and becomes the first Christian martyr recorded in Acts.

WEEK 3 — WHO IS WELCOME HERE?

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE	CONTEMPORARY FOCUS
Acts 8:1–4, 26–40	**Migration • Immigration • Ethnicity • Outsiders • Belonging**
SERIES	**MEETING TIME**
Beyond the Divide	**Thursday Evening Bible Study • 6:00 PM**

OPENING TABLE ASSIGNMENT

THE STRANGER AT THE TABLE

Imagine someone joins your table who comes from another country, speaks with a strong accent, has unfamiliar customs, and does not know anyone in the church.

1. What might make this person uncomfortable?

_____

_____

2. What would genuine Christian hospitality look like?

_____

_____

3. What assumptions do people sometimes make based on accent, nationality, neighborhood, or appearance?

_____

_____

INTRODUCTION

Acts 8 begins with Christians being scattered because of persecution. Many are forced away from familiar places. Yet God uses their movement to spread the gospel. Later Philip meets an Ethiopian official traveling through the region. God brings two people from very different backgrounds together. The passage reminds us that people who may seem foreign to us are never foreign to God.

KEY VERSE • KEY WORDS • WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

KEY VERSE — Acts 8:36 KJV

"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

KEY WORDS

Word / Term	Meaning in the Passage
Scattered — Diaspeirō	To disperse or spread abroad. Acts 8:4.
Ethiopian	A person connected with the ancient African kingdom south of Egypt. Acts 8:27.
Understand — Ginōskō	To know, recognize, or comprehend. Acts 8:30.
Baptized — Baptizō	To immerse or baptize; in this passage, a public response of faith and identification with Christ. Acts 8:38.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

People move for many reasons—employment, family, education, violence, persecution, poverty, or opportunity. Christians may hold different opinions about government immigration policies, but Scripture consistently calls God's people to recognize the dignity of other human beings. Acts challenges us to see people as neighbors before reducing them to political categories.

BIG IDEA

God's gospel crosses boundaries, sees people others may overlook, and creates a family in Christ that is larger than geography, ethnicity, nationality, or social status.

NOTES

LESSON OUTLINE

1. GOD CAN WORK THROUGH THE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

Acts 8:1–4

- The believers were scattered.
- Their movement was difficult, but God worked through it.
- Communities and churches change as people move.
- The church must learn how to minister faithfully in changing neighborhoods.

TEXTUAL TRUTH

Acts 8:4 shows that those who were scattered "went every where preaching the word." What looked like disruption became a means through which the gospel moved outward.

STUDENT NOTES

2. GOD SEES THE PERSON OTHERS MAY CALL AN OUTSIDER

Acts 8:26–35

- Philip meets an Ethiopian official.
- Philip begins with a question rather than an assumption.
- Christian ministry starts by seeing a person before seeing a category.

TABLE QUESTION

Why is listening important when ministering to people from different backgrounds?

THE GOSPEL OPENS THE DOOR TO BELONGING

3. THE GOSPEL OPENS THE DOOR TO BELONGING

Acts 8:36–40

The Ethiopian asks: “What doth hinder me?”

He believes, is baptized, and continues his journey rejoicing.

The gospel creates a family larger than geography, ethnicity, nationality, or social status.

LOOK AGAIN AT THE QUESTION

“What doth hinder me?” is not merely a question about water. In the flow of Acts, it invites us to notice how the gospel keeps moving beyond familiar boundaries and bringing new people into the community of faith.

STUDENT NOTES

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

HOW TO APPLY THIS TO LIFE

- Welcome newcomers intentionally.
- Learn someone’s story before making assumptions.
- Refuse ethnic and national stereotypes.
- Pray for displaced people.
- Practice hospitality.
- Recognize the dignity of immigrants and migrants.
- Ask whether unnecessary barriers prevent people from belonging.

THIS WEEK I WILL...

CLOSING REFLECTION

Who might God be calling me to see, hear, welcome, or understand more faithfully?

_____

_____