

Baptist Basics University
Truth Must Be Preserved For Future Generations

The Book of Acts

Lecture Notes

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Lesson 1

Introduction to Acts

The best way to begin studying a book in the Bible is to look at the basics. Who wrote the book? What is its purpose? What is its place in the canon of Scripture? Before we begin going through the book of Acts, let's look at some of the details of the book.

I. Subject

- A. The actions of the Apostles after the Ascension of Christ
- B. History of the Early Church
- C. The Gospel taken from Jerusalem to the World - Acts 1:8 (KEY VERSE)

II. Author - Luke

- A. Physician from Antioch (according to tradition)
- B. Travelled with Paul (II Timothy 4:11, Philemon 24, Colossians 4:14)

III. Date

- A. Around 63 A.D.
- B. Covers about 30 years of history

IV. Outlines of Acts

- A. According to spread of Gospel (1:8)
 - 1. To Jerusalem - chapters 1-7
 - 2. To Judaea and Samaria - chapters 8-12
 - 3. To the Uttermost Parts - chapters 13-28
- B. According to Key Figures
 - 1. Peter, Church at Jerusalem, and Jews - chapters 1-12
 - 2. Paul, Church at Antioch, and Gentiles - chapters 13-28

V. Features of Acts

- A. Companion volume or sequel to the Gospel of Luke - 1:1
- B. Highly important as an historical document and glimpse into life at the time
- C. Takes place throughout Roman Empire
 - 1. 32 countries
 - 2. 54 cities
 - 3. 9 Mediterranean islands
- D. Despite being a book of "Acts", almost 20% of it is speeches/sermons

Lesson 2
Prelude to Pentecost
Acts 1:1-26

The first chapter of Acts fills us in on the events between the Resurrection of Christ and the day of Pentecost. This time period, about forty-eight days, was filled with much action. Christ Himself was present with the disciples for forty days after His Resurrection. This leaves only about a week between His Ascension and Pentecost.

I. Setting

- A. Jerusalem
- B. Between the Resurrection and Pentecost

II. Lesson

- A. From the Resurrection to the Ascension - vs. 1-14
 - 1. Continuing the narrative of the Gospel of Luke - vs. 1-2
 - 2. The proofs of the Resurrection - vs. 3
 - 3. Christ tells of the coming of the Spirit - vs. 4-5
 - 4. Disciples ask if the Millennial Kingdom was at hand - vs. 6
 - 5. It was not their concern - vs. 7
 - 6. The Power and the Mission - vs. 8
 - 7. The Ascension - vs. 9-12
 - 8. The Church in its infancy - vs. 13-14
- B. The Choice of Matthias
 - 1. Peter addresses the 120 gathered disciples - vs. 15
 - a. The prophecies about Judas - Psalm 41:9 - vs.16-17
 - b. The fate of Judas - vs. 18-19
 - c. More prophesies concerning Judas - Psalm 69:25 & 109:8 - vs. 20
 - 2. The requirements placed on Judas' replacements - vs. 21-22
 - 3. The two potential replacement - vs. 23
 - 4. The prayer for guidance - vs. 24-25
 - 5. The lots fall on Matthias - vs. 26
- C. Who was Matthias?
 - 1. Only mentioned in this passage
 - 2. Various traditions have him preaching in Europe or Africa
 - 3. Various traditions have him as a martyr or dying of old age
 - 4. Bottom line: we know basically nothing about him!
 - 5. Some consider the entire process to not have been God's will
 - 6. If anyone "replaced" Judas as an Apostle it was obviously Paul

Lesson 3
Pentecost
Acts 2:1-47

The disciples have followed the Lord's instruction and have been in Jerusalem awaiting the outpouring He promised. What happened there would change the course of human events, as the Apostles received the fulness of the Holy Spirit. The world would soon be turned upside down.

I. Setting

- A. Jerusalem
- B. Pentecost (Deuteronomy 16:9-12)
 - 1. Takes place on 6th of Sivan
 - 2. One of the three "pilgrimage feasts" with Passover and Feast of Tabernacles
 - 3. Called in Hebrew *Shavuot*, meaning *Weeks*
 - 4. Celebrated by giving of the First Fruits

