

The Book of Acts

8th Grade Bible Study

The Book of Acts of the Apostles tradition says was written by St. Luke to record the missions and events of the early followers of Jesus. This type of writing of history has a name—*historiography*. The Greeks and Romans wrote historiographies.

Greek Historiography

These writers concentrated mainly on war, the development of constitutional history, and the character of political leaders to create pictures of human societies in times of crisis or change. Herodotus and Thucydides gained an authority that influenced succeeding historians. The ideal historian would combine rigorous truthfulness and freedom from bias with the gift of developed expression. In the 4th century B.C., Flavius Josephus placed the history of the Jews in its Hellenistic and Roman context. He also defended and explained Jewish religion and customs. Josephus and Philo are two of the historians whose work survived the turmoil of the Dark Ages.

Roman Historiography

The prestige of Greek as a language of art and learning was so great that the first Roman historiography, even by Romans, was written in Greek. The Latin style combined moral reflections with insights on human thinking and behavior. (Roman historians attempted to analyze how human thinking and behavior connected to events in history) This was to have a long and pervasive influence on historical writing. Latin historical writing continued in this mode with Cicero, Livy, Tacitus, and Suetonius.

The Acts of the Apostles

The book of Acts is a historiography following the styles mentioned above but adding a spiritual dimension that is different and uniquely Christian. What makes this book unusual is that it can neither be treated as theological fiction nor can it be used as a fully reliable source of information on the early Christian movement. It cannot be treated as fiction because we have a historical record at the time that corresponds with events recorded there. It cannot be used a fully reliable source of information on the early church mostly because of the limitations of the author. Luke, a Greek physician wrote the Book of Acts. He also wrote the Gospel that bears his name. Luke traveled with Paul, even onto Rome. He was an eyewitness to much of what he records in this book. The stated intention of this book is to provide a witness of the early days of the “movement.”

Rather, it should be taken as apologetic historiography. Apologetic means, *“to give an explanation or defense.”* A careful study of the Book of Acts reveals the growth of the Christian movement as an independent religion formed by Jews and pagans, and influenced by both groups. Two matters are central to this evolution. Firstly, there is the historical situation of the socio-political Roman world in Judea. Secondly there is the growing division between mainstream Judaism and the developing Christian movement. Taken together, these two things ultimately ask for the self-definition of the author of Acts and his religious movement.

The book is called “The Acts of the Apostles” but the lion’s share of the apologetic historiography is about Peter and Paul. The book does not contain the acts of *all* the apostles; neither does it contain all the acts of *one* Apostle. It opens with a brief notice of the forty days succeeding the Resurrection of Christ during which He appeared to the Apostles, *“speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God.”* The promise of the Holy Ghost and the Ascension of Christ are then briefly recorded. The table below indexes this book of the Bible.

What’s in a Name?

- The traditional name for this book is "Acts of the Apostles,"
 - A more accurate name might be "A Few Acts of a Few of the Apostles."
 - Peter and Paul are particularly prominent; the other apostles play little or no role.
 - The book describes some developments in detail, but sometimes skips several years at a time.

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- "Acts of the Risen Jesus" might also be an appropriate name for this book.
 - Luke tells us that his first book (the Gospel of Luke) was "about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven" (Acts 1:1-2).
 - Acts, the second volume of Luke's history-writing project, is about what Jesus did after his ascension into heaven — he directed and taught the apostles through the Holy Spirit.
 - Since this book frequently reminds us that the actions of the apostles were inspired and guided by God's Spirit, "Acts of the Holy Spirit" has also been suggested as a descriptive title.

What This Book Means to You

- Acts has both history and faith.
 - Historically, the book serves as a vital link between the Gospels and the epistles.
 - The book of Acts explains how the messenger became the message.
- The book of Acts may be read for history, and it may also be read to strengthen our faith and commitment to Jesus Christ. As we read, we can put ourselves in the apostles' sandals, to feel their boldness in preaching the gospel and their fears when facing persecution. We can marvel that the apostles, right after being flogged, were "rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name [of Jesus]" (Acts 5:41). And by reading about their faith and perseverance, we can be a little more emboldened to face our own crises with the help of the same Holy Spirit.

What Luke Records

- Without the book of Acts, we would not know who Paul was or how he entered the picture or what motivated him to preach to gentiles or why he wrote to such far-flung regions.
- Luke gives us glimpses into the personalities of Peter, John and James, who wrote other New Testament books.
- Luke also records the persecutions of Peter, the martyrdoms of Stephen and James, the stonings and beatings and imprisonments of Paul. Whether they lived or died, captive or free, these Christians were led by the Holy Spirit to testify that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.

How Do We Read It?

- Two Senses of Scripture
 - Literal - Exactly following the order or meaning of an original word or text. Adhering strictly to the basic meaning of an original word or text without further elaboration or interpretation simple in a clear unimaginative way that sticks to the facts and avoids embellishment.
 - Spiritual - Relating to the soul or spirit, usually in contrast to material things; relating to religious or sacred things rather than worldly things. Connected by an affinity of the mind, spirit, or temperament.

