

Continuing Lay Training Bible Study

The Discipleship Place

Acts — Part 1

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CLT Bible Study

Acts (part 1)

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Suggestions for Study

Chapter 1. Introduction

- A. The Author: Luke
- B. Acts: The Book

Chapter 2. The Church Established (Acts 1:1–8:3)

“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem . . .” (Acts 1:8)

- A. The Risen Christ and the Disciples (Acts 1:1-26)
- B. Pentecost (2:1-13)
- C. Noteworthy Beginnings (2:14–8:3)

Chapter 3. The Church Enlarged (Acts 8:4–12:25)

“ . . . and in all Judea and Samaria . . .” (Acts 1:8)

- A. Philip the Evangelist (8:4-40)
- B. The Conversion of Saul (9:1-31)
- C. Peter in Lydda and Joppa (9:32-43)
- D. Gentiles Received into the Church (10:1–11:18)
- E. The Ministry of Barnabas and Saul in Antioch (11:19-30)
- F. The Persecution Under Herod (chapter 12)

Study Questions

Pronunciation Guide



Suggestions for Study

Welcome to the Continuing Lay Training series of Bible studies. You are engaged in a study venture that will be both helpful and enjoyable. Here are a few suggestions that will make this Bible study the most beneficial to you.

1. Since this is a Bible study, have your Bible near you at all times. This study outline is only designed to help you read the Bible.
2. The Bible version used for this study is the *New International Version (NIV)*. The editor used the language of the NIV to prepare the lessons. You may use other versions of the Bible if you choose. While the language may be different, the meaning will be the same.
3. Before you begin each section, read the entire Scripture passage. This is very important. The study outline will help you understand the particular Bible verses, but it does not tell what they say.
4. **IMPORTANT:** Note that scriptures from the Book of Acts do not have the book's name. If the Bible reference is (1:4-5), this means you will find these verses in the Book of Acts. Other books of the Bible will include the name in the reference, for example Luke 12:49-50 and Leviticus 23:17.
5. Go through the study outline carefully. Take time to look up all the Scripture verses in the outline.
6. Use a highlighter to mark your Bible as you go. Marking your Bible will help the words become more and more your own.
7. Finally, read the Bible passage again to better understand its meaning.
8. The editor has also included how to pronounce some of the more difficult proper names and words. The first time the word is introduced, the pronunciation will follow the word. At the end of each chapter you will find a list of the words in the order in which they were introduced. Additionally, at the end of the book, all of the words and pronunciations will be listed alphabetically.

If a family or a few friends decide to take this study together, here two suggestions.

1. Have one person read the Bible passage and another person read this outline.
2. Then discuss the Scripture and outline. Ask questions of each other to help clarify the meaning of the Scripture.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Notes

A. The Author: Luke

Acts is a thrilling story often called “The Acts of the Apostles.” This story has been called by some Bible scholars as “the greatest page in all history.”

There is little doubt Luke is the author. There is sufficient proof Luke, a companion of Paul, wrote Acts. Let’s consider the following three reasons:

1. The tradition of the Early Christian Church indicates Luke was the author.
2. The author of Acts is most certainly the same person who wrote the Gospel of Luke, which has his name. Both books have a common purpose, vocabulary, and style. Both books are dedicated to a man named Theophilus [thee-AHF-uh-lus] (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1). The two books have sometimes been called “Luke-Acts.”
3. In reading Acts, we note the author is present for only part of the story. We know this by looking at the pronouns “we” and “us.” These sections are known as the “we” sections (for example, see Acts 16:8-13; 20:5-6). These verses suggest the author was a member of Paul’s group for part of the second and third missionary journeys. When we compare these sections of Acts with Paul’s letters, it indicates the writer of these passages had to be Luke. Also, the style and vocabulary of these “we” sections are the same with those of the rest of Luke-Acts. Therefore, the conclusion is certain: Acts was written by Luke.

What do we know about Luke? He was a Greek by birth. Perhaps, he was a citizen of Troas [TROH-az]. Was he converted under the ministry of Paul? We cannot answer with certainty. But it was Paul’s gospel of salvation by grace that captivated the interest and thinking of Luke.

Luke joined Paul and his traveling companions at Troas. And he was with Paul when he first went to Europe. After the Church was established in Philippi [FIL-uh-pie or fuh-LIH-pie], Luke remained in that city for several years, perhaps as pastor (16:11-12; 20:5-6). Later, he rejoined Paul on his return to Jerusalem [juh-REW-suh-lum] at the close of the third missionary journey.

Luke was probably Paul’s physician during the latter years of the apostle’s life (Colossians 4:14). He returned to Jerusalem with Paul and was with him during Paul’s imprisonment of two years in Caesarea [SES-uh-REE-uh]. Luke traveled to Rome with Paul. And during Paul’s imprisonment in Rome, Luke



was loyal to Paul. Paul wrote to Timothy these words, “Only Luke is with me” (2 Timothy 4:11).

Luke was qualified for the task of writing the first history of the Church. He had a two-year stay in Caesarea (Acts 24:23, 27). While there, he did extensive research and talked to many eyewitnesses (Luke 1:2). Also, he would certainly have talked with Paul and his companions during their long journeys together. But there are passages in Acts where Luke wrote as an eyewitness himself. He again lived through those events as he wrote about them, which have become inspiring pictures for the Christian Church.

B. Acts: The Book

1. Purpose

Luke had one main purpose in mind as he wrote Acts. He wanted to show how the Holy Spirit empowered witnesses in the Early Church. He started the story as the Church began in Jerusalem. Then Luke showed how the Church spread to nearby regions and then to the world. His concern was the preaching of the gospel and planting the Church in the Roman Empire.

There are no extensive biographies of Peter and Paul in Acts. And there is not an extensive history of the Church. As a history book, Acts only has parts of the story of the Early Christian Church. But Acts provides an accurate and adequate story. It fulfills the purpose of Luke in writing the book.

Note: When the word *Church* begins with a capital letter, it has a special meaning. It means all the people who confess Jesus Christ as Lord. The Church is made up of everyone who is doing His work in the world. The Church does not mean a particular denomination or a place where Christians meet to worship. This church begins with a small letter.

2. Scope

To understand Acts, we must see its relationship to the Gospel of Luke. In writing these two books, Luke evidently planned a brief history of Christianity. This story traces the important features of Christianity from the birth of Jesus to the establishment of the Church. For this reason, Luke-Acts has been called *The Beginnings of Christianity* (in two volumes) by Dr. Luke. Volume 1 is *The Story of How the Good News Began with Jesus in Galilee and Jerusalem*. Volume 2 is *How the Apostles Carried the Good News from Jerusalem to Rome*.

Notes



3. Theme

Acts sets forth the meaning of the Christian Church. As God-inspired Church history, Acts provides the significance and mission of the Church in the world. The book declares the Church is the Body of Christ.

John Wesley was an important church leader in England in the 1700s. He said the Gospels treat Christ as the Head of the Church. Wesley also said Acts shows how the Holy Spirit breathed life into the Church. Then, when the Church was persecuted by the world, God defended and exalted the Church.

The words of John Wesley indicate the meaning of the opening statement in the Book of Acts. "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach . . ." (1:1). Acts records how the work and teaching of Jesus continued through His Body, the Church.

