



Acts



THRU the BIBLE

NOTES & OUTLINES WITH

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HISTORY



Acts

(Sometimes called the fifth Gospel, it is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke)

Last recorded fact about Jesus in the Gospels:



The great missionary commission given in the four Gospels is confirmed in Acts.

- Acts furnishes a ladder on which to place the Epistles.
- Acts is a bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles.

The New Testament without Acts leaves a great, yawning gap. “If the book of Acts were gone, there would be nothing to replace it” (Howson).

WRITER: Dr. Luke, who also wrote the third Gospel (Acts 1:1). Sir William Ramsay says that Luke is the greatest of all historians, ancient or modern (*The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170; St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*).

DATE: About A.D. 63. Acts covers a period of approximately 30 years. This is the inspired record of the beginnings of the church. While Genesis records the origin of the physical universe, Acts records the origin of the spiritual body.

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 Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- 1 - Prominence of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 - Prominence of the Holy Spirit. Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39; John 14:16, 17; John 20:22; Acts 1:8). This is the age of the Holy Spirit. The great fact of this age is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).
- 3 - Power of the church.
- 4 - Prominence of the church, visible and invisible (a new institution).
- 5 - Prominence of places—begins in Jerusalem, ends in Rome. (Ramsay checked the many places referred to.)
- 6 - Prominence of persons—Dr. Luke mentions 110 persons by name.
- 7 - Prominence of the resurrection, the center of gospel preaching.
- 8 - Prominence of Peter in the first section, and Paul in the last section. (There is a strange omission of the other apostles.)

TITLE: The proper title for this historical book is the supreme problem.

“The Acts of the Apostles”—Authorized and Revised Versions

“The Acts of the Apostles”—Codex Vaticanus (MSS)

“The Acts of the Ascended and Glorified Lord”—Robert Lee

“Words Concerning Deeds”—Bantu title

Acts 1:1, 2 gives the key to the problem: *“The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles”* (human instrumentalities).

OUTLINE:

- I. **The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in Jerusalem, Chapters 1–7**
 - A. Preparation for the coming of the Spirit, Chapter 1
 - 1. Introduction, vv. 1, 2
 - 2. 40 days post-resurrection ministry of Jesus, vv. 3-9
 - 3. Ascension and promise of the return of Jesus, vv. 10, 11
 - 4. Waiting for the Spirit, vv. 12-14
 - 5. Appointment of an apostle, vv. 15-26
 - B. Day of Pentecost (Bethlehem of the Holy Spirit), Chapter 2
 - 1. Coming of the Holy Spirit, vv. 1-13
 - 2. First sermon in the church age by Peter, vv. 14-47
 - C. First miracle of the church; Peter's second sermon, Chapter 3
 - 1. Healing of lame man, vv. 1-11
 - 2. Appealing and revealing address of Peter, vv. 12-26
 - 3. Believing 5000 men (results), 4:4
 - D. First persecution of the church; power of the Holy Spirit, Chapter 4
 - E. Death of Ananias and Sapphira; second persecution, Chapter 5
(Discipline within and persecution without)
 - F. Appointment of deacons; witness of Stephen, a deacon, Chapter 6
 - G. Stephen's address and martyrdom (first martyr), Chapter 7
- II. **The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in Judæa and Samaria, Chapters 8–12**
 - A. Conversion of Ethiopian Eunuch (son of Ham), Chapter 8
 - B. Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (son of Shem), Chapter 9
 - C. Conversion of Cornelius, Roman centurion (son of Japheth), Chapter 10
 - D. Peter defends his ministry; gospel goes to Antioch, Chapter 11
 - E. Death of James; arrest of Peter, Chapter 12

III. The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles to the uttermost part of the earth, Chapters 13–28

- A. **First missionary journey of Paul**, Chapters 13, 14
- B. **Council at Jerusalem**, Chapter 15
- C. **Second missionary journey of Paul**, Chapters 15:36–16:40
- D. **Second missionary journey (continued)**
Paul in Thessalonica, Athens, Chapter 17
- E. **Second missionary journey (concluded)**
Paul in Corinth; Apollos in Ephesus, Chapter 18
- F. **Third missionary journey, Chapters 18:23–21:14**
Paul in Ephesus, Chapter 19
- G. **Third missionary journey of Paul (continued)**, Chapter 20
- H. **Paul goes to Jerusalem and is arrested**, Chapter 21
- I. **Paul's defense before the mob at Jerusalem**, Chapter 22
- J. **Paul's defense before the Sanhedrin**, Chapter 23
- K. **Paul before Felix**, Chapter 24
- L. **Paul before Festus**, Chapter 25
- M. **Paul before Agrippa**, Chapter 26
- N. **Paul goes to Rome via storm and shipwreck**, Chapter 27
- O. **Paul arrives in Rome**, Chapter 28
(Last seen preaching to Gentiles)

COMMENT:

I. The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in Jerusalem, Chapters 1–7

CHAPTER 1—Gives the post-resurrection ministry and ascension of Jesus, and the ten-day interval before the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

W. 1, 2—Theophilus, the one addressed, is one of the unknown disciples in the early church whose name means “lover of God” or “loved of God.” Luke’s primary objective is to show that Jesus continued His work and ministry after His resurrection but from a different position (see Acts 2:33).

V. 3—There are ten recorded appearances of Jesus after His resurrection. This ministry has a more important bearing on the lives of Christians today than the three-year ministry recorded in the four Gospels (see author’s book, *The Empty Tomb*). “The kingdom of God” includes not only His purpose in the church but reaches beyond to the re-establishment of the house of David (see Acts 15:14-17).

V. 4—“The promise of the Father” is the Holy Spirit (see John 16:7-15).

V. 5—Water baptism is ritual baptism; the Holy Spirit is real baptism.

V. 6—This is not a foolish question. The kingdom will be restored to Israel.

V. 7—Jesus does not rebuke them. He merely says that the times and seasons for the establishment of the kingdom are not available to man.