Spiritual Sense of Scripture

- Three Layers of the Spiritual Sense
 - Allegorical - When the characters and events are to be understood as representing other things and symbolically expressing a deeper, often spiritual, moral, or political meaning. A symbolic representation of something; foreshadowing (syn.) or pre-figurement (syn.)
 - Moral - Relating to issues of right and wrong and to how individuals should behave based on what somebody's conscience suggests is right or wrong, rather than on what the law ... to make decisions based on an inner conviction, in the absence of physical proof.
 - Anagogical - A mystical interpretation of a word, passage, or text, especially scriptural exegesis that detects allusions to heaven or the afterlife.

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We will study the Book of Acts in several chunks of the next several weeks

First Chunk

The Beginning of the Church (Acts 1:1-8:1)	Jesus' Ascension	1:1 – 11
	Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas	1:12 – 26
	Pentecost	2:1 – 41
	Believers' Fellowship	2:42 – 47
	Peter Heals the Beggar	3
	Peter & John at the Sanhedrin	4:1 – 31
	Ananias and Sapphira	4:32 – 5:11
	Gamaliel Speaks for the Apostles	5:12 – 42
	Choosing the seven	6:1 – 7
	Stephen Seized	6:8 – 15
	Stephen's Discourse	7:1 – 53
	Stephen Martyred	7:54 – 8:1

Continuing the Gospel...

- *“In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for “the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (vs. 1 -5)*

First Things First

- Christ Ascends
- What about Judas?
- Waiting for the Paraclete
- Peter’s Pentecost Sermon
- Remaining in the Temple...following Jewish ways

Peter’s Pentecost Sermon

- The first sermon that Luke includes in his apostolic history
- This is not only a landmark event in the church, it is a foundational speech in the book of Acts.
 - First, Peter tells the people that the Spirit-caused tongues are a fulfillment of Scripture and a sign that the "last days" had begun and people can be saved.
 - Peter then makes his point: "Men of Israel, listen to this..."
 - The conclusion: "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ". Jesus is the Messiah and the One we should obey.

Response to the Pentecost Sermon

- The people believed. They had crucified the Messiah they had been hoping for! So what were they supposed to do? Peter told them the appropriate response of faith: repentance and baptism, with the result of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. And Peter pleaded with them to do it.
- 3000 did, and their zeal is shown in Luke's summary statement: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Their

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willingness to share was legendary. They met at the temple, broke bread at home and ate together, praising God. They quickly became a community, a fellowship.

The Kerygma

- This package of core facts is usually called the kerygma (a Greek noun meaning preaching). Here are the major components:
 1. Jesus' resurrection: God raised Jesus from the dead.
 2. Jesus' life and death: Jesus did many miracles, he suffered, he died by crucifixion.
 3. Jesus' exaltation: God glorified Jesus, raised him to his right hand as Messiah, Prince, Savior and Lord.
 4. Prediction: All this happened as predicted in Scripture. Jesus fulfills the promise of the Old Testament.
 5. Salvation: Because of Jesus' resurrection, people are exhorted to repent and are promised forgiveness, grace, salvation, new life in his name.
 6. Restoration: Jesus Christ will return.
- This is the heart and core of the gospel — it is the message the apostles preached, despite threats of death. It's a life-transforming message, a message about new life, a message worth living for, and a message worth dying for. We see that in the next story Luke gives us.

Comprehension Questions

1. What purpose does Luke give for writing this account?
2. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the history of the Early Church? (Cite examples from Acts 1)
3. In 1:6, what does the disciples' question reveal about what they thought the kingdom was? What does the Church teach regarding the establishment of Christ's kingdom?
4. In 1:12, the apostles wait in the upper room. What other important event occurred there. How many people are there? Compare how this event is often portrayed in art to what is described in scripture.
5. 1:15 records that Peter stood up in front of the assembled "church" and spoke. What is Peter's message? How does his witness help shape his role of leader?
6. How do the disciples replace Judas? Why do you think they chose this method?
7. Adult Jewish men were required to travel to Jerusalem to celebrate three yearly religious feasts described in Deut. 16—Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the feast of Tabernacles. How did the feast of Weeks come to be called Pentecost and what instructions does God give the Israelites for celebrating this feast (Lev. 23)?
8. How does 2:1-4 mirror Ex. 19:16 – 19?
9. Act 2:14, Peter preaches about the signs mentioned in the book of Joel (2:28). How do other prophecies make similar claims (see Isa. 32:15, 44:3; Ezek 36:26, 39:29)?
10. In 3:17, Peter tells the crowd that the leaders acted in ignorance in putting Jesus to death. What does the Church teach about ignorance and its relationship to moral conduct? Under what circumstances is a person responsible for the sins they commit by not knowing God's commands?

Home Practice Assignment (Preparation for Next Lesson)

- Read Acts ch. 4 - 7
- Answer Comprehension Questions #11 - 18 on loose leaf, place paper in Religion Binder

Comprehension Questions

11. 4:1 – 2 describes the Sadducees as being "annoyed" because Peter and John are teaching the people about Jesus. What is it about the gospel message that particularly annoyed them? How did Jesus approach discussion with the Sadducees about this topic?