4. Outline

The apostles, Peter and Paul, are two main people in Acts. Therefore, some Bible scholars divide the book into two parts:

- a. The evangelization of the Jews by Peter (1–12)
- b. The evangelization of the Gentiles by Paul (13–28)

However, this Bible study uses this most popular and accurate outline:

- a. The Church Established (1:1–8:3)
- b. The Church Enlarged (8:4–12:25)
- c. The Church Extended (13:1–28:31)

Theophilus [thee-AHF-uh-lus]

Troas [TROH-az]

Philippi [FIL-uh-pie or fuh-LIH-pie]

Jerusalem [juh-REW-suh-lum]

Caesarea [SES-uh-REE-uh]

Notes



Chapter 2. The Church Established (Acts 1:1–8:3)

“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem . . .” (Acts 1:8)

A. The Risen Christ and the Disciples (Acts 1:1-26)

1. The Ascension of Jesus Christ (1:1-11)

In this Scripture passage, we read the *subject* and *substance* (essence or important parts) of the Christian witness. The *subject* is Jesus Christ, who is now incarnate in the Church. *Incarnate* means God became a man. Jesus, the Son of God, was fully God and fully human. Therefore, God, through Jesus, is now incarnate in His Church.

The *substance* is fivefold:

- Jesus’ suffering and death on the Cross, known as His passion (1:3)
 - Jesus’ resurrection, being raised to life from death with “convincing proofs” (1:3)
 - Jesus’ ascension and His return to God the Father in heaven (1:9)
 - The gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (1:8)
 - Jesus’ return to earth, called the Second Coming (1:11)
- a. The preface to Acts is recorded in the first five verses. It indicates Luke intends to record “the acts” of Jesus as done by the Holy Spirit through His followers (Acts 1:1-2). Jesus experienced His own baptism of suffering or passion as a man (1:3). But He is no longer limited by His humanity. After His ascension, Jesus is now at the right hand of God (2:33). He promised His followers they “will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (1:4-5). (See also Luke 12:49-50.)
- b. Jesus Christ commanded His followers to wait in Jerusalem for this mighty baptism (1:4-5). But the disciples asked Him if He would restore the kingdom to Israel (1:6). Jesus’ reply probably surprised them. It was not for them to know “the times and dates” God the Father has set by His authority (1:7). Jesus told them it was more important for them to have the Holy Spirit than to have Israel restored. He boldly declared they would be witnesses for Him everywhere. First, they would witness in Jerusalem, then nearby in Judea and Samaria, and then to the whole earth (1:8). This important verse is the basis for the outline of this study of Acts.
- c. The Ascension (1:9-11) suggests three important truths.
- (1) Jesus Christ has ascended. He left this world where He was seen to a “place” where is *not* seen. He was “taken up” to a higher

Notes



level of existence (1:9).

- (2) Jesus Christ lives at the right hand of God. He has now received from the Father the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:33).
- (3) Jesus Christ will return (1:11). He will consummate or complete His kingdom by appearing in person.

2. The Apostles and Other Followers (1:12-26)

- a. The apostles returned to Jerusalem as Jesus had instructed them (1:12). All of them, except Judas Iscariot [JEW-dus is-KAIR-ih-ut], were there. Luke names each one (1:13). But they were not alone.

In this passage we read of Mary, the mother of Jesus for the last time. On the Cross, Jesus committed His mother to John (John 19:26-27). She was at the meeting in Jerusalem with her other sons. Luke wrote that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was “with his [Jesus] brothers” (1:14).

- b. This passage also gives a final look at the tragic ending of Judas Iscariot. Matthew stated Judas hanged himself (Matthew 27:5). Luke suggested the rope broke (Acts 1:18).
- c. Luke states that about 120 followers of Jesus had gathered to wait for the promised Holy Spirit (1:15). They were constantly in prayer (1:14). They also felt it was necessary to choose someone to replace Judas Iscariot (1:21). The qualifications for this person were twofold: (1) a constant disciple; (2) a witness of the Resurrection (1:21-22). We see Christian democracy at work in this election. They nominated two men: Joseph and Matthias (1:23). First, they prayed. Then they “cast lots” (1:26), which was the method they used to elect the next apostle. And the winner was Matthias [muh-THIE-us] (1:26).

If these early disciples erred in selecting Matthias, Luke makes no judgment or criticism of this decision. Matthias is not mentioned again in the New Testament, but neither are most of the 12 apostles.

B. Pentecost (2:1-13)

Pentecost [PEN-tuh-cahst] was the most popular of the feasts or festivals the Jews celebrated each year. Pentecost came 50 days after the Sabbath of the Passover week (Leviticus 23:15-16). Thus, the name Pentecost (2:1), which means 50.

Pentecost was also called the Festival of Harvest or the Festival of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:17). The Jews celebrated the harvest of their crops. Later the

Notes



Notes

Jews believed Pentecost celebrated the giving of the Law at Sinai (Exodus 19–20). On Mount Sinai, the Law or the Ten Commandments were written on tablets of stone. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit wrote the Law on the hearts of the disciples (Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 10:15-16). Pentecost was also the first harvest of Christian converts (2:41). How appropriate that the gift of the Holy Spirit came on a day the Jews celebrated both the harvest and the Law.

1. The Suddenness of Pentecost (2:2)

The preparation for Pentecost was gradual. But the baptism of Pentecost came quickly in a moment of crisis. So, today, the believer finds sanctifying power when it comes to a personal crisis. This is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Signs of Pentecost (2:2-4)

- a. The sound like “the blowing of a violent wind” filled the house where the believers were (2:2). This sound represents the supernatural or divine aspect of Pentecost (Matthew 3:11-12).
- b. “Tongues of fire” came to rest on each of the believers (2:3). This fire represents the purifying work of the Holy Spirit (Malachi 3:1-3).
- c. The believers “began to speak in other tongues” as the Holy Spirit helped them (2:4). These were not unknown “tongues” or languages. Many people, who came from several countries, were in Jerusalem for the Pentecost Festival. These people heard what was said in their own tongues or languages (2:7-11).

These unusual gifts were miracles. They were signs of the beginning of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. (See Exodus 19:16-19 for other signs and miracles.) But these signs or gifts must never be viewed as signs that make a person more spiritual or holy (1 Corinthians 12:28-31).

3. The Substance of Pentecost (2:4)

Luke says, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit . . .” The substance of Pentecost is threefold:

- a. The Holy Spirit purifies the heart of believers when He fills or baptizes them (15:8-9).
- b. The Holy Spirit gives power to believers for their daily lives and service to God (1:8).
- c. The Holy Spirit lives within the hearts of believers; therefore, God himself lives within believers (John 14:16-17, 23; Ephesians 3:16-19).



This is holiness. Believers are holy when they are completely filled and possessed by the Holy Spirit.

