

PREFACE

THE BOOK OF ACTS

- **Commonly called the Acts of the Apostles**
- **In reality it is the Acts of the Holy Spirit**
- **Tells of the spread of the church from Jerusalem - Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

Acts 1:1-8 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,² until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,³ to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me;⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Why to Theophilus

Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, and Theophilus, to whom it is addressed, had been pleasantly associated. From Luke, Theophilus had received much instruction and great light. Luke had been Theophilus' teacher, and he still felt a responsibility to direct and instruct him and to sustain and protect him in his work. {Ms40-1903}

At that time it was customary for a writer to send his manuscript to some one for examination and criticism. Luke chose Theophilus, as a man in whom he had confidence, to perform this important work. He first directs the attention of Theophilus to the record of Christ's life as given in the book of Luke which had also been addressed by the same writer to Theophilus. He says: {Ms40-1903}

Why to Theophilus

“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen: to whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: and being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” {Ms40-1903}

But though addressed by name to one person, this book, written by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, is designed for all who desire to understand its truths. Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning. {Ms40-1903}

Why to Theophilus

He who is taught of God will advance step by step in the divine life. His path will grow brighter and brighter even unto the perfect day. His heart will be filled with a desire to make known the truths that he has received. {Ms40-1903}

“Moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” {Ms40-1903}

Why to Theophilus

When those upon whom the Lord has once laid the burden of His work have labored faithfully for a time, they are not to feel that their work is finished. As the light increases, they are to continue to walk and work in the light. Their broader experience and the encouragement they receive as they see the results of their efforts will better fit them for work. {Ms40-1903}

Though Luke had already given precious light, he was still to work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In his former treatise, he had laid a foundation; under the direction of the Spirit of God, he must continue to build a structure of truth. His later writings were not to take the place of what he had previously written: they contained truths in advance of what he had known at the time of his former writing. If from a sermon or a book we receive new light and knowledge, we are not to reject truth which we have already received. Advanced knowledge will establish and strengthen that which has preceded it and cause it to be more highly appreciated. {Ms40-1903}

The teachings of Christ were to be preserved in manuscripts and books. The duties He taught were to be written out in plain, simple language, presented so clearly that the gracious words of instruction could be cherished and heeded. {Ms40-1903}

Why to Theophilus

It will be remembered that it was at Antioch, in the church raised up by the apostles, that the early followers of Christ were first called Christians. 14 And THEOPHILUS (died c. A.D. 180) is listed as becoming the sixth bishop of Antioch, about A.D. 168, in succession to Euodius. According to the records, by the close of the third century Antioch was one of the largest Christian churches in the Roman Empire. The statements of such a leader therefore carry considerable weight in our quest. {1966 LEF, CFF1 840.2}

Theophilus was educated as a pagan, but tells us he was converted to Christianity by the reading of the Scriptures. His numerous writings, extant at the time of Eusebius and Jerome, included a commentary on the Gospels and a treatise against heresies, both of which have been lost. Theophilus' main work, his apology for Christianity, is in the form of a lengthy letter addressed to a pagan friend named Autolycus, an "idolater and scorner of Christians." 15 Theophilus states that he writes as an avowed Christian. This treatise is a detailed examination of the evidences of Christianity derived from Scripture and history, and a careful exposition of Christian doctrines. It was designed to convince Autolycus of the absurdities of paganism and the truth of Christianity. It was a learned work, showing the familiarity of the author with the Greek classics. More important, according to Bishop Coxe, it revealed "a profound acquaintance with the inspired writings." {1966 LEF, CFF1 841.1}

Why to Theophilus

Theophilus was a disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna, who was also a Conditionalist. He was likewise a contemporary of Athenagoras, under whom significant departures were appearing. (For Theophilus' chronological and categorical placement, see Tabular Chart F , on page 758.) The evidence is overwhelming that Theophilus did not believe in the innate or inherent immortality of man, holding instead that we are immortalized only by and in Christ. He likewise enunciated another fundamental principle of Conditionalism -- that God created Adam neither mortal (that is, certain to die) nor yet immortal (that is, certain not to die), but created him capable of either destiny, and master of his own fate. And he further taught that the penalty for sin is terminable -- that the true penalty of sin is endless because it is final destruction, from which there is no return. {1966 LEF, CFF1 841.2}

SMYRNA - (100-313)

"a crown of life"
(Rev. 2:10)



Polycarp, an elder at the church in Smyrna, was burned alive at the stake in 155 A.D. for his refusal to deny Christ and swear allegiance to Caesar.

Why to Theophilus

Theophilus, it should be stated, wrote his apology before the Neoplatonic philosophy, already beginning to find its way into the church, had been widely accepted. It is to be noted that no one censured Theophilus for his avowed position on the nature and destiny of man, for what he taught from so high a post was still the received and orthodox doctrine of many -- if not, indeed, still the majority view at that time. But the rising tide of a radically different concept had already set in, destined ere long to overwhelm the earlier position of the Apostolic Fathers. The turning point in this area of the faith of the church was immediately ahead. {1966 LEF, CFF1 841.3}

The Book of Acts by Chapters

- 1. Heavenly ascension of Christ**
- 2. Outpouring of the Holy Spirit**
- 3. Lame man is healed**
- 4. Yield from public preaching**
- 5. Sapphira & Ananias lie**
- 6. Providing servants solves problem**
- 7. Intensive defense by Stephen**
- 8. Rising persecution scatters church**
- 9. Introducing Saul to the gospel**
- 10. Taking the gospel to Cornelius**

The Book of Acts by Chapters

- 11. Word spreads to the Gentiles**
- 12. Outbreak from prison of Peter**
- 13. Relaying the gospel to Antioch**
- 14. Kingdom spreads to Iconium**
- 15. Investigation by Jerusalem council**
- 16. Need for Timothy's circumcision**
- 17. Gospel preached in Athens**
- 18. Influence of Priscilla & Aquila**
- 19. New baptism in Ephesus**
- 20. Troas 1st day breaking bread**
- 21. Holy Spirit warns Paul of arrest**
- 22. Effect of Paul's testimony**

The Book of Acts by Chapters

- 23. Council of the Sanhedrin**
- 24. Hearing held by Felix**
- 25. Urgent appeal to Caesar through Festus**
- 26. Reasoning with Festus & King Agrippa**
- 27. Ceasarea to shipwreck on Malta Island**
- 28. Healing of Publius father, on to Rome**

The Book of Acts by Chapters

1. **H**eavenly ascension of Christ
2. **O**utpouring of the Holy Spirit
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9. **I**ntroducing Saul to the gospel
10. **T**aking the gospel to Cornelius

The Book of Acts by Chapters

11. **W**ord spreads to the Gentiles
12. **O**utbreak from prison of Peter
13. **R**elaying the gospel to Antioch
14. **K**ingdom spreads to Iconium
15. **I**nvestigation by Jerusalem council
16. **N**eed for Timothy's circumcision
17. **G**ospel preached in Athens

18. **I**nfluence of Priscilla & Aquila
19. **N**ew baptism in Ephesus

20. **T**ouching farewell of Ephesian elders
21. **H**oly Spirit warns Paul of arrest
22. **E**ffect of Paul's testimony