V. 8—This is not a corporate commission given to the church as a body, but a private and personal command given to each believer.

V. 9—The ascension is an important and significant miracle in the ministry of Jesus. This is especially true in the space age with eyes turned aloft. “Cloud” means the Shekinah Glory cloud that filled the tabernacle (see Exodus 40:38). He is surrounded with the glory He had before Bethlehem (John 17:5).

W. 10, 11—Note the witness of the two angels who appeared as men. “This same Jesus” (v. 11) means that in His glorified body He will return to earth to the same place (Zechariah 14:4).

W. 12-14—This is the ten-day interval between His ascension and Pentecost. The attitude of the apostles and believers is that of oneness, prayer, and waiting. This period cannot be duplicated today, for the Holy Spirit has already come.

V. 15-26—The election to choose a successor to Judas Iscariot is conducted by Peter without the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit—the Holy Spirit had not yet come. Matthias was evidently a good man who met the requirements of an apostle and apparently was an apostle. The Holy Spirit, however, ignored him, for he never is mentioned again in the Scriptures. The successor, we believe, to Judas Iscariot was Saul of Tarsus, chosen personally by the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:1).

CHAPTER 2—Records the fulfillment of Pentecost, Peter’s sermon, and the primary church.

V. 1—Pentecost took place 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits. “Fully come” means that this was the fulfillment of the meaning and purpose for which it was given. As the Feast of Passover depicts the death of Christ and the Feast of Firstfruits depicts the resurrection of Christ, the Feast of Pentecost depicts the beginning and origin of the church. (Five minutes before the Day of Pentecost there was no church; five minutes after the Day of Pentecost there was the church.) What Bethlehem was to the birth of Christ, Pentecost and Jerusalem were to the coming of the Holy Spirit. He began to baptize believers, which means He placed them in the body of Christ—identifying them with Christ as His body on earth (see 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13).

V. 2—It was not a wind but there was a sound “like a” wind. “Rushing mighty wind” means that it had the sound of a tornado so that all of Jerusalem evidently heard it. The sound of a tornado has been likened to that of 1000 freight trains. It was an appeal to the ear gate.

V. 3—“As of fire” means that it was not fire but looked like fire, appealing to the eye gate. This was not the baptism of fire, which is judgment yet to come, but the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

V. 4—“All filled with the Holy Spirit” indicates that all the other ministries of the Holy Spirit to believers in this age had already been performed, as they occur in this order:

1 - Regenerating (John 3:5)

2 - Indwelling (Romans 8:9)

3 - Sealing (Ephesians 4:30)

4 - Baptizing (Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13)

The experience of Pentecost came from the filling of the Spirit—not the baptizing of the Spirit. The baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit placed them in the church, the new body that came into existence here for the first time. “Other tongues” were not unknown tongues, but the polyglot languages of the Roman Empire spoken by the worshipers who had come from the different areas of the Roman Empire (vv. 5-11). (See author’s message, “Talking in Tongues.”)

V. 12—Some of the multitude that come together are startled and impressed, but not convinced because they do not understand.

V. 13—Others are cynical and mock. They offer a natural explanation for the phenomenon.

W. 14, 15—Peter addresses himself to the skeptics and ignorant.

W. 16-21—Peter does not use Joel’s prophecy to show that Pentecost is the fulfillment of it, but “this is that” (v. 16)—it is similar to and like that which is yet to come (see Joel 2:28-32; 3:1, 2). Peter is saying that Pentecost is not contrary to the Old Testament. It is obvious that Joel’s prophecy was not fulfilled at Pentecost. God said, “I will pour out of my Spirit upon *all* flesh” (v. 17), yet there were only 3,000 converted at Pentecost. The signs in the heavens did not appear at that time. The age of *grace* began, not the “great and notable day of the Lord” (v. 20). Neither did all nations assemble in “the valley of Jehoshaphat” (Joel 3:2, 12).

W. 22-24—The emphasis is not upon tongues or even on the coming of the Holy Spirit, but rather on the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His resurrection (see John 16:13, 14). Notice that the passport of Jesus was the miracles, wonders, and signs.

W. 25-31—David in Psalm 16 spoke of the Messiah (not of himself, for his grave was in Jerusalem) who must be raised from the dead to sit on David’s throne.

V. 32—Peter and the others there are witnesses that Jesus was raised from the dead.

V. 33—We know that Jesus arrived at the right hand of God because the Holy Spirit arrived here.

W. 34, 35—This is a fulfillment of Psalm 110.

V. 36—The explanation of all that had occurred is the fact that Jesus died, rose again, ascended, and had taken His place at the right hand of God.

V. 37-41—Peter puts down the conditions of salvation for these men of Judæa and all other Israelites who are in Jerusalem.

V. 42—These are the visible marks of the local church.

V. 43-47—The first church had very little organization, but great power and much love and joy.

CHAPTER 3—Peter and John perform the first miracle of the church and Peter preaches again. This is God's last call to the nation to turn to Him as a corporate body. Jesus will return to set up His kingdom as predicted by the prophets (vv. 24-26). The suffering of Christ had been fulfilled (vv. 18, 19).

CHAPTER 4—5000 are saved at the preaching of Peter's second sermon, but the apostles are arrested and imprisoned. The reason given for their arrest is that they preached the resurrection (v. 2). The apostles are brought to trial before the Sanhedrin to explain the power or name they used in healing the lame man. Peter answers by the power of the Holy Spirit and presents Jesus as the only way of salvation and His name as the name of power and salvation. The apostles are reprimanded by the Sanhedrin and commanded to desist from preaching in the name of Jesus. The apostles return to the company of the early church. The church went to prayer, quoting Psalm 2:1 and 2. They did not pray for cessation of persecution, but for courage to speak the Word of God (v. 29). Notice the power of prayer (vv. 30, 31), also the high plane of spirituality of the early church.

