

# Commentary Notes - Acts

by Walter Beuttler

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*The book of Acts provides a historic account of the spread of the gospel and demonstrates the power of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling God's plan, leading to the growth and triumph of the Church.*

**Scripture:** Acts 1:8, Acts 2:1, Acts 8:26, Acts 10:1, Acts 13:1, Acts 15:1, Acts 16:25, Acts 20:17, Acts 27:1, Acts 28:30

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Apostolic Ministry"

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## Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on the Book of Acts, highlighting the comprehensive yet limited title 'The Acts of the Apostles' as it mainly focuses on Peter and Paul's ministries, including other notable individuals and the acts of Jesus working through them. The book serves as a connecting link between the Gospels and the Epistles, emphasizing the Holy Spirit's personality and activity. It covers about thirty years of events, starting with the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem and ending with the gospel reaching Rome, showcasing the power of the gospel.

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## Transcript

### I. THE BOOK OF ACTS

1. It is obvious that the title "The Acts of the Apostles" is both too comprehensive and too limited to be correct because:

(1) The book deals, in the main, with the acts of only two of the apostles, Peter and Paul.

(2) The ministry of other notable individuals, besides apostles, is also recorded.

(3) The acts recorded in this book are in actuality the acts of Jesus working through a diversity of instruments by whom he continues "to do and teach" what he "began to

do and teach" in the Gospels.

2. The book of "Acts" forms a necessary connecting link between the Gospels and the Epistles.

3. It is evident from the "we sections" in the book, e.g., 16:10-17, that Luke was the author, a companion of Paul, and an eye witness to many of the incidents which he relates.

4. The chief doctrinal emphasis in the book of Acts is upon the personality and activity of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of the promise in 1:8.

5. The book opens with the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, the great ecclesiastical center of the Jewish nation, and closes with the preaching of the gospel in Rome, the great political center of the earth, thus testifying to the power of the gospel.

6. The events recorded in Acts cover a period of about thirty years.

7. The key verse of the book is 1:8.

## II. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

1. To provide a historic account of the spread of the gospel throughout the then-known world.

2. To demonstrate to all future believers:

(1) The manner in which the Lord of the harvest wants to carry on from heaven the work which he had begun on earth.

(2) The power by means of which this work is to be accomplished ; namely, that of the Holy Spirit.

3. To account for God's severity with the Jews who were the bitter and implacable enemies of the gospel.

4. To vindicate God for his setting aside of the Jewish nation in favor of the acceptance of the Gentiles.

## III. THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK

1. Christ's dependence upon human instrumentalities.

2. The instrument's dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

3. The diversity of the Spirit's activity by means of a diversity of instruments.

4. The exercise of the power of divine providence in the extension of God's kingdom.

5. The certain triumph of the Church by honoring the Lordship of Christ through:

(1) Obedience to his Word.

(2) Employment of his methods.

(3) Dependence upon his means.

(4) Promotion of his ends.

## HISTORICAL REVIEW, 1:1-26

### I. INTRODUCTION, 1:1-3

1. To which "former treatise" does the writer make reference in 1:1? To the gospel of Luke (Luke 1:3).

2. Who is the Theophilus in Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1? A man of high rank in the Roman world, but of whom nothing is known other than that he was a friend of Luke.

3. What does Luke do in 1:2-11? He reviews the events following the Lord's resurrection over a period of forty days during which the Lord showed himself at different times and places and in various forms, Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13-32, by "many infallible proofs."

4. Wherein were these proofs "infallible," 1:3? In that his resurrection was incontrovertibly attested by the perception of their natural faculties of hearing, John 20:14-16; sight, John 20:20; and touch, John 20:26-28.

5. To what purpose were these "many infallible proofs," 1:3? To leave no doubt whatsoever in the minds of the disciples inasmuch as the resurrection of Christ was of crucial importance to the Christian faith and would be fiercely challenged by the Lord's enemies.

## II. THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION, 1:4-11

1. What is evident from 1:4-8? That the apostolic commission could not be carried out without the fullness of the Spirit.

2. What does Jesus do in 1:8? He points out:

(1) The dynamic of the Great Commission.

(2) The personnel of the Great Commission.

(3) The method of the Great Commission.

(4) The geography of the Great Commission.

3. Finally the disciples are assured of what, 1:9-11? The literal and visible return of the Lord.

## III. WAITING FOR THE SPIRIT, 1:12-26

1. What characterized the prayer meeting in 1:12-14? Unanimity, perseverance, petition, and earnestness.

2. What takes place in 1:15-26? The mistaken election of Matthias under the leadership of Peter.

3. Wherein do the following scriptures evidence Peter's mistake in this respect?

(1) Acts 9:1-20 - In that Christ made his own selection of a twelfth apostle.

(2) I Cor. 9:1-2 - In that the Corinthians rejected Paul's apostleship, probably because of the election of Matthias.

(3) II Cor. 12:11-12 - In that Paul found it necessary to defend his apostleship by calling attention to his credentials.

(4) Gal. 1:1 - In that Paul found it necessary to affirm his apostolic authority when writing to the Galatians

(5) Gal. 1:1 - In that Paul alluded to someone (probably Matthias) whose pseudo-apostolic appointment came of men and by men, i.e., authorized and implemented by men instead of by Jesus Christ.

(6) Rev. 21:14 - In that the name of Paul would be missing from the foundations of the New Jerusalem if Matthias were indeed the twelfth apostle which is an inadmissible conclusion.