The Book of Acts by Chapters

- 23. **C**ouncil of the Sanhedrin
- 24. **H**earing held by Felix
- 25. **U**rgent appeal to Caesar
- 26. **R**easoning with King Agrippa
- 27. **C**aesarea to Malta Island
- 28. **H**earlding the gospel in chains

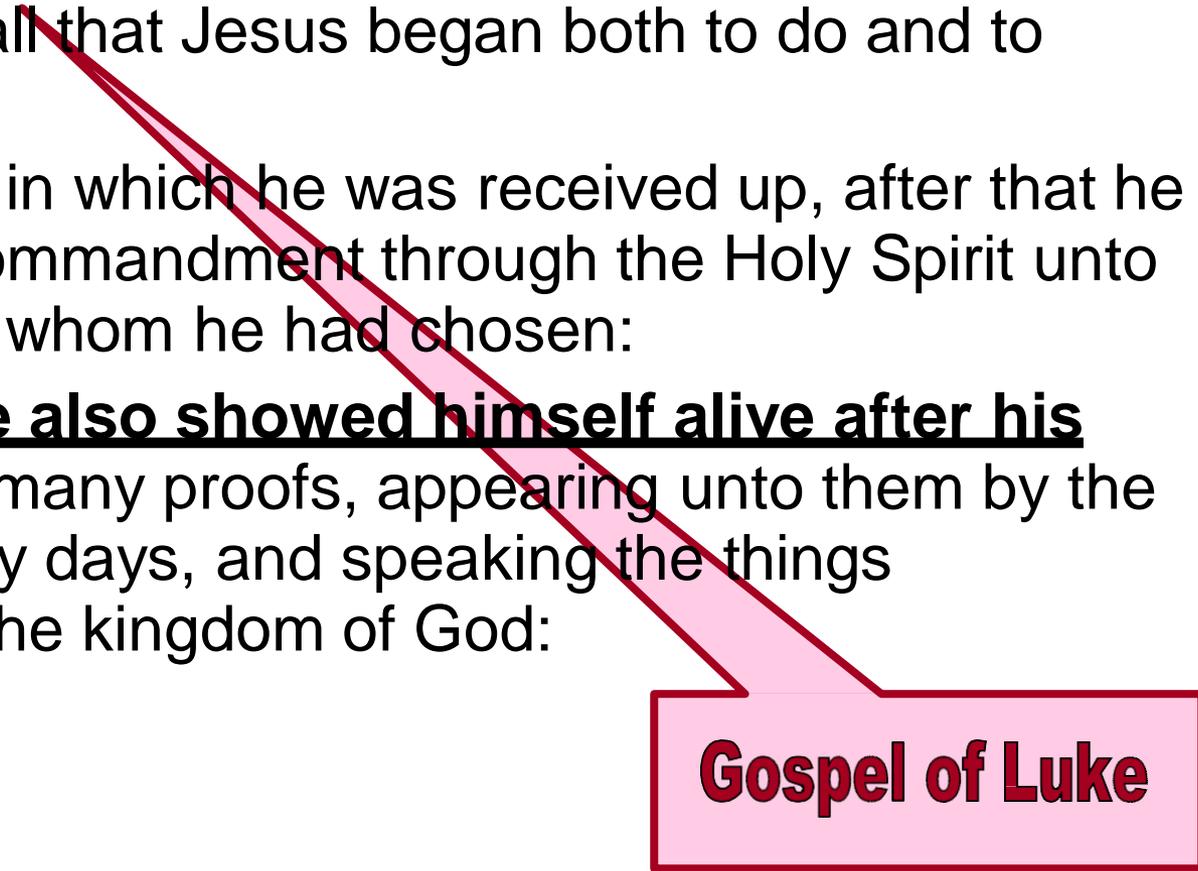
THE BOOK OF ACTS BY CHAPTERS

1. **H**eavenly ascension of Christ
2. **O**utpouring of the Holy Spirit
3. **L**ame man is healed
4. **Y**ield from public preaching commanded
5. **S**apphira & Ananias lie
6. **P**roviding servants ends problem
7. **I**ntensive defense by Stephen
8. **R**ising persecution scatters the church
9. **I**ntroducing Saul to the gospel
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11. **W**ord spreads to the Gentiles
12. **O**utbreak from prison of Peter
13. **R**elaying the gospel to Antioch
14. **K**ingdom spreads to Iconium, Lystra & Derbe
15. **I**nterrogation by Jerusalem council
16. **N**eed for Timothy's circumcision
17. **G**ospel presentation in Athens
18. **I**nfluence of Priscilla & Aquila
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27. **C**aesarea to Malta Island
28. **H**eralding the gospel in chains

Prologue to Acts

Acts 1:1-3

1. The **former treatise** I made, O **Theophilus**, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach,
2. until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen:
3. **To whom he also showed himself alive after his passion** by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God:



Gospel of Luke

Acts is a sequel

Who?

Luke 1

1. Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us,
2. even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word,
3. it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus;
4. that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou was instructed.



Acts 1:8

But ye shall receive power,
when **the Holy Spirit**

is come upon you:

and ye shall be

my **witnesses**

both in Jerusalem,

and in all Judaea and Samaria,

and unto the

uttermost part of the earth.

Key word

Mark 16

15. And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation.**

16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.

17. And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues;

18. they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19. So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

20. **And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them,** and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen.

Luke 24

45. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures;

46. and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day;

47. and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

48. Ye are witnesses of these things.

49. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be **clothed with power from on high.**

Acts 26



15. And I said, Who art thou, Lord?
And the Lord said, I am Jesus
whom thou persecutest.

16. But arise, and stand upon thy
feet: for **to this end have I**

**appeared unto thee, to appoint
thee a minister and a witness
both of the things wherein thou
hast seen me, and of the things
wherein I will appear unto thee;**

17. delivering thee from the people,
and from **the Gentiles**, unto whom
I send thee,

18. **to open their eyes**, that they
may turn from darkness to light
and from the power of Satan unto
God, **that they may receive
remission of sins** and an
inheritance among them that are
sanctified by faith in me.

Luke, the Beloved Physician

- **Colossians 4:14** *Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas salute you.*
 - Paul’s co-worker – Philemon 24
 - Paul’s steadfast companion – 2 Timothy 4:11
- Wrote the gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts
- Interviewed the “eyewitnesses” and traced the course of all things accurately from the first (cf. Luke 1:2-3)
- Was with Paul near the end – cf. 2 Timothy 4:11

Luke, the Evangelist

Acts 16:9-10 And a vision appeared to **Paul** in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10. And when he had seen the vision, straightway **we** sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called **us** to preach the gospel to them.

the author of Acts

The Macedonian Call

Some suggest that Luke is the Macedonian (Greek) who invites Paul to come over “to help us” – Acts 16:9

However, there are two arguments against this idea:

1. The text says Paul had a “vision”
2. Luke, together with Paul (“we”), was part of the response to the invitation



Not Mentioned in Acts

Of all the people named in the book of Acts, there are two individuals who are markedly absent

Luke (the beloved physician – and author)

Titus (a Greek, Galatians 2:3)

Some have suggested that these were brothers...

