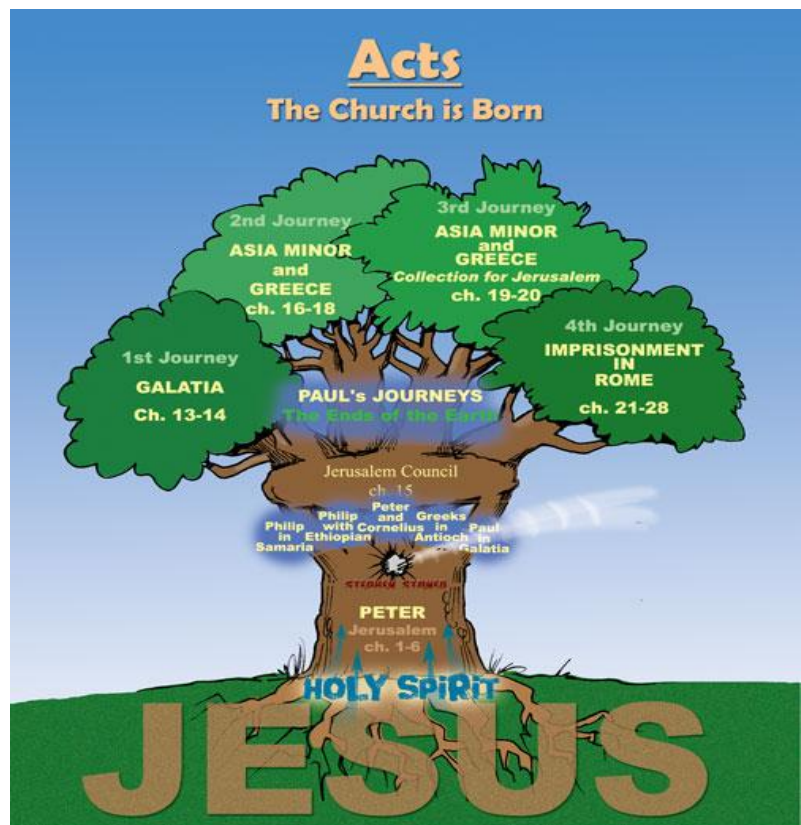
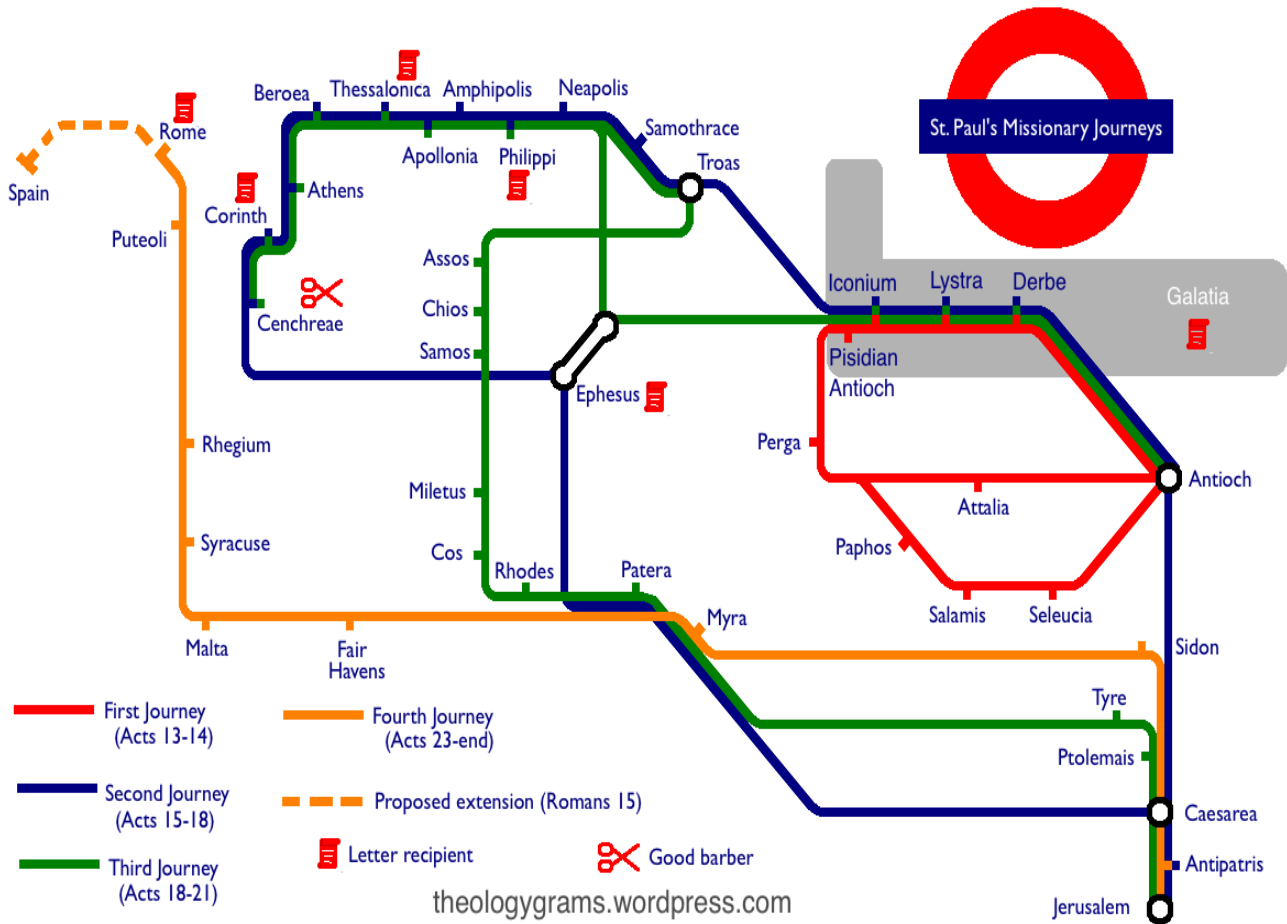


**Danville Road church of Christ
Young Adult Bible Class
January-March 2015**

Class Schedule

The Acts of the Apostles

	Introduction To Acts and Acts 1
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3	Acts 3
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16	Acts 16:1-17:9
17	Acts 17:10-18:23
19	Acts 18:23-19:41
20	Acts 20:1-21:14
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22	Acts 23
23	Acts 24
24	Acts 25
25	Acts 26
26	Acts 27 and 28



The Acts of the Apostles

Introduction

Although not specifically stated in the book, internal evidences and tradition point to Luke as the author of the Acts. It was probably written around the year A.D. 63 as a companion to the Gospel of Luke. The book might be more appropriately named “Some of the Acts of a few of the Apostles” as it centers on the works of Peter (1-12) and Paul (13-28). It was addressed to Theophilus whose name means “*lover of God*”. There is some debate as to whether Theophilus was a specific individual or a reference to all believers. Acts encompasses a period of about 33 years, from the ascension of Christ in A.D. 30 to Paul’s imprisonment in Rome (c. A.D. 63).

In the book of Acts the beginning of the church and its expansion as Jesus predicts “*to Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth*” 1:8 is recorded. A greater part of the book revolves around a detailed history of cases of conversion as well as unsuccessful attempts at the conversion of sinners. In the book we see the Holy Spirit guiding the Apostles into “*all truth*” as Jesus had prophesied (John 14:25, 16:13). When this truth is preached and obeyed it gives salvation, produces Christians and adds people to the church.