CHAPTER 5—Introduces the defection in the church, followed by the death of Ananias and Sapphira. These Christians were not living on the high spiritual level of the early church, although they were saved. When they lied to the Holy Spirit, they were removed from the company of believers. They committed the sin unto death (1 John 5:16). The amazing thing is that this sin could not exist in the early church. There was holiness of life in the church. Peter was probably as much surprised as anyone when Ananias died (v. 5). Power continues in the church (vv. 12-14); multitudes are saved. The apostles exercise the apostolic gifts. The apostles are arrested the second time and put in prison (vv. 17, 18). Gamaliel counsels restraint and moderation in dealing with them. They are beaten, forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus, and continue to preach in His name.

CHAPTER 6—Gives the selection of deacons due to the defection, and the account of Stephen—framed, arrested, tried.

V. 1—The Grecians were Hebrews with a background of Greek culture, while the Hebrews were those who still followed the Mosaic Law. The high plane to which the Spirit had brought the church was interrupted by the intrusion of satanic division and confusion. The sharing of material substance, which first characterized the church (Acts 2:44-46), gave way to the selfishness of the old nature. The Grecians (evidently a minority group) felt neglected and demanded that their widows be given equal consideration with the Hebrews.

V. 2—The apostles do not feel that they should have the burden of this detail, as it would take them from the study of the Word of God, prayer, and the ministry of the Word (v. 4).

V. 3—Certain qualified men are chosen to assume the burden of handling the material substance. Notice their qualifications:

1 - men of honest report

2 - full of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)

3 - men of wisdom—application of scriptural truth

4 - men of conviction (v. 10)

5 - full of faith—not only saving faith, but serving faith and witnessing faith
(not amount, but object of faith)

V. 5—Of the list of the first seven deacons, we have only the record of two—Stephen and Philip.

V. 6—Laying on of hands merely designates these men for the office, denoting their fellowship in the things of Christ and representation for the corporate body of believers.

V. 7—The church continues to grow in spite of the internal condition.

W. 8-15—Stephen, a strong witness to the gospel, incurs the hatred of certain sects. False witnesses are brought before the council to accuse Stephen.

CHAPTER 7—Stephen’s defense before the council is a recitation of the history of the nation Israel and their resistance and rebellion to God. Stephen charges the council of being betrayers and murderers of Jesus, which engenders their bitterest hatred and leads to the stoning of Stephen.

W. 2-8—He begins with Abraham, who believed and obeyed God.

W. 9-16—He goes on to the Patriarchal period. The brethren of Joseph, motivated by envy and hatred, sold Joseph into Egypt. God overruled and used Joseph to save them.

W. 17-29—He reviews the Egyptian bondage period. Moses was born in this period and was brought up in the palace of Pharaoh. The wisdom of the Egyptians was advanced beyond that for which we have given them credit. Mathematics, chemistry, engineering, architecture, and astronomy were highly developed fields of study. All this wisdom did not prepare Moses to deliver his people (v. 25).

W. 30-36—He reminds them of the deliverance out of Egypt. God made Moses the deliverer (v. 35), whom the children of Israel first refused to accept.

W. 37-44—He refers to the wilderness experience. A series of rebellions against God were brought to a climax in the making of a golden calf. This plague of idolatry broke out again in the land (v. 43) and resulted in the Babylonian captivity.

W. 45-53—Stephen concludes with Joshua, who led them into the land, and Jesus who made a way to heaven. Note the strong charge of Stephen (vv. 51, 52). The Law was given to them supernaturally by the ministry of angels—they did not keep it (v. 53). Jesus came by the announcement of an angel, but they rejected Him.

W. 54-60—Stephen is stoned to death. Stephen, a Spirit-filled believer, beholds the glory of God and the seated Savior *standing* to receive him as the first martyr. The Savior has stood up to receive multitudes since then. Another young man standing there (v. 58), Saul of Tarsus, who led in the stoning of Stephen, also looks into the heavens but does not see Jesus. However, this prepared him to see Him later on the Damascus road. “He fell asleep” (v. 60) means that Jesus put his body to sleep to await the Rapture. Stephen and Saul were on opposite sides of the cross at first, as were the two thieves. Stephen was a tremendous witness to Saul. Both were young men. The witness to the gospel became a youth movement.

II. The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles in Judæa and Samaria, Chapters 8–12

CHAPTER 8—Saul continues his persecution of the church, and the witnesses scatter. Philip becomes the chief missionary. The Ethiopian eunuch is converted.

W. 1-4—Saul becomes the chief persecutor of the church, and the church is scattered.

W. 5-8—Philip becomes the chief witness abroad after the death of Stephen.

W. 9-25—Philip has an experience with Simon the sorcerer, who was the first religious racketeer in the church, but not the last. Note that Simon professes to be a believer during the sweeping revival of Philip in Samaria. He goes through all the outward ritual—he believes (but it is not saving faith), is baptized, and becomes a friend of Philip (v. 13). He is exposed to Christianity and is impressed, though not converted. Notice that the professing believers (vv. 15-17) had not been born again, for they were not baptized into the church by the Holy Spirit—they were baptized by water. Simon was not baptized by the Holy Spirit but was impressed by it and wanted this gift. Notice that he is willing to pay for the gift (vv. 18, 19) that he might use it in turn for profit and publicity. There is no record that he ever was converted; he is a member of the “mixed multitude” that has been following the church for more than 1900 years.

W. 26-40—In contrast to Simon the sorcerer is the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip is led by the Holy Spirit from the revival in Samaria to the desert on the way to Gaza (vv. 26-28). The Ethiopian was traveling from Jerusalem in state. He had a chauffeur who drove the chariot while he was reading. Evidently, he had a retinue of servants. He was a proselyte who had been to Jerusalem, the religious capital, but he was leaving with a mind and heart unsatisfied. The Spirit directed Philip to join him by hitchhiking (v. 29). Philip explains to him that Isaiah 53 is all about the crucifixion of Jesus (vv. 30-35). The Ethiopian believes in his heart and is baptized.