2 Corinthians 8:16-19

- 16. But thanks be to God, who putteth the same earnest care for you into the heart of **Titus**. 17. For he accepted indeed our exhortation; but being himself very earnest, he went forth unto you of his own accord. 18. And **we have sent together with him the brother** whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches; 19. **and not only so, but who was also appointed by the churches to travel with us** in the matter of this grace, which is ministered by us to the glory of the Lord, and to show our readiness:

Who is this “unnamed” brother?

2 Corinthians 8:22-23 *and we have sent with them our brother, whom we have many times proved earnest in many things, but now much more earnest, by reason of the great confidence which he hath in you. 23. Whether any inquire about Titus, he is my partner and my fellow-worker to you-ward, or our brethren, they are the messengers of the churches, they are the glory of Christ.*

2 Corinthians 12:18

- I exhorted **Titus**, and I sent **the brother** with him. Did Titus take any advantage of *you?*
walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?

Aristarchus

- Mentioned together with Luke
 - Colossians 4:10, 14
 - Philemon 24
- Mentioned 3 times in the book of Acts
 - Acts 19:29
 - Acts 20:4
 - Acts 27:2 (here in the company of Paul and the writer of the book, “we”)

Others who are named in Acts:

- Aquila
- Priscilla
- Mark
- Silas
- Timothy
- Trophimus

Who is NOT mentioned in Acts?

Titus

Luke (not by name)

Our question becomes “why?” When Luke records the names of so many co-workers who traveled and labored with Paul, the apostle... why does Luke NOT mention Titus?

Philippi

- Luke is together with Paul when they enter Macedonia – cf. **Acts 16:9-12**
- It is in Philippi that Luke remains when Paul continues on with his journey
 - cf. **Acts 17:1** – note that the short “we” section in Acts ends here until Luke rejoins Paul again in **Acts 20:5**
 - It appears that Luke is one of the messengers chosen by the Macedonians churches to accompany Paul with the relief for brethren in Jerusalem

The Philippian Connection?

- While Paul is traveling and preaching, Luke remains behind in Philippi to strengthen the brethren in that place
- The church in Philippi was very supportive of Paul during his travels...
 - Philippians 1:3-5, 4:15-16
- Can we postulate that the relationship between Paul and Luke influenced the brethren in Philippi to send to Paul's needs?

Philippians 4:15-16

And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only; 16. for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need.

compare with the narrative in Acts

Others not mentioned...

- **Mark** is not mentioned by name in the gospel of Mark
 - cf. Mark 14:51-52
- **John** does not refer to himself in the gospel of John
 - cf. John 13:33, 18:15-16, 19:26-27, 20:2-8, 21:7-8

Luke

The Sources

(1:1-4)

having traced the course of all things accurately from the first

Inspiration of the Holy Spirit

Mary

Early chapters of Luke

2:19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart

John 19:26-27

(Mary, a source of information for John?)

Mark

Early chapters of Acts

Mark 14:51-52

Acts 12:12, 25

1 Peter 5:13

Philip

Middle chapter of Acts

Acts 6-8

Acts 21:8

Paul

Later chapters of Acts

Acts 16:11 **“we”**
Acts 21:15,17

- Imprisoned first in Jerusalem
- then in Caesarea—Acts 23:33; 24:27 (2 years)
- then in Rome—Acts 28:16

Luke

Philemon 23-24

Colossians 4:9-10,14

Philemon 10

Luke, the Historian

- When one reads the book of Acts, he is seeing events through the “eyes” of Luke
- While Luke was not an eyewitness of ALL the events recorded in Acts, he certainly had ample opportunities to interview the principle characters concerning the events he records
 - Paul
 - Barnabas / Mark (his cousin, cf. Colossians 4:10)
 - Philip – cf. Acts 21:8-10
 - Peter
 - Silas (Silvanus)

The Macedonian Call

Acts 16

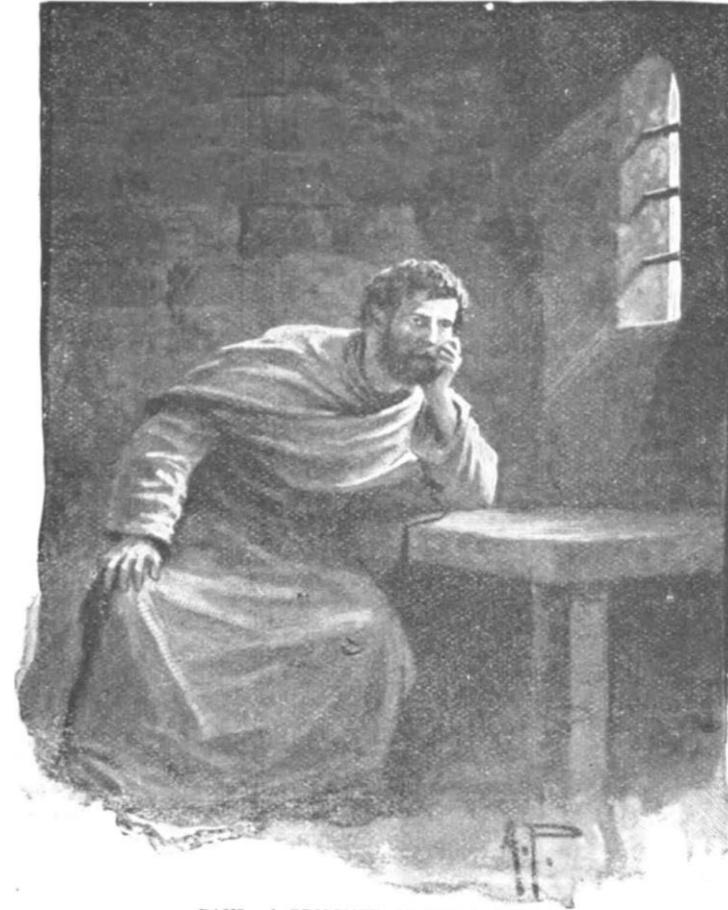
8. and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.
9. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.
10. And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.
11. Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis;
12. and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days.

The “we” sections of Acts

- These are the times when Luke is traveling together with Paul – thus, Luke is an eyewitness of these events
- Acts 16:10 – into Macedonia / at Philippi
 - Conversion of Lydia
 - Conversion of the Jailor
- Acts 20:5 – reunited in Macedonia, travels with Paul to Jerusalem
 - Acts 21:8 spent time in Caesarea (Philip)
 - Acts 21:16 lodged with Mnason of Cyprus in Jerusalem

Paul is imprisoned

- Arrested in Jerusalem – Acts 21:33
- Imprisoned for two years in Caesarea
 - Acts 23:23-24, 33; 24:26-27
- Appeals to Caesar
 - Acts 25:11,25; 26:30-32
- Sent to Rome
 - Acts 27:1 Luke with Paul
- Imprisoned for two years in Rome
 - Acts 28:16, 30-31



PAUL, A PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST.