II. Lesson

- A. The Outpouring of the Spirit
 - 1. The manifestation of the Spirit - vs. 1-4
 - 2. The miracle of tongues (languages) - vs. 5-11
 - 3. The varied opinions of the observers - vs. 12-13
- B. Peter's Sermon
 - 1. Defense of the miracle - vs. 14-15
 - 2. Fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 - vs. 16-21
 - 3. The ministry of Christ - vs. 22-24
 - 4. Christ is prophesied in Psalm 16:8-11 - vs. 25-28
 - 5. David as a prophet - vs. 29-31
 - 6. Christ ascended and exalted - vs. 32-33
 - 7. Better than David, seen in Psalm 110:1 - vs. 34-36
- C. The First Fruits of the Church Age
 - 1. The hearers are moved - vs. 37
 - 2. They are to repent - vs. 38-39
 - 3. Peter sermon summarized - vs. 40
 - 4. 3,000 saved and baptized - vs. 41
- D. The Church Described
 - 1. The character of the Christians - vs. 42-43
 - 2. The community of the Christians - vs. 44-45
 - 3. The continuation of the Christians - vs. 46-47

Lesson 4
Peter's Sermon at the Temple
Acts 3:1-26

The Church Age entered with a flourish at the Day of Pentecost. God was not through working, and the next couple of chapters set the tone for the rest of the book: evangelism, miracles, and persecution. In this lesson we will see Peter and John making quite a stir at the Temple after healing a lame beggar.

I. Setting

- A. Jerusalem
- B. After Pentecost, but necessarily soon.

II. Story

A. Healing the Lame Beggar

- 1. Peter and John enter the Temple at the evening sacrifice - vs. 1
- 2. The sad state of the beggar - vs. 2-3
- 3. The beggar is healed - vs. 4-7
- 4. The beggar's witness - vs. 8-11

B. Peter's Sermon

- 1. Peter draws in the crowd - vs. 12
- 2. Their guilt before God - vs. 13-15
- 3. The power of Christ in the healing - vs. 16
- 4. Ignorance is no excuse - vs. 17-18
- 5. The cure for their sin - vs. 19
- 6. The Second Coming of Christ - vs. 20-21
- 7. Moses prophesied of Christ - Deuteronomy 18:15,18-19 - vs. 22-23
- 8. Even more prophesies point to Christ - vs. 24
- 9. The special position of the Jews - vs. 25
- 10. "To the Jew first" - vs. 26

We leave off in the midst of the story here. In the next lesson we'll see the opposition sparked by the events we covered today.

Lesson 5
The First Persecution
Acts 4:1-30

The Church is only at most a couple of years old and has not faced any real opposition. Many Jews and Romans alike saw these followers of Christ as a new sect of the Judaism. The stir created at Pentecost did not seem to garner much attention. The stir created in the Temple in chapter 3 did bring more attention on the new group, including for the first recorded time opposition.

I. Setting

- A. Jerusalem
- B. Immediately following the events of chapter 3
- C. Perhaps a year or two after Pentecost

II. Story

- A. The Arrest of Peter and John - vs.1-4
 - 1. The cause: opposition to their teaching - vs. 1-2
 - 2. They were to be held overnight for trial the next day - vs. 3
 - 3. Regardless, many believed on Christ - vs. 4
- B. The Trial - vs. 5-12
 - 1. The “who’s who” of the accusers - vs. 5-6
 - 2. The interrogation - “By whose authority do you teach?” - vs. 7
 - 3. Peter declares it was through Christ - vs. 8-10
 - 4. The rejection prophesied in Psalm 118:22 - vs. 11
 - 5. The Supremacy of Christ - vs. 12
- C. The Verdict - vs. 13-22
 - 1. Their opinion of Peter and John - vs. 13
 - 2. They couldn’t deny the miracle - vs. 14
 - 3. The decision reached in conference - vs. 15-17
 - 4. The command to no longer teach - vs. 18
 - 5. Peter and John refuse to stop - vs. 19-20
 - 6. The disciples are released - vs. 21-22
- D. The Reaction - vs. 23-31
 - 1. Peter and John report back to the Church -vs. 23
 - 2. The Church’s view of the Persecution:
 - a. God was still in control - vs. 24
 - b. Persecution was prophesied - Psalm 2:2,6 - vs. 25-26
 - c. Christ was also persecuted - vs. 27
 - d. It was all part of God’s Will - vs. 28
 - e. The Church needed grace to continue - vs. 29-30

Lesson 6
The State of the Early Church
Acts 4:31-5:16

We pick up this lesson at the conclusion of the events of the previous. The young Church has faced its first opposition from without. In this lesson we will first see the character of the early Church, and then see its first internal problem.

