

Acts

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I. Introduction

1. This study is a verse-by-verse exposition of the book of The Acts of the Apostles.
2. I do not intend to spend a sermon on each verse, but rather move through it at a pace that will give an adequate explanation to each verse or passage, while trying not to “miss the forest for the trees.”

II. Overview

1. The book of Acts was written by Luke (**Luk 1:1-4 c/w Act 1:1**).
2. It picks up where the book of Luke left off with the ascension of Christ to heaven after promising to send the Holy Ghost to the apostles (**Luk 24:49-53 c/w Act 1:4-9**).
3. The first part of the book focuses mainly on Peter’s ministry (chapters 1-12), and the second part focuses mainly on Paul’s ministry (chapters 13-28).
4. Chapter highlights
 - A. Chapter 1: Matthias was chosen to replace Judas as the 12th apostle.
 - B. Chapter 2: the giving of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost and the conversion of about 3000 Jews on that day.
 - C. Chapter 3: the account of Peter and John healing a lame man and preaching to the Jews.
 - D. Chapter 4: Peter and John are brought before a council of Sadducees, rulers, elders, scribes, and the high priest and were threatened to stop preaching about Jesus.
 - E. Chapter 5: Ananias and Sapphira were killed by God for lying to the Holy Ghost; the apostles were put in prison and delivered by an angel; they were brought before the council again and beaten and released.
 - F. Chapter 6: ordination of the first deacons in the Jerusalem church; the Jews dispute with Stephen, suborn witnesses, and bring him before the council.
 - G. Chapter 7: Stephen gives his defense before the council and is martyred.
 - H. Chapter 8: a great persecution arises against the church in Jerusalem and the saints are scattered; Philip preaches and baptizes in Samaria; Simon the sorcerer is “converted” and tries to pay the apostles for the gift of the Holy Ghost; the Ethiopian eunuch is converted by Philip.
 - I. Chapter 9: Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus; Peter heals Aeneas, a man sick of the palsy for eight years; Peter raises Tabitha from the dead.
 - J. Chapter 10: the conversion of Cornelius by Peter.
 - K. Chapter 11: Peter’s recounting of the conversion of Cornelius; the church in Antioch is founded; Barnabas is sent from the Jerusalem Church to Antioch; Barnabas goes to Tarsus to get Paul and brings him to Antioch where they assemble with the church and teach for a whole year; a great dearth hits the world and the disciples in Antioch take up a collection for the brethren in Judea and send it to them by Barnabas and Saul.

- L. Chapter 12: Herod kills James the brother of John and puts Peter in prison; an angel delivers Peter from prison; Herod is killed by God; Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch after taking the relief to Jerusalem.
- M. Chapter 13: Barnabas and Saul are sent on their first evangelistic trip with John; they go to Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, and the isle of Paphos where they encounter a sorcerer named Barjesus/Elymas whom Paul blinds for a season; Saul is renamed Paul; Paul and Barnabas depart Paphos for Perga in Pamphylia and John returns to Jerusalem; Paul goes to Antioch in Pisidia and preaches in the synagogue; the Gentiles want to hear more on the next sabbath and the whole city shows up, which provokes the Jews to envy who raise up a persecution and expel them; they go to Iconium.
- N. Chapter 14: Paul preaches in the synagogue in Iconium and the unbelieving Jews stir up the Gentiles and try to stone him, and they flee to Lystra and Derbe; Paul heals a crippled man in Lystra and the pagans there think Paul and Barnabas are gods; the Jews stir up the people and they stone Paul, leaving him for dead; Paul and Barnabas depart to Derbe and return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch where they confirm the disciples and ordain elders in the churches they started in those places; they pass through Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga, and Attalia on their way back to Antioch; they tell the church in Antioch the story of their evangelistic trip and remain in Antioch for a long while.
- O. Chapter 15: a council is convened in Jerusalem to determine if the Gentiles need to keep the law of Moses; Paul and Barnabas meet with the other apostles and elders and decide that the Gentiles do not need to keep the law of Moses; they write up a few laws for the Gentiles to keep and send it by Paul and Barnabas to the Gentile churches; Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, and after a while decide to return to the cities where they had preached and started churches to see how the brethren were faring; Paul and Barnabas have a sharp disagreement on whether to take John Mark, so they split up; Barnabas and Mark sail to Cyprus, and Paul and Silas go through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.
- P. Chapter 16: Paul meets a young converted man named Timotheus in Derbe and Lystra, has him circumcised, and takes him with him as he delivers the decrees from the council in Jerusalem to the Gentile churches. They go through Phrygia and Galatia, but the Spirit forbids them to go into Asia and Bithynia. They are then called to go into Macedonia and preach the gospel. After a few stops, they get to Philippi where they meet and convert Lydia. Paul casts a spirit of divination out of a young girl and ends up getting himself and Silas thrown into prison for it. While in prison, a great earthquake opens the prison doors and frees the prisoners, and the jailor and his house are converted and baptized. Paul and Silas are released from prison the next day.
- Q. Chapter 17: Paul and his travelling companions come to Thessalonica and reason out of the scriptures with the people in the synagogue for three sabbaths. When many believe, the unbelieving Jews cause an uproar in the city, and Paul and Silas are sent away by night to Berea. Paul preaches the gospel and converts many until the Jews in Thessalonica get wind of it and go to Berea to stir up trouble there, causing Paul and Silas to depart into Athens. In Athens, Paul disputes with the

