
a *Grace Notes* course

The Acts of the Apostles

an expositional study
by Warren Doud

Lesson 120: **Acts 7:46-60**

Acts 7:46-60

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Instructions

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

1. Study the lesson by reading the passage in ACTS, studying the notes, and studying the other passages of the Bible which are cited. It is a good idea to read the whole book of Acts regularly, perhaps at least once a month. This will give you a good overall view of the events in ACTS.
 2. Study the topics in the same way, paying close attention to all of the Bible verses which are mentioned.
 3. Review all of the notes in the ACTS study and the topics
 4. Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is “open book”. You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.
 5. When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to SAVE the file.
 6. Return the completed Quiz to Grace Notes, either by e-mail or regular mail. There are instructions below in the Quiz section.
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Acts 7:46-60

ACTS 7:46, 47

Acts 7:46 Who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

Acts 7:47 But Solomon built him an house.

David, having been a man of war, and having shed much blood, God would not permit him to build the Temple (2 Samuel 7; Psalm 132:2-5), even though he had a strong desire to do so.

ACTS 7:48 - 50

Acts 7:48 Howbeit the most High dwells not in temples made with hands; as the prophet says,

Acts 7:49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will you build me? says the Lord: or what is my place of rest?

Acts 7:50 Has not my hand made all these things?

Stephen refers to Solomon's speech in 1 Kings 8:27, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less the house that I have built."

"as the prophet says" – The reference is to Isa. 66:1,2, "Thus says the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool. Where is the house that you build unto me? And where is my place of rest..."

Stephen did not continue his speech here, at least he could have gone considerably farther on this subject. It seems that at this point, the Sanhedrin raised up a clamor against him, so that he responded with the words found in verses 51 to 54.

ACTS 7:51

Acts 7:51 You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do you. [KJV]

Acts 7:51 ¶ "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. [NASB]

"stiffnecked" – from **sklhrotrachlo~** (**sklhro~**, "hard" + **trachlo~**, "neck") a metaphor taken from oxen who cannot be broken to the yoke; when an ox resists the yoke placed on his neck, he is so strong that his neck cannot be bent either right or left.

"uncircumcised in heart and ears"

Circumcision was instituted (1) as a sign and seal of the covenant, and (2) as a type of the purity and holiness which the Law of God requires. Purity and holiness requires a cutting off of that which is either not necessary or else injurious.

Where the spirit of disobedience is found, where the heart is devoted to sin, the ears are unwilling to listen to counsel and exhortation. A person who refuses to obey is represented as "uncircumcised" in those parts, because of being devoted to iniquity, and impatient of reproof.

Hence, the Jewish writers tell of uncircumcision of heart, ears, lips, in addition to that of the flesh.

READ Romans 2:17-29.

ACTS 7:52

Acts 7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers:

"You have not only resisted the Holy Spirit, but you have also persecuted all of those who have spoken to you in His name, and by His influence. Thus you prove your opposition to God himself, by your opposition to everything that proceeds from him."

"the Just One" – meaning the Lord Jesus Christ, who is not only perfectly just and righteous, but was also acquitted by Pilate, who said, "I find no fault in him."

"of whom you have now been the betrayers and murderers:"

They had no answer to these charges, no defense. Their outrageous reaction is of people who stand condemned and have no other option than to commit another murder.

“**betray**er” is **prodoth-**, meaning traitor. This is the same word used of Judas in Luke 6:16. Likewise the word **murderer** is **fonei-**, the same word used of Barabbas. These are very sharp words; and they cut like a knife. Judas betrayed Christ, and delivered him into the hands of the chief priests and elders, these very men sitting in judgment here. Then, the Jewish rulers delivered Christ into the hands of the Romans, to be put to death. Therefore, they are rightly called both *betrayers* and *murderers*.

ACTS 7:53

Acts 7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

Stephen is adding every more to his enormous accusation, by stating that these men the law, which had been well communicated to them both by God Himself and by His messengers. The Pharisees and Sadducees gloried in possessing the Law, and in knowing it, but they openly violated it in every way.

ACTS 7:54

Acts 7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. [KJV]

“Heart” is **kardia**, so the KJV is correct. The NASB uses the word “quick,” which seems an unnecessary introduction of an English idiom.

The word “cut” is **dieprionto**, which means “sawn through.” The same word was used in Acts 5:33, on the effect of Peter’s speech on the Sadducees, which had the same violent reaction in those who heard it. If Gamaliel had not intervened in that instance, the apostles would probably have been killed, too.

They were so full of fury and indignation that they were grinding their teeth.

[Note: there is no expository material for that last six verses of this chapter.]

