



# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

ST. PAUL'S BIBLE COLLEGE – ONLINE LECTURE – LESSON 19

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# LESSON OUTLINE

- I. Background information to the Book.
- II. Relationship between Luke and Acts.
- III. Acts as History and Theology.
- IV. Structure of Acts.
- V. Witnesses in Jerusalem (Acts 1:1-8:3)
- VI. Witnesses in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:4-12:25)
- VII. Witnesses to the Ends of the Earth (Acts 13-28)
- VIII. Jewish Mission (Peter and others), and Gentile Mission (Paul and companions).
- IX. Significance of the Book.



# I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE BOOK



# 1. INTRODUCTION

- Continuation of the Third Gospel.
- Luke is the author.
- The Way
- The Christians (Ac 11:26)

## 2. TITLE

- Acts of the Apostles
- Acts of the Holy Spirit
- Acts of Peter and Paul

## 3. AUTHOR

- Internal evidence: Preface, 'We' texts (cf. 16:10-40)
- External evidence
- Luke

## 4. DATE AND PLACE

- c. 60 – 63 AD
- Different places. Antioch, Philippi.

## 5. SCOPE

- About 30 years of history-theology.
- From Jesus' ascension to Paul's entry into Rome.



## 6. GENRE

- 'praxeis' ('acts') of individuals / city.
- Ancient history?!
- Theological text?

## 7. PURPOSE

- Record of selected events on the Road to Rome.
- Jesus as the builder of his Church.
- Apologetic, kerygmatic, conciliatory, exhortatory, and catechetical.

## 8. SALIENT FEATURES

- Gospel: Vertical universalization.
- Acts: Horizontal universalization.
- Key to understand Paul's epistles.
- Transition from Judaism to Christianity.
- Early Christian community.



## II. LUKE AND ACTS RELATIONSHIP

### SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES



## Parallels between Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts

<b>Luke's Gospel</b>	<b>Acts</b>
Preface to Theophilus (1:1–4)	Preface to Theophilus (1:1–5)
Spirit descends on Jesus as he prays (3:21–22)	Spirit comes to apostles as they pray (2:1–13)
Sermon declares prophecy fulfilled (4:16–27)	Sermon declares prophecy fulfilled (2:14–40)
Jesus heals a lame man (5:17–26)	Peter heals a lame man (3:1–10)
Religious leaders attack Jesus (5:29–6:11)	Religious leaders attack apostles (4:1–8:3)
Centurion invites Jesus to his house (7:1–10)	Centurion invites Peter to his house (10:1–23)
Jesus raises widow's son from death (7:11–17)	Peter raises widow from death (9:36–43)
Missionary journey to Gentiles (10:1–12)	Missionary journeys to Gentiles (13:1–19:20)
Jesus travels to Jerusalem (9:51–19:28)	Paul travels to Jerusalem (19:21–21:17)
Jesus is received favorably (19:37)	Paul is received favorably (21:17–20)
Jesus is devoted to the temple (19:45–48)	Paul is devoted to the temple (21:26)
Sadducees oppose Jesus, but scribes support him (20:27–39)	Sadducees oppose Paul, but Pharisees support him (23:6–9)
Jesus breaks bread and gives thanks (22:19)	Paul breaks bread and gives thanks (27:35)
Jesus is seized by an angry mob (22:54)	Paul is seized by an angry mob (21:30)
Jesus is slapped by high priest's aides (22:63–64)	Paul is slapped at high priest's command (23:2)
Jesus is tried four times and declared innocent three times (22:66–23:13)	Paul is tried four times and declared innocent three times (23:1–26:32)
Jesus is rejected by the Jews (23:18)	Paul is rejected by the Jews (21:36)
Jesus is regarded favorably by a centurion (23:47)	Paul is regarded favorably by a centurion (27:43)
Final confirmation that scriptures have been fulfilled (24:45–47)	Final confirmation that scriptures have been fulfilled (28:23–28)

## Symmetry in Luke & Acts

LUKE	ACTS
Begins with an address to most excellent Theophilus	Begins with an address to Theophilus
Announcement made by the angel, Gabriel	Announcement made by two angels following the Ascension
Begins in Jerusalem	Begins in Jerusalem
Birth of Jesus as the Spirit comes upon Mary	Birth of the Church as the Spirit comes upon the Church
A general movement towards Jerusalem	A general movement away from Jerusalem

## Luke's Mirror Structuring of Acts

C. H. Talbert (1974) *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts*. Atlanta: SBLMS

	<b>Peter</b>	<b>Paul</b>
Before Sanhedrin	4:1-22, 5:17-42	21:26 – 23:10
Silver and Gold	3:6	20:33
Filled with Spirit	4:8	13:9
Fear falls on all	5:5, 11	19:17
Jews filled with jealousy	5:17	13:45
Gamaliel/ <u>Gallio</u> diverts anger	Gamaliel (5:34-39)	<u>Gallio</u> (18:14-17)
Laying on of hands	18:17-18	19:6
Speaking in tongues	10:46	19:6
Converts with Latin names	Cornelius (10:1)	Julius (27:1)
Stories told 3x involving voice from heaven at midday		
Earthquakes following prayer	4:31	16:26

Mirror

G

E

B

D

C



### III. ACTS AS HISTORY AND THEOLOGY





# 1. ACTS AS HISTORY

- Slanted history.
- Selective history.
- Contradictions: ascension of Jesus; mission command; Paul's conversion stories; Judas' death.
- Miracles.
- Speeches.

## 2. ACTS AS THEOLOGY

- God as Saviour, Jesus as Saviour.
- Message of salvation. All are invited.
- Universality.
- The coming of the Holy Spirit.
- The preaching of the Apostles.
- Establishment of the Church.