One of the main themes of the preaching found in the book is the resurrection of Jesus. The apostles knew that without the resurrection of Jesus our faith would be in vain (I Cor. 15:14-19). The unbelieving Jews and *intellectual* Gentiles on the other hand, ridiculed the idea of the resurrection.

As we study the book let us focus on the elements of Christianity as it was first practiced. We will do well to emulate their example.

Outline

Work in Jerusalem 1-7

Samaria, 8

Conversion of Saul, 9

Cornelius, 10-11

1st Missionary Journey, 13-14

Conference in Jerusalem, 15

2nd Missionary Journey, 16:1-18:22

3rd Missionary Journey, 18:23-21:14

Paul’s arrest, accusations, his defense, 21:15-26:32

Journey to Rome 27-28

Chronology of Acts

The following is an approximate chronology of Acts according to Haley's Bible Handbook:

Formation of the church in Jerusalem - Acts 2	A.D. 30
Stoning of Stephen, dispersion of the church - Acts 7, 8	A.D. 31 or 32
Conversion of Saul - Acts 9	A.D. 31 or 32
Paul's visit to Jerusalem after conversion	A. D. 34 or 35
Conversion of Cornelius - Acts 10	between A.D. 35 and 40
Reception of Gentiles at Antioch - Acts 11	A.D. 42
Paul's first missionary journey - Acts 13 and 14	A.D. 45-48
Council at Jerusalem - Acts 15	A.D. 50
Paul's second missionary journey - Acts 16, 17 and 18	A.D. 50-53
Paul's third missionary journey – Acts 19 and 20	A.D. 54-57
Paul reaches Jerusalem – Acts 20:16	A.D. 58
Paul in Caesarea – Acts 24, 25 and 26	A.D. 58-60
Paul's voyage to Rome – Acts 27 and 28	A.D. 60-61
Paul in Rome, 2 years – Acts 28:30	A.D. 61-63

Roman Emperors

Augustus	31 B.C. - 14 A.D.	Luke 2:1
Tiberius	14 -37 A.D.	Luke 3:1
Caligula	37-41 A.D.	
Claudius	41-54 A.D.	Acts 11:28, 18:2
Nero	54-68 A.D.	

Acts 1

Overview – Jesus ascends into heaven, a replacement for Judas is chosen.

There is some overlap between the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. Verses 1-11 correspond to Luke 24:50-52. Jesus appeared after His resurrection for 40 days. Ten or eleven post-resurrection appearances of Jesus are recorded in the gospels.

Questions

1. How are the proofs that Jesus is the Son of God described in v.3?
2. Why were the Apostles to wait in Jerusalem?
3. In verse 6, the Apostles are still asking about the re-establishment of the earthly Israel. When do they finally begin to understand the true nature of the kingdom?
4. What does verse 11 indicate about Jesus' 2nd coming?
5. In verse 14, Jesus' brothers are numbered among the disciples. What happened to change their attitudes from that of John 7:1-5?
6. Why was someone chosen to take Judas' place?
7. Explain the apparent difference in the accounts of Judas' death in Acts 1:18 and Matt. 27:1-5.
8. What were the qualifications of the person to take Judas' place? Vs. 21,22.
9. How would these qualifications prevent others from assuming this office in the future?
10. How was Matthias chosen? Was this by chance?

Lessons

1. God always fulfills His promises.
2. Wait on the Lord.

Acts 2

Overview - Day of Pentecost, Apostles are baptized with the Holy Spirit, the first gospel sermon, 3000 added to the church.

Keys To Understanding- Pentecost was one of the three feast days observed by Jews. They came to Jerusalem from many parts of the world for these feasts. This particular Pentecost was 50 days after the Passover when Jesus was crucified. "The third hour of the day" was 9:00 a.m. Jesus had told the Apostles in John 14:25 and 16:13 that the Father was going to send the Holy Spirit to help them. They probably had little understanding of this promise until this day.

Questions

1. What does it mean to speak with "other tongues"?
2. How many nationalities were represented in vs. 9-11?
3. How did the skeptics try to discredit what was going on?
4. What arguments did Peter use to re-establish credibility with the listeners? What is the importance of Peter saying that all should believe that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ? (vs.36).

Study Question: "The gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38 in the original language is ambiguous, we are left with the task of discerning what best fits the parallel passages we have that might shed some helpful light. Consider John 7:37-39; Acts 5:29-32; Rom. 8:1-27; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; Gal. 3:2; 5:22-23; Eph. 1:13-14; 3:14-19; 1 John 4:12-13. Based on those passages, what seems to be the best understanding of Acts 2:38?

Questions Concerning Salvation

1. What did Joel say one must do to be saved (vs.21)
2. What did Peter say believers should do "for the remission (forgiveness) of sins" (vs.38)
Note: Peter here explains how to "call on the name of the Lord." See also Acts 22:16 and Matthew 7:21.
3. According to Acts 2:38,41,47 how were people being saved/added to the church? - What is the importance of being added to the church?

Questions Concerning The Church At Jerusalem

1. In Acts 2:42 "the apostles' teaching" or "doctrine is mentioned." What is this teaching? How important was it to be fully "devoted" to this teaching? (see 2 John 9).
2. The disciples were "devoted" to "fellowship" (Acts 2:42). What is fellowship? What kinds of things did this diverse body of believers from all over the world now have in common?

Thought Question: Fellowship and spending time together regularly to deepen relationships and serve one another is a significant challenge facing the church – especially in larger churches of heavily populated areas. Work schedules, the pull of entertainment, and the sheer volume of various activities can severely undermine community. The result is that believers sometimes feel disconnected, uncared for, and unloved. Many Christians even see "church" as something that you "do" only once a week. What steps can be taken to develop more true fellowship among believers?

3. They "devoted themselves" to "the breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42). What should we make of this phrase?
4. Can a 21st century group of people with different backgrounds, experiences, opinions and ideas enjoy that same kind of unity? If so, how? (See Acts 2:46-47, Eph 4:1-16)

Acts 3

Overview- A lame man is healed, the 2nd gospel sermon

Peter and John heal a lame man and use the opportunity to preach to the people. The man that was healed had been lame from birth and the people knew this to be the case. Josephus, the Jewish historian, described this gate, which separated the inner court from the outer Court of the Gentiles on the east, as the gate that “greatly excelled those that were only covered over with silver and gold.” This gate was about 75 feet high and its huge double doors would have been opened wide at this hour to accommodate the foot traffic.

Questions

1. Why were Peter and John going up to the temple?
2. What means of support did the infirmed have during this time?
3. Describe the miracle. How long did it take him to be healed? What percentage cured was he?
4. What was the purpose of this miracle?
5. How did Peter launch into a sermon?
6. What did Peter tell them to do in v. 19? Is this different than what the people were told in 2:38?
7. What does Peter say about Pilate’s role in the crucifixion in v. 13?
8. What was the Jews' role in the crucifixion? vs. 13-17.
9. How did Peter describe the prophesies about Jesus?

Lessons

1. First century miracles served a specific purpose, although for a limited time.
2. The Bible is unified in its message.

Acts 4

Overview- Peter and John are arrested because of their preaching, accusations against them and their defense; sharing amongst the early Christians.

1. On this occasion, the Jewish rulers are "greatly disturbed" (4:2) by the preaching of Peter. What was so disturbing about Peter's preaching? What prevented the Jewish rulers from punishing Peter and John?