Epicureans and Stoicks and then is taken to the Areopagus where he preaches the gospel on Mars' Hill, and some are converted.

- R. Chapter 18: Paul departs from Athens and comes to Corinth where he meets Aquila and Priscilla and stays and works with them while he reasons with the people in the synagogue every sabbath for a year and a half. The Jews make insurrection against him unsuccessfully, after which he sails to Syria with Aquila and Priscilla. He then goes to Ephesus, leaving Aquila and Priscilla there, before going to Caesarea and finally back to his home church in Antioch. After spending some time in Antioch, Paul departs on his third evangelistic trip, going over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia. A preacher named Apollos goes to Ephesus preaching the gospel as far as he understood it. Aquila and Priscilla teach him the way of God more perfectly, and he mightily convinces the Jews that Jesus is Christ.
- S. Chapter 19: Paul returns to Ephesus and finds about twelve men who had not been correctly baptized, which he baptizes and lays hands on, giving them the Holy Ghost. Paul spends over two years there preaching and disputing daily, and many in Ephesus believe and turn from their occultic religion. Paul's evangelistic success causes a silversmith named Demetrius, who is losing revenue in his idol-making business, to create an uproar which the townclerk had to put down.
- T. Chapter 20: Paul goes into Macedonia and then into Greece where the Jews lay wait to kill him. He sails to Troas where he assembles with the church, preaches until midnight, resurrects Eutychus after he falls asleep and falls from a loft, breaks bread with them, and preaches for the rest of the night. Paul goes to Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Trogyllium, and Miletus. At Miletus he calls for the elders of the church at Ephesus and warns them of spiritual dangers to come, after which they accompany him to the ship, weeping and sorrowing that they will see him no more.
- U. Chapter 21: During Paul's return trip to Jerusalem, he is warned twice to not go because of what would befall him there, but he goes anyway, not worrying about it. When he arrives at Jerusalem, he goes into the temple to perform a vow with some men. When the Jews see him in the temple, they create an uproar and try to kill him, but he is rescued by a band of soldiers.
- V. Chapter 22: Paul addresses the Jews and tells them the story of his conversion. When he gets to the part about being sent to the Gentiles, the Jews demand his death. The chief captain is going to have him scourged until he finds out that he is a Roman citizen. The chief captain then calls down the chief priests and their council to interrogate Paul.
- W. Chapter 23: Paul stands before the council of the high priest, Pharisees, and Sadducees, and he shrewdly turns the Pharisees and Sadducees against each other by stating that he is a Pharisee and is being called into question because of his belief in the resurrection of the dead. The chief captain saves him from being pulled in pieces and takes him into the castle. A group of Jews conspire to kill him. His nephew learns about it and tells the chief captain who commands hundreds of soldiers to escort Paul to Caesarea to Felix the governor.
- X. Chapter 24: Five days later, the high priest and the elders bring an orator named Tertullus to make an accusation against Paul before Felix. After Paul gives his defense, Felix decides to wait for the chief captain to come so that he can

understand the matter fully. Paul remains in prison for two years until Festus replaces Felix.

