# Introduction

## The story behind the Title

* The Acts of the Apostles is the story of how a group of fishermen took the Roman Empire by storm proliferating the teachings of their Messiah. This amazing book begins with Jesus’ ascension to the heavens and ends with Paul preaching in Rome, the capital of the great Roman empire. You could say that within 30 years the good news traveled from Jerusalem to Rome.
* Originally, as we might expect, these two volumes circulated together as one complete and independent *History*, but not for long. Early in the second century the four “canonical” Gospels (as we call them) were gathered together into one collection and began to circulate as the fourfold Gospel. This meant that the earlier volume of our twofold *History* was detached from its sequel and attached to three works by other writers which covered more or less the same ground, relating the story of Jesus and ending with the witness to his resurrection. The second volume was thus left to pursue a career of its own, but an important and influential career, as it proved.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The backbone of NT History

* Acts is closely related to both the Gospels and the New Testament Epistles, especially Paul’s. In connection with the Gospels, Acts continues the story of Jesus by including the apostles in a post-resurrection world. Of course, Acts is explicitly connected to one of the Gospels, Luke. Acts is also closely related to the New Testament Epistles as it provides a historical framework to put these letters in context. For example, without Acts, it would be difficult to construct a coherent “life of Paul’s ministry” using only the Pauline Epistles. Acts provides the information for Paul’s persecution of the church and his wonderful conversion, Paul’s three missionary journeys, his journey to Rome, his various companions, and more… In addition to providing a historical framework for many of the New Testament epistles, Acts provides us other basic information about early Christianity. For example, we learn about Pentecost, Stephen’s martyrdom, the joys and difficulties of the early church, the content of sermons, and various events related to solidifying the church’s mission to the Gentile lands.[[2]](#footnote-2)

# Date

* The writing of Acts most likely took place before the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70. Certainly an event of such magnitude would not have been ignored. This is especially true in light of one of the basic themes of the book: God’s turning to the Gentiles from the Jews because of the Jews’ rejection of Jesus Christ.
* Luke would have omitted an account of Paul’s death, traditionally dated from a.d. 66–68, if it had occurred before he wrote Acts.
* Nor did Luke mention the Neronian persecutions which began after the great fire of Rome in a.d. 64.
* Furthermore, a defense of Christianity before Nero by using the Book of Acts to appeal to what lower officials had ruled regarding Paul would have had little point at the time of the Neronian antagonism. At that time Nero was so intent on destroying the church, the defense set forth in Acts would have had little effect in dissuading him.
* The date usually accepted by conservative scholars for the writing of Acts is around a.d. 60–62. Accordingly the place of writing would be Rome or possibly both Caesarea and Rome. At the time of writing Paul’s release was either imminent or had just taken place.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Author

* The author of this amazing book is widely believed to have been “Luke the beloved physician” (Col. 4:14), who accompanied Paul on portions of his missionary journeys and was a Gentile, wrote both Luke and Acts. Critical scholars agree that the same author (or final editor) wrote both Luke and Acts, but that person is said to have been an unnamed Gentile who was *not* a companion of Paul.The traditional view is based on (1) the external evidence of church tradition that points only to Luke the physician and (2) the internal evidence of both Luke and Acts that dovetails with this. For purposes of this chapter, only the internal evidence of Acts is presented.
* Luke is mentioned by name in only three passages in the New Testament: Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; and 2 Timothy 4:11. In Colossians 4:14, Luke is called “the beloved physician,” and the context implies that he is a Gentile. In Philemon 24, Luke is called one of Paul’s “fellow workers.” Both of these comments are in the greetings section, indicating that Luke was with Paul at the time of the writing of these letters. Also, it is assumed that the Colossian church and Philemon, who was at the Colossian church, knew Luke to some degree. Assuming a traditional, conservative chronology of Paul, both of these letters were written while Paul was under house arrest in Rome. This would then relate to Acts 28:16–31. In 2 Timothy 4:11, Paul comments to Timothy, “Luke alone is with me.” Again, assuming a traditional, conservative chronology, 2 Timothy is Paul’s last canonical letter and written while he was under arrest in Rome for a second time. This second imprisonment occurred after the final events in Acts. This comment in 2 Timothy 4:11 also indicates that Timothy knew Luke. To summarize, Luke was a physician, a fellow worker and companion of Paul, and a Gentile. Also, he was with Paul at least in both his first and second Roman imprisonments. Finally, the Colossian church, Philemon, and Timothy knew Luke at least to some degree.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* References to various companions of Paul in these we-sections “Acts (16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:16)[[5]](#footnote-5)”at once distinguish the author from other of Paul’s close companions. Other well-known companions appearing in the Pauline epistles do not fit into the pattern set by these we-sections and can be located elsewhere at one time or another. Of the known close companions of Paul only Titus and Luke are never named in Acts. That Titus is not named is strange, but no one has ever seriously suggested that Titus was the author of Luke–Acts. This leaves only Luke as the probable author, and he is strongly supported by the external evidence[[6]](#footnote-6).
* Gordon Fee writes, “The same author who wrote the Gospel of Luke also wrote Acts. Both books are dedicated to a man named Theophilus. Acts 1:1 refers to the “first account” (the preceding, companion volume), and both works display similarities of thematic interest and writing style. The “we”-sections of Acts reveal that on Paul’s second missionary journey Luke accompanied him as far as Philippi (in Macedonia) and rejoined the apostle for the return trip to Palestine at the end of his third evangelistic tour. Likely, Luke relied on his own memory of eyewitnessed events and gleaned additional information from Paul and his other traveling companions (e.g., Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy), from Christians in Jerusalem, Antioch (Syria), and elsewhere, from the administrator-evangelist Philip, and from written documents such as the decree of the Jerusalem Council (15:23–29) and the letter of Claudius Lysias (23:26–30).”[[7]](#footnote-7)