I. Setting

- A. Picks up immediately following the previous lesson
- B. Jerusalem
- C. Perhaps a year or two after Pentecost

II. The Lesson

- A. The State of the Early Church - 4:31-37
 - 1. The power of the Church - vs. 31
 - 2. The closeness of the Church - vs. 32
 - 3. The mission and power of the Church - vs. 33
 - 4. The generosity of the Church - vs. 34-35
 - 5. The example of Barnabas - vs. 36-37
- B. Ananias and Sapphira - 5:1-11
 - 1. The devious plot - ch. 5:1-2
 - 2. Peter confronts Ananias - vs. 3-4
 - 3. Ananias expires - vs. 5-6
 - 4. Peter confronts Sapphira - vs. 7-10
 - 5. The Church learns from their example - vs. 11
- C. The Spread of the Church's Influence - vs.12-16
 - 1. The public ministry of the Apostles - vs. 12-13
 - 2. The result of their ministry - vs. 14
 - 3. The people acknowledging the power - vs. 15-16

Lesson 7
The Second Persecution
Acts 5:17-42

Interest in the Christians, or at least the healings performed by them, has reached a point where the Jewish rulers can no longer ignore the growing movement. In fact, Christianity's popularity is such that the rulers must move carefully lest the people rebel against them. They arrest the disciples and bring them to trial.

I. Setting

A. Jerusalem

B. Probably within months of the events of 5:1-16

II. Lesson

A. The Arrest and Short Imprisonment

1. The Apostles thrown into prison - vs. 17-18

2. An angel releases them - vs. 19-20

3. The priests prepare for the trial, but the defendants are missing - vs. 21-23

4. They realize the trouble they could be in - vs. 24

5. The Apostles arrested again - vs. 25-26

F. The Trial

1. Accusation: disobeying previous order - vs. 27-28

2. Response: obey God not men - vs. 29

3. They are witnesses of Christ - vs. 30-32

G. The Verdict

1. They wanted to kill them - vs. 33

2. The counsel of Gamaliel - vs. 34-35

a. The example of Theudas - vs. 36

b. The example of Judas (not to be confused with Iscariot) - vs. 37

c. Counsel: Leave them alone and God will deal with them - vs.38-39

3. Disciples beaten and again commanded to silence - vs. 40

H. The Reaction

1. The Apostles rejoiced - vs. 41

2. The Apostles continued preaching - vs. 42

Lesson 8
The First Deacons
Acts 6:1-15

The church has grown to a point that the Apostles are struggling to keep up with the demands of the ministry. This practical problem leads to the appointment of the first deacons. We will see a glimpse of their ministry before beginning the story of the martyrdom of Stephen.

I. Setting

- A. Jerusalem
- B. Church is estimated to have 25,000 members
- C. Perhaps three years after Pentecost

II. Story

A. The Problem - (vs. 1-4)

- 1. Some complain that the “Grecians” (foreign-born Jews) were neglected - vs. 1
- 2. The Apostles see that they need to delegate the solution - vs. 2
- 3. The Church is to choose seven deacons - vs. 3
- 4. The Apostles then continue their ministry - vs. 4

B. The Solution - (vs. 5-8)

- 1. The deacons chosen- vs. 5
- 2. The deacons ordained - vs. 6
- 3. The work of the church grows with their help - vs. 7
- 4. The growing ministry of Stephen - vs. 8

C. The Path to Stephen’s Martyrdom - (vs. 9-15)

- 1. Stephen debates in synagogue - vs. 9
- 2. Stephen persuades many to Christianity - vs. 10
- 3. Bribed men bring false charges - vs. 11
- 4. Stephen is brought to trial - vs. 12
- 5. The charge: blasphemy - vs. 13-14
- 6. Stephen is set to give his defense - vs. 15

We will take leave in the mid-story. In the next lesson we will hear Stephen’s sermon and witness his martyrdom. We will also see our first glimpse of a key figure in Acts and in the history of Christianity: Paul.

Lesson 9
The First Martyr
Acts 7:1-60

The church has been growing more popular and powerful with each passing day. The Jewish rulers could not sit by for much longer without taking drastic action. They found their opportunity when the newly appointed deacon Stephen stirred a local synagogue into a frenzy. Put on trial before a hostile crowd, Stephen's bold witness leads to his place in sacred history as the first Christian martyr.

I. Setting

- A. Jerusalem
- B. 34 A.D.???
- C. Continuation of events of 6:9-15
- D. Longest sermon/speech in Acts

II. Story

- A. The high priest examines Stephen - vs. 1
- B. Stephen's Sermon - vs. 2-53
 - 1. The History of Israel - vs. 2-50
 - a. Israel's origins - vs. 2-8
 - b. Israel into Egypt - vs. 9-16
 - c. Israel out of Egypt - vs. 17-36
 - d. Israel was rebellious from the beginning - vs. 37-44
 - e. Israel was rebellious in the place of God's blessing - vs. 45-50
 - 2. Pointing out the sin of Israel - vs. 51-53
- C. The crowd is enraged against Stephen - vs. 54
- D. Stephen's Theophany - vs. 55-56
 - 1. Saw it - vs. 55
 - 2. Said it - vs. 56
- E. The mob stones Stephen, Paul present and consenting - vs. 57-58
- F. The death of Stephen - vs. 59-60

Lesson 10
The Ministry of Philip - Part I
Acts 8:1-25

The growth of the Christian movement is only matched by its growing opposition. The persecution is only fanning the flames of the movement. We also see the growing number of leaders in the church, as evidenced by the ministry of Philip.

