

ACTS



Welcome to our journal for the Book of Acts. Our aim is to empower you by clarifying the Bible's message and building confidence in your understanding of the Word. While there are in-depth courses available on extracting detail and nuance from both literature and Scripture, this journal offers straightforward insights as you seek greater self-assurance in your personal Bible-reading journey.

Luke, a physician and companion of Paul, wrote both the Gospel of Luke and Acts to provide an orderly, reliable account of Jesus' life for Theophilus and other readers. He emphasizes the historical context of Jesus' life within the Roman Empire, often detailing settings, names, and places to anchor the narrative in real events.

This journal provides a structured journey through a single book of the Bible. The introductory insights are designed to prepare you for a six-week learning experience, offering tools and ample space for daily practice in reading, understanding, and applying Scripture to your life.

How to Use This Journal

The opening pages offer guidance on approaching Bible reading to draw out deeper meaning and insights. They also provide tools to help you gain confidence in the depth of your understanding. Acknowledging that interpreting a text written 2,000 years ago can be challenging, so these early resources are designed to build your assurance as you study Scripture.

Most pages in this journal outline our recommended reading pace and provide space for your observations. While church sermons often move quickly through details to reach meaning and application, this journal encourages you to slow down and focus on the details. A clear understanding of meaning emerges best through a careful, deliberate approach.

Each day, you will be assigned two chapters to read, with one being a repeated chapter. This repetition is intentional, as it supports better retention and deeper understanding. The structure is purposefully designed to foster these two outcomes. Plus, chapters in the Bible are almost always short, which allows you to read a couple at a time, repeat, and still make good progress through a whole book.

After reading, you'll have space to engage with the passage through three steps:

1. OBSERVATIONS:

Write down all your observations from the day's passage. Take the time to record what you read before feeling pressured to figure out why it was written. You'll be amazed at how much meaning surfaces when you pause to observe the passage's details. In addition to

gaining confidence by noticing the details, also think through how God presents Himself through what you read.

If you'd like some coaching on what to observe, check out this special session we recorded for you.



(OPTIONAL):

If you'd like, attempt to summarize the passage in a single sentence. This exercise aids retention and helps sharpen your focus on how the passage may speak to your everyday life.

2. APPLICATION:

Reflect on how the passage might relate to your day. Was it encouraging in a current situation? Write down how it uplifted you. Then pray about that. There are very few things that help prayer more than spending some time in God's Word before praying for His provision or direction in your life. Did it challenge you toward a new step of faith? Note how you sense God might be calling you forward. Did it convict you of sin in your life? Confess that to God and move forward with His forgiveness and freedom.

REPEAT THIS PROCESS EACH DAY.

For the next six weeks, you'll have the opportunity to immerse yourself in a chapter-after-chapter biblical story. Take time to dwell on a firsthand narrative of the movement that changed the world. Document your insights, hear God's words across the centuries, and apply the truth to your daily life.

Insights to Help

The Book of Acts is called that because it records the actions of the early Church. Some people call it the “acts of the apostles” while others are more precise and call it the “acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles.” Either way, the book is important because it connects the growth and reach of the early Church to the decisions and actions of the early Church.

Since Acts is a story of the early Church growing, its meaning unfolds like any other story. Characters can be good or bad. Teachings, dialogue, events, and even locations convey meaning.

The characters in Acts highlight two main questions:

- How does God see the Church?
- How does God see the unreached?

As you read Acts, you’ll see that characters bring developing maturity about how the early Church should function. And those characters wrestle with what the early Church should become. Then some characters reflect the reach of the gospel. While other characters reflect the opposition to the gospel. In many places, even outside of Israel, the local Jewish population served as antagonists to the gospel.

Just like in his gospel, Luke often uses figures to depict people who work with or reject God. Through these characters, he shows that the way people respond to God matters more than any external label. Especially as the book “leaves Jerusalem” and begins to travel the old world.

Another way to see the book is through two key church leaders. Peter is representative of the Church in Israel, and Paul is representative of the Church to the Gentile world.

Teachings and dialogue in Acts add further clarity. When the apostles speak, they offer insight into what people need to believe to trust Jesus. Other characters’ words demonstrate belief or disbelief. Acceptance or opposition.

The events in Acts center around significant moments in the development of the Church or the growth of the Church. The early Church made a series of decisions that affected what they did. And they made a series of trips that impacted who they reached. You will see the book alternate back and forth between when an event shaped their structure or their reach.