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12. When Peter and John are released they return to pray with their fellow Christians. Together they pray Psalm 2. How does the rest of this psalm apply to the situation faced by early Christians?
13. What is the apostles' reaction to being beaten for preaching in the name of Jesus (5:41 – 42)?
14. What is the difference between the Hellenists and the Hebrews who are mentioned by Luke in Acts 6:1?
15. Why have the Hellenists been murmuring against the Hebrews?
16. How does the Scripture describe the vulnerability of widows in ancient society?
17. In Acts 6:7, what important information does Luke provide about the makeup of the early Church in Jerusalem?
18. In Acts 6:15, how does Luke describe Stephen's face as he is being charged with blasphemy?
19. In his speech before the council of Jewish religious leaders, what examples does Stephen give of God's active presence in places other than the Promised Land of Canaan?
20. In the 8th chapter a great persecution arises against the Church at Jerusalem, the early Christians scatter. How does this action fulfill instructions given by Jesus in chapter 1? What group of Christian remained in Jerusalem?

First Chunk Cont'd

Peter, the Prince of the Apostles

“You shall be called Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.”

Peter's Leadership

- Peter is immediately conspicuous as the leader of all,
 - He takes the initiative in the appointment to the Apostolic College of another witness of the life, death and resurrection of Christ to replace Judas
 - After the descent of the Holy Ghost on the feast of Pentecost, Peter standing at the head of the Apostles delivers the first public sermon to proclaim the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and wins a large number of Jews as converts to the Christian community
 - First of the Apostles, he worked a public miracle, when with John he went up into the temple and cured the lame man at the Beautiful Gate. To the people crowding in amazement about the two Apostles, he preaches a long sermon in the Porch of Solomon, and brings new increase to the flock of believers (Acts 3:1 - 4:4).

Peter's Leadership

- Before the Jewish High Council, Peter defends in undismayed and impressive fashion the cause of Jesus and the obligation and liberty of the Apostles to preach the Gospel
- When Ananias and Sapphira attempt to deceive the Apostles and the people Peter appears as judge of their action
- By numerous miracles God confirms the Apostolic activity of Christ's confessors, and here also there is special mention of Peter
- The ever-increasing number of the faithful caused the Jewish supreme council to adopt new measures against the Apostles, but "Peter and the Apostles" answer that they "ought to obey God rather than men"

Peter's Mission

- Not only in Jerusalem itself did Peter labor in fulfilling the mission entrusted to him by his Master. He also retained connection with the other Christian communities in Palestine
- in Samaria...baptism of the Holy Spirit

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- Peter now undertook an extensive missionary tour, which brought him to the maritime cities, Lydda, Joppe, and Caesarea.
- On Peter's return to Jerusalem a little later, the strict Jewish Christians, who regarded the complete observance of the Jewish law as binding on all, asked him why he had entered and eaten in the house of the uncircumcised. Peter tells of his vision and defends his action, which was ratified by the Apostles and the faithful in Jerusalem (Acts 11:1-18).

Peter's Arrest and Exile(?)

- A confirmation of the position accorded to Peter by Luke, in the Acts, is afforded by the testimony of St. Paul (Galatians 1:18-20).
- Peter's long residence in Jerusalem and Palestine soon came to an end. Herod Agrippa I began (A.D. 42-44) a new persecution of the Church in Jerusalem; after the execution of James, the son of Zebedee, this ruler had Peter cast into prison, intending to have him also executed after the Jewish Pasch was over. (Acts 12:1-18).
- After this passage, Luke records very little detail of Peter's missionary travels.

Peter's Martyrdom

- Rome, 65 AD
- Persecution of the Emperor Nero
- Crucified, upside down on Vatican hill...which was the Emperor's garden
- His wife, Perpetua, was executed at the same time by crucifixion

Overview of Ch. 4 - 8

- One of Luke's major themes, Jewish opposition to the gospel message
- How the Church prays
- the Church becomes community
- Persecution Strikes the Church
- The role of deacons
- The martyrdom of Stephen
- Philip's Mission Trip to Samaria

Preparation

- Read Acts 8:2 - 12:23

Second Chunk

The Persecution & Dispersion of the Church (Acts 8:2-12:23)	Conversions of Samaritans	8:2 – 25
	Philip and the Ethiopian	8:26 – 40
	Saul's Conversion	9:1 – 25
	Saul 1st Meets Believers in Jerusalem	9:26 – 31
	Peter Heals Aeneas in Lydda	9:32 – 35
	Peter Raises Dorcas in Joppa	9:36 – 43
	Peter Meets Cornelius	10:1 – 11:18
	Church at Antioch (Syria)	11:19 – 30
	Peter's Escape from Prison	12:1 – 19
	Herod's Death	12:19 – 23

Conversion of Samaritans

- One of the few occasions we hear about an apostle other than Peter or Paul
- Phillip Preaches to Samaritans, casting out demons and healing the lame
- Later Peter and John visit, baptism of the Holy Spirit

