
The Acts

- For the previous 12 months, the Wednesday nights men's class has been studying the Book of The Acts through a verse-by-verse, chapter-by-chapter approach.
- The document is a high-level overview of The Acts; divided into four sections:
 1. Introduction
 2. The Gospel in Jerusalem
 3. The Gospel in Judea and Samaria
 4. The Gospel taken to the World
- The hope is that these notes helps you fall in love with God's Word! Remember, God's Word is exact, it is perfect, and should be taken literally; God has the ability to write exactly what He means!!

1. Introduction:

- The Acts is the story of the explosive world-wide growth of the early church
 1. Account of the first men who heard The Great Commission and put it into action!
- Consider The Acts has a historical and transitional bridge
 1. From Christianity as a small primarily Jewish religion to a world-wide primarily Gentile religion
 2. The Acts serves as a continuation of the Gospels and a bridge to the Epistles
 - Think about this, without The Acts, we would not understand the author of majority of the New Testament; Paul.
- **Theme:** The evangelization of the World and the expansion of the Church and the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the Earth.
- **Time:** Thought to be written in 62AD and covers approximately 40 years
- **Author:** Luke (second volume to his two part history of Christ (Gospel of Luke) and the history of the Church (The Acts))
- **Purpose:**
 1. History of the growth and expansion of the early Church and spread of the Gospel throughout the world
 2. Provides background for the Epistles
 3. Provides unity to the work of Christ in the Gospels and the work of Christ through the Holy Spirit
 4. Confirms the apostolic authority of Paul
- **Four Significant Firsts:**
 1. The First Deacons (Acts 6)
 2. The First Christian Martyr - Stephen (Acts 7)
 3. The First Apostolic Martyr – James (Acts 12)
 4. The First Missionary Journeys (Acts 13-21)
 5. Two resurrections – Dorcus (Acts 9:41) and Eutychus (Acts 19:10)
 6. First time the word “Christians” was used to describe believers (Acts 11:26) at Antioch

- **3 levels of Evangelism:**
 1. Locally; witness in Jerusalem (Acts 1-7)
 2. Regionally; witnesses in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-9)
 3. Globally; witnesses unto the uttermost (Acts 10-28)
- **Key Verse:**
 - *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” – Acts 1:8*
 - **If our mindset concerning evangelism is anything less than the entire world, we are minimizing the call to action in Acts 1:8!**

2. The Gospel in Jerusalem (Acts Ch. 1-7):

- **Chapter 1:**
 - Luke begins The Acts by forming a bridge between the Gospel and what comes next
 - Key Points:
 - V.5 – we see the promise in the coming of the Holy Spirit to man
 - V.8 – Through the Power of The Holy Spirit, the Church receives commandment to go!
 - This simple statement by Jesus becomes the marching orders for the Church until Jesus’s return for His Bride!
 - This statement is the theme of the Book of The Acts
 - The New Testament Church revolves around this verse.
- **Chapter 2:**
 - Throughout history, this has been a controversial chapter
 - Chapter has two main components and results
 - Action/Results
 - Action: Coming of the Holy Spirit (2:1-4)/Result: Impact to believers (2:5-13)
 - Action: Message of Peter (2:14-40)/Result: Impact on the crowd (2:41-47)
 - V.41 – in one single day, 3,000 souls were saved and baptized!
- **Chapter 3:**
 - We see a single day in the life of the church in which a miraculous healing leads to a confrontation with the Jewish authorities.
 - A lame man “from his mother’s womb” miraculously was healed
 - V.7 – “Immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.”
 - Immediately strength entered his feet and legs
 - Immediately the man’s muscle connection between his brain and feet was established
 - Notice: this miracle occurred immediately; how long does it normally take an infant child to learn how to walk?
 - Peter gives a second sermon that results in 5,000 souls being saved (4:4)

- **Chapter 4:**

- Chapter begins with the disciples being questioned
 - Simple fishermen brought before the pomp, circumstance and royalty of the highest level of the land
- A tremendous day was recorded in Scripture, but we also see in this chapter the beginning of conflict between Jewish authorities and the preaching of the Gospel
 - V.2 – “being grieved” – “greatly disturbed”
- But when the disciples were commanded not to speak of the Resurrection of Christ, their answer is one of my favorite verses
 - Acts 4:20 – “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”
 - Link this verse back to Jeremiah 20:9

