

ACTS 1:8

Session 8: “Judea Needs The Savior”

Getting Started

Learning Goal: The state/province we live in is our modern-day Judea. As Christ's followers, we have a responsibility to carry the gospel to those who live in our state/province.

What You Need to Know: There are people in your state who are merely going to church, and they believe that doing good works will save them. Early Christians in the New Testament struggled with this challenge in their Judea, and we must confront it in our state/province today by pointing people to a relationship with Jesus.

Key/Memory Verse: Mark 16:15

Supporting Verses:

- Genesis 49:9-10
- Joshua 15:20
- Judges 1:1-10
- Ruth 4:12,16-22
- 2 Samuel 2:4
- Jeremiah 52:27
- Matthew 2:1
- Matthew 3:1
- Mark 3:7-10
- Luke 3:23-38
- Acts 15:1-5
- Mark 3:7-10
- Luke 5:17
- Galatians 1:13, 22
- John 1:12
- Romans 10:13
- Acts 4:12
- Acts 15:5-11
- Galatians 3:11
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- 1 Peter 1:18

Supply List

- Video: Acts 1:8 Challenge video, *Of course I'm a Christian!*
- Video: *The World's Fastest Indian*
- Chalkboard, dry-erase board, or large paper tablet
- Markers or chalk
- Copies of *Discussion Questions* for each person (provided with this lesson)
- Copies of this week's *Learner Material* for each person

INTERNET RESOURCES

- Acts 1:8 Challenge – www.ActsOne8.com
- International Mission Board – www.imb.org
- North American Mission Board – www.namb.net
- Southern Baptist Convention – www.sbc.net

Prepare Ahead

- ▶ **Download** the video, *The World's Fastest Indian*, at www.wingclips.com. Scroll down to “Legalism.” Note: Subscription to Wingclips is free. If the suggested video clip is no longer available, select another clip under the suggested category.
- ▶ **Download** the Acts 1:8 Challenge video, *Of course I'm a Christian!* from www.ActsOne8.com.
- ▶ **Make** copies of the *Discussion Questions* for each person.
- ▶ **Make** copies of this week's *Learner Material* for each person.

Leader Background Study



Some people put their faith in routine and rituals. They go through the motions of being “good” and invest their lives in believing things that support their own interests, but they don’t know that it’s not enough. Sure, there might be churches on every corner, but many people are wrapped up in religious routines and traditions, rather than a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. You may be inclined to think that a person in your Judea who has grown up with the church is more open to the gospel than people in your Samaria. In reality, however, familiarity with “Christianity” can make people cynical or hardened to the gospel. The New Testament church’s biggest challenges were with people who were religious and claimed to know the answers to spiritual questions. In today’s lesson, and the week to follow, we will discuss our role in our Judea.

Jesus was born in Judea. He knew it well and performed many miracles there. But the people in Judea still rejected His teachings and ultimately turned on him. Many Judeans were more concerned with laws, power, and rules than with faith. But followers of Christ would have their day among the people in Judea. Though some people still struggled with legalistic views, many would put their faith in Jesus.

Today, the church has a challenge to take Jesus’ message to its Judea. Many people in our Judea have developed skepticism toward Christianity and the church. They’ve heard countless stories of sin and corruption among those who claim to have a relationship with Jesus. Many see Christians as hypocrites. So how can we overcome those attitudes and reach our Judea? How can we help skeptical and disillusioned people see a need for a Savior? In these next two lessons, we will learn how we can reach out to those in our Judea as we continue our study of Jesus’ Acts 1:8 challenge.



Connect: “Beyond the Surface” (10 minutes)

Briefly **go over** highlights from the previous session’s *Learner Materials*. Ask if there are any questions.



Video: *Of Course I’m a Christian!*

Before you start your lesson:

Ask your class if any of them have a testimony or something the Lord has taught them this week during their prayer time about their particular people group. (You may want to call someone in the class during the week to check on their prayer times.) Ask if they would be willing to share with the class.

Activity (Younger Adults): “Reaching the Average Joe”

On a large piece of paper, **draw** the outline of a person. Above the picture, **write**

“Average person in our state/province.” **Acknowledge** that there is no way one person can represent all the characteristics of all the people in one state/province.

Ask: Based on what you know about our state/province, what are a few things you do know about people who live here? How familiar are most of them with church?