## THE GOSPEL IN JERUSALEM, 2:1-8:3

### I. THE MINISTRY OF PETER, 2:1-5:42

#### A. THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT, 2:1

1. Give the origin of "the day of Pentecost," 2:1: The day of Pentecost, i. e., the day of Fifty, was the Jewish festival known as the Feast of Weeks and is described in Lev. 23:15. It was the feast of ingathering and so was peculiarly fitted to be the day of the beginning of the ingathering of all nations into the Church of God.

2. Note the remarkable circumstances in which this supernatural phenomenon began, 2:1: In circumstances of completeness as to:

(1) Time, in that "the day of Pentecost was fully come." There was no prematurity.

(2) Locality, in that all were in one place at the same time. There was no scattering.

(3) Spirit, in that all were of one accord. There was no disharmony.

3. Observe the various characteristics of this supernatural phenomenon, 2:2-3:

(1) It came suddenly, i.e., it was not the climax to physical, emotional, or psychic effort.

(2) It came from heaven, i.e., it originated with God and therefore came neither from men nor from Satan.

(3) It came as a sound, i.e., as a manifestation of the Spirit perceivable by the human faculty of hearing.

(4) It came as the appearance of tongues of fire, i.e., as a manifestation of the Spirit perceivable by the human faculty of sight.

(5) It sat upon each, i.e., it came to each individual as a personal experience.

(6) It came in a miraculous manifestation of other tongues, i.e., in languages not known by the speakers.

(7) It came as the Spirit gave utterance, i.e., as a vocal manifestation of the Spirit.

(8) It came to one hundred and twenty persons at the same time, i.e., as an incontrovertibly multiple evidence of one Source impossible to attribute to natural origin or individual production.

4. What was the purpose of accompanying the outpouring of the Spirit with such an extraordinary phenomenon, 2:1-13? To call extraordinary attention to such an extraordinary experience of such an extraordinary importance.

5. Account for the presence of so many devout Jews "out of every nation under heaven," (i.e., from the then-known world): They had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost.

6. Comment on the timing of the outpouring of the Spirit on this occasion: It would cause the dissemination of the news of this phenomenon in the best possible manner to the greatest possible extent.

7. Observe the diverse effects upon the multitude from:

(1) 2:6 - They were "confounded," i.e., "troubled in mind," because "every man heard them speak in his own language."

(2) 2:7 - They were "amazed," i.e., astonished, because those who spoke in tongues were unfamiliar with the language they uttered.

(3) 2:12 - They were "in doubt," i.e., they were without explanation as to the meaning of this unprecedented phenomenon.

8. Comment on 2:13: This is an eloquent example of the extent of absurdity to which willful unbelief will go to justify its rejection of the truth, for how can even an excess of wine produce the ability to speak an intelligent foreign language?

## B. PETER'S SERMON, 2:14-47

1. Comment on Peter's standing up in 2:14 in contrast to his standing up in 1:15: In 2:14 Peter stood up in the fullness of the Spirit; in 1:15 he had stood in his own rationalizing impulsiveness.

2. Account for Peter's courageous action in 2:14-40 in the light of his previous denial of the Lord: It is the result of the effectual workings of Christ in the life of Peter, Gal. 2:8.

3. What is "the third hour of the day," 2:15? Since the Jewish day began at 6:00 A.M., the third hour was 9:00 A.M.

4. The outpouring of the Spirit in 2:2-4 is evidently the fulfillment of what, 2:16-21? The prophecy in Joel 2:28-29.

5. Observe two facts concerning the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth from 2:22:

(1) The Lord's supernatural ministry constituted his credentials.

(2) The Lord's supernatural ministry was actually the work of God performed by him, (John 5:19).

6. For what purpose does Peter make the address in 2:22-36? To prove that the very same Jesus, whom they had crucified, is both Lord and Christ.

7. Explain the difference between "miracles, wonders, and signs," 2:22: These terms express different aspects of the same event; namely:

(1) Miracles are supernatural accomplishments by supernatural means, with the accent upon the power of the act.

(2) Wonders are the effects produced upon the observer by these supernatural accomplishments, with the accent upon the marvel of the act.

(3) Signs are the objectives to which these supernatural accomplishments point, with the accent upon the portent of the act.

8. Why does the apostle insist that the shameful death of Christ was "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," 2:23? Because they might quite logically have said that if Jesus had been a man "approved of God," he would not have been permitted to die so shameful a death.

9. What is evident from 2:39? That the promise of the Holy Ghost as a unique personal experience is for every believer in Christ and includes all generations of both Jews and Gentiles.

10. What is apparent from 2:41? That the early church did not make water baptism conditional on a course of instruction nor a period of probation.

11. Point out the general subject matter of 2:41-47: The phenomenal growth of the Church as a consequence of supernatural phenomena in both word and deed.

12. By what was the Church characterized in:

(1) 2:42? By steadfast continuance in apostolic teaching, Christian fellowship, commemoration of the Lord's death, and united prayer.

(2) 2:44-45? By unselfish communality and compassion for the needy.

(3) 2:46? By unity of spirit and joyful simplicity.

(4) 2:47? By thankfulness and exemplary conduct.

13. What is observed from 2:47b? That, notwithstanding the employment of human instrumentalities, the growth of the Church is, in the final analysis, the work of Christ as Lord (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:6).