# Day One- Questions

## Why is this book called “Acts of the Apostles?

## When was this book written? And why?

## Could we use the book of Acts as background for the Epistles? Why? And how?

## Who wrote this book? Who was he? Look at the **“we”** passages, what information can we know about the author?

# Literary Genre

* What is the genre of Acts? Scholars have proposed a range of possibilities—from history to biography to historical novel. Evangelicals have properly insisted that Luke intends to provide us with an historical account. The opening verses both of the Gospel and of Acts are ‘prefaces to a historical work’ and therefore inform the reader’s expectations concerning how each book is to be read. The centrality in Acts of the apostles, commissioned to be unique ‘eyewitnesses’ to Christ, simply confirms this assessment.
  + For example: Take a look at both prefaces, look at how Luke tells them what he is writing and informs that expectation.
  + **Luke 1:1**    Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, **2** just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, **3** it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, **to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; 4 so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught**.
  + **Acts 1:1**    **The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2** until the day when He was taken up *to heaven,* after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. **3** To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of* forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. **4** Gathering them together, **He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem**, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” *He said,* “you heard of from Me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”
* Two further comments merit reflection. First, some quarters of scholarship have questioned Luke’s accuracy and veracity as an historian. In response to such scholarship, there have been a number of helpful defenses of the historicity of Acts.[[8]](#footnote-8) At no point has Luke’s account been disproven with respect to its factual claims. On the contrary, the progress of research and investigation has only confirmed Luke’s trustworthiness as an historian.
  + Look at Luke 1:1-4, “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, **2** just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, **3** it seemed fitting for me as well, **having investigated everything carefully from the beginning**, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; **4** so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.”
* Second, it is important to remember that history, both in antiquity and in modern times, is ‘written … for moral, ethical, and polemical purposes, and not just to inform or entertain’.In keeping with Old Testament historiography, Luke’s record is both selective and crafted with a purpose. Also in keeping with Old Testament historiography, Luke’s historical narrative evidences considerable literary sophistication. It is important to keep in mind that these particular features of Acts are not indicators of Luke’s lack of interest in historical accuracy. On the contrary, they are marks of careful historiography and, in Luke’s case, wedded to a commitment to historical accuracy.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Chronology

On the basis of a few fixed dates and a number of likely hypotheses I venture to draw up the following chronological list[[10]](#footnote-10):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * *Event* | * *Date* |
| * Birth of Paul | * a.d. 5 |
| * Pentecost | * 30 |
| * Paul’s conversion | * 35 |
| * Escape from Damascus | * 37 |
| * Death of Agrippa I | * 44 |
| * Famine relief for Jerusalem | * 46 |
| * First missionary journey | * 46–48 |
| * Jerusalem Council | * 49 |
| * Jews expelled from Rome | * 49 |
| * Second missionary journey | * 50–52 |
| * Third missionary journey | * 52–55 |
| * Paul in Macedonia | * 56–57 |
| * Arrest and imprisonment | * 57–59 |
| * Voyage and shipwreck | * 59 |
| * House arrest in Rome | * 60–62 |
| * To Spain, Crete, Macedonia | * 63–67 |
| * Arrest and imprisonment | * 67 |
| * Death of Paul | * 67 or 68 |

# Day Two- Questions

## Acts’ genre is history. Why is history a genre that is included in the Bible? Why no just make everything a systematic theology?

## How can you trust Luke’s account? Why is that important?

## Read Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-5. Do you see any similarities? What are they? What do these tell us about Luke as a historian?

## Look at the above chronology. If the event appears in the book of Acts, add the verses. For example: Pentecost – 30 AD – Acts 2

# Purpose and Themes

## Purpose

* Why did Luke write the book of Acts?
* ***The main reason Luke writes (Luke 1:4)*** 
  + Luke 1:4 says, “so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.” This is the main reason why Luke wrote his two-volume disquisition on Christ and his followers. He writes so that Theophilus would know with certainty all the things he had been taught.
  + “Luke writes to encourage the church, telling them *this* is the plan of God. God’s kingdom scheme is not put on hiatus once Christ leaves; it simply kicks into a different gear. Jesus ascends, the Spirit falls, and Jesus’ witnesses are sent to Jerusalem (1–7), Judea and Samaria (8–12), and the ends of the earth (13–28). Peter receives most of the focus in the first half, while Paul’s journeys take up the second half. The narrative ends with Paul on trial and in prison. But the word about the King and the kingdom is not bound. It continues to spread.[[11]](#footnote-11)”

**Themes[[12]](#footnote-12) [[13]](#footnote-13)**

* Although the book of Acts is a historical account that expands over 30 years after Jesus’ crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, it is a book with clearly defined themes. Here are a few:
  + **The outworking of God’s Sovereign Plan**
    - Following the first volume of his gospel, Luke continues with the premise that God is sovereign even in the midst of something so heinous, like the crucifixion of Israel’s long-expected Messiah.