Observations

- Luke is with Paul often from the time that Paul first entered **Macedonia**
- When Paul is arrested, Luke is with him in **Caesarea** – and later in **Rome**
- This presents a four year period wherein Luke has access to eyewitnesses, to interview them and accurately trace the events of which he writes

The Acts of the Apostles

1 **Peter**

8 Philip Saul Peter

13 **Paul**

1:8 Stephen

Cornelius Barnabas

**Uttermost
Parts of the
World**

Jerusalem

**Judea &
Samaria**

Rome

Jews first

Caesarea

Antioch

Jerusalem

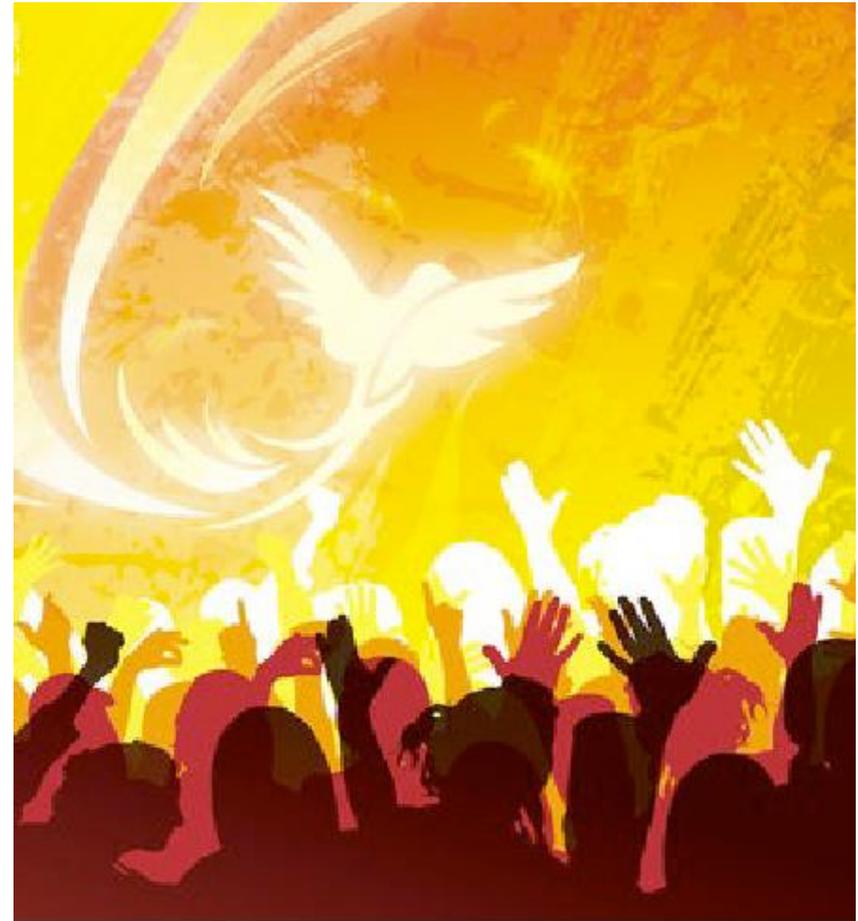
Gentiles

Silas
Timothy

Acts: An Action Filled Book

“Peter said many other things to warn them. He begged them, “Save yourselves from these evil people.” Those who accepted his message were baptized. About 3,000 people joined the believers that day.” (Acts 2:40–41, NIV)

Supernatural
Power



Conversion

“As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him.

He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting Me?”

“Who are You, Lord?” Saul asked. And the voice replied, “I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

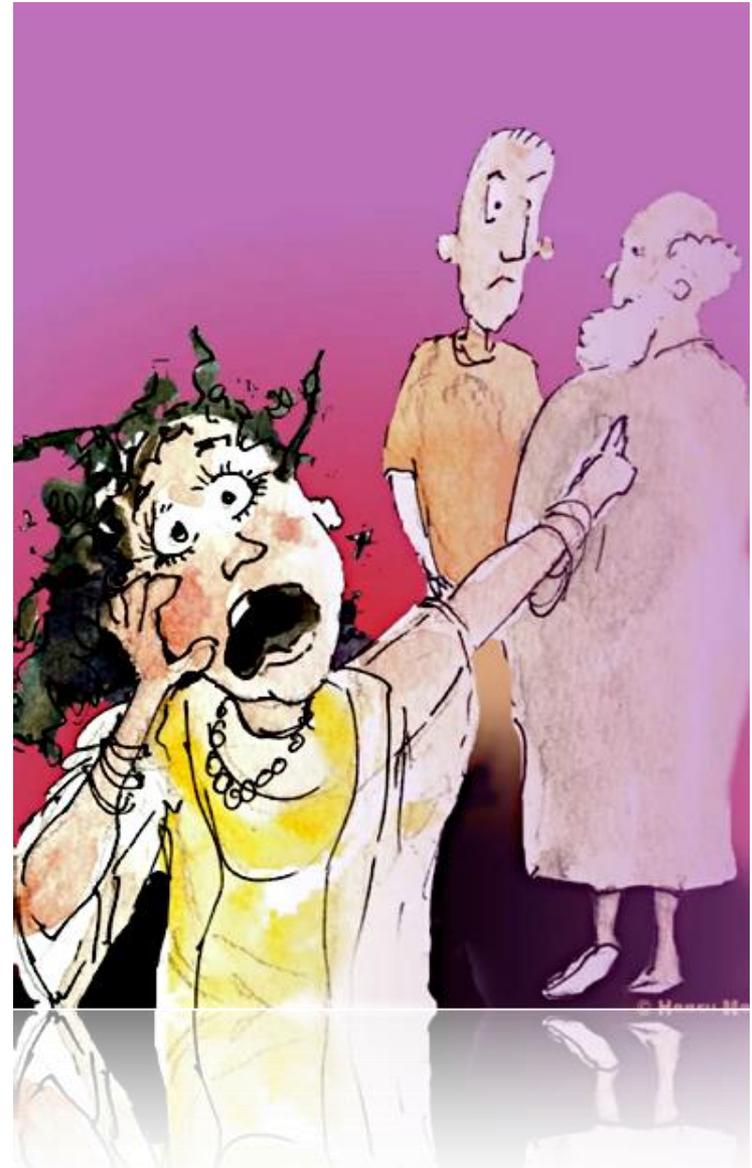
....He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink.”

(Acts 9:3–9, NLT)



Confrontation

“Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.



Confrontation

But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn't escape."

(Acts 16:16–23, NLT)



Shipwreck

The Gospel goes to Rome.