#### C. THE HEALING OF THE IMPOTENT MAN, 3:1-4:33

1. What is "the ninth hour," 3:1? Three o'clock in the afternoon, the beginning of the evening sacrifice.

2. What is apparent from 3:1-13? That God granted this miracle to glorify his son, not the instrument.

3. How did Peter account for this miracle:

(1) Negatively in 3:12?

a. Not by themselves.

b. Not by their own power.

c. Not by their own holiness.

(2) Positively in 3:13, 16?

a. To the God of their fathers.

b. To the name of Christ.

c. To faith in that name.

4. How did Peter account for his faith in that name, 3:16? "By him," i.e., imparted by Christ.

5. Comment on 3:19b: The translation should read "in order that times of refreshing may come," - the coming of those times of refreshing being consequent to repentance from sin and turning to God.

6. Peter's address in 3:13-26 was given for what effect?

(1) Conviction of sin (vv. 13-15).

(2) Faith in Christ (vv. 16-18).

(3) Repentance of sin (v. 19).

(4) Salvation from sin (v. 26).

7. What development takes place in 4:1-7? Opposition by the Sadducees, whose theology was bitterly opposed to the supernatural in general and to the resurrection in particular.

8. Notwithstanding the opposition, what is to be noted in 4:4? The salvation of some five thousand people.

9. Comment on 4:13

(1) "Ignorant men" described those who had not studied in rabbinical schools. So the apostles were regarded as being uneducated because they did not attend one of their "accredited" schools.

(2) Actually these men were informed in religious matters far beyond their scholarly critics.

(3) The knowledge and wisdom which they demonstrated was of such superiority that they were able to turn their schooled opponents from accusers into defenders and to bring upon them a verdict of guilt intended for themselves.

10. The apostles' knowledge and wisdom came from what in:

(1) 4:8? The fullness of the Holy Spirit.

(2) 4:13? Their association with Christ.

11. Comment on 4:19-20 in the light of 4:15-18:

(1) The Jewish rulers' reaction to this healing evidences their malicious hatred of and bitter opposition to Christ and the work of God.

(2) The apostles asserted the supremacy of another authority which takes precedence over the authority of man.

12. What is apparent in 4:21? That Peter and John would not have been released had it not been for such a strong public sentiment in their favor.

13. Note some major elements of the prayer meeting in:

(1) 4:23-24a - Oneness of spirit and purpose.

(2) 4:24b-28 -

a. Affirmation of God's omnipotence.

b. Affirmation of God's veracity.

c. Affirmation of God's power and wisdom.

(3) 4:29-30 - Petition in accordance with the will of God and in the interests of his kingdom.

(4) 4:31 - Response from God beyond the limits of their petition.

14. What characterized the believers in 4:32-37?

(1) Oneness of heart and soul.

(2) Unselfishness and compassion for others.

(3) Great grace from God.

15. Comment on 4:33: Unintimidated by threats of punishment, Peter and John continued to witness with great power to the resurrection of Christ.

16. Why was such major emphasis placed upon the resurrection, 4:33? It was the resurrection which proclaimed the death of Christ to have been the death of the Son of God.

D. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA, 5:1-42

1. What did Ananias and Sapphira do in 5:1-2? They imitated the actions of others without possessing their grace.

2. Why was Ananias held responsible for his deed, 5:3? Because he gave Satan access to his heart through pride which coveted the church's praise for piety and self-denial, notwithstanding his covetous reluctance to part with his cherished possessions.

3. Of what did the sin of Ananias and Sapphira actually consist, 5:3-4? Of a deliberate and daring attempt to deceive the Holy Ghost as a test to prove to themselves his supposed inability to discover their secret.

4. Point out Peter's position in 5:4:

(1) They were not compelled to sell their possessions if they did not want to do so.

(2) After they were sold, they were not compelled to bring the proceeds if they did not want to do so.

5. Account for Peter's knowledge of the thoughts and intents of Ananias and Sapphira, 5:3-4, 9? It was imparted by the revelation of the Spirit through a manifestation of the word of knowledge (1 Cor. 12:8, 11) as in John 4:16-19.

6. Comment on the death of Ananias and Sapphira, 5:5, 10: It was a miracle of judgment by a manifestation of "the working of miracles" (I Cor. 12:10; II Kings 1:9-10) as a warning to the others, which also demonstrated the holiness of God and the activity of the Holy Spirit in the purification of the Church.

7. Observe the events following the death of Ananias and Sapphira, 5:11, 12b-16:

(1) Great fear came upon believers and unbelievers.

(2) Multitudes of men and women became believers.

(3) Miraculous cures were effected in great numbers.

## E. RENEWED PERSECUTION, 5:17-42

1. Renewal of the apostles' persecution in 5:17-42 was the direct consequence of what, 5:14-16?

- (1) The multitudes of people who became believers.
- (2) The many miraculous cures that took place.
- (3) The increasing popularity of the apostles.

2. With what do the apostles meet in 5:17-18? With imprisonment by the Jewish leaders who were filled with jealous indignation because of the apostles' successes and the defiance of their ecclesiastical authority.

3. What is recorded in:

- (1) 5:19? The amazing deliverance of the apostles from prison by the angel of the Lord.
- (2) 5:20-21? The continued public ministry of the apostles who were unintimidated by their enemies.

4. Point out the effect which the apostles' witness had on these ecclesiastical leaders, 5:24-33:

- (1) They were "cut to the heart" (lit., "sawn asunder") by the sword of the word of God (Heb. 4:12).
- (2) They contrived ways to kill the apostles as the only means to silence their witness.

