

Journey Through the Bible: A Year of Our Lord
Session 45: The Book of Acts & Early Church History
Remember Acts 17:11

The New Testament:

Historical Accounts	(5)
The Gospels	4
Synoptic: Mt. Mk. Lk.	(3)
Commentary: Jn.	(1)
<u>Acts</u>	1
Interpretive Letters	(21)
Pauline Epistles	14*
Hebrew Christian Epistles	7
Prophecy (Apocalypse)	1

The Book of Acts:

- Written by Luke as a Companion (Sequel) Volume to the Gospel
- Biographical Account of Peter & Paul
 - o Potentially the Court Documentation of Paul
- Background Info. In Session 40
- Consider the Title
 - o The Acts of the Apostles
 - o The Acts of Peter & Paul
 - o The Acts of the Holy Spirit
 - Hint: “about all that Jesus *began* to do and teach...” (1:1)

Outline:

Introduction: The Risen Christ	Ch.1
The Apostles’ Ministry in Jerusalem	2-7
The Church Ministers in Judea & Samaria	8-12
The Missionary Journeys Abroad	13-20
Paul’s Journey to Rome	21-28

The Risen Christ: (Acts 1:9-11):

- Jesus Offers Instructions to the Apostles
 - o Ministers with them for 40 Days
- Commissions Them to Missionary Work
- Ascended into Heaven on a Cloud
- Apostles Elected a Replacement for Judas (?)

The Holy Spirit in Pentecost:

- Feast of Required Attendance
(International Pilgrimage)
- The Presence of God through Flame (Holy Spirit)
 - o A New Temple is Established WITHIN the Believers (Ref. Ex. 40; 2 Chr. 7. Cf. Ezek. 43; Haggai 2)
- Jews (Born & Proselytes) from 14+ Nations
- The Holy Spirit Compelled, Inspired, & Equipped the Apostles to Speak to All of Them in Such a Way That They Would Understand (Native Language: Dialect)
- Enabled the Listeners to Understand the Gospel
 - o (Inferred) Did Not Enable the Hard Hearted to Understand

Possible Interpretations:

- The Spirit Gave Each Apostle the Ability to Be Understood in Multiple Languages (Previously Unknown to Them)
- The Spirit Translated the Sermons in Real Time
- The Apostles Spoke in an Unknown Language that was Interpreted Individually by the Hearers

Questions of Interpretation:

- 12 Apostles Able to be Understood in 14+ Dialects
 - o Did the Spirit Translate in the Ears of the Hearers?
 - o Did the Spirit Translate in the Mouths of the Speakers?
 - o Did the Spirit Switch Languages in the Same Apostle?
 - Brief Sermons (Early AM?)
 - Text Infers Simultaneous (Rapid) Understanding
 - o Did the Spirit Enable an “Unknown Language” within the Apostles
 - Crowd was Not Yet Saved (Implication: Not Sealed by the Spirit)
 - Did Not Possess the Gift of Interpretation
- The Hard Hearted Were Unable to Understand (Inferred Babbling & Ignorance)
 - o Did the Spirit Not Interpret the Message or Confuse Their Hearing?

Questions of Interpretation (Cont.):

- When Peter Brought His Message (1 Voice)
 - o Did the Miracle Cease?
 - o Did He Preach the Same Message 14+ Times?
 - o Did The Spirit Continue to Interpret for All Those Gathered?
 - o The Hard-Hearted Heard Peter (Addressed 1st to Them)

The Apostles' Ministry in Jerusalem (2-7):

- Through Pentecost Many of the Various Tribes of Israel are United (Ref. Is. 11; Ezek. 37)
- 3,000 Converted to Begin the Early Church
 - o Minister in the Temple & Gather in Homes
 - Daily Ministering, Fellowship, Teaching
 - Selling of their Excess
 - Provide for the Destitute (Fulfilling the Purpose of the Temple)
- Peter Heals & Preaches in the Temple
 - o Arrested & Tried
 - o Continues Professing Christ
- Deacons Appointed to Tend to Physical Needs
 - o Apostles Continue the Teaching Ministry

The First Persecution (6:1-8:3):

- Stephen (Deacon) Arrested for Witnessing
 - o Provides an Expository Commentary of the OT
 - o Israel Always Rejects Her Messengers
 - o Stoned to Death (Illegally) by the Priests
 - Saul (Pharisee) Holds their Cloaks
 - o Many Driven from Jerusalem
 - Witnessing in Judea & Samaria

The Church Ministers in Judea & Samaria (8-12):

- Multiple Missionary Accounts
 - o The Church Transitions to a Multi-Ethnic Community (No Boundaries)
 - o Philip Ministers in Samaria
 - o Saul Meets Christ and Converts
 - o Peter Has a Vision of Gentile Acceptance
 - Conversion of Cornelius (Ch. 10)
 - The Spirit Empowers Gentiles
 - o Judaizer Controversy Begins (11:1-18)
 - Convert to Judaism First?