CHAPTER 9—Saul of Tarsus is converted on the road to Damascus; he is filled with the Spirit and baptized. He begins to preach, returns to Jerusalem, then visits his hometown of Tarsus. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus was the greatest event from the Day of Pentecost to the Reformation. Peter visits Lydda and heals Æneas, goes on to Joppa and raises Tabitha from the dead (vv. 32-34).

W. 1, 2—The zeal of Saul in persecuting the church leads him to go beyond the borders of Jerusalem and Judæa. Having secured papers from the high priest, he goes to Syria.

W. 3-6—Saul meets the living Christ. “Who art thou, Lord?” (v. 5) reveals that he did not know Jesus, whom to know is life. “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (v. 6) reveals that he yields in obedience to Jesus. He is converted—faith with works.

V. 7—The men with him see the light but do not hear the voice. Only Saul understands the message (see Acts 22:9; 26:14).

W. 8-16—Blinded, Saul is led into Damascus and Ananias, a believer, is sent to him. Ananias is dumbfounded and fearful of Saul. Jesus explains His purpose in calling Saul (vv. 15, 16):

1 - To witness to the Gentiles

2 - To suffer more than any other saint

W. 17-25—After he receives his sight and is baptized, he begins to witness in the synagogue to the person of Jesus. The Jews plot to kill him, and the disciples let him over the wall in a basket.

W. 26-29—Saul returns to Jerusalem after his conversion (see Galatians 1:18, 19), but the church is reluctant to receive him until Barnabas sponsors him.

W. 30, 31—When a plot is discovered to slay Saul, he is taken to Cæsarea from which he returns to his hometown of Tarsus.

W. 32, 33—Peter goes to Lydda where he heals Æneas, a palsied patient bedfast for eight years. This leads to many conversions.

W. 34-43—In Joppa, Tabitha (or Dorcas), a believer who used her gift as a dress-maker, died and Peter, who is still in Lydda, is sent for. He comes and raises her from the dead.

CHAPTER 10—Cornelius, the Roman centurion, is converted.

W. 1-8—Cornelius is a soldier, but a deeply religious man—devout, fearing God, giving generously to the people, and praying much. With all these good marks to his credit, he is not saved and these works do not make him a Christian. The Spirit of God directs him to send for Simon Peter in Joppa.

W. 9-22—The Holy Spirit prepares Peter for this missionary journey. In prayer on the housetop he becomes very hungry, and is placed in a trance. A sheet let down from heaven contains every kind of unclean beast, bird, and bug. Peter is instructed to slay and eat. He calls the Holy Spirit “Lord,” but contradicts his address by refusing to eat (v. 14). As a Jew, he had never eaten any unclean thing even after Pentecost. Peter wonders about the dream until the knock at the door and the messengers from Cornelius explain their mission. The Holy Spirit instructs Peter to go with them.

W. 23-43—Peter reluctantly enters the home of Cornelius. He does not permit Cornelius to bow before him, saying that he, too, is only a man. Peter preaches the death and resurrection of Jesus and he gives the invitation to accept Jesus (v. 43).

W. 44-48—This has been labeled the Gentile Pentecost. Peter is astonished that Gentiles too have the Holy Spirit poured out upon them—it is made audible by their speaking in tongues (v. 46). The tongues were more of an evidence to Peter and the other apostles that God would save Gentiles (see Acts 11:1-18; 15:7-11). Then were the Gentiles in Cornelius’ house baptized.

THE THREE REPRESENTATIVE CONVERSIONS

Acts 8—Ethiopian eunuch—Son of Ham

Acts 9—Saul of Tarsus—Son of Shem

Acts 10—Cornelius, Roman centurion—Son of Japheth

There must be three factors that come into focus before there can be a conversion. All three are evident in these representative conversions:

The HOLY SPIRIT (Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ)	The WORD of GOD (Faith cometh by hearing the Word of God)	The MAN of GOD (Instrument)
Ethiopian – Holy Spirit directed Philip	Isaiah 53	Philip
Saul – Holy Spirit led him down Damascus road; Jesus dealt with him directly	Was grounded in the Old Testament	Stephen
Cornelius – Holy Spirit supervised every detail; prepared Peter and Cornelius	Peter preached Christ	Peter

CHAPTER 11—Peter recounts the events in connection with the conversion of Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. Antioch becomes the center of the Gentile church.

W. 1-3—The news of the Gentiles receiving the Word of God did not seem to bring any joy to the church in Jerusalem. They demand of Peter an explanation of his conduct.

W. 4-18—Peter reviews his conduct in detail with the apostles in Jerusalem. He is half apologetic (v. 17). *He* had not envisioned Gentiles in the church, and he explains that he moved only at the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The church in Jerusalem then accepts the fact that Gentiles are to be incorporated into the body of believers with them (v. 18).

W. 19-21—Antioch becomes the center of evangelism as many different races are converted and a strong church is formed.

W. 22-24—Barnabas is sent to Antioch by the Jerusalem church. He ministers the Word to them.

W. 25, 26—Barnabas needs a helper and he knows that Saul would make a good one. He goes to Tarsus to find him. “Christian” was the name given to believers in Antioch (v. 26). It may have been given in derision, but more likely it simply implied a follower of Christ.

W. 27-30—A prophet by the name of Agabus predicted a famine which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Tacitus confirms the fact of the famine. It motivated the church in Antioch to send relief to the church in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 12—Persecution strikes through Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great. Peter in prison is miraculously delivered. The death of Herod is a judgment from God.

W. 2, 3—James, brother of John, is executed by Herod. Peter is imprisoned. God, by His sovereign will and purpose, permits James to be executed, but He delivers Peter.