Location also plays a role in the story. Some people read the Book of Acts completely through a geopolitical lens. It follows the pattern Jesus gave in the Great Commission, to move out further and further away from Jerusalem. In chapter 10 an important interaction inside a non-Jewish home takes place. And by chapter 13 the book begins to focus on non-Jewish cities.

You’ll be encouraged by so many of the themes in Acts. It’s good to see and know that every generation of the Church has had to wrestle with how to organize themselves. It’s good to see opposition to the gospel then because we feel opposition to the gospel now. It’s good to see the gospel advance, churches planted, and individual stories prove that God is faithful then, which means we can trust He is still faithful. We hope your time in this book gives great courage to your faith.

We also recommend

“The Bible Project,” is a helpful resource to deepen your understanding of different types of biblical literature.

Types of literature in the Bible:

[Bibleproject.com/explore/video/literary-styles-Bible](https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/literary-styles-Bible)

Deeper digging on the Book of Acts:

bibleproject.com/videos/acts-1-12

bibleproject.com/videos/acts-13-28

How does a setting or location impact the story:

bibleproject.com/videos/setting-biblical-narrative

Deeper digging on how to read a narrative book:

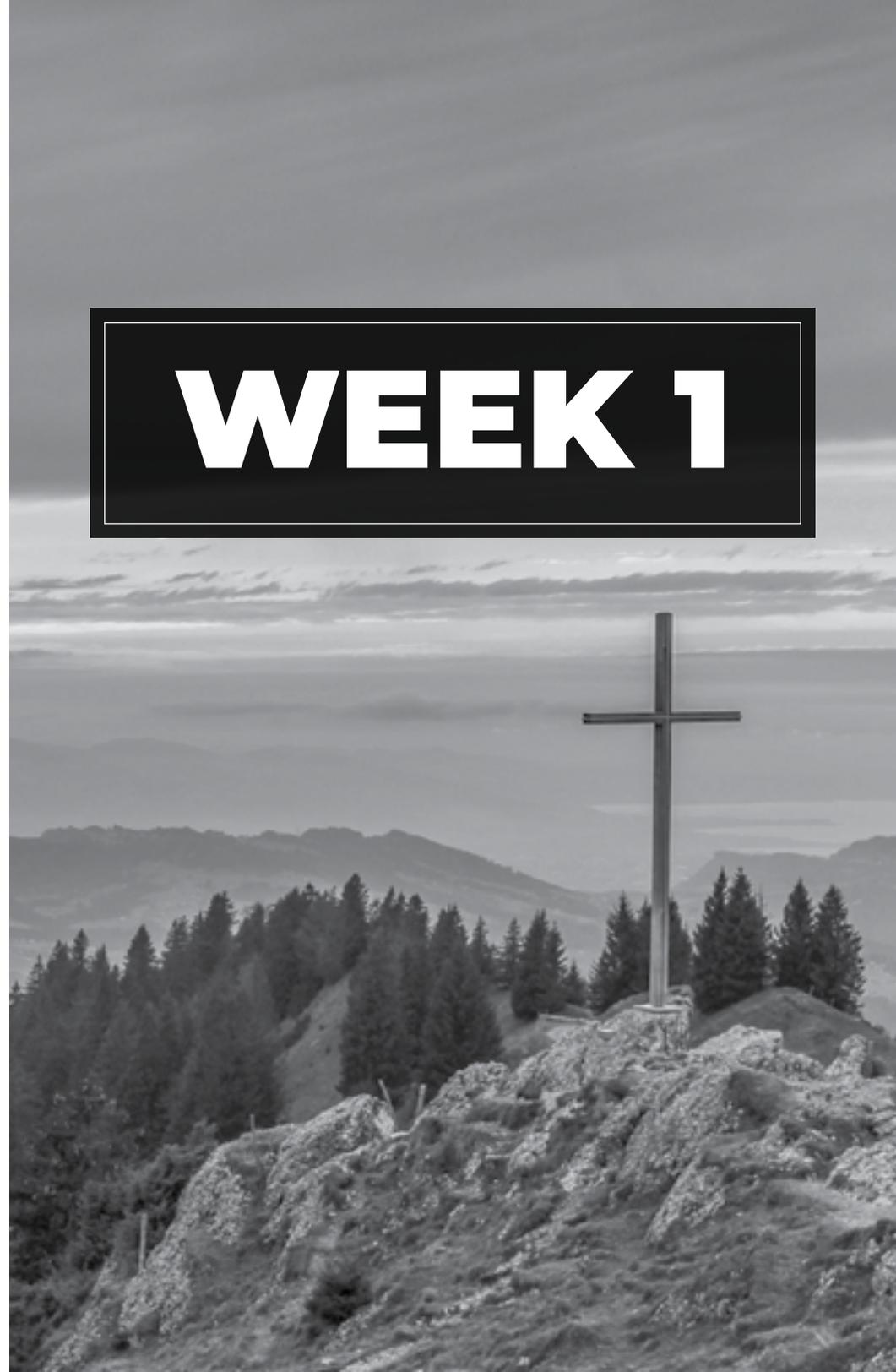
[Bibleproject.com/explore/category/how-to-read-biblical-narrative](https://bibleproject.com/explore/category/how-to-read-biblical-narrative)