Phillip and the Ethiopian

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- Sent by angel, from Jerusalem to Gaza
- Ethiopian had to come to Jerusalem to worship
- Sits in his chariot studying the book of Isaiah
- Phillip explains how the passage the man is reading relates to Jesus
- The man believes and is baptized

Saul's Conversion

- After participating in the martyrdom of Stephen, Paul is appointed by Jewish authorities to go to Damascus
- He is to go to Damascus to arrest "followers of the way"
- On the road to Damascus, Paul has a personal encounter with the Risen Lord

Saul's 1st meets believers in Jerusalem

- Greeted with suspicion
- But he continues preaching, until the other Jews toss him out of town

Peter Heals Aeneas in Lydda

- Aeneas was paralyzed and bedridden for eight years
- Peter heals his paralysis
- Many other community members convert and are baptized

Peter raises Dorcas in Joppa

- Young women devoted to good works (perhaps making vestments)
- She dies while Peter is traveling nearby
- Community members seek Peter out
- Peter raises her from the dead.

Peter Meets Cornelius

- It is significant that Cornelius is Roman
- Cornelius receives message from angel
- Peter has a vision (clean/unclean; chosen/unchosen)

New Church in Antioch

- After persecution that started with Stephen's martyrdom, many followers go to Antioch
- Soon leaders in Jerusalem send Barnabas to pastor them
- First place the followers are called Christians

Peter Escapes Prison

- During the feast of unleavened bread
- Chained, sleeping seated between two soldiers
- Guided out of prison by an angel
- Goes to the house of John Mark
- Explains how God delivered him from prison, leaves Jerusalem

Herod's Death

- His arrogance and pride lead to a painful death

Home Practice Assignment

- Answer Comprehension Questions #21 - 28 on notebook and keep paper in the binder

Lesson Three Comprehension Questions

21. For what purpose is Peter and John called to Samaria?
22. How does 8:17 relate to the sacrament of Confirmation?
23. Retell the story of Saul's conversion in your own words. (use direct quotes when necessary)
24. In chapter nine, Barnabas comes to the defense of Saul (now Paul). Why were early believers afraid of Paul? Who did Paul end up staying with during this visit to Jerusalem?

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25. In your own words, retell Peter's vision in chapter 10. Explain why Peter was concerned about "clean" and "unclean."
26. In Acts 10, after the Holy Spirit has descended on the Gentiles, Peter commands that they be baptized. What does the Church teach is required for Baptism? How is Baptism related to unity within the Church?
27. In Acts 11:15 – 16, why is significant to Peter that the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles in Caesarea "just as on us in the beginning?"
28. In 11:26, followers of Jesus are called Christians for the first time. What are the four distinguishing marks of the Church, from whom does the Church derive these qualities?
29. How does the church of Antioch respond when they learn of the approaching famine? In the letter to the Romans (15:25 – 27), what reasons does Paul give explaining why the Gentiles should share what they have with the Church in Jerusalem?

Preparation

- Read 12:24 - 14:28

Third Chunk

Paul's 1st Missionary Trip (Acts 12:24 – 14:28)	Saul & Barnabas Start Trip	12:24 – 13:3
	Cyprus	13:4 – 12
	Pisidian Antioch	13:13 – 52
	Iconium	14:1 – 7
	Lystra & Derbe	14:8 – 21
	Return to Antioch	14:21 – 28

Saul & Barnabas Start Trip

- Significance of Laying on of Hands
 - One of the basic doctrines of
 - Judaism (Gen 48:14, 17 - 19, Num. 27:18 - 23)
 - Christianity (Acts 8:18, Heb. 6: 1 - 2)
 - Purposes
 - Physical Healing
 - Spiritual Deliverance
 - Baptism (impartation) of the Holy Spirit
 - Separation for God's Service (Ordination)
 - The Men in Acts 13 were being separated for Mission...this passage describes their ordination
- How Paul Taught
 - Method
 - Traveled to different places... he was a missionary
 - Spoke and taught about Jesus... he was a evangelist
 - Wrote letters... called epistles
 - "Epistle" simply means a letter which was intended to be published and read by the general public
- Themes of the Epistles
 - To resolve differences
 - Moral (How are you treating the stranger, the orphan, the widow?)
 - Theological (relating to God)

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→ Paul's letter reinforced the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles...countering HERESY...for instance, the Gnostic Christian movement taught that Jehovah is an evil deity, that all matter is evil, that Jesus was not fully human, and that individuals are saved by having special secret

- Other themes common to many epistles are: love within the Christian community, hospitality to strangers, and exhibiting godly behavior.
- Pauline Epistles
 - 13 written by Saint Paul
 - Among the earliest Christian documents.
 - Provide an insight into the beliefs and conflicts of the early Church
 - Continue to be, hugely influential

Cyprus

- Preaching in local synagogues
- Challenging a false prophet

Pisidian Antioch

- Paul delivers "homily"
- Let's compare to Acts 2:13 – 40

Iconium

- Preaches to Jews and Gentiles
- Residents of the city are divided on Paul's preaching
- Angry listeners attempt to stone Paul and Barnabas