V. 4—“Easter” should be “the Passover.”

V. 5—The church in Jerusalem prays for Peter.

V. 6—Peter could sleep in prison!

W. 7-11—“The angel” should be “*an* angel,” as Christ was *the* angel of the Lord in the Old Testament. *An* angel delivers Peter, and the prayer of the church is answered.

V. 12—The church met in homes, as there were no church buildings at this time. Note the home in which they were meeting—Mary’s, the mother of Mark.

W. 13-15—Although the church prayed, their faith was small—they thought he had been executed. “It is his angel” should be “It is his spirit” (v. 15)—they couldn’t believe their prayers were answered.

V. 19—Note the cold-blooded and hard-hearted attitude of Herod toward human life.

W. 20-23—Herod, like Nebuchadnezzar, is lifted up by pride. Herod tried to act like a god (v. 22). His death is God’s judgment upon him. God is jealous of His glory (v. 23).

W. 24, 25—In the midst of persecution and opposition, the church grows and prospers.

III. The Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles to the uttermost part of the earth, Chapters 13–28

As the final surge of the gospel beyond the boundaries of Israel begins, Paul becomes the dominant leader and Peter disappears from the scene.

CHAPTERS 13, 14—The first missionary journey of the apostle Paul is begun with Barnabas. The first stop is the Island of Cyprus, the home of Barnabas. They cross the island to Paphos. From there they sail to Perga in Pamphylia, then enter the interior of Asia Minor (now Turkey) into the Galatian country.

CHAPTER 13

V. 1,2—The church in Antioch was the missionary church, not the church in Jerusalem. Notice that the Holy Spirit chose Saul and Barnabas. It is “Barnabas and Saul” at first, but Saul becomes the leader, changes his name to Paul, and the team becomes “Paul and Barnabas.”

V. 4—They are led by the Holy Spirit.

V. 5—They begin at Salamis on the Island of Cyprus, but there are no conspicuous conversions here.

V. 6-12—They cross the island to Paphos where Paul encounters Elymas, the sorcerer, who influences Sergius Paulus, a Roman deputy in the country. Elymas is routed and Sergius Paulus becomes a believer. Saul’s name is changed (v. 9) to Paul (Paulus means “little”) and could be taken after Sergius Paulus.

V. 13—They arrive at Perga and John Mark turns back.

V. 14-42—In Antioch of Pisidia Paul preaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath day one of his greatest sermons. Notice that after the reading of the Law, Paul was permitted to speak. He recounts their history as a nation, as Stephen had done. Then he presents Jesus as the Savior (v. 23). He recounts His history, and then presents the death and resurrection of Jesus as the means of salvation (vv. 29-39). Paul gives a final warning (vv. 40-42).

V. 43-49—The next Sabbath they preach to the Gentiles.

V. 50-52—Paul and Barnabas are forced to flee to Iconium.

CHAPTER 14

W. 5, 6—Paul and Barnabas are forced to flee to Lystra and Derbe.

W. 8-28—In Lystra Paul heals a man who had no strength in his feet. The Galatians were a fickle people (see notes on Galatians). They want to perform a religious sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas as gods (vv. 11-13). Paul and Barnabas have to protest vigorously to prevent this (vv. 14-18). The next moment they stone Paul (v. 19). It is our judgment that Paul was dead after the stoning and that God raised him from the dead. During this time he had the experience of 2 Corinthians 12:1-9. Paul and Barnabas retrace their steps (vv. 21-28), return to Antioch, and make their report.

CHAPTER 15—The council of Jerusalem convened to consider law vs. grace, or law vs. liberty. The question before the council: Must Gentiles come under the Mosaic Law to become Christians? The Jerusalem church followed the Mosaic Law to a great extent. Judaizers insisted that Gentiles come under the Law and wear the badge and outward mark, which was circumcision (v. 1).

W. 2-4—The church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to confer with the church there on this disturbing matter. On the way, in Phenice and Samaria, they report to the churches concerning the conversion of Gentiles, causing many of the brethren to rejoice.

W. 5, 6—A sect of the Pharisees who are believers insist that Gentiles be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. (The sacrificial section of the Mosaic system was not an issue.)

W. 7-11—Peter is the first to speak to the issue. He recounts again his experience in the home of Cornelius where Gentiles had the same experience that the apostles did on the Day of Pentecost. The Gentiles did not have any connection with the Law. Peter makes it abundantly clear that Israel had never kept the Law (v. 10).

V. 12—Barnabas and Paul then report what God has done among the Gentiles apart from the Law. Their messages are not recorded.

W. 13-18—James, leader of the church in Jerusalem, summarizes the mind of the council. He fits the church into the program of the prophets although the church is not a subject of prophecy. God is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name today (v. 14). The program of the prophets will follow.

V. 16—"After this" means after the church is taken out of the world. "I will return" is the second coming of Christ, described in Revelation 19. He "will build again [the] ruins" of the house of David that today has fallen down.

V. 17 –When Christ returns there will be a way for the remainder of men to seek after the Lord. Then all the Gentiles will be in the kingdom in that day. The contrast is between "out of them" (Gentiles, v. 14) and "all the nations" (Gentiles).

W. 19-29–The decision is that the Gentiles not be required to meet any of the demands of the Mosaic system, but that they exercise courtesy to those who do—especially in the area of meats offered to idols and fornication.

W. 30-41–After the council Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch and make preparations for a second missionary journey. Since they disagree about John Mark going with them again, they part company (vv. 37-39). The division is sharp. Paul takes Silas while Barnabas takes his nephew John Mark. Paul starts out through Syria and Cilicia.

CHAPTER 16–Paul revisits the churches of Galatia. Having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go south to the province of Asia or north to Bithynia, he proceeds to Europe after receiving the vision of the man of Macedonia. Paul arrives in Philippi where he ends up in the local jail. At midnight Paul and Silas pray and sing praises! An earthquake shakes the jail, the doors are opened and the jailer opens his heart to receive Christ as Savior.