5. What takes place in 5:34-40? A providential intervention on behalf of the apostles by the interposition of Gamaliel, a member of the council and, according to tradition, a secret believer.

6. Following their release, what did the apostles do in:

- (1) 5:41? They rejoiced because of their privilege to share the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.
- (2) 5:42? They continued their apostolic mission regardless of the risks to themselves.

## II. THE MINISTRY OF STEPHEN, 6:1-8:3

### A. THE INSTITUTION OF THE DEACONATE, 6:1-7

1. What do we have in 6:1? The first recorded discord in the early church in the form of murmuring because of neglect in the distribution of benevolences to the Grecian widows.

2. Who were the:

- (1) "Grecians," 6:1? They were not Greeks or Gentiles, but Hellenists, Jews who had been born and brought up in Gentile cities and who spoke the Greek language.
- (2) "Hebrews," 6:1? They were the Jews of Jerusalem or Palestine, who looked upon the foreign Jews as contaminated by dwelling among the Gentiles and so regarded them as inferior.

3. Why were these "Grecians" neglected, 6:1? Probably for two reasons; namely:

- (1) The "Hebrews" national and caste prejudice against the "Grecians."

(2) Inadequate organization for the constantly augmenting multitude of believers.

4. Point out the apostles' position in:

(1) 6:2 - That it would be unreasonable for them to neglect the ministry of the Word in favor of correcting the neglect of the Grecian widows.

(2) 6:3 - That the selection of qualified administrators should be made by the people themselves and their choice endorsed by the apostles.

(3) 6:3 - That the essential qualifications of these administrators should be:

a. Proven honesty in financial matters.

b. Evident fullness of the Spirit.

c. Demonstrated wisdom in difficult situations.

(4) 6:4 - That the pressures of secondary matters should not be allowed to interfere with the primary obligation of the ministry of the Word.

(5) 6:4 - That the maintenance of a prayer life is essential to the maintenance of effective ministry.

5. Where is the Spirit's power in the ministry of the Word especially evident from 6:7? In that the great company of the priests who were obedient to the faith constituted a class very liable to be prejudiced against the faith which would rob them of their importance and livelihood.

## B. THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN, 6:8-8:3

1. With whom, as usual, did the opposition to Stephen begin, 6:8-10? With the established ecclesiastical authorities whose traditional attitudes and cherished positions came into conflict with the God-ordained ministry of God-ordained men.

2. Who were the "Libertines," 6:9? They were Jews by birth who, after having been brought to Rome as prisoners of war, were afterwards liberated and allowed to return home.

3. What does 6:11-15 show? The diabolical extent to which man can go in his obstinate resistance to the depravity of his heart.

4. To what purpose did Stephen review Jewish history with such details and methodical precision, 7:1-53? To demonstrate the fact that the nation's continued rejection of the oracles of God by the prophets had finally resulted in the nation's rejection of THE oracle of God--Jesus Christ.

5. What is to be observed from Moses in:

(1) 7:22? That Moses was highly educated and an able orator (contrast with Ex. 4:10-12).

(2) 7:22-24? That Moses had an awareness of his divine calling before its actual disclosure.

(3) 7:25? Not to take for granted that others understand our own individual ministry.

(4) 7:27-28? That those who are in the wrong may falsely

accuse others to cover themselves.

6. Why does Stephen make a point about the angels in 7:53? Because the fact that the law was given by the disposition of the angels enhanced the Jews' obligation to keep it, which they did not.

7. What occasioned Stephen's bitter invective in 7:51? The evident implacable hostility of his hearers.

8. Comment on 7:54-59: Man reacts to the persuasive conviction of the Spirit in accordance with the choice of his own will, either by softening or hardening, by submission or resistance.

9. What is conspicuous in 7:60? Stephen's likeness to Christ who likewise died interceding for his enemies, (Luke 23:34).

10. Who appears now on the scene in 8:1-3? Saul the persecutor "making havoc of the church" with religious zeal.

## THE GOSPEL IN SAMARIA AND JUDAH, 8:4-11:18

### I. THE MINISTRY OF PHILIP, 8:4-40

#### A. PHILIP IN SAMARIA, 8:4-25

1. How did Saul's persecution affect the gospel, 8:4? It spread the gospel wherever the Christians "were scattered abroad" and therefore had the opposite effect of the purpose for which the persecutions took place.

2. Comment on the term "preaching" in 8:4: This refers to the proclaiming of the good news as best as each could wherever there was opportunity.

3. Account for Philip's success in Samaria, 8:5-8: The people believed Philip because the miracles he performed constituted divine credentials and required no spiritual perception.

4. Wherein did Simon's sorcery consist, 8:9-11? In having astonished the public by taking advantage of its credulity and superstitious inclinations by means of charms, jugglery, and incantations.

5. What seems evident concerning Simon from:

(1) 8:12-19? That Simon believed in the genuineness of Philip's miracles in contrast with his own, which were merely deceptions.

(2) 8:20-24? That Simon was still bound by a spirit of self-aggrandizement and commercialized religion, seeing an opportunity for material gain.

6. What may be observed from:

(1) 8:22? That sin does not lie alone in the act, but also in the thought behind the act and that, therefore, repentance and forgiveness must extend to the thoughts.

(2) 8:24? Simon seemed concerned only about the consequences of his sin, not about his state, and so sought only remission of the penalty, not a change of heart.