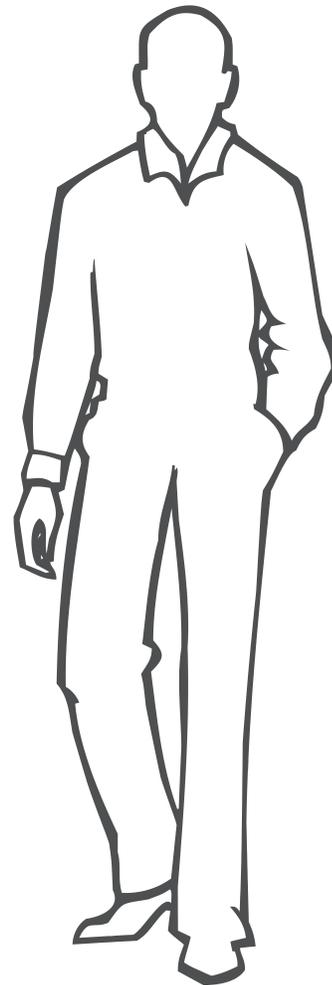
On the person you’ve drawn, **write** what class members say could be the perceptions and attitudes the average person might have toward church.

Say: Most of them probably have encountered Christianity and are somewhat familiar with the church, but the fact is that most people do not go to church regularly or have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

After drawing and writing down all of the comments, **ask:** How does the church realistically reach that person with the message of Jesus Christ? How do we break through some of those barriers?

Say: In today’s lesson, we’re going to look at the obstacles the New Testament church faced and how the early Christians handled those challenges. We also will look at some of the barriers we face in sharing Christ with our Judea and how we can confront the challenges we face.

Average person in our state/province.





Coach: “The Challenge of Judea” (40 minutes)

Explain that Judea was the scene of many events in Bible history. The Bible mentions Judea in Matthew 2:1, the account of Christ’s birth. John the Baptist began his ministry in the wilderness of Judea. Many travelers passed through Judea for various economic and religious reasons. Out of all the places Jesus told His followers to go and make disciples, Judea, where Jesus was born, might have seemed like a promising area.

Background verses:

- Genesis 49:9-10
- Joshua 15:20
- Judges 1:1-10
- Ruth 4:12,16-22
- 2 Samuel 2:4
- Jeremiah 52:27
- Matthew 2:1
- Matthew 3:1
- Mark 3:7-10
- Luke 3:23-38

For background: Judea represented the southern kingdom of Judah. The area had endured wars and conflict for many years, but an attack by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. destroyed Jerusalem. Most of the Jews were forced to leave Judea and live in Babylon. Despite all this, for the most part they kept their culture in good shape. Years later, the Jews were allowed to return to their homeland in what had become a Persian province. They re-established Jewish culture and worship in Judea.

Read aloud Genesis 49:9-10.

Say: The people of Judea were proud. Most of them were members of the tribe of Judah. The above verse, a blessing from Jacob to his son Judah, is seen as a prediction of the coming Christ.

Say: We’re going to skip ahead to the New Testament.

Read aloud Mark 3:7-10 and Luke 5:17.

After reading these verses, **ask:** What are some of the things happening in and around Judea?

As Jesus performs miracles—healing and casting out demons—many respond to His message and flock to be near Him. Lives are being changed, and the Pharisees take notice. Most of the Jewish leaders are skeptical and do not like what they see happening.

Say: We’re going to look at some of the challenges Jesus and his followers faced in Judea. The task was difficult in Judea. Many Jews did not accept Jesus’ message. The apostles would endure a lot of persecution while sharing the message of Christ. The story of much of this persecution can be found in the book of Acts.

Read aloud Galatians 1:13, 22; and Acts 15:1-5.

Ask: What were some of the challenges early Christians faced? *Saul led the persecution of many Christians in Judea. Early Christians also had to deal with false teachings that tried to impose Jewish rituals and customs on Christianity. Eventually, Saul turned his life over to Jesus and became known as Paul. He and Barnabas confronted false, legalistic teachings and spread the message of Christ wherever they went.*

Say: But legalism wasn’t just a problem in the New Testament. We still confront it today.



Video: *The World’s Fastest Indian*

Say: As you can see, our hero had some problems entering the race because he hadn’t registered. As we just talked about, the Jewish leaders also were pretty tough when it came to following rules and rituals. If you did something they didn’t agree with, they wanted no part of you. And in some cases, they wanted you imprisoned or killed.

Say: Believers today experience resistance to the gospel too. Some find that people in their own area are less receptive to the gospel than people in other countries who have never been exposed to the message of Jesus Christ. Some people in our Judea are very legalistic about religion, but Christ's sacrifice on the cross meant that we are no longer dependent on following strict laws and traditions for salvation.

Read aloud the following verses:

- John 1:12
- Galatians 3:11
- Romans 10:13
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Acts 4:12
- 1 Peter 1:18
- Acts 15:5-11

Ask:

- According to these verses, what does and doesn't lead to eternal life?
- What are some ways we can make the same impact in our Judea today?
- What are some ways you can connect with others who normally wouldn't be responsive to the gospel?

Ephesians 2:8 tells us that we are saved by grace, not works. "For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast." And Galatians 3:11 tells us, "Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because the righteous will live by faith." Good works and carrying out rituals doesn't give us eternal life. As believers we must share this message with others in a way that shows genuine concern and love for others.

