



FOOLS AND HERETICS: THE TRIBULATIONS OF THE EARLY CHURCH: PAGANS AND JEWS

September 17/18

Acts 18:1-22; Acts 19, I Corinthians

Gonzalez, chapters 1-4

1. **Proclaiming Jesus in the Synagogue (Acts 13:14–16, 42–45):**
Why did Paul and other apostles often begin their mission work in synagogues? What opportunities and tensions came from preaching Jesus as Messiah to fellow Jews?
2. **Conflict with Jewish Leaders (Acts 4:1–22):**
Peter and John were arrested for preaching in Jesus' name. Why do you think the message of Jesus was so threatening to some Jewish leaders? How do we see similar tensions in our own culture?
3. **Stephen's Speech and Martyrdom (Acts 6–7):**
Stephen traced Israel's history and accused the leaders of resisting the Spirit. How does his speech show both continuity with Israel's story and a sharp break?
4. **The Inclusion of Gentiles (Acts 10):**
What is significant about Peter's vision and his encounter with Cornelius? How did this event reshape the church's understanding of who belonged?

5. **The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15):**

Why was the question of circumcision and the law so controversial? What does the council's decision teach us about unity, cultural differences, and the gospel?

6. **Paul in Athens (Acts 17:16–34):**

How did Paul connect the gospel to the religious and philosophical background of the Athenians? What can we learn from his approach to engaging pagan culture?

7. **Accusations Against Christians (Acts 16:16–24; 19:23–41):**

Why were Christians sometimes accused of disturbing the peace or threatening the economy? How do these stories show the clash between the gospel and Roman/pagan values?

8. **Appealing to Roman Citizenship (Acts 22:22–29; 25:10–12):**

Paul used his Roman citizenship for protection and for advancing the gospel. What does this teach us about living faithfully within a political system that may not share Christian beliefs?

9. **Jewish and Roman Opposition Together (Acts 18:12–17):**

At times, both Jewish leaders and Roman officials opposed Paul. How did God use even hostile political and religious authorities to spread the gospel?

10. **The Gospel's Universal Reach (Acts 28:23–31):**

At the end of Acts, Paul preached to both Jews and Gentiles in Rome. What does this ending reveal about the nature of the gospel message and the mission of the church?