

ACTS 9-12

Great Expectations

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Flourish Women Tuesday

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This Study Booklet belongs to

“Great Expectations - Acts 9-11”

Welcome to Flourish Women Tuesday at Tea Tree Gully Anglican Church.

We are thrilled that you are with us to study, hear and learn from God’s Word together.

MORNING PROGRAM

9am Creche opens

9.15-10.15 Small Group Studies

10.15-10.45 Morning Tea

10.45-11.25 Talk

11.30 Close (please collect your children immediately)

Study 1 - Acts 9:32-10:8

1. Have you ever found yourself thinking that <insert name of a non-believing friend> would be “such a good Christian”? Conversely, have you ever been surprised to learn that someone you least expected has become a Christian?

2. Acts 9:31 reads:

Acts 9:31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Look at the map (page 3) and locate the places mentioned above. What is significant about this progression? (Hint: see Acts 1:8)

Read Acts 9:32-43.

The miracles may seem somewhat familiar - there are strong similarities between these events and healings Jesus performed (see Mark 2:1-12 and Mark 5:21-43 for extra reading).

3. Make notes about the two events in the table below:

	Aeneas	Tabitha/Dorcas
Where did this occur?		
How did they come to connect with Peter?		
How did they contribute to society?		
What happened to them?		
How did witnesses respond?		

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4. What do you notice about the type of person God chooses to heal?

5. What resulted from these two healings?

Chapter 10 will move us farther afield: to Caesarea. The first few verses introduce us to Cornelius.

6. **Read Acts 10:1-8.** List everything you notice about Cornelius. Is there anything particularly striking/unexpected about Cornelius?

7. What conclusion, if any, can be drawn about the type of people God might choose to save? Does this challenge any assumptions or motivate you to pray differently for anyone you know?

8. In pairs, take a few minutes to pray:

- Thank God for the joy it has been so far to read about the progression of the gospel to Judea, Galilee and Samaria.
- For the people you thought of in Q1 and/or 6. Pray that they would come to know Jesus or give thanks for their salvation, and that they would continue to grow and mature in their walk with him.
- Ask God to help us to be quick to give him thanks and glory when he works miraculously around us. Pray that others might hear of his saving work and themselves be saved.
- Pray that like Cornelius we'd be quick to trust God and respond when he calls us to act.

Talk 1: Acts 10:9-48 Let’s get on board!

Early milestones

Jews and Gentiles, clean and unclean

- Genesis 12
- Leviticus 11

1. God orchestrates for two men to meet
 - Peter, the Jew (v19-23), staying with a Tanner (Acts 9:43)
 - Cornelius, the God-fearing Gentile (v1-7)
2. God prepares his people (v9-17)
3. God’s good news is shared (v34-43)
 - V43 All the prophets testify about him that **everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.**
4. God’s Holy Spirit is poured out (v44-46)
5. God’s plan proceeds

Peter previously quoted Joel in Acts 2:16-21:

¹⁷“In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit **on all people.**

...

²¹And **everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.’**

Peter previously addressed the crowd (at/after Pentecost), Acts 2:38

³⁸Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy

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Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children **and for all who are far off—
for all whom the Lord our God will call.**”

Peter previously spoke before the Sanhedrin, Acts 4:12:

¹²Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven **given to mankind** by which we must be saved.”

6. God’s people get on board (and don’t stand in the way!) (v47-48)

This week, let’s be a bit like Cornelius, and a bit like Peter:

Study 2: Acts 11

This study looks at Chapter 11: much of which reviews/repeated the events of last week’s talk. It is interesting that Luke records the events of Chapter 10 a second time in as many chapters – this is surely an indication of how profound and significant the learning is: that everyone (including Gentiles!) who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins through the name of Jesus.

The talk today will be on Chapter 12. The rest of Acts (Chapter 13 onwards) focuses on the ministry and missions of the Paul: the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Read Acts 11:1-18

1. As you read Acts 11:1-18 notice how the attitude of Peter’s hearers changes. Why do they change their opinion?

2. How does **John 14:26** illuminate this passage?

The next section of this chapter turns our thoughts to the horrific events in Jerusalem: the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7). You might like to **skim read Acts 8:1-8**, noting what the believers who witnessed Stephen’s stoning did after his death.

Read Acts 11:19-30

3. Use the map on page 3 to trace where the believers scattered to after Stephen’s death (v19-21). What did they do there, and what was the result?

4. In light of this, is there any comfort you can take about God’s ways?

5. What is particularly striking about v26b?

6. Looking especially at v22-30, identify and discuss the various church leadership and pastoral practices you see emerge within the early church.

7. What did you feel as you watched the trajectory of the gospel as it has moved out from Jerusalem?

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8. Is there a mis-match between your expectations of ongoing gospel growth today and what we see in Acts? What might help you increase your expectation of growth today?

If you have time, each share one encouragement from Acts.

Pray

Thank God for his word, and particularly for the book of Acts.

Thank God for the salvation you have through belief in Jesus' name.

Thank him for including Jew and Gentile alike into his eternal family through Jesus.

Thank him for your church family. Ask that by his Spirit he would be maturing you and your church family members: that others would know we are Christians by our love for each other.

Invite him to use you each day so that you might have the joy of sharing in the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Talk 2: Acts 12 God’s Plans Prevail

“If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is”

1. Peter is freed (v6-17)

- Praise

- Prayer

Acts 5:38-39

³⁸Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.”

- Persecution

Hebrews 11:32-38

32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. 35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. 36 Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— 38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

2. King Herod falls (v19-23)

- Pride

- Punishment (Judgement)

3. Jesus Reigns

“But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.” (v12)

- 2:41 “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and *about three thousand were added to their number that day.*”
- 2:47: “... and the Lord *added to their number daily those who were being saved.*”
- 6:7 “So the word of God spread. *The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*”
- 9:31 “...*Then the church* throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened: and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it *grew in numbers*, living in the fear of the Lord.
- 11: 24 ...”He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and *a great number of people were brought to the Lord.*”

It if sounds too good to be true it probably is.

Except with God, and in the gospel.