2. Peter's defense to the Sanhedrin (4:8-12) is his third speech recorded in Acts. What are the common elements in Peter's speeches on Pentecost, in the temple, and before the Sanhedrin?

3. Take special note of Peter's response in *Acts 4:11-12*. He claims that their rejection of Jesus is a fulfillment of *Psalms 118:22*. By appealing to this passage, Peter follows the lead of Jesus Himself (*Matthew 21:42-46*). The force of this rebuke is clear when we realize that the scribes were described as "builders" in ancient Jewish literature. But what is a "cornerstone"? Of what, and in what way, is Jesus "the cornerstone"?

4. What two things were (are) accomplished by the name of Jesus?

Thought Question: Why were healing miracles so appropriate and hence, so often done by Jesus and the apostles as compared to other miracles which could have been done?

5. The response of Peter and John to the Sanhedrin's demands was, "For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (4:20). Take a moment to reflect on the things that you have "seen" and "heard" as a disciple of Christ. Which of those things could have an impact on others around you if you served as a faithful witness of God's working in your life? Are you willing to speak up about those things? If not, why not?

6. Luke begins with a beautiful description of unity – "Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32). In your own words, what would it mean to be "of one heart"? and "of one soul"? (John 17:20-21.)

7. Acts 4:32-35 summarizes the spirit of the early disciples in Jerusalem. a. Compare this section with 2:42-47. List the similarities. b. Were the disciples compelled to give up their property or did they simply do it out of love for their fellow disciples?

"The Sadducees" (4:1) – making several appearances in the Gospels, this was a wealthy group of politically influential Jews, many of whom were priests. Later, in *Acts 23:8*, Luke tells us that the Sadducees refused to accept the belief in a future resurrection of the dead. The apostles' preaching about Jesus' resurrection was obnoxious to them.

The three groups of officials mentioned in *Acts 4:5* made up the body called "the Sanhedrin." The Sanhedrin was the high court of the Jews. It was composed of 70 people plus the high priest, who presided over the council. Although Palestine was ultimately under the control of the Romans, the emperor had granted the Jews a great deal of self-governing power. The Sanhedrin was essentially a senate that directly governed the eleven districts of Judea. But the decisions of the Sanhedrin carried substantial weight for Jews scattered throughout the Mediterranean world. It was the final board for deciding on matters connected with Jewish law.

Annas (4:6) retired from the high priesthood some twenty years earlier and bore the title "high priest" only in an honorary sense. Nevertheless, his age, experience, and family associations gave him significant personal authority. Annas became high priest in A.D. 6 and served in that capacity for nine years. He played a significant role in the trial of Jesus (*John 18:12-14, 19-24*).

Caiaphas (4:6) became high priest in A.D. 18 and was able to retain his position for nineteen years. He was the son-in-law of Annas (*John 18:13*). As high priest, he not only officiated at the Temple, but served as president of the Sanhedrin and as the political head of the Jewish nation.

Acts 5

Overview- Ananias and Sapphira try to deceive the Holy Spirit; Apostles are arrested and freed.

At the end of Chapter 4 the disciples gave of their means to support those who were in need. This was not done by force or compulsion but rather out of love for the brethren. In Chapter 5 we see how this opportunity to help others was perverted and what happened as a result.

Questions

1. What was wrong with Ananias and Sapphira's actions?
2. Why were they punished by death? Any parallels between this and Nadab and Abihu in Lev. 10?
3. Were they required to do as Christians?
4. What happened among the disciples when Ananias and Sapphira died?
5. What does the phrase "yet none of the rest dared join them" mean in verse 13?
6. Discuss the miracles recorded in verses 12-16.
7. Why were the Sadducees disturbed by their preaching? See Acts 23:6-8 & Mt. 22:23-33
8. Compare v. 28 with Matthew 27:25.
9. What do you think of Gamaliel's advice? Particularly v. 39?
10. Why did the apostles rejoice when they suffered for Jesus?

Lessons

1. Suffering as a Christian is to be expected.
2. Suffering as a Christian is a privilege.
3. *"We ought to obey God rather than men" v. 29*

Acts 6

Overview- Problem surrounding the care of Grecian widows, Stephen is introduced.

1. In Acts 6:1 we find Luke's first use of the word "*disciples*" to describe the followers of Jesus. What is a disciple and what are we implying as we describe ourselves as disciples of Christ?

2. Considering human nature, what would've been the easy thing to do if you were one of the Hellenists whose widows were being neglected?

3. It's hard to imagine the workload of the apostles in these early days of the church. They were responsible for teaching and ministering to thousands of people. On top of all that, problems often must have surfaced that required their attention, time and wisdom. With such a busy schedule, it certainly would've been very easy to let their devotion "*to prayer and the to the ministry of the word*" slip. What can you and I as modern disciples learn from their important realization?

4. In Acts 6:2, the verb translated "serve" is diakonein from which we derive diakonoi ("deacons" meaning to serve as in Mark 10:45, and more formally in Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13 as a office of the local church)

Building on these passages, what function should deacons serve in the health and growth of a modern local church?

5. Looking carefully at Acts 6:3-6, there seems to be a clear process that was followed to resolve the practical issue: In our own day and age, looking as a local church to have elders and deacons as God intended, is there anything we should take away from this example of selection and appointment?

6. In your own words, summarize the qualifications given by the apostles:

- "Men of good repute" –
- "Full of the Spirit" –
- "Full of wisdom" –

7. What is the significance of priests being converted? What is the significance of the phrase "obedient to the faith" (6:7)?

8. What do you make of Luke's summary in Acts 6:10?

9. Looking at Acts 6:11-14, can you summarize the basic charges brought by the Jews against Stephen? What did they hope to gain with these charges?

10. As you read those charges, do they sound familiar? Who else had been falsely charged in much the same way? (Matthew 26:57; Mark 14:53)

"Hellenists" – describes Greek speaking Jews. Jews who were raised in Palestine typically spoke Aramaic, the dominant language of the Near East for centuries even before the time of Christ. Many Jews in Palestine, especially in Jerusalem and Judea, continued to use Hebrew as well. But many Jews raised outside of Palestine would have spoken Greek, having never learned Hebrew. When they settled in Jerusalem, these "Hellenists" would have enjoyed meeting together in synagogues where the reading of Scripture, prayers and conversation were in Greek. When we remember how Samaritans and foreigners were regarded by many within Hebrew communities (John 4:9; 8:48; Mark 7:24-30), it's not hard to imagine Jewish prejudice toward those who had grown up with Grecian ideals and customs. They were regarded as "less than holy" at best by many. Perhaps some of these old feelings are in the background of this present dispute.

"They prayed and laid their hands on them" – at times, the laying on of hands was for the purpose of bestowing supernatural spiritual gifts. A miraculous measure of the Spirit was given to brethren through the laying on of apostolic hands (Acts 8:14-19; 19:6). However, the laying on of hands was also a customary practice when someone was about to undertake an important work, signifying endorsement and support (Numbers 27:18-23). It was for this reason that the Christians in Antioch laid their hands on Paul and Barnabas when they sent them out to preach (Acts 13:3).

Acts 7

Overview- Stephen's sermon, Stephen is stoned.

Stephen turns the Jews' accusations against him into an opportunity to preach. He recounts several stories from the Jews' past. Stoning was the Jewish method of capital punishment. See Num. 15:36; Josh. 7:25; I Kings 21:13, 14.

