
The Book of ACTS



A History of the Early Church

Gene Taylor

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An Outline of the Book

I. Introduction (1:1-5)

- A. Wrote a former treatise. (1)
- B. That treatise ended on the day of ascension. (2)
- C. Jesus commissioned the twelve apostles. (2b)
- D. Jesus had shown Himself alive by many proofs for 40 days. He spoke to the apostles concerning the kingdom of God. (3)
- E. At one appearance, Jesus charged His apostles not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (4-5)

II. On Mt. Olivet (1:6-11)

- A. The inquiry of the apostles. (5-8)
- B. The ascension. (9-11)

III. In the Upper Room (1:12-26)

- A. The return of the disciples. (12)
- B. The prayer meeting. (13-14)
- C. The place of Judas filled by Matthias. (15-26)

IV. In an Apartment of the Temple (2:1-47)

- A. The baptism of the Holy Spirit. (1-4)
- B. The result of the baptism. (5-13)
- C. The sermon of Peter. (14-36)
- D. The results of the sermon. (37-42)
- E. The unity of the church. (43-47)

V. At the Gate Beautiful (3:1-10)

- The healing of the lame man. (1-10)

VI. On Solomon's Porch (3:11-26)

- Peter's second sermon. (11-26)

VII. In the Prison (4:1-4)

- A. The arrest of Peter and John. (1)
- B. The reason for the arrest. (2)
- C. Peter and John led away. (3)
- D. The result of the preached word. (4)

VIII. Before the Sanhedrin (4:5-22)

- A. The council gathered. (5-6)
- B. The examination of the council and the defense of Peter. (7-12)
- C. The decision of the council and the answer of the apostles. (13-22)

IX. In the Upper Room (4:23 - 5:11)

- A. The praise and prayer of the disciples. (4:23-31)
- B. The unity of the believers. (4:32-37)
- C. The first church discipline: Ananias and Sapphira. (5:1-11)

X. On Solomon's Porch (5:12-16)

- Signs and wonders and the increase of the word. (12-16)

XI. In the Prison (5:17-20)

- A. The imprisonment of the apostles. (17-18)
- B. The divine release. (19-20)

XII. On Solomon's Porch (5:21a)

- The apostles teach in the temple in the early morning. (21a)

XIII. Before the Sanhedrin (5:21b-41)

- A. The assembling of the council and the apostles' trial. (21b-28)
- B. Peter's defense. (29-32)
- C. The result of the defense. (33)
- D. The advice of Gamaliel and the apostles' release. (34-41)

XIV. The Spread of the Word (5:42)

XV. On Solomon's Porch (6:1-6)

- A. Murmuring of the Grecian Jews. (1)
- B. The action of the twelve and the church to alleviate the situation. (2-6)

XVI. The Increase of the Word of God (6:7)

XVII. At the Synagogue of the Libertines (6:8-12)

- A. The power of Stephen. (8)
- B. The oppression of the Grecian Jews. (9-12)

XVIII. Stephen Before the Sanhedrin (6:13 - 7:56)

- A. The testimony of the false witnesses. (6:13-15)
- B. Stephen's defense. (7:1-53)
- C. The results. (7:54-56)

XIX. Outside the City Wall (7:57-60)

- A. Stephen was cast out. (57-58)
- B. The act of stoning and Stephen's death. (59-60)

XX. The Dispersion and the Work of Philip, Peter and John (8:1-40)

- A. At Jerusalem. (8:1-4)
 - 1. The persecution against the church. (1)
 - 2. The dispersion. (1b)

3. The burial of Stephen. (2)
4. The persecution by Saul. (3)
5. The preaching of all who were scattered. (4)
- B. The work of Philip. (8:5-13, 26-40)
 1. Leaving Jerusalem at the dispersion. (5a)
 2. The signs and preaching at Samaria which resulted in the conversion of the Samaritans and Simon. (5-13)
 3. On the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. (26-39)
 - a. The directions of the angel. (26)
 - b. The meeting of the eunuch and Philip. (26-30)
 - c. Philip's sermon. (31-35)
 - d. The baptism of the eunuch. (36-39)
 4. Azotus. (40a) Directed here by the Holy Spirit.
 5. Lydda. (40b) One of the cities in which Philip probably preached.
 6. Joppa (40b). Same as Lydda.
 7. Caesarea. (40b) The final place mentioned in Philip's preaching tour. (cf. 21:8)
- C. The work of Peter and John. (8:14-25)
 1. At Jerusalem. (14) The news of Philip's work in Samaria reaches Jerusalem. They send Peter and John.
 2. At Samaria. (15-25a)
 - a. The imparting of spiritual gifts through the laying on of the apostles' hands. (15-17)
 - b. The sin of Simon and the rebuke of Peter. (18-24)
 3. Preaching to the villages of the Samaritans. (25b)
 4. The return of Peter and John to Jerusalem. (25b)

XXI. The Conversion and Early Labors of Saul (9:1-30; cf. Gal. 1:17-24)

- A. At Jerusalem. (1-2) Saul seeks permission from the high priest to carry the persecution to Damascus.
- B. On the road to Damascus. (3-9) The appearance of Jesus to the persecutor Saul.
- C. In Damascus. (10-22)
 1. The directions of the Lord to Ananias. (10-16)
 2. The directions of Ananias to Saul and Saul's response. (17-19)
 3. The preaching of Christ by Saul in Damascus. (20-22)
- D. In Arabia. (23; Gal. 1:17a) Saul's sojourn in Arabia.
- E. Back in Damascus. (23b-25; Gal. 1:17b)
 1. The plot of the Jews to kill Saul. (23b)
 2. Saul's knowledge of the plot and his escape over the wall of the city in a basket. (24-25)
- F. In Jerusalem. (26-29; Gal. 1:17b-19)
 1. Saul's vain attempt to join himself to the disciples and the intervention of Barnabas. (26-27)
 2. Saul's visit with Peter and James, the Lord's brother. (Gal. 1:18-19)
 3. Saul's preaching in the city and the opposition of the Grecian Jews. (28-29)
- G. At Caesarea. (30a) The point of embarkation from Jerusalem to Tarsus.
- H. In Tarsus. (30b; Gal. 1:21-24) Saul's preaching in the regions of Cilicia and Syria.

XXII. At Jerusalem (9:31)

- The increase of the church through the preaching of Peter and others. (cf. 32a)

XXIII. In Lydda (9:32-35)

- A. Peter comes to the saints at Lydda on his preaching tour. (32)
- B. The healing of Aeneas. (33-34)
- C. The results of this miracle and the preaching. (35)

XXIV. At Joppa (9:36-43)

- A. The incident in Joppa that prompted Peter to come to this town. (36-37)
- B. The disciples sent to Lydda from Joppa for Peter. (38)
- C. Peter's coming to Joppa and the raising of Dorcas. (39-41)
- D. The good results of the miracle. (42)
- E. The place where Peter abode. (43)

XXV. In Caesarea (10:1-48)

- A. The man Cornelius and his vision. Messengers sent to bring Peter. (1-8)
- B. The vision of Peter in Joppa. (9-16)
- C. The arrival of the messengers. God's directions to Peter and the reception of the messengers by Peter. (17-23a)
- D. The party leaves for Caesarea. (23b)
- E. Their reception by Cornelius. (24-25)
- F. Peter's statement of the purpose of his coming. (26-29)
- G. The reply of Cornelius. (30-33)
- H. The sermon of Peter. (34-43)
- I. The baptism in the Holy Spirit of Cornelius and his household. (44-46a)
- J. The baptism in water of Cornelius and his household. (46-48)

XXVI. At Jerusalem (11:1-18)

- A. The news of the conversion of the Gentiles arrives in Jerusalem before Peter. (1)
- B. The objection of those of the circumcision. (2-3)
- C. The answer of Peter. (4-18)

XXVII. The Establishment of the Church in Antioch (11:19-21)

- A. Jerusalem (19a). The scattering of the church at the time of the death of Stephen. (cf. 8:4)
- B. A pivot to designate the dispersion of those of Jerusalem. (19a; 8:4)
- C. The places touched by those who were scattered; namely, Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. These spoke only to the Jews. (19b)
- D. Some from Cyrene and Cyprus (following the conversion of Cornelius) went to Antioch and spoke also to the Gentiles. (20-21)