- Y. Chapter 25: Festus goes to Jerusalem, and the high priest and the chief of the Jews attempt to convince him to have Paul brought to Jerusalem to be tried. Festus tells them to come to Caesarea to make their case against him, which they do. After Paul makes his defense, Festus asks him if he will go to Jerusalem to be judged, but Paul appeals to Rome to be judged there. When king Agrippa comes to Caesarea to visit Festus, Festus tells him about Paul, and Agrippa asks to hear him himself.
- Z. Chapter 26: Paul gives his testimony before Agrippa and almost convinces him to become a Christian. Agrippa deems Paul to be innocent and would have let him go free, had he not appealed to Caesar.
- AA. Chapter 27: Paul sets sail in a ship full of criminals for Rome, but a terrible storm at sea causes them to be shipwrecked on the island of Melita.
- BB. Chapter 28: After three months of wintering on the island of Melita, Paul and the other prisoners depart for Rome. When he arrives at Rome, he calls for the Jews and preaches the gospel to them. He dwells in a rented house in Rome for two years and preaches the kingdom of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ to all those who come unto him.

III. Acts Chapter 1

1. **Acts 1:1** – *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,*
 - A. Luke is the author of the book of Acts (**Luk 1:1-4**).
 - B. The “former treatise” that Luke had written for Theophilus was the gospel of Luke.
 - C. Theophilus is only mentioned twice in the Bible (**Luk 1:3; Act 1:1**), so we next to nothing about him, except the following that we can deduce.
 - i. *Theophilus* means *friend of God* according to James Strong, Albert Barnes, Adam Clarke, and Matthew Henry, and *lover of God* according to John Gill and Matthew Henry.
 - a. He was therefore a friend and lover of God and also a disciple of Jesus Christ who had been instructed in the gospel (**Luk 1:4**).
 - b. He was a godly man like his spiritual father Abraham (**Jam 2:23**).
 - ii. Theophilus was apparently a man of high rank or nobility, as Luke addressed him as “most excellent” (**Luk 1:3**).
 - a. “Most excellent” was a title reserved for governors and the like (**Act 23:26**).
 - b. “Most excellent” was a similar title as “most noble” (**Act 24:3; Act 26:25**).
 - c. Theophilus was one of the “not many noble” which are called (**1Co 1:26**).
 - D. In his gospel, Luke wrote to Theophilus detailing “all that Jesus began both to do and teach” (**Act 1:1**).
 - E. In the book of Acts, Luke picks up where he left off at the end of his gospel and gives the history of the acts of the apostles, beginning immediately after the ascension of Christ until the AD 60s when Paul was first imprisoned in Rome.

2. **Act 1:2** – *Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:*
 - A. Before His ascension, Jesus commanded the apostles through the Holy Ghost (**1Pe 1:12**) to feed His sheep (**Joh 21:15-17**) and go into all the world and preach the gospel to all nations (**Mat 28:19-20**).
 - B. Jesus also gave commandments to the apostles through the Holy Ghost after He ascended to heaven.
 - i. Prior to His death, Jesus had promised the apostles that He would send the Holy Ghost, who was the Comforter, who would make known all things to them (**Joh 14:16-17, 26; Joh 15:26-27; Joh 16:12-15**).
 - ii. Jesus had instructed them to wait in Jerusalem after His ascension until they were endued with power from on high (**Luk 24:49**).
 - iii. After the Lord was taken up to heaven, He gave commandments to His apostles through the Holy Ghost whom He sent to them.
 - iv. The giving of His commandments by the Holy Ghost began on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and lasted to the death of John, the last apostle.
3. **Act 1:3** – *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:*
 - A. Jesus appeared to His apostles after His passion (suffering) and demonstrated that He was indeed risen from the dead by many *infallible* proofs.
 - i. Infallible *adj.* – Of things: Not liable to fail, un failing. a. Not liable to prove false, erroneous, or mistaken; that unfailingly holds good.
 - a. The NIV replaces *infallible* proofs with *convincing* proofs.
 - b. Convincing – 1. Persuading or assuring by argument or evidence (dictionary.com - since this is not a KJV word and the latest usage in the OED for it is 1885)
 - c. There is a big difference between infallible proofs and convincing proofs.
 - ii. Some of the infallible proofs of Christ's resurrection included:
 - a. Having the disciples touch Him (**Luk 24:39-40; Joh 20:27**).
 - b. Eating food with them (**Luk 24:41-43**).
 - c. Performing miracles such as walking through walls (**Joh 20:19**) and causing them to catch a whole boat full of fish when they had caught nothing that night (**Joh 21:6-11**).
 - d. Appearing to a crowd of over 500 people at once (**1Co 15:6**).
 - B. Jesus was seen by the apostles for 40 days after His resurrection prior to His ascension.
 - C. He continued preaching the kingdom of God during that time as He did prior to it (**Mar 1:14-15, etc.**).
4. **Act 1:4** – *And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*
 - A. The apostles were told by Jesus to go into all the world and preach the gospel in all nations to every creature (**Mat 28:19; Mar 16:15; Luk 24:47**).
 - B. But before they did that, they were to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Ghost, who was promised by the Father, was given unto them (**Act 1:5**).