1. The *dei* Motif [18x in Luke; 22x in Acts] (Luke 2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 11:42; 12:12; 13:14, 16, 33; 15:32; 17:25; 18:1; 19:5; 21:9; 22:7, 37; 24:7, 26, 44; Acts 1:16, 21; 3:21; 4:12; 5:29; 9:6, 16; 14:22; 15:5; 16:30; 17:3; 18:21; 19:21, 36; 20:35; 21:22; 23:11; 24:19; 25:10, 24; 26:9; 27:21, 24, 26)
   1. Dei is a Greek verb that means, “**to be under necessity of happening,** ***it is necessary, one must, one has to,*** denoting compulsion of any kind.[[14]](#footnote-14)”
   2. In this case, Luke shows both in his gospel and in Acts that all these events that are occurring are not just a series of unlucky events, but they are guided by a sovereign God.
      * + - Example: **Luke 24:7** saying that the Son of Man **must be** delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”
          - **Luke 24:26** “**Was it not necessary** for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?”
          - **Luke 24:44**   Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms **must be fulfilled**.”
          - **Acts 1:16** “Brethren, the Scripture **had to be fulfilled**, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.
          - **Acts 1:21** “Therefore **it is necessary** that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us —
2. The Determination of God (Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 10:42; 17:26, 31)
   1. God’s sovereign outworking also touches the sufferings of the Messiah. All of it was in the determined plan of God.
   2. Example: “**Acts 2:23** this *Man,* delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.”
3. The Appointment of God (Acts 3:20; 10:41; 22:14; 26:16)
   1. God’s sovereign outworking is seen in how he appoints, or selected people to do his will. Even the Messiah was appointed.
   2. Example, “**Acts 3:20** and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you,”
4. The Fulfillment of Scripture (Luke 4:21; 18:31; 21:22; 22:37; 23:46; Acts 3:18; 13:27; 26:22-23)
   1. God’s sovereignty is not just fortune, but a plan from eternity past revealed in Scripture and fulfilled by his sovereign hand.
   2. Example: “**Luke 22:37** “For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, ‘AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS’; for that which refers to Me has *its* fulfillment.””
   3. “**Acts 3:18** “But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”
   * The Holy Spirit (Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 67; 2:25, 26, 27; 3:16, 22; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21; 11:13; 12:10, 12; Acts 1:2, 5, 8, 16; 2:4, 17, 18, 33, 38; 4:8, 25, 31; 5:3, 9, 32; 6:3, 5, 10; 7:51, 55; 8:15, 17, 18, 19, 29, 39; 9:17, 31; 10:19, 38, 44, 45, 47; 11:12, 15, 16, 24, 28; 13:2, 4, 9, 52; 15:8, 28; 16:6, 7; 19:2, 6; 20:23, 28; 21:4, 11; 28:25)
     + The theme of the Holy Spirit is summarized in 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
     + The Holy Spirit is poured out on the Jews in Jerusalem at Pentecost. The Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit when Peter and John arrive, pray, and place their hands on them. Next, the Holy Spirit instructs Peter to accompany the servants of Cornelius, travel to Caesarea, and preach the gospel to the Gentiles, represented by Cornelius and his household. The Holy Spirit descends upon them also. And last, in Ephesus Paul encounters disciples of John the Baptist, who are unaware of the coming of the Spirit. When Paul places his hands on these disciples, they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
   * Mission
     + The next topic is the missionary theme. Peter and the Eleven proclaim the gospel in Jerusalem chiefly to Aramaic-speaking Jews. Stephen preaches the Good News in the Synagogue of the Freedmen to Jews whose native tongue is Greek. Philip goes to Samaria, preaches the word, and baptizes the people. When the apostles arrive to accept the Samaritans as members of the church, Philip travels toward Gaza and tells the Ethiopian eunuch the meaning of Isaiah 53. After baptizing the Ethiopian, Philip preaches the gospel in numerous places along the Mediterranean coast and arrives in Caesarea. Peter extends his ministry beyond the city of Jerusalem and travels to Lydda and Joppa to strengthen the churches. From Joppa he journeys to Caesarea to teach the gospel in the house of Cornelius and to welcome the Gentiles into the church.
     + Paul, converted on the way to Damascus, preaches in the local synagogues of that city, goes to Jerusalem, where he debates with Greek-speaking Jews, voyages via Caesarea to Tarsus, and presumably starts churches in Cilicia and northern Syria. Barnabas is sent to Antioch to organize a church of Jewish and Gentile Christians. He and Paul are sent to Cyprus and to Asia Minor to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. On his second missionary journey, Paul extends his ministry to cross the Aegean Sea and begin mission work in Europe (Macedonia and Greece). During his third missionary journey, he writes a letter to the church in Rome in which he expresses the wish to visit the believers there. After two years of imprisonment, Paul arrives in the imperial city.
   * The Word (Luke 1:2, 4, 20, 29; 3:4; 4:22, 32, 36; 5:1, 15; 6:47; 7:7, 17; 8:11, 12, 13, 15, 21; 9:26, 28, 44; 10:39; 11:28, 12:10; 16:2; 20:3, 20; 21:33, 22:61; 23:9; 24:17, 19, 44; Acts 1:1; 2:22, 40, 41, 4:4, 29, 31; 5:5, 24; 6:2, 4, 5, 7; 7:22, 29; 8:4, 14, 21, 25; 10:29, 36, 44; 11:1, 19, 22; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 15, 26, 44, 46, 48, 49; 14:3, 12, 25; 15:6, 7, 15, 24, 27, 32, 35, 36; 16:6, 32, 36; 17:11, 13; 18:5, 11, 14, 15; 19:10, 20, 38, 40; 20:2, 7, 24, 32, 35, 38; 22:22)
     + The Word moves forth from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, to the ends of the earth.
   * The authority of the apostles and the Jerusalem church is another theme. The apostles are instrumental in organizing the church in Jerusalem, teaching the people the apostolic doctrine, receiving gifts for the poor, and appointing seven men to supervise the daily distribution of food. They also oversee the extension of the church among the Samaritans in Samaria and the Gentiles in Caesarea. The Jerusalem church commissions Barnabas to go to Antioch, and this church also gives leadership at the Jerusalem Council. And last, at the conclusion of every missionary tour, Paul visits Jerusalem to inform the church about the work he has performed.
   * The theme of opposition to the spread of the gospel is evident from beginning to end. The scoffers at Pentecost accuse the apostles of being intoxicated. The Sanhedrin arrests Peter and John for preaching at Solomon’s Colonnade. Ananias and Sapphira seek to undermine the integrity of the church through deception. The apostles are arrested, jailed, released by an angel, and scourged by order of the Sanhedrin. Stephen is stoned and dies; but Paul, experiencing a similar fate in Lystra, lives. Paul and Silas, flogged and jailed in Philippi, are driven from Thessalonica and Berea. But wherever the apostles meet opposition, the gospel is preached and the church flourishes. Satan’s efforts to block the spread of the gospel are not only futile; indeed, they aid the growth of the church.
     + Israel’s rejection: Luke 2:34; 11:49-51; 13:7-9, 28, 33-35; 14:16-24; 19:41-44
   * A last theme is the defense of the gospel. Jesus informed his disciples that they would be dragged before local councils, flogged in synagogues, and brought before governors and kings. He told them not to be afraid, because God would give them his Spirit who would speak for them and through them (Matt. 10:17–20). Peter addresses a crowd of thousands of Jews on Pentecost with the result that three thousand repent, believe, and are baptized. Standing in the half circle and facing the members of the Sanhedrin, Peter and John defend the cause of the gospel. They speak with such boldness that the members of the Sanhedrin have to acknowledge that the men had been disciples of Jesus. Peter rebukes Simon the sorcerer for desiring to purchase the gift of the Holy Spirit and Paul opposes the deceit of Bar-Jesus. Paul ably defends the gospel before Athenian philosophers and seeks to persuade two governors (Felix and Festus) and King Agrippa to become Christians. From one of Paul’s epistles we learn that, while in Rome under house arrest, Paul was instrumental in converting the palace guard and Caesar’s household (Phil. 1:13; 4:22). Luke depicts both Peter and Paul as defenders of the gospel of Christ.

# The First Century’s World (Map)

A map of the mediterranean sea

Description automatically generated

# Day 3 Questions

## What is the purpose of Acts? Where does Luke shows his reasoning?

## Look at the themes of the outworking of God’s sovereign plan. How should the reader respond to it?

## Why is it important to explore the issue of fulfilment in Luke/Acts? What has been fulfilled? Why should it matter?

## Why is the missionary theme so important in Acts? Give some examples of the extension of the gospel.

# Outline

MacArthur’s Outline[[15]](#footnote-15)

I. Jerusalem (1:1–8:4)

A. The beginning of the church (1:1–2:47)

B. The expansion of the church (3:1–8:4)

II. Judea and Samaria (8:5–12:25)

A. The witness to the Samaritans (8:5–25)

B. The conversion of a Gentile (8:26–40)

C. The conversion of the apostle to the Gentiles (9:1–31)

D. The witness to the Gentiles (9:32–12:25)

III. The remotest part of the earth (13:1–28:31)

A. The first missionary journey (13:1–14:28)

B. The Jerusalem council (15:1–35)

C. The second missionary journey (15:36–18:22)

D. The third missionary journey (18:23–21:16)

E. The journey to Rome (21:17–28:31)

OUTLINE[[16]](#footnote-16)