W. 1-5–Paul finds a young disciple by the name of Timothy who evidently had been converted on his first missionary journey (1 Timothy 1:2). Timothy travels with Paul and becomes his companion and helper in his missionary efforts.

W. 6-13–Paul obviously intended to enlarge the circumference of his missionary journeys in Asia Minor, but the Spirit moves him out of Asia. When Paul reaches Troas he apparently has no leading as to where to go next until he is given the vision of the man of Macedonia. He accepts this as the Holy Spirit's moving him into Europe. Dr. Luke joins the party at Troas. Note the change from "they" (v. 8) to "we" (v. 10). They proceed inland to Philippi. The conversion of Lydia, a businesswoman from Thyatira, was the opening of Europe to the gospel (vv. 14, 15).

W. 16-40—The incident of the demon-possessed girl following Paul and finally being freed from the demon caused her owners to have Paul and Silas arrested. After being beaten, they are pushed into the dungeon. At midnight their prayer meeting brings an earthquake that opens the prison doors. When the jailer sees the doors open, he assumes that all the prisoners have escaped. His life would be forfeited according to Roman law. On the verge of suicide, Paul deters him and assures him that none had escaped. Having stood on the brink of eternity, the guard sees himself as a lost soul. When he cries out asking how to be saved, Paul gives him the gospel in a sentence. “Thy house” (v. 31) means that his household would have to believe separately as he would. The jailer and his household believe and are saved. These form a part of the church in Philippi that Paul loved and which seemed closer to Paul than any other (see his Epistle to the Philippians).

CHAPTER 17—Paul’s second missionary journey continues to Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens.

W. 1-9—Paul is in Thessalonica for three Sabbaths, and there are some converts. Opposition forces him to leave.

W. 10-14—Paul goes to Berea where he has a better reception and many believe (v. 11).

W. 15-34—Paul proceeds to Athens, having left Silas and Timothy in Berea. Paul observes the idolatry of Athens. He disputes with the Jews in the synagogue and the philosophers in the marketplace daily. Finally he is given a public hearing on Mars’ Hill. Paul’s address is a masterpiece adjusted to his audience, as was his sermon in Pisidia. Paul’s point of contact is the altar to the unknown god (vv. 22-29). He presents the true God as Creator (past) and the true God as Redeemer (present) (vv. 27-29); he asks men to turn to Him. Light creates responsibility. Paul presents the true God as Judge (v. 31) (future). Paul was not a failure in Athens, as some insist. There *were* converts (v. 34).

CHAPTER 18—The second missionary journey concludes with Paul in Corinth. Corinth was the sin-city of the Roman Empire, a city of corruption. (See notes on 1 Corinthians for a pen-picture of Corinth). Apollos comes to Ephesus.

W. 1-3—Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla who had escaped from an anti-Semitic campaign in Rome. They were tentmakers as was Paul, and he stayed with them. They were apparently his first converts in Corinth.

W. 4-17—Paul begins his public ministry in the synagogue. Silas and Timothy join him in Corinth. Many believe, including Crispus who was the chief ruler of the synagogue. The Lord encourages Paul to speak boldly. For 18 months he ministers the Word. An insurrection is made against Paul, and he is brought before Gallio. Gallio is not careless, but refuses to handle a case that has to do with religious liberty.

W. 18-22—Paul sails for Antioch but goes by Ephesus. He takes Priscilla and Aquila with him as far as Ephesus. Paul makes a vow and shaves his head. Under grace, this was an exercise in Christian liberty. He had a *right* to do this, not an obligation.

W. 24-28—Apollos from Alexandria, an eloquent preacher and one who knew the Old Testament, came to Ephesus. He was fervent in the spirit and taught zealously the things of the Old Testament up through the ministry of John the Baptist. He knew nothing beyond the baptism of John. Aquila and Priscilla had the privilege of bringing him up to date and also to conversion. He went to Achaia (visiting the churches in Greece, including Corinth and Athens) and began to preach Jesus as the Messiah and Savior.

CHAPTER 19—Paul's third missionary journey. Paul returns to Ephesus after retracing part of his first and second missionary journeys. He spends two years here where he speaks daily in the school of Tyrannus. Paul performs miracles which lead to the march against him led by Demetrius and his fellow silversmiths. The mob is quieted by the town clerk who urges them to appeal to the law and not resort to violence.

W. 1, 2—The proper translation of verse 2 should be “Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?” They had heard only the preaching of Apollos which went no farther than the baptism of John.

W. 3, 4—Paul explains to them that they must believe on Jesus to be saved.

W. 5-7—These men respond to the preaching of Paul, and when they believe they receive the Holy Spirit.

W. 8-10—Paul withdraws from the synagogue under the fire of opposition but continues his ministry in the school of Tyrannus for a period of two years.

W. 11-16—Paul performs special miracles which lead to the seven sons of Sceva attempting to duplicate the miracles of Paul. This attempt backfires to their humiliation and hurt.

W. 17-22—As a result, many who had traffic with demons believe in Christ. So great are the results that Paul postpones his trip to Corinth and continues to minister in Ephesus—“But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Corinthians 16:8, 9).

W. 23-41—The uproar of the silversmiths led by Demetrius centered about their bread and butter—they made little images of Diana and sold them. The temple of Diana in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world (see notes on Ephesians). The meeting ends in confusion with the mob crying incessantly, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians” (v. 28), until the town clerk brings order. He explains that they need not worry about the worship of Diana and that a legal charge should be made. The uproar ceases and the crowd goes home, but now the work of Paul in Ephesus is ended.

CHAPTER 20—The third missionary journey concludes. Paul continues on to Macedonia to Philippi, back to Troas, and to Miletus.

