

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

HISTORY

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

LESSON 15

LESSON OUTLINE

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 - D. Why the book of Acts was written.
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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

I. INTRODUCTION

The book of Acts tells of the work (acts) of the apostles after Jesus went back to heaven.

A. Who wrote the book of Acts.

The book of Acts was written by a man called Luke. He also wrote the Gospel of Luke.

Luke is a short name for Lucanus. Luke was a Greek Gentile. He was born in Antioch of Syria or in Philippi. Luke was a doctor, Colossians 4:14.

Luke traveled much with Paul. Paul had much sickness. It is believed Luke went along to help Paul, 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 23,24. In Acts 16:10 Luke says, "we" went to Macedonia. The word "we" here means Paul and Luke.

B. When the book of Acts was written.

Luke wrote the book of Acts after he had written the Gospel of Luke. He says, "the former treatise" in Acts. He speaks of the Gospel which he had written. Luke wrote the book of Acts about A.D. 60 - 70.

C. To whom the book of Acts was written.

Luke wrote to Theophilus. Theophilus was a Gentile leader. He may have been led to the Lord by Luke or Paul. The book was written to the Greeks or Gentiles.

D. Why the book of Acts was written.

The word "churches" in Acts speaks about groups of believers in Jesus Christ. All the churches are parts of a great group of believers. This great group of believers is called the Church. In this course the great group of all the believers will be written with a capital "C", Church.

1. Luke shows the work of Jesus Christ in His Church.
2. Luke also shows how the Church spread from Jerusalem to Samaria, to Antioch in Syria, to Asia and to Europe.
3. Luke wrote to show the growth of the Church. He tells of the Church from the time Jesus went to heaven until the time Paul was in prison at Rome.
4. Luke wrote to show that the Church is not a part of Judaism. Even though the Church came out of the Jewish religion, it is not the

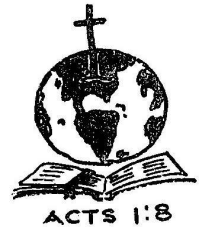
same as Judaism. Judaism is different from the Old Testament Jewish religion. (See New Testament Survey, Volume I, pp. 17-19.)

Judaism teaches:	The Church teaches:
1. A person must keep the law of Moses and the Jewish law in order to please God, Acts 15:24.	1. Salvation is by grace and not by keeping the Law, Acts 15:10,11. Salvation is received by faith, Acts 15:9.
2. A person must be circumcised to please God, Acts 15:1.	2. The believer does not have to be circumcised in his body, Acts 15:24; Romans 2:29; Philipians 3:3.
3. God loves only the Jews. He will not have anything to do with Gentiles, Acts 11:1-3.	3. God loves people of all races, Acts 15:9.

E. Main thought of the book of Acts.

The main thought of the book of Acts is to tell the world about Jesus Christ.

The key verse for the book of Acts is Acts 1:8.



“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes into your life. You will tell about Me in the city of Jerusalem and over all the countries of Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (N.L.T.)

II. OUTLINES OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

There are two outlines for the book of Acts. One outline is about what happened. The other outline is about people.

A. Outline one.

1. Introduction, Acts 1:1-11.

2. The birth of the Church in Jerusalem, Acts 1:12 - 8:3.
3. The Christians were scattered, Acts 8:4 - 11:18.
4. The Jewish Church accepted the Gentiles, Acts 11:19 - 14:26.
5. Paul's missionary journeys, Acts 13:4 - 21:16.
 - a. Paul's first missionary journey, Acts 13:4 - 14:26.
 - b. Paul's second missionary journey, Acts 14:26 - 18:22.
 - c. Paul's third missionary journey, Acts 18:23 - 21:16.
6. Paul, the prisoner, Acts 21:17 - 28:31.
 - a. Paul arrested at Jerusalem, Acts 21:17 - 23:22.
 - b. Paul in prison at Caesarea, Acts 23:23 - 26:32.
 - c. Paul sent to Rome, Acts 27:1 - 28:15.
 - d. Paul in prison at Rome, Acts 28:16-31.

B. Outline two.

1. Peter's ministry, Acts 1:1 - 5:42.
2. Stephen's ministry, Acts 6:1 - 7:60.
3. Barnabas', Philip's and Saul of Tarsus' ministries, Acts 8:1 -12:25.
4. Paul's ministry, Acts 13:1 - 28:31.

III. THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM

Read Acts 1:1 - 8:3.

A. Foundation of the Church, Jesus Christ.

The four Gospels tell about the life and work of Jesus Christ.

Jesus worked with the Jews. The twelve disciples were Jews. Jesus spent most of His time teaching and training the disciples. The disciples were to become the first leaders of the Church.

Sometimes Jesus helped people who were not Jews. He talked to the woman of Samaria, John 4. Jesus helped a Greek woman, Mark 7:24-30. Jesus helped the nobleman, John 4.

The disciples knew that Jesus Christ was the foundation of the Church, Matthew 16:15-18; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20. After Pentecost the disciples went to the different parts of the world to tell others about Jesus Christ.

B. Birth of the Church.

The Church was born on the day of Pentecost. Pentecost is the fiftieth day after the death of Jesus Christ.

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the believers. There was a sound like a great wind. The disciples saw something like tongues of fire come on each of them, Acts 2:1-3.



When the Holy Spirit came, the people were excited. Many people came to see what was happening. Many people from other countries were at Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. These people spoke different languages. When the disciples told them what was happening, each person heard the disciples speak in his own language. The disciples did not know these languages before, Acts 2:4-12.

Some people made fun of what they saw. Peter told them that this was the prophecy of Joel coming true. In the last days God would pour out His Spirit on all men, Acts 2:14-21.

Peter preached his first sermon. He preached,

“Jewish men, listen to what I have to say! You knew Jesus of the town of Nazareth by the powerful works He did. God worked through Jesus while He was with you. You all know this. Jesus was handed over to sinful men. God knew this and planned for it to happen. You had sinful men take Him and nail Him to a cross. But God raised Him up. He allowed Him to be set free from the pain of death. Death could not hold power over Him. . . .

Jesus is this One! God has raised Him up and we have all seen Him.

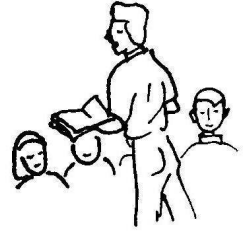
. . . Be sorry for your sins and turn from them and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:22-24,32,38. (N.L.T.)

About three thousand people believed in Jesus that day, Acts 2:41.

A disciple is a follower of a teacher. An apostle is one who is sent forth with a message. After Pentecost the twelve disciples were called apostles.

C. Growth of the Church.

The believers spent much time together. The apostles taught them. The believers had communion and they prayed together. This was important for Christian growth. The believers needed each other, Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:25. The believers were not selfish. They shared all they had with each other in love, Acts 2:44,45. (Communists share because they have to and not because of love.)



The love and joy of the believers drew others into the Church, Acts 2:47.

Peter healed a lame man. Many people came to see what happened. Peter preached another sermon. About five thousand more people believed in Jesus Christ.

D. Persecution of the Church.

The Church grew very fast in Jerusalem. This made the religious leaders jealous. The religious leaders arrested Peter and John.

The believers learned to pray for each other. They prayed for those in trouble, Acts 4:23-31. Peter and John were in trouble.

The religious leaders wanted Peter and John to stop preaching about Jesus Christ. Peter and John answered them,
“. . . ‘If it is right to listen to you more than to God, you decide about that. For we must tell what we have seen and heard.’” Acts 4:19,20. (N.L.T.)

After Pentecost, Peter was very brave to speak for Jesus Christ.

E. Punishment of sin in the Church.

The believers shared what they had with each other. Barnabas sold his land and shared the money. He did this with a true heart. Ananias and Sapphira sold their land. They brought some of the money to Peter. Some of the money they kept for themselves. They tried to make Peter believe they were giving all the money. The Holy Spirit told Peter that Ananias and Sapphira told a lie. Peter said to them,
“. . . You lied to God, not to men,” Acts 5:4. (N.L.T.)

Ananias and Sapphira died right away.

This taught the believers how bad sin was. God showed the believers that He did not want sin in the Church.

F. Deacons in the Church.

As yet the Church was mostly Jews. The Grecians in Acts 6:1 were Jews who were born in the provinces of Greece. They spoke the Greek language. The Hebrews were the Jews born in Palestine. They spoke Hebrew and Aramaic languages.

