

“INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ACTS”

INTRODUCTION

The title is the "Acts of the Apostles", or "Acts of Apostolic Men". Acts, covering about 30 years, is the bridge between the gospels and the epistles. This account, written by Dr. Luke, (also the author of the gospel of Luke), is *not* an exhaustive account of all the apostles. Apart from Paul, only 3 other apostles are included in the narrative, John, Peter and James. Matthias is mentioned as taking Judas's place. (Barnabas is mentioned as one since he was sent by the Holy Spirit). These recorded events in Acts shaped world history as the gospel was spread. In a little more than 10 years, churches were established throughout the Mediterranean areas.

LUKE'S ACCOUNT

Interestingly, each gospel has its own focus: Matthew - Resurrection; Mark - Ascension; John - The Second Coming; and Luke - Promise of the Spirit. Luke went on a missionary journey with Paul, his 2nd, in **Acts 16:6-10**. Luke's accounts were sent to Theophilus first. He not only explained the gospel, but also what the gospel produced. Christians were spoken against everywhere (**28:22**) as it appeared to others that it was a subversive movement. After all, the starter of this movement, Jesus, was condemned to death by a Roman governor.

Luke spoke to eyewitnesses in his travels. Luke is included in Acts when he says "we". He is also spoken of in the epistles by Paul. **Colossians 4:14; Philemon 1:23, 24**. Dr. Luke also uses some medical terms and references in the book of **Acts, 3:7; 12:23; 13:11; 28:8**.

OUTLINE OF ACTS

Acts has some main sections: 1) Birth of the church (**Chap. 1-5**); 2) Persecution and spread (**Chapt. 6-9**); 3) Peter and Gentile Christians (**Chapt. 9:32-12:24**); 4) Church expansion from Antioch and Jerusalem (**Chapt. 12:25-15:35**); 5) Paul's other missionary trips (**Chapt. 15:36 - 28:31**).

Some general themes in Acts are: 1) How the Church is to operate - the instruction book of priorities and model of operation. 2) The Holy Spirit - the main influence in the church. (Leading pastors to get into God's Word). 3) The Power of the Word - hearing and believing! There are major speeches by Peter, Paul and Stephen. 4) Prayer - which is most often in difficult situations - **Acts 1:24; 4:23-31; 6:6; 8:15; 9:40; 12:5; 13:3; 14:23; 28:8**. Prayer accomplished more than Rome ever could!

While the church in Corinth was torn and divided, Acts speaks of *the unity* of how the church started and was meant to be! Outside pressure forced the church to recognize the common enemy. When the Lord turns up the heat, we get more focused!

CONSIDER

As we study Acts, let it cause a recalibration in us. Let's be dependent on the Holy Spirit. Pray! Let pressure make us stronger! Let the Word increase in us and let us be of one accord!

PRAY.....

- * That our health care workers would be protected and strengthened at this time.
- * That God's wisdom would be granted to our leaders.
- * That the Holy Spirit would refocus us as we study the God-inspired history of the early church!