Judas Iscariot [JEW-dus is-KAIR-ih-ut]

Matthias [muh-THIE-us]

Pentecost [PEN-tuh-cahst]

C. Important Beginnings (2:14–8:3)

1. The First Pentecost Sermon (2:14-40)

Simon [SIE-muhn] Peter is one of the great miracles of Pentecost (see John 1:42). He stood up with the other 11 apostles on Pentecost and began to speak to the crowd in Jerusalem (2:14). His sermon was wonderful. It showed Peter had insight into the Scriptures. It also had spiritual power. The signs (wind, fire, and tongues) attracted the crowd. But it was the sermon of Peter that “cut to the heart” or convicted the people (2:37).

- a. The introduction (2:14-21) of the sermon answered the question, “What does this mean?” (2:12). The answer Peter gave was from the Book of Joel in the Old Testament. Peter said, “This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel” (2:16). God said He would pour out His Spirit on “all people” (2:17). The Spirit would come to both men and women, and to both old and young people (2:17). The Spirit would also come to both rich and poor people. Even “servants” were mentioned (2:18), which means people with little money or no social standing. Peter finished the introduction by declaring “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (2:21). What a wonderful promise!
- b. The body of the sermon (2:22-36) proclaimed the redemptive purpose of Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and ascension. The sermon climaxes with the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:33). Throughout the sermon, Peter supported his points with sound reasons and quotations from the Old Testament. (See Luke 24:25-27, 32 to read how Jesus also supported His teachings from the Scriptures.)
- c. The appeal Peter gave (2:38-40) was twofold: (1) The people were told to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (2:38). (2) The people were to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38). This is the “second blessing,” as John Wesley called it. The gift of the Spirit was not limited to the time of the apostles. Peter declared this gift was “for you and your children and for all who are far off” (2:39). This is another wonderful promise!

2. The First Harvest of Souls (2:41-47)

Notes



Notes

- a. The Day of Pentecost brought about 3,000 people into the kingdom of God (2:41). What a miracle! What an amazing outpouring of the Holy Spirit! We need to remember Pentecost was “The Festival of Harvest or Firstfruits.” This harvest of souls was the firstfruits of the great and glorious multitude in heaven one day (Revelation 7:9).
- b. After Pentecost, the people were part of the fellowship of the apostles. They were devoted to the teaching of the apostles, to eating together, and to praying together (2:42). As they met together, they praised God and enjoyed the “favor of the people” (2:46-47). And the harvest of souls continued every day (2:47). The best proof of the power of Pentecost is not the gifts but the daily life of believers. We are not to amaze and dazzle other people with our gifts. Instead, our lives must earn the respect of those we contact every day.

3. The First Opposition (3:1–4:31)

Luke wrote about the miracle of the healing of the crippled man. This was the first serious opposition to the Church. But the result was another great harvest of souls (4:4) and another outpouring of the Holy Spirit (4:31).

- a. The miracle (3:1-10). The setting for this miracle, the Temple, indicates the Christians were still loyal Jews. Peter and John went to the Temple to pray at about three o'clock in the afternoon (3:1). This hour was the time of the evening sacrifice and the time for prayer (10:30). (Read Hebrews 10:1-18 to learn what the apostles believed about Old Testament sacrifices.)
 - (1) Peter told the crippled man to get up and walk “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth” [NAZ-uh-ruhth] (3:6). The “name” stands for the authority of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Jesus performed miracles in His own name. The apostles performed miracles in dependence upon Jesus.
 - (2) When the crippled man was healed, he jumped to his feet. Then he walked and jumped and praised God (3:7-8). And the people who witnessed this miracle were amazed at what had happened (3:10). The crippled man is a symbol of helpless humanity that must be lifted to its feet and filled with worship and praise.
- b. Peter’s sermon (3:11-26). This is the second record of Peter preaching to a large group of people. He was standing “in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade” (3:11). This was a part of the



Temple in Jerusalem where all people, both Jews and Gentiles, could go. But he addressed his sermon to the Jews when he said “men of Israel” (3:12).

Notes

- (1) The theme of Peter’s sermon was Jesus Christ (3:13-18). Peter said God “has glorified his servant Jesus” (3:13). Peter spoke directly to the Jews and said they were responsible for killing Jesus (3:13-15). Yet, Peter knew the divine purpose in the crucifixion of Jesus. (Compare this with what Joseph said to his brothers in Genesis 45:7-8.)

Peter also knew the Jews had “acted in ignorance” when they killed Jesus (3:17). But God fulfilled what had been foretold by the prophets that “Christ would suffer” (3:18). Peter’s understanding of Jesus as the Suffering Servant came from the prophecy of Isaiah (52:13–53:12).

- (2) Peter appealed to the Jews to repent (3:19-21). This was, in part, based on the fact they crucified Jesus in ignorance (3:17). Repentance is the way for their sins to be “wiped out” (3:19) and forgiven. Those who repent can then prepare to share in the Kingdom at the return of Christ (3:21).

- (3) Peter concluded his sermon (3:22-26) by quoting the Old Testament. He spoke of Moses (3:22-23) as a warning to those who will not listen to God. He spoke of Abraham [AY-bruh-ham] (3:25-26) as a promise of blessing and salvation. Peter told them they were “heirs of the . . . covenant” (3:25) that God had made with their forefathers. This was a message of hope.

c. The boldness of Peter and John (4:1-22)

- (1) The *arrest* of the apostles (4:1-4). Peter and John were put in jail (4:3). The Sadducees [SAD-yew-seez] (4:1) were the ones responsible for their arrest. The Sadducees were a group of wealthy Jewish leaders who were in charge of the Temple. They did not believe in the Resurrection (Matthew 22:23). Therefore, they were greatly disturbed and angry because of what the apostles were teaching (4:2).

- (2) The *arraignment* of the apostles (4:5-7). Peter and John were charged with a crime and taken before the Sanhedrin [san-HED-ruhn or san-HEE-druhn] or taken to court. The Sanhedrin was the highest ruling council of the Jews. It included the high priests, members of wealthy families, and elders. Most of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees. They asked the apostles by what



name they healed the crippled man (4:7). This question was an attempt to trap the apostles in blasphemy. The Sanhedrin wanted Peter and John to say the miracle was done by some power less than God.

Notes

(3) The *answer* of the apostles (4:8-12). Peter and John gave a courteous but specific answer. The miracle was by the power of Jesus Christ whom God “raised from the dead” (4:10). The apostles quickly dismissed the charge of blasphemy. And they were quick to make the bold claim that salvation is only through the name of Jesus (4:12).

(4) The *astonishment* of the rulers (4:13-17). The members of the Sanhedrin were amazed for three reasons. (a) The apostles were “unschooled, ordinary men” or not highly educated men (4:13). Yet, they bravely faced the skilled lawyers of the court. (b) The apostles “had been with Jesus” (4:13). They sincerely declared Him to be alive and helped them to perform this amazing miracle. (3) The facts were all on the apostle’s side. The Sanhedrin could see the man who had been crippled was now well. This left them speechless (4:14).

(5) The *assurance* of the apostles (4:18-22). The Sanhedrin commanded the apostles not “to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus” (4:18). But Peter and John refused to obey. They boldly said, “For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (4:20). They were immovable. They were certain of what they believed.

d. The Church in prayer (4:23-31). The opposition the apostles faced caused the Church to pray (4:24). And after praying, the Holy Spirit came again in a mighty way. Luke says “the place where they were meeting was shaken” and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly (4:31). Often, when Christians are opposed and persecuted, they seek God for help and courage. God is faithful to give His people boldness when they encounter danger and opposition.

