



SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 2 October 2, 2022

“How the West Was Won”

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for preserving the ancient document we call the book of Acts. As we continue to study the stories of the early Christians from this book, would you give us wisdom to understand what it means for us as a congregation today? And would you give us the courage to live out what we learn. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

1 Corinthians 15:1-10 (NIV)

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

⁹For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

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INTRODUCTION

The message of Christianity comes in all shapes and sizes. Some people emphasize our brokenness. Others emphasize God’s goodness... the need for repentance or forgiveness... having faith... walking in obedience. While all of these aspects are part of the Christian gospel, what was the essential message that ignited a movement that continues today?

The gospel of Jesus Christ is clear: Christ died for our sins; he was buried; he was raised; he appeared. This is the foundational message behind the movement that continues today.

QUESTIONS

1. With which character from the Bible do you most identify yourself?
2. If you had fifteen seconds to explain the Christian message, what would you say? If you had one minute? If you had five minutes?
3. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-10 (on page 1), Paul clarifies the gospel message very succinctly. He says: Christ died for our sins; he was buried; he was raised; he appeared. Why do Christians often add additional “requirements” to that gospel message?
4. Saul (Paul) experiences a dramatic conversion. Did your relationship with God spark in one climactic moment or was it a more gradual process?
5. Much of the Book of Acts chronicles Paul’s missionary travels in an attempt to spread the message of Jesus Christ to unreached regions. Have you ever tried to share your faith with someone who had never heard the message of Christianity before? Describe that experience. If you haven’t, what prevents you from sharing the Christian message with others who have not heard it?

FINAL APPLICATION

The message of the church “Christ died for our sins; he was buried; he was raised; he appeared” is a message for the world. What are some ways you can share that message to those who have never heard it?