

# The Bible FOR DUMMIES The New Testament

***April 15, 2008***



## "THE LETTERS"

**April 22, 2008**

**Romans**

**April 29, 2008**

**I & II Corinthians, Philippians, & Galatians**

**May 6, 2008**

***YOF & God's Angels Dinner Show***

**May 13, 2008**

**James, Colossians, Ephesians,  
Thessalonians, & Hebrews**

**May 20, 2008**

**"The Revelation" – The Book of Revelation**

# The Book of Acts

(Part II of Luke-Acts)

## History of the Early Church (written 80-90 AD)

Continues the story after the  
Ascension of Jesus (Luke)

\*Luke wants to show the  
continuous progression of the  
Good News against the  
charge that they were  
hurting Judaism or that they  
were a troublesome element  
in the Roman Empire.



## **History of the Early Church (cont.)**

**ACTS contains**

**Sermons**

**Speeches**

**Biographical sketches**

**Theological debates**

**Travelogues**

**Tremendous Change: in one generation this Jewish church becomes Gentile – change happens with lightning speed!**

## ***Major Events in New Testament History in the First Century A.D.***

	<b>Roman</b>	<b>Jewish</b>	<b>Christian</b>
BC	Reign of Augustus as emperor (27BC-AD 14) First census ordered by Quirinius, governor of Syria (6)	Reign of Herod the Great (37-4 BC) Beginning of Herod's temple (20 BC) Death of Herod the Great (4)	Birth of Jesus Christ (6-4)
AD			
10	Reign of Tiberius (14-37)	Anointing of Caiaphas as high priest (18)	
20	Appointment of Pilate as procurator over Judea (26)		John the Baptist's ministry (26-27) Jesus' ministry (26-29)
30	Dismissal of Pilate by Rome (36)	Reign of Herod Agrippa I (37-44)	Crucifixion of Christ (30-33) Pentecost (30-33)

## **Major Events in New Testament History in the First Century A.D. (cont.)**

	<b>Roman</b>	<b>Jewish</b>	<b>Christian</b>
30	Reign of Caligula (37-41)		Martyrdom of Stephen (32-35)  Conversion of Paul (33-35)
40	Reign of Claudius (41-54)	Death of Herod Agrippa I (44)  Expelling of Jews from Rome (49)	Imprisonment of Peter (41-44)  Judean famine and Paul's relief visit (46-47)  Paul's 1 <sup>st</sup> missionary journey (47-49)  Jerusalem Council (49)  Paul's 2 <sup>nd</sup> missionary journey (49-51)
50	Reign of Nero (54-68)	Appointment of Felix as procurator (52-59)	Paul's 3 <sup>rd</sup> missionary journey (52-57)

## **Major Events in New Testament History in the First Century A.D. (cont.)**

	<b>Roman</b>	<b>Jewish</b>	<b>Christian</b>
50		Appointment of Festus as procurator (59-61)	Paul's arrest (56-57)  Paul before Festus and Agrippa II; his appeal to Caesar (58-59)
60	Great fire of Rome; Christians blamed and persecuted (64)  Reign of Vespasian (69-79)	Jewish revolt against Rome (66)  Flight of Jerusalem Christians to Pella, east of Jordan (66)	Paul in Rome (60)  Martyrdom of James, the Lord's brother (62)  Martyrdom of Paul and Peter (64-68)
70	Reign of Titus (79-81)	Fall of Jerusalem (70)  Fall of Masada (73)	
80	Reign of Domitian (81-96)		Great Roman Persecution of church (81-96)
90			Banishment of John the beloved to Patmos (93-96)  Death of John (c. 98)

## Outline

- I. Look at the structure of Acts (II-part)**
- II. Consider three problems**
- III. 4 marks of the life and work of the early church**
- IV. For you to ponder**

### I. Outline of Acts

- I. First (Luke) and now the Second Book (Acts of the Apostles) both written to Theophilus.**

**John the Baptist had predicted that the Messiah would baptize his people with the Holy Spirit (all 4 Gospels report this), and Book One (Gospel of Luke) ends with “And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49)**

**Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.”**

## **2. Matthias chosen to replace Judas (1:12-26)**

**Important to have “12” ( the number of the tribes of Israel) disciples**

**Criteria: be present for Jesus’ ministry and witness resurrection**

**Cast lots to choose Matthias**

## **3. The Day of Pentecost: The church is born (Acts 2:1-47)**

**Jewish tradition was that the Law was given 50 days after Passover. Pentecost was first called The Festival of Weeks – it was a festival celebration; all Jews who were able went to Jerusalem for the celebration.**

**Luke 3:16 – Jesus had promised gift of Holy Spirit (fulfillment of Prophecy of Joel – Spirit/like wine, will be Abundant)**

**Holy Spirit was like “wind and fire” – both important symbols for Judaism**

**WIND: creation – breath/logos of God**

**FIRE – Moses heard God from a burning bush**

**Filled with new wine or the Holy Spirit?**



#### **4. The believers in Jerusalem (3:1-7:60)**

- **Church gets organized – shared possessions, praying and worshipping, setting standards, etc.**
- **Disciples believed they had no power but that everything came to them from God through the Holy Spirit**
- **Jesus/God now accessible to all through the Holy Spirit**
- **7 men of good character chosen Deacons to respond to the needs of widows and others.**
- **STEPHEN, chosen first, later charged with blasphemy and stoned to death; his last words, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit...do not hold this sin against them.” (7:59-60)**

#### **5. The Gospel spreads beyond Jerusalem (8:1-12:24)**

**The first half of Acts (Chapters 1-8) is about the church in Jerusalem.**

**The second half is dominated by Paul.**

**The progress of the book is mainly geographical; from Jerusalem the word spreads to Samaria (8:5), the seacoast (8:40), Damascus (9:10), Antioch and Cyprus (11:19), Asia Minor (13:13), Europe (16:11), and finally Rome itself (28:16).**

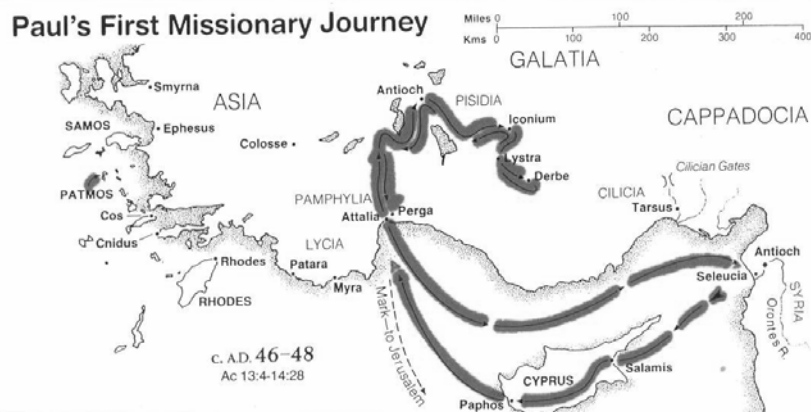
## Peter and Saul/Paul

**Peter is key leader in the early church (Chapters 1-8) — convinces Jews to receive Gentiles into the fellowship and allow for their baptism.**

**In Antioch the church's numbers/strength is also growing – here they are called Christians for the first time.**

**Saul has been a chief persecutor of the Christians (Chapter 8) but becomes converted (Saul to Paul, Chapter 9) and now leads the effort to bring Christianity to the non-Jews (Gentiles).**

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



- **Paul and Barnabas commissioned by Church in Antioch to go to Cypress and several cities on mainland of Asia Minor -- would go to Synagogue and proclaim the Good News of how "God had opened a door of faith for Jesus as the Messiah."**
- **Return to report the Gentiles (14:27)**

## 7. The council of Jerusalem (15:1-35)

Should Gentiles be subject to Jewish laws?