XXVIII. The Early Labors of Barnabas and Saul (11:22 - 12:25)

- A. In Jerusalem. (11:22) The report of the conversion of the Gentiles reaches Jerusalem and they send Barnabas.
- B. At Antioch. (11:23-24) The rejoicing of Barnabas and his efforts in Antioch.
- C. At Tarsus. (11:25-26a) Barnabas goes to Tarsus and seeks out Saul to help in the work.
- D. At Antioch. (11:26b-30)
 - 1. The laboring of Barnabas and Saul for a whole year. The new name given. (26a)
 - 2. The coming of the prophets from Jerusalem and the prophecy of Agabus. (27-28)

3. The free-will offering of the Antioch church. (29)
 4. The offering sent by Barnabas and Saul to the Jerusalem elders. (30)
- E. At Jerusalem. (12:1-24)
1. The persecution by King Herod. The beheading of James and the imprisonment of Peter. (1-5)
 2. The miraculous release of Peter. (6-11)
 3. Peter's reception at the house of Mary, the mother of John. (12-17)
 4. The consternation and death of the soldiers. (18-19a)
 5. The speech of Herod at Caesarea and his death. (19b-23)
- F. Back to Antioch. (12:25) Barnabas and Saul return to the work of Antioch taking John Mark with them.

XXIX. The First Missionary Journey (13:1 - 14:28)

- A. At Antioch. (13:1-3)
1. The leaders of the church. (1)
 2. The directions of the Holy Spirit. (2)
 3. Barnabas and Saul set aside for their work. (3)
- B. At Selucia. (13:4) The seaport of Antioch from whence they sailed to Cyprus.
- C. At Salamis (13:5) and Paphos (13:6-12).
1. Preached in synagogues. (5a)
 2. Elymas opposition to the preaching of Barnabas and Saul before the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. (6b-8)
 3. The rebuke and miracle of Paul. (10-11)
 4. The result of this incident on the proconsul. (12)
- D. In Perga. (13:13) John Mark left to return to Jerusalem.
- E. In Antioch of Pisidia. (13:14-52)
1. Into the synagogue and the first sermon of Paul. (14-41)
 2. The desire to hear them the next Sabbath. (42)
 3. The interest of the Jews and devout proselytes. (43)
 4. The great gathering the next Sabbath. The contradictions of the Jews. (44-45)
 5. The turning to the Gentiles and the good results. (46-48)
 6. The spread of the word. (49)
 7. The persecution and departure from the city. (50-51)
 8. The joy of the disciples in spite of trouble. (52)
- F. At Iconium. (14:1-6a)
1. Into the synagogue and the conversion of many Jews and Greeks. (1)
 2. The opposition of the Jews. (2)
 3. They stay some time in spite of opposition, God granting them signs and wonders. (3)
 4. The city divided. (4)
 5. A plot laid for stoning, so they leave. (5-6a)
- G. At Lystra. (14:6b-20)
1. A general statement of work. (6b-7)
 2. The healing of the lame man. (8-10)
 3. The multitudes worship them as gods. (11-13)
 4. The objection of Paul and Barnabas. (14-18)
 5. The Jews from Antioch and Iconium persuade the multitudes against the apostles. Paul is stoned and left for dead. (19)
 6. Paul is raised and returns to the city (20).
 7. Timothy, his mother, and grandmother converted here (cf. 16:1; 1 Tim. 1:5).

- H. At Derbe. (14:21a) Preached the gospel here. Many were converted.
- I. At Lystra. (14:22-23) Confirmed the souls of the disciples and appointed elders.
- J. At Iconium. (14:22-23) Same as the above.
- K. At Antioch. (14:22-23) Same as the above.
- L. Through the Provinces of Pisidia and Pamphylia. (14:24)
- M. At Perga. (14:25a) The word was spoken here.
- N. At Attalia. (14:25b) They boarded the ship.
- O. In Antioch. (14:26-28)
 - 1. Their return and the gathering of the church to hear all that God had done. (26-27)
 - 2. They tarry here some time. (28)

XXX. The Trouble Over Circumcision and The Jerusalem Council (15:1-35)

- A. False teachers trouble the people. (1)
- B. Paul and Barnabas sent to Jerusalem. (2-3)
- C. Their reception in Jerusalem. (4-5)
- D. The elders and apostles all meet to settle this dispute. (6-29)
 - 1. Peter's speech. (6-11)
 - 2. Paul and Barnabas tell of their work. (12)
 - 3. The speech of James. (13-21)
 - a. The letter on circumcision. (21)
 - b. The work in Antioch. (30-35)
 - 4. Peter's visit to Antioch. (Gal. 2:11-21)

XXXI. The Second Missionary Journey (15:36 - 18:22)

- A. In Antioch. (15:36-40)
 - 1. The desire to revisit the churches established on the first tour. (36)
 - 2. The desire of Barnabas to take John Mark. (37)
 - 3. The disagreement and the parting of the two men. (38-40)
- B. Through the provinces of Syria and Cilicia. (15:41) Confirmed the churches in this region. (cf. Gal. 1:21-24)
- C. At Derbe. (16:1a) Confirmed the church.
- D. At Lystra. (16:1b-5)
 - 1. Timothy, his faith, and his ancestry. (1b)
 - 2. The good report of Timothy by Paul in preparation for their work. (2)
 - 3. The circumcision of Timothy by Paul in preparation for their work. (3)
- E. Through the cities of Iconium and Antioch to whom they delivered the decrees of the Jerusalem council. The churches were greatly strengthened. (16:4-5)
- F. Through the region of Phrygia and Galatia. (16:6a; cf. Gal. 4:13; 1 Cor. 16:1)
- G. While in the above stated regions, they were forbidden by the Spirit to speak the word in Asia. (16:6b) So they passed through the province of Mysia and assayed to go into the province of Bithynia, but again they were forbidden.
- H. At Troas. (16:8b-10)
 - 1. Arrival at Troas. (8b)
 - 2. The vision of the man from Macedonia, his message, and the response of the apostle. (9-10)
- I. At Samothrace. (16:11a) A small island where they anchored overnight.
- J. At Neapolis. (16:11b) A large seaport city. No time spent here.
- K. In Philippi. (16:12-40)
 - 1. A description of Philippi. (12)
 - 2. The attendance of Paul and Silas at the prayer meeting. (13)

3. The conversion of Lydia and her household. (14-15)
 4. The incident of the maiden with the evil spirit. (16-18)
 5. The result of the casting out of the evil spirit. (19-24)
 6. The praise and prayer meeting in jail. (25)
 7. The earthquake and the release of the prisoners. (26)
 8. The desperation of the jailer. (27)
 9. The intervention of Paul. (28)
 10. The inquiry of the jailer for salvation. (29-30)
 11. The reply and explanation of the reply given. (31-32)
 12. The results. (33-34)
 13. The attempted release of Paul and Silas by the authorities and their reply. (35-57)
 14. The report of Paul's reply to the magistrates and the action of the magistrates. (38-39)
 15. The final visit with brethren at the house of Lydia. (40)
- L. Passing through the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia. (17:1a)
- M. At Thessalonica. (17:1b-10a)
1. Entering the synagogue and reasoning for three Sabbaths that it behooved Christ to suffer and that Jesus is the Christ. (1b-3)
 2. Many respond. (4)
 3. The Jews, full of jealousy, stir up a persecution. (5a)
 4. The assault on the house of Jason. (5b)
 5. The trial of Jason and certain brethren. (6-9)
 6. The brethren send them away by night. (10a)
- N. At Berea. (17:10b-14a)
1. Entering the synagogue. (10b)
 2. The noble attitude of the Berean Jews. (11)
 3. The good results. (12)
 4. The Jews of Thessalonica stir up opposition and Paul is taken by the brethren down to the sea to escape. Silas and Timothy remain. (13-14a)
- O. In Athens. (17:15-34)
1. The brethren from Berea go with Paul as far as Athens and take back the command for Silas and Timothy to join Paul. (15)
 2. Paul is provoked in the spirit and reasons in the synagogue. (16-17)
 3. The contact with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers and the Areopagus. (18)
 4. Paul's message on the unknown God. (19-31)
 5. The results. (32-34)
- P. In Corinth. (18:1-17)
1. Coming to Corinth. (1)
 2. His meeting and abiding with Priscilla and Aquila. (2-3)
 3. Reasoning in the synagogue. (4)
 4. The arrival of Silas and Timothy. (5a)
 5. Paul preaches openly. (5b)
 6. The opposition of the Jews and Paul's turning to the Gentiles. (6)
 7. The services in Titus Justus' house. (7)
 8. The results of the preaching. (8)
 9. The encouraging vision by night. (9-10)
 10. The time spent there: one year and six months. (11)
 11. Paul's trial before Gallio. (12-16)
 12. The beating of Sosthenes. (17)

