



THEMES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

WEEK EIGHT: GOD'S AMAZING POWER

We saw how in the days after the Day of Pentecost, God started to do tremendous miracles through the Apostles. In Acts 3 Peter spoke to the man at the Beautiful Gate in the temple and commanded him to rise and walk in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. At no time did the Apostles claim special powers for themselves; every healing and conversion was in the name of Jesus.

God demonstrated his power in bringing Peter out of prison; in giving a vision to Cornelius which brought about tremendous change in the thinking and attitudes of the Jewish Christians. Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road had a life-changing encounter with Jesus which had momentous consequences not only for the early Church but for us today as we benefit from his letters.

Noel Richards wonderful song describes the power that is in the name of Jesus.

There is power in the name of Jesus

We believe in His Name

We have called on the name of Jesus

We are saved, we are saved

At His name, the demons flee

At His name, captives are freed

For there is no other name that is higher than Jesus

Acts 16:6-34 (Note particularly verses 20-24)

- Have you ever felt totally discouraged; that everything was against you? Do you know what to do in these circumstances? Read verse 25: "*But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*"

Look at the following scriptures:

- "He inhabits the praises of His people." **Psalm 22:3**
- By praising God, we are reminded of the greatness of God! His power and presence in our lives is reinforced in our understanding. **Psalm 96:1-6**

- In [2 Chronicles 20:14-22](#) we read how God told the Children of Israel to go into battle with the singers leading the way. Not common military practice! However, we find that as they began to sing praises to God, the enemy was confused and killed each other.

Praise leaves no room for complaining and negativity and this allows God to come into a situation. Paul and Silas may have had good reason for complaint but verse 25 shows us that not only were they singing praises to God, but the prisoners were listening to them. What a testimony!

- Don't use the excuse that no one understands what you are going through. God knows. When you find yourself in a difficult situation, always remember: **PRAISE BRINGS THE VICTORY.** *"Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. [1 Corinthians 14:57](#)*
- What would you expect to happen in a situation where an earthquake has broken open the prison? Why was the jailer so terrified?
- Read verses 30-34 again. What can you learn from these verses?
- Why were the authorities so afraid?

We read in [Acts 5:14-16](#). how when the shadow of Peter touched the sick, they were healed. This was not saying that the shadow of Peter healed the people. It was the power of the Holy Spirit in him and his willingness to step out in faith that gave God the opportunity to demonstrate his power. Likewise, when Paul, [Acts 19:11-12](#), sent out handkerchiefs or aprons to those who were sick or suffering and they were healed, it was not anything in the articles themselves but God using Paul as an instrument of his power. God can use us provided we are filled with his love and the Holy Spirit.

- Do you believe that God can bring healing in your life? It may not be a physical healing that is needed. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can be healed from hurts and fears which we are suffering.

[Acts 21:1-13](#)

We read in these verses of the power of the Holy Spirit to direct lives. "Several days later a man named Agabus, who also had the gift of prophecy, arrived from Judea. He came over, took Paul's belt, and bound his own feet and hands with it. Then he said, "The Holy Spirit declares, 'So shall the owner of this belt be bound by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and turned over to the Gentiles.'" When we heard this, we, and the local believers all begged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. But he said, "Why all this weeping? You are breaking my heart! I am ready not only to be jailed at Jerusalem

but even to die for the sake of the Lord Jesus.” When it was clear that we couldn’t persuade him, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.”

- In many parts of the world, Christians are making such decisions as these, knowing that they may be going to their death. We don’t know how we would respond but let us pray that our love, trust and faith in Jesus would enable us to be willing to pay the ultimate price.

Acts 23:1-22

God speaks to us in many different ways: through scripture; other Christians; when we are praying, but on this occasion Jesus himself came and stood by Paul and told him that he must give testimony at Rome.

- When you pray, do you give opportunity for God to speak to you? Sometimes we have such a ‘shopping list’ for God that we never give him chance to say anything. It is so important to have a ‘quiet’ time when we listen to what the Holy Spirit might want to say us.

In these chapters of Acts, we have seen the amazing power of God. Always remember the scripture Hebrews 13:8, *“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.”* The power of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit can, and wants, to work in and through us. God can use each one of us provided we are willing and prepared through prayer, scripture, and fellowship with other Christians.



Prayer: Help me to open my heart to all God has, and wants to do, through me.