ACTS 7:55-60

Acts 7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

Acts 7:56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

Acts 7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

Acts 7:58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

Acts 7:59 And they stoned Stephen, who called upon God, and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

Acts 7:60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Paul the Apostle

The apostle Paul was one of the most famous citizens of the Roman Empire and without question one of the most influential individuals in history. He was used by the Lord in his missionary and evangelistic activities to set in motion a great deal of the organization known as the Christian Church, the Body of Christ on earth, to the extent that billions of human beings have been directly or indirectly affected by his ministry. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote the foundation documents for the Christian way of life, the Word of God which has changed the lives of millions.

Paul's Education

Paul was educated by his mother until the age of five. From age five to ten he studied with his father in the Hebrew scriptures and traditional writings. At the same time, being a Roman citizen and living in a Greek and Roman environment, he

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received a thorough education in the Greek language, history, and culture.

He was sent to Jerusalem at about the age of ten to attend the rabbinical school of Gamaliel, who was the son of Simeon the son of Hillel. Gamaliel was a most eminent rabbi who was mentioned both in the Talmud and in the New Testament (ACTS 5:24-40; 22:3). Gamaliel was called Rabban - one of only seven teachers so called. He was a Pharisee, but he rose above party prejudice. He composed a prayer against the Christian "heretics". He lived and died a Jew.

At this time, Herod was dead, and the Romans had complete control of Judea, hence, there was Roman money, language, and culture. The Jews, therefore, were inclined to cling more closely to their religion as the center of unity. [Refer to the topic: JUDEAN HISTORY]

There were two great rabbinical schools, those of Hillel and Schammai. Hillel, the grandfather of Gamaliel, held that tradition was superior to the Law. The school of Schammai despised traditionalists, especially when their teachings clashed with the writings of Moses.

The religious school of Gamaliel (Hillel) was chiefly oral and usually had a prejudice against any book but Scripture. They used a system of Scriptural exegesis, and Josephus in his writings expressed the wish to have such a power of exegesis. When school was in session, learned men met and discussed scriptures, gave various interpretations, suggested illustrations, and quoted precedents. The students were encouraged to question, doubt, even contradict.

When Paul became a Christian, his very thorough education was enormously helpful. He was able to assimilate Christian doctrines rapidly and relate them accurately to the Scripture teaching he had received. From his education, both from Gamaliel and in the desert from the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul developed a divine viewpoint attitude toward human history.

Paul knew that the existence of God can easily be perceived by anyone, that man can become aware of God, but that many men's deliberate halted this good beginning by immoral activities which

accompanied their idolatry. Therefore, Paul had an intense hatred of idolatry of any kind.

Paul's teaching shows that the only reality is God. Idolatry distorts man's conception of the world and external nature. Idolatry is the enemy of mankind.

Paul knew the law of growth of human nature. As a Roman, Tarsian, Hebrew, and culturally Greek, he knew of the many distortions of the life of his society. As a nation becomes unhealthy, development is halted. Societies errors as to the nature of God and the true relation of God to man prevented nations from getting rid of their besetting evil.

The books of Acts is the chief authoritative record for the ministries of Paul and the other apostles. For a brief outline of Paul's ministry, see the CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY. The most thorough, accurate, and interesting secular work on Paul is *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, by Conybeare and Howson.

PAUL, THE PRISONER FOR THE GENTILES

The Lord made Paul a missionary to the Gentiles, even revealing to him during the period of his arrest in Palestine, and during his subsequent trials before Jewish and Roman authorities, that he should "be of good cheer, for you must bear witness of Jesus at Rome."

After a considerable stay at Antioch after his second missionary journey, Paul departed and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order to strengthen the disciples (ACTS 18:23). During this time, he also gave directions for the collection for the poor in Jerusalem.

He came to Ephesus, probably in about 53 A.D. He found there twelve disciples of Apollos who had only received John's baptism and were not aware of the Holy Spirit and Church Age mysteries.

He taught three months in the synagogue in Ephesus. In the face of opposition, he took his classes to the school of one, Tyrannus, where he taught daily for two years. Exorcists were converted and books of magic were burned by the new converts. He paid a visit to Corinth, then returned to Ephesus where he wrote 1 Corinthians.

Paul left for Troas and Macedonia because of the danger in Ephesus from the silversmiths and craftsmen who made articles for the worship of Diana. (See Topic: EPHESUS) He sailed to Macedonia to meet Titus, landed at Neapolis and went to Philippi where he was “comforted by Titus.” He sent Titus to Corinth with the second Corinthian letter and instructions for completing the collection there for needy Christians.

Paul traveled through Macedonia and finally arrived at Corinth himself, staying there about three months and writing Romans. He took ship for Miletus where he met for a few days with Ephesian elders. He then sailed (island hopping to Coos, Rhodes, and Patara) to Tyre. From Tyre he sailed to Ptolemais and reached Caesarea.

Paul was warned not to visit Jerusalem. He went anyway and was warmly received by the brethren. He had an interview with James and the elders. A charge was brought against him by the Sanhedrin that “he taught all the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their sons, neither to walk after their customs.” [For a discussion of the Sanhedrin, see topic: JEWISH RELIGIOUS SYSTEM]

The Sanhedrin asked Paul to do a public act of the Law in order to prove his faith. There were four men who were to undergo the ritual associated with the Nazarite vow, and Paul was requested to put himself under that vow and to pay the costs of the other four men. He did so.