- Q. At Cenchrea. (18:18) Paul cut his hair in fulfillment of a vow. Accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.
- R. In Ephesus. (18:19-21)
 - 1. Enters the synagogue and reasons with the Jews. (19)
 - 2. Their desire that he would abide a longer time. (20)
 - 3. His departure and promise to return. (21)
- S. At Caesarea. (18:22a) Saluted the church.
- T. In Antioch. (18:22b) Back home.

XXXII. The Third Missionary Journey (18:23 - 21:16)

- A. In Antioch of Syria. (18:23a) Having spent some time there, Paul prepares for the third journey.
- B. Through the Provinces of Galatia and Phrygia. (18:23b)
- C. At Ephesus. (18:24 - 19:41)
 - 1. Apollos, teaching the baptism of John, is corrected by Priscilla and Aquila. (18:24-28)
 - 2. Paul corrects some on the baptism of John, baptizes them, lays hands on them, and they receive spiritual gifts. (19:1-7)
 - 3. Paul preaches in the synagogues and the school of Tyrannus. (19:8-12)
 - 4. Exorcists overcome by evil spirit. The name of the Lord magnified. (19:13-20)
 - 5. Paul's far-reaching plans. (19:21-22)
 - 6. The riot of the silversmiths. (19:23-41)
- D. At Troas. (2 Cor. 2:12-13)
 - 1. A door opened for the word. (12)
 - 2. Greatly troubled at the failure to find Titus. Presses on into Macedonia. (13)
- E. In Macedonia. (Acts 20:1-2)
 - 1. A tender parting. (1)
 - 2. Spoke on the way in Macedonia. (2)
- F. At Corinth in Greece. (20:3)
 - 1. Paul's labors with the Corinthian church. (Of which we have no details)
 - 2. He wrote the epistle of Romans. This is borne out in the epistle itself. (Rom. 15:23-26; 16:23)
 - 3. We would conclude that the letter to the Galatians was written from here also.
 - 4. Learning of the plot for his life changes Paul's plans.
 - 5. A collection was taken from here by Paul according to previous instructions. (cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-2)
- G. At Philippi. (20:6a) Sailed from here after "the days of unleavened bread," on his way to Jerusalem.
- H. In Troas. (20:6b-13)
 - 1. The seven day stay. (6b)
 - 2. The worship on the first day of the week. (7)
 - 3. Paul's sermon. The raising of Eutychus. (8-13)
- I. At Assos. (20:14a) Luke met Paul here after Paul had walked from Troas.
- J. At Mitylene. (20:14b) Overnight stop.
- K. Over Against Chios. (20:15a) Same as the above.
- L. At Samos. (20:15b) Same as the above.
- M. At Miletus. (20:15c-38)
 - 1. Paul's address to the Ephesian elders. (18-35)
 - 2. Paul's past ministry, as exemplified at Ephesus. (21, 26)

3. His attitude to his own future. (22-24)
 4. His hearers would see him no more. (25)
 5. Conditions at Ephesus in the near future. (28-30)
 6. The self-sacrificing spirit of Paul's example. (31-35)
- N. At Cos. (21:1a) Anchored overnight.
- O. At Rhodes. (21:1b) An overnight stop for Paul's ship.
- P. At Patara. (21:1c-2) Change of ships.
- Q. In the Sight of Cyprus on the Left. (21:3a)
- R. At Tyre. (21:3b-6)
1. Tarried seven days. (3b-4a)
 2. They tried to prevent Paul from going to Jerusalem. (4b)
 3. Sorrowful parting. (5-6)
- S. In Ptolemais. (21:7) Saluted the brethren and stayed one day.
- T. In Caesarea. (21:8-14)
1. Stayed with Philip, the evangelist, and his four gifted daughters. (8)
 2. Prophetic promise of affliction in Jerusalem. (9-14)
- U. In Jerusalem. (21:15-16) On to Jerusalem to stay in the home of Mnason of Cyprus.

XXXIII. At Jerusalem (21:17 - 23:30)

- A. Paul's salutation and advice of the elders. (21:17-26)
- B. Jews from Asia cause Paul's arrest. (21:27-40)
- C. Paul addresses the Jewish mob. (22:1-21)
- D. The response of the mob. Paul imprisoned. (22:22-30)
- E. Paul addresses the council. (23:1-10)
- F. The Lord encourages Paul. (23:11)
- G. The plot for Paul's life and his escape. (23:12-30)

XXXIV. At Antipatris (23:31-32)

- The soldiers traveled this far and returned. The horsemen went on with Paul.

XXXV. In Caesarea (23:33 - 26:32)

- A. Paul is brought before Felix, the governor. (23:33-35)
- B. Paul's trial before Felix the governor. (24:1-22)
- C. Paul's two-year imprisonment in Caesarea. (24:23-27)
- D. Festus visits Jerusalem. (25:1-6a)
- E. Paul's trial, defense, and appeal to Caesar. (25:6b-12)
- F. Paul's defense before King Agrippa. (25:13 - 26:32)

XXXVI. The Voyage to Rome (27:1 - 28:31)

- A. At Sidon. (27:3) A stop for refreshment.
- B. Under the Lee of Cyprus. (27:4)
- C. At Myra. (27:5-6) Changed ships.
- D. At Cnidus. (27:7a) Over against this place with difficulty.
- E. Under the Lee of Crete. (27:7b)
- F. At Fair Havens. (27:8-15)
 1. Came into port. (8)

2. Because of the weather, Paul advised to stay. (9-10)
 3. The centurion listened to the captain who advised that they sail on. (11)
 4. They sail for Phoenix. (12)
- G. Claudi. (27:16-44)
1. Strengthened the ship. (16)
 2. Driven by the wind for 14 days. (17-27)
 3. Landed on Melita. (28-44)
- H. Melita. (28:1-10)
1. Barbarians show them much kindness. (1-2)
 2. Incident of Paul and poisonous snake. (3-6)
 3. Paul heals Publius' father and many others. (7-9)
 4. Leave with many honors on a ship from Alexandria. (10)
- I. At Syracuse. (28:11-12) Stayed there three days.
- J. At Rhegium. (28:13a) Stop on the way.
- K. At Puteoli. (28:13b-14) Found brethren and tarried with them 7 days.
- L. The Market of Appius and the Three Taverns. (28:15)
- M. At Rome. (28:16-31)
1. Paul dwells alone with a guard. (16)
 2. Paul speaks with the chief Jews. (17-29)
 3. He stays two years in his own hired dwelling preaching the kingdom of God. (30-31)

Lesson One:

An Introduction to the Book

I. The Author

There are no serious doubts as to the authorship of the book of Acts of the Apostles. Luke is assigned as its author. As early as the last part of the 2nd century, Irenaeus cites passages so frequently from the Acts of the Apostles that it is certain that he had constant access to the book. He gives emphasis to the internal evidence of its authorship. Tertullian also ascribes the book to Luke, as does Clement of Alexandria. That Luke is the author of the book of Acts is evident from the following.