1. The Witness in Jerusalem (1:1–6:7)

A. The expectation of the chosen (chaps. 1–2)

1.The introduction (1:1–5)

2.The internment at Jerusalem (1:6–26)

3.The inception of the church (chap. 2) ***Progress report- 1:* “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (2:47).**

B. The expansion of the church at Jerusalem (3:1–6:7)

1. Opposition to the church (3:1–4:31)

2. Correction in the church (4:32–5:11)

3. Progression in the church (5:12–42)

4.Administration in the church (6:1–7) ***Progress report- 2:* “So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly” (6:7).**

II. The Witness in all Judea and Samaria (6:8–9:31)

A. The martyrdom of Stephen (6:8–8:1a)

1. The arrest of Stephen (6:8–7:1)

2. The address of Stephen (7:2–53)

3. The attack on Stephen (7:54–8:1a)

B. The ministry of Philip (8:1b–40)

1. In Samaria (8:1)

2. To the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40)

C. The message of Saul (9:1–31)

1. The conversion of Saul (9:1–19a)

2. The conflicts of Saul (9:19b–31)

***Progress report- 3:* “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria … was strengthened; and [it was] encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord” (9:31).**

III. The Witness to the Extremity of the Earth (9:32–28:31)

A. The extension of the church to Antioch (9:32–12:24)

1.The preparation of Peter for a universal gospel (9:32–10:48)

2.The preparation of the apostles for a universal gospel (11:1–18)

3.The preparation of the church at Antioch for a universal gospel (11:19–30)

4.The persecution of the church at Jerusalem (12:1–24) ***Progress report- 4:* “But the Word of God continued to increase and spread” (12:24).**

B. The extension of the church in Asia Minor (12:25–16:5)

1. The call and dedication of Barnabas and Saul (12:25–13:3) *[First missionary journey, chaps.* 13–14*]*

2. The circuit in Asia Minor (13:4–14:28)

3. The conference at Jerusalem (15:1–35)

4. The confirmation of the churches in Asia Minor (15:36–16:5) *[Second missionary journey, 15:36–18:22]*

***Progress report-5:* “So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers” (16:5).**

C. The extension of the church in the Aegean area (16:6–19:20)

1. The call to Macedonia (16:6–10)

2. The conflicts in Macedonia (16:11–17:15)

3. The crusade in Achaia (17:16–18:18)

4. The conclusion of the second missionary journey (18:19–22)

5. The conquest of Ephesus (18:23–19:20) *[Third missionary journey, 18:23–21:16]*

***Progress report -6:* “In this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (19:20).**

D. The extension of the church to Rome (19:21–28:31)

1. The completion of the third journey (19:21–21:16)

2. The captivity at Jerusalem (21:17–23:32)

3. The captivity at Caesarea (23:33–26:32)

4. The captivity at Rome (chaps. 27–28) ***Progress report 7****:* “Paul … welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” (28:30–31).

# Commentary

## The prologue (1:1-5)

* **Acts 1:1**    The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,
* Of all the New Testament writers, only Luke used the form of a literary prologue. Such prologues were a convention with the writers of his day, and the use of them suggests that Luke saw himself as a producer of literature for the learned public. Acts begins with a “secondary prologue,” a device used for introducing new segments to works consisting of more than one book. Luke’s, of course, was a two-volume work; and Luke 1:1–4 is the “primary preface” for his entire work, including Acts. In Hellenistic literature a secondary preface usually consisted of a brief summary of the prior volume followed by a short introduction to the matter to be covered in the new volume. The preface of Acts gives a summary of the Third Gospel: “All that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up.” There is, however, no introduction to the content of the new volume. The book is dedicated to Theophilus, without the formality of the title “most excellent” found in the first volume (Luke 1:3).[[17]](#footnote-17)
* The question is who is Theophilus?
  + **Theophilus** may have been Luke’s patron who financed the writing of Luke and Acts. At any rate he was a believer in Christ. These two books would confirm and instruct Theophilus, as well as the church of Christ, in the faith (cf. Luke 1:1–4).[[18]](#footnote-18)
  + The name means “friend of God” and applies to both Jew and Gentile. In the Gospel prologue, Luke calls Theophilus “most excellent.” This description also occurs in addresses to the Roman governors Felix and Festus (see Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25). We assume that Theophilus belongs to the educated, ruling class of society. He is a God-fearer who attends the worship services in a Jewish synagogue but objects to circumcision. Hence, he is not a convert to Judaism, but like the Roman centurion Cornelius (10:1–2) he worships the Lord God. By dedicating his Gospel to Theophilus (Luke 1:3), Luke introduces him to Jesus Christ in word and deed. And although Luke gives no further details about him in Acts, we surmise that by reading the Gospel Theophilus has become a Christian.[[19]](#footnote-19)
* “about all that Jesus began to do and teach,”
* *All that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven* summarizes the contents of Luke’s *former book.* Jesus is presented in the Gospel as being ‘powerful in word and deed before God and all the people’ (Lk. 24:19), and the narrative ends with his ascension (24:51). The opening verses of Acts suggest that Luke is about to narrate what Jesus continued *to do and to teach* after his ascension, through his Spirit and the ministry of his followers.[[20]](#footnote-20)[[21]](#footnote-21) As Kistemaker writes, “Luke implies that his account in Acts is a continuation of what Jesus said and did as recorded in the Gospel. Luke writes about Jesus, who is the subject of both the Gospel and Acts.[[22]](#footnote-22)”
* Verse 2, “**2** until the day when He was taken up *to heaven,* after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.”
* Jesus’ earthly ministry ended on the day of his ascension. The passive voice of the verb (ἀνελήμφθη) “he was taken up” implies God as causing Jesus to be taken up into heaven. The same verb is used for Elijah’s ascension into heaven. [[23]](#footnote-23)
* Central to Luke’s purpose is the indication that Jesus’ ascension took place *after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit.*[[24]](#footnote-24)
* In his Gospel, Luke already mentioned this period when Jesus instructed his disciples after the resurrection, opening their understanding of the Scriptures, commissioning them for a mission to all the nations, and promising the gift of the Spirit (Luke 24:44–49). This period of instruction and its closure at the ascension will receive fuller attention in the narrative of Acts that immediately follows (1:3–11). The period of instruction was a time of transition. In the Gospel it was the time when Jesus completed his earthly ministry. In Acts it was the time when Jesus prepared the apostles for theirs.[[25]](#footnote-25)
* The statement in v. 2 is also the first reference to the Holy Spirit in Acts. Seen in the context of Luke’s earlier references to the Spirit of God in the gospel, he envisages here the disciples as having experienced the Holy Spirit as divine presence addressing them, as they had already come under the influence of the Spirit when they accepted Jesus as God’s emissary and his teaching as the expression of the presence of God’s Spirit upon him.[[26]](#footnote-26)