## ... THEOLOGY

- Christians' Response to the Preaching: faith, repentance and conversion, baptism, following of Jesus, testimony, prayer.
- Kerygma, Koinonia, Diakonia, Marturia.
- World-affirmation.
- Salvation.
- Eschatology (Parousia)



## IV. STRUCTURE OF ACTS



# NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

- Introduction (1:1-2:41)
- Christian mission to the Jewish world (2:42-12:24)
- Christian mission to the Gentile world (12:25-28:31)

## KEY VERSES

- Acts' thesis statement:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Ac 1:8)

## KEY VERSES

- Peter's signature statement:

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.” (Ac 4:13)

# KEY VERSES

- Paul's vision statement:

“This man (Paul) is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.” (Ac 9:15)





## V. WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM (1:1-8:3)



# TAKE THE WORLD SERIOUSLY

- “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” (1:11)

# MARY IN PRAYER

- “All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.” (1:14)

# REVERSAL OF BABEL

- “And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.” (2:6)

# FROM ALL. TO ALL.

- “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (2:42, cf. 4:32)

# NAME OF JESUS

- But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!”  
(3:6)
- “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”  
(4:12)

## DIVINE ORIGIN

- So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice.  
(5:38-39)

# CLARITY OF MISSION

- And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables ... But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (6:2, 4)



# FIRST MARTYR

- Stephen, the Deacon.
- Saul was guarding the clothes of the persecutors.
- And God was guarding Saul.



## VI. WITNESSES IN JUDEA & SAMARIA (8:4-12:25)



# PHILIP, THE DEACON

- Philip's initiative: 'Do you understand what you read?' (8:30). Cf. Emmaus narrative.
- And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. (8:39)

# SAUL BECOMES PAUL

- Acts 9:1-18
- 22:6-16
- 26:12-18
- Gal 1:11-19
- Barnabas (Ac 9:27)
- Paul's vocation narrative?!

# PETER'S TRANSFORMATION

- Cf. Synod on Synodality. Two images.
- Peter learns. Learning Peter.
- But Peter lifted Cornelius up, saying, “Stand up; I too am a man.” (10:26)
- Farmer vs. Rain.

# APOSTLES BECOME MARTYRS

- Herod beheads James (12:2).
- Herod imprisons Peter. Peter is saved by God (12:6-19).
- Herod dies (12:20-25).



# VII. WITNESSES TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH (13-28)



# BEING SET APART

- While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” (13:2)



# EVER READY

- After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.” (13:15)

# GODS STONED

- And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” (14:11)
- But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. (14:19)

# JERUSALEM COUNCIL (15)

- Instant discussion.
- Effective consultation.
- Efficient coordination.
- Impactful delegation.

# AT ODD ENDS

- Paul and Barnabas separate in their Second Missionary Journey.

# NEW MISSION MODEL

- “Come to Macedonia, and help us!” (16:9)
- In touch with the Spirit.

# GOSPEL EVERYWHERE

- “And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.” (16:13)

# PAUL'S INTEGRITY

- But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” (16:28)

# AT AREOPAGUS

- For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. (17:23)



# EARNING BREAD

- and because Paul was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. (18:3)

# WITH APOLLOS

- Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. (18:24)

# HOLY SPIRIT

- And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” (19:2)

# PAUL'S FAREWELL AT EPHESUS

- I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. (20:33-34)

# SUFFERING FORETOLD

- And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" (21:11)

# PRESENCE OF MIND

- Paul at the Sanhedrin (cf. Jesus, Peter and John)

# PAUL'S EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION

- And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. (27:35)

# PAUL IN A RENTED HOUSE

- And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him. (28:16)
- Homecoming. With the Jews (28:17, 30)





## VIII. JEWISH MISSION & GENTILE MISSION



# TWO HEADS

- Jewish mission headed by Peter.
- Gentile mission headed by Paul. “Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.” (28:28)



## IX. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BOOK



# FOUR LIFE LESSONS

- The community of believers.
- The power of God.
- The priority of prayer.
- The power of prayer.



# ASSESSMENT



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1. How were the early Christian communities technically named? **A. The Way.** B. Apostles of Jesus. C. Disciples.
  2. How do we differently name the Acts? A. Chronicle of Paul. B. Mission history of Peter. **C. The Road to Rome.**
  3. When was the Ascension of Jesus according to the Acts? A. On the same day of the resurrection. **B. Forty days after the resurrection.** C. On the day of Pentecost.
  4. Which of the Triune God is mostly present in the Acts and motivates the apostles for the mission? **A. Holy Spirit.** B. God, the Father. C. Jesus Christ.
  5. Which was the end of the world in the time of the Acts? **A. Rome.** B. Jerusalem. C. Antioch.

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6. How many people embraced Christianity after Peter's sermon in the Temple? **A. 3000.** B. 7000. C. 5000.
7. What was the most important Council in the history of the early Church. A. Second Vatican Council. B. Council of Trent. **C. Council of Jerusalem.**
8. Could you name some of the prominent deacons of the early Church? **A. Stephen and Philip.** B. Prochorus and Nicanor. C. Timon and Nicolaus.
9. Where did Peter begin his Gentile mission? A. In Jerusalem. B. With Ethiopian Eunuch. **C. In the house of Cornelius.**
10. What is the general tendency of the Acts? **A. Since the Jews rejected the message it is taken to the Gentiles.** B. Since the Gentiles rejected the message it is taken to the Jews. C. Since Christians rejected the message it is taken to the Jews.

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## Paragraph Questions

1. What is the purpose of Acts?
2. What is the unity and disunity between Luke and Acts.
3. Name important theological trends of the Acts?
4. Say something about the day of Pentecost in Acts.
5. Write something about the gentile mission in Acts.
6. Narrate the incidents in the house of Cornelius.



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Questions

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Answers

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