4. The First Discipline (4:32–5:11)

a. Some of the believers in the church in Jerusalem, for a time, “shared everything they had” with one another (4:32). Luke reported “there were no needy persons among them” (4:34). As people sold “lands or houses,” they gave the money to the apostles or church leaders (4:34-35). And this money was distributed to anyone who had a



need (4:35). Barnabas [BAHR-nuh-bus] was mentioned for his special generosity (4:36-37). But there were some believers who did not participate in this way. For example, Mary, the mother of Mark, kept her home in Jerusalem and a meeting place for believers (12:12).

- b. This practice of a common treasury easily caused deception and fraud. This was the sin of Ananias [an-uh-NIE-us] and Sapphira [suh-FIE-ruh]. They sold some land, but they kept part of the money for themselves (5:1-2). The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was fivefold.
 - (1) Deception (5:3). They pretended to bring all the money from the sale of the land to the apostles.
 - (2) Stealing (5:3). They kept some of the money for themselves.
 - (3) Impiety (5:4). They did not respect God. Peter told them they had not “lied to men but to God.”
 - (4) Presumption (5:9). They boldly and rashly tested the Lord. They took for granted His grace and mercy.
 - (5) Selfishness and lust. They obviously wanted some of the money for themselves. They probably expected to be praised for their generosity. As a result, God brought judgment on them and they both died (5:5, 10).

Does this cause us to question God’s severe punishment? We must note Ananias and Sapphira were not required to sell their property and bring the money to the apostles. That was their choice. The Church must be kept pure and holy in its witness for the Lord. God’s holiness must be kept and protected.

5. The First Persecution (5:12-42)

- a. The apostles gained popularity with the masses of people (5:12-16). “More and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number” (5:14). The attitude of some people was almost superstition. They believed even Peter’s shadow on them might bring healing (5:15). Yet, there were many true miracles (5:16).
- b. The popularity of the apostles made the Sadducees jealous (5:17). So, they had the apostles arrested and put in jail (5:18). But God had a surprise for both the apostles and Jewish leaders. He opened the doors of the jail and the apostles were free (5:19). God even told them to go to the Temple and preach to the people (5:20). And the Temple guard and Jewish leaders were puzzled and amazed about how the apostles were released (5:21-24).
- c. The apostles were again taken before the Sanhedrin (5:27). This

Notes



Notes

was a very important matter, as the full Sanhedrin was called together (5:21). The Sanhedrin reminded Peter and John they had been given “strict orders not to teach” in Jesus’ name (5:28). And then they stated the serious charge against the apostles. “You . . . are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood” (5:28).

Two important facts stand out in this passage.

- (1) Obedience to God is all-important. The apostles said, “We must obey God rather than men!” (5:29). Obeying God must be a priority in the life of every believer. Compromise is never acceptable.
- (2) The Church must give priority to witnessing for God (5:32). Our witnessing must be empowered by the Holy Spirit and rooted in absolute obedience to God.

- d. Again, the Jewish leaders were furious, and they wanted to kill the apostles (5:33). But Gamaliel, [guh-MAY-lee-el] a Pharisee and teacher of the law (5:34), probably saved the lives of the apostles. He convinced the Sanhedrin not to kill them (5:40). He said if the apostles’ work was of human origin it would not succeed (5:38). But if their work was of God, the Jewish leaders could not stop them (5:39). So, the Sanhedrin had the apostles “flogged” or beaten (5:40) and commanded them again not to speak in Jesus’ name (5:40).
- e. The persecution resulted in rejoicing. The apostles were glad they could suffer for Jesus Christ (5:41). And they continued to teach and proclaim the Good News “day after day” (5:42).

6. The First Organization (6:1-7)

- a. There was difficulty and disagreement among the believers in the Early Church (6:1). This helps us to see the Church did not operate perfectly. The Church was growing in numbers and seemingly was successful. But there was trouble. The problem came from the distribution of food. The Grecian [GREE-shun] Jews were those people who lived outside Palestine [PAL-us-tien]. The Hebrew Jews were those persons who lived in Palestine and converted to Judaism [JEW-duh-iz-um]. The Grecian Jews complained their widows were not given the same food the widows of Hebrew Jews received (6:1).
- b. The solution to the problem was to choose (or elect) a group of seven men to oversee the distribution of food (6:2-3). These men had to possess two important qualifications: “be full of the Spirit and wisdom” (6:3).



Notes

- c. The Grecians raised the complaint. Therefore, Greek men were chosen or elected to oversee the matter. All of the men have Greek names (6:5). The Church chose or elected the men, and then the apostles ordained them (6:5-6).
- d. This was evidently a wise decision. The number of disciples or believers “increased rapidly” (6:7).
- e. Some important observations can be made from this passage.
 - (1) The Church was democratic from the start.
 - (2) The form of government developed and changed as new situations arose.
 - (3) The church office or position mentioned here is probably “deacon.”
 - (4) At least two of the “deacons” were known as outstanding preachers: Stephen and Philip.
 - (5) The qualifications for church lay leaders are important for today: being filled with the Holy Spirit and being wise or having sound judgment.
 - (6) All offices or places of leadership in Church are sacred. “And in the church God appointed first of all apostles . . . those with gifts of administration” (1 Corinthians 12:28).

7. The First Martyr (6:8–8:3)

Stephen became known in the Early Church when he was elected a “deacon.” He was a man “full of God’s grace and power.” He did great things and miracles among the people (6:8). As a result, he had the honor of being the first to preach that Christianity was for all people.

- a. The preaching of Stephen caused his arrest (6:8-15).
 - (1) A dispute took place in the Greek-speaking synagogues in Jerusalem (6:9). These men argued with Stephen, but his wisdom evidently made them angry (6:10).
 - (2) The mention of Cilicia [suh-LIH-shee-uh or suh-LIH-shuh] suggests Saul (later, called Paul) probably disputed with Stephen also. It is an accepted fact Saul was present (7:58).
 - (3) The charges brought against Stephen were false. He was accused of blasphemy against Moses and God (6:11). His accusers even took Stephen before the Sanhedrin (6:12). They brought in false witnesses, (6:13) who twisted Stephen’s words. They claimed Stephen said Jesus would “destroy this place,” meaning the Temple, and change their customs (6:14). Yet, the members of the Sanhedrin thought Stephen’s face was “like that



of an angel” (6:15).

b. The defense of Stephen to the Sanhedrin was masterful (7:1-53).

- (1) The high priest asked Stephen if the charges against him were true (7:1).
- (2) Stephen’s response was long. He related much of the history of the Jews, starting with Abraham (7:2-50).
- (3) His argument was threefold.
 - (a) The revelation of God has never been confined to the Temple (7:2-50). God’s revelation came to people in various places and ways.
 - (b) God’s revelation had been ongoing and always pointed to Jesus Christ (7:37, 52). Stephen’s accusers were the real lawbreakers.
 - (c) A look at their sacred history showed these Jews were doing what their fathers had done (7:51). These Jews also were resisting the Holy Spirit as their ancestors did.

c. The death of Stephen made him the first Christian martyr (7:54–8:3).