After this some Jews from Asia stirred up the people against him, charging him with bringing Greeks into the Temple. A Gentile man from Ephesus named Trophimus was with Paul, and the Jews supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple, which would have been a sacrilege. The mob took Paul to kill him, but soldiers of the Roman garrison appeared. Paul spoke to the mob in his own defense, telling of his mission to the Gentiles. They shouted “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live.” (ACTS 22:1-23).

The Roman soldiers took Paul to the governor’s castle for interrogation by scourging, at which time Paul claimed his Roman citizenship. The next morning he was taken before the Sanhedrin,

but there was no conclusion because of the dissension between the Sadducees and Pharisees. Paul was taken back to the castle for protection, and it was that night that the Lord appeared to Paul telling him to “be of good cheer.” (ACTS 23:6-10)

There arose a conspiracy among forty Jews to assassinate Paul, but Paul’s nephew brought him a warning of the plot. The Romans decided to send him to Caesarea to Felix, the procurator (governor) of Judea (ACTS 22:21ff). Before Felix, Paul was merely asked from province he had come. Five days later, the high priest Ananias and some of the Sanhedrin appeared, with Tertullus as their advocate (ACTS 24:1-9). They made charges, which Paul denied. Felix delayed the proceeding further until Claudias Lysias, the captain of the Roman troops in Jerusalem, could come to give evidence.

After a few days, Felix’ wife, Drusilla, a Jewess, wanted to see and hear Paul. Paul appeared and gave the gospel to Felix and Drusilla. Felix trembled but was unrepentant. He wanted a bribe from Paul so did not acquit him. (Drusilla died in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, AD 79.)

Felix kept Paul a prisoner in Caesarea (under loose house arrest) for two years until the arrival of Festus, the new governor. Festus wanted Paul taken back to Jerusalem, but Paul was aware of the danger there and uttered the Latin word *Caesarem apello!* -- “I appeal to Caesar!” Festus was thus obliged to make arrangements for Paul to travel to Rome under escort.

About this time, King Agrippa II, with his sister, Berenice, came to visit Festus, the new governor. Festus pleaded ignorance of Jewish law, so Paul made his testimony before Agrippa, with the greatest of pomp and ceremony. This episode was one of the greatest defenses of the gospel ever recorded. Agrippa said, “Almost you persuade me ...”

Festus decided then that Paul was innocent or wrongdoing, and he would have let him go free if he had not appealed to Caesar.

PAUL’S VOYAGE TO ROME

Paul’s escort on the trip to Rome was a platoon of Roman soldiers under Julius, a centurion of the

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Augustan Cohort. They sailed in a coasting vessel to Adramyttium and Sidon. Paul was given liberty. The next port was Myra, from which they took ship to Italy.

They sailed to Crete, stayed at the port of Fair Havens for one month, sailed for Phoenix, and were driven on the rocks at Malta where they stayed for three months. From Malta they sailed in the vessel "Castor and Pollux" to Syracuse (Sicily) and Rhegium, the port city of the Italian province of Puteoli. From there they went to Rome on the Appian Way.

In Rome Paul dwelled in his own hired house under the supervision of a Prefect of the Praetorian Guard. He was permitted to hold meetings, and he met with Jewish elders, winning some of them to Christ. This period lasted two years, during which he wrote Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians.

He was acquitted by Nero, so he was free to travel and did so. His visits were to Crete and to Asia Minor; and it is widely thought that he traveled in Spain on a missionary journey. He is thought to have been arrested again in Ephesus and taken again to Rome from there, but this time treated as a malefactor, with his friends deserting him (except for Luke and Onesiphorus). There was persecution in Rome at this time, and a campaign of terror by Nero against the Christians. Paul was condemned and executed in Rome.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

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Lesson 20 Quiz

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

This Quiz may have Multiple Choice, True/False, Fill-in-the-Blank, and Short Answer questions. Type your responses after the word "Answer:" following each question. The last question is an essay question and requires you to write a few sentences. Type your response following the questions.

Quiz

1. Please write three or four paragraphs to describe your thoughts about this course. Include such things as how the course was useful to you, how you might use the information in your ministry with others, and what suggestions you have for improving the course. Also, if you would like to include some personal testimony regarding your studies that would be interesting to other Grace Notes students, please do so. (Your name or email address will not be used in any communication with other people.)

Answer:

2. Type your name the way you would like it on the certificate. Also, provide your mailing address.

Name:

Address:

City, State:

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Postal Code (ZIP):

Country (if not USA):

Congratulations on completing the Acts I course ! As soon as I receive the Lesson 20 quiz, I will send you the certificate, and enter a Course Complete record in your transcript.

Warren Doud

Grace Notes

End of Quiz