#### B. PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN, 8:26-40

1. Of what important principles of service is 8:26-40 a brilliant example?

(1) Of being "labourers together with God" I Cor. 3:9.

(2) Of "the Lord working with them," Mk. 16:20.

2. Who was this eunuch, 8:27? He was a proselyte to Judaism and, as a keeper of the law, had come up all the way from the upper valley of the Nile to Jerusalem to worship at one of the feasts.

3. Note some remarkable facts:

(1) In relation to Philip, 8:27: The instantaneous, unquestioning obedience which he rendered to an unusual direction given without explanation.

(2) In relation to God, 8:27: The wisdom of divine strategy in selecting a man of such high position whose influence in favor of the gospel would be enormous.

(3) In relation to the Ethiopian, 8:28, 32-33: The power of divine providence exercised over the Ethiopian so that he was reading the most suitable passage in the most suitable book at the most suitable time.

4. What, concerning Philip, is to be observed in 8:29-35?

(1) The guidance of the Spirit in clear and precisely spoken words.

(2) Philip's unhesitating response without protest or question.

(3) The wisdom granted to Philip in opening the conversation in the most effective manner calculated to provoke the most suitable response.

5. What is apparent from 8:35-39? The phenomenal effectiveness of Philip's ministry.

6. Comment on this entire incident in view of 8:39 in the light of 8:25 and 8:40: This incident was a parenthesis in Philip's ministry.

## II. BEGINNING OF SAUL'S MINISTRY, 9:1-31

1. The language in 9:1 shows what concerning Saul? The passionateness with which he terrified the Christians by threats and hurried them to their death.

2. Saul seeks what in 9:1-2? An authorization from the Jewish leaders to arrest any believers and bring them bound before the ecclesiastical tribunal in Jerusalem.

3. What happened to Saul in:

(1) 9:3-5? He was himself arrested on his way to Damascus by a heavenly light and the voice of the Lord.

(2) 9:6? He was brought into surrender, trembling and astonished, to the very Lord whom he persecuted.

(3) 9:8-9? He became himself a prisoner, blinded and led away in helplessness and humiliation.

4. The Lord does what in 9:4? He identifies himself with his people and regards things done to them as done to himself, Matt. 25:34-45; 10:40.

5. Observe the Lord's remarkable working in 9:10-17:

- (1) Saul received a vision concerning his deliverance by the instrumentality of one Ananias.
- (2) Ananias received a vision about the nature of the vision Saul received.
- (3) God helps Ananias to overcome his fears by means of a gracious explanation.

6. Comment on:

- (1) 9:17-22 - The Lord's personal appearance to Saul brought about a revolutionary transformation of Saul that was impossible to attribute to anything but a supernatural cause.
- (2) 9:23-30 - The former persecutor now has become the persecuted himself and for the same reasons and with the same zeal as he had persecuted others.
- (3) 9:31 - The fact that the churches had rest for the present shows that Saul was the driving spirit behind the persecutions.

7. Contrast 9:25 with 5:19: In the one instance God grants deliverance by natural agencies and humble means; in the other he grants deliverance by employing a supernatural agency and supernatural means.

### III. THE MINISTRY OF PETER CONTINUED, 9:32-11:18

1. To what purpose did God grant the two miracles in 9:32-42? As signs for the purpose of causing men to believe and turn to the Lord (vv. 35, 42).

2. Why did "Peter put them all forth" in 9:40? To avoid observation by people for better concentration upon God and to remain unaffected by their unbelief.

3. What crucial event in the history of the Church takes place in 10:1-48? The inclusion of the Gentiles into the Church which now unveiled the mystery of God which was hid from ages and generations (Eph. 3:6).

4. What kind of a man was Cornelius, 10:2? Devout, God-fearing, generous, and prayerful.

5. What is evident from 10:3-8? That the godliness of Cornelius bore a relationship to God's selection of him in the opening of the door to the Gentiles.

6. Why did Peter go to the housetop to pray, 10:9? The housetop could be used as a place of privacy, equivalent to the "closet" in Matt. 6:6.

7. Why did God repeat this vision three times, 10:10-16? Because the implication of the vision was so contrary to Peter's religious beliefs that this repetition was necessary before he could discard the old and accept the new.

8. Note the implications of Peter's vision, 10:11-16:

(1) That God had abolished the Levitical distinctions between clean and unclean animals and that all may therefore be freely eaten without conscientious scruples, (I Cor. 10:25-32).

(2) The removal of one of the principal barriers of exclusion between Jews and Gentiles, for the specified animals were designated as "unclean unto you" to keep the Jews separate from the heathen in their social

intercourse.

9. Point out some remarkable circumstances in:

(1) 10:17-18 - The providential timing of the vision and the arrival of the men.

(2) 10:19 - God helps Peter to understand the vision by making the connection between the three men and the thrice repeated vision obvious.

(3) 10:20-29 - God helps Peter to overcome his doubts by relating the vision to the purpose for which the three men had come (note 11:10-11).

10. What do we learn about Cornelius in 10:30-33? If the revelation of truths made known to him by Peter was an answer to his prayers, his prayer must have been a supplication for more truth.

11. This incident demonstrated what to Peter, 10:34-35?

(1) That God bases his acceptance of men not on race, color, nationality, or creed, but on men's attitude toward God.

(2) That God accepts men on an individual basis, not as a member belonging to any group.