- (1) The Jews were furious (7:54). They did not wait for the Roman government to approve of their evil deed. They dragged Stephen outside the city and stoned him (7:57-58).
- (2) Stephen did not fight against the people who killed him. He even asked for God not to “hold this sin against them” (7:60). On this day, Stephen received the “crown of life,” which symbolizes his reward in heaven. Stephen’s name means “crown.”
- (3) The death of Stephen resulted in persecution of believers. And they began going throughout Judea and Samaria (8:1). This was the beginning of taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world.
- (4) Saul was a witness to Stephen’s death (7:58) and gave his approval (8:1). He was actively involved in the persecution of believers (8:3).

Simon [SIE-muhn]
Nazareth [NAZ-uh-ruhth]
Abraham [AY-bruh-ham]
Sadducees [SAD-yew-seez]
Sanhedrin [san-HED-ruhn or san-HEE-druhn]
Barnabas [BAHR-nuh-bus]
Ananias [an-uh-NIE-us]
Sapphira [suh-FIE-ruh]
Gamaliel [guh-MAY-lee-el]

Notes



Grecian [GREE-shun]
Palestine [PAL-us-tien]
Judaism [JEW-duh-iz-um]
Cilicia [suh-LIH-shee-uh or suh-LIH-shuh]

Notes

Chapter 3. The Church Enlarged (8:4–12:25)

“ . . . and in all Judea and Samaria . . . ” (Acts 1:8)

This section of the Book of Acts shows how the Christian faith spread to Judea, Samaria [suh-MAIR-ee-uh], and Antioch [AN-tee-ahk]. It also shows how the Gentiles became a part of the fellowship of believers. This information is grouped around six men: Philip, Saul (also known as Paul), Peter, Cornelius [kohr-NEE-lih-us], Barnabas, and Herod [HAIR-ud].

A. Philip the Evangelist (8:4–40)

1. The Revival in Samaria (8:4-25)

- a. Philip traveled to Samaria, and he was a remarkable soul winner. He was one of the seven “deacons” (6:5). He is also the only man in the New Testament specifically called an evangelist (21:8). He was assisted by a group of lay preachers (8:4). Philip’s message was a simple one about Jesus Christ (8:5). There were miracles in his ministry (8:6-7), and the revival was successful (8:12). This was strange indeed; a Jew was preaching to Samaritans [suh-MAIR-uh-tunz]. The Samaritans knew the Jews hated them. And they were rejoicing in Philip’s message (8:8).
- b. Simon, a sorcerer, was attracted by these events (8:9-24). Some Bible scholars believe Simon was a true believer at first, since he was baptized (8:13). But his scheming nature soon caused him to seek money (8:18-19). However, most Bible scholars believe Simon was never genuinely converted to Christ. In any case, his faith was shallow and not sincere (8:20-23). He did not crave the Holy Spirit; instead, he wanted the power of giving the Holy Spirit to others.
- c. The revival in Samaria was glorious, but it was not complete. The leaders in Jerusalem considered that being filled with the Spirit was essential (8:14-16). The leaders sent Peter and John to Samaria (8:14). They placed or laid their hands on the people, and they received the Holy Spirit (8:17). They became the human agents through whom the baptized converts received the Holy Spirit. Therefore, there are two crises in the Christian experience: being saved and being filled with the Holy Spirit.



Notes

- d. Pentecost had brought an important change in John. A few years earlier, he wanted to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans (Luke 9:51-55). Now, John was calling down the “fire” of the Holy Spirit on them (see Matthew 3:11).

2. The Conversion of the Ethiopian (8:26-40)

- a. Philip led the great revival in Samaria with large crowds. Now, God calls him to bring the message to just one man. He meets the treasurer of Candace [KAN-duh-see], the queen of Ethiopia [ee-thee-OH-pee-uh] (8:27). The man was probably a convert to the Jewish faith (8:27-28).
- b. The Ethiopian [ee-thee-OH-pee-un] was reading from the prophet Isaiah (8:28). He was a student of God’s Word, but he needed guidance (8:31). God’s Spirit told Philip to go to the man (8:29). But God’s Spirit was already working in the heart of the Ethiopian. Philip “told him the good news about Jesus” (8:35).
- c. The Ethiopian became a convert and was baptized (8:36-38). This fulfilled the prophecy in Psalm 68:31. Perhaps, this was the first person of African race to find Christ. This Ethiopian convert was important in helping believers to become witnesses in all the world, not just in Jerusalem.

B. The Conversion of Saul (9:1-31)

1. The Man Saul

Luke now introduces Saul, truly one of the greatest of Jesus’ followers. Saul stands out as a Christian disciple and missionary. He was also a great interpreter of Christian thought and doctrine as seen in his writings in the New Testament. He wrote many of the books in the New Testament. Some Bible scholars say Paul wrote as many as 13 of the New Testament books.

Saul brought together Greek, Hebrew, and Roman influences. As a native of Tarsus [TAHR-sus], he was raised in Greek culture. As a Pharisee trained by Gamaliel, he was a Jew in his heart. As a Roman citizen, he had a worldwide outlook that prepared him to become the apostle to the Gentiles [JEN-tielz] (9:15). Saul was trained as a rabbi in the Old Testament scriptures. He was certainly more familiar with the Word of God than any of Jesus’ disciples. All of these influences and training prepared Saul in ways none of the other 12 apostles could match.



2. Saul's Religion as a Jew

What kind of man was Saul, who became a chief persecutor of Christ's followers (9:1-2)? By his own testimony, he was outwardly blameless (Philippians 3:4-6), but, he was inwardly defeated (Romans 7:14-25). Saul kept the law of Moses carefully, yet he failed to achieve peace in his heart. Before he was saved, he sought for righteousness, but he did not find it. His zeal in persecuting the Church was likely a symptom of his inner conflict. He had heard Stephen's wise arguments (6:8-10). He had felt Stephen's spirit (7:58-8:1). Saul probably saw in those he was persecuting the peace he could not find for himself in Moses' law. Saul had doubts, which simply made him angry and determined to stamp out or destroy Christ's followers.

3. Saul's Conversion (9:3-9)

- a. On his way to Damascus [duh-MAS-kus], Jesus came to Saul in a supernatural way. He saw a light from heaven that forced him to the ground (9:3-4). Then Jesus Christ confronted Saul with these words, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (9:4). And Saul became blind (9:8-9). Many years later, Saul (then Paul) wrote, ". . . he [Jesus] appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born" (1 Corinthians 15:8). In this encounter with Christ, Paul considered he received his credentials as an apostle (Galatians 1:1).
- b. Let's consider this miracle of Saul's conversion. On the road to Damascus, the chief enemy of the Church was subdued. Only the true appearance of the living Christ could bring about the radical transformation of this Pharisee. What a great argument for the Resurrection!
- c. In Saul's conversion, we see a revolution of theology. In this moment the idea of righteousness by works was destroyed. In its place was a new kind of righteousness, "the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith" (Philippians 3:5-9). The center of Saul's life was changed from self to Christ (Galatians 2:20). The gospel of salvation by grace was revealed to Saul by Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:11-12).