- **Chapter 5:**

- In 4:32, we see that the church were of “one heart”, “one soul” and “had all things in common”
 - Because of this, “great power” was given to the apostles, and “great grace” was upon them all!
- Notice in 5:1, the word “But” (always means a change of direction, 180 degree turn)
 - We see a contrast between the description of the church at the end of Chapter 4 and the actions of a husband/wife of Ananias and Sapphira
 - We also see the contrast of internal and external conflict to the church from the sin of church members (internal) and Jerusalem authorities (external).

- **Chapter 6:**

- The first deacons are appointed
 - 7 men were to be selected
 - Selected by the church (not by the Apostles)
 - Must be:
 - Men “seven men”
 - Saved, church members “among you”
 - Honest report (testimony)
 - Full of the Holy Ghost (Spirit filled)
 - Wise
 - Further qualifications by Paul in I Timothy 3:8-13
 - They must be Grave (serious minded and worthy of respect)
 - They must not be Double-Tongued
 - They must not be given to Wine
 - They must not be Greedy or Stingy
 - They must be Sound Doctrinally and Spiritually Mature
 - They must be Pure in Conscience and in Character
 - They must be Proven Servants
 - They must be blameless
 - They must be the husbands of one wife
 - They must be in control of their home and children

- Their wives much also be grave, not gossips, sober
- Scriptural Duties:
 - i. They are to be the servants of the Church
 - 1. The word for Deacon literally means “slave” “Servant”
 - ii. They are to be problem solvers (6:1-3)
 - iii. They are to be need meters (6:1-3)
 - iv. They are to minister to widows and others in need (orphans, sick, and hurting) (6:1)
 - v. They are to minister to the poor and underclass (6:1)
 - vi. They are to be church peacemakers (6:1)
 - vii. They are to be complaint solvers. (6:1-4)
 - viii. They are to preacher servers — freeing up pastor’s time for their labors in prayers and the ministry of the word (6:2,4)
 - ix. They are to assist with the labor for church growth (6:6-7)
 - x. They are to carry out ministry through the distribution of the church’s resources.
 - xi. Their ministry concern is the physical needs of the church
 - xii. They are to soul winners — indicated by Philip
 - xiii. They defend the Faith and the Church — indicated by Stephen
 - xiv. They are to be busy serving the church
- This format will allow the Pastors (Apostles) to stay in the word
 - He is the Shepherd of the flock
 - Leader of the Church
 - If the Pastor is not staying the Word, or underprepared, then the congregation will suffer
- **Chapter 7:**
 - Chapter starts with a tremendous sermon by Stephen, and ends with the first Christian martyr and a glimpse into the Throne Room of God!

3. The Gospel in Judea and Samaria (Acts Ch. 8-9):

- **Chapter 8:**
 - A great transition takes place in this chapter
 - Previous chapter focused on Peter, the Apostles, Church at Jerusalem, and the lifestyle of the early believers
 - Now we see the movement of the Gospel away from the Jews
 - At the death of Stephen, persecution of the early church increased dramatically (8:1)
 - This movement begins with the 1st Missionary Evangelist, Philip going into Samaria
- **Chapter 9:**
 - We see the transition of the “old man” Saul to a “new creature” Paul

- He was well educated, very intelligent and trained in critical thinking, who was zealous for the advancement of the Gospel! He was a hard-headed, pit-bull, buzz saw for the Gospel; 100% commitment level!!

4. The Gospel Taken to the World (Acts Ch. 10-28):

- **Chapter 10:**

- We see another major shift as we now see the first purely Gentile converts saved and baptized
 - Cornelius and his family
 - Read his tremendous testimony: 10:2, 10:22, 10:30
- 10:44 – huge turning point for the Gentiles (which includes you and I)
 - The holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles
- Important to note:
 - Holy Spirit given to Jews in Chapter 2
 - Spirit given to the Samaritans in Chapter 8
 - Holy Spirit given to the Gentiles in Chapter 10
 - Notice that Peter was present with each group!
- Since the Holy Spirit has now been given to the Gentiles, the door is opened for Paul to go!