I. Setting

- A. Samaria - our first departure from Jerusalem
- B. Soon after the death of Stephen

II. Lesson

A. The Persecution

- 1. The church is scattered - vs. 1
- 2. Stephen is memorialized - vs. 2
- 3. The wrath of Saul - vs. 3-4

B. Philip and Simon the Sorcerer

- 1. The great revival in Samaria - vs. 5-8
- 2. Enter Simon - vs. 9-11
- 3. Simon joins with the Christians - vs. 12-13
- 4. Peter and John visit Samaria - vs. 14
- 5. The Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit - vs. 15-17
- 6. Simon seeks to purchase this power - vs. 18-19
- 7. Peter rebukes Simon for the offer - vs. 20-21
- 8. Simon needs to repent - vs. 22-23
- 9. Simon does, kind of - vs. 24
- 10. The continued work of evangelizing Samaria - vs. 25

Lesson 11
The Ministry of Philip - Part II
Acts 8:26-40

We now come to one of the more famous episodes in the Book of Acts. The Holy Spirit brings Philip to witness to a visitor from Ethiopia. God went to quite a bit of trouble to get the Gospel to that man. Church history tells us that he returned to Ethiopia and established Christianity there.

I. Setting

- A. On road between Jerusalem and Gaza
- B. Still around 34 A.D.

II. Lesson

- A. Philip commanded to go to the Gaza road - vs. 26
- B. He meets an Ethiopian eunuch - vs. 27-28
 - 1. Ethiopia - kingdom of Kush, capital is Meroe
 - 2. Candace - queen Amanitare (reigned A.D. 25-41)
 - 3. Treasurer
 - 4. Most likely a Jewish proselyte
- C. Philip approaches - vs. 29-31
- D. He was reading Isaiah 53:7,8 - vs. 32-33
- E. Philip preaches Christ - vs. 34-35
- F. The Eunuch wants to be baptized - vs. 36
- G. The requirement of baptism - vs. 37
- H. The Eunuch is baptized - vs. 38
- I. The Spirit takes Philip - vs. 39
- J. He preaches up the coast of Israel - vs. 40

III. Epilogue

- A. First recorded salvation of non-Jewish believer
- B. Does not count as a Gentile because he was a proselyte
- C. Tradition states that he brought the Gospel to Ethiopia

Lesson 12
The Conversion of Saul
Acts 9:1-25

Lesson 13
Peter and Paul
Acts 9:26-43

Lesson 14
Peter and Cornelius - Part I
Acts 10:1-22

Lesson 15
Peter and Cornelius - Part II
Acts 10:23-48

Lesson 16
The Gospel and the Gentiles
Acts 11:1-30

Lesson 17

Herod and Peter

Acts 12:1-24

Lesson 18

The First Missionary Journey - Part I

Acts 12:25-13:52

Lesson 19

The First Missionary Journey - Part II

Acts 14:1-28

Lesson 20
The Gentile Controversy
Acts 15:1-35

Lesson 21

The Second Missionary Journey - Part I

Acts 15:36-16:15

Lesson 22

The Second Missionary Journey - Part II

Acts 16:16-40

Lesson 23

The Second Missionary Journey - Part III

Acts 17:1-34

Lesson 24

The Second Missionary Journey - Part IV

Acts 18:1-22

Lesson 25

The Third Missionary Journey - Part I

Acts 18:24-19:41

Lesson 26

The Third Missionary Journey - Part II

Acts 20:1-38

Lesson 27

The Third Missionary Journey - Part III

Acts 21:1-36

Lesson 28

Paul and the Jews - Part I

Acts 21:37-22:30

Lesson 29
Paul and the Jews - Part II
Acts 23:1-35

Lesson 30

Paul and the Jews - Part III

Acts 24:1-27

Lesson 31
Paul and the Jews - Part IV
Acts 25:1-27

Lesson 32
Paul and the Jews - Part V
Acts 26:1-32

Lesson 33

The Journey to Rome - Part I

Acts 27:1-44

Lesson 34

The Journey to Rome - Part II

Acts 28:1-31

Lesson 35

The Rest of the Story