# Day Four Questions

## Why did Luke write an introduction to Acts?

## Who is Acts address to? Who is this person? What does Luke say to him?

## What does Acts 1:1 imply about Luke’s gospel account?

## Why did Luke mention the ascension again? Didn’t he do that in Luke 24:50-53?

* **3** To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of* forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.
* The Lord’s post-resurrection appearances attested the reality of the Resurrection. Christ **gave many convincing proofs** of this. The word “proofs” (*tekmēriois*) occurs only here in the New Testament and looks at demonstrable evidence in contrast with evidence provided by witnesses. In other words, the Resurrection was proven by touch, sight, and feel (cf. Luke 24:39–40; 1 John 1:1).[[27]](#footnote-27)
  + According to the four Gospel accounts, Acts, and Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians, Jesus appeared ten times in the period between Easter and Ascension Day. He showed himself to

1. The women at the tomb (Matt. 28:9–10)

2. Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9–11; John 20:11–18)

3. Two men of Emmaus (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13–32)

4. Peter in Jerusalem (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5)

5. Ten disciples (Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–23)

6. Eleven disciples (John 20:24–29; 1 Cor. 15:5)

7. Seven disciples fishing in Galilee (John 21:1–23)

8. Eleven disciples in Galilee (Matt. 28:16–20; Mark 16:14–18)

9. Five hundred persons (presumably in Galilee; 1 Cor. 15:6)

10. James, the brother of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:7)

* + The last appearance of Jesus occurred when he ascended to heaven from the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem. All these appearances show, says Luke, that “[Jesus] presented himself alive, after his suffering, by many convincing proofs.” The work that Jesus began to do during his earthly ministry continues because Jesus lives.[[28]](#footnote-28)
* *“*appearing to them over *a period of* forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God*”*. This may be simply a round number, but it fits in with the fact that there were fifty days between Easter and Pentecost.
  + During this period the theme of Jesus’ teaching is said to have been the *kingdom of God*, a phrase which elsewhere sums up the theme of his earthly ministry (Luke 4:43), and signifies the saving, sovereign action of God through him.
  + The point is that this is to continue to be the theme of the witness of the church, which will thus follow on from the preaching of Jesus (8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31), although there will inevitably be new elements and a new emphasis as Jesus himself becomes part of the message (28:31). It follows that the church can take up the message of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, and make it part of its own.[[29]](#footnote-29)
* **4** Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” *He said,* “you heard of from Me;
* The phrase, “gathering them together” implies someone who has a mean with someone else… a better translation could be “while eating with them” or “while staying with them.”
* During these meals, Jesus is giving instructions to the disciples.
  + “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise my Father made.” We should see this command which Jesus gives his apostles in the light of the historical context. After his resurrection, Jesus instructed the disciples to return to Galilee (Matt. 28:10; Mark 16:7). They readily complied for two reasons. First, they would be able to see Jesus again in Galilee, as he had said. Next, they had no desire to remain in Jerusalem, the place where the Jews had killed Jesus. Nevertheless, after the resurrection, Jesus already had told them that, beginning in Jerusalem, they would proclaim repentance and forgiveness in his name to all nations. He said, “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49).[[30]](#footnote-30)
* **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”
* Luke quotes Jesus’ promise given to the disciples. He identifies the “promise of the Father” with John the Baptist’s prophecy of the coming Messiah who would cleanse (i.e., restore) Israel through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16).[[31]](#footnote-31)
* To baptize literally means to immerse a person in water or to deluge him with it, usually as a means of cleansing. When the term is applied to the Spirit, it appears to refer to the pouring out of the Spirit from on high by God and is associated with the forgiveness of sins (2:38)[[32]](#footnote-32)
* “not many days from now” -- In Acts 1:5, Luke uses the Greek word “*litotes”*, a favorite rhetorical device in which a statement is made by negating the opposite idea. Here “not after many days” means “very soon” (for other examples of Lukan litotes, see Acts 4:20; 5:26; 12:18; 14:28; 15:2; 17:4, 12; 19:11, 23, 24; 20:12; 21:39; 25:6; 26:19, 26; 27:14, 20; 28:2).[[33]](#footnote-33)

# Day Five Questions

## What were some of these convincing proofs? Why was this necessary?

## What does Luke mean that Jesus spoke to them ‘of the things concerning the kingdom of God?’

## Why did the disciples commanded not to leave Jerusalem? Is it because it’s a holy city? What is the reason behind it?

## Luke mentions the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Who said this in the gospel of Luke and where?

APENDIX

EXCURSUS:

**Structure/Outline of Acts**

The outline of Acts can be concentrated on the church in Jerusalem (Acts 1–7), on the church in Samaria, in Damascus, in Caesarea, and in Antioch (Acts 8–12), on the church in Asia Minor and Europe (Acts 13–20), and on Paul’s trial (Acts 21–28). The following outline of the book of Acts reflects Luke’s focus on the growth of the church and on the expansion of Christian communities through the work of the early missionaries. The shorter and longer speeches of Peter and Paul are numbered, as are Luke’s summaries and his reports of imprisonments.

**I.** **JESUS’ EXALTATION AND THE COMMISSION OF THE APOSTLES (1:1–14)**

**A.** **Introduction to the second volume of Luke’s work (1:1–2)**

1. The content of Luke’s first volume (1:1–2)

(1) The content of Luke’s first volume (1:1)

(2) The time frame of the first volume (1:2)

**B.** **The missionary commissioning of the apostles (1:3–14)**

2. Jesus’ instructions to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Spirit (1:3–5)

(1) Jesus’ appearances during forty days (flashback) (1:3)

(2) Jesus’ instruction to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Spirit (1:4)

(3) Jesus’ promise of the coming of the Spirit of prophecy (1:5)

3. Jesus commissions the Twelve as his witnesses (1:6–8)

(1) The disciples’ question about the restoration of the kingdom for Israel (1:6)

(2) Jesus refuses to engage in speculations about the chronology of the last days (1:7)

(3) Jesus promises the coming of the empowering Spirit (1:8a)

(4) Jesus commissions the apostles to witness from Jerusalem to the end of the earth (1:8b)

4. Jesus’ ascension (1:9–11)

(1) The ascension of Jesus in front of the disciples (1:9)

(2) Appearance of two angels (1:10)

(3) Direct speech (angels): Announcement of Jesus’ return (1:11)

5. The return of the eleven disciples to Jerusalem (1:12–14)

(1) The apostles’ return to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives (1:12)

(2) The apostles’ sojourn in an upstairs room in the city (1:13a–b)

(3) List of the eleven disciples (1:13c–f)

(4) The apostles’ prayers (*Summary I*) (1:14a–c)

(5) The presence of women and of Jesus’ earthly brothers (1:14d–f).