Acts 27:1-44

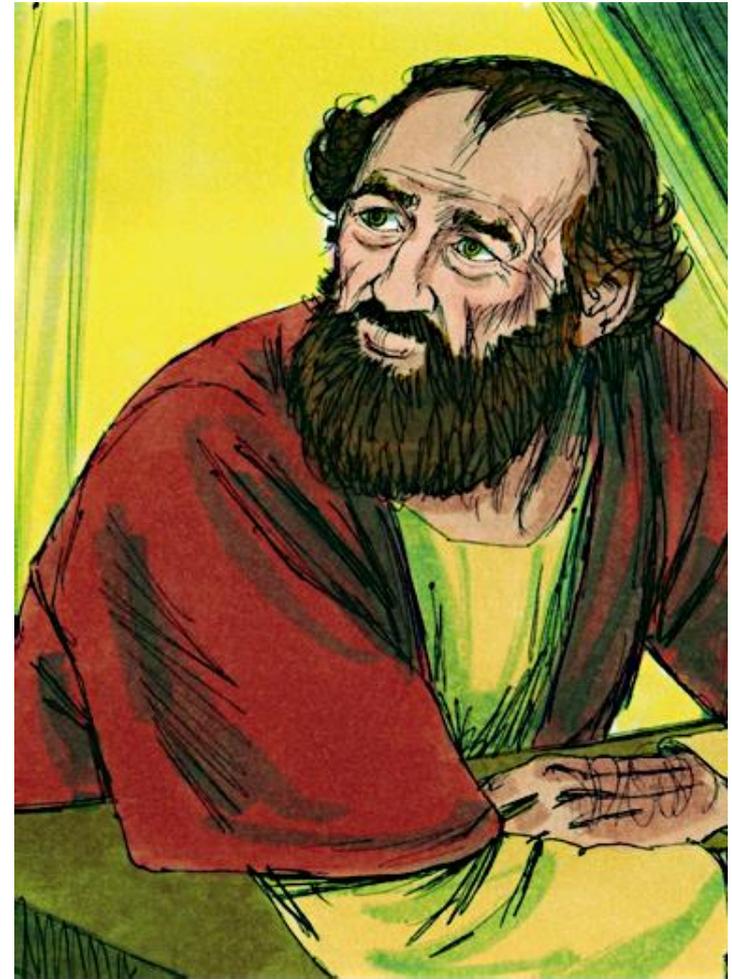
One of the most vivid and direct descriptions of sailing and shipwreck in ancient literature.



Obedience

“Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.”

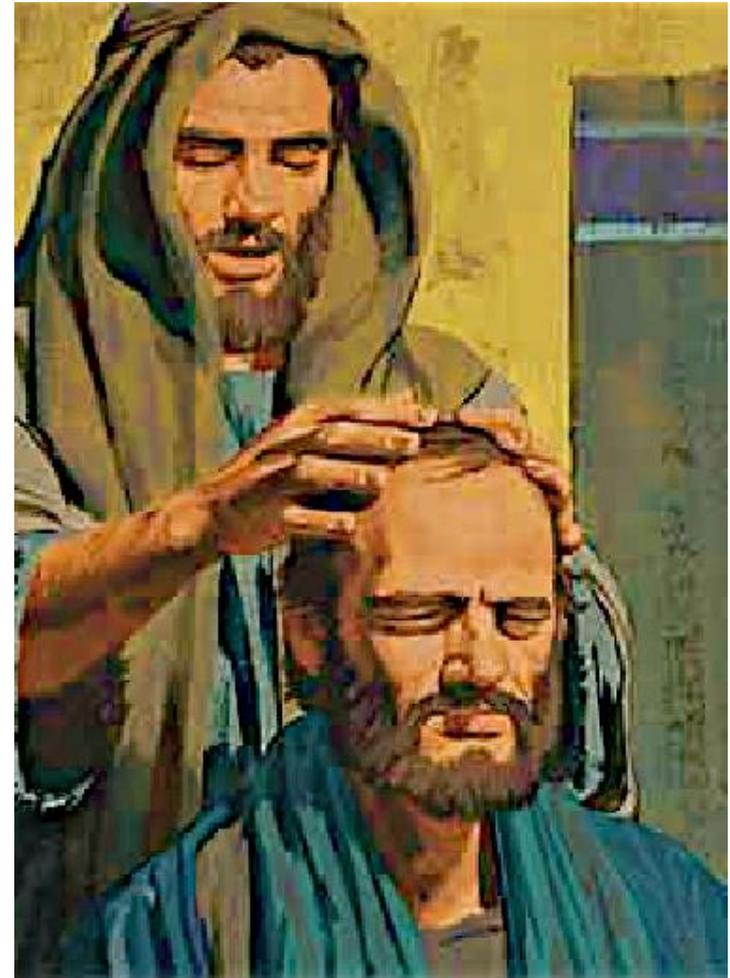
And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.”



Ananias and Saul

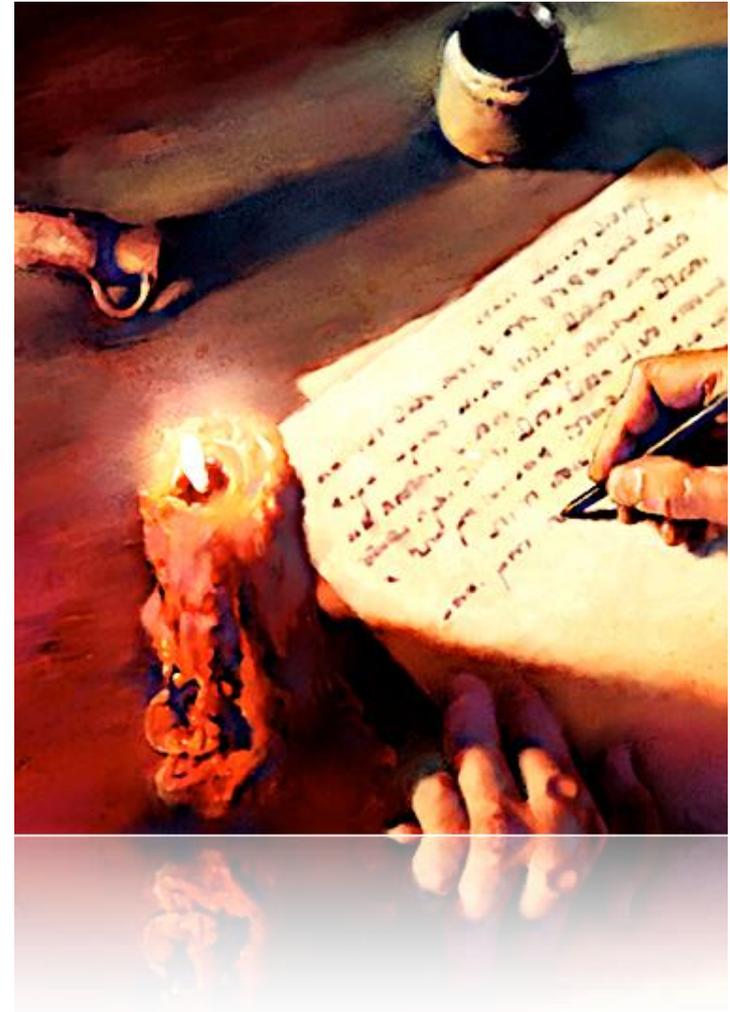
Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your Name.”