- The Preface of the Book. The writer addresses Theophilus (Luke 1:3), who is the same individual to whom the gospel of Luke was also directed, and makes reference to a “former treatise” which dealt with “all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was received up” (1:1-2). This is very evidently a reference to the third gospel.
- The book of Acts and the gospel of Luke are identical in style, as a number of scholars have pointed out and demonstrated.
- The book of Acts comes as an historical sequel to the gospel of Luke, taking up with the very events, and at the point where the gospel of Luke concludes, namely the resurrection, the appearances following the resurrection, and the commissioning of the Apostles to the task for which they had been selected and trained by the Lord, and the ascension of Jesus.
- Several portions of the book of Acts are written in the first person plural, called the “we” sections of the book, signifying that the writer was an eye-witness of what he wrote and the companion of Paul (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1; 28:16).
- Both the gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles frequently use medical terminology, which seems sufficient to indicate the profession of Luke, “the beloved physician” (Col. 4:14).

II. When the Book of Acts Was Written

The time of the writing of the Book of Acts seems to coincide reasonably with the close of its historical account. Paul is in prison, still alive in Rome. Evidently, the history recorded in Acts would not have so abruptly ended, if Paul’s death had taken place and it is unlikely that such an event as the destruction of Jerusalem would not have even been mentioned in such an historical account, if it had already occurred. We, therefore, place the date of writing of Acts of the Apostles as prior to 70 A.D. and after Paul reached Rome, probably 63 A.D., or thereabout.

III. To Whom the Book of Acts Was Written

Although the record of Acts is addressed personally to Theophilus, as was the gospel of Luke, it was intended surely for a much wider reading. The origin of Christianity among the Jews, as a prepared people, is prominently noticed in the facts of the beginning (Acts 2). It is also emphasized that the unflinching practice was to preach the gospel first always to the Jews.

However, much of the book is concerned with the history of the transfer of the center of interest in the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Antioch, and from the Jewish phase of gospel preaching to the concentrated effort to spread the gospel to the whole Gentile world. This is portrayed as the Lord’s own plan (Acts 1:8, “you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth”). Luke does not turn away from his purpose in the gospel written by him, namely to present the origin and history of Christianity from the viewpoint of one outside of Judaism.

The book of Acts, therefore, is an historical account adapted to meet the need of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. This reflects Luke's association with Paul and becomes the basis of what is often thought to be Pauline influence on the record.

IV. The Purpose of the Book of Acts

The common purpose of both the Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles is expressed in Luke 1:4. Additionally, there are a number of specific aims.

1. **An *Historical Motive*.** A comparison of Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:5, shows a continuation in the historical motive. The subject of the gospel of Luke is "the things that Jesus began to do and teach." The book of Acts gives the history of the continuation of the work that Jesus had begun as the Holy Spirit carried on His Purpose and that work in the lives of the Apostles. This continuation was outlined in the purpose expressed by the Lord in Acts 1:8, just before His ascension.

2. **The *Defense Motive*.** In addressing himself to the Roman world, Luke constantly calls attention to the fact that the gospel enjoyed an interested hearing at the hands of government officials. In every contact with government officials recorded in Acts, Christianity either received a favorable hearing or was ignored, but never opposed. Luke, no doubt, gave emphasis to these favorable attitudes upon the part of the officials for the purpose of contrast in the face of increasing hostility toward Christianity.

3. **The *Biographical Motive*.** While Luke's record is primarily devoted to the revelation of the gospel and its being preached throughout the world, the beginning, growth and spread of the church of the Lord as a consequence, and to the work of the Holy Spirit in the revelation of Divine truth and its confirmation; yet, in a very pronounced way, he divides the historical record of Acts into two different sections biographical in nature by recording in the first section (1 through 12) the history of Peter's work, and in 13 through 28 a record of the work of the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul.

Luke's story is a vivid picture of the use and employment of humanity in the persons of Peter and Paul, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, Timothy and Titus, in the fulfillment of the purposes which had brought Jesus Christ into the world and of God's purpose from eternity in the accomplishment of human redemption through the preaching of the gospel.

V. Contents and Character of the Book of Acts

There are five lines of historical reference distinct and continuing that can be definitely traced throughout the Book of Acts. Just as the gospels give us the history of the coming of the Messiah and His life upon the earth, so the book of Acts of the Apostles records for us the history of the beginning, growth and spread of Christianity for at least the first 30 years, from the ascension of Jesus to the imprisonment of Paul.

It has been suggested that the book of Acts furnishes the historical setting for the most of the New Testament epistles, especially those of Paul, and that these epistles can be placed like jewels in the setting of its history. As an analysis of the book and its historical data, we suggest five lines of historical reference:

1. **The Apostolic Office and Work.** The book derives its name from the work of the Apostles of our Lord and from this record of their work we are able to learn of the Apostolic office in operation and the work that Jesus selected and trained the Apostles to do, as well as the place they fill in the church through the work which they did.

- They were witnesses for Christ (1:8; 1:21-22).
- They were ambassadors of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:20; Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-32). They were authorized to speak for Him and to make known His Divine decrees unto all the Nations of the earth. This testimony which they bore is binding both in Heaven and on earth upon all men forever (Matt. 18:18).

- They sat upon thrones with authority to rule over the church of our Lord (Matt. 19:28; Acts 2:42; Gal. 2:1-9; 1 John 4:6).
 - They were “earthen vessels” expendable in the purpose of Christ to reveal the will of God (2 Cor. 4:7).
2. The book could have been called the “Work of the Holy Spirit” in the scheme of redemption.
- The Spirit began His mission which was promised by Christ (John 14:16-17,25-26; 16:7-15; Acts 1:8) on the day of Pentecost (2:33; 2:15-21; 2:1-4).
 - The mission of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts can be set forth in the following four points:
 - 1) The revelation of the gospel (2:4; I Cor. 2:10-13; Eph. 3:3-5).
 - 2) The confirmation of the word revealed by the miracles and signs which followed (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 6:6-8; 8:6-13; 19:6; Heb. 2:1-4).
 - 3) The conviction and conversion of sinners (John 16:8-11). This was accomplished through the power and influence of Divine truth as the Spirit enabled the Apostles to preach it.
 - 4) Guide, direct, and edify early Christians through gifts bestowed of an extraordinary nature and through the revelation of the will of God concerning their lives and the accomplishment of His purposes (5:32; 4:31; 9:31; Rom. 8:14).

3. Another line of historical reference prominent in the book is the story of the preaching of the gospel. In this record, the message preached can be identified; and in addition to what they preached, we can learn much of how they preached under different circumstances.

4. An additional line of historical study in the book is that of conversion. Several conversions are related which do not bear testimony concerning human experiences but which passed under the observance of the Holy Spirit twice: 1) When they occurred the preacher was guided by the Holy Spirit; 2) when they were recorded the Holy Spirit recorded them. All of these records of conversions have several things in common.

- The gospel was preached. There is not a single record of anybody being converted by some miraculous experience separate from the power and influence of Divine truth.
- When people were saved by the power of the gospel, it was always because they believed the truth was preached.
- Faith in the gospel which they heard always produced the works of obedience to the will of God which that gospel commanded them to perform.

5. Another prominent theme of historical evidence which can be easily traced all through the book is the story of the church, what it was, of whom it consisted, its organization, its mission and work, its worship and its growth and development. From all this history we can learn what the church was in the beginning under Apostolic guidance, as God designed it and as Christ built it, and therefore, what it must be today.

Lesson Two: The Ascension

Lesson Text: Acts 1:1-26

A Charge to the Apostles (vv. 1-5)

1. What former writing is connected with this book?
2. Who is Jesus addressing in verses one through eleven?
3. What were the “many infallible proofs, mentioned in verse three?
4. Taking context into consideration, what is “the Promise of the Father” in verse four?

A Question about the Kingdom (vv. 6-8)

5. What likely gave rise to the question asked by Jesus’ apostles in verse six? What do you think they meant by this question?
6. Does Matthew 21:43 have any bearing on the question asked in verse six? Explain.
7. What is Jesus’ answer to the question posed in verse six? Why do you think He answers as He does?
8. What would the coming of the Holy Spirit do for the apostles? Why did Jesus want them to wait for its coming before giving their testimony?
9. What was the nature or purpose of the power referred to by Jesus?

The Ascension (vv. 9-11)

10. How would the ascension of Jesus aid the apostles’ understanding in times to come?
11. Who spoke to the apostles about the ascension? Why?