- **Chapters 13 and 14:**

- **1st Missionary Journey**
 - Lasted 1-2 years (AD 44-45)
 - Over 700 miles by land and 500 by sea
- **Overview of Route and Events:**
 - Paphos on Cyprus: Sergius Paulus is saved and Bar-Jesus is blinded
 - Perga of Pamphylia: John Mark leaves missionary team
 - Antioch of Pisidia: Paul preaches his first recorded sermon. The mad Jews reject and the glad Gentiles accept the Gospel
 - Iconium: Many believe, but again the Jews oppose the Gospel
 - Lystra: Paul heals a cripple and the crowds attempt to worship and then stone the missionaries.
 - Derbe: They teach and preach and return edifying and organizing the churches.
 - Antioch of Syria: The first mission report and the writing of Galatians.

- **Chapter 15:36-18:22**

- **2nd Missionary Journey**
 - Lasted 5 years (AD 50-54)
 - Over 3,000 miles

- **Overview of Route and Events:**
 - Lystra: Timothy joins the team
 - Troas: Paul receives his Macedonian call and Luke joins the team
 - Philippi: The conversion of Lydia, the Demonic Girl, and the Philippian Jailor (Gospel reaches Europe)
 - Thessalonica: Paul preaches 3 Sabbaths in the synagogue, but unbelieving Jews assault the house of Jason where Paul is staying
 - Berea: This group studies the Scriptures, to see whether the things were so, but Paul is forced to flee by trouble making Jews from Thessalonica.
 - Athens: Paul preaches his famous sermon at Mars Hill
 - Corinth: Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla, sees Crispus converted, a vision from God, his case dismissed by Gallio, and Sosthenes beaten. He also writes 1 and 2 Thessalonians
 - Ephesus : He makes a brief preaching stop and leaves Aquila and Priscilla here
- **Emphasis:**
 - The First Missionary Journey focused on Galatia
 - The Second Missionary Journey focused on Greece
- **Chapters 18:23-21:16**
 - **3rd Missionary Journey**
 - Over 4 years (AD 54-58)
 - About 3,000 miles
 - **Overview of Route and Events:**
 - Ephesus (remains 3 years)
 - Philippi (remains 1 year): Paul preaches throughout Macedonia
 - Corinth (remains 3 months): Paul writes Romans
 - Troas: Paul preaches at night; Eutychus falls asleep, falls down to death, and is raised up by Paul
 - Miletus: Paul preaches a tearful farewell to the Ephesian elders
 - Tyre: Paul is warned about danger in Jerusalem
 - Caesarea: Paul visits Philip and is warned by Agabus of danger in Jerusalem
- **Chapters 21:17-28:31**
 - **Pauls' Trip to Rome**
- From 21:33 and for the remainder of the Book, Paul will be in captivity
 - First Paul in captive in Jerusalem
 - Later he will move to Caesarea
 - Finally, the book ends with Paul in prison in Rome
 - 5-years in captivity
- Acts 21:33 begins the journey that Paul knew was coming:
 - Jesus said that Paul would suffer "great things" in Acts 9:16
- Acts 20:23, Paul knew, through the Holy Spirit, that "bonds and afflictions abide me"
- During this time:

- Paul is carried before the Sanhedrin (Acts 22:30-23:32)
- Stood in front of Felix – Governor of Judea and Samaria (Acts 23:33-24:27)
 - Holds Paul in captivity for 2 years
- Paul before Festus – Governor after Felix (Acts 25:1-22)
- Paul before King Agrippa II – appointed king of the region by emperor Nero (Acts 25:13-26:32)
- Paul in Rome (Acts 27-28)
 - Paul spent two years in house arrest
 - After the two year period, Paul is released and travels spreading the Gospel
 - He is later arrested again and placed in prison
 - Paul is beheaded in Rome by Emperor Nero in AD67
- Stanley Toussaint writes: *“And so it was that the kingdom message under God’s sovereign control went from Jew to Gentile, and from Jerusalem to Rome.”* (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament Edition, p. 431)

References:

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