

13101-E December 11, 2013**Outline for the Book of Acts**

“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.”

Acts 1:8

- I. **Intro:** 40 days after Jesus’ resurrection there are approximately 120 Believers—a small band of Jewish brothers and sisters who trust Jesus as Lord.
 - a. 30 years later, from this small band of Believers, the message and life of Jesus has spread throughout the Roman Empire, and thousands of people have trusted Jesus as Lord.
 - b. How in the world did a small minority of strictly Jewish men and women impact the Roman world to such a degree that they started violently persecuting them?
 - c. That’s what the book of Acts sets out to tell us.
 - d. In the Gospels we see the impact Jesus’ life had while He was on the earth, and in Acts we see the impact Jesus’ life had *after* He left this earth and ascended to Heaven through the life of His people.
- II. **Facts on Acts:**
 - a. **Written by Luke:** Luke was a Gentile Doctor, a missionary, and a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul’s. Acts is a record of the first 30 years of redeemed human life. Lives that have been touched and transformed by Jesus Christ, and now live to bring Him glory.
 - b. **Written to Theophilus:** Luke opens us Acts by writing, “In my former book. Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to apostles He had chosen.”

- c. ***Written around 62-63AD:*** The book of Acts is written about 30 years after the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. It covers all the experiences of that first generation of Believers after Jesus ascended into Heaven, and His Spirit was poured out and His community was formed. It's an indispensable follow up to the Gospels. In the Gospels we see the impact Jesus' life had while He was on the earth, and in Acts we see the impact Jesus' life had *after* He left this earth and ascended to Heaven.

III. The Promise of the Spirit & the Prediction of an Ever Expanding Witness (ch 1)

- a. "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." (1:8)
- b. This is the outline for the book of Acts---the church *starts* in Jerusalem (2-7), the church scatters into Judea and Samaria (8-12) and the church *sends* witnesses to the ends of the earth (13-28).

IV. The Church Starts in Jerusalem (2-7)

a. Peter's Preaching on the Day of Pentecost (2:1-41)

- i. The audience's response: What shall we do?
- ii. Peter's answer: Repent and be baptized.

b. The Jerusalem Church starts (2:42-47). It's characterized by

- i. Devotion to Christ (v. 42)
- ii. Unity (v.44)
- iii. Joy (v. 46)

c. External Opposition: The Sanhedrin Arrest Peter and John (ch. 3 & 4).

d. Internal Obstacles: Ananias & Sapphira; Growing Pains (ch. 5 & 6).

e. Stephen becomes the first martyr (ch. 7).

- i. Stephen (like Jesus) dies with words of forgiveness for those who take his life (Acts 7:54-60)

V. The Church Scatters into Judea and Samaria (8-12)

a. A great persecution breaks out led by Saul of Tarsus (ch. 8:1-3).

- i. On the surface, this persecution looks to be a huge setback for the Jesus movement, but God is actually using this great evil as a great means for spreading the Gospel to a different people group.
 - ii. Oftentimes, God uses the pressing circumstances in our life to guide us into His will and that's what was taking place here.
 - iii. Please notice the spread of the Gospel here isn't done by the official spokesmen for the church or by formal missionaries. The evangelism that takes place in Judea and Samaria wasn't done by the Apostles or clergy, but rather by ordinary believers who lived their lives and worked alongside others.
- b.** Philip Takes the Gospel to the Samaritans (ch. 8). The church in Jerusalem is so stunned by this they send Peter and John to confirm it!
- c.** *Saul's Conversion (ch. 9).* Paul conversion to Christ and out of religion is told in three different places in the book of Acts; it's still one of the main arguments for the truth of the Gospel message.
- d.** *The Gospel goes to the Gentiles (ch. 10).* This is the Gentile Pentecost! The Lord kicks open the door to the Gentiles.

- e. The Church in Antioch is Born (ch. 11).* Growing thriving church. Barnabas goes and gets Paul to help him lead it. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Powerful church.
- f. More Persecution. James martyred and Peter arrested (ch. 12).*
 - i.* In spite of the persecution, probably because of the persecution the chapter closes with a summary statement: “But the word of God continued to increase and spread.”

VI. The Church Sends Witnesses to the Ends of the Earth (13-28).

- a. The Antioch Moment (13:1-3).* This decision is one of the most important decisions in history. The Holy Spirit calls for Saul and Barnabas to be redeployed; to plant churches all over the Roman world.
 - i.* The mindset of God at Antioch was not how can this church *survive* without Saul and Barnabas, but how can the world be reached with the message of the crucified and risen king of the universe?
 - ii.* The answer was to send Paul and Barnabas out to plant churches.
 - iii.* The fruit? 2.1 billion Believers today with a Christian witness in virtually every country of the world. And 13 out of the 29 books of the New Testament were the result of the ministry that was launched in this moment of prayer and fasting.
- b. Paul’s First Missionary Journey (ch. 13 & 14).*
 - i.* In Cyprus (13:4-12).
 - ii.* In Pisidian Antioch (13:13-52).
 - iii.* In Iconium (14:1-7).

- iv.** In Lystra and Derbe (14:8-20).
- v.** Return to Syrian Antioch (14:21-28).

c. *Jerusalem Council (ch. 15).*

- i.** Is a sinner saved by the sheer grace of God in and through Christ crucified, when they believe?
- ii.** Has Jesus Christ by His death and resurrection done everything necessary for salvation? Or are we saved partly through the grace of Christ and partly through our own good works and religious performance...are we saved by faith alone or a mixture of faith and works, grace and law, Jesus and Moses?
- iii.** Are Gentile believers a sect of Judaism, or are they authentic members of the multi-national family of God? Huge questions. So they head to Jerusalem for the first church council.

d. *Paul's Secondary Journey (ch. 15:36-18:22)*

- i.** Starts off with an argument and split with Barnabas! Ahh...the ministry! (15:36-41).
- ii.** In Derbe and Lystra. Timothy joins the team (16:1-5).
- iii.** In Philippi (16:11-40).
- iv.** In Thessalonica (17:1-9).
- v.** In Berea (17:10-15).
- vi.** In Athens (17:16-33).
- vii.** In Corinth for a year and a half (18:1-22).

e. *Paul's Third Missionary Journey (18:23-21:16)*

- i.** In Ephesus for three years! (ch. 19).
- ii.** In Macedonia and Greece (20:1-5).
- iii.** In Troas (20:6-12).

f. *Paul to Rome (21-28)*

- i.** Paul's Arrested in Jerusalem (21-23).
- ii.** Paul stands trial before Felix (24).
- iii.** Paul stands trial before Festus and Agrippa (25 & 26).
- iv.** Paul sails for Rome (27:1-26).
- v.** Paul's shipwrecked in Malta (27:27-28:10).
- vi.** Paul arrives in Rome (28:11-28).
- vii.** Paul witnesses in Rome for two years (28:30-31).

VII. 3 Questions to close.

- e. *What Part Will I Play in the Spread of the Gospel?*** Luke ends the book of Acts in a deliberate way; he wants us to see that the movement of God through the people of God continues and that you and I are being written into this story; we're living out Acts 29 as we live under the direction of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming in word and deed that Jesus is Lord.
- f. *Why did these people in the book of Acts do what they did?*** Why did they go to such lengths and take such risks? Answer: The Gospel is true! Jesus is Lord. He's the king of the universe and the king of their lives and these men and women were *captured* by the love of Christ and *compelled* to do whatever it took to ensure the message of Christ's love and Lordship would continue to expand.

- g. *Is that the way you feel about the Lord?* Has He so captured your heart and transformed your life that you're compelled to tell others about Him? I hope so.