The Upper Room (vv. 12-14)

12. What groups of people gathered in the upper room?
13. With what were the people in the upper room occupied at this time?

Judas' Replacement (vv. 15-26)

14. Are the Old Testament references applied to Judas in verses 15 through 20 direct prophecies of him? How do they concern him?
15. In light of verses 21 through 26, define and discuss the nature and function of the apostolic office.
16. How many were proposed to take the place of Judas? Why only this number?
17. Who was chosen? How was the choice manifested?

Lesson Three: The Beginning

Text: Acts 2:1-47

The Coming of the Holy Spirit (vv. 1-13)

1. Of what significance was the Day of Pentecost in the Old Testament?
2. Describe the phenomena observed on the Pentecost recorded in this chapter.
3. What is meant by “other tongues?” What was the purpose of these “other tongues?”
4. What is there about the phenomena of Pentecost that justifies its being described as “baptized in the Holy Spirit?”
5. What were the reactions among the people to the happenings of Pentecost?

Peter’s Sermon (vv. 14-36)

6. Since Peter’s sermon falls naturally into three main parts which are listed below, give a heading or a brief summary for each.
 - a. Verses 14-21.
 - b. Verses 22-36.
 - c. Verse 37-40.
7. What is meant by “the last days?”
8. How would you summarize Peter’s explanation of the significance of that moment in the history of the world?
9. What is Peter’s conclusion?

The Reactions of the People (vv. 37-42)

10. Since Jesus had said that the Holy Spirit would “convict the world of sin” etc. (John 16:8), considering verse 37, explain the means by which the Spirit did His work.
11. Considering verse 21, why the question of verse 37? Had they not already been told? Explain.

12. Explain the relationship between verse 38 and verse 21. (cf. Matthew 7:21-23 and Acts 22:16)
13. Explain the meaning of the phrase “for the remission of sins” (v. 38) by using the context and the parallel passage, Matthew 26:28. Will either of these passages allow the phrase to mean “because of the remission of sins?”
14. What is the “gift of the Holy Spirit” that is referred to in verse 38?
15. What was done by those who received Peter’s word? What lesson(s) is to be learned here?
16. What does this passage teach about who should be baptized?

A Portrait of the Church (vv. 43-47)

17. Describe the life of the church in the period immediately after Pentecost.
18. Who was doing “wonders and signs” at this point?

Lesson Four: Persecution from Without

Text: Acts 3:1 - 4:37

The Healing of a Lame Man (3:1-11)

1. Describe the miracle performed by Peter.
2. From the details of this account of the miracle and from what is said of it in Acts 4:13-22, what establishes the certainty and greatness of the cure?
3. What was the reaction of the people to this healing?

Peter's Second Sermon (3:12-26)

4. Who comprised the audience for this sermon? How was the sermon especially adapted to the people to whom it was addressed?
5. Give an analysis of the sermon and its two main parts listed below.
 - a. Verses 12-16.
 - b. Verses 17-26.
6. List the purposes of repentance as they are stated in verses 19 and 20.
7. What is meant by the phrase "the times of restoration of all things?"

The Beginning of Persecution: Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin (4:1-22)

8. What Jewish party (sect) was the leader of this early opposition to the apostles? What was the reason for this opposition?
9. How is verse four an illustration of the power of the apostolic message even amidst adverse circumstances?
10. From details given in verses five through twelve, show how Peter takes control of the situation using it for his own purposes.
11. From verses 13 and 14, list the four facts of the case that confronted the Sanhedrin and show the importance of each in relation to the others and to the overall situation. To what conclusion(s) do these facts point?

12. What would have been the honorable course for the Sanhedrin to follow? What was the Sanhedrin determined to do?

The Reaction of the Apostles (4:23-31)

13. What was the reaction of the other apostles when Peter and John told them what happened? What accounted for their boldness?

14. Describe the help and inspiration the example of Peter and John provides disciples today as they face similar situations and tasks.

A Second Portrait of the Church (4:32-37)

15. What are some features of the status of the church given in this text?

16. What can be said about the effect of persecution or opposition on the church?

17. How was provision made for the needy among believers?

18. Who was Barnabas? What does the text record him doing? What characteristics does this act reveal about him?

Lesson Five: Ananias and Sapphira

Text: Acts 5:1-42

Ananias and Sapphira (vv. 1-11)

1. Compare and contrast the two attacks that Satan has made on the church, the one in chapter four and this one in chapter five.
2. Give a full explanation of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira.
3. What was the effect of the death of Ananias and Sapphira upon the church?
4. Does this passage illustrate any beneficial effect that can be accomplished through church discipline? Explain.

A Third Portrait of the Church (vv. 12-16)

5. What seems to be the condition of the church after facing two problems?
6. How were outsiders generally viewing the church at this time?

The Apostles Before the Sanhedrin (vv. 17-42)

7. What was the motivation of the rulers when they arrested the apostles?
8. With what Jewish sect was the high priest identified? How does that help to explain what was behind the persecution?
9. How do verses 19 and 20 represent a bold challenge to the:
 - a. Apostles?
 - b. Sanhedrin?
10. What was found by the officers the morning after the arrest of the apostles?
11. What would have been a reasonable reaction on the part of the rulers to the report of the officers? What was their reaction? What does their reaction indicate about the character of these men?
12. Since the apostles are brought before the Sanhedrin anyway, was their release from prison useless? Explain.

13. Discuss the importance of the principle set forth in verses 27 through 29 as furnishing a precedent to show the responsibility of a disciple of Christ in such a situation.
14. Compare verse 33 with 2:37. How was the effect of the apostolic message similar in the two cases? How was it different? Why the difference?
15. Who was Gamaliel? How did God use him to save the apostles? What advice did he offer?
16. Did the Jewish rulers act consistently in applying Gamaliel's advice? What did they do?
17. How did the apostles view the beating they received?

Lesson Six: The Martyr Stephen

Text: Acts 6:1 - 7:54

Seven Chosen (6:1-7)

1. What problem arose as the church grew? Who were the “Grecian widows?”
2. Explain the “daily ministration” in light of 2:44ff and 4:32-35.
3. What was the apostolic solution to the church’s problem of how to care for its needy more efficiently?
4. What is taught in verses two through four about the work of the apostles? Were the apostles “too good” to serve tables? Explain.
5. What kind of men were to be appointed over the business of serving tables?
6. Did the problem of verses one through six stop the growth of the church? Any lesson(s) for today?

Charges Against Stephen (6:8-15)

7. Besides the service described in verses one through six, what other work did Stephen do? Is this the first time after Pentecost anyone other than an apostle is said to have worked miracles?
8. List the stages of opposition to Stephen found in verses eight through fourteen.
9. List the charges against Stephen.

Stephen’s Defense (7:1-53)

10. What seems to be the two-fold purpose of Stephen’s speech?
11. How do verses 17 through 43 relate to the charges against Stephen? How do verses 44 through 50 relate to those charges?

The Death of Stephen (7:54-60)

12. How did his audience react to Stephen’s speech?
13. Compare verses 55 through 56 with Matthew 26:63-64 and Mark 14:61-62.
14. In the light of John 18:31 and the necessity of bringing Jesus before Pilate to get the death sentence, how would you explain the action of verses 57 through 59?
15. What is noteworthy about the young man who tended the garments of those who stoned Stephen?

Lesson Seven: The Preaching of Philip

Text: Acts 8:1-40

The Gospel in Samaria (vv. 1-25)

1. Describe the aftermath of the death of Stephen. How do verses one through four show that God is ruling the world? (cf. 4:27-28; Phil. 1:12-14)
2. What caused the Samaritans to give heed to the preaching of Philip? What relationship was there between his message and the signs he performed?
3. Under whose influence had the Samaritans previously been and why?
4. What important precedent does verse 12 establish as to who should be baptized?
5. What was accomplished by the laying on of the apostles' hands? What sort of blessings of the Spirit were imparted on this occasion? What conclusion(s) can be drawn with regard to the duration and purpose of these special powers?
6. How can Simon be used to refute the doctrine of "once saved, always saved?"
7. How does a person who has been baptized gain pardon from sins committed after baptism?