Questions

1. From 6:13-15, what were the charges brought against Stephen?
2. On what O.T. characters does Stephen concentrate in his narrative?
3. What does Stephen stress in his story about Moses?
4. What is he trying to get them to realize?
5. At what point in his discourse does his audience turn violent?
6. What is the difference in being "cut to the heart" in 2:37 and 7:54?
7. For what offence did the Jews stone Stephen?
8. Why did they take matters into their own hands here and not in the killing of Jesus?
9. Why would Stephen ask that these Jews not be held accountable for this sin? See Luke 23:34
10. Explain what is meant by "gnashed at him with their teeth" in verse 54.

Lessons

1. Christians need to seize opportunities to preach the gospel.
2. Many Christians have suffered through no fault of their own.
3. Christians must have a forgiving attitude towards their persecutors.

Acts 8

Overview- Phillip preaches to the city of Samaria and to the Ethiopian.

1. One of the principal leaders in this flare-up of persecution is Saul of Tarsus. Later on, this man admits in his letters “how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it” (Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6). Luke uses “ravaging” in Acts 8:3, a vivid word typically used to describe the devastation caused by wild beasts (lions, wild boars, wolves, etc). Acts 26:9-11 describes, in Saul’s own words, just how far he was willing to go. But why would he do such a thing?
2. “Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ” (Acts 8:4-5). The Greek term Luke uses can be translated in a simple and straight-forward way: “evangelizing” – literally, “announcing good news.” In your own words, what does it mean to “announce the good news of the word” to someone? What about to “proclaim the Christ”?
3. Note Acts 8:12: Can we glean anything from this account as to who was expected to be baptized?
4. Carefully read Acts 8:14-19 and then revisit Acts 2:38. What were people commanded to do in Acts 2 to “receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”? After comparing Acts 8, would you say this context is speaking of the same “gift”? If not, what is it describing and what can we learn?
5. As you carefully read the story of Simon the magician (8:9-24), is there anything that would prove Simon was once in a saved condition? What should the erring disciple of Christ do in order to reestablish a pure heart before God? (1 John 1:9-10)
6. Before His ascension, Jesus said that the disciples would be witness to “the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The simple conversion story of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39) marks an enormous stride forward toward the fulfillment of this goal. To Greeks and Romans, Ethiopia was at “the ends of the earth.” Take the time to carefully read the account and make a list of the elements necessary for the eunuch’s salvation.
7. What is the value of Philip’s asking “Do you understand what you are reading?” (Acts 8:30)
8. Can we infer anything from this account about the nature of baptism as the Bible describes it?
9. One of the obvious topics we are paying special attention to in the early part of *Acts* is the question of what people did to become Christians? What do we learn from *Acts 8* that can help us answer that question?

Personal Challenge: Acts 8 is a wonderful illustration of what can happen when disciples of Christ speak up from the “abundance” of a fully-devoted heart (Matthew 12:34). Take a moment for some honest inventory.

What is keeping you from “evangelizing” just as these saints did? Spend some time in faith-filled prayer to God this week. Seek His help. Ask for open doors of opportunity.

“He had come to Jerusalem to worship” – this would have been an incredible journey to undertake. If the eunuch had covered an average of 25 miles per day, the trip to Jerusalem would have taken anywhere from 48-60 days and round trip, 96-120 days. The journey would have been considerably longer if he stopped for any length of time in the cities along the way.

The Samaritans viewed themselves as Israelites, true remnants of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. They kept the rite of circumcision, regularly observed the Sabbath and the Jewish festivals, and honored Moses as the greatest of the prophets. Jews, however, viewed Samaritans as “half breeds” – descendants of Mesopotamian (Gentile) colonists who settled in the area and intermarried with the Jews remaining there after the Jewish exile by Assyria (2 Kings 17:24-41). Not only did Jews prohibit intermarriage with Samaritans, but they did not even allow a Samaritan to convert to Judaism. John summarizes the situation well when he says, “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” (John 4:9).

Acts 9

Overview- The conversion of Saul. Peter raises Dorcas.

A major turning point in the history of the church is the conversion of Saul. Up until this point Saul had been the biggest persecutor of Christians. Beginning in Chapter 13 Saul (later Paul) is the focal point of the book of Acts.

Questions

1. How is the church described in v. 2?
2. What does "kick against the goads" mean?
3. Why did God pick someone like Saul to be a "chosen vessel"?
4. Thought question: What was going through Saul's mind for these three days?
5. Why was Ananias reluctant to go and teach Saul?
6. Why did Ananias call Saul "brother" before he was baptized?
7. How did Saul "prove that Jesus was the Christ" in verse 22?
8. What happened when Saul tried to join the brethren in Jerusalem?
9. Were they justified in being wary of Saul? Discuss the difference between "*proving all things*" (I Thess. 5:21) and " *...bears all things, hopes all things, believes all things, endures all things.*" (I Cor 13:7)
10. What was the result of Peter's healing of Aeneas? Of raising Dorcas?

Lessons

1. No sin or any person is too bad for God to forgive.
2. God can use anyone in His service.
3. Trust in God when you are frightened.
4. Give people the benefit of a doubt.

Acts 10

Overview- The conversion of Cornelius.

- Caesarea was the Roman capital of Palestine and military headquarters of the province.

Questions

1. As you read Luke's description of Cornelius in Acts 10:1- 2, how would you describe him, in your own words?
2. Do you remember the promises of Jesus in Matthew 16:13-20? In our study of Acts we have read of disciples like John, Barnabas, Stephen and Philip. In fact, there is evidence that Philip had actually settled in Caesarea (8:40; 21:8). Why, then, was Cornelius specifically instructed to seek out "Simon who is called Peter"? (Acts 10:3-8)
3. According to Cornelius' account of this incident, the angel of God told him that Peter would declare to him "a message" by which he would be saved (11:13-14). It's noteworthy that the angel did not tell Cornelius what to do to be saved. An angel was involved in the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, but specifically directed Philip to proclaim the message (8:26-40). Even when Jesus himself appeared to Saul, he did not tell Saul what to do to be saved. Rather, he brought Saul into contact with Ananias (9:6,10-17; 22:16). Is there a practical lesson we should learn from these accounts?
4. Read Luke's description of Peter's vision in Acts 10:9-16. It's easy to understand how Peter would have been "inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean" (10:17). What was God's point and how did this vision even tie into what God was asking Peter to do?
5. The Holy Spirit tells Peter to "rise and go down and accompany [Cornelius' messengers] without hesitation" (10:20). That same phrase is translated "waver" (Romans 4:20), "doubts" (Romans 14:23) and "doubting" (James 1:6) in other contexts. Why would Peter "hesitate" to follow the Lord's instructions?
6. In Acts 10:26, when Cornelius had fallen at Peter's feet and begun worshiping him, "Peter lifted him up, saying, 'Stand up; I too am a man.'" How have some men with far less authority than Peter forgotten that principle of reverence?
7. As you read Acts 10:34-43, how would you summarize Peter's message?
8. What we read in Acts 10:44-46 is of supreme importance.
 - In your own words, what happened?
 - Just as important, why did it happen?
 - How was this outpouring of the Holy Spirit different from anything Peter had ever seen?
 - Finally, very practically speaking, what does Acts 10:47-48 teach us—even 2,000 years later— about salvation?

"A centurion" was a commander of a "century" in the Roman army—that is, he was over 100 men. A "cohort" was a tenth part of a "legion." A Roman legion consisted of 6,000 men. This particular cohort was made up of soldiers from Italy.