**II.** **THE BEGINNINGS OF THE NEW PEOPLE OF GOD (1:15–8:3)**

**A.** **The identity and witness of Jesus’ followers as God’s people (1:15–2:47)**

6. The reconstitution of the Twelve. Peter’s speech (1:15–26)

(1) Peter’s initiative regarding the reconstitution of the group of the Twelve (*Peter I*) (1:15–22)

(2) The nomination of two candidates (1:23)

(3) The prayer of the believers before the decision (1:24–25)

(4) The decision by the casting of lots and the integration of Matthias into the Twelve (1:26)

7. The arrival of the Holy Spirit and the identity of Jesus as Israel’s Messiah and Lord (2:1–41)

(1) The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (2:1–4)

(2) The reaction of diaspora Jews living in Jerusalem (2:5–13)

(3) Peter’s speech on the day of Pentecost (*Peter II*) (2:14–36)

(4) Peter’s missionary sermon (*Peter III*) (2:37–40)

(5) Mass conversions and baptisms (2:41)

8. The life of the Jerusalem community of Jesus’ followers (*Summary II*) (2:42–47)

(1) The essentials of the life of the Jerusalem church (2:42)

(2) The effect of the life of the church on unbelievers (2:43)

(3) The essentials of the life of the church expanded (2:44–47a)

(4) The effect of the life of the church on unbelievers (2:47b)

(5) The continued growth of the church (2:47c)

**B.** **The life, witness, trials, and growth of the church in Jerusalem (3:1–8:3)**

9. Peter’s miracles, proclamation of Jesus, and defense before the Sanhedrin (3:1–4:31)

(1) The healing of a lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple (*Peter IV)* (3:1–10)

(2) Peter’s sermon in Solomon’s Portico (*Peter V*) (3:11–26)

(3) Arrest of Peter and John (*Imprisonment I*) (4:1–4)

(4) Peter’s defense before the Sanhedrin (*Peter VI*) (4:5–22)

(5) The prayer of the Jerusalem Christians (4:23–31)

10. The life of the Jerusalem community (*Summary III*) (4:32–37)

(1) The sharing of resources in the community of believers (4:32–35)

(2) The example of Joseph Barnabas (4:36–37)

11. The demise of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1–11)

(1) The deception of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1–2)

(2) Peter’s confrontation with Ananias (*Peter VIIa*) (5:3–6)

(3) Developments after Ananias’s death (5:7)

(4) Peters’ confrontation with Sapphira (*Peter VIIb*) (5:8–10)

(5) The effect of the death of Ananias and Sapphira (5:11)

12. The growth of the church: signs and wonders (*Summary IV*) (5:12–16)

(1) The miracles and the ministry of the apostles (5:12)

(2) The conversion of many people and further miracles (5:13–16)

13. Renewed persecution of the apostles (5:17–42)

(1) The arrest of the apostles by the high priest (*Imprisonment II*) (5:17–18)

(2) The miraculous escape of the apostles (5:19–21b)

(3) The failed first session of the Sanhedrin (5:21c–26)

(4) The interrogation of the apostles before the Sanhedrin (*Peter VIII*) (5:27–33)

(5) The advice of Gamaliel (5:34–39a)

(6) The decision of the Sanhedrin (5:39b–40)

(7) The continued preaching ministry of the apostles (5:41–42)

14. The appointment of the seven assistants (6:1–7)

(1) The neglect of the Greek-speaking widows in the food distribution (6:1)

(2) The meeting of the community of believers (6:2–4)

(3) The choice of seven candidates (6:5)

(4) The appointment of the seven assistants (6:6)

(5) The continued growth of the church in Jerusalem (*Summary V*) (6:7)

15. The ministry, trial, and death of Stephen (6:8–8:3)

(1) The witness of Stephen (6:8–7:1)

(2) The speech of Stephen before the Sanhedrin (7:2–56)

(3) The end of the session in the Sanhedrin and the death of Stephen (7:57–60)

(4) The persecution of the church in Jerusalem (8:1–3)

**III.** **THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MISSION TO GENTILES (8:4–12:25)**

**A.** **The mission of Philip to the Samaritans and the conversion of an Ethiopian (8:4–40)**

16. The missionary work of Philip in Samaria (8:4–25)

(1) The missionary work of Jerusalem believers (*Summary VI*) (8:4)

(2) The proclamation of the gospel by Philip among the Samaritans (8:5–8)

(3) The conversion of the Samaritans (8:9–13)

(4) The arrival of Peter and John and the gift of the Holy Spirit (8:14–17)

(5) The confrontation between Peter and Simon (8:18–24)

(6) The missionary work of Peter and John in Samaria (*Summary VII*) (8:25)

17. The conversion of an Ethiopian official (8:26–40)

(1) Philip and an Ethiopian official (8:26–28)

(2) The encounter of Philip and the Ethiopian (8:29–31)

(3) The proclamation of the gospel of Jesus by Philip (8:32–35)

(4) The conversion and baptism of the Ethiopian (8:36–38)

(5) Philip and the Ethiopian believer continue their travels (8:39–40)

**B.** **The conversion of Saul-Paul and the beginning of his missionary work (9:1–30)**

18. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus (9:1–19b)

(1) Saul’s involvement in the persecution of the followers of Jesus (9:1–2)

(2) Saul’s encounter with the risen and exalted Jesus (9:3–9)

(3) The commission of Ananias (9:10–16)

(4) The evidence of Saul’s conversion (9:17–19b)

19. The mission of Saul in Damascus and in Jerusalem (9:19c–30)

(1) Saul’s mission in Damascus (9:19c–25)

(2) Saul’s visit in Jerusalem and the departure for Tarsus (9:26–30)

**C.** **The mission of Peter in Palestine (9:31–11:18)**

20. The mission of Peter in cities on the coastal plain (9:31–43)

(1) The growth of the church in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (*Summary VIII*) (9:31)

(2) The healing of the lame Aeneas in Lydda (9:32–35)

(3) The raising of the dead Tabitha in Joppe (9:36–43)

21. The mission of Peter in Caesarea (10:1–11:18)

(1) The vision of Cornelius in Caesarea (10:1–8)

(2) Peter’s vision in Joppe (10:9–16)

(3) The messengers of Cornelius and Peter (10:17–23b)

(4) The encounter of Peter and Cornelius in Caesarea (10:23c–33)

(5) Peter’s sermon (*Peter IX*) (10:34–43)

(6) The conversion of the first Gentiles (10:44–48)

(7) Peter’s justification of the acceptance of Gentile believers in Jerusalem (*Peter X*) (11:1–18)

**D.** **The mission in Antioch (11:19–30**)

22. The mission of Jerusalem believers, Barnabas, and Saul in Antioch (11:19–26)

(1) The mission of Jewish-Hellenistic Christians from Jerusalem in Antioch (11:19–21)