The Church in Antioch (Ch. 11:19-30):

- A Large Multi-Ethnic City
- Becomes a Hub of Missionary Activity
- Disciples First Called Christians
 - o “Little Christs” (Initially Derogatory)
 - o “Christ-Like”
(Redeemed as a Discipleship Reminder)
- Paul & Barnabas Become Teachers/Leaders
 - o Antioch Prepares Famine Relief for Judea

The Missionary Journeys Abroad (13-20):

- 1st Missionary Journey (13-14)
 - o Paul & Barnabas
 - o Antioch – Asia Minor – Cyprus – Jerusalem
 - o Council of Jerusalem (c. 50AD)
- 2nd Missionary Journey (16-18)
 - o Paul & Silas (Eventually Timothy)
 - o Antioch - Asia Minor – Greece – Judea –
Antioch
- 3rd Missionary Journey (18-20)
 - o Asia Minor – Greece – Jerusalem
 - o Paul Arrested at the Temple

Recurring Pattern:

- Paul Begins by Preaching at Synagogues
 - o Jewish Leaders Opposes Paul
(Drags in Romans)
 - o Jews & Gentiles Convert
- Apostle Meets & Trains Prospective Ministry Leaders
in Homes (Becoming Their Disciples)
- Discover Ministerial Calling & Equip Accordingly
- Departs to Plant a New Church

The Council of Jerusalem (Ch. 15):

- Seek the Will of God Regarding Gentile Believers
- Recognize the Fulfillment of the OT Law in Christ
 - o Ceremonial: Circumcision, Kosher, Etc...
- Publish a Decision Drawing from the Covenant of
Noah (v. 24-29 Ref.)
 - o Abstain from Food Offered to Idols
 - o Do Not Consume Blood
 - o Do Not Eat Anything Strangled
 - o Abstain from Sexual Immorality
(ref. Gen. 8:9-1-17)

Cultural Resistance (Ch. 14, 16, 17, 19):

- Monotheism vs. Roman Syncretism & Polytheism
- Jesus as Lord vs. Caesar as God
- Idolatry vs. Singular Devotion
- Indulgence vs. Worship
- Ambition & Greed vs. Agape
- In Brief:
 - o Jewish Messianic Movement (BUT)
 - Ethnically Diverse
 - Economically Diverse
 - Morally Rigorous
 - Singular in Allegiance

Accusations Against Paul (Ch. 17-18):

- Jewish Religious Leaders to Roman Political Authority
- Rebellion Against Roman Authority (Jesus is King)
- Challenge to Multiple Roman Cultural Values
- Paul Found Not to be a Threat of Insurrection

Paul's Journey to Rome (21-28):

- After Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey
- Paul's Reputation Arrives in Jerusalem Ahead of Him
- Attacked by the Jews for Betraying the Temple
 - o Roman Soldiers Arrest Him Under Suspicion of Being an Egyptian Insurrectionist
 - o Paul Publicly Witnesses to Jerusalem
 - o Jews Riot
 - o Romans Attempt Examination by Flogging
 - o Paul Asserts His Roman Citizenship
- Roman Trials of Paul (23-26)
 - o Sanhedrin Erupts into Confusion
 - Paul Divides Sadducees & Pharisees
 - Conspiracy of 40 Swear to Kill Paul
 - Centurion Orders that He be Taken to Caesarea
 - o Trial Under Gov. Felix (v. Jewish Authority)
 - Witnesses to Felix & His Wife
 - Internal Jewish Religious Matter
 - Leaves Paul in Prison (Term Ends)
 - o Trial Under Gov. Festus
 - Appeals to Caesar (Roman Instead of Jewish Authority)
 - Finds No Roman Charge Against Paul
 - Asks King Agrippa for Council

Roman Trials of Paul (Cont.):

- Trial Under Gov. Festus
 - Paul Witnesses to Agrippa
 - Note: Herod Agrippa II (Descendant of Herod the Great)
 - No Prosecutable Charge Found Under Roman Law
 - Paul Could Have Been Released if Not for His Own Appeal (26:32)
- Shipwrecked en route to Rome (Ch. 27)
- Paul Placed Under House Arrest
- Witnesses to Roman Jews & Gentiles (2+ Years)
- Writes Prison Epistles During This Period:
 - Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, & Philemon

For Discussion:

Share Your Notes and Highlights with Your Groups.

Consider:

What does Acts teach you about the way a church should behave?

What does Paul teach you about the impact of salvation?