

# SCATTERED

## ACTS PART II

Acts 6:8 - 12:24 • April - July 2024

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### Overview

Our Acts Part One series focused on the first days and steps of the newborn church. We looked at how it felt to see the Spirit descend and a brand new mission emerge through the proclamation that the crucified Jesus was raised to life again.

In this series, we'll focus on what came next: persecution and the scattering of the disciples around the region to fulfill the Great Commission; the mission Jesus left the disciples—and us—in Acts 1:8. *“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.”*

### Outline

1. Acts 6:8-15
2. Act 7:1-60
3. Acts 8:1-25
4. Acts 8:26-40
5. Acts 9:1-19
6. Acts 9:20-31
7. Acts 9:32-43
8. Acts 10
9. Acts 11:1-18
10. Acts 11:19-30
11. Acts 12

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Week 1 • 7 April 2024 • Acts 6:8-15

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This week's key theme: Set Apart to Scatter

1. It was about a year ago, but take some time to reflect on the first Acts series. What were some things that stood out from the Empowered series? Has anything changed in your walk with Jesus due to that series?
2. Stephen is the key figure in this passage.
  - a. What do we know about Stephen from Acts 6:5,8,10?
  - b. What reasons can we assume his opponents had for coming against him? (See Acts 5:40-42)
  - c. What tactics do the men use when they fail in debating Stephen? Where have we seen this happen before? (Hint: Matt 26:59-61)
  - d. What encouragement does Jesus give us concerning this from Matt 5:11?



3. What examples come to mind where believers have stood up for the gospel, justice, or something good and been persecuted for it, either from your life or stories you know of?
  - a. Why do you think these acts of righteousness are so offensive to some people?
  - b. How do you think the “you do you” cultural narrative might contribute to this?
  
4. Like Stephen, we are all filled with the Spirit and have been set apart by God for good works that he prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).
  - a. Is there a situation where you feel God is asking you to stand up for righteousness?
  - b. Are you prepared to receive any hostility that might come?
  
5. Pray for each other regarding the above situations. If there are none, pray for the persecuted church around the world—for our brothers and sisters who are suffering for the sake of the gospel. Consider looking at [Open Doors](#) for some prayer prompts.

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ACTS PART II

Week 2 • 14 April 2024 • Acts 7:1-60

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This week's key theme: The God Who Scatters

1. Share your favourite courtroom drama moment - from a movie (A Few Good Men, anyone?) or TV series (Boston Legal or Suits?) What made it so memorable?
2. Read Acts 7:1-150 and write down the key names and locations that are mentioned throughout
  - a. What do we notice about where God meets people and what he asks them to do?
  - b. What do you think Stephen is highlighting to the Sanhedrin in explaining this well-known history of Israel?
  - c. What else does Stephen accuse the religious leaders of in vv51-53? How is that portrayed in what Jesus says to the religious leaders in Mark 12:1-11?
3. The religious leaders had put constraints on God and tried to reduce him to a national deity, but God could not be controlled.
  - a. How do we see people putting God in a box today?
  - b. What are some ways you have seen God blow apart people's paradigms of who he is?



4. Do you have room for a God on the move in your theology? Have you put constraints on what he can do in your life? Are you limiting him in any way?
  
5. Take time to pray with one another for anything that may have come up in question four.
  - a. How can you encourage each other to have a more expansive view of God?

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## ACTS PART II

### Week 3 • 28 April 2024 • Acts 8:1-25

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This week's key theme: Scattered to Proclaim

1. Who in the group has had to move to a new city or new country? How did you find it? What was the hardest part about it? What was the best part about it?
2. Read Acts 8:1-8.
  - a. What are the key events that stand out?
  - b. Where do you see the disciples being scattered to, and how does this remind you of Acts 1:8?
  - c. How does Saul's intense persecution of the church reinforce the principle of Genesis 50:20?
  - d. What was the defining characteristic of the disciples who had been scattered? What did they do? How was this fulfilling what Jesus asked them to do in Matthew 28:19-20?
3. This gospel message came with power and miracles, and Simon the Sorcerer thought he could purchase this power with money. He wanted to add Jesus to his life as a means to an end.



- a. Where do you see examples of people wanting “the kingdom without the king”?
4. A marker of a disciple is that they can share the good news of Jesus Christ. Do you feel equipped and able to share this message clearly and simply?
    - a. Take some time to practice the [3 Circles method](#) of sharing the gospel with each other.
  5. Go around the group and share about the people in your life with whom you would love to share the 3 Circles method, and then spend time praying for those people to receive the gospel.