(2) The mission of Barnabas and Saul in Antioch (11:22–26)

23. The famine relief of the congregation in Antioch for the Jerusalem believers (11:27–30)

(1) The prophecy of Agabus (11:27–28)

(2) The relief efforts of the Antioch Christians through Barnabas and Paul (11:29–30)

**E.** **The departure of Peter from Jerusalem in the persecution under Herod Agrippa I (12:1–25**)

24. The persecution of the church in Jerusalem by Herod Agrippa I (12:1–23)

(1) The execution of James son of Zebedee (12:1–2)

(2) The arrest and miraculous liberation of Peter (*Imprisonment III*) (12:3–19)

(3) The death of Herod Agrippa I (12:20–23)

25. The growth of the church (12:24–25)

(1) The growth of the church in Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond (*Summary IX*) (12:24)

(2) The return of Barnabas and Saul to Antioch (12:25)

**IV.** **THE MISSION OF PAUL IN ASIA MINOR: CYPRUS, GALATIA, PAMPHYLIA (13:1–15:35**)

**A.** **The mission of Paul and Barnabas on Cyprus, in South Galatia, and in Pamphylia (13:1–14:28**)

26. The mission on Cyprus (13:1–12)

(1) The new missionary initiative of Barnabas and Paul (13:1–3)

(2) Missionary work on the southern coast of Cyprus (13:4–6c)

(3) The confrontation with the magician Bar-Jesus in Paphos (*Paul I*) (13:6d–11)

(4) The conversion of the proconsul Sergius Paulus in Paphos (13:12)

27. The mission in Pisidian Antioch (13:13–52)

(1) Travel from Paphos to Antioch (13:13–15)

(2) Paul’s sermon in the synagogue of Antioch (*Paul II*) (13:16–41)

(3) The beginnings of the church comprised of Jewish and Gentile believers (*Summary X*) (13:42–49)

(4) The opposition of the Jews and the local elite (13:50)

(5) The departure of Paul and Barnabas (13:51–52)

28. The mission in Iconium (14:1–7)

(1) The proclamation of the gospel in Iconium (14:1–4)

(2) The persecution by local Jews and Gentile officials (14:5–7)

29. The mission in Lystra (14:8–20)

(1) The healing of a lame man in Lystra (14:8–14)

(2) Paul’s speech in front of the temple of Zeus (*Paul III*) (14:15–18)

(3) The persecution by local Jews and the Citizens of Lystra (14:19–20)

30. The mission in Derbe and Perge (14:21–28)

(1) Missionary work in Derbe (14:21a)

(2) Consolidation of the churches in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (14:21b–23)

(3) Missionary work in Perge (14:24–25a)

(4) Return journey to Antioch in Syria (14:25b–28)

**B.** **The Apostles’ Council in Jerusalem: policies for the mission among Gentiles (15:1–33**)

31. The council of the apostles, elders, as well as Paul and Barnabas (15:1–33)

(1) Prehistory: the dispute in Antioch about circumcision and the role of the Mosaic law (15:1–3)

(2) Controversy over the status of the Gentile Christians in Paul’s mission (15:4–5)

(3) Convocation of a meeting and debate (15:6–7a)

(4) Peter’s speech (*Peter XI*) (15:7b–12a)

(5) Barnabas’s and Paul’s report (15:12b–f)

(6) James’s speech (15:13–21)

(7) Decision of the assembly and letter to the Gentile Christians (15:22–29)

(8) Aftermath: the explanation of the decision in Antioch (15:30–33)

**V.** **THE MISSION OF PAUL IN EUROPE: MACEDONIA AND ACHAIA (15:35–18:22**)

**A.** **The beginnings of a new missionary initiative (15:35–16:10**)

32. Disagreements, travels, and missionary plans (15:35–16:5)

(1) Paul and Barnabas in Antioch: cooperation, disagreement, separation (15:35–40)

(2) Paul’s visit of the churches in Syria and in Cilicia (15:41)

(3) The recruitment of Timothy from Lystra as coworker (16:1–3)

(4) The visitation of the churches in South Galatia (*Summary XI*) (16:4–5)

33. Travels from south Galatia to Troas (16:6–10)

(1) The travels from south Galatia to Alexandria Troas (16:6–8)

(2) The call to Macedonia in a vision (16:9–10)

**B.** **The mission of Paul in Macedonia: Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea (16:11–17:15**)

34. The mission in Philippi (16:11–40)

(1) The conversion of the purple merchant Lydia (16:11–15)

(2) The exorcism of a spirit of divination from a slave girl (16:16–18)

(3) The arrest of Paul and Silas (*Imprisonment IV*) (16:19–24)

(4) The conversion of the jailer (16:25–34)

(5) The liberation of the missionaries (16:35–40)

35. The mission in Thessalonica (17:1–9)

(1) The proclamation of the gospel in the synagogue and conversions (17:1–4)

(2) Opposition and eviction of the missionaries (17:5–9)

36. The mission in Berea (17:10–15)

(1) The proclamation of the gospel in the synagogue and conversions (17:10–12)

(2) Opposition and eviction of the missionaries (17:13–15)

**C.** **The mission of Paul in Achaia: Athens, Corinth (17:16–18:22**)

37. The mission in Athens (17:16–34)

(1) The proclamation of the gospel in the synagogue and in the market (17:16–17)

(2) The discussion with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (17:18)

(3) The invitation to appear before the Areopagus Council (17:19–22c)

(4) Paul’s speech before the Council of the Areopagus (*Paul IV*) (17:22d–31)

(5) The aftermath of the speech and conversions (17:32–34)

38. The mission in Corinth (18:1–22)

(1) The proclamation of the gospel in the synagogue (18:1–4)

(2) Departure from the synagogue and move to the house of Titius Justus (18:5–8)

(3) Divine encouragement in a vision (18:9–11)

(4) Opposition of the Jews (18:12–17)

(5) Continued missionary work (18:18a)

(6) Return to Jerusalem and Antioch (18:18b–22)

**VI.** **THE MISSION OF PAUL IN ASIA MINOR: EPHESUS (18:23–21:17)**

**A.** **The mission of Paul in Ephesus (18:23–20:1)**

39. The departure for the province of Asia (18:23–28)

(1) The visit to the churches in Galatia and Phrygia (18:23)

(2) The ministry of Apollos from Alexandria in Ephesus (18:24–28)

40. The mission of Paul in Ephesus (19:1–20:1)

(1) Paul’s arrival in Ephesus and the disciples of John the Baptist (19:1–7)

(2) The proclamation of the gospel in the synagogue (19:8–9f)

(3) The proclamation of the gospel in the lecture hall of Tyrannus (*Summary XII*) (19:9g–10)

