

Introduction to Acts

(Pas. Baines, Jr. 9/10)

The book of Acts is thought to be written by the same Luke who wrote the Gospel of Luke. Luke was a gentile (i.e., non-Jew) and a physician by profession. Notice that Christians can be doctors and other types of professionals, not just preachers.

The book recounts the acts or actions of the apostles, as the Gospel of Jesus Christ was being shared throughout a large portion of the Roman Empire, in spite of believers being persecuted. The book is actually written to a man by the name of Theophilus (see Acts 1:1). Peter and Paul are the major characters, with a special emphasis on Paul from chapter thirteen until the end of the book.

A.D. 61-63 seems to be the time of writing, since Paul is in jail at the end of the book (i.e., 60-61 A.D.). If the book was written any later, it would have probably mentioned Paul's release, after being in jail for two years, the great fire in Rome (A.D. 64), and the martyrdom of Paul in (A.D. 67). A.D., by the way, stands for *anno domini*, which is medieval Latin for "in the year of (the/our) Lord." (for more information see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anno_Domini).

There are many good resources on the book of Acts. My major resources are *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 9, John-Acts* (Frank E. Gaebelin, General Editor; Richard N. Longenecker, Contributor for Acts; Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library of Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), *Halley's Bible Handbook, New Revised Edition* (Henry H. Halley; Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library of Zondervan Publishing House, 1965); *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition, New International Version* (Charles C. Ryrie; Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994); and the *PC Study Bible CD-ROM* (i.e., multiple Bible translations, commentaries, dictionaries, lexicons, concordances, and other resources)

A key idea in the book of Acts is that believers should be witnesses of the Lord wherever they go (see Acts 1:8). The following outline is based on the Ryrie Study Bible.

OUTLINE OF ACTS

I. Christianity in Jerusalem, 1:1-8:3

- A. The Risen Lord, 1:1-26
 - 1. The Lord confirming, 1:1-5
 - 2. The Lord commissioning, 1:6-11
 - 3. The Lord choosing, 1:12-26
- B. Pentecost: Birthday of the Church, 2:1-47
 - 1. The power of Pentecost, 2:1-13
 - 2. The preaching of Pentecost, 2:14-36
 - 3. The results of Pentecost, 2:37-47
- C. The Healing of a Lame Man, 3:1-26
 - 1. The miracle, 3:1-10
 - 2. The message, 3:11-26
- D. The Beginning of Persecution, 4:1-37
 - 1. The persecution, 4:1-22
 - 2. The prayer, 4:23-31
 - 3. The provision, 4:32-37
- E. Purging and Persecution, 5:1-42
 - 1. Purging from within, 5:1-11
 - 2. Purging from without, 5:12-42
- F. Choosing Collaborers, 6:1-7
- G. Stephen, the First Martyr, 6:8-8:3
 - 1. The stirring of the people, 6:8-15
 - 2. The sermon of Stephen, 7:1-53
 - 3. The stoning of Stephen, 7:54-8:3

II. Christianity in Palestine and Syria, 8:4-12:25

- A. The Christians Scattered, 8:4-40
 - 1. The preaching in Samaria, 8:4-25
 - 2. The preaching on the Gaza road, 8:26-40
- B. The Conversion of Paul, 9:1-31
 - 1. The account of Paul's conversion, 9:1-19a
 - 2. The aftermath of Paul's conversion, 9:19b-31
- C. The Conversion of Gentiles, 9:32-11:30

1. The preparation of Peter, 9:32-10:23a
 2. The preaching of Peter, 10:23b-48
 3. The plea of Peter, 11:1-18
 4. The church at Antioch, 11:19-30
- D. The Christians Persecuted by Herod, 12:1-25
1. The death of James, 12:1-2
 2. The deliverance of Peter, 12:3-19a
 3. The death of Herod, 12:19b-23
 4. The dissemination of the Word, 12:24-25

III. Christianity to the Uttermost Part of the Word, 13:1-28:31

- A. The First Missionary Journey, 13:1-14:28
1. Events in Antioch, 13:1-3
 2. Events in Cyprus, 13:4-12
 3. Events in Galatian cities, 13:13-14:20
 4. Events on the return to Antioch, 14:21-28
- B. The Council at Jerusalem, 15:1-35
1. The dissension, 15:1-5
 2. The discussion, 15:6-18
 3. The decision, 15:19-29
 4. The letter delivered to Antioch, 15:30-35
- C. The Second Missionary Journey, 15:36-18:22
1. The personnel chosen, 15:36-40
 2. The churches revisited, 15:41-16:5
 3. The call to Europe, 16:6-10
 4. The work at Philippi, 16:11-40
 5. The work at Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens, 17:1-34
 6. The ministry at Corinth, 18:1-17
 7. The journey completed, 18:18-22
- D. The Third Missionary Journey, 18:23-21:26
1. Ephesus: The power of the Word, 18:23-19:41
 2. Greece, 20:1-6
 3. Asia Minor: Troas and the elders of Ephesus, 20:7-38
 4. From Miletus to Caesarea, 21:1-14
 5. Paul with the Jerusalem church, 21:15-26
- E. The Journey to Rome, 21:27-28:31
1. Paul's arrest and defense, 21:27-22:29
 2. Paul brought before the Sanhedrin, 22:30-23:10
 3. Paul escorted to Caesarea, 23:11-35
 4. Paul's defense before Felix, 24:1-27
 5. Paul's defense before Festus, 25:1-27
 6. Paul's defense before Agrippa, 26:1-32
 7. Paul's voyage and shipwreck, 27:1-44
 8. Paul in Malta and on to Rome, 28:1-16
 9. Paul in Rome, 28:17-31

Review Questions (Note: This material is for your edification. It will not be collected or corrected.)

1. Who wrote this book? To whom was it written? And about what time was it written? _____

2. From the life of Luke, we learn that Christians can be more than preachers. **True or False** From the content of this book, we learn that when persecution comes then God doesn't expect us to be witnesses for Him. **True or False**

3. What is the key idea being emphasized in this book, the key verse, and what is the source of the outline?