And if you'd like even more resources on how to study the Bible on your own, consider our free online course:

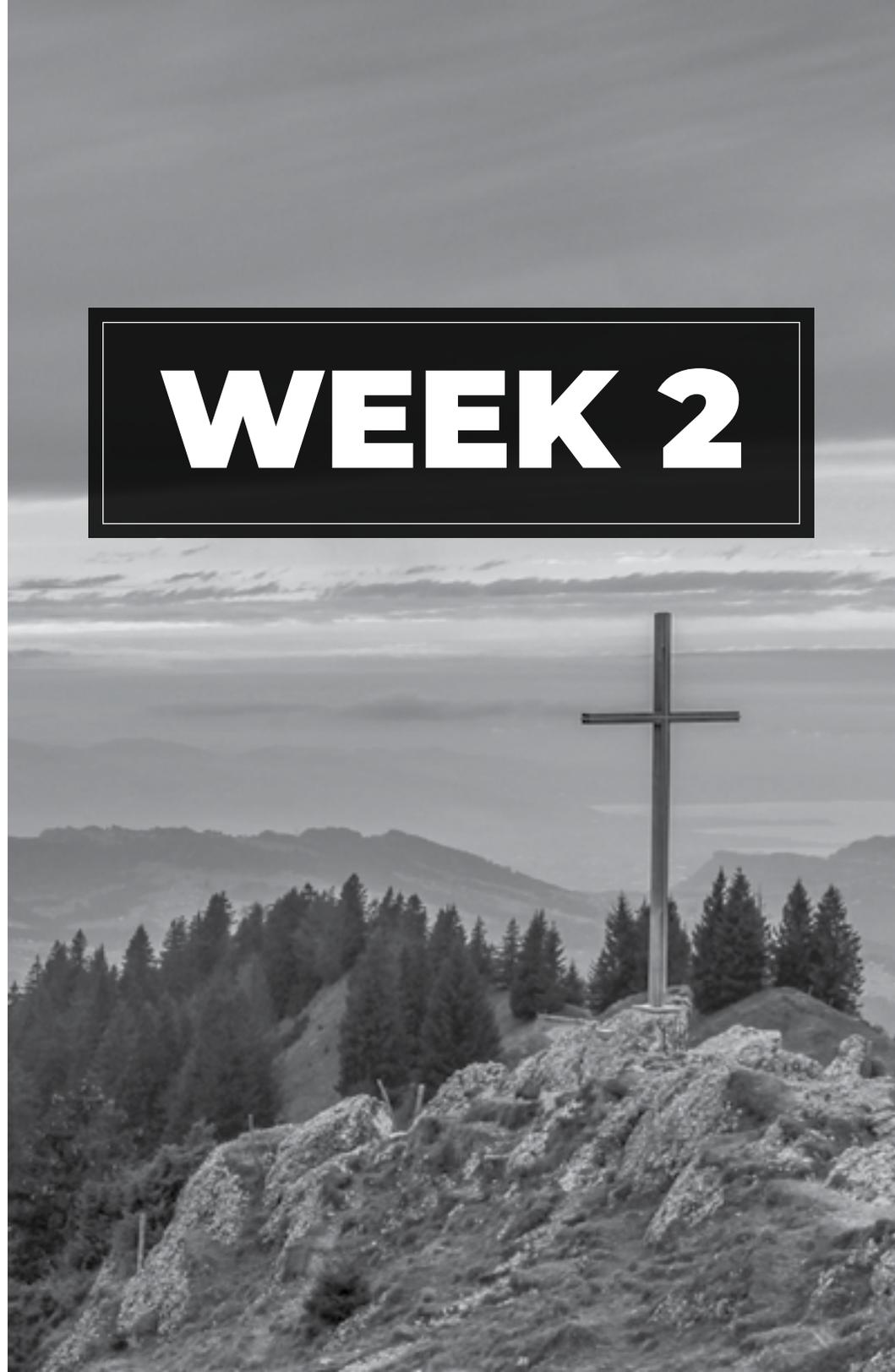
Bible Study Methods and Rules of Interpretation