Lystra & Derbe

- Paul heals a crippled man
- Paul and Barnabas mistaken for (Greek) gods
- Jews follow Paul and Barnabas from Iconium stir up the crowd
- Paul is stone, but manages to recover and continue preaching

Return to Antioch

- Going back the way they had come
- Report to church at Antioch on all they had done

Paul's Missionary Trips

- TIMELINE - Read Acts 13 - 20
- ca.47-48 Paul's mission to Cyprus
- ca.49 Paul's mission to Philippi, Thessalonica and Veria
- ca.49 Paul's mission to Athens
- ca.51-52 Paul's first mission to Corinth; he writes his two Epistles to the Thessalonians
- ca. 54 Paul writes his First Epistle to the Corinthians
- ca.55 Paul revisits Corinth
- ca.56 Paul revisits Macedonia; he writes his Second Epistle to the Corinthians
- ca.61 Paul shipwrecked in Crete

Home Practice Assignment

- Complete the following comprehension questions on loose leaf paper, retain in binder.

Comprehension Questions

30. James is the 2nd martyr mentioned in the book of Acts. Who is he and what is his relationship to Jesus?
31. List the similarities between Peter's imprisonment (ch. 12) and the Passion of Jesus described in the gospels.
32. How does Peter's rescue mirror the first Passover?

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33. In what ways do the circumstances of Herod's death resemble those surrounding the death of Antiochus (2 Macc 9:5 – 12)?
34. In 13:6 – 41, Luke records details of Paul's first sermons. Where is Paul at this time, and to whom does he address this sermon?
35. In Acts 13:41, Paul cites two passages from the Old Testament prophets. How do these prophecies relate to Paul's audience?
36. In 14:21, Paul and Barnabas return to the three cities where their messages weren't well received—Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisida. What do they tell believers in these cities on their return visit? How is this related to the beatitudes (Mt. 5)?
37. What was the main purpose of the Council of Jerusalem? Who were the leaders at this council? What was the outcome of this council? How did this council shape the future of the Church?

Preparation

Read 15:1 -35

Fourth Chunk

The Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-35)	Council at Jerusalem	15:1 – 35
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Council at Jerusalem

- Meeting of apostles (50 AD)
- The issues
 - The primary issue which was addressed related to the requirement of biblical circumcision, but other matters arose...
 - The dispute was between those who believed the church must observe the rules of traditional Judaism, and Paul of Tarsus, who believed there was no such necessity
- The outcome
 - This decision (later known as the "Apostolic Decree"):
 - It basically stated that Gentiles who believed in Jesus did not have to follow the strict observance of Mosaic laws. (Acts 15:19–21).

Home Practice Assignment

- Write a response to the “Apostolic Decree” found in Acts 15.
- Compose an answer that agrees or disagrees with the decree
- Your answer should consider the community of Acts as well as future generations who would learn about Christ

Preparation

Reading Acts 15:36 – 18:22

Fifth Chunk

Paul's 2nd Missionary Trip (Acts 15:36-18:22)	Paul & Silas in Asia	15:36 – 16:10
	Philippi	16:11 – 40
	Thessalonica	17:1 – 9
	Berea	17:10 – 14
	Athens	17:15 – 34
	Corinth	18:1 – 18
	Paul Returns to Antioch	18:18 – 22

Paul & Silas in Asia

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- Paul and Barnabas separate
- Paul wants to continue to new places; Barnabas wants check-up on established communities
- Paul partners with Silas and continues on
- Paul also takes on Timothy (whose mother is Jewish/Father is Greek)
- Continue to preach the Gospel and relate recent “Council of Jerusalem” news
- Paul receives vision calling him to Macedonia, he goes...goes to leading city--Philippi

Philippi

- Philippi: chief city of Macedonia and a Roman colony
 - Sometimes colonies were settlements of Roman veterans; the self-governing status (with citizenship) could also be accorded to certain privileged provincial cities
 - There was not a synagogue in Philippi and perhaps not enough Jewish males for a *minyan* (or legal prayer group) the God-fearers gathered by a river to pray
- Conversion of Lydia and Her Household (16:11-15)
 - A wealthy (seller of purple dye and cloth) and independent woman, as was possible under Roman law
 - As with Cornelius, when the head of a household converts, so do all the family, slaves, dependants, and clients in it.
- Imprisonment
 - Paul & Silas are put in prison when they cast demons out a young girl
 - The girl’s demonic possession was profitable to some local merchants
 - Paul & Silas are mobbed, beaten and thrown in jail
 - Feet locked in stocks, Paul and Silas sing praise to God
 - Midnight, Earthquake, doors pop open, chains fall off
 - Guard converted, wounds washed, family baptized
 - Receive pardon and public apology

Thessalonica

- Located at the intersection of two major Roman roads, one leading from Italy eastward (Ignatia Way) and the other from the Danube to the Aegean.
- Its location made it a port made and prominent city.
- In 168 B.C. it became the capital of the district and later it was made the capital and major port of the whole Roman province of Macedonia
- Another riotous mob searches for apostles; accuse them of defying ROMAN law
- Jason (leading believer of area) is fined

Berea

- At first receive gospel, but when Jews from Thessalonica “incite the crowds” The Bereans send the disciples away

Athens

- Paul observes how the city is full of idols
- Great place for freedom of thought and speech
- “To an unknown God”
- Conversions

Corinth

- Corinth is located about 50 miles west of Athens
 - The original city was destroyed by the Romans, but Julius Caesar had it rebuilt and established as a Roman colony ... it grew to become the capital of the province of Achaea
- In Paul’s time, Corinth had developed into a major government and commerce center of that region.