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (vv. 26-40)

8. What was the role of the angel in the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch?
9. What conclusions can be reached about the character of the Ethiopian from the following?
 - a. His position.
 - b. His long trip and its purpose.
 - c. What he was doing as he was riding in his chariot.
 - d. The attitude reflected in verse 31.
10. Was the Ethiopian saved before Philip came to him? Explain.
11. What was the Spirit's role in the conversion of the Ethiopian? Did it agree with earlier evidence, especially from Acts 2, concerning the manner in which the Spirit works to bring about the conversion of sinners? Explain.

12. How would Philip's question (v. 30) help him know how to proceed? What would the answer tell him about this man?
13. What passage was the Ethiopian reading? Is that a good place to begin preaching Jesus? Explain.
14. What are some things that must be taught when one preaches Jesus?
15. What did early preachers say about baptism when they preached Jesus? (cf. Acts 2:38)
16. What circumstantial evidence in this text contributes toward understanding how baptism was performed?
17. Why do you suppose the Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing after his baptism?
18. What did Philip do following this encounter with the Ethiopian? Any lesson(s) for us?

Lesson Eight: The Conversion of Saul

Text: Acts 9:1-43

The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (vv. 1-19a)

1. How was Saul an example of what Jesus predicted in John 16:1-3?
2. To what extreme did Saul go in his opposition to the disciples? What was his motivation?
3. What was the purpose of the Lord's appearance to Saul? Was it a part of the plan of salvation applicable to all? Should such appearances be expected today? Explain.
4. What do you think must have been Saul's state of mind when given the information in verse five? What had he thought of Jesus before? What does he learn now?
5. What does it mean that Saul was "a chosen vessel?"
6. How was Saul saved? Was he saved on the road to Damascus? How do you know? Does the term "Brother Saul" (v. 17) indicate that Saul was already a Christian brother before he was baptized? Explain. (cf. Acts 2:29; 3:17-19; 13:15,38)

Saul's First Preaching of Christ (vv. 19b-30)

7. Describe the radical change that took place in Saul.
8. What was Saul's message about Jesus? What amazed his audiences?
9. Why were the disciples in Jerusalem slow to accept Saul? Describe the role of Barnabas in this matter.
10. Why did Saul go to Tarsus? Why was it a natural place for him to go?

A Fourth Portrait of the Church (v. 31)

11. Describe the state of the church throughout Palestine after Saul's conversion. What does your answer suggest about Saul's role in the persecution against the church?

Peter in Lydda and Joppa (vv. 32-43)

12. What two remarkable miracles were performed by Peter? What was the effect of each?
13. What is meant by the "good works and charitable deeds" (v. 36) done by Dorcas? What good effects from this kind of personal, individual involvement are evident?

Lesson Nine:

The Conversion of Cornelius

Text: Acts 10:1 - 11:30

Cornelius, a Moral and Pious Man (10:1-2)

1. List the characteristics of Cornelius.
2. What conclusions in regard to salvation can be drawn in relation to what is presented about Cornelius in these verses. Explain.

An Angel of God (10:3-9; cf. 11:13-14)

3. What was the function of the angel in this text? Compare the function of the angel here to that of the angel in the account of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-40).

The Vision on the Housetop (10:9-16)

4. What did Peter see and hear? Did he understand the meaning and significance of his vision at this point? Explain.

The Arrival of Messengers (10:17-23a)

5. What was Peter's state of mind after seeing the vision?
6. What removed any doubt Peter might have had about going to the house of Cornelius? Why did he need such preparation and reassurance?

The Meeting of Peter and Cornelius and the Preaching of Peter (10:23b-43)

7. What did Peter now realize the purpose of the vision that he had on the housetop to be?
8. Characterize the audience gathered to hear Peter speak.
9. Was Peter's message to Gentiles basically different from his message to Jews? Explain.
10. Is the salvation of the Jews and that of the Gentiles on the same or different conditions? Explain.

The Holy Spirit on the Gentiles (10:44-48)

11. What was the purpose of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit on this occasion?

12. In what way does verse 45 point to the purpose of this manifestation? What evidence does verse 47 provide as to its purpose?

Peter's Explanation at Jerusalem (11:1-18)

13. How do verses 1 through 3 contribute to our understanding of the purpose of the manifestation of the Spirit at Caesarea?

14. How does Peter justify his conduct at Caesarea?

15. What conclusion is drawn by the Jews from the facts presented by Peter?

The Church at Antioch in Syria (11:19-26)

16. What is the major new development that is described in these verses?

17. How did Barnabas come to be in Antioch? What did he see when he got there?

18. Give the meaning of Barnabas' exhortation to them.

19. How did Saul come to be in Antioch? Why was he the man for this job?

20. What new name was given to the disciples in Antioch? Why do you think they were the first to be designated in that way?

Lesson Ten: The Death of James

Text: Acts 12:1-25

The Persecution by Herod (vv. 1-5)

1. What action did King Herod take against the church? Why did he do it?
2. Whom did Herod kill? With what was he killed?
3. What was the reaction of the Jews to the death mentioned in the previous question? What did this reaction motivate Herod to do?
4. At what time of year was Peter arrested? When was he to be brought before the people?
5. While Peter was in prison, what did the church do for him?

Peter's Release from Prison (vv. 6-19a)

6. Describe Peter's situation in prison.
7. Who released Peter from prison? Describe his release. What did he think was happening? When did he realize that was not the case?
8. To whom did Peter attribute his release?
9. Where did Peter go after his release? What was going on there?
10. Who answered Peter's knock at the gate? What was her reaction?
11. What conclusion did those in the house reach when told that Peter was at the gate? What was their reaction when they saw Peter?
12. Who did Peter tell those in the house to inform of his release and how it was accomplished?
13. Seeing that Peter was gone from prison, what was the reaction of:
 - a. The soldiers?
 - b. Herod?

The Death of Herod (vv. 19b-24)

14. With whom was Herod angry? What did they do to assuage his anger? What was Herod's response to them?

15. What did the people keep shouting during Herod's oration?
16. What happened to Herod? Who did it? Why was it done?
17. Why do you think the statement made in verse 24 concerning the word of God is inserted at this point in the text?

Back to Antioch (v. 25)

18. Who returned to Antioch from Jerusalem? Why did they leave Jerusalem? Who accompanied them?

Lesson Eleven: The First Journey of Paul

Text: Acts 13:1 - 14:28

The Sending of Barnabas and Saul (13:1-3)

1. What is the difference between “prophets and teachers?” How did people other than the apostles receive the ability to prophesy?
2. Since verse four says that Barnabas and Saul were “sent forth by the Holy Spirit,” what can be learned from verses two and three about how the Holy Spirit worked in the early church?

Preaching on the Island of Cyprus (13:4-12)

3. Name two men Paul and Barnabas met on the island of Cyprus. Describe the attitude or character of each.
4. How does the miracle of verse 11 differ from others mentioned in Acts? What was the effect of this miracle?

Paul’s Address in Antioch of Pisidia (13:13-43)

5. At first, when mentioned, the order of the names is “Barnabas and Saul,” but after the departure from Cyprus it is “Paul and his company,” then, usually “Paul and Barnabas.” Is there any significance in the change of order?
6. What happened at Perga in Pamphylia?
7. Explain the situation which gave Paul opportunities to speak in Jewish synagogues.
8. Analyze Paul’s sermon found in this text by briefly stating its theme. Explain the importance of this sermon. Describe the immediate response to it.

Further Work in Antioch of Pisidia (13:44-52)

9. What was the motivation behind the Jewish opposition to Paul?
10. How does one “judge (himself) unworthy of eternal life” (v. 46)?
11. What did Paul do when the Jews rejected the gospel?

12. What success did Paul and Barnabas have in Antioch?
13. How did the Jews get rid of Paul and Barnabas?
14. What is meant by the symbolic act mentioned in verse 51?

Iconium (14:1-7)

15. What does verse one suggest as to how belief (faith) is produced in a person?
16. According to verse three, what use was made of “signs and wonders” by the Lord?
17. What was the reaction in Iconium to Paul and Barnabas’ teaching? Who was behind the persecution?
18. For discussion: Should not Paul and Barnabas have been brave and stood their ground for the Lord and His gospel even at the cost of their lives?