12. To what purpose was the outpouring of the Spirit in 10:36-44? To demonstrate that those Gentiles were accepted by God without conformity to Judaism.

13. Comment on:

(1) 10:45-48 - The Gentiles' speaking with other tongues was accepted as evidence of the baptism with the Spirit.

(2) 11:1-18 - The acceptance of the Gentiles' inclusion into the grace of God by the prejudiced Jewish believers comes only after strong initial opposition and Peter's explanation.

THE GOSPEL IN THE UTTERMOST PART, 11:19-28:31

I. THE MINISTRY OF BARNABAS, 11:19-12:25

A. EXTENSION OF THE GOSPEL, 11:19-30

1. Comment on 11:19: The persecution of the Christians served only to scatter the Word of God.

2. What is meant by the statement "the hand of the Lord was with them," 11:21? That many miracles and signs were performed in confirmation of the faith they preached.

3. What takes place in:

(1) 11:19-26? After an initial discrimination against the Gentiles, the message of salvation now spills over the Jewish legal boundaries.

(2) 11:22-24? Barnabas is sent to Antioch to establish the new believers in that city.

(3) 11:26? The disciples of the Lord were first called Christians at Antioch, a name that distinguished them from friends and foes alike.

(4) 11:27-30? God uses the gift of prophecy to predict a disaster in order to enable the Christians to make preparations for relief.

## B. PETER'S IMPRISONMENT, 12:1-25

1. Why did Herod the king stretch forth his hands "to vex certain of the church," 12:1-5? To please the Jews and thus enhance his own popularity.

2. What are "four quaternions," 12:4? Four bands of four soldiers each which were on guard in succession through the four watches of the night.

3. What is apparent from 12:4, 11? That the Jews were gleefully awaiting the end of the days of unleavened bread to take their revenge on Peter.

4. Comment on 12:6, 10: He who can sleep in such circumstances as these shows plainly the extraordinary peace and tranquility of mind through confidence in God.

5. List the things the angel did for Peter in 12:5-12:

(1) He brought him light to find his garments (v. 7).

(2) He took the chains off to make him free.

(3) He gave him directions.

(4) He shielded him from the notice of the guards.

(5) He caused the gate to open of its own accord.

(6) He accompanied Peter until he could make his own way.

6. Comment on Peter's deliverance in the light of 12:5; 13-17: There is undoubtedly a connection between this supernatural intervention and the ceaseless prayer of the people of God, even though they themselves were incredulous at the answer.

7. Observe the sovereignty and power of divine providence as seen in 12:18-24: Peter's guards were put to death and Herod was eaten by worms for accepting divine worship, "but the word of the Lord grew and multiplied."

8. Comment on 12:25: The spectacular deliverance of Peter is not permitted to obscure the ministry of relief fulfilled by Barnabas and Saul.

## II. THE MINISTRY OF PAUL, 13:1-21:14

### A. PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY, 13:1-14:28

1. Give the salient points in 13:1-5:

(1) The early church recognized those with specific ministries (v. 1).

- (2) Divine guidance was obtained in a climate of fasting, prayer and worship (v. 2).
- (3) The Holy Ghost (probably by means of prophetic utterance) selected specific individuals for specific work (v. 2).
- (4) This selection evidences the necessity of a personal call for certain types of ministry.
- (5) This incident presents a beautiful example of the blending between the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost and human instrumentality, (vv. 3-5).

2. Who went on this first missionary journey, 13:2-5? Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark.

3. What takes place in 13:6-12?

- (1) Satan's opposition to the conversion of the deputy through the sorcerer's instrumentality.
- (2) This opposition was turned into the reason for the deputy's conversion by the intervention of a miracle of divine judgment.

4. Make two observations from 13:9, 13:

- (1) Paul has become the leader of the company.
- (2) John Mark deserts his companions, (15:38).

5. What does Paul do in 13:13-41? He proves from Jewish history and prophecy that justification is to be obtained by faith in Christ and not by the law.

6. What major turning point is reached in 13:42-52? Inasmuch as the Jews were rejecting God's salvation by Jesus Christ, Paul is now turning his efforts toward the Gentiles in fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 65:1.

7. What takes place in 14:1-7? Paul and Barnabas were obliged to flee because the hostile Jews stirred up the Gentiles against them (v. 2).

8. What did the people do in 14:8-19? They invested Paul and Barnabas with the names of their deities and sought to worship them as such because of the healing of the impotent man.

9. Summarize the disciples' activities in 14:20-28:

- (1) They taught many people (v. 21).
- (2) They confirmed the souls of the disciples (v. 22).
- (3) They ordained elders in every church (v. 23).
- (4) They traveled and preached the Word of God in diverse places (vv. 24-26).
- (5) They rehearsed all that God had done (v. 27).

**B. THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL, 15:1-35**

1. Point out the immediate occasion for the calling of the council, 15:1-6: The controversy over the need of circumcision and the keeping of the law of Moses as necessary to salvation.
2. Note Peter's action in 15:7-12: He protected the Gentiles against the assembly's attempt to put the unbearable yoke of the law upon them.
3. How does James in 15:13-21 support Peter's position? With the assertion that the prophets agree with the acceptance of the Gentiles without the keeping of the law of Moses.
4. Suggest the reasons for the restrictions in 15:20-21:
  - (1) Pollutions of idols - Because those who partook of meats offered to idols would be looked upon by others as practicing idolatry.
  - (2) Fornication - Because the general opinion of the heathen was that this was no sin, and its practice was so wide spread that it was deemed desirable to give it special notice even though it was already incorporated in the moral law.
  - (3) Things strangled and from blood - Because this would prove an offense to those Jewish believers who still regarded the practice of these Mosaic restrictions as obligatory.
5. What, in general, is to be said concerning 15:20-21? That these prohibitions were a temporary arrangement adapted to the conditions existing at that time and to be applicable only where and when similar conditions prevail elsewhere.
6. The settling of this serious doctrinal conflict was followed by what, 15:22-35? By a period of exhortation and strengthening in the faith.