But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My Name’s sake.”
(Acts 9:10–16, NKJV)



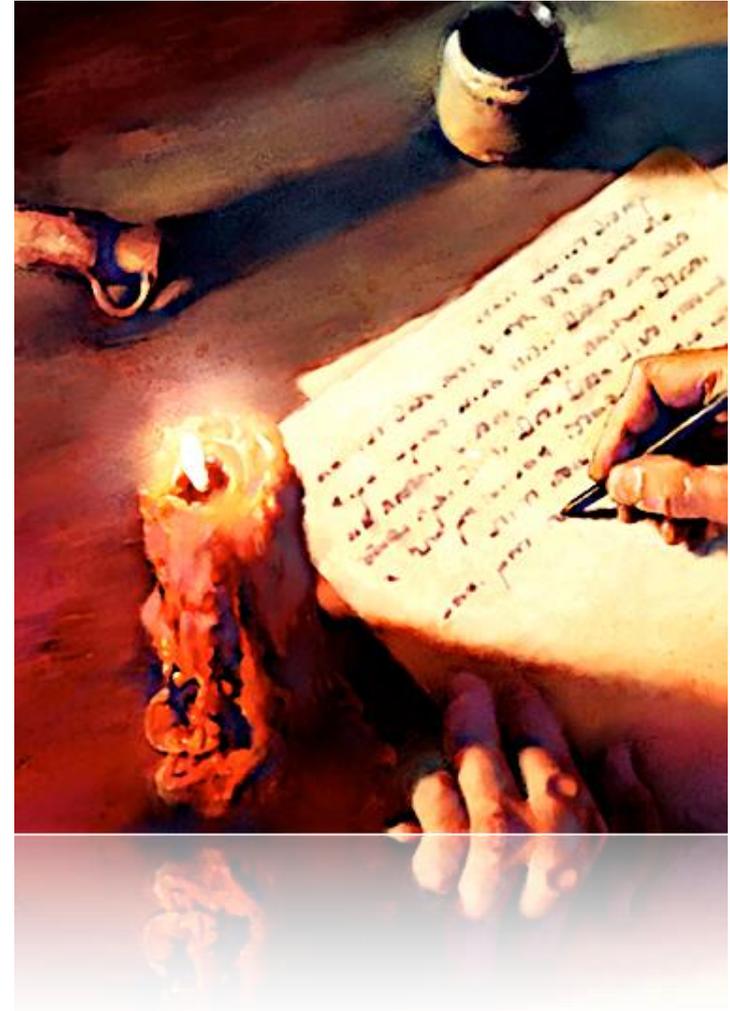
Acts of the Holy Spirit

- Very few of Jesus' 12 apostles feature in the story.
- Of the original 12 only Peter, John, and Philip are mentioned by name after chapter one.
- The real hero of the book of Acts is the Holy Spirit.
- It is the Holy Spirit that leads and empowers the amazing expansion of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome.



Acts of the Holy Spirit

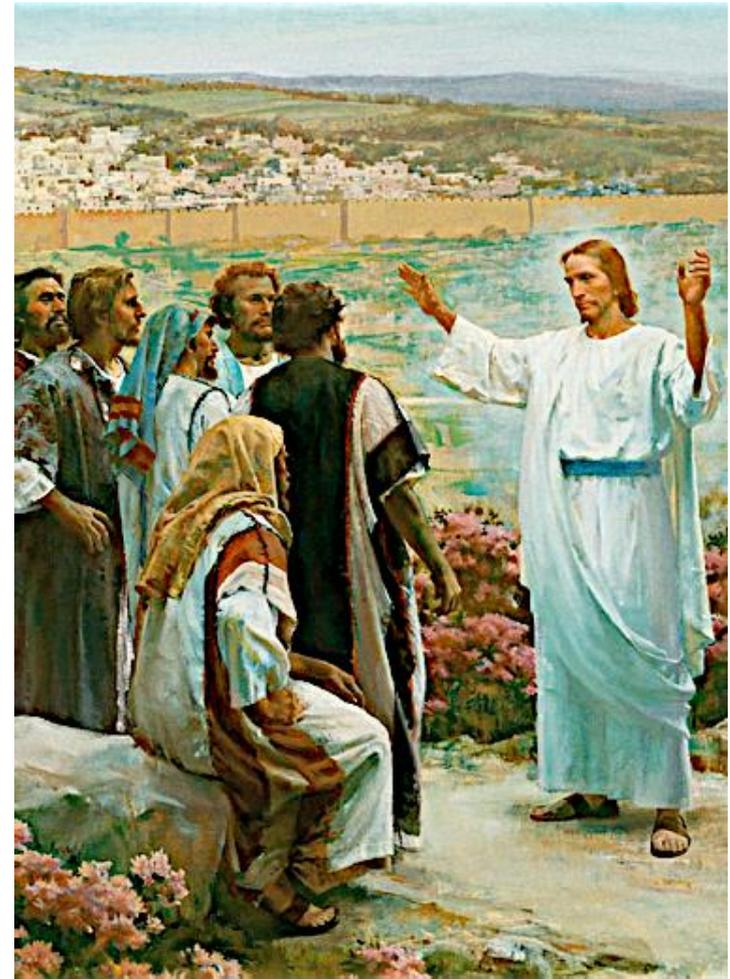
- The action or presence of the Holy Spirit is described **43** times in Acts.
- In Matthew's Gospel the Holy Spirit is mentioned **5** times
- In Mark's Gospel the Holy Spirit is mentioned **4** times.
- In Luke's Gospel He is mentioned **12** times
- In John's gospel **10** times.