Lystra (14:8-20)

19. What miracle was performed by Paul? How did the people react to it?
20. How does Paul’s address to the people of Lystra (vv. 14-17) differ from the address in the synagogue at Antioch (13:16-41)? Why was it different?
21. Who were the main enemies of the gospel in every city? What, in verse 19, especially indicates the degree of their hostility?

The Churches Revisited (14:21-23)

22. What new stage of the work of Paul and Barnabas is described in these verses?
23. What do these verses reveal about the needs of churches after they have been newly planted?

The Return to Antioch in Syria (14:24-28)

24. What did Paul and Barnabas do upon returning to Antioch in Syria?
25. What, if anything, do you find to be remarkable about the terms in which their report is made?

Lesson Twelve: The Jerusalem Council

Text: Acts 15:1-35

The Issue of Circumcision (vv. 1-5)

1. What were certain men from Judea teaching the brethren in Antioch?
2. What was the reaction of Paul and Barnabas to the above teaching?
3. What did the church at Antioch determine to do in relation to this teaching?
4. What caused the brethren in Phoenicia and Samaria to have great joy?
5. How were Paul, Barnabas and the brethren from Antioch received in Jerusalem?
6. What did some believers who had been Pharisees say was necessary?

The Testimony Considered (vv. 6-21)

7. What did the apostles and elders do to determine whether or not the teaching of the believers who had been Pharisees was true?
8. Briefly describe the testimony given by Peter.
9. Briefly describe the testimony given by Paul and Barnabas.
10. Briefly summarize James' analysis of the testimony. What conclusion did he reach?

The Conclusion of the Council (vv. 22-29)

11. Who did the apostles and elders designate to go to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas?
12. Briefly summarize the contents of the letter sent to Antioch.
13. What lesson(s) can be learned from this episode as to how to solve differences among brethren?

The Return to Antioch (vv. 30-35)

14. What was the reaction of the Christians in Antioch to the letter from Jerusalem?
15. What did Judas and Silas do while in Antioch?
16. Who decided to remain in Antioch instead of returning to Jerusalem?

Lesson Thirteen: The Second Journey of Paul

Text: Acts 15:36 - 18:23

The Separation of Paul and Barnabas (15:36-41)

1. What proposal did Paul make to Barnabas?
2. Why did Paul and Barnabas separate? Who was Paul's new co-worker? What else you know of him?
3. What was the first phase of Paul's work on this second journey?

The Churches of Galatia (16:1-5)

4. Who was the other co-worker added by Paul at Lystra? What is known of his background?
5. Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised but not Titus? (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-22; Gal. 2:1-5)
6. What "decrees" are meant in verse four?
7. Describe the effect of Paul's visit on these churches.

The Call to Macedonia (16:6-10)

8. After visiting the churches established the first journey, what decision is faced by Paul and his companions?
9. Since the apostles had been commissioned to carry the gospel to "all the world," why is Paul forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia or Bithynia?
10. What is to be made of the change from "they" in verses six through eight to "we" in verses 10 through 17?

The Conversion of Lydia (16:11-15)

11. Describe the city of Philippi. How does Paul's work there begin?
12. Describe Lydia before her conversion.
13. How did the Lord open Lydia's heart? Are the hearts of people opened in the same way today? Explain.
14. Since verse 15 is often used in support of infant baptism because of its use of the word "household," does that word necessarily imply infants? Explain.

The Conversion of the Philippian Jailer (16:16-40)

15. How did Paul and Silas come to be in prison? Were the men who made charges against them honest? (Cite evidence for your answer.)
16. Summarize the events that took place during their imprisonment.
17. Why would the jailor want to take his life? What was his question to Paul and Silas? What prompted it? What was their response?
18. Does this incident teach that one only has to believe in order to be saved? Explain.

The Gospel in Thessalonica (17:1-9)

19. Describe the method of Paul's work which is illustrated by his work in Thessalonica.
20. Since the first three verses of this chapter give an excellent summary of the points Paul had to establish in a Jewish synagogue:
 - a. List those points.
 - b. Tell how each point would be proven to be true.
21. List the three classes from which converts were drawn and give the terms which indicate how many from each class.
22. Describe the opposition to Paul's work at Thessalonica. What were the charges against the Christians? What, in the apostolic preaching, would have lent plausibility to those charges? How did such charges misrepresent the truth?

Berea (17:10-15)

23. How was the nobility of the Bereans seen? What is meant by "the Scriptures?" Why was such an examination of the Scriptures a logical and reasonable response to the preaching?
24. What, from this incident, is evidently necessary to believe.
25. Who provided the opposition to Paul at Berea? What did the brethren do in response to it?

Athens (17:16-34)

26. What did Paul find in Athens? How was it distinctive from the other cities in his travels?
27. What two views of Paul were adopted by the Athenians? How does his presentation of the gospel in Athens differ from his preaching in the synagogues? Why did it differ?

28. What is the basis on which all men everywhere are commanded to repent?
29. Describe the three responses to Paul's message.

Corinth (18:1-23)

30. In what way was Paul's departure from Athens different from his departures from the other European cities he had visited?
31. What kind of city was Corinth?
32. Who were Aquila and Priscilla? What was Paul's relationship with them?
33. Describe Paul's work during the early part of his stay in Corinth.
34. What crisis is precipitated as Paul presses the claims of the gospel? Describe it.
35. What is the meaning of Paul's symbolic action ("shook out his raiment") and of his words about "blood?" What change takes place in his work at this point?
36. What is remarkable, especially in the circumstances, about the conversion of Crispus?
37. Why did the Lord want Paul to stay in Corinth in spite of opposition there? What encouragement did He provide that would allow him to stay?
38. During Gallio's administration:
- a. What charge did the Jews press against Paul?
 - b. What position was taken by Gallio?
 - c. Did this persecution turn out differently than the usual persecutions against the apostles? Explain.

Lesson Fourteen: The Third Journey of Paul

Text: Acts 18:24 - 21:16

Apollos (18:24-28)

1. Who was Apollos? Tell what you know of his back-ground and personal characteristics. What was he doing at Ephesus?
2. Who were Aquila and Priscilla? Explain the wisdom of their methods in dealing with Apollos.

Paul's Work in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-22)

3. Why was it necessary for certain disciples to be baptized again? Explain the difference(s) between the baptism of John and that of the great commission.
4. Of what significance is the laying on of hands in verse six? (cf. Acts 8:17-19)
5. What was the first stage of Paul's work in Ephesus? (v. 8) The second stage? (vv. 9-10) Describe the far-reaching effect of his Ephesian ministry.
6. How is the expression "special miracles" (v. 11f) explained in the context?
7. Relate the incident in which certain Jewish exorcists were discredited in Ephesus. What were its effects on the people of Ephesus? What were its effects on believers?
8. What were Paul's travel plans? How did he finally reach where he desired to go?
9. How long was Paul in Ephesus altogether?

A Riot Over Christianity (19:23-41)

10. Identify the following people and their roles in this incident.
 - a. Demetrius.
 - b. Gaius.
 - c. Aristarchus.
11. Who was Alexander? What sort of a defense do you think he, a Jew, could have offered under the circumstances?

12. How was this incident brought to a close?

The Journey to Macedonia and Greece (20:1-6)

13. Where does Paul make a stop between Ephesus and Macedonia? (2 Cor. 2:12-13)

14. What was Paul's state of mind as he left for Macedonia? (2 Cor. 2:12,13; 7:5ff) Give several possible reasons for this state of mind.

15. Noting the use of "us" and "we" in verses five and six, what is their significance in relation to their use in the book of Acts?

The Meeting at Troas (20:7-12)

16. What is the significance of this reference to "the first day of the week?"

17. What was the purpose of the gathering? What is meant by the phrase "to break bread?" (vv. 7, 11)

18. What tremendous miracle was performed by Paul on this occasion?

The Voyage from Troas and Paul's Address to the Ephesian Elders at Miletus (20:1-38)

19. Why did Paul not go to Ephesus?

20. Why would Paul have a close relationship with these elders?

21. Summarize Paul's speech to these elders.

The Trip to Jerusalem (21:1-16)

22. How did the gospel first reach Phoenicia? (cf. 11:19)

23. What warning was Paul repeatedly given as his journey continued?

24. In what way is the close relation between disciples brought out in this passage?

25. Who was Philip? What special gift did his four virgin daughters possess? Under what circumstances, according to the Scriptures, may a woman exercise such a gift?