W. 1-5—This brief section covers the visit of Paul to Thessalonica, Berea, and Philippi in Macedonia and also to Corinth and Athens in Greece.

W. 6-12—This section records the visit of Paul to Troas and the episode of the young man, Eutychus, who goes to sleep in a window while Paul is preaching and falls down three floors to his death. Paul raises him from the dead.

W. 13-38—Paul goes by Miletus, the port of Ephesus, so he can visit the Ephesians and still be in Jerusalem for Pentecost. The elders of the church meet him and they have a tender reunion. Paul knows he will encounter danger in Jerusalem, but he is determined to go. He gives a report of his stewardship of the gospel in Ephesus. He had been faithful. He knows that the church in Ephesus will be subjected to false teaching (v. 29). Note the tender farewell (vv. 37, 38).

CHAPTER 21—The third missionary journey ends in Jerusalem with Paul’s arrest.

W. 1-3—Paul takes a ship from Miletus to Patara where he changes to one going to Tyre.

W. 4-17—Paul spends seven days in Tyre with disciples who warn him that he should not go to Jerusalem. Paul already had this information (see Acts 20:22-24) and he is willing to make the sacrifice in order to bring the gift for the church in Jerusalem. Paul takes the ship to Ptolemais, greets the brethren, spends one day, and then

proceeds to Cæsarea. There he stays in the home of Philip, the evangelist. A prophet from Judæa, Agabus by name, came down from Judæa and takes Paul's girdle and binds him, telling him that this is what the Jews will do to him in Jerusalem. Paul explains that he knows this but is willing to die in Jerusalem if need be (v. 13). When the friends of Paul see that they are not persuading him, they say, "The will of the Lord be done" (v. 14). We believe that Paul was in the will of God when he went to Jerusalem. Paul continues on to Jerusalem where the church receives him gladly.

W. 18-26—The fact that good Bible expositors offer different explanations of this passage is evidence that there is a difficulty here. Was Paul out of or in the will of God when he went to Jerusalem and took a Jewish vow that evidently involved a sacrifice? We believe that Paul was in the will of God when he did this. Those who insist that the grace of God did not force the Gentiles to keep the Mosaic Law seem to forget that the same grace permits the Jew to continue in its precepts if he feels it is the will of God. We need to remember that Peter had eaten nothing contrary to Mosaic Law until he visited Paul in Antioch. The Jewish believers had an abhorrence of eating anything sacrificed to idols. Paul made it abundantly clear that meat does not commend us to God—therefore you can eat or refrain from eating. Paul is the man who also wrote:

But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. (1 Corinthians 7:17, 18)

For though I am free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

Grace permitted Paul to take a Jewish vow to win the Jews. If he had been a Gentile it would have been questionable to adopt a foreign custom. Finally, this is the man who could say at the end of his life when he wrote his own epitaph, “I have finished my course” (see 2 Timothy 4:6-8). Paul touched all the bases God had wanted him to touch. It is our considered judgment that Paul was in the will of God in following this procedure. Nowhere did the Holy Spirit forbid him to do this. He did keep Paul out of Bithynia (see Acts 16:7). We trust we are not out of the will of God in taking this position.

The church in Jerusalem rejoices in the ministry of Paul to the Gentiles but calls his attention to the fact that God is still saving Jews (v. 20). These Jewish converts had not forsaken the Law. We insist that under grace they were not required to do this, but neither could they insist that Gentiles come under the Law. Gentiles, therefore, could not insist they forsake the practices of the Law—provided following the Law was not trusted for salvation.

W. 27-40—Paul is mobbed and beaten in the temple. He would have been killed had not the chief captain and soldiers rescued him from the angry mob. Actually the arrest of Paul saves him from death. The chief captain knew nothing about Paul and was mistaken as to his actual identity (vv. 37, 38). Paul identifies himself to the chief captain who grants him permission to address the mob (vv. 39, 40).

CHAPTER 22—Paul recounts his encounter with Christ and his subsequent experience which brought him to Jerusalem. Paul appeals to his Roman citizenship to deliver himself from the awful whipping of a prisoner.

W. 1-3—Notice that Paul speaks to the chief captain in Greek (21:37), but he addresses the Jewish mob in his and their native tongue (Hebrew). He gives his background—born a Jew in Tarsus of Cilicia, taught by Gamaliel in Jerusalem. He makes it abundantly clear that he is a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

W. 4-24—He then recounts his persecution of the church and his experience on the Damascus road as he was prosecuting his hatred of Christ beyond the pale of Jerusalem. He explains briefly his conversion. Also he makes it clear why he had not remained in Jerusalem but had gone to the Gentiles. Paul can proceed no further. The mob drowns out his voice, and the chief captain rescues him again but is puzzled at the rage of the mob.

W. 25-30—The chief captain intends to scourge Paul to get a confession from him, as he is puzzled at the strange hatred against Paul. The hatred of the crowd was evidently satanic. Paul declares his Roman citizenship which will spare him the ordeal. This further perplexes the chief captain, for he recognizes now that he has no ordinary prisoner on his hands.

Notice that Paul had many assets which made him suitable to be the missionary to the Roman Empire. He had a world view. Greek training had prepared him as the cosmic Christian. He was trained in the Mosaic system, which prepared him to interpret it in the light of the coming of Christ and His redemptive death and resurrection. Not the least of his assets was his Roman citizenship which finally opened the door for him to visit Rome.

The chief captain, who now wants to know the exact charge against Paul, is determined that he appear before the Sanhedrin to hear their charge.

CHAPTER 23—Paul makes a futile attempt to explain his position and conduct to the Sanhedrin. The Lord encourages Paul, and the plot to murder Paul leads to his being sent to Cæsarea for trial before Felix.

W. 2, 3—Paul rebukes the high priest for having him smitten on the mouth contrary to the Law. Paul uses strong language, “Thou whited wall” (v. 3).