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- 400,000 people - Romans, Greeks, and Jews
- Paul's first stay at Corinth lasted for eighteen months
 - Paul returned after a later missionary journey and remained for another three months (Acts 20:3).
- It was during that return visit that he wrote the Epistle to the Romans, sometime around 55 A.D.

Paul Returns to Antioch

- Stayed in Corinth for a “considerable time”
- Stops at Ephesus
- Lands at Caesarea goes to Jerusalem before finally returning to Antioch

Second Mission

- In Paul’s second missionary journey he re-visits a couple cities in Asia, one of which was Lystra where he was stoned and left for dead a few years earlier.
- He later has a vision that leads him over to Greece and Paul and his companions travel and minister in various cities in Greece (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth). Later Paul returns to Ephesus and finally to Caesarea and Antioch.
- Paul and his companions journeyed out by faith into uncharted territory, and the Lord was faithful to them, working signs and wonders in every place that they ministered the gospel.
- History confirms many of the events in the Book of Acts and as Christianity spread the "Christians" were fiercely persecuted, and shortly after the message went out it became a capital offense to be a Christian.
- Yet Christianity survived all the slander, hatred and persecutions and after approximately 300 years it broke the power of its greatest adversary in the world, the Roman Empire.

What Happened?

- Paul and Barnabas Separate (15:36-39)
- Paul and Silas Strengthen the Churches in Syria and Cilicia (15:40-41)
- Timothy Joins Paul and Silas (16:1-5)
- Paul travels through Asia Minor to Troas (16:6-10)
- Paul’s Vision of the Man in Macedonia (16:6-10)
- Luke joins up with Paul (16:11-40)
- Uproar in Thessalonica (17:1-9)
- Some Success in Berea (17:10-14)
- Athens (17:16) & Corinth (18:1-18)
- Final Travels of the Second Mission

Comprehension Questions - For Acts ch. 16 – 28, we will use information in our Faith First textbook chapter 13

Home Practice Assignment

- Read *one* of the following epistles
 - Philippians,
 - 1st or 2nd Corinthians, or
 - Thessalonians
 - Explain in a 3-paragraph essay
 - Why letters are incorporated into scripture
 - How letter teach differently than other forms of scripture
 - Cite 3 - 4 examples of your arguments from one or more of the epistles
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Preparation

- Read Acts 18:23 – 20:38
- Read Faith First, pp. 162 - 163
- Prepare for upcoming Quiz on Bible Study Material

Sixth Chunk

Paul's 3rd Missionary Trip (Acts 18:23-20:38)	Paul Travels to Galatia & Phrygia	18:23
	Apollos in Ephesus	18:24 – 28
	Paul in Ephesus	19
	Paul in Macedonia & Greece	20:1 – 16
	Paul in Miletus	20:17 – 38

Paul Travels to Galatia & Phrygia

- Revisits to established communities

Apollos in Ephesus

- Another time speaking of someone other than Peter or Paul
- Apollos was a North African Jew
- Perhaps apostle of John the Baptist or apostle of John's apostle
- Received further instruction on the gospel and continued to preach

Paul in Ephesus

- During Paul's third mission trip, he returns to the Jewish synagogue at Ephesus. He ministers there in the synagogue for three months.
- Paul is not accepted by everyone, and faces opposition from some Jews. So, Paul continues to preach to the accepting hearts.
- Paul remains in Ephesus for two years.
- And soon there is a wide-spread outreach so that all they that dwell in Asia hear the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks
 - An Ephesian Pentecost (19:1 - 7)
 - Miracles Wrought by Paul (19:11 - 12)
 - Many Converted and Reject Their Pagan Ways (19:17 - 20)
 - Paul's Plans (19:21 - 22)
- Riot in Ephesus (19:23 - 41) Tour through Macedonia and Greece (20:1-6)
- Farewell Counsel to the Elders of Ephesus (20:17-38)

Paul in Macedonia & Greece

- Revisiting established communities
- Knows there is a plot to kill him
- Travels with many people from other established communities
- Raises Eutychus from the dead (boy fell out 3rd story window in front of witnesses)

Paul in Miletus

- Eager to return to Jerusalem by Pentecost, Paul avoids returning to Asia (Ephesus)
- Ephesian Elders meet with Paul in Miletus
- Paul basically says goodbye to them (and the Ephesian community)
- He knows when he returns to Jerusalem, he will probably be arrested

Assignment

- Read Paul's Letter to the Ephesians
- Pick a particular passage...
- Summarize it

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- Respond to it as though Paul had written it to you personally

Preparation

- Read Acts 21:1 – 26:2
- Read Faith First, pp 157 – 161; Ch 13 review in Faith First