Acts of the Holy Spirit

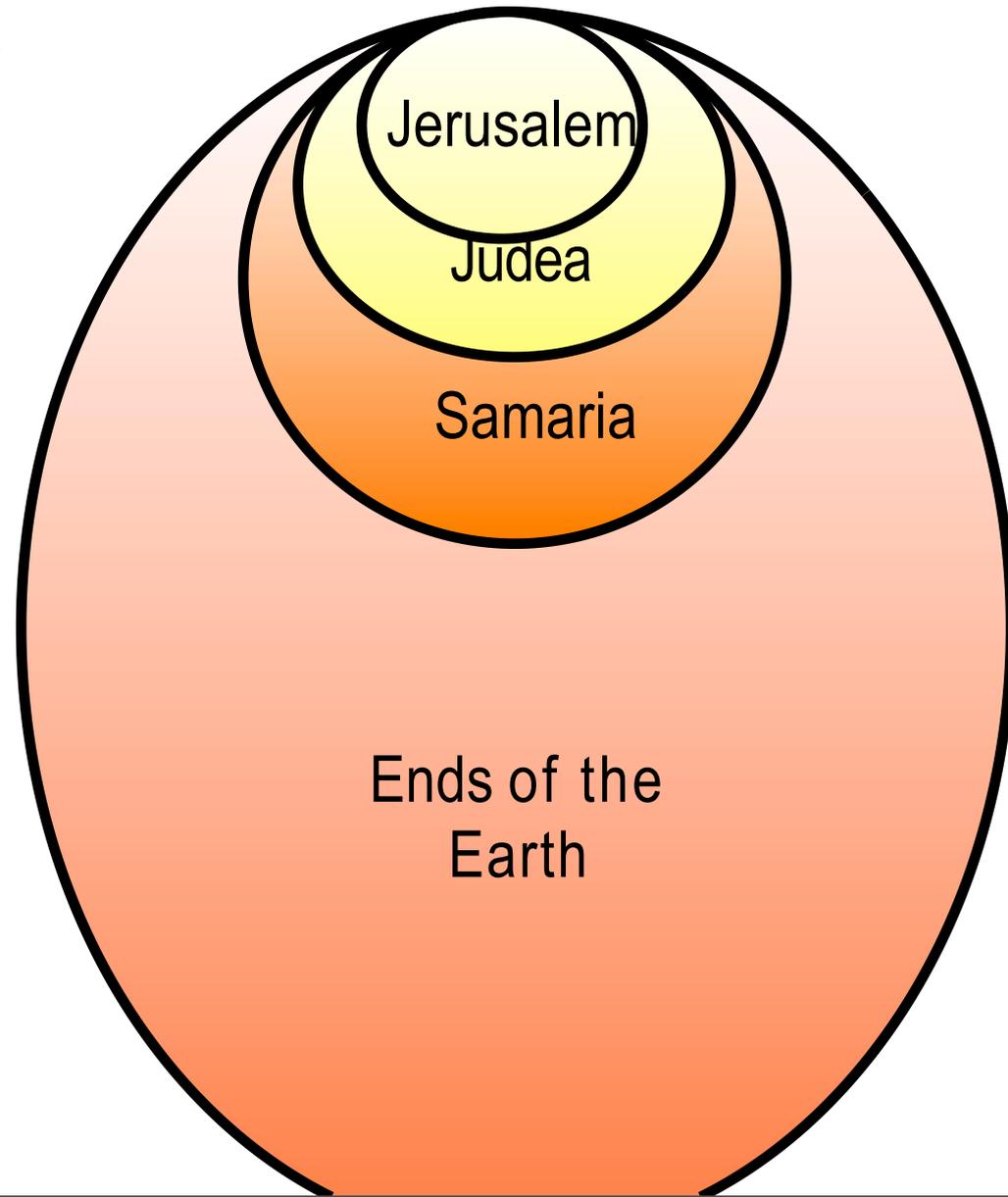
The Holy Spirit directs and empowers individual believers to spread the good news. This is exactly what Jesus promised.

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:4–8, NKJV)



- Acts covers a period of about 30 years from Jesus' ascension through to Paul's house arrest in Rome in 61 AD.
- The good news spread and fellowships of believers sprang up through out the Roman empire.
- To the small group of disciples Jesus' command was an impossible challenge.
- Each stage represented a huge barrier in their minds.
- Without the Holy Spirit Christianity would not even have got out of Jerusalem.

The Plan



Acts of the Holy Spirit

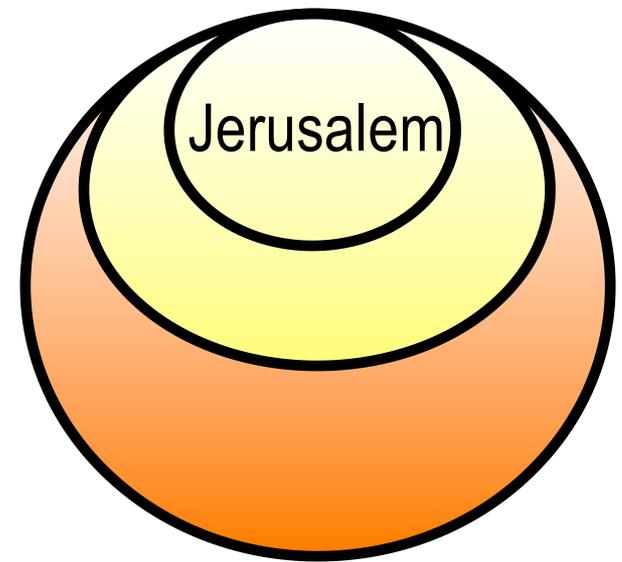
- The Holy Spirit came in power and filled the disciples
- Peter and the others started testifying about Jesus; fearlessly preaching and doing amazing acts of healing.
- People became believers in Jerusalem and from Judea. 3000 became 4000 within a year.
- The religious authorities tried to shut down the new “movement”.
- The effect of their persecution was to drive the gospel to Judea and Samaria.



Out To Samaria

“Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralysed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.”

(Acts 8:4–8, ESV)



believers to receive the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:14–15, NLT)

Breaking Barriers

The Holy Spirit falls on the gentiles in Cornelius' house.

“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.”

(Acts 10:44–46, NIV84)



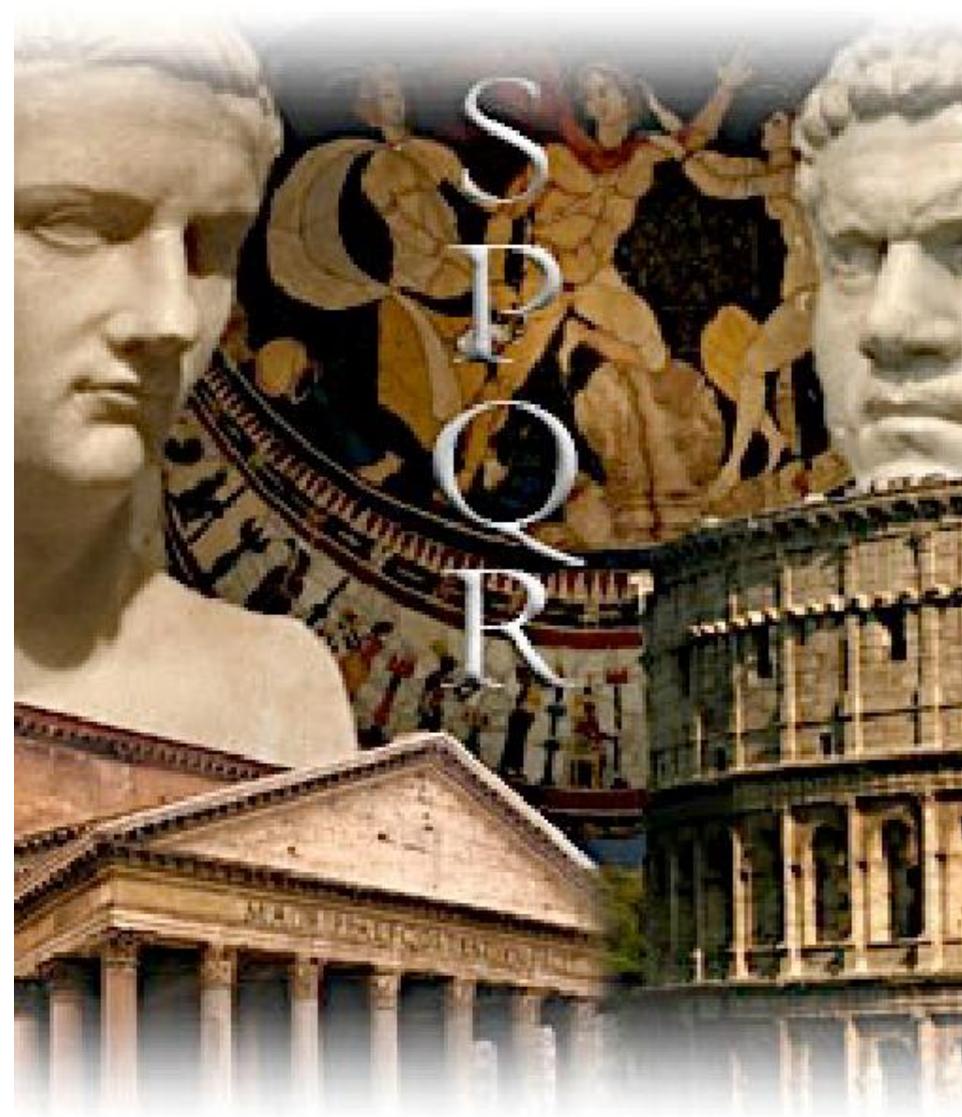
Breaking Barriers

- Very few of the Jewish believers were capable of overcoming the religious stronghold of Judaism in their minds.
- Even Peter himself struggled and was ill-equipped to take the good news to the gentile world.



