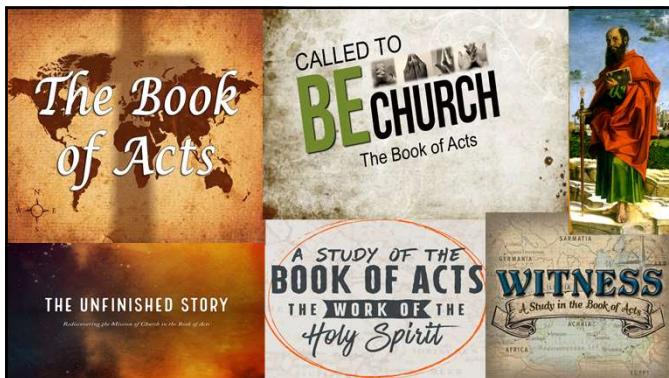


INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

Week 4: Acts and The Life of Paul



The Book of Acts: Major Themes and Ideas

- Second-Volume of Luke's history of Christian beginnings
 - Details the spread of the early church and the missionary journeys of Paul
 - Three decades of church history
- "The Acts of the Holy Spirit" or the "Continued Work of Jesus"
- A mix of speeches, travel log and history purposed to tell the story of the church, and assure readers of their faith.

Acts: Authorship

- Strictly speaking, like Luke, Acts is anonymous
- Traditional author is Luke, the doctor and companion of Paul (Colossians 4:10-14)
- The author was well-educated, not an original apostle of Christ, and was present for some of Paul's missionary journeys ("we" passages 16:8-17, 20:5-15, 21:1-18, 27:1-28:16)
- External evidence singles out Luke as early beginning in the 2nd Century

Acts: The “We” Passages

- Natural and best understanding is that Luke was present as a companion of Paul, and this fits with the Paul's words in the Epistles written while at Rome (Colossians 4:14)
 - *Luke was a companion of Paul throughout his life, even towards the end (2 Timothy 4:11)*
 - *The “we” accounts contain great detail, that seem to show an eyewitness account*
- Other theories say that “we” comes from a source or is perhaps a stylistic device, but these aren't convincing

Dating the Book of Acts

- A wide range of dates is proposed for Acts: AD 62-115!
- Most scholars date the book between AD 80-95 but their arguments aren't convincing
- The best evidence favors a date close to AD 62
 - *The ending of Acts seems unresolved*
 - *Luke does not mention Paul's letters*
 - *Luke portrays Judaism as legal (AD 66 Rebellion)*
 - *Luke omits Neronian persecution*
 - *Vivid details suggest that the material was composed soon after the events happened.*

Address/Purposes of Acts

- To Theophilus (1:1) with the same purpose as the Gospel ("So you can be assured...") but a wider audience was in view
- The multiple purposes of Luke
 - *To combat Jewish/Gentile Christians tensions (Peter and Paul agreed on the basics)*
 - *Evangelism/Apologetics (the speeches of Acts, the miracles of Acts)*
 - *Christianity as a religio licita (Legal religion)*
 - *Edification of Christians*
 - *Vindication of Paul (Paul's speeches, defense)*

The Text of Acts: Speeches

- Luke records 26 speeches/sermons
 - Peter (8)
 - James (2)
 - Stephen (1)
 - Paul (9)
- Speeches must be summaries- they only take a few minutes to read
- Speeches provide major points and fulfill Luke's purpose



The Text of Acts: Speeches

- "The speeches in Acts accurately portray the speakers and reflect their individual traits." Kistemaker
- Luke uses facts and researches to make his presentation.
- Luke writes the speeches, but is not their composer



The Text of Acts: History

- Luke should be seen as historian, in keeping with ancient histographies
- He demonstrates knowledge of politics, social customs, etc.
- However, his book is not meant only to be a recounting of "facts" but for the purpose of telling the story of the work of the Spirit



Outlining the Book of Acts

Chapters 1-12: "The Mission of the Jerusalem Church"

Key Person: Peter

- Prologue: The Foundation of the Church (1:1-2:41)
- The Church in Jerusalem (2:42-6:7)
- Wider Horizons for the Church (6:8-9:31)
- Peter and the First Gentile Convert (9:32-12:24)

Chapters 13-28 "The Mission of Paul"

Key Person: Paul

- Paul turns to the Gentiles (12:25-16:5)
- Further Penetration into the Gentile World (16:6-19:20)
- On To Rome (19:21-28:31)

Based on Carson and Moo

Outlining the Book of Acts

Chapters 1-12: "The Mission of the Jerusalem Church"

Key Person: Peter

- In Jerusalem (1-5)
- Beyond Jerusalem (6-12)

Chapters 13-28 "The Mission of Paul"

Key Person: Paul

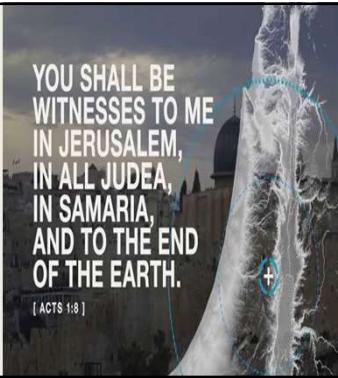
- Three Major Missions (13-21:16)
- Defending the Ministry (21:17-28:31)