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## ACTS PART II

Week 4 • 12 May 2024 • Acts 8:26-40

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This week's key theme: Scattered for the One

1. Share about a time you shared the gospel with someone. How did it go? Was it a disaster? Did they respond? What did you learn from this experience?
2. Philip has gone from Jerusalem to Samaria and now down to Gaza.
  - a. Why has he traveled to so many places in a short space of time?
  - b. What can we learn from Philip here?
3. Philip walks alongside the eunuch and hears him reading from Isaiah.
  - a. What was Philip's first reaction?
  - b. What can we learn from this?
  - c. After asking a question, Philip is invited to share with the eunuch. What do we learn about the gospel message from v35?
4. After sharing the gospel, the eunuch immediately responds and is baptised, but for many of us this isn't what we experience when





sharing Jesus with others. Recent research shows it takes, on average, 12-14 faith conversations for someone to turn to Jesus.

- a. What encouragement do you take from Philip as you consider the lost people in your life?
  - b. Do you feel more comfortable sharing Jesus with non-Christians who you know already or with complete strangers? Why?
5. Philip demonstrated a few things in this text:
- a. Obedience to the Spirit
  - b. Competence to share the gospel
  - c. Passion to do so
  - d. Which of these are you the strongest in? Which area would you like to grow in? Pray for one another with this.



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## ACTS PART II

Week 5 • 19 May 2024 • Acts 9:1-19

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This week's key theme: Scattered for the Unlikely

1. Have you ever met someone who you judged by their appearance or from third-hand information and then realised you totally got them wrong? How did that situation pan out?
2. Read Acts 9:1-9 aloud together.
  - a. What do you notice about how Jesus describes Saul's persecution?
  - b. What does this tell us about how Jesus identifies with the church?
  - c. How is this reinforced by Ephesians 4:10-16?
3. Read Acts 9:10-19
  - a. Imagine being Ananias; how does his response to the Lord's words seem perfectly reasonable?
  - b. How does Ananias's obedience show the principles of the kingdom of God in action? See Matthew 5:43-48

- c. Later in Saul's (Paul's) life, he reflects on the man he was. How does 1 Timothy 1:15-17 reveal Paul's incredible transformation?
4. What messages does the world give us about people who have messed up in the past? How are people treated for sins of their youth or past mistakes?
  - a. What does a gospel response look like in the face of this?
5. Is there anyone in your life who you think is "too far gone" to be saved by the amazing grace of God?
  - a. Spend some time praying for those people by name and asking God to change your heart to believe in His desire and power to save.

# SCATTERED

## ACTS PART II

Week 6 • 26 May 2024 • Acts 9:20-31

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This week's key theme: Scattered to Strengthen

1. For you sports fans, which athlete created the most waves when they switched teams during their career? For you non-sports fans... sorry.
2. Read Acts 9:20-22
  - a. What apparent differences do you see in Saul compared to how he describes himself in Acts 26:9-18
  - b. How does this show the power of someone encountering the risen Lord Jesus Christ?
3. What do you think it would have been like for the disciples to hear that Saul was a new believer and trying to join their group?
  - a. Do you more readily identify with the believers or with Barnabas as mentioned in v27?
  - b. What reflections do you make of Barnabas' character in how he comes alongside Saul?

4. The early church's greatest threat now becomes one of their strongest weapons.
  - a. What encouragement do you take from God's power to take what the enemy means for evil and use it for good?
  
5. What do you think modern secular culture would make of Saul's conversion today? How would 'cancel culture' (perhaps) have an influence on how people would treat Saul?
  
6. Are there situations happening in the world today that you feel hopeless about? Are there people you feel are just impossible to reach with the gospel?
  - a. Pray together for these things and ask for faith to believe they can be turned around - and ask God to do it!

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## ACTS PART II

Week 7 • 2 June 2024 • Acts 9:32-43

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This week's key theme: Scattered to Heal

1. When you hear stories of people being miraculously healed, what's your first impression? What kind of beliefs do you have about healing? Have an open discussion on what people think and feel - no rights or wrongs.
2. Read through Acts 9:32-43.
  - a. What similarities do you see between the healing of Aeneas and Dorcas (Tabitha), particularly in the results?
  - b. What can we infer about the purpose of miraculous healing?
  - c. What do we learn about humanity when we compare this story with what happens in Acts 14:8-19?
3. Jesus said in John 14:12 that his followers will do "even greater things" than what he did, because he will give us his Holy Spirit.
  - a. Do you believe this is still the case in 2024?
  - b. Is there anything that holds you back from believing in healing and praying for it to happen?



4. It's clear from scripture that healing doesn't always happen (Paul left Trophimus sick in 2 Timothy 4:20, for example) but some traditions say if healing doesn't work, it's your fault because you don't have enough faith.
  - a. What Biblical insights are helpful to have when you encounter this view? (Consider Jesus' unanswered prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, for example).
  
5. Does anyone in your group need prayer for healing today?
  - a. Take a step of faith and pray for that person
    - i. Start by giving glory to God for who he is (Jehovah Rapha - the healer)
    - ii. Thank God for the person in front of you, made in His image
    - iii. Speak to the condition/injured part and tell it to be healed in the name of Jesus
    - iv. Get the person to test it out, and pray again if needed
    - v. Praise the Lord if there is healing and, if there isn't, ask him to do it in his time and to comfort the person in their journey.