

THE STORY

THE BIBLE AS ONE CONTINUING STORY OF GOD AND HIS PEOPLE

CHAPTER 28 – NEW BEGINNINGS

DISCUSSION OF GENERAL QUESTIONS

- ❶ What is God saying?
- ❷ For what does this section lead me to give thanks? (See God’s grace and promises!)
- ❸ What sins does this section lead me to confess? (See God’s expectations for his people)
- ❹ For what does this section lead me to pray? (As you ponder the Word, what needs of heart and life for yourself and others come to mind? Consider every word you read as an invitation to turn it into a prayer you speak back to your Lord!)

Key Events: Jesus’ ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, the ministries of the apostles, Stephen is martyred, the conversion of Saul (Paul)

DIGGING IN

- 1) Even after seeing the risen Lord Jesus the disciples were still not clear about his mission. They wondered out loud before Jesus’ ascension, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (pg 389) Think of a time when you were speaking with a Christian who was misgiven in portions of their beliefs. How should we respond in such circumstances?
- 2) Consider Peter’s Pentecost sermon. If Peter had printed a “theme” of his sermon in the worship folder that day, what might it have said?

- 3) What do we learn about Baptism from Peter's reply to the crowds on that Pentecost day? (pg 392)

- 4) Read the final full paragraph on page 392 beginning with "They devoted themselves...." Describe the church in those early days. What did they do? (and why did they do it???) Throughout the history of the Christian church there have been efforts of re-creation; an attempt to restore things to the "good ol' days." What are the possible dangers of such attempts?

- 5) Imagine that you were one of the Pharisees or Sadducees in Jerusalem at this time. What events in this chapter would you have found extremely frustrating?

- 6) "The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name." (page 397) How can the pain and humiliation of persecution be something that brings joy? What spiritual benefits result from persecution?

- 7) After Stephen was martyred for the faith a great persecution broke out against the Christians. How did God use this evil for the good of his church? C.S. Lewis once said, "Only a real risk tests the reality of a belief." What did he mean? How have you experienced this to be true?

- 8) What message about Christ's kingdom did God relay to Peter in the episode with Cornelius? (pages 401-403) Apply this message to Christians and congregations today.

Chapter 29: Paul's Mission

Bible Reference: Acts 13-14; 16-20; Romans 1; 3-6; 8; 12; 15; 1 Corinthians 1; 2; 5-6; 10; 12-13; 15-16; Galatians 1; 2; 5-6; 1 Thessalonians 1-5