W. 4, 5—Paul obviously had eye trouble since he did not recognize the high priest. He would have shown proper respect for him had he done so.

W. 6-10—The Sanhedrin was divided between Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees were fundamental in doctrine. They believed in the integrity of the Old Testament. The Sadducees were liberal and rejected the supernatural. Paul, knowing this, makes it clear that the real issue is concerning the resurrection of the dead. Notice that this causes a division in the council that leads to confusion and turmoil. The chief captain rescues Paul again without learning the real nature of the hatred against Paul.

V. 11—The Lord appears to Paul at night to encourage him. This verse indicates that Paul is not out of the will of God in coming to Jerusalem.

W. 12-15—A plot of more than 40 fanatics vow not to eat or drink until they have killed Paul.

V. 16–The plot is discovered by a nephew of Paul who reveals it to him.
W. 17-35–Paul makes it known to the chief captain who determines now to send Paul under guard, secretly, to Cæsarea where he is to appear before Felix the governor.

CHAPTER 24–Paul testifies before Felix. The high priest, Ananias, and the elders come down from Jerusalem to accuse Paul before Felix. Paul is accused of sedition, rebellion, and profaning the temple.

W. 10-21–Paul offers an explanation of his conduct and states that the way he worships God centers about the resurrection.

W. 22, 23–Felix asks for more evidence before he makes a judgment.

W. 24-26–Felix has Paul in for a private audience with him and his wife Drusilla, a Jewess. Paul witnesses to them concerning Christ.

PAUL REASONS OF

1 - righteousness—of Christ (Philippians 3:9)

2 - temperance (self-control)

3 - judgment to come (great white throne (Revelation 20:11-15))

Felix is convicted, but he expects a bribe that is not forthcoming (v. 26).

V. 27–Paul is kept in prison for two years without any further hearing.

CHAPTER 25–Festus succeeds Felix and Paul appears before Festus.

W. 1-3–When Festus goes to Jerusalem, the high priest renews his charges against Paul and asks that he be brought to Jerusalem for trial.

W. 4-9–Festus refuses this request but agrees to examine him in Cæsarea. Many false charges are made against Paul, which he denies.

W. 10-12–Paul, as a Roman citizen, exercises his right and appeals to Caesar. This, Festus is forced to grant.

W. 13-22–King Agrippa and Bernice come to visit Festus. Festus tells them of Paul's case and that he has appealed to Caesar. Agrippa asks to hear Paul and a meeting is scheduled.

W. 23-27–A hearing with great pomp and ceremony is arranged. The setting is dramatic. Paul in chains appears before this august company of rulers and kings. Festus requests Agrippa to help him frame a charge against Paul to send to Caesar.

CHAPTER 26—Paul’s testimony before Agrippa is not a defense of himself, but a declaration of the gospel with the evident purpose of winning Agrippa and the others present to Christ. This is a dramatic scene, and this chapter is one of the greatest literary pieces either secular or inspired.

W. 1-3—Paul’s introduction flatters Agrippa and engages his attention.

W. 4-7—Paul reviews his life as a Jew under Law.

V. 8—Paul appeals to Agrippa personally.

W. 9-11—Paul reviews his life as a Pharisee who persecuted the church.

W. 12-23—Paul reviews his experience on the Damascus road, his encounter with Christ, and his response to the call of Christ. Paul declares the gospel clearly to the royal audience (v. 23).

V. 24—The reaction of Festus—Paul is insane.

V. 25—Note Paul’s gentle answer to Festus. (Who was mad—Paul or Festus?)

W. 26, 27—Paul attempts to win Agrippa to Christ.

V. 28—Agrippa is almost persuaded. This is the closest to conversion that any member of the house of Herod came.

V. 29—Paul gives an invitation to the assembled crowd there to turn to Christ.

W. 30-32—Paul was cleared of all charges and could have been freed if he had not appealed to Caesar. He had not made a single convert as far as we know, but he had been faithful—which is all Christ requires.

CHAPTER 27—Paul’s prosperous journey to Rome (Romans 1:10).

W. 1-6—Paul is sent by ship with other prisoners to Myra of Lycia. There they board a ship going to Italy.

W. 7-9—The journey is very slow.

W. 10-13—Paul warns of coming danger, but the centurion in charge of the prisoners listens to the master of the ship.

W. 14-44—The ship encounters a severe storm that leads to the wrecking of the ship but no loss of life. The crew, passengers, and prisoners all escape to the Island of Melita (Malta).

CHAPTER 28—From Melita to Rome. Paul arrives in Rome and ministers first to Jews and then to Gentiles. The narrative is not concluded but breaks off with Paul preaching in Rome. The Acts of the Holy Spirit have not been finished even in our day. The book of Acts will end with the Rapture.

W. 1-6—Paul is bitten by a viper on the Island of Malta. Obviously he could not see the poisonous snake, as he did not deliberately pick it up.

W. 7-10—Paul has a ministry on the island in healing the father of a prominent man by the name of Publius.

W. 11-16—Paul goes to Rome.

W. 17-24—Paul is visited by many Jews and preaches to them. Some believe.

W. 25-31—Paul turns from the Jews when controversy arises and preaches to the Gentiles the kingdom of God. The record is not concluded, for the Holy Spirit continues to work today. There are still Acts of the Holy Spirit. They will be concluded at the coming of Christ for His church.

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY



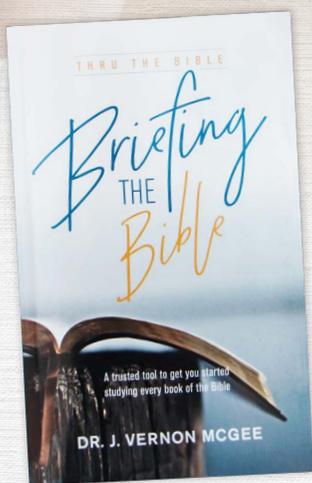
PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY



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