Acts 11

Overview- Peter defends preaching to Cornelius, a Gentile. Antioch becomes a center for evangelism.

After Peter recounts his experience with Cornelius the scene shifts to Antioch of Syria. At this time Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire after Rome itself and Alexandria of Egypt.

Questions

1. What did those of "the circumcision" accuse Peter of in v. 3? What did this imply concerning preaching the Gospel to them?
2. What made these Jews think they could call Peter, the "chief apostle", out on this matter?
3. Was it wise of Peter to take fellow Jewish Christians with him to Cornelius' house?
4. What point(s) did Peter make that proved that God now allowed Gentiles to be saved?
5. What is the only other instance of baptism by the Holy Spirit?
6. What was one of the results of the killing of Stephen? v. 19
7. How would you describe the work of Barnabus in 4:36, 37; 9:27 and in 11:22-26?
8. What is the significance of disciples now being called Christians? How many times is the word Christian(s) used in the New Testament?
9. What was the work of 1st century prophets?
10. What was the 1st century pattern whereby Christians in one area helped out those in another area?

Lessons

1. One of the most important works of a Christian is to encourage others.
2. We should never feel offended when asked to defend or explain a position we hold.

Acts 12

Overview- The Apostle James is killed by Herod. Peter is imprisoned and miraculously freed.

1. In Acts 12:1-2, Luke tells us of the death of the first apostle (other than Judas) – James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John. Take the time to go back and read Matthew 4:18-22 and 20:20-23.

What was this “cup” James shared with Christ?

2. Combining Acts 12:2 with Deuteronomy 13:12- 15, what most likely was the charge against James?

3. Reading Acts 12:4, it’s evident that Peter was in the “maximum security wing” of Agrippa’s prison. A “squad” consisted of four soldiers each. Why so many soldiers? Perhaps rereading Acts 5:17-20 will help your answer.

4. In Acts 12:5 we find the church engaged in “earnest prayer” for Peter. Our English word earnest relates to an ancient Greek medical term (ektenes), describing the stretching of a muscle to its limits.

The same word is used to describe Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane (Luke 22:44). - In your own words, what is “earnest” prayer?

5. Christians may have regularly assembled at "the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark" (12:12). In any case, Peter went to her house and found many disciples there. He told them to tell "James and the brethren" (12:17). Which James is this?

6. In Acts 12:20-23, Luke documents the striking death of Herod Agrippa I. Josephus, the Jewish historian, also describes the occasion:

“He put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of wonderful contexture, and early in the morning came into the theater place of the shows and games, at which time the silver of his garment, being illuminated by the first reflection of the sun’s rays upon it, shone after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently on him...he did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery...A severe pain arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. And when he was quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, in the 54th year of his age, and the 7th year of his reign” (Antiquities XIX, viii, 2).

What should we learn from this account?

7. What interesting point does Luke seem to make by mentioning the continued growth of the church in verse 24 after telling of the death of Herod in verse 23?

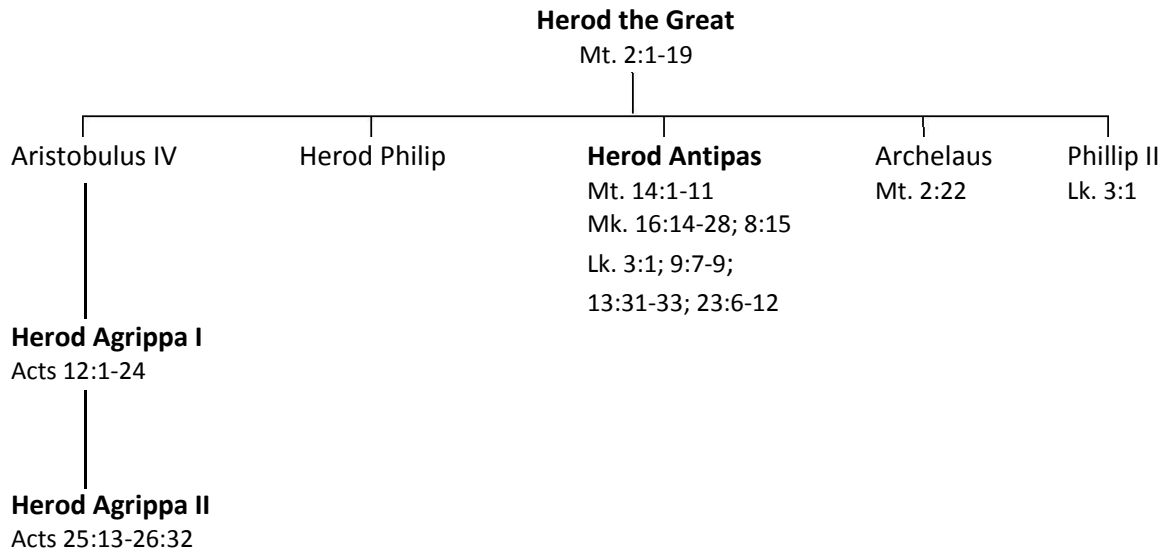
See next page for a short summary of the different "Herod's" that are mentioned in the New Testament.

Herods in the New Testament

The name Herod is mentioned several times in the New Testament. There are three different rulers in and around Palestine in the first century that are referred to by this name in the New Testament. The first is commonly known as *Herod the Great* and was the person responsible for the killing of innocent children as cited in Matthew 2:1-19. This should not be too surprising considering that he killed several of his own children due to his paranoia. Herod the Great came to power in Judea around the year 36 or 37 B.C and ruled to about 4 B.C. He was a Hasmonean or Idumean which means that he was from the area south of Judah, an area once known as Edom.

Upon Herod the Great's death his kingdom was divided to three of his sons by Augustus. Herod Antipas received the provinces of Galilee and Perea. This is the Herod who married his brother Phillip's wife. He succumbed to his wife's treachery and had John the Baptist beheaded and was involved in the trial of Jesus. Philip was given the rule over Trachonitis and Iturea while Archelaus ruled over Judea, Samaria and Idumea from 4 B.C. until 6 A.D. Archelaus' reign was cut short by Augustus due to the numerous complaints by his subjects. After Archelaus was forced to step down Judea was ruled by Roman prefects such as Pontius Pilate.

Herod Agrippa I is the Herod in Acts 12. He was the son of Aristobulus IV. Paul preaches to his son, Herod Agrippa II, in Acts 25 and 26.



Acts 13

Overview- Paul's first missionary journey.

The Holy Spirit directs the church at Antioch to separate Barnabus and Saul for special work. They begin a series of "missionary journeys" as they are commonly called to begin to evangelize other areas. The first place that Paul and Barnabus go is the island of Cyprus, possibly because Barnabus was from there (Acts 4:36). A proconsul was the ruler of a senatorial province of the Roman Empire. A synagogue is an assembly of Jews formally gathered together to offer prayers and listen to the reading and expositions of the scriptures. Assemblies of that sort were held every Sabbath and feast day, afterwards also on the second and fifth days of every week.

Questions

1. Why did this journey begin from Antioch as opposed to Jerusalem?
2. What preceded the sending out of Barnabus and Saul?
3. Discuss the role of the Holy Spirit in the 1st century church.
4. Where did Barnabus and Saul go preach first when they came into a city? Why? See v. 46
5. What is the difference between Simon in 8:9-13 and Elymas in this chapter?
6. Can you think of other N.T. miracles that were negative in nature?
7. Why was Saul's name changed to Paul?
8. Discuss the difference in prominence between Paul and Barnabus after v. 9.
9. Why do you think John Mark left the journey?
10. What was Paul's main point about Jesus in his sermon at Antioch?
11. Compare the Jews' reaction to Paul's sermon to that of the Gentiles.

