

Acts Lesson 24 Handout

"Tiger Woods will recover as a golfer. Whether he can recover as a person, I think is a very open question," Hume said on the show *Fox News Sunday*. "The Tiger Woods that emerges, once the news value dies out of this scandal, the extent to which he can recover, seems to me, depends on his faith. He's said to be a Buddhist. I don't think that faith offers the kind of forgiveness and redemption that is offered by the Christian faith.

So my message to Tiger would be, Tiger, turn to the Christian faith and you can make a total recovery and be a great example to the world."

The former news anchor says he became serious about his Christian faith about 11 years ago, when his son Sandy committed suicide at age 28. Hume spoke to *Christianity Today* about his faith and the criticism in response to his suggestion to Woods.

I certainly expected this. I'm nowhere near the first Christian to be mocked for his faith. It is simply a fact of life that the two most explosive words in the English language appear to be Jesus Christ. You don't even need to say them if you speak openly of Christianity. Faith engenders a tremendous reaction, a lot of it positive and a lot of it negative.

When we stand up for the truth of the Bible – for Jesus being the ONLY way to God – we will be mocked and ridiculed. Plan on it.

**KNOW
YOUR
BIBLE.**

**KNOW
JESUS.**

Romans 8:28

28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Iran—one of the greatest stories in the world today.

- 1. Persecution threatened to wipe out Iran's tiny church.**
- 2. Instead, the church in Iran has become one of the fastest growing in the world, and it is influencing the region for Christ.**

As simple as it is, such an amazing story is worth examining deeper.

GROWTH AMID PERSECUTION

The Iranian revolution of 1979 established a hard-line Islamic regime. Over the next two decades, Christians faced increasing opposition and persecution: All missionaries were kicked out, evangelism was outlawed, Bibles in Persian were banned and soon became scarce,

and several pastors were killed. The church came under tremendous pressure. Many feared the small Iranian church would soon wither away and die.

But the exact opposite has happened.

As a result, more Iranians have become Christians in the last 20 years than in the previous 13 centuries put together since Islam came to Iran. In 1979, there were an estimated 500 Christians from a Muslim background in Iran. Today, there are hundreds of thousands—some say more than one million. Whatever the exact number, many Iranians are turning to Jesus as Lord and Savior

In 1972, when he was ready to go back home, he discussed his plans with his fellow students.

They pointed out that he might be arrested at the border. One student asked, "Joseph, what chances do you have of successfully implementing your plans?"

Joseph smiled and said to himself, "Now this is typically Western thinking."

He later wrote, "Chances of success? I never thought in those terms. My thinking was in terms of obedience. I knew that the king said, 'Go,' and I had to say, 'Yes, sir,' and go."

Tson turned the question around and asked God, "What if I ask You about success?"

The Lord gave him [Matthew 10:16](#), "I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves."

The Lord said to him, "Tell me, what chance does a sheep surrounded by wolves have of surviving five minutes, let alone of converting the wolves?"

Joseph, that's how I send you: totally defenseless and without a reasonable hope of success. If you are willing to go like that, go. If you are not willing to be in that position, don't go."

Acts 6:9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen.

10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

11 Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God."

12 And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council,

13 and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law,

14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us."

15 And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

*If you can see the
past clearly - the
present will make
sense.*

1 Peter 3:15

15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

The whole Old Testament
history points us
to Jesus.

Acts 7

1 Then the high priest asked him, "Are these charges true?"

2 To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.

Abraham

3 'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.'

4 "So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living.

5 He gave him no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child.

6 God spoke to him in this way: 'Your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.

7 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,' God said, 'and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.'

8 Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

Joseph

**9 "Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him
10 and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt; so he made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.**

11 "Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our fathers could not find food.

12 When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers on their first visit.

13 On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family.

14 After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all.

15 Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our fathers died.

16 Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money.

17 "As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased.

18 Then another king, who knew nothing about Joseph, became ruler of Egypt.

19 He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our forefathers by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die.

Moses

20 "At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for in his father's house.

21 When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son.

22 Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

23 "When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites.

24 He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian.

25 Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.

26 The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?'

27 "But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us?

28 Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'

29 When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

30 "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai.

31 When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord's voice:

32 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.

33 "Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals; the place where you are standing is holy ground.

34 I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.'

35 "This is the same Moses whom they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush.

36 He led them out of Egypt and did wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the desert.

37 "This is that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.'

38 He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us.

39 "But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.

40 They told Aaron, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don't know what has happened to him!'

41 That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and held a celebration in honor of what their hands had made.

42 But God turned away and gave them over to the worship of the heavenly bodies. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets: " 'Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the desert, O house of Israel?

43 You have lifted up the shrine of Molech and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile' beyond Babylon.

44 "Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.

45 Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under

Joshua

Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David,

David

46 who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.

47 But it was Solomon

Solomon

who built the house for him.

48 "However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says:

49 " 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be?

50 Has not my hand made all these things?'

51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

52 Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute?

Luke 11:

47 Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

52b -They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—



53 you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it."

54 When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.

55 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

56 "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

57 At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him,

58 dragged him out of the city and began to stone him.

Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

*You are just frustrated
because God did not answer
your prayers like YOU
thought they should be
answered.*

Acts 8:1–2

1 And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.

*All of Israel's history
points to Jesus.*

*This was a nation of
disobedient wayward
people and yet God never
gave up on them.*

*Don't stop sharing the
good news about Jesus
with those who have
very hard hearts.*

*We have to guard ourselves
from just going through
the motions.*

*Stop caring about
what others
think.*

*We have to truly believe
what we believe so that nothing
sways us from the truth
that Jesus is the ONLY way
to God.*