Say: In some areas there is a church on nearly every corner. Like Jesus and His disciples, we are confronted by many obstacles in trying to share the gospel. Many people today are misguided about Christian faith. Many are cynical and suspicious of the church. Many believe salvation is a matter of following rules and traditions. Those challenges, however, did not stop the early Christians from continuing Christ's work. We should be equally resilient too.

Looking Ahead

We will continue our look at Judea and how we can find our role in this particular area.

Discussion Questions: “Judea and Me”

Divide the class into smaller groups to discuss the following questions. Give each person a copy of the questions (provided with this lesson). **Direct** each group to answer as many questions as time allows.

1. What are some things that stand out to you about this lesson and reaching our Judea?
2. How would you describe our Judea and the people who live here? Have most of them at least had an opportunity to hear the gospel?
3. Have you ever participated in some type of outreach ministry within our state/province? If so, share what you did and anything that stands out about the experience.
4. What are some of the challenges we face in reaching our Judea? What are some ways we might be able to overcome those challenges?
5. What are some positive things about our Judea?
6. What are some areas of need in our Judea?
7. What is one small step you could take this week to reach out to our Judea?

Challenge: “Make Your Move” (10 minutes)

There is a lot of opportunity to spread the gospel in our state/province. We live in an eclectic society with a hodgepodge of many beliefs. Even though there may be many churches in our area, many people still take pieces of different religions and add them to their own thoughts and mix it all together. They need to be told the truth. They need to understand that Jesus is the only way to have abundant and eternal life.

Start thinking about something your class could do for a weekend outreach this spring or summer:

Go to camp! Is there a local ministry—a camp for underprivileged children, a local outreach—that you can contact to see if they need help? Contact other churches for ideas about outreach projects.

Brainstorm with your class about other ways you can reach out to your Judea. Are there groups of people around your state/province who need someone to tell them about Jesus? Of course there are! The key is to locate them and develop a strategy to reach them.

Distribute a copy of the *Learner Material* to each person. **Encourage** your class to complete the questions and activities and to bring their answers with them to the next session.

Close in prayer: Pray that God will reveal the role you and your class (and church) should play in helping to share the gospel in your Judea.

Additional Suggestions

Take a class. Find a class on apologetics that will teach Christians how they can “give a reason for the hope that is in them” (1 Peter 3:15) to people who don’t understand the truth about God and Jesus. Plan to engage other people about their beliefs and what the Bible has to say on important matters of daily life.

Invite your class to visit www.ActsOne8.com to learn more about the Acts 1:8 Challenge.

Encourage your class to listen to the Acts 1:8 podcasts.

Discussion Questions: "Judea and Me"

1. What are some things that stand out to you about this lesson and reaching our Judea?
2. How would you describe our Judea and the people who live here? Have most of them at least had an opportunity to hear the gospel?
3. Have you ever participated in some type of outreach ministry within our state/province? If so, share what you did and anything that stands out about the experience.
4. What are some of the challenges we face in reaching our Judea? What are some ways we might be able to overcome those challenges?
5. What are some positive things about our Judea?
6. What are some areas of need in our Judea?"
7. What is one small step you could take this week to reach out to our Judea?

Adult Learner Material: Session 8: Judea Needs The Savior

Memory Verse: Mark 16:15

In this session, we learned about people in Judea who had religion but became misguided by their own agenda and selfish ambitions. Jesus' disciples took His message to Judea. We also must look beyond our own selfish ambitions and reach out to people in our state/province.

1. Write down some of the challenges of reaching your state/province for Christ.

2. What are some ways you plan to overcome those challenges?

Read Acts 15:1-5 and answer the following questions:

3. What were the "men from Judea" teaching? How were their teachings flawed?

4. How did Paul and Barnabas handle this particular situation?

5. Define legalism. How have you been legalistic?

6. Describe a person who would be considered "religious."

7. What is the difference between being "religious" and "born again"?

Prepare for the Next Session

In the next session, we continue our look at Judea. We will look at how early believers spread Christ's message in this part of the world and how the church today also has a responsibility to reach people in their Judea—their state/province.

1. What were some of the challenges early Christians faced? Read the following verses and write down what they faced while sharing their faith.

Acts 13:44-52

Acts 14:19-20

Acts 21:26-36

Read Acts 13:44-52.

5. What was behind the Jews' desire to persecute the Christians? What motivated them?
6. How did Paul and Barnabas respond?
7. How did the Jews react to Paul and Barnabas?
8. How did Paul and Barnabas respond when they were expelled?
9. Describe the culture of your state/province—its religious, political, socioeconomic, and historical makeup.
10. What type of opposition might churches face today as they evangelize their Judea?
11. Define "church-planting movement."
12. How might you and your class be able to respond to the spiritual needs of your Judea in the coming weeks or months?