Lesson Fifteen:

Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem

Text: Acts 21:17 - 23:10

Paul and the Customs of Moses (21:17-26)

1. In Paul's reports to James and the elders, who was given credit for his accomplishment among the Gentiles both by him and by them? What can we learn from that?
2. What had the Jewish Christians heard about Paul that threatened the unity of the church? What recommendation did they make to him? For what purpose?
3. Explain the connection between verse 25 and chapter fifteen and the discussion over whether or not Gentiles becoming Christians needed to be circumcised.
4. What would allow Paul to consent to do as they suggested?

Paul Under Arrest (21:27-36)

5. What charges were made against Paul? Who made them? What was the (mistaken) basis of part of the charges?
6. What saved Paul's life?

Paul's Request to Speak and His Defense (21:37 - 22:21)

7. Who did the chief captain think Paul was? What provided evidence of his mistake?
8. What characteristics of Paul are manifested on this occasion?
9. What two languages did Paul speak on this occasion? Why were two languages used?
10. Summarize Paul's speech. What was the purpose of it? What did he hope to accomplish and explain?

Interruption of Paul's Speech (22:22-29)

11. How would you describe the attitude of the Jews? Why do you think they had such an acute hostility toward Paul?
12. Why did the chief captain order Paul to be scourged? What saved him from it?

Paul Before the Sanhedrin (22:30 - 23:10)

13. Who called the meeting of the Sanhedrin? For what reason?
14. Who was Ananias? What was his attitude toward Paul?
15. What does Paul mean by “you whitewashed wall” (23:3)? How does this designation fit Ananias?
16. Why did Paul make the statement found in 23:6? Does it have any bearing on the Jewish opposition to him? (cf. 24:13-15,20f; 26:4-8,22f)
17. How did the meeting end?

Lesson Sixteen: Paul Before Felix

Text: Acts 23:11 - 24:27

The Transfer to Caesarea (23:11-35)

1. What word of encouragement did Paul receive from the Lord?
2. Describe the plot against Paul's life. Who became co-conspirators in this plot? How was it exposed?
3. What did the chief captain decide to do? What was the purpose of the letter sent to the governor by Claudius Lysias? Why do you think he did not set Paul free?
4. Where was Paul taken? Why? What happened upon his arrival there?

Paul's Hearing Before Felix (24:1-27)

5. Who was Tertullus? What three charges did he make against Paul? Before whom were they made? What was the official position of the one hearing them?
6. When Christianity was referred to as "the sect of the Nazarenes" (v. 5), what was implied in the understanding of Paul's accusers as to the relation of Christianity and Judaism?
7. What gave Paul cheer as he made his defense? Why?
8. Summarize Paul's reply to each charge made against him.
9. What did Felix decide concerning Paul? Was there really any reason to wait for Lysias to come? (cf. 23:25-30) Explain.
10. What treatment was accorded Paul?
11. Discuss Paul's approach to preaching to Felix and Drusilla.
12. Describe the character of Felix. Was he honest? Is there reason to believe that he ever intended to consider the gospel again? Explain.
13. What two motives did Felix have for continuing to hold Paul? Why would he think that Paul had money? (v. 17)

Lesson Seventeen: Paul's Appeal to Caesar

Text: Acts 25:1 - 26:32

The Appeal to Caesar (25:1-12)

1. Who was now governor in place of Felix? What do you know of him?
2. Why did Paul appeal his case to Caesar?

Paul's Defense Before Agrippa (25:13 - 26:32)

3. What would seem to be the purpose or occasion for such a visit as seen here by Agrippa to the Roman governor?
4. Did Festus' summary of Paul's case coincide with the actual facts? Explain.
5. What did Festus perceive to be the issues in Paul's case?
6. What, according to Paul, was the purpose of his speech? Summarize that speech.
7. What reaction did Festus have to Paul's speech? What is the implication of the charge he makes?
8. What was Agrippa's reaction to what Paul had said? How did Paul respond?
9. What was now to be done with Paul?

Lesson Eighteen: Paul's Voyage to Rome

Text: Acts 27:1 - 28:31

Voyage and Shipwreck (27:1-44)

1. What was the first leg of the voyage? (vv. 1-5) What was the second stage? (vv. 6-8)
2. What is meant by “the Fast?” (v. 9) What is the point of this reference to it?
3. Why would Paul presume to give advice to those running the ship? (vv. 9-10; cf. 2 Cor. 11:25)
4. Discuss the relationship among the three speeches of Paul. (vv. 9-10, 21-26, 30-31)
5. Why was the wheat thrown overboard?

The Island of Malta (Melita) (28:1-10)

6. Explain the term “natives” (“barbarians,” “barbarous people,” etc.) used in verse two.
7. Out of all who had been on the ship, why does the attention come to be focused on Paul upon arrival on the island? What was the natives’ reaction to this miracle? What two misinterpretations of events were held by them?

From Malta (Melita) to Rome (28:11-15)

8. How did Paul and the company get off the island?
9. What evidence is there that there were Christians already in Rome before Paul ever arrived there?

Paul in Rome (28:16-31)

10. What were Paul’s circumstances in Rome? What is the significance of these conditions?
11. What were the main points of Paul’s explanation of his situation to the leaders among the Jews in Rome? What was their response to Paul’s message?
12. What, according to the quotation from Isaiah 6:9-10, is the real explanation of the gospel’s failure to bring about the salvation of some who hear it proclaimed?

Lesson Nineteen:

Review

1. In reference to the book of Acts, please discuss the following areas citing evidence to support your answers.
 - a. Author.
 - b. Time of writing.
 - c. To whom the book was written.
 - d. The purpose of the book.
2. Cite the five lines of historical reference found in the book of Acts and explain each.
3. Who was chosen to take the place of Judas as an apostle? How was he chosen? What criteria were used to select who could be qualified to be an apostle?
4. What significance did the “Day of Pentecost” have in the Old Law? What new significance was given to it in chapter two?
5. Briefly summarize the apostle Peter’s sermon in chapter two and the reactions to it.
6. Why, in chapter four, were Peter and John arrested? What happened to them? Who was arrested in chapter five? Why? Briefly summarize the outcome of this arrest.
7. Who were Ananias and Sapphira? What happened to them? Why? What was the reaction of the rest of the church?
8. What was the problem of the Grecian widows in chapter six? How was it solved? What lessons are to be learned from this today?
9. Who was Stephen? What happened to him? Why?
10. What caused the church to begin to disperse in chapter eight? Who was the main threat to the church? Briefly summarize what happened to him in chapter nine.
11. Briefly summarize the conversion of Cornelius. Cite several reasons as to why it was such a significant event.
12. How did the church in Antioch of Syria come to be established? Who did the Jerusalem church send there? Why? What was so noteworthy about the establishment of this church?

13. Who was killed by Herod? Why? Who was imprisoned by him? What happened to this imprisoned one? What happened to Herod?
14. Briefly summarize the first preaching trip of Paul. Include in your summary why he went, who went with him, where he went, and noteworthy events which took place on this journey.
15. Why was a meeting called in Jerusalem in chapter 15? Who were the participants in the meeting? What was the outcome of it?
16. Briefly summarize the second preaching trip of Paul. Include in your summary why he went, who went with him, where he went, and noteworthy events which took place on this journey.
17. Briefly summarize the third preaching trip of Paul. Include in your summary why he went, who went with him, where he went, and noteworthy events which took place on this journey.
18. Why was the apostle Paul arrested while at Jerusalem in chapter 22? Summarize his defense before the Jewish council.
19. How did Paul come to be in Caesarea in chapter 23? Briefly summarize his three defenses in Caesarea.
 - a. Before Felix.
 - b. Before Festus.
 - c. Before Agrippa.
20. Why did Paul journey to Rome? What happened to him while en route?

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