

Acts: An Overview

How to Divide Acts

- By Luke's interest in:
 - Peter (chs. 1-12) = Jewish ministry
 - Paul (chs. 13-28) = Gentile ministry
 - Geographical expansion of the Gospel (see Acts 1:8)
 - Jerusalem (chs. 1-7)
 - Judea & Samaria (chs. 8-10)
 - To the ends of the earth (chs. 11-28)
- 1. *The primitive Church in Jerusalem (1:1-6:7)***
- Its preaching, common life, spread, and opposition
 - Every aspect is especially Jewish in nature and form
 - Jewish preaching forms
 - Jewish opposition
 - The Church's continued association with the Temple and synagogues
 - Ends with mention of a division between the Aramaic and Greek speaking believers (6:1)
- 2. *The 1st geographical expansion to the Jews (6:8-9:31)***
- Carried out by the Hellenistic Jewish Christians
 - Hellenistic = "Those who adopt Greek language and culture"
 - Primarily to Diaspora Hellenistic Jews
 - Diaspora = "The dispersion of the Jewish people, who were scattered due the events of the Babylonian captivity"
 - Though also to Samaritans & proselytes
 - Proselytes = "Gentiles who converted to Judaism"
 - This also includes Paul's conversion, who was
 - Hellenistic
 - A Jewish opponent to the Gospel
 - The one who would bring the Gospel to the Gentiles
 - Stephen's martyrdom is a key component to this expansion (8:1)

3. *The beginning of the mission to the Gentiles (9:32-12:24)*

- The conversion of Cornelius is a central story (ch. 10)
 - Told twice: Peter's vision & narrative event
 - This was brought about by a direct act of God via Peter
 - Since Peter was the leader of the Jewish-Christian mission, it made the Gentile Cornelius' conversion more poignant
 - God used it as a means of thrusting the Church to the Gentile world
- Also includes the birth of the Church in Antioch by Hellenistic Christians

4. *The 1st geographic expansion to the Gentiles (12:25-16:5)*

- Paul as the lead character
- A growing rejection of the Gospel by Jews
 - Because of its inclusion of Gentiles
- Includes the Council of Jerusalem (ch. 15)
 - Gentiles are not rejected
 - Jewish regulations are NOT put upon Gentile believers
 - Called to abstain from food polluted by idols, sexual immorality, the meat of strangled animals and blood
 - Lays the groundwork for the expansion to the rest of the Gentile world

5. *The Gospel expands to Europe (16:6-19:20)*

- A direct act of God
 - Paul's vision of the Macedonian (16:9)
- Marked by Jewish rejection & Gentile acceptance

6. *Movement to Rome (19:21-28:20)*

- A description of the events that move Paul and the Gospel to Rome
 - Rome = Center of the known world
- Interest in Paul's trials
 - Where 3 times he is shown innocent of wrongdoing

The Main Character

- The Holy Spirit is the key player in every movement of the book of Acts