

Acts—Series Overview

The Expansion of the Gospel Witness with Power

The book of *Acts* gives the account of God’s faithful accomplishment of all that He promised in taking the gospel to the nations. It lays the groundwork for all that will take place as His Church awaits His return. Just as Jesus lived and spoke as the Father commanded, we now are called to do in the power of His Holy Spirit. While Jesus did this perfectly, we will strive imperfectly, constantly in need of the Holy Spirit’s direction, power, and correction. Nevertheless, our faithful God will work even through our failing efforts and His gospel witness through us will prevail and penetrate every nation, tribe, & territory. For the praise of our King!

APPLYING GOD’S WORD

Please ask the Holy Spirit to guide you:

What is Your Relationship to the Covenant? How are you connected? What does that mean?

Honor that commitment! If you are a member of the covenant community, live like it. If not, join it by faith in Jesus!

Daniel—Series Overview

Holy Living in a Hostile World

The book of *Daniel* was written to console and motivate God’s people during desperate times. It shows us how to live faithfully in the midst of a faithless world. It is a book-long treatment of Christ’s command to be in the world but not of it (John 15:17). But the book of Daniel is far more than a “how-to” manual. It sets in context the whole flow of history. It shows that all of history is *His story*—the story of God’s redeeming work for His people. From the horrific discipline of the exile to the horrors of the cross, God is sovereignly directing all human history for the redemption of His saints.



Sermon Notes and Daily Devotional
First Congregational Church of Woodstock

Pastor Doug Warren
March 15th, 2020

Morning Service:

Acts 3: 17 – 26

Covenant of Transformation

1. This Restoration Is For Covenant Members (22-26).
2. Insiders Are Put Out and Outsiders Brought In (13, 16-21).
3. Christ Has Fulfilled the Covenant (18).

The Jews amazed at the healing of the man born lame hear how they should not have been surprised and are then called to repentance and faith in Christ. To help them make sense of what they should have known as recipients of the prophets and members of the covenant as God’s people, Peter connects the dots from Abraham to Moses. We too are called to faith and repentance and invited into the covenant community. Will you come?

Evening Service:

Daniel 3: 1 – 12

Swollen Head of Gold

1. Nebuchadnezzar Responds to Blessing with Pride.
2. He Demands Everyone Else to Join in His Idolatry.
3. The World Hates Us Because It Hates Jesus.

Christians sometimes refer to New England as a spiritually dark place because of the animosity here towards biblical Christianity. This is nothing new or unique to this region. It is in fact the historical norm. In this chapter of Daniel we see that hatred in full gear. There are important lessons as to how hatred towards God and His people is manifested and how the gospel equips us to resist it with love.

Taking Gathered Worship Home

They were privileged with membership in the covenant community and had been privy to all the prophets' explanations of God's plans to bless them and through them to bless the nations. Yet they missed it. They did not understand. So God in His grace provides them an opportunity to repent and believe Him anew. What about you?

Please use the devotional material below each day this week to praise Christ.

Sunday AM

READ **Acts 3:17-26; Romans 11:11-24**. DISCUSS, How does this explanation of the covenant help you better understand the gospel? How is Christ faithful to His promise to His people? PRAY for God to open our eyes to the covenant. Ask the Lord to enable us to walk in it.

Sunday PM

READ **Daniel 3:1-12; John 15:18-27**. Why does the world hate us (followers of Jesus)? Why did it hate Jesus? How are we to respond to this hatred? PRAISE God for loving us enough to allow us to suffer with Christ.

Monday

READ **Acts 3:22-26; Gen 22:15-18**. DISCUSS, Why does God take an oath? By whom does He swear? What does He promise? PRAY for your neighbors, peers, friends, & family, asking God to make them recipients of His promise. Ask Him to draw them to Himself.

Tuesday

READ **Acts 3:22-26; Deuteronomy 18:15-22; Hebrews 1:1-4**. DISCUSS, Why did God raise up prophets? What specific prophet is in view here? Why? How did Christ fulfill the covenant? MEDITATE on Christ's faithfulness. REJOICE in Christ's steadfast love. PRAY, "Lord, thank You for making us Your holy people based on Your faithfulness and not ours. Make us faithful too."

Wednesday

READ **Acts 3:17-21; Galatians 3:6-9**. DISCUSS, how does God reckon Abraham's faith as righteousness? How do we experience this blessing? How are we brought into the covenant community? PRAY, "Lord, You have been faithful, brought us near, and made us Your own. We praise You!"

Thursday

READ **Acts 3:17-26; Galatians 3:23-29**. DISCUSS, How are we made sons or daughters of God? What difference does that make in your daily life? REJOICE in the restoration that Jesus provided us. PRAY, "Lord, enable us to praise You and follow Your Holy Spirit's leading as we await Your return."

Friday

READ **Acts 3:17-26**. How has God been teaching you from this passage this week? REJOICE for Christ has not left us outside, but brought us near to Him! PRAY for our neighbors to know God and themselves as they truly are and so run to Christ.

Saturday

PREPARE today for the gathered worship service tomorrow.

READ **Acts 4:1-22**. Invite others to come with you to worship tomorrow. Pray for God's glory to be shown through us as we extend His grace and celebrate it together.

Romans 11: 22 – 24

Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.