Based on Polhill (NAC)

Birth of the Church 1	Growth of the Church 2	Scattering of the Church 3	Extension of the Church 7	Paul's First Missionary Journey 13	Paul's Second Missionary Journey 15:18	Paul's Third Missionary Journey 15:36 18:22	Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem 18:23 21:26	Paul's Trials in Caesarea 21:27 23 24	Paul's Arrest in Rome 26 27	28						
Triumph	Transition	Travels			Trials											
Witnessing in the City	Witnessing in the Provinces	Witnessing in the World														
Jews	Jews & Samaritans															
Peter	Philip, Peter, Paul	Gentiles			Paul											
"Jerusalem"	"Judea & Samaria"				"To the ends of the earth"											
2 Years (AD 30-32)	14 Years (AD 32-47)	14 Years (AD 47-61)														

Witnesses to all places...

- What are some key observations from this verse? How does it provide a thematic for the book of Acts?



The Day of Pentecost

- The day of Pentecost represents a transformation (from hidden and afraid-to-open witnesses)
- From Jewish roots, to all nations
- The first preaching, which forms the outline of all preaching in Acts: "Repent and Believe in Jesus Christ."



The Pattern of the Early Church

DEVOTED



ACTS 2:42-47

What are we called to value? What are the lessons from the picture of the early church?

The Conversion and Story of Paul



Key Themes: The Work of the Early Church

- The Importance of prayer in the early church
- Boldness through the Spirit
- The Gospel reaching all people (Acts 10=Gentile Pentecost)
- Scripture being fulfilled
- Repent and Believe

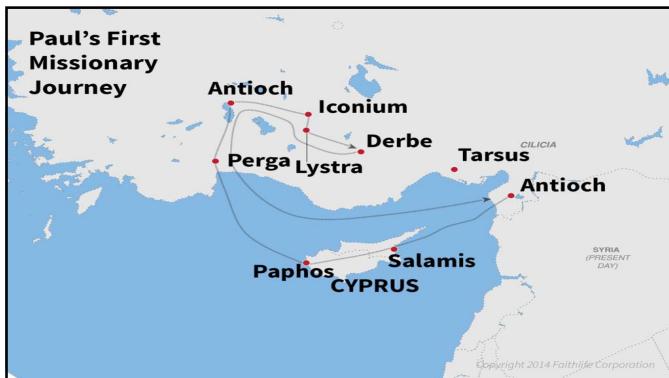
Paul: The Apostle

His life and mission



- Composed about 25% of NT
 - Born in Tarsus, raised in Jerusalem
 - Trained in the law, zealous for God, a strict Pharisee
 - Changed on the Damascus Road
 - Theologically influential:
“Grace alone through faith alone”





Highlights from the 1st Missionary Journey

- Paul, Barnabas commissioned, with John Mark, who leaves in the middle
- The pattern for Paul's Ministry: First to the Jews, then to the Gentiles
- Stoned in Lystra, left for dead, walks back into the city (14:8-20)
- Meets Timothy, who he will form a relationship with
- God has opened a door to the Gentiles (14:27)

Acts 15: The Jerusalem Council

- The issues centered on two questions: Do Gentiles first have to become Jews before they can become Christians? Do Gentiles have to observe the Mosaic Law after they become Christians? (vs. 1-5)
- Both Peter and Paul speak on the matter.
- The decision is No and No, with rules to build harmony (vs 29):
 - Abstain from food sacrificed to idols
 - Abstain from sexual immorality
 - Abstain from that which is strangled/blood
 - Not for salvation, but to promote peace



Highlights from the 2nd Missionary Journey

- A disagreement leads Paul to take Silas (15:40)
- Returns to cities he had ministered in.
- Vision of a man in Macedonia (16:10) leads to Paul traveling there, Luke joins the journey
- A night spent in jail after an encounter with a slave girl (16:16-39)



Highlights from the 3rd Missionary Journey

- Teaching in Ephesus for 3 years, faces opposition
- Teaching long into the night, Eutychus is raised from the dead
- Paul decided to head to Jerusalem, even after being warned about the danger that awaited Him.



The Contribution of Acts

- Historical: Provides the history of the early church, records key events/speeches
- Theological: Highlights key themes, as expanded by the letters
- Pastoral: To provide assurance of salvation.

Theological Themes in Acts

- The Plan of God: To bring salvation to the ends of the earth and to all people.
 - *Divine necessity/fulfillment of Scriptures*
 - *Angelic Interventions*
- The Presence of the future: The last days have dawned (2:16-17)
- Salvation (2:41, 2:47, 16:31, 28:28)

Theological Themes in Acts

- The Importance of the Word of God and its spread and increase
- The Holy Spirit (How the pouring of God's Spirit transformed God's people)
- The People of God (the growth of the church)

Assignments, Wrap Up

- Test on Intertestamental/Gospels by Saturday
- Begin thinking about theme for application project
- Read: Carson/Moo: Chapters 11, 12, 16 and Witherington: Chapter 9 (This will be review, more insight)