(4) The effect of miracles (*Summary XIII*) (19:11–12)

(5) The effect of the encounter with the sons of Sceva (19:13–16)

(6) The effect of the conversion of Jews and Greeks (*Summary XIV*) (19:17–20)

(7) The decision to visit Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem, and Rome (19:21–22)

(8) The riot of the silversmiths in Ephesus (19:23–41)

(9) Paul’s departure from Ephesus (20:1)

**B.** **Paul’s visits to the churches in Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia (20:2–21:17)**

41. Paul visits believers in Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia (20:2–12)

(1) Paul’s travels in Macedonia, Achaia, Macedonia, and to Troas (20:2–6)

(2) Paul’s meeting with the believers in Troas and the accident of Eutychus (20:7–12)

42. Paul meets with the Ephesian elders in Miletus (20:13–38)

(1) Paul’s travel from Troas to Miletus (20:13–16)

(2) Paul’s meeting with the elders of the church in Ephesus (*Paul V*) (20:17–38)

43. Paul visits believers in Tyre, Ptolemais, and Caesarea (21:1–17)

(1) Paul’s meeting with the believers in Tyre (21:1–6)

(2) Paul’s meeting with the believers in Ptolemais (21:7)

(3) Paul’s meeting with the believers in Caesarea (21:8–14)

(4) Paul’s travel from Caesarea to Jerusalem (21:15–17)

**VII.** **PAUL IN JERUSALEM, CAESAREA, AND ROME (21:18–28:31**)

**A.** **Paul in Jerusalem (21:18–23:35**)

44. Paul’s encounter with the Jerusalem church (21:18–26)

(1) Paul’s visit to James and the elders of the Jerusalem church (21:18–20a)

(2) The speech of the elders: concerns regarding Paul’s reputation (21:20b–25)

(3) Paul’s demonstration of his obedience to the law (21:26)

45. Paul’s arrest in the temple (21:27–22:21)

(1) The riot in the temple instigated by Jews from the province of Asia (21:27–29)

(2) The attempted killing of Paul (21:30–31)

(3) The intervention of the Roman commander Claudius Lysias (21:32–36)

(4) Paul asks for permission to address the Jewish crowd (21:37–40)

(5) Paul’s speech to the crowd assembled in the outer temple courts (*Paul VI*) (22:1–21)

46. Paul’s imprisonment in Jerusalem (*Imprisonment V*) (22:22–23:35)

(1) Paul’s interrogation in the Antonia Fortress (22:22–29)

(2) Paul’s interrogation before the Sanhedrin (*Paul VII*) (22:30–23:11)

(3) The plot of Jerusalem Jews to kill Paul (23:12–22)

(4) Paul’s transfer to Caesarea (23:23–35)

**B.** **Paul in Caesarea (24:1–26:32)**

47. The trial before governor Antonius Felix (24:1–23)

(1) The initiation of trial proceedings by Ananias the high priest (24:1–2c)

(2) Tertullus’ speech for the prosecution (24:2d–8)

(3) The Jewish leaders’ confirmation of the charges against Paul (24:9)

(4) Paul’s defense before Felix (*Paul VIII*) (24:10–21)

(5) The adjournment of the trial (24:22–23)

48. The imprisonment in Caesarea during the governorship of Felix (24:24–27)

(1) The private conversations between Paul and Felix (24:24–26)

(2) The confinement of Paul for two years until Felix is replaced by Festus (24:27)

49. The imprisonment in Caesarea during the governorship of Porcius Festus (25:1–26:32)

(1) Festus’ inaugural visit in Jerusalem (25:1–5)

(2) The trial proceedings in Caesarea (*Paul IX*) (25:6–12)

(3) Festus’ consultation of king Agrippa II (*Paul X*) (25:13–26:32)

**C.** **Paul in Rome (27:1–28:31**)

50. The sea voyage to Italy (27:1–28:15)

(1) The first stops of the ship bound for ports in the province of Asia (27:1–8)

(2) The storm and shipwreck at Malta (*Paul XI*) (27:9–44)

(3) The winter layover in Malta (28:1–6)

(4) The healing of the father of Publius and of other Maltese (*Summary XV*) (28:7–10)

(5) The voyage from Malta to Rome (28:11–15)

51. Paul as a prisoner in Rome (28:16–31)

(1) The conditions of Paul’s imprisonment (28:16)

(2) Paul’s first encounter with the Jews of Rome (*Paul XII*) (28:17–22)

(3) Paul’s second encounter with the Jews of Rome (*Paul XIII*) (28:23–28)

(4) The ministry of the imprisoned Paul over the next two years (*Summary XVI*) (28:30–31)[[34]](#footnote-34)

1. F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Robert J. Cara, “Acts,” in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*, ed. Michael J. Kruger (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 137-138. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 351–352. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Cara, 140–141. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Expanded Digital Edition., Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Volume 1: The Gospels and Acts* [Chicago: Moody, 1979], p. 121 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Gordon D. Fee and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., eds., *The Eerdmans Companion to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 602. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See, for example, not only the commentaries of I. Howard Marshall, Ben Witherington, and Darrell Bock, but also Colin Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (WUNT 49; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Guy Prentiss Waters, *A Study Commentary on The Acts of the Apostles* (Welwyn Garden City, UK: EP, 2015), 17–19. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Simon J. Kistemaker and William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 17, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 19–20. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Patrick Schreiner, *The Visual Word: Illustrated Outlines of the New Testament Books*, ed. Connor Sterchi (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2021), 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. I was helped by Dr. Keith Essex’s lectures on New Testament Studies (The Master’s Seminary). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. I was helped immensely by reading Simon J. Kistemaker and William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 17, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 34–36. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. John F. MacArthur Jr., *Acts*, vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 352–353. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 78–79. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Toussaint, 353. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Simon J. Kistemaker and William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 17, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 46–47. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *ērxato* (‘began’) is emphatic here and ‘should not be regarded merely as a semitizing auxiliary’ (Bruce 1990, 98; cf. Barrett 1994, 66–67). The idea that Jesus continues to work through his Spirit is especially suggested by Acts 2:33; 16:7. Other texts speak more generally of the risen Lord’s continuing guidance, protection, and provision for his people (e.g., 9:4–17; 16:14–15; 18:9–10; 23:11). Cf. Sleeman, ‘Heavenly Ministry,’ 140–90. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Simon J. Kistemaker and William Hendriksen, 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Schnabel, 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Peterson, 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Polhill, 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Schnabel, 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Toussaint, 353. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Kistemaker and Hendriksen, 48–49. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. I. Howard Marshall, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 5, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Kistemaker and Hendriksen, 49–50. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Schnabel, 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Marshall, 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia Commentaries on The New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Expanded Digital Edition., Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 46–53. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)