Lessons

1. Sometimes a rebuke is all that some people deserve.
2. If we reject the gospel we will forfeit eternal life. v. 46

Acts 14

Overview - Acts 14 documents the rest of Paul's first missionary journey. To this point in the journey, the gospel has been preached on the island of Cyprus and in Pisidian Antioch. After their mixed reception at Antioch, Paul and Barnabas travel nearly a hundred miles to Iconium where they receive a similar response to their preaching. Before making their way back to Antioch in Syria, the two will proclaim Christ in Lystra and Derbe and take the time to revisit and strengthen these new Galatian churches.

Questions

1. "Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed" (14:1). Do you remember what Paul wrote in Romans 10:17? Some say that faith is produced through a miraculous, direct operation of the Spirit on the sinner's heart. How is the truth demonstrated perfectly here in Acts 14?
2. In Acts 14:4 Paul and Barnabas are referred to as "apostles." What does that word mean and how was it apparently used in two different contexts throughout the New Testament?
3. As you read Paul's brief statements in Acts 14:14-17, do any other New Testament passages come to mind?
4. In Acts 14:15, Paul references "vain things" that these Gentiles needed to turn away from. "Vain" could also be translated "futile, useless, worthless, empty." Why would Paul refer to the people's belief in Zeus and Hermes in this way and how could he be unashamed to do so?
5. What should we make of Luke's summary of Paul's message as he sought to strengthen the souls of these new disciples, "saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (14:22)? Doesn't the immersion of a penitent believer translate him or her into the kingdom of God? Didn't Paul write to 1st century believers who had been transferred out of the domain of darkness into the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13)? If such is the case, why would Paul speak of entering the kingdom as if it were still something to be awaited and prepared for in the future (2 Peter 1:10-11)?
6. The details of Acts 14:23 are of supreme importance. What does this relatively simple and straightforward statement by Luke teach us about early Christianity under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?
7. It's significant to note that the disciples of Acts 14 will eventually be Paul's audience in his letter "to the churches of Galatia" (Galatians 1:2). Take the time to skim Galatians. What points of emphasis do you notice in that letter that fit the context of Acts 13-14 perfectly?

The strange and surprising turn of events in Acts 14:8-18 probably had its roots in local folklore. There was a tradition in Lystra recorded by the Roman poet Ovid (43 B.C. - A.D. 17) that the gods Zeus (the most powerful of the gods, popularly worshiped as the god of weather and the provider of vegetation) and Hermes (the god of eloquence, the spokesman of the gods) once came to earth in human form. As they asked for food and lodging they were refused at a thousand homes. Finally, at the last house in Lystra, a tumbledown shack at the edge of the city dump, an old peasant named Philemon and his wife, Baucis, took them in, fed them well, and prepared for them a place to rest. Not knowing that they were entertaining gods "in the guise of human beings," the old couple eventually learned the identity of their heavenly visitors. The gods led them late at night to the top of a hill and mercifully spared them from a devastating flood sent in vengeful judgment on the inhospitable inhabitants of the region. Following the destruction, Philemon and Baucis saw their humble cottage miraculously transformed into a magnificent marble temple where they served as priest and priestess for the rest of their lives. After their deaths, according to the legend, they were turned into two stately trees.

Acts 15

Overview- Conference at Jerusalem to discuss whether circumcision was necessary for Gentile converts.

After the conversion of Cornelius, Peter had to explain himself to the Jews back in Jerusalem. As more Gentile converts came into the church there arose a conflict as to whether they needed to be circumcised (in other words, become a Jew) before they could become a Christian.

Questions

1. Why didn't Paul and Barnabus handle this matter at Antioch? Weren't they inspired men who could confirm the word through miracles?
2. Why don't we have "conferences" today to determine what is the correct position in a matter?
3. How did they determine God's will concerning whether Gentiles had to be circumcised?
4. What proof did Peter offer to show that circumcision was not required for Gentiles?
5. What was Paul and Barnabus' evidence that circumcision was unnecessary?
6. What was James' assessment of the matter?
7. What part did their intellect or reasoning play in coming to their conclusion?
8. Discuss the prohibitions listed in v. 20 and 29.
9. Who was right, Paul or Barnabus, regarding John Mark?

Lessons

1. The jurisdiction of the Old Law has ended.
2. God requires Christians to use their intellect to determine His will.
3. We must be careful not to make laws where God has not and vice versa.

Acts 16:1-17:9

Overview - "After some days," Paul determines that the time has come for a second missionary journey. His proposal is to visit the Christians in the cities where he and Barnabas had preached on their first journey. Recognizing that these converts face temptations and opposition, Paul is understandably concerned about their spiritual welfare. This second journey, however, will turn out to be even more extensive, as Paul will travel beyond Asia Minor where he and Barnabas had preached on their first journey, and carry the gospel into Europe.

Questions

1. There are three generations of disciples in Lystra—a grandmother (Lois), a mother (Eunice), and a son (Timothy). In 2 Timothy 1:5, Paul mentions them by name. What are the implications made by Luke in noting that Timothy's father "was a Greek"? Can we learn anything from the faith of these two women and the impact they had, not only on Timothy, but on generations to come?
2. "Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek" (Acts 16:3). Is Paul being grossly inconsistent in this action? After what we studied of the great debate over the place of circumcision and its relationship to Christianity in Acts 15, why would Paul do such a thing? Perhaps 1 Corinthians 7:19; 9:19-23 will be helpful.
3. Acts 16:11-15 documents the conversion of Lydia and her household. Note especially 16:14. How does the Lord "open the hearts" of people even today?
4. After reading Acts 16:16-18, why would Paul have become "greatly annoyed" (the word can include the different ideas of grief, pain and anger) at the actions of this slave girl?
5. What could possibly keep these men from being moved to believe in Paul's teaching and submit to Christ in whose name this demon had been expelled? (16:19).
6. How is what we read in Acts 16:25 a living commentary on Paul's later words in Philippians 4:11-13? How can mere mortals possibly learn to enjoy such peace and contentment?
7. Having read Acts 16:25-34, what can we learn from this simple example of New Testament conversion?
8. If you were the Philippian jailer, or Lydia, or a member of their households, what kinds of things would have been going through your mind as Paul and Silas "encouraged" you after everything that had occurred in Philippi, and then "departed"?
9. It's evident from the Thessalonian epistles that the kingdom of Christ—and especially Jesus' second coming as King—was very prominent in Paul's preaching while in Thessalonica. Forty-six times in his two letters Paul refers to Jesus as "Lord." Take the time to read 1 Thes. 2:11-12; 5:23; 2 Thes. 1:5-8; 2:1-12. Putting these words together with Acts 17:1-9, in what way were Paul and his companions saying that "there is another king, Jesus" (17:7)?

Acts 17:10-18:23

Overview- Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey (Continued)

As Paul continues his second journey he comes in contact with groups of people with different attitudes towards the gospel: the open-minded Bereans, the opposition of the Thessalonian and Corinthian Jews and the "ignorance" of the intellectually advanced Athenians. As always, there are some in every group with good hearts that accept Paul's message.