4. A Disciple Named Ananias (9:10-19)

God chose a man named Ananias in Damascus to do His bidding (9:10). He is described as "a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there" (22:12). (This is not the same Ananias in chapter 5.) When God told Ananias to go to Saul, Ananias was reluctant, which is understandable. He had heard how Saul had persecuted believers (9:13-

Notes



14). But Ananias obeyed the Lord. When Ananias found Saul, he greeted him as a new believer (9:17). Ananias's mission was twofold. He laid his hands on Saul (9:17). Then he said, "Jesus . . . has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (9:17). Luke said "scales fell from Saul's eyes" and his sight was restored (9:18). Although the Scripture does not say it, Bible scholars believe Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit at that moment. Then he was baptized (9:18).

Water baptism followed immediately as an outward sign of Saul's inner cleansing (9:18; 22:16). Faith in Jesus Christ, not baptism, brought salvation to Saul. Nothing we do can will save us. Baptism and good works cannot make us righteous. While baptism should follow placing faith in Christ to save us, it only symbolizes the washing of regeneration (22:16; Titus 3:5).

5. Saul Preached in the Synagogues (9:19-22)

Saul immediately began to preach in Damascus that "Jesus is the Son of God" (9:20). This is very important. Earlier, the deity of Christ was blasphemy to Saul. This was the reason he tried to stamp out or destroy the followers of Christ. But the appearance of the divine Christ changed Saul's thinking (26:9-15). He was now free to proclaim the doctrine he once opposed in the name of God. He wrote an important statement of doctrine in Philippians 2:5-11.

6. Saul's Silent Years (9:19, 23, 25)

In his letter to the Galatians, Saul wrote that he went to Arabia for a certain time (Galatians 1:17). Then he returned to Damascus. Not much is written about this time in his life. It was probably a time of study and reflection upon the meaning of his new experience in Christ. He was reflecting on his belief in Jesus Christ as He (Jesus) was revealed in the Old Testament. In his letter to the Galatians, Saul wrote that after three years he went to Jerusalem (Galatians 1:18).

7. Saul Visited Jerusalem (9:23-30)

While Saul was preaching in Damascus, some Jew wanted to kill him (9:23). Where once he hunted followers of Christ, now he was being hunted by his own people. He was forced to leave the city quickly (9:25). When he arrived in Jerusalem, the people, even the disciples, were afraid of him (9:26). They remembered how Saul had persecuted them. But Barnabas proved to be a true friend. He took Saul to the apostles and spoke on his behalf (9:27). Saul enjoyed a brief ministry in Jerusalem (9:29). Saul was then sent to his home in Tarsus (9:30). At least seven or eight years passed before we read anything else about him in Acts.

Notes



Cornelius [kohr-NEE-lih-us]
Herod [HAIR-ud]
Samaria [suh-MAIR-ee-uh]
Samaritans [suh-MAIR-uh-tunz]
Candace [KAN-duh-see]
Ethiopia [ee-thee-OH-pee-uh]
Ethiopian [ee-thee-OH-pee-un]
Tarsus [TAHR-sus]
Gentiles [JEN-tielz]
Damascus [duh-MAS-kus]

Notes

C. Peter in Lydda and Joppa (9:32-43)

In telling the story, Luke leaves Saul in Tarsus for a time and returns to the story of Peter. This time, Peter is in Lydda [LID-uh] and Joppa [JAHP-uh], both near the seacoast.

1. Healing of Aeneas [uh-NEE-us] (9:32-35). First, Peter visited the believers in Lydda. He found a man who had been paralyzed for eight years (9:33). Peter told Aeneas Jesus Christ healed him and told him to get up. And immediately the man stood up (9:34). All the people who witnessed this miracle became believers (9:35).

2. The raising of Tabitha [TAB-uh-thuh] from the dead (9:36-42). In Joppa there was a believer named Tabitha or Dorcas [DOHR-kus] (9:36). Joppa was near Lydda (9:38). Tabitha was known for doing good deeds (9:36). While Peter was in Lydda, Tabitha became ill and died (9:37). So, two men went to Lydda and urged Peter to go with them to Joppa (9:38). When Peter prayed and told Tabitha to get up, she opened her eyes and sat up (9:41). Again, many people believed because of this miracle (9:42).

3. The Man Cornelius (10:1-8)

- a. Cornelius was a centurion of the Italian or Roman military (10:1), which means he was in charge of 100 soldiers. Cornelius lived in Caesarea (10:1). In the Roman military, a legion had about 6,000 men. A legion was divided into 10 groups of 600 each. Each group was divided into 6 centuries of 100 men. Centurions were leaders of a century. The three other centurions in the New Testament were men of high character (Matthew 8:5-10; Matthew 27:54; Acts 27:1).
- b. Cornelius was a devout and God-fearing man (10:2). The term God-fearer meant he was a Gentile who believed in the one true God. Yet, he had not become a circumcised believer as required of



the Jews. (Circumcision is a ceremony required of all Jewish male worshipers of God.) He was generous in giving to people in need and faithfully prayed to God (10:2). His life was pleasing to God (10:4).

- c. Cornelius had a vision while praying (10:3). He, a Gentile, was asked to send for Peter, a Jew, to come to him (10:5). And Cornelius obeyed (10:7-8).

4. Peter, God's Messenger (10:9-23)

- a. God must get Peter ready for his mission to this Gentile. First, his Jewish prejudice must be subdued. The Holy Spirit cleanses the heart of believers (Acts 15:8-9). Prejudice is remedied as the believer grows in Christ and receives new light from God.
- b. Peter was in Joppa, and he went up on the roof to pray (10:9). While he prayed, he had a vision and was confronted with his Jewish prejudice (10:9-16). The Jews were forbidden to eat certain meat. When the voice told him to kill and eat the animals (10:12-13), he was surprised. His response was no, because he had never eaten any unclean animals (10:14). But the voice told Peter not to call anything unclean God has made clean (10:15). "This happened three times" (10:16) and left Peter wondering what this meant (10:17).
- c. The next day, Peter goes to Cornelius (10:17-23). The Holy Spirit assured Peter this was the right thing to do (10:20).

5. The Meeting of Peter and Cornelius (10:24-33)

- a. When Peter went into the house of Cornelius, Cornelius bowed down before him in reverence (10:25). But Peter let Cornelius know they both were only men, and one was not more important than the other (10:26).
- b. Peter found a large group of people at the house of Cornelius (10:27). He told them right away a Jew was not to associate with Gentiles (10:28). But he related how God showed him it was all right to be with Gentiles (10:28). God had broken down Peter's prejudice. God had worked in the hearts of Peter and Cornelius so they could come together as Jew and Gentile.

6. Peter's Message and Result (10:34-48)

- a. Peter begins to preach to Cornelius and those who had gathered

Notes



Notes

(10:34). He began by saying “God does not show favoritism” but accepts people from every nation and race (10:34-35). What a powerful message for today! The gospel is for all people everywhere in the world.