- C. The Father had promised to send the Holy Ghost to the disciples after Christ departed this earth (**Joh 14:26**).
- 5. **Act 1:5** – *For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*
 - A. They only had to wait about seven days for the Holy Ghost to be given unto them.
 - i. The Holy Ghost came on the day of Pentecost (**Act 2:1-4**).
 - ii. Pentecost was 50 days after the Passover (**Lev 23:15-16**).
 - iii. Jesus died at the time of Passover (**Joh 18:28, 39; Joh 19:14**).
 - iv. Jesus was in the grave for three days and nights (**Mat 12:40**).
 - v. Jesus spent 40 days on earth after His resurrection (**Act 1:3**).
 - vi. Therefore, the “not many days hence” until the Holy Ghost was given was seven days (50-3-40=7).
 - B. The apostles were baptized *with*, not *by*, the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.
 - i. John baptized *with* water by immersing believers in water (**Mat 3:6; Mar 1:5, 10**).
 - ii. John, not the water, performed the baptism.
 - iii. The apostles would be baptized *with* the Holy Ghost by being immersed in the Holy Ghost to the point of being filled with Him (**Act 2:4**).
 - iv. Jesus, not the Holy Ghost, performed the baptism (**Mat 3:11**).
 - v. Believers are baptized *by* the Holy Ghost when He adds them to the local church when they are baptized in water (**1Co 12:13 c/w Act 2:38, 41-42, 47**).
- 6. **Act 1:6** – *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*
 - A. The apostles at this time were demonstrating that they still did not understand the nature of the kingdom of God which Jesus preached.
 - B. They appear to have thought that the Christ’s kingdom was an earthly kingdom that was synonymous with the nation of Israel.
 - C. They were expecting God to restore the nation of Israel unto its former glory instead of being a vassal state of Rome (**Joh 6:15**).
 - D. Jesus made it clear in His preaching and teaching that the kingdom of God was not a physical, national, geographical kingdom, but rather a spiritual one (**Luk 17:20-21; Joh 18:36**).
 - E. Furthermore, Jesus told the Jews that the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to others (**Mat 21:43**).
- 7. **Act 1:7** – *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*
 - A. Some have concluded that since Jesus did not say that God would *not* restore the kingdom to Israel, but only said that “it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power,” that therefore God *will* restore the kingdom again to Israel.
 - i. But Jesus did *not* say that He would restore again the kingdom to Israel at that time or at any time.
 - ii. Jesus simply told them that, “it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”

- iii. This is very similar to how Jesus answered Peter when he asked what was going to happen to John (**Joh 21:20-22**).
 - a. Jesus answered Peter with, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.”
 - b. The disciples took His statement to mean that John would not die.
 - c. But Jesus did not say that John would not die; He simply asked, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” (**Joh 21:23**).
 - d. Likewise, Jesus did not say that He was going to restore again the kingdom to Israel.
 - e. As a matter of fact, Jesus said the opposite (**Mat 21:43**).
- B. The broader lesson to glean from Jesus’ words is that there are some things that are secret and belong only to God (**Deut 29:29**), especially the timing of future events such as the second coming of Christ (**Mar 13:32; 1Th 5:1-2**).