Questions

1. What qualities does someone have to make them *fair-minded*?
2. Contrast the Bereans' attitude with that of the Thessalonians.
3. Is there anything wrong with wanting to hear or tell some new thing?
4. How does Paul's message to the Athenians compare to the one he preached at Antioch in 13:16-41?
5. What was the result of preaching the gospel in Athens?
6. Is there a point where you have to "give up" trying to convert certain people? See v. 6, Mt. 7:6
7. In 18:13 the Jews accuse Paul of teaching "contrary to the law". Was there any validity to their accusation? See Mt. 5:17, 18.
8. What is involved in "reasoning" with others concerning the Gospel? See 17:17; 18:4, 19
9. Who beat up Sosthenes and why?
10. Why did Paul think it important to attend a Jewish feast in Jerusalem?

Lessons

1. Adapt the gospel to the audience without changing it.
2. Being fair-minded is an essential trait of being a Christian.

Acts 18:23-19:41

Overview- Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey

Without much fanfare Paul begins his third missionary journey. In Ephesus Paul encounters worshippers of the goddess Diana (Greek goddess Artemis). Antipater of Sidon, who compiled the list of the Seven Wonders, describes the finished temple: "I have set eyes on the wall of lofty Babylon on which is a road for chariots, and the statue of Zeus by the Alpheus, and the hanging gardens, and the colossus of the Sun, and the huge labor of the high pyramids, and the vast tomb of Mausolus; but when I saw the house of Artemis that mounted to the clouds, those other marvels lost their brilliancy, and I said, "Lo, apart from Olympus, the Sun never looked on aught so grand".

The book of First Corinthians was written from Ephesus during this time.

Questions

1. What was the reason that Paul went back to visit congregations he had established earlier?
2. What is the difference between John's baptism and the baptism commanded in 2:38?
3. How could Apollos be considered "mighty in the scriptures" and not know about baptism?
4. How could the 12 men in 19:1-7 be considered disciples without knowing about the Holy Spirit or receiving the correct baptism?
5. How were these situations with Apollos and the 12 at Ephesus handled?
6. Why couldn't the seven sons of Sceva perform miracles through Jesus?
7. What was Demetrius' motivation for causing an uproar over Paul's preaching?
8. What are some characteristics of a mob mentality?

Lessons

1. Error has to be confronted and corrected in order to remain pleasing to God.
2. We should strive to teach others with a "spirit of meekness and fear".
2. Repenting involves abandoning the sinful practices of our past lives.

Acts 20:1-21:14

Overview - After spending three years in Ephesus (20:31), Paul departs into Macedonia as he continues his third missionary journey. He had told the Corinthians that he planned to stay in Ephesus through Pentecost (1 Corinthians 16:8), which in the year 55 A.D. fell on May 25th. Now, Paul pours his efforts into visiting and writing to many of the churches he has helped to establish. He is also working during this time to gather a collection for the impoverished Christians in Jerusalem, where this third journey will eventually end on a dark prophetic note.

Questions

1. We sometimes use the phrase “approved apostolic example.” What is that, and how does Acts 20:7 fall into that category? What do we, as modern disciples, learn from this passage?
2. Jesus had taught his apostles what Christians were to do in order to remember his body and blood (Matthew 26:26-29), but the scriptural account of that event does not tell us when this memorial was to be observed. Acts 20:7, as well as 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, indicate that the early Christians assembled on the first day of the week to worship (Sunday), rather than on the traditional Sabbath day (Saturday). Based on the larger context of the New Testament, why would this have been the case?
3. The term “breaking of bread” can be used to mean different things in varying contexts, as we found to be the case in Acts 2:42-47. Twice we run across that phrase in Acts 20. Is there any way to figure out what is meant by:
 - “to break bread” in verse 7?
 - “broken bread and eaten” in verse 11?
4. After reading Acts 20:18-35, how would you summarize Paul’s message to the elders of the church in Ephesus?
5. What did Paul mean by saying, “I am innocent of the blood of all of you” (20:26)? How is this similar to God’s image and expectation of a watchman of Israel in Ezekiel 33:1-6?
6. What do we specifically learn about the work of elders (shepherds) from Paul’s parting words?
7. In Acts 21:8, we once again read of Philip. When was the last time we ran across him?
8. What has Philip been doing in Caesarea, based on Luke’s description of him as “the evangelist”?
9. What does Luke intend for us to see by his reference to the fact that Philip “was one of the seven”?
10. We have already read of an Agabus in Acts. If this is the same man, what else had he prophesied?
11. What insight does Acts 21:13-14 give us into Paul’s frame of mind?

Acts 21:15-22:30

Overview- Paul tries to placate Jewish Christians by helping four men complete a Jewish vow but is arrested instead.

All along the journey back to Jerusalem people have been warning Paul that something bad was going to happen at Jerusalem. In order to convince some Jewish Christians that Paul isn't opposed to keeping some of the Jewish traditions James suggests that Paul help four men complete a Jewish ritual. James' suggestion and Paul's participation in it is regarded as one of the more difficult passages in Acts. The remainder of the book of Acts revolves around the accusations made against Paul and his defense concerning these charges.

Questions

1. Is it inconsistent for a Christian to be "zealous for the law"? 21:20
2. What had Paul written concerning the law in Galatians 5:1-6?
3. How does I Corinthians 9:20-23 relate to this passage?
4. What charges are brought against Paul in 21:28?
5. Why did Paul not heed the warnings about going to Jerusalem?
6. What are some similarities when Paul is accused of wrongdoing? See Acts 9:20-25; 13:45; 14:2-5, 19; 16:19-24; 17:5-8, 13; 18:6; 19:24-34.
7. Why did Paul recount the story of his conversion as defense of his actions?
8. Name some things in 21:15-22:30 that made him an ideal Gospel preacher?
9. Explain the apparent contradiction between 9:7 and 22:9 concerning the voice that Paul's travelling companions heard or didn't hear.
10. Why did the Jews have such a negative reaction (v. 22, 23) to what Paul said in his defense?
11. Why did Paul not tell the magistrates in 16:22-24 that he was a Roman citizen before being beaten?

Lesson

1. We need to be able to "meet people halfway" as long as the truth is not compromised.

Acts 23

Overview - After the days spent in Caesarea, Paul and his fellow-travelers complete this third great missionary journey in Jerusalem, about 65 miles southeast of Caesarea. As best we can tell, they arrive in time for the Pentecost celebration of A.D. 57. While in Jerusalem, Paul is arrested and imprisoned, and he will remain a prisoner throughout the rest of the book of Acts. Following his arrest and imprisonment in Jerusalem, he will be sent as a prisoner to Caesarea (23:31-33), then to Rome (27:1), where he remains a prisoner as the book closes.

Questions

1. As Paul stands before the Jewish Sanhedrin, he states, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day" (Acts 23:1). What does he mean by that statement?
2. What did Paul mean by referring to Ananias the high priest as a "whitewashed wall"? (Acts 23:3)

Interestingly, Josephus records that at the outbreak of the Jewish war with Rome [66 A.D.], Ananias went into hiding in Jerusalem near an aqueduct. The Jewish revolutionaries found him and his brother, Hezekiah, and killed them both.