#### C. PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY, 15:36-18:22

1. Paul's second missionary journey was motivated by what, 15:36? By a desire to learn the present state of those brethren they had visited before.
2. What occurs in 15:37-41? A sharp discord between Paul and Barnabas over John who had deserted them at Pamphylia (13:13), leading to their separation.
3. Why did Paul circumcise Timothy in 16:1-5? As a matter of expediency to avoid rejection by those Jews who still believed in circumcision.
4. To what region does "Asia" refer in 16:6? To that district on the western coast of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital.
5. What takes place in:
  - (1) 16:6? They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia which was their intention.
  - (2) 16:7? Intending to go into Bithynia instead, they were again restrained by the Spirit.
  - (3) 16:8? They were providentially led in the direction of Macedonia, their next field of labor.

(4) 16:9-10? They received their call to Macedonia by means of a night vision, the meaning of which they could gather for themselves.

6. What takes place in:

(1) 16:12-15? Paul finds his first convert in Europe in a woman "whose heart the Lord had opened."

(2) 16:16-18? The deliverance of a girl possessed with an evil spirit which had employed her to utter prophecies.

(3) 16:19-24? The beating and imprisonment of Paul and Silas through the false accusations of those who were more greedy of financial gain than glad for the deliverance of a human being.

(4) 16:25-34? The conversion of the Philippian jailer and his house.

(5) 16:35-40? The release of Paul and Silas.

7. Comment on 16:19-24:

(1) The "inner prison" was shut off by strong inner gates with bars and locks and consisted often of a cold, damp cavern reeking with filth and every abomination.

(2) 16:25 - Singing under such circumstances is a most eloquent commentary on the quality of these men's Christian experience.

(3) 16:27-28 - The keeper of the prison would have killed himself because he thought that his prisoners had escaped, for under Roman law he would have been flogged and put to death for the escape of the prisoners.

(4) 16:36-38 - The magistrates feared because under Roman law a Roman citizen could not be beaten and imprisoned without due process of law.

8. How did the unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica react in 17: 5-9 to Paul's successes in 17:1-4? Moved with envy, they employed "lewd fellows" to make an uproar and thus create a hostile mob psychology.

9. Wherein were the people of Berea "more noble" than those of Thessalonica, 17:10-12?

(1) "In that they received the word with all readiness of mind."

(2) In that they searched the scriptures daily with obvious diligence.

(3) In that they verified what they had heard by objective examination of the scriptures.

(4) In that they approached the truth without emotional prejudice.

10. What takes place in 17:13-15? The brethren, fearing for Paul's life because of the hostility of the Jews, sent him stealthily away to Athens.

11. Comment on 17:16-31: The philosophers, in their attempt to discredit the teaching of Paul, actually provided him with an opportunity to declare the existence of "THE UNKNOWN GOD."

12. Observe three kinds of reactions to Paul's sermon on Mars' hill, 17:32-34:

- (1) Some ridiculed and rejected Paul's message.
- (2) Others, unconvinced, deferred their decision.
- (3) Still others believed and clave to the truth.

13. List the events recorded in:

- (1) 18:1-4 - Paul supported himself with his old trade while preaching the gospel.
- (2) 18:5-6 - Paul incurs new opposition to his testimony from blaspheming Jews.
- (3) 18:7-8 - Paul makes converts among the Corinthians.
- (4) 18:9-11 - The Lord encouraged Paul to continue preaching in Corinth without fear and assured him of divine protection notwithstanding strong opposition.
- (5) 18:14-17 - In the providence of God the case against Paul is dismissed and the chief instigator against Paul is himself beaten before the same judgment seat.

14. Comment on 18:18-22: Paul did not regard the open door of Ephesus as an indication of the will of God to stay on.

#### D. PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY, 18:23-21:14

1. Comment on 18:23-28: There is such a ministry as:

- (1) "Strengthening all the disciples" by means of itineration in the ministry of the Word, v. 23.
- (2) Helping the believer by means of the exposition of the Word, vv. 23-28.

2. Observe three kinds of baptisms in 19:1-7:

- (1) John's baptism, which was a baptism of repentance.
- (2) Christ's baptism, which is a baptism of identification.
- (3) The baptism in the Spirit, which is evidenced by a supernatural vocal phenomenon.

3. Comment on the statement "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," 19:5: Paul used this expression to differentiate this baptism from that of John's, not to introduce a formula in contradiction to Matt. 28:19.

4. Why did God grant "special miracles" (extraordinary even for miracles) in 19:8-20? To convince the practitioners of "curious arts" of the superior power of God so as to bring about their abandonment of these things and acceptance of Christ.

5. What should the incident in 19:13-16 teach us? Not to trifle with Satanic power.

6. Account for the "no small stir" in 19:23-41: The highly profitable craft of making silver shrines for the goddess Diana, as well as the worship of Diana itself, was jeopardized by the gospel.