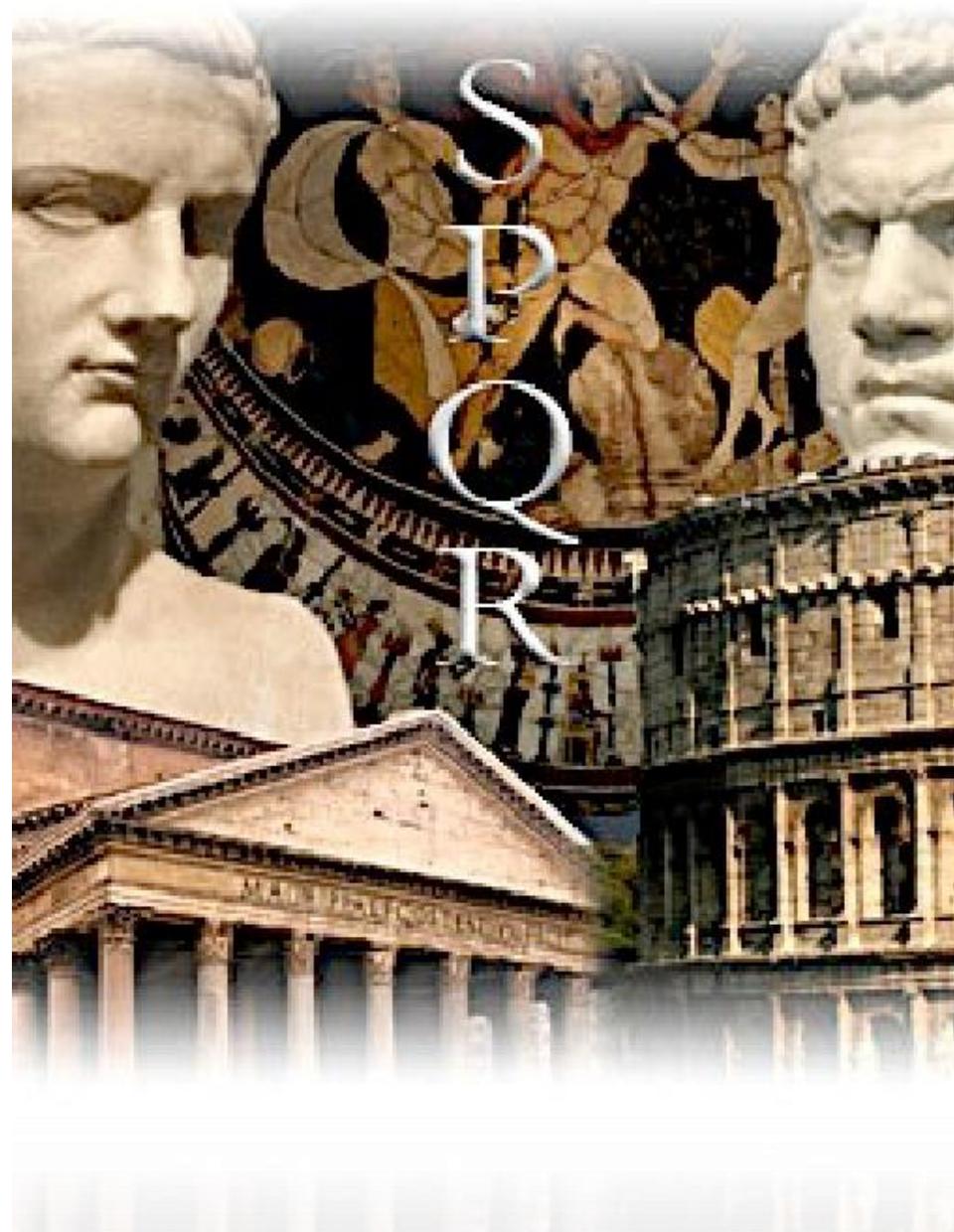
To the Gentile world

- Jesus personally intervened revealing Himself to the most unlikely Jewish evangelist to the gentile world.
- Who but God would have chosen a Pharisee of the Pharisees and greatest enemy of the church to be the greatest evangelist of the gentile world?
- Once again we see how God looks at the heart not at the outside appearances.



Paul

- Highly qualified to take the Gospel out to the Graeco-Roman world:
 - Highly educated
 - A Jew and a Roman citizen
 - Profound knowledge of the O.T.
 - Skilled debater
 - Filled with love and zeal for the Lord.
- He needed a vision of Jesus to change him from an enemy of believers to evangelist.



Mission

- After a time of preparation the Holy Spirit began the first systematic mission to bring the Gospel to the rest of the world.
- “One day as these men were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them.” So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way. So Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They went down to the seaport of Seleucia and then sailed for the island of Cyprus.” (Acts 13:2–4, NLT)



Acts has not ended

- The good news of Jesus and the kingdom of God began the long process of spreading into every nation and culture on earth.
- The story continues today and remains the primary task of the church and all believers.
- When it is complete Jesus will return.
“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14, NKJV)



Acts 28

- The spread of the gospel was not achieved without suffering and blood shed.
- Satan will not yield up his dominion without a fight.
- In the book of Acts Luke does not hide the difficulties, hardships, persecutions and bloodshed that happened as the gospel spread.
- He shows that the Holy Spirit enabled ordinary people to do what seemed impossible acts.
- He shows the opposition to the truth and ignorance of God being overcome by the power of God in dramatic ways but it was never easy.



- ❖ The beginning relates to the Gospel of Luke, with the commission of Jesus to the Apostles to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth (Luke 24:48, Acts 1:8).
- ❖ Acts describes the infancy period of the early Church, and begins with the Ascension of Jesus, the formation of the first community in Jerusalem, and the Pentecost, the Descent of the Holy Spirit.





- ❖ The Acts of the Apostles is an exciting narrative, and may be enjoyably read in one sitting.
- ❖ **Writer:** Luke, a Gentile and the "beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14), a friend and travelling companion of Paul
- ❖ **Date:** c AD63, towards the end of Paul's Roman captivity
- ❖ **Where written:** Rome, but possibly drafted in part, or material collected in Caesarea