Seventh Chunk

Paul Arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21-26)	Paul to Caesarea	21:1 – 14
	Arrival in Jerusalem	21:15 – 26
	Paul's Arrest	21:27 – 22:29
	Paul Before the Sanhedrin	22:30 – 23:11
	Paul's Transfer to Caesarea	23:12 – 35
	Paul Before Felix	24
	Paul Before Festus	25:1 – 12
	Paul Before Agrippa	25:13 - 26:32

Paul to Caesarea (ca. 58 AD)

- Paul's arrival in Jerusalem must have been with some joyful anticipation...
- He had been in a hurry to get there for the Day of Pentecost
- He had been delayed right at the last moment, having to wait in Tyre and then Caesarea
- He was accompanying a contribution for needy Christians in Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-27)
- His arrival must have also been with anxious expectations...
- He knew that chains awaited him in Jerusalem
- He knew that he would be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles ...yet he was willing not only to be bound, but die for the name of Jesus

Arrival in Jerusalem

- RECEPTION BY THE CHURCH...The brethren receive him and his companions gladly. On the next day, he and his companions visit James and the elders.
- He details what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. They glorify the Lord when they heard this news.
- They tell Paul what thousands of Jewish Christians have heard about him
- That he teaches the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses and not to keep the Jewish customs
- They counsel Paul in view of these things that he ought to be purified along with four men who have taken a vow (likely the Nazarite vow, cf. Num 6:1-12) thereby reassure Jewish Christians...
- That what they have heard is false
- That Paul himself was willing to keep the Law
- That Gentiles were not required to do so, but to keep the ordinances from the conference in Jerusalem

Paul's Arrest

- Prompted by Jews from Asia who stirred up a mob to seize Paul, accusing him:
 - Of the same things the brethren had heard
 - Of bringing a Gentile into the temple (a false presumption)
- Rescued from death by the Roman commander
 - News of the riot came to the commander
 - The crowd stops beating Paul when they see the commander along with soldiers and centurions
 - After binding Paul with chains, the commander is unable to determine why people were so upset with Paul
 - Paul is commanded to be sent to the barracks (taken into custody)

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- Paul's Address to the Mob
 - Paul seeks to speak with the commander, who is surprised Paul speaks Greek. Paul identifies himself as a Jew from Tarsus
 - With permission, Paul begins to speak to the mob in Hebrew
 - The enraged mob call for Paul's death (Angry at his mention of the Gentiles; tearing their clothes and casting dust into the air)
 - The Roman commander prepares to scourge Paul
 - Paul is ordered back into the barracks to learn why the people are so angry
 - As he is about to be scourged, Paul tells the centurion he is a Roman
- HIS APPEAL TO HIS ROMAN CITIZENSHIP...
 - The commander, learning Paul was born a Roman citizen, is afraid for having put him in bonds-- Paul is spared because of his Roman citizenship
 - The next day, Paul is brought to appear before the council, that the commander might learn why Paul was being accused by the Jews

Paul Before the Sanhedrin

- Paul claims a clear conscience (23:1)
- This angers Ananias the High Priest, who has Paul struck
- Seeing the council is divided between Sadducees and Pharisees, Paul identifies himself as a Pharisee
- A dispute arises between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, with the latter defending Paul
- Fearing for Paul's life, the commander returns him to the barracks
- Paul is transferred to the jurisdiction of Caesarea

Trial in Caesarea

ACCUSATIONS

- A plague
- A creator of dissension among Jews throughout the world
- A ring leader of the sect of Nazarenes
- Tried to profane the temple
- They wanted to judge him by Jewish law

DEFENSE

- Paul was not the one who incited the mob... He came to Jerusalem to bring alms and offerings for his nation.
- He was found purified in the temple by Jews from Asia, but neither with a multitude nor with tumult
- He always strove to have a good conscience before God and men. He worships God according to the Way they call a sect, yet he believes all things written in the Law and the Prophets and like any other Pharisee, he has hope in God regarding the resurrection of the dead
- The Jews from Jerusalem who could find only one thing wrong with him: ie. his belief in the resurrection of the dead, which divided the council

Felix's Procrastination...

- Felix suspends judgment until Lysias (the Roman commander) can come from Jerusalem
- Paul is basically under house arrest for two years.
- Felix, hoping Paul would pay for his release, talks with him often
- After two years (58-60 A.D.), Felix is replaced by Porcius Festus. Wanting to please the Jews, Felix leaves Paul under arrest
- This sets the stage for...

Paul Before Festus

- Three days after arriving in Caesarea, Festus goes to Jerusalem
- He is petitioned by the high priest and other chief men to send Paul to Jerusalem
- They hope to kill Paul on the way
 - Festus arranges for the trial at Caesarea

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- Festus decides that Paul should be kept there
- Paul's accusers invited to come and present their charges
- Paul is brought before Festus and the judgment seat

The Trial & Paul's Appeal

- The Jews from Jerusalem make charges they cannot prove
- Paul denies any offense against the Law, the temple, or Caesar
- Trying to please the Jews, Festus asks if Paul is willing to go to Jerusalem and be judged there
- Paul appeals to Caesar, which Festus grants
 - As a Roman citizen, Paul exercises his right to appeal his case before Caesar. Before Festus sends Paul to Rome, the governor takes advantage of an opportunity to have Paul examined by one known for his knowledge of Jewish law, King Agrippa II.