3. Who else had referred to many of the leading Jewish authorities in a similar way?
4. Should modern Christians be concerned with being nothing more than "whitewashed walls" or "tombs"? If so, in what ways?
5. Jesus may have ascended into heaven and taken His place at the right hand of God, but He did not cease to be actively involved with His people (Acts 23:11). Can you find other New Testament passages that speak to the work of Jesus following His resurrection and ascension?
6. If you were a first-century Christian who witnessed Paul's trials and conduct firsthand, what would you have taken away from the experience?
7. In comparison to what we undergo at this point in history because of our faith, what should we glean from this real-life account of suffering for the cause of Christ (Acts 9:15-16)?

Paul Is Sent to Felix in Caesarea – Acts 23:23-35 The seat of Roman government in Palestine is Caesarea, and the governor at the time was Felix. Lysias decides to take Paul from Jerusalem at night under heavy guard to Caesarea and let Felix sort the situation out.

8. What falsehood does Lysias write? Why do you think he did so?
9. How does he exonerate Paul? What should Lysias have done if Paul was innocent?

Acts 24

Overview-Paul is accused by the Jews. He defends himself.

The scene has now shifted to the city of Caesarea, the capital of the province of Judea. Caesarea has been mentioned several times in thus far in our study: Acts 8:40, 21:8, 9 (Phillip); Acts 9:30, Acts 10:1 (Cornelius), etc. Felix was a Roman procurator or governor. He was married to Drusilla (v. 24), the daughter of Herod Agrippa I. They were living in an adulterous situation as Drusilla had left her first husband to become Felix's wife.

Questions

1. How does Tertullus try to gain favor with Felix?
2. What is the significance of the accusation regarding the "Sect of the Nazarenes"?
3. What were the differences in Tertullus' account of Paul arrest with that of Lysias in 23:26-30
4. What were the charges against Paul? How does this compare to the initial charge in 21:28?
5. What points did Paul make in his defense?
6. What is the one thing that Paul confesses that he actually did that the Jews took exception to?
7. Why did Paul's original accusers not come to Caesarea to pursue this case?
8. Discuss Felix's statement in v. 25.
9. Based on v. 26 and 27, what do you think Felix's motives were?

Lessons

1. It is not wrong to offer logical arguments as a defense against false accusation.
2. "*The road to hell is paved with good intentions*" -Procrastination

Acts 25

Overview- The vehemence of the Jews against Paul is seen by the fact that, two years after his imprisonment and upon their first meeting with the new governor, they appeal to Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem – not for trial but to assassinate him along the way.

Paul Appeals to Caesar vs.1-12

1. What were the Jews hoping to take advantage of in the character of Festus in order to kill Paul?
2. What was once again evident in the charges against Paul in Acts 25:7-8?
3. As evidenced by Paul's reply (25:8), what was the nature of the “serious complaints” brought by the Jews against Paul?
4. Festus, initially refuses to summon Paul to Jerusalem, he later makes this very proposal...why (cf. Ac 25:9).
5. Paul is repeatedly victimized by political expediency. As strong as Rome was, why they did not wish to invest the resources needed to keep Palestine firmly under control? What were the tragic results of this decisions?
6. How does Paul stress his innocence in Acts 25:11?
7. When Paul sees that he will not get justice from Festus either, he finally exercises his right of Roman citizenship in a capital case – direct appeal to Caesar. Why did He wait so long?

Paul Before Agrippa vs.13-27

8. How does Festus characterize the accusations against Paul in Acts 25:18-20?
9. Festus' admits to Agrippa that *“I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death”* and thus *“I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him”* (25:25-26). In other words, he is sending a Roman citizen under a death penalty from his jurisdiction to the Emperor without any substantive capital charges. How would this look to the Emperor?
10. What prophecy of Jesus do these proceedings fulfill?

Herod Agrippa II, son of Herod Agrippa I (cf 12:1), was born in AD 27, but he was too young to assume the entire realm of his father at the time of his father's death (AD 44). When his uncle, Herod, king of Chalcis, died in AD 50, Claudius gave Agrippa II that kingdom. Nero also added to his territory so that he ultimately ruled the northeast section of Palestine (Galilee, Perea, Iturea, etc.).

Agrippa II was loyal to Rome during the Jewish revolt of AD 66-70 and was rewarded with further territories and the rank of praetorian. He died about AD 100.

Acts 26

Overview- Paul defends himself before Agrippa.

Questions

1. Why was Paul glad to be speaking to Agrippa as opposed to Felix, Festus or Lysias?
2. What promise was Paul referring to in vs. 6 and 7?
3. Is there any connection between Paul mentioning being a Pharisee and the concept of the resurrection? See Acts 23:6-8
4. What was Paul's line of defense in this chapter?
5. What did Paul say concerning Moses and the prophets' teaching compared to Paul's teaching?
6. Why did Festus think Paul was crazy? v. 24
7. Why does Paul say Jesus was the "first to rise from the dead" in v. 23? Were there not others who had been raised prior to Jesus' resurrection?
8. Do you think Agrippa was sincere in v. 28?
9. In Chapter 25 we read of Paul's appeal to Caesar. Why had he done this?
10. After determining that Paul was an innocent man why couldn't Agrippa just set him free?

Lessons

1. The New Testament does not conflict with the O. T., it completes it.
2. The gospel is for all. We each have a choice to accept or reject it.

Acts 27-28

Overview- Our journey through the Acts of the Apostles concludes with a journey to Rome. Paul has appealed to Caesar. He is sent by Festus, along with some other prisoners, by ship. The apostle's prayers will be answered and God's promise will be fulfilled—the gospel will be preached in Rome (Acts 23:11). As we draw our study to a close, take a moment to reflect on the progress that was made in the spread of the gospel over a span of thirty years. Appreciate how much growth on the part of fallible human beings has been exhibited. Ordinary people who were inspired and aided by the Holy Spirit of God have served as witnesses of the risen King through an extraordinary message—from Jerusalem, throughout all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, exactly as the Father had planned.

Questions

1. Luke devotes a great deal of space to the description of this voyage. Perhaps the Lord's purpose for so detailed an account was to emphasize dramatically the fact that nothing could prevent God from accomplishing his desire for Paul to reach Rome. How will the divine plan be fulfilled when it seems that everything is working against it?
2. Who are Paul's companions on this trip to Rome? Acts 16:10;20:5. What feature do these sections have in common with this section in chapter 27?
3. Paul makes two statements regarding the future of their journey (27:10,22). The two statements contradict each other: the first says that there will be loss of life, the second says there won't be any loss of life. Explain.
4. Acts 28:15 tells us that upon Paul's arrival in Rome, he "thanked God and took courage." We all know what it's like to ask God for help when we are in distress. But why is it that we so frequently forget to thank God when deliverance has come?
5. Luke records in Acts 28:24 that "some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved."
- What does that tell us about our own responsibility as 21st century disciples?
6. One of Paul's last recorded statements is his quoting of Isaiah 6:9-10:
As people see, why do they sometimes not perceive? Interestingly, the only other time that we have recorded where Paul quotes this passage is in his letter which he wrote to the Roman brethren several years earlier(Romans 10:1-3; 11:1-10)].
7. The book of Acts ends somewhat anticlimactically, with no verdict from the Roman court or emperor. Yet, for Luke, the important part of his story has been told. Paul has reached Rome and is there proclaiming the kingdom of God. To the saints in Philippi, he wrote: (1:12-14).
- 8 . Both the first and last sentence in the book refers to the "kingdom of God" (compare 1:1-3 and 28:30-31) What do they have in common?

Conclusion: The full story continues to unfold. The gospel continues to be proclaimed. God's children continue to await the return of the Christ. "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:20).