- b. Peter did not get to finish his message. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message (10:44). The gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles, upon men who were not circumcised (10:44-46). Pentecost was repeated, only this time among Gentiles. Peter compared this event with the first Pentecost (10:47). Peter then had the people baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (10:48).
- c. Consider these differences. In Saul’s experience, Ananias, a layman, laid his hands on him. Then Saul was baptized (9:17-18). With the Samaritans’ experience, they had been baptized before they received the Holy Spirit. Apostles, not a layman, had placed their hands on the people when they received the Holy Spirit (8:16-17). We see another difference in the story of the people in the house of Cornelius. Peter did not place or lay his hands on the people. The people just yielded their hearts to the Holy Spirit, and He came to them. And then the people were baptized (10:44, 48). There is a very important truth here. The method or how it is done is not what is most important. But being filled with the Holy Spirit is essential in the life of believers.

7. The Church Accepts Peter’s Action (11:1-18)

- a. The rumor about what Peter did at the house of Cornelius reached the believers in Jerusalem (11:1). When Peter went to Jerusalem, “the circumcised believers criticized him” (11:2). To them, Peter had broken the Jewish laws. But Peter explained in detail what had happened in Caesarea (11:4-17). When the people listened to Peter, they were glad Gentiles could be believers as well (11:18).
- b. Later, Saul (Paul) encountered the same attitude by the Jews in accepting the Gentiles as believers (see chapter 15). Some of the people had difficulty understanding God does not show favoritism. This is still true today. Some people think God favors only certain people. But the Bible teaches God loves all His creation. Jesus died for all people in all the world (John 3:16).

Lydda [LIH-duh]
Joppa [JAH-puh]
Aeneas [uh-NEE-us]



Tabitha [TAB-uh-thuh]
Dorcas [DOHR-kus]

Notes

D. The Ministry of Barnabas and Saul in Antioch (11:19-30)

1. A New Christian Center Emerges (11:19-21)

- a. In telling the story, Luke moves the place of the Early Christian Church to Antioch [AN-tee-ahk] in Syria. Antioch was a large and important city in the Roman world. The events in chapters 11:19-30 and 12 in Antioch and Jerusalem occurred before the events in chapters 10 and 11:1-18.
- b. After the death of Stephen, those who were persecuted for their faith moved to places where they would be safe (11:19). In Antioch the Greeks heard the good news of Jesus and a large number believed (11:20-21).

2. New Leaders Appear (11:22-26)

- a. The main person in this part of the story was Barnabas. The church in Jerusalem sent him to oversee the growing number of believers (11:22). Barnabas was “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith” (11:24), and again a large number believed (11:24). He was the “Son of Encouragement” (4:36) to these new converts.
- b. Barnabas evidently saw he needed help. He knew the Church in Antioch had grown beyond his ability to supervise it by himself. So he went to Tarsus to find Saul and brought him back to Antioch (11:25-26). Barnabas recognized in Saul the qualifications for ministry in this Greek city. For a year Barnabas and Saul conducted a teaching ministry (11:26).

3. A New Name Given (11:26)

“The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” This is a significant verse in the Bible. This means these believers had become a topic of conversation in the city. This term “Christian” was probably given by outsiders. This also means the Church was now recognized as distinct from Judaism or the Jewish faith. Today, the term Christian refers to everyone who believes in and accepts Jesus Christ.

4. The New Church Was Compassionate (11:27-30)

A famine came to the whole Roman world as predicted by “some prophets” (11:28). The Christians at Antioch became concerned about their fellow



believers in Judea and the area around Jerusalem (11:29). This shows their Christian love for others and that they were part of a universal Church. The Christians in Antioch then sent Barnabas and Saul with their gifts to the elders in Jerusalem (11:30). Today, Christians show their love for people in need by their deeds of compassion. Whenever they do, they do this for Jesus Christ (see Matthew 25:34-40).

E. The Persecution Under Herod (chapter 12)

Luke gives us a last look at Jerusalem as the center of the Early Church. He helps us take a look at the Jews' rejection of the gospel. He also shows us how evil King Herod was.

1. The Man Herod (12:1, 3)

Herod Agrippa [uh-GRIP-uh] was the grandson of Herod the Great (Matthew 2:1-18). Herod Agrippa was a cruel, evil man. He had been a citizen of Rome for 30 years, yet he still had great interest in the Jews. He certainly wanted to please the Jewish people (12:3).

2. The Persecution (12:2-19)

- a. Herod's first act was to kill James, the brother of John (12:2; Matthew 4:21). When he saw how this pleased the Jews, he arrested Peter and put him in jail (12:3-5). But Peter miraculously escaped from prison (12:7-11). Even though the Church prayed for him (12:5), they could not believe it when he was released (12:15).
- b. Here is the mystery of the providence of God. James was martyred, but Peter was released and lived. This does not prove prayer is not answered. It only emphasizes the fact that God's ways are at times beyond our understanding. We can be encouraged by this story of Peter. The answers to our prayers often accomplish more than what we expect (12:12-16).

3. Herod's Death (12:20-25)

Divine judgment fell on Herod, but not for his persecution of the Church. Rather, it was because he "did not give praise to God" (12:23). He allowed the people to claim he was a god, not a man (12:22). An angel of the Lord "struck him down" and he died (12:23). And Herod disappeared from the story of the Early Church. Josephus [joh-SEE-fus], a Jewish historian, confirmed Luke's story of the death of Herod.

Notes



Antioch [AN-tee-ahk]
Syria [SIHR-ee-uh]
Agrippa [uh-GRIP-uh]
Josephus [joh-SEE-fus]



Study Questions

Notes

Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Acts and Acts of the Apostles are the same book in the Bible.
 - A. True
 - B. False
2. Who is the writer of Acts?
 - A. Peter
 - B. Paul
 - C. Theophilus
 - D. Jesus
 - E. none of these
3. Who was Theophilus?
 - A. Luke's father
 - B. Paul's brother
 - C. one of Jesus' 12 disciples
 - D. a friend of Luke
 - E. none of these
4. How many books of the New Testament did Luke write?
 - A. 1
 - B. 2
 - C. 3
 - D. 4
 - E. none of these
5. The "we" sections in Acts indicate Luke wrote Acts.
 - A. True
 - B. False
6. Luke was a Jew, since he was born in Jerusalem.
 - A. True
 - B. False
7. Which is true of Luke?
 - A. He was a doctor.
 - B. He was an author.
 - C. He traveled with Paul.
 - D. all of these
 - E. none of these



8. The purpose of Luke in writing Acts was to write a biography of Paul.
A. True
B. False
9. The Book of Acts tells how Jesus' ministry continued through the Church.
A. True
B. False

Chapter 2. Sections A and B

10. What does the word *incarnate* mean?
A. God became a man.
B. Jesus was both God and man.
C. both of these.
D. neither of these.
11. The suffering and death of Jesus are known as His passion.
A. True
B. False
12. Jesus' return to earth is also known as the Second Coming.
A. True
B. False
13. What did Jesus tell his disciples to do?
A. To wait for Israel to be restored.
B. To hide from people at the Pentecost Festival.
C. To wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
D. all of these
E. none of these.
14. What truth does the Ascension suggest?
A. Jesus went up to place where He can be seen by people on earth.
B. Jesus lives with God the Father.
C. Jesus will never return to earth again.
D. all of these
E. none of these