**Paul: Moral law – yes Ritual law – no**

**Peter: Law is the law – no exceptions!**

**Decided NO ritual law for Gentiles – sent letter to Antioch to explain**

## 8. The 2nd missionary journey (15:36 – 18:22)

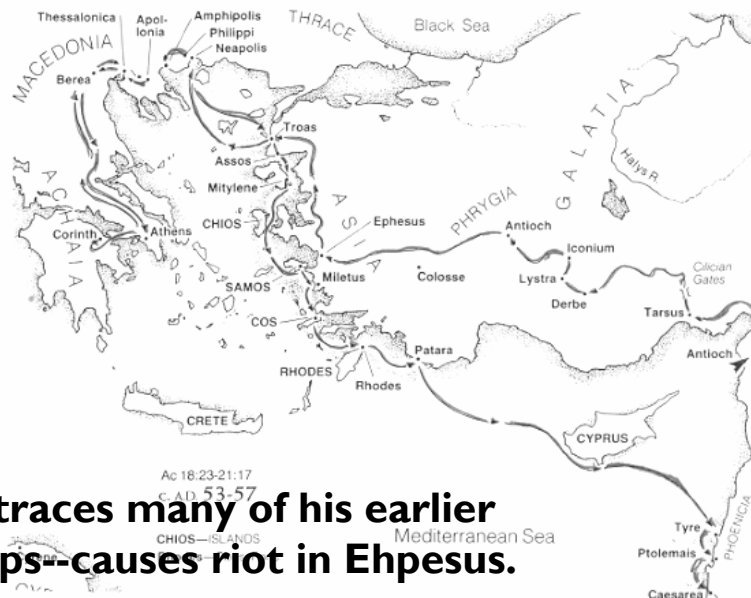
### Paul's Second Missionary Journey



- Paul invites Barnabas who declines, because Paul won't allow John Mark, his nephew, to go, as John Mark had left the last journey early. So, Paul chooses Silas. Paul and Silas thrown in jail in Macedonia. Everywhere they went, people were baptized and became believers, everyone they went, people were offended and angry at them.
- Barnabas and Timothy join Paul in Corinth and remain for 18 months

## 9. The third missionary journey (18:23 – 21:8)

### Paul's Third Missionary Journey



## **10. Paul in Jerusalem (21:9 – 26:32)**

**Paul creates near riot here as well**

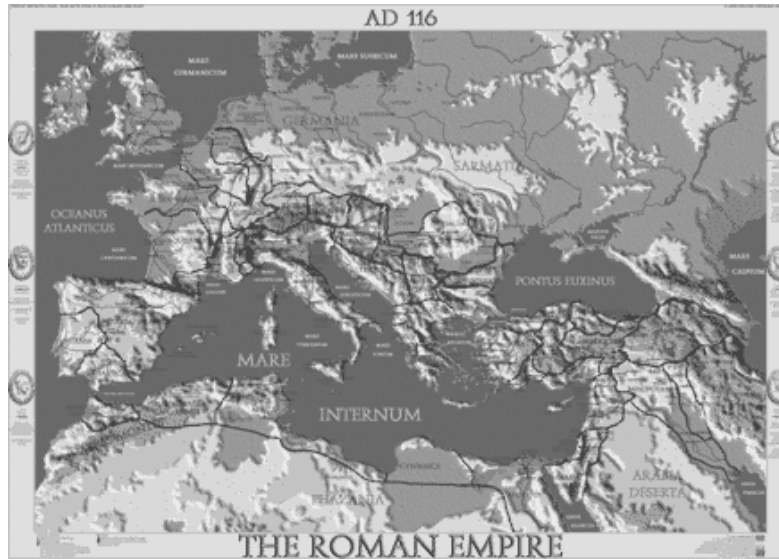
**“Fellow Israelites, help: This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place.” (21:28)**

**Paul arrested – wants his case tried in Rome (he is a Roman citizen)**

## **11. The journey to Rome (27:1-28:31)**

- **Fascinating account of sea adventure, navigation, shipwreck**
- **Begins as prisoner – but in time of crisis, they took orders from Paul**
- **Ends with Paul spending 2 years under house arrest in Rome**
- **Paul continued to preach – some believed, some didn't**

**Chapter 28 ends with people all over the Roman Empire embracing Christianity. The promise of Acts 1:8 is fulfilled:**



## **II. Three Problems**

- I. THE PROBLEM OF JESUS' DEATH (Jewish problem)**  
Deuteronomy 21:23 "...his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is accursed by God; you shall not defile your land which the Lord, your God gives you for an inheritance."

