

“VOICE OF PAUL-x-LUKE” SERIES

This series shows how the writings of the apostle Paul and his traveling-&-writing assistant Luke, all tie in together to construct “the basic frame of the entire New Testament” from 16 of its books. Under Paul’s unique influence, all these writings emphasize *God forging His People into a new kind of Followership whose “growth policy” involves embodying every kind of people & heritage.* It is within the framework of this people-building endeavor that (1) the Forgiving-&-Restoring Power of Jesus especially gets to be displayed, and where (2) its best participants are those whose lives have God’s Presence “pouring forth” within them.

study #11: The Amazement Community

— covering **Acts 3:1—4:37** —

ACTION #1. By noticing certain “names” mentioned *early-on* in Acts, we will *later-on* be able to recognize the Church’s larger story as it unfolds. Read **Acts 3:9-12** where **PETER** and **JOHN** have become the most noticeable leaders after miraculously healing a crippled man, then discuss:

- Describe the people who saw the crippled man get healed—what were their reactions like?
- Has anyone noticed the author’s constant emphasis *about people’s reaction* even in passages before & after this passage as well—what words are used to describe their reactions?
- Read **Acts 4:32-37** and discuss how Jesus’ followers must have felt about their new community.

ACTION #2. As Peter and John are explaining to the crowd how the crippled man got healed, they give a very interesting description of 4 “eras” in history that are a part of God’s plan. Read **Acts 3:19-23** and then discuss: *what do you think each of these eras involve, and are there any details in the text that help you imagine what a Follower of God’s life might be like during it?*

- The fulfillment of “Christ’s suffering” will occur
- “Times of Refreshing” will come from God’s special Presence
- Heaven will spend time “receiving Christ”
- A “period of restoration of all things” will come about

ACTION #3. Read **Acts 4:1-13** and also **4:17-18** and then discuss:

- Does it seem like the religious leaders are more angry about the crippled man being healed, or with a “new influence” other than theirs arising—what words and phrases are used to show this?
- Does it seem like the religious leaders consider Jesus’ followers to be a different Faith than theirs, or just that they do not like the way they are doing their Faith—what evidence in the text might show this?
- If the angry religious leaders could change *only one-single thing* about this new community of God (while keeping everything else the same), what do you think it would be?

ACTION #4. Each person share briefly one final summary, personal take-away, “ah-ha!” insight, or new question or curiosity from today’s study.

EXTRA... FOR THOSE MOTIVATED, DEVOTED, & WITH SOME SELF-COMMAND:

GOLD CHALLENGE ...read ahead (& maybe journal about) for next study: **Acts 4:36—6:7**

PENGUIN CHALLENGE ... (=daily reading + cover full NT+Psalms during series): read **GC** plus **Psalms 11-20**