7. List the events in:

(1) 20:1-5 - Paul, intending to go to Syria by sea, goes instead by land via Macedonia to avoid falling into the hands of the Jews.

(2) 20:6-12 - At Troas Paul preached until midnight when a young man, having fallen asleep, fell out of the window, yet remained unharmed.

(3) 20:13-38 - Paul, in hurrying on his way to Jerusalem, calls for the elders of the church of Ephesus to bid them farewell for the last time.

8. Explain the warning given by Paul in 21:4 on his way to Caesarea, 21:1-9: Inasmuch as 23:11 makes it clear that Paul was not out of the will of God in going to Jerusalem, it must be concluded that while it was revealed to those prophets that bonds and afflictions awaited Paul, the inference that he should not go was their own. Therefore, Paul accepted the information, but not their inference.

9. What takes place in 21:10-14? The Holy Spirit warns Paul a second time, this time by symbolic action added to vocal expression, not to dissuade him, but to prepare him.

### III. THE IMPRISONMENT OF PAUL, 21:15-28:31

#### A. PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT IN JERUSALEM, 21:15-23:10

1. What does Paul do in Jerusalem, 21:15-26? He observed a meaningless Jewish custom to avoid unnecessary opposition by the Jews.

2. What takes place in:

(1) 21:27-40? Paul is providentially saved by intervention of the Roman authorities.

(2) 22:1-23? Paul seeks to convince his opponents that the evangelization of the Gentiles was an obligation laid upon him by Christ.

(3) 22:24-30? Paul saves himself from scourging by making use of his legal rights as a Roman citizen.

3. In Paul's trial before the Sanhedrin, what may be observed from:

(1) 23:1-2? The wickedness of the Jewish leaders.

(2) 23:3? The fearlessness and courage of Paul.

(3) 23:4-5? Paul's respect for the law of God.

(4) 23:6-9? Paul's brilliant strategy in dividing his enemies against each other.

(5) 23:10? That if it had not been for the protection of Rome, Paul would have been torn to pieces.

#### B. PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT IN CAESAREA, 23:11-28:29

1. How does the Lord take care of his servant in:

(1) 23:11? By the Lord's personal appearance, standing by him with reassurance.

(2) 23:12-35? By the providential employment of an ordinary young man and a governor.

2. Of what is Paul accused, 24:1-9? Of being a pestilent fellow, a seditious ringleader, and a profaner of the temple.

3. Point out the events in 24:10-27:

(1) The case is deferred, pending the arrival of another witness.

(2) Felix, under obvious conviction through Paul's testimony, temporizes with the excuse of waiting for a more convenient season, thus missing the opportunity of his life.

(3) Felix further temporized by hopes of a bribe, thus providing opportunity for his hardening against the truth.

(4) Finally, with the hardening process well on the way, Felix failed to take judicial action in order to win the favor of the Jews.

4. List the events during Paul's trial before Festus in Caesarea, 25:5-27:

(1) Festus, for political advantage, decides to grant the Jews their demand and sends Paul to Jerusalem, vv. 7-9.

(2) Paul, to save himself from the Jews, takes advantage of his legal right to appeal to Caesar, vv. 10-12.

(3) In the meantime, King Agrippa requests to hear Paul for himself, vv. 13-27.

5. How did Paul succeed with his defense, 26:1-32?

(1) He had almost persuaded King Agrippa, v. 28.

(2) He was absolved from all guilt, vv. 30-32.

6. In the light of 26:32, had Paul made a mistake by appealing to Caesar? No, for he would have been delivered to the Jews and never brought before Agrippa.

7. Throughout the stormy voyage, 27:1-44, the providential care for Paul is manifest, wherein?

(1) In the centurion's courtesy toward Paul, v. 3.

(2) By giving Paul knowledge of impending disaster, v. 10.

(3) By the reassuring visit of an angel, vv. 21-24, 34, 37.

(4) By their ability to run the ship aground at a suitable place, vv. 39-41.

(5) By the centurion's interference with the soldiers' intent to kill their prisoners, v. 43.

8. Wherein did the fleeing shipmen endanger the lives of others, 27:31? In that their skill was needed to run the ship aground.

9. Comment on 27:44: God kept his promise by getting them safely to land, even though it was in a very unconventional manner.

10. Comment on the incident in:

- (1) 28:1-6 - How quickly men jump to wrong conclusions from mere appearances.
  - (2) 28:7-10 - Paul ministered to others notwithstanding his personal circumstances.
  - (3) 28:11-16 - God's providential care is evident in the centurion's special consideration for Paul.
11. What was the result of Paul's patient efforts in 28:17-29? Some believed, and some believed not.

#### C. FULFILLMENT OF APOSTOLIC COMMISSION, 28:30-31

1. Observe the remarkable providential circumstances associated with Paul's imprisonment at Rome, 28:30-31:

- (1) Paul's imprisonment was actually for his own safety; for had he been allowed to go free, he would have been killed at once by the Jews.
- (2) Protected, yet unhindered by the Roman authorities for two years, he was able to fulfill his mission for Christ.
- (3) The seeming hindrance of his imprisonment was so ordered by God as to bring about the more rapid spread of the truth, Phil. 1:12, 13.
- (4) Furthermore, many of the brethren became much more bold to preach the gospel, Phil. 1:14.

2. Why does this book end so abruptly and evidently incomplete, 28:31? Because the work of the Lord upon the earth was not terminated with the end of the book of Acts.

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