**Church responds that Jesus' death was not an ordinary death**

- 1. Death was necessary (Acts 2:23-part of God's plan)**
- 2. Following the resurrection, Jesus explained what his death meant**
- 3. Death had special value: "Christ died for us"**

## **2. THE PROBLEM BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS**

**The Hebrews** – conservative, nationalistic, this is how Paul saw himself before he had his conversion

**The Hellenists** – more liberal, less concerned about ritual, first to see the ritual law as problematic

**\*\*In Diaspora, one becomes more liberal by adapting or more conservative by rejecting.**  
**STEPHEN** – against the Hebrews (stiff-necked people resisting the Holy Spirit; God does not live in houses made by men)

**CHRISTIANITY DEVELOPED AND GREW OUT OF THIS TENSION.**

## **3. THE PROBLEM WITH GUILT AND SHAME**

**Paul does NOT suffer from guilty conscience – does not have remorse about persecuting early church. Augustine and Luther superimpose their own inner turmoil/introspection on Paul.**

**Paul's conversion is a 'breaking in' from the outside. Comes to see that 'before the foundation of the world' he had been 'set apart' for this.**

### **III. 4 Marks of the Life and Work of the Early Church**

**After baptizing 3,000 people on Pentecost, “They (the baptized) devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers”**

**Acts 2:42**

**These are the 4 marks of the church: teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer.**

### **The Life and Work of the Early Church**

#### ***I. Teaching Church***

**Apostle means “one sent out” – they were called to tell others what they had learned from Jesus.**

**Apostolic authority – to preach what Jesus taught the apostles (whose authority was the Risen Christ).**

**2. *Fellowship in Greek – Koinonia***

**Refers not so much to friendship/ fellowship as much as it refers to their common bond in Christ.**

**They have koinonia not because they like one another, but because they share the same confession of faith.**

**3. *Community – they broke bread together***

**Common meals – both for fellowship and for practical reasons, some of their members were poor and could not afford to provide for their families.**

**Probably by the end of the 1st Century, ‘breaking bread together’ became associated with The Lord’s Supper.**

**4. *Praying - Judas' replacement chosen after prayer***

**People prayed for the Holy Spirit that empowered people to act, to remain steadfast and faithful (this is **NOT** a self-reliant church but a Spirit-reliant church).**

**Acts 17:6--Early followers called "These people who have been turning the world upside down." Their power/energy/boldness resulted from their commitment to Jesus Christ and reliance upon him (through prayer).**

## **IV. For You To Ponder**

### ***I. THE EARLY CHURCH HAD MISSIONAL ZEAL...***

***Imperative to take the Gospel to ALL THE WORLD***

***Chapter One – Disciples in Jerusalem awaiting the Spirit***

***Last Chapter – Paul in Rome proclaiming the Good News***

- 2.14.42** at Pentecost, 3,000 baptized
- 3.11-3.4** Peter preaches and 5,000 become believers
- 8.26-30** Philip preaches and an Ethiopian official is baptized
- 9.1-19a** Paul is converted
- 10.34.-48** Peter preaches and Gentiles convert
- 13.42-52** Paul and Barnabas preach and many Gentiles believe
- 16.11-15** Lydia becomes the first convert in Europe
- 16.25-34** A Philippian jailer and his family believe
- 18.1-8** A leader of the synagogue and his family and others in Corinth convert

## **Key Verse**

**Acts 2:43-47**

**<sup>43</sup>And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup>And all who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup>And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.**

## **For You to Ponder (cont.)**

**Wherever the Gospel is preached,  
there is controversy!**

**If you were arrested for being a  
Christian, would there be enough  
evidence to convict you?**