hcbc.com/biblestudymethods

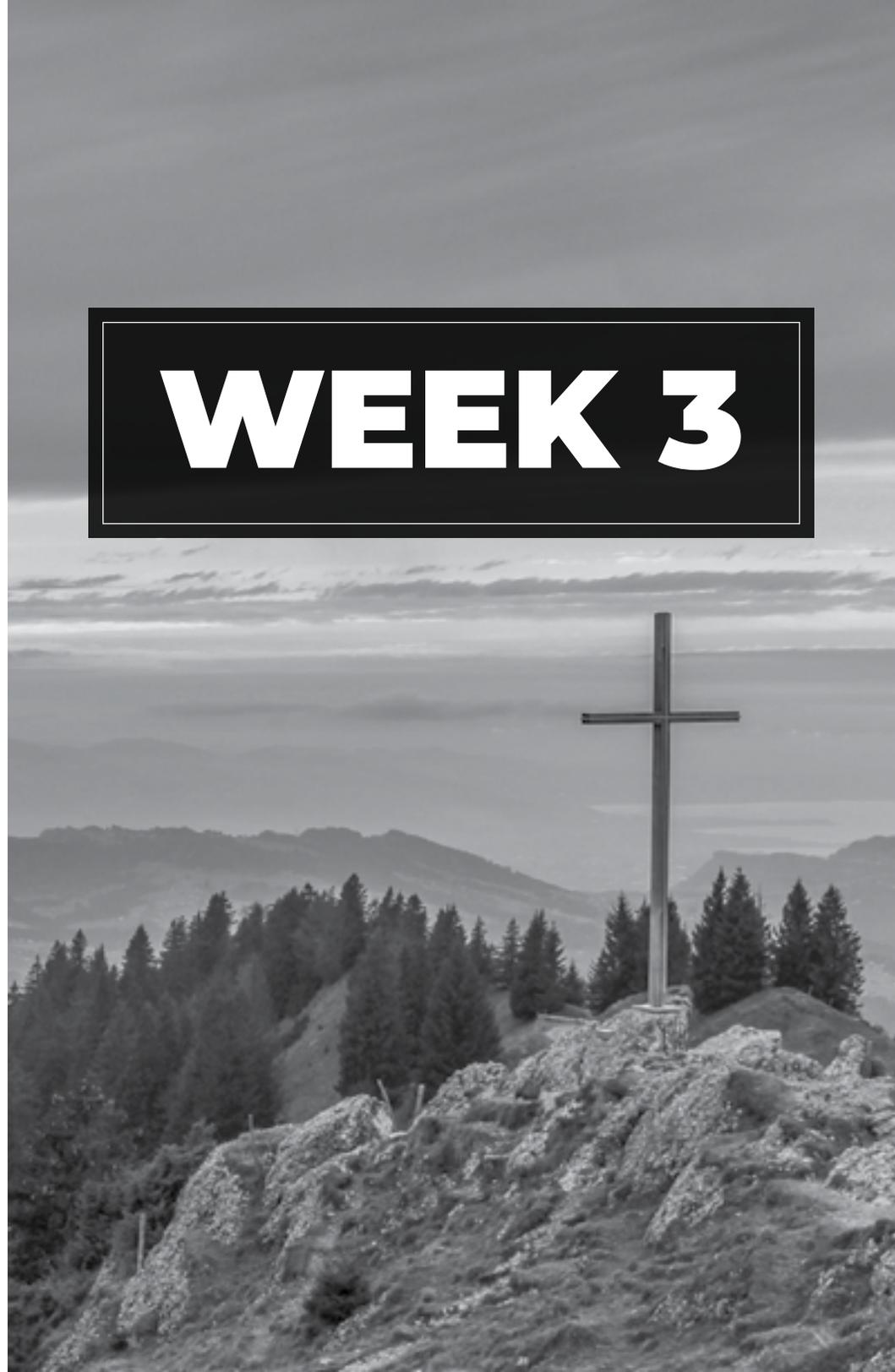
WEEK 1



WEEK 2



WEEK 3



WEEK 4



WEEK 5



WEEK 6





**HILL
COUNTRY**

BIBLE CHURCH