Notes



15. How many followers of Jesus were waiting in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit?
 - A. 12
 - B. 66
 - C. 100
 - D. about 120
 - E. more than 3,000
16. Joseph was elected by the apostles to take the place of Matthias.
 - A. True
 - B. False
17. Pentecost was celebrated 50 days after the Sabbath of the Passover week.
 - A. True
 - B. False
18. At Pentecost the followers of Jesus were baptized with the Holy Spirit.
 - A. True
 - B. False
19. What was a sign of Pentecost?
 - A. a strong wind
 - B. speaking in tongues or languages
 - C. tongues of fire on people's heads
 - D. all of these
 - E. none of these

Chapter 2: Section C

20. Peter's sermon at Pentecost was based on the prophet Joel.
 - A. True
 - B. False
21. Peter said, "Every person who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
 - A. True
 - B. False

Notes



Notes

22. What is the best proof of the power of Pentecost in believers' lives?
 - A. gifts of the Spirit in believers' lives
 - B. believers preaching about Jesus Christ
 - C. believers giving money to the church
 - D. the daily life of believers
 - E. none of these
23. Why did Peter and John go to the Temple at three o'clock?
 - A. to make a sacrifice
 - B. to pray
 - C. to preach
 - D. to do a miracle
 - E. all of these
24. Peter and John were arrested _____.
 - A. because of what they were teaching.
 - B. because they healed a crippled man.
 - C. because the Sadducees became angry.
 - D. all of these.
 - E. none of these.
25. The opposition to the early apostles caused the Church to grow.
 - A. True
 - B. False
26. God required all the believers in the Early Church to sell their lands and houses.
 - A. True
 - B. False
27. Ananias and Sapphira died _____.
 - A. because they deceived the apostles.
 - B. because they did not respect God.
 - C. because of their selfishness and lust.
 - D. all of these.
 - E. none of these.
28. Which is true of the organization in the Early Church?
 - A. There was a dispute between Grecian Jews and the Hebrew Jews.
 - B. They choose 7 men (deacons) to help distribute the food to widows.
 - C. Deacons were men who were filled with the Spirit and were wise.
 - D. all of the above.
 - E. none of the above.



29. Which statement is true of Stephen?
- A. He was one of the seven deacons.
 - B. He was a shy and timid man who did not like to preach.
 - C. When Stephen was arrested, he fought those who came to kill him.
 - D. Stephen's name means "death."
 - E. none of these
30. Stephen was the first Christian martyr.
- A. True
 - B. False

Chapter 3: Sections A and B

31. The Samaritans did not receive the gift of the Holy Spirit because they refused to believe.
- A. True
 - B. False
32. Which is true about Philip?
- A. He was one of original deacons in the Church.
 - B. He was an evangelist.
 - C. He led a revival in Samaria.
 - D. He told an African man about the good news of Jesus.
 - E. all of these.
33. The man from Ethiopia was probably the first Christian convert from Africa.
- A. True
 - B. False
34. Saul was one of the 12 apostles of Jesus when Jesus was alive on earth.
- A. True
 - B. False
35. Which is true about Saul?
- A. He was born in Tarsus.
 - B. He kept the law of Moses faithfully.
 - C. He was trained as a rabbi.
 - D. He persecuted the followers of Jesus.
 - E. all of these.

Notes



36. Saul approved of the stoning of Stephen.
A. True
B. False
37. Which is true about Saul's conversion?
A. He was on the way to Damascus.
B. He saw a bright light and heard a voice.
C. He became blind.
D. all of these.
E. none of these.
38. Saul's conversion shows us the gospel of salvation is by God's grace.
A. True
B. False
39. Which is true about Saul after his conversion?
A. He immediately began to preach about Jesus.
B. He went to Ethiopia for about five years.
C. All the Jews loved him because he was a changed man.
D. all of these
E. none of these

Chapter 3. Sections C, D, and E

40. God used Peter to raise Tabitha (Dorcas) from the dead.
A. True
B. False
41. Which is true about Cornelius?
A. As a centurion, he was in charge of 1,000 men.
B. He was a devout man who had been circumcised.
C. He lived in Joppa.
D. all of these
E. none of these
42. Cornelius believed in the one true God even though he served in the Roman military.
A. True
B. False
43. Before Peter met Cornelius, he was prejudiced against Gentiles.
A. True
B. False

Notes



Notes

44. Which is true about the vision Peter had?
 - A. He was praying in the city of Caesarea when he had the vision.
 - B. He saw all kinds of animals and birds he was not supposed to eat.
 - C. The vision happened four times.
 - D. all of these
 - E. none of these
45. Our prejudice is automatically removed when we receive Christ as Savior.
 - A. True
 - B. False
46. It is very important how we receive the Holy Spirit and when we are baptized.
 - A. True
 - B. False
47. Which is true of Barnabas?
 - A. He was sent by the church in Jerusalem to supervise the church in Antioch.
 - B. He was known as the "Son of Encouragement."
 - C. He befriended Saul and asked Saul to help him in Antioch.
 - D. all of these
 - E. none of these
48. The disciples were first called Christians in Jerusalem.
 - A. True
 - B. False
49. Which is true of Herod Agrippa?
 - A. He was the father of Herod the Great.
 - B. He had James and Peter killed.
 - C. He died because he would not give praise to God.
 - D. all of these
 - E. none of these
50. God answers our prayers at times in ways we cannot understand.
 - A. True
 - B. False



Pronunciation Guide

Abraham [AY-bruh-ham]
Aeneas [uh-NEE-us]
Agrippa [uh-GRIP-uh]
Ananias [an-uh-NIE-us]
Antioch [AN-tee-ahk]
Barnabas [BAHR-nuh-bus]
Caesarea [SES-uh-REE-uh]
Candace [KAN-duh-see]
Cilicia [suh-LIH-shee-uh or suh-LIH-shuh]
Cornelius [kohr-NEE-lih-us]
Damascus [duh-MAS-kus]
Dorcas [DOHR-kus]
Ethiopia [ee-thee-OH-pee-uh]
Ethiopian [ee-thee-OH-pee-un]
Gamaliel [guh-MAY-lee-el]
Gentiles [JEN-tielz]
Grecian [GREE-shun]
Herod [HAIR-ud]
Jerusalem [juh-REW-suh-lum]
Joppa [JAH-puh]
Josephus [joh-SEE-fus]
Judaism [JEW-duh-iz-um]
Judas Iscariot [JEW-dus is-KAIR-ih-ut]
Lydda [LIH-duh]
Matthias [muh-THIE-us]
Nazareth [NAZ-uh-ruhth]
Palestine [PAL-us-tien]
Pentecost [PEN-tuh-cahst]
Philippi [FIL-uh-pie or fuh-LIH-pie]
Sadducees [SAD-yew-seez]
Samaria [suh-MAIR-ee-uh]
Samaritans [suh-MAIR-uh-tunz]
Sanhedrin [san-HED-ruhn or san-HEE-druhn]
Sapphira [suh-FIE-ruh]
Simon [SIE-muhn]
Syria [SIHR-ee-uh]
Tabitha [TAB-uh-thuh]
Tarsus [TAHR-sus]
Theophilus [thee-AHF-uh-lus]
Troas [TROH-az]