Paul Before Agrippa

- Festus describes Paul's case to Agrippa
 - Paul was left a prisoner by Felix
 - Jews from Jerusalem wanted a judgment against Paul
 - Roman law required that Paul face his accusers
 - In the trial, it became apparent that the questions involved Judaism and whether Jesus was alive
 - Paul appealed to Caesar rather than be judged in Jerusalem
- Agrippa desires to hear Paul, to which Festus consents

Paul's Defense Before Agrippa

- Focuses on his vocation
 - He was not disobedient to the vision. He proclaimed repentance to those in Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, and then the Gentiles. For this, Jews seized him in the temple and sought to kill him
- Yet with God's help he simply testifies what Moses and the prophets said would happen
 - That Christ would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead
 - That He proclaim light to both Jews and Gentiles

Reaction to this Defense

- Festus thinks Paul is crazy, but Paul claims to speak words of truth and reason, of things Agrippa knows well.
 - Paul challenges Agrippa
 - To believe the prophets
 - To become a Christian
- Agrippa's conclusion
 - The king, governor, Bernice (Agrippa's wife), and others go aside to discuss the matter. They all conclude Paul has done nothing worthy of death
 - Agrippa tells Festus that Paul could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar

Preparation

Read Acts 27:1 – 28:31

Eighth Chunk

Paul's Trip to Rome (Acts 27-28)	Paul Sails to Rome	27:1 – 8
	Paul in Rome	27:9 – 28:10
	Shipwreck	28:11 – 31

Paul Sails to Rome

- The voyage to Rome would not be without trials of it's own.
- Traveling by sea was extremely very hazardous in those days.
- Paul had already experience three shipwrecks. He is about to add to his experiences of "perils in the sea".

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- The first leg of the trip was...FROM CAESAREA TO MYRA

Shipwreck

- The first leg of the trip appears to have been a pleasant one, despite the rough winds they encountered near Cyprus.
- But those winds were nothing compared to what they would experience on the next leg of their voyage...FROM MYRA TO MALTA
 - This part of the voyage took place in late September or early October. Autumn brings many storms...some are treacherous.
- For the fourth time in his life, Paul experiences shipwreck.

Paul in Rome

- Yet God was with him, and would be with him as he and his traveling companions continued their journey...FROM MALTA TO ROME
 - Paul lands on the peninsula not far from Naples. Staying in that part of the country for about a week before traveling on foot to Rome.
 - People came out on the roads to meet him. When he was handed over to the guards in Rome, he was again placed under house arrest.

The Letter to the Romans

- The period during which Paul wrote his letters was traumatic for the new church.
- Christianity had not yet evolved into a distinct religion with a hierarchy of authority and a defined dogma. Christianity, in its earliest years, was an offshoot of Judaism.
- The church was not a single, unified body governed by a central authority, but rather a conglomeration of individual communities, often separated by large distances, who depended for spiritual authority on local preachers or traveling missionaries, like Paul.
- The letters that Paul wrote respond to local conditions of the early church. The aim of the letters was to inspire unity among believers and to instruct the faithful on difficult points of doctrine. In the Letter to the Romans, Paul elevates the role of faith, describing it as the sole means by which people can attain salvation. Through Jesus' self-sacrifice, Paul teaches, God gave men the free gift of a covenant of salvation. It is only by faith in Jesus that one attains salvation.

Conclusion (1)

- Paul fully expected to be released from his imprisonment, as expressed...
 - By his plans to visit Philemon (1:22)
 - In his epistle to the Philippians (1:23-27; 2:24)
- That he was released and traveled some more is evidenced...
 - By references made in such epistles as 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus
 - By the testimony of those who came along later: Chrysostom, Jerome, Eusebius, and even Clement of Rome, who lived in the latter part of the first century A.D.

Conclusion (2)

- No two years of Paul's life were better filled with earnest labor than these two spent in his Roman prison." Indeed, we have seen that such was the case, as Paul himself wrote:
"But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." (Php 1:12-14)
- Paul returned to Rome sometime during 65 AD

Conclusion (3)

- According to church tradition as recorded in the Acts of Peter and Paul, Paul died a martyr's death, beheaded near the third milestone of the Ostian Way. He was executed probably in A.D. 65 or shortly

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thereafter, and probably in an incident involved with the Neronic persecution of the Christians in Rome.

- After his execution and burial in Rome in the 1st century AD, Saint Paul's followers erected a shrine over the grave. What now stands on this spot is a grand basilica called, St. Paul outside the Walls.
- May we learn from Paul's example of how "good can come out of ill", and use whatever circumstances in which we find ourselves to be utilized for the glory of God!

Assignment

- Write a news article about Paul's arrest using the information in Acts 27 - 28
- Use what you know about Paul's letter to the Romans...this is the audience for your news article