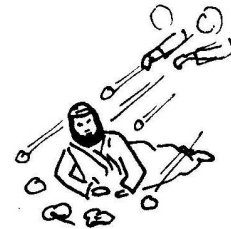
The apostles were preaching and teaching the Word of God. They also took care of the widows in the Church. Some of the widows who spoke Greek did not get enough care. The apostles did not have time to look after the widows and to preach.

The apostles called a meeting of the Church. At this meeting they chose seven men to take care of the widows. These men were called deacons.

G. First martyr of the Church.

Stephen was one of the deacons. The Bible says he was a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, Acts 6:5.

Stephen spoke to many people about Jesus Christ. He also did some miracles. This made the religious leaders angry. They took Stephen to the council meeting. Some people said Stephen was preaching against God. Stephen answered the people before the council.



Stephen started to preach to the council about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Then he told them about Moses. He used the words of Moses:

“ . . .God will give you one who speaks for Him like me from among your brothers.” Acts 7:37 (N.L.T.)

Stephen went on to tell them how the people of Israel had left God and turned to other gods. Then he said,

“You have hard hearts and ears that will not listen to me! You are always working against the Holy Spirit. Your early fathers did. You do too. Which of the early preachers was not beaten and hurt by your early fathers? They killed those who told of the coming of the One Right with

God. Now you have handed Him over and killed Him. You had the Law given to you by angels. Yet you have not kept it.” Acts 7:51-53. (N.L.T.)

The men of the council did not want to hear about Jesus Christ. They became very angry. They took Stephen out of the city and stoned him to death. Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He also asked God to forgive those who were stoning him. Acts 7:55,56.

Saul of Tarsus was watching this - he held the clothes of those who threw the stones, Acts 7:58.

H. Church at Jerusalem.

The Church was at Jerusalem. The apostles were there. The deacons were at Jerusalem. The believers were at Jerusalem.

The religious leaders had made it hard for some of the apostles. However, the believers were still at Jerusalem.

Stephen was the first to be killed because he was a believer.

IV. WORDS TO LEARN

1. circumcise - religious act of becoming a Jew.
2. deacon - a man who takes care of the business of the church.
3. determinate - fixed; that which already decided upon.
4. foundation - the base on which something is built.
5. martyr - a person who willingly dies for what he believes.
6. persecution - when people are made to suffer for what they believe.

V. ASSIGNMENT

1. Who wrote the book of Acts?
2. To whom was the book of Acts written?
3. Why was the book of Acts written?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

- d.
- 4. Name 5 important people in the book of Acts (See outline two.)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
- 5. Who is the foundation of the Church?
- 6. What is the birthday of the Church called?
- 7. Pentecost.
 - 1) How did the people know the Holy Spirit came? Acts 2:2-4.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - 2) In how many languages did the people hear the Gospel? Acts 2:9-11
 - 3) Whose prophecy began to come true? Acts 2:16-21
Tell of 5 things that began to come true.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
- 8. Tell four important things that Peter preached in his first sermon.
 - 1) Acts 2:22-24
 - 2) Acts 2:22-24
 - 3) Acts 2:38
 - 4) Acts 2:38
- 9. Where was the Church born?
- 10. How many believed in Jesus Christ when Peter preached his first sermon?
- 11. How did God punish Ananias and Sapphira for lying?

12. What did Stephen preach about?
 - 1) Acts 7:2. He preached about
 - 2) Acts 7:5. God promised _____ to Abraham.
 - 3) Acts 7:8. Stephen preached about _____ and
 - 4) Acts 7:9,10. Stephen preached about
 - 5) Acts 7:20. Stephen preached about
 - 6) Acts 7:37. What did Moses tell the Jews?

 - 7) Acts 7:38. What did God give to the Jews?
 - 8) Acts 7:39. Did the early fathers obey Moses?
 - 9) Acts 7:40. What did the early fathers do?

 - 10) Acts 7:42. What did God do then?
 - 11) Acts 7:47. What did Solomon do?
 - 12) Acts 7:48,49. Where does God live?
 - 13) Acts 7:51. What did the Jews who lived when Stephen preached do?

 - 14) Acts 7:52. What did the Jews do with Jesus?
 - 15) Acts 7:57,58. What did the Jews do with Stephen?
13. Who was the first martyr of the Church?
14. What does the word "apostle" mean?

15. Why did the Church choose deacons?

16. What was the work